

International Perceptions and African Agency: Uganda and its donors 1986-2010

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This thesis investigates the place of African states in the international system and seeks to understand what space exists for aid-dependent governments to exercise agency in relations with donors. In exploring these issues I focus on the case of Uganda's NRM regime which has enjoyed very substantial international support despite its increasingly authoritarian nature, destabilising regional policy and questionable human rights record. The two central questions posed are therefore: 'why has Uganda benefited from such uncritical international support and what role has the NRM regime itself played in bringing about this situation?' The thesis also compares Uganda's experience to those of Ethiopia, Kenya and Rwanda to demonstrate the broader relevance of these questions.

I argue that donors have taken a lenient approach to Uganda because they perceive it as valuable as an economic success story, an ally in the 'War on Terror' and a guarantor of regional stability. The study stresses, however, that these perceptions are just that: perceptions. They do not necessarily reflect reality nor are they formed without input from Africa, as some inadvertently suggest. Indeed, the principal contention of this thesis is that these three donor perceptions of Uganda have been actively constructed, moulded, managed and bolstered by Kampala itself in an effort to shore-up international support. Using a variety of 'image management' strategies the regime has succeeded in convincing its donors to see it as a valuable ally worth supporting. The same is true of the Rwandan and Ethiopian governments, I suggest, but not of the Kenyan. In doing so, the thesis contends, Kampala has carved out a subtle but substantial degree of agency in relations with donors and this raises important questions for scholars and policy-makers.

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Acronyms

ABC	American Broadcasting Corporation
ACRI	African Crisis Response Initiative
ADF	Allied Democratic Forces
AFDL	Alliance of Democratic Forces for the Liberation of Congo (<i>Alliance des Forces Démocratiques pour la Libération du Congo-Zaire</i>)
AFP	Agence France-Presse
AGOA	African Growth and Opportunity Act
AIDS	Acquired immunodeficiency virus
AMIS	African Union Mission in Sudan
AMISOM	African Union Mission in Somalia
AP	Associated Press
ATP	Aid and Trade Provision Scheme
AU	African Union
BBC	British Broadcasting Corporation
CA	Constituent Assembly
CBS	Columbia Broadcasting System
CC	Constitutional Commission
CEO	Chief executive officer
CG	Consultative Group
CHOGM	Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting
CIA	Central Intelligence Agency
CLS	Chlopak Leonard Schechter
CNN	Cable News Network
CPA	Comprehensive Peace Agreement
CRC	Constitutional Review Commission
CTV	Canada Television
DFID	Department for International Development
DOJ	Department of Justice
DP	Democratic Party
DRC	Democratic Republic of Congo
EAC	East African Community
ECOMOG	Economic Community of West African States
EDA	Excess Defense Articles
ERP	Economic Recovery Programme
EU	European Union
FARA	Foreign Agents Registration Act
FBI	Federal Bureau of Investigation
FCO	Foreign and Commonwealth
FDC	Forum for Democratic Change
FDI	Foreign Direct Investment
FMF	Foreign Military Financing
FOI	Freedom of Information

GBS	General Budgetary Support
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GoU	Government of Uganda
HIPC	Heavily Indebted Poor Countries
HIV	Human immunodeficiency virus
HRW	Human Rights Watch
ICC	International Criminal Court
IDA	International Development Association
IDP	Internally displaced person
IFI	International Financial Institution
IGAD	Intergovernmental Authority on Development
IGG	Inspector-General of Government
IMET	International Military Education and Training
IMF	International Monetary Fund
IR	International Relations
KFM	Kampala FM
LC	Local Council
LRA	Lord's Resistance Army
MCA	Millennium Challenge Account
MCC	Millennium Challenge Corporation
MFPED	Ministry for Finance, Planning and Economic Development
MP	Member of Parliament
NEC	National Executive Council
NEPAD	New Partnership for Africa's Development
NGO	Non-governmental Organisation
NRA	National Resistance Army
NRC	National Resistance Council
NRM	National Resistance Movement
NSC	National Security Council
NSSF	National Social Security Fund
NTV	National Television (Uganda)
OAU	Organisation of African Unity
ODA	Orange Democratic Movement
ODA	Overseas Development Administration
ODA	Overseas Development Aid
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
PCC	Policy Coordination Committee (of the NSC)
PDG	Partners for Democracy and Governance
PEAP	Poverty Eradication Action Plan
PEPFAR	President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief
PRSC	Poverty Reduction Support Credit
PRSP	Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper
RC	Resistance Council
RPF	Rwandan Patriotic Front
SPLA	Sudanese People's Liberation Army
SPLM	Sudanese People's Liberation Movement

TFG	Transitional Federal Government (of Somalia)
TWG	The Whitaker Group
UHRC	Ugandan Human Rights Commission
UK	United Kingdom
UN	United Nations
UNAIDS	Joint United Nations Programme on HIV and AIDS
UNITAF	United Task Force
UNLA	Uganda National Liberation Front
UNLF	Ugandan National Liberation Front
UNOSOM	United Nations Operation in Somalia
UPC	Ugandan People's Congress
UPDA	Ugandan People's Democratic Army
UPDF	Ugandan People's Defence Force
US/USA	United States/United States of America
USAID	United States Agency for International Development

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Introduction

Introduction

Why do Western donors still use aid to support autocracies? To what extent does dependence on aid deny agency? Such questions are pertinent for both scholars and policy-makers. During the Cold War, a simple rationale was put forward by donors for such behaviour: any government opposed to Communism, regardless of its political dispensation, was worth bolstering in an effort to prevent states, regions and continents falling to this ‘menace’. Numerous tyrants including Mobutu Sese Seko, Ferdinand Marcos and Ngo Dinh Diem benefited from this thinking and came to depend upon continuous injections of Western aid to remain in power. Often loathed in their own countries, these men nevertheless became valued, and yet dispensable, ‘clients’ of the major powers.¹

The fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989, however, led to a rapid re-evaluation, in Western capitals, of this ‘containment’ policy and a swift incorporation of ‘political conditionalities’ including good governance, democratisation and respect for human rights into donor aid programmes. This left many old anti-Communist dictators, in the words of Ugandan president Yoweri Museveni, ‘orphaned’ by their former supporters.² Since then, consideration of an aid recipient’s democratic and human rights record has become, officially, a key factor for donors in decisions relating to international assistance. Thus in 1991, the European Council of Ministers declared that future disbursements of European aid would be cut to recipients ‘in the event of grave and persistent human rights violations or the serious interruption of

¹ Root (2008), pp.3-4

² Akinrinade and Sesay (1998), p.75

democratic processes' and in 1993 stated that 'developing and consolidating democracy' was to be a key aim of the European Union's (EU) future foreign policy.³ Most European governments have followed suit; Sweden's 1992 Budget Bill, for example, established that human rights and democracy would be one of 'three criteria influencing the allocation of development assistance funds'.⁴ Such sentiments have also been expressed in the statements and policy papers of UK and Dutch officials in the 1990s and 2000s.⁵ In addition, successive US governments have nominally taken the same approach, often at the instigation of Congress.⁶ This culminated, in 2004, in the creation of the Millennium Challenge Account (MCA) which provides funds to various countries as long as they fit particular 'selection criteria' including 'commitment to...promoting political pluralism...[and] respect [for] human and civil rights'.⁷

A review of these states' major aid recipients two decades into this 'new era', however, suggests that such ideals have not been translated into policy. Among the top ten recipients of EU, UK and US aid between 2007-2008⁸, for example, only three of eighteen countries listed (India, Serbia and Croatia) are classified by *Freedom House* as 'free' while ten are 'partly-free' and five decidedly 'not free'.⁹ This should perhaps not come as a surprise; a number of

³ Crawford (1997), pp.5-8

⁴ *ibid*

⁵ Crawford (1997), pp.8-11; see also UK Foreign Secretary Douglas Hurd's 1990 speech where he declared that '...governments who persist with repressive policies...should not expect us to support their folly with scarce aid resources.' (Cumming (1996), p.490), DFID (2005), p.3 which discusses 'the circumstances in which the UK will consider reducing or interrupting aid' and Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs (1993), p.26 which sets out the conditions whereby Dutch aid could be terminated including in response to 'a serious relapse of democratization'.

⁶ Crawford (1997), pp.10-12

⁷ Millennium Challenge Corporation (MCC) (2010), p.5

⁸ Information compiled by OECD and listed by donor at http://www.oecd.org/countrylist/0,3349,en_2649_34447_1783495_1_1_1_1,00.html (accessed 01/12/10)

⁹ see http://www.freedomhouse.org/template.cfm?page=351&ana_page=363&year=2010 (accessed 01/12/10) for information on how Freedom House decides upon such classifications.

studies have concluded that donors are still primarily influenced by geostrategic, economic and foreign policy concerns in their selection of aid partners.¹⁰ This is certainly borne out when applied to the fifteen ‘partly-free’ and ‘not free’ states referred to here. Several, for example, represent major donor trading partners (India, China) or producers of vital natural resources (Nigeria, Iraq), while others are geostrategically crucial to Western security policy, particularly since 9/11 (Pakistan, Afghanistan, Iraq, Egypt, Palestinian Territories, Turkey). Furthermore, some are of specific importance to individual donors for reasons of foreign policy: Turkey and Morocco to the EU, for example, as potential future EU members, and Colombia as a major ally in the US ‘War on Drugs’.

In a number of instances, however, it is difficult to understand why some undemocratic states are prioritised in this way by donors. Uganda, for example, is the tenth largest recipient of both US and EU aid but is, on the face of it, of limited geostrategic or economic significance to donors by any standard. Far from the epicentre of Islamic fundamentalism and lacking any notable natural resources¹¹, the semi-authoritarian regime of Yoweri Museveni and his National Resistance Movement (NRM) has nevertheless received a large amount of international assistance from International Financial Institutions (IFIs), the US and European governments between 1986-2010. Indeed, its total financial support among donors has risen fairly consistently during this period from a meagre US\$197 million in 1986 to US\$713 million in 1992, US\$850 million in 1995, US\$991 million in 2003 and US\$1891 million in 2008 suggesting that its standing in donor capitals has steadily increased since taking power

¹⁰ Schraeder, Hook and Taylor (1998)

¹¹ In 2006, however, significant oil reserves were discovered on Uganda’s western border with Democratic Republic of Congo. As of 2010 exploration in this area continues and extraction is not likely to begin until 2011 at the earliest. (Tripp (2010), pp.184-185)

in 1986.¹² This is in spite of the fact that it has frequently acted against stated and implied donor wishes in areas such as democratisation, human rights, corruption and regional militarism. That it has done so but still retained Western support is particularly surprising since Uganda's government has long depended on aid to survive. As of 2008-2009, for example, donors continue to fund nearly half of the country's budget (including 80% of development spending) as they have since the early 1990s and aid represents over 13% of Uganda's GDP (reduced from an average of 21% between 1991-1994).¹³

This point is highly salient because, from the early 1990s, donors have often reduced or suspended aid to regimes such as this which flout democratic norms. Most notably, in 1991 and 1992 donors cut all but non-humanitarian aid to Kenya and Malawi respectively for committing human rights abuses and failing to democratise.¹⁴ Crawford has also drawn attention to at least fifteen other cases of this nature in donor-African relations between 1990-1997 alone.¹⁵ In several of these instances, donors have forced regimes to abolish one-party states and hold multi-party elections, taking full advantage of the leverage their aid contributions have provided them with.¹⁶ Uganda, however, has escaped this fate on numerous occasions and this thesis seeks to understand why and, more centrally, how. What has prevented donors from applying political conditionality to Uganda when they have had few qualms about doing so elsewhere on the continent? Existing scholarship suggests that donors see Kampala as conforming to several positive stereotypes and are reluctant, therefore

¹² OECD (1987-2010)

¹³ Brownbridge (2009), p.305; Tripp (2010), p.186; aid as a percentage of GDP figures calculated using data on aid flows to Uganda 1986-2008 (OECD (1987-2010) and historical GDP information available on the World Bank website (available at <http://data.worldbank.org/indicator/NY.GDP.MKTP.CD>; accessed 01/12/10)

¹⁴ Crawford (1998), p.15

¹⁵ Crawford (1998), p.v

¹⁶ Stokke (1995), pp.47-56

to reduce their support. These international perceptions have not, however, been thoroughly interrogated and a number of issues remain unexplored, most importantly the question of agency. For if donor support to Uganda rests upon perceptions rather than anything concrete then the ability to influence such perceptions arguably would become a valuable asset to the aid-dependent government. This thesis will argue that understanding donor support for Uganda, and Ugandan-donor relations in general, requires a careful re-thinking of Uganda's, and Africa's, place in the international system. As part of this effort, it will be necessary to carefully consider how aid-dependent states can influence international perceptions and how such 'image management' strategies can be used to secure agency even in the most asymmetrical of contexts. In exploring these subjects it is hoped that the study can contribute more generally to political science debates on democracy promotion, agency and the making of Western foreign policy towards non-democracies.

Secondary Literature

The question of why Western donors have supported the government of Uganda (GoU) since 1986 is not infrequently posed in academic literature. Indeed almost all scholars commenting upon Uganda, East Africa or African democratisation since the early 1990s have raised this issue. In general, political scientists have addressed the problem from a comparative politics or political economy, rather than international relations (IR), perspective and few have examined the implications in depth. Furthermore, while clear distinctions can theoretically be made with regard to the disciplinary backgrounds of these commentators, the literature as a whole cannot be meaningfully broken down according to such categorisations. Indeed, there appears to be little debate among scholars who have attempted to answer this question. Most argue, fairly convincingly, that donors have perceived the Ugandan regime to be one which

possesses certain attractive qualities and therefore support it, despite its democratic deficit and military adventurism, as a result. Kampala therefore, commentators suggest, effectively possesses a potent form of immunity against donor ire based on its various ‘images’ in Western capitals, the three most central of these being ‘economic success story’, ‘guarantor of stability’ and ‘ally against terrorism’. Though most scholars have pointed to the significance of more than one of these tropes in explaining donor support they will nevertheless be explored separately below.

In assessing the relative potency of these images, most commentators point to Uganda’s reputation as an economic reformer and success story. The most substantial contributions to this particular argument are made by Hauser and Harrison who both contend that donors supported Kampala in the 1990s because it was useful to them as a ‘showcase’ or ‘success story’ of IFI-recommended structural adjustment reforms.¹⁷ Hauser, whose research explores why donors ‘opted for dialogue rather than coercive methods’ in their early attempts to support democratisation in Uganda, ascribes donor behaviour to a ‘need [on their part] to present Uganda as a success story for economic liberalisation’.¹⁸ As noted in chapter 2, in 1987 Museveni abandoned a statist approach to managing the economy and agreed to follow IFI-recommended reform policies in return for increased donor support. During the following decade Uganda’s GDP grew far more than expected and this was taken by policy-makers to be the consequence of IFI-promoted reforms.¹⁹ Hauser, whose analysis draws on a number of interviews carried out with donor officials in Kampala between 1994-1995, argues that donors valued the ‘success story’ Uganda appeared to represent ‘because...donor

¹⁷ Hauser (1997), pp.123-124, pp.138-145 and (1999), pp.633-634; Harrison (2001), pp.672-3

¹⁸ Hauser (1999), p.621, pp.633-634

¹⁹ Hauser (1999), p.633

governments need to have success stories, especially in Africa'.²⁰ She suggests that they were grateful to have such a case to point to for both internal and external reasons: to 'justify their [development] programmes to legislatures and citizens back home, to rebut criticisms from Western academics and politicians that 'these programmes did not work' and to present to other African governments as a 'role model'.²¹ As a result, she argues, donors were reluctant to reduce support for Kampala in relation to democratic backsliding 'for fear of upsetting the economic balance' and undermining the economic 'showcase'. Hansen and Twaddle, who look briefly at this issue as part of a more general review of Uganda's political economy in the 1990s, also suggest that donors have made use of the 'success story' narrative to persuade a fourth group of the merits of IFI reforms: donor officials themselves. Uganda's success, they argue, has been held up *within* donor institutions as evidence that IFI policies are workable; it has been a source of 'self-confidence' for all those involved in promoting economic liberalisation in development policy.²²

Harrison has also explained donor forbearance in this manner but has developed the argument somewhat. In a more general exploration of 'external intervention in the reform processes of indebted states' he posits that the extent of donor involvement in the policy-making processes of states such as Uganda and Tanzania has made it conceptually difficult for scholars to determine where donors end and recipients begin.²³ Consequently, donors come to rely on economic success in recipient countries as an indication that they themselves have been successful, a state of mutual-dependency which Harrison characterises as 'post-

²⁰ *ibid*

²¹ *ibid*

²² Hansen and Twaddle (1998), p.10

²³ Harrison (2001), pp.659-663

conditionality'.²⁴ In the case of Uganda he argues that 'the World Bank has invested so much political capital' in the regime that it has no choice but to continue supporting it as a 'showcase' of Bank success and to ignore issues such as poor governance which might undermine this reputation.²⁵

Okuku, in a study which focuses mainly on the internal aspects of democratisation in Uganda, has also noted the 'symbiotic' nature of the donor-Ugandan relationship in this regard. Like Harrison, he asserts that 'the Bank [along with other donors] has invested very heavily in making Uganda a success story' and thus is averse to acting in a way which might damage this reputation (such as reducing support).²⁶ How far this situation has created space for Ugandan agency in the donor-recipient relationship is clearly pertinent although neither author addresses this issue in these analyses.

More recently a number of commentators have suggested that donor delight at Uganda's economic success in and of itself explains, to a certain extent, the degree of uncritical support they have provided. Haynes, for example, has sought to answer the question 'what is most important to international actors: stability or political freedom' by comparing donor relations with Ghana and Uganda in the 1990s.²⁷ In his analysis he argues that, despite their rhetoric, donors in the 1990s primarily 'wanted political and economic stability, not necessarily democracy' in Africa and thus Museveni's success in bringing 'economic steadiness' to his country through following IFI recommendations earned him a great deal of international

²⁴ *ibid*

²⁵ Harrison (2001), pp.672-673

²⁶ Okuku (2002), pp.37-39

²⁷ Haynes (2001b), pp.183-184

support.²⁸ Pinkney, in several discussions of international democracy promotion in East Africa, accepts this premise but varies the overall argument somewhat.²⁹ In setting out why Uganda has received such a ‘degree of indulgence’ on democratisation from donors he suggests that they have been ‘impressed’ by the country’s ‘economic record’³⁰ and ‘superior economic performance’³¹ and it is this, rather than stability *per se* which has lead to them to behave as they have. Tangri and Mwenda, who have written extensively on corruption and anti-corruption reform in Uganda, also cite the ‘central concern with economic growth’ among donors to explain why Western governments have been so tolerant of the Museveni regime.³²

In some of these cases, however, the reason why donors being ‘impressed’ by Uganda’s economic success would lead them to enthusiastically support its government for decades is not made clear. In one case, Tangri and Mwenda mention the ‘success story’ narrative as the primary explanation³³ but elsewhere do not.³⁴ Indeed, there is some, unacknowledged, tension in the literature on this subject with some commentators suggesting that donors support Uganda because it is in their economic interests to do so. Pinkney argues, for example, that donors have long valued the Museveni regime as ‘sympathetic to foreign investment’ while Tangri, in a study of Museveni’s successful attempt to abolish presidential term limits in Uganda, suggests that donors failed to reduce aid to Kampala in response to this incident because they feared that ‘adopting a punitive approach’ would endanger their own ‘economic

²⁸ Haynes (2001b), pp.201-202; Haynes (2001a), pp.238-239

²⁹ Pinkney (2001a), p.175

³⁰ Pinkney (2005), p.11

³¹ Pinkney (2001b), p.78

³² Tangri and Mwenda (2006), p.120

³³ Tangri and Mwenda (2005), pp.466-467

³⁴ Tangri and Mwenda (2006), p.120

interests' in the country.³⁵ Other scholars have dismissed this argument. Ottaway, in a comparative study of the political dispensations of several African 'new leaders' including Museveni, for example, maintains that Uganda has never been of economic significance to donors.³⁶ All of these commentators certainly agree, nonetheless, that donors have supported Kampala because they see it as an economic 'showcase' and 'success story'.

Commentators also argue that donors have supported Kampala because they see it as a valuable guarantor of stability, both domestically and regionally. As noted above, Haynes argues that, in their relations with Uganda as with much of the rest of Africa, donors have prioritised 'stability', both political and economic, above all other concerns and thus regimes such as Museveni's which can apparently deliver this are 'valued immensely'.³⁷ Dicklitch also contends, as part of a study on democratisation in Uganda, that, in bolstering Kampala, donors have 'overlooked obvious red flags [on governance] in their scramble to secure a semblance of stability in the Great Lakes region'³⁸ while Pinkney agrees that 'Western powers took a lenient view of the [Ugandan] regime in view of its apparent success in restoring order...in Central Africa'.³⁹

Many commentators make clear, however, that Uganda has been particularly favoured by donors as a guarantor of stability because of the exceptional instability which struck East/Central Africa during the 1980s and 1990s. Haynes notes, for example, that Museveni came to power after 'decades of conflict' in Uganda and that donors were particularly grateful

³⁵ Pinkney (2005), p.126; Tangri (2004), p.193

³⁶ Ottaway (1999), p.4

³⁷ Haynes (2001b), p.202

³⁸ Dicklitch (2002), p.216

³⁹ Pinkney (2005), p.119

to him for bringing ‘political stability’ back to a country which had been violently torn apart by Obote and Amin.⁴⁰ Dicklitch too has characterised donor views of Museveni as a leader who has ‘been able to bring Uganda back from the brink of chaos’.⁴¹

Some scholars have extended the logic of this argument and use it to explain why donors have not been more critical of Kampala in the past. Cumming, for example, in a study of how donor usage of political conditionality has developed since its original inception, argues that the UK government was hesitant to employ this mechanism in its interactions with the Ugandan regime in the 1990s since it still recalled the ‘brutality of earlier regimes [Obote and Amin – see chapter 2]’ and how damaging to Ugandan and East African stability these governments had been.⁴² Likewise, Young observes in a cursory review of democratisation in Africa that donors have traditionally been fearful that Uganda might deteriorate into the destabilising ‘religion-based rivalry’ of the 1970s and 1980s should Museveni’s hold on power be externally undermined.⁴³ Curiously, however, there is very little interrogation by these scholars of the ‘truth’ behind such assertions. In the case of Haynes and Dicklitch, for example, neither set out exactly what Museveni’s restoration of order in Uganda has entailed, nor do they attempt to explain why persistent violence caused by insurrections in northern and western Uganda (see chapter 2) throughout Museveni’s tenure have not caused donors to re-think their perceptions. Such issues go to the very heart of this topic and require much more thorough exploration.

⁴⁰ Haynes (2001b), pp.201-202

⁴¹ Dicklitch (2002), p.216

⁴² Cumming (2001), p.370, note 61

⁴³ Young (1999), p.75; Cumming (2001), p.370, note 61

In addition, commentators argue that the prevalence of instability in states surrounding Uganda has further led donors to support the Kampala regime as a guarantor of regional stability. Hauser notes, for example, that Museveni's first decade in power 'saw the continuation of a civil war in Sudan, anarchy in Somalia, massacres in Rwanda and Burundi and uncertainty in Kenya. Uganda was an 'island of stability in the midst of chaos'.⁴⁴ Similarly, Muhumuza, in a brief consideration of 'donor indifference to Uganda's flawed transition' in a study of the country's stalled democratisation process asserts that 'donors were slow at pushing [Kampala] to democratise because...Uganda was considered to be one of the very few 'beacons of hope' in a region torn by civil and political strife'.⁴⁵ Like Hauser, he points to 'civil wars...in Burundi, Rwanda, Congo and Sudan' but does not explain, however, exactly why Uganda being 'an oasis of relative stability' would convince donors 'to opt for a softer approach' on governance.⁴⁶ Indeed, one of the more frustrating aspects of Muhumuza's argument (which is also made by Haynes and Pinkney) is that he does not answer two fundamental questions.⁴⁷ Firstly, do donors hope that Uganda's domestic stability will 'rub off' on its neighbours or are they simply thankful to have one state in the region not engulfed by conflict? Secondly, and more importantly, has Kampala's destructive involvement in Congo since 1996 undermined the logic behind this 'guarantor of stability' narrative and if not, why not?

Hauser has addressed the former question, to some degree, by maintaining that Uganda's stability has often made it the obvious regional 'interlocutor' for donors when dealing with the region; it has therefore become, in donor minds, a reliable facilitator of regional

⁴⁴ Hauser (1999), p.634

⁴⁵ Muhumuza (2009), p.39

⁴⁶ Muhumuza (2009), pp.39-40

⁴⁷ Haynes (2001b), p.201; Pinkney (2005), p.119

peacekeeping.⁴⁸ She observes, for example, that ‘Museveni has been an ally to the US government in its relations with...Sudan...[and also]...cooperated with Western governments by providing a regional hub for logistical support after the 1994 genocide in Rwanda’.⁴⁹ Ottaway also points to Uganda’s role in Sudan, as part of IGAD efforts ‘to mediate the conflict between the Sudanese government and its armed opponents’, as well as in Burundi where it ‘participated in the OAU-sponsored regional summits’.⁵⁰ In addition, there is an emerging trend in the literature which argues that donors have in fact started to question this apparently positive Ugandan regional role in light of its behaviour in Congo. Oloka-Onyango, for example, notes that the US was ‘displeased about [Kampala’s involvement in]...the DRC war’ in his ‘socio-political biography’ of Museveni but nevertheless ‘this alleged displeasure did not manifest itself in any change in support for the Museveni regime’.⁵¹ Oloka-Onyango understands this disjuncture between donor perception and donor policy by referring to Museveni’s personality and Uganda’s role in the War on Terror (see below) but there is clearly far more work to be done on this question.⁵²

More recently, analysts have suggested that donor views of Uganda as a reliable ally in international security matters, particularly in opposing and preventing international terrorism, have also lead Western powers to increase support for the regime and overlook governance problems. Most of the literature on this subject dates from the later 1990s and focuses on the US-Ugandan relationship, particularly the mutual hostility of both of these states towards the Islamic government of Sudan between c.1995-2000. A major contributor to this argument has

⁴⁸ Hauser (1999), p.634

⁴⁹ *ibid*

⁵⁰ Ottaway (1998), pp.212-213

⁵¹ Oloka-Onyango (2004), p.47

⁵² *ibid*

been Clark whose 1998 review of US-Africa policy under Clinton emphasises that despite Washington having ‘very little traditional strategic interest in Africa’ it was nevertheless deeply concerned in the later 1990s about Khartoum’s apparent sponsoring of Islamic terrorists, particularly after US embassies were targeted in Kenya and Tanzania.⁵³ In such a context, he argues, Uganda became a ‘new important ally’ both because, as a neighbour of Sudan, it could ‘put pressure on Khartoum to moderate its policies’ and also because it, along with Eritrea and Ethiopia, could serve as a ‘conduit for aid to the SPLA’, a Sudanese rebel group.⁵⁴ Uganda, which had its own reasons for opposing Khartoum (see chapter 5), cooperated fully in this arrangement and set itself up, as Hansen and Twaddle put it, as a ‘bulwark’ against Sudanese radicalism thereby playing a key role in US security policy.⁵⁵ Though scholars such as Ottaway have questioned the extent to which Kampala’s actions actually interrupted Sudan’s activities, commentators nevertheless agree that this Ugandan-US ‘alliance’ against a ‘terrorist state’ caused donors to see the Museveni regime as an important ally in the fight against terrorism and, therefore, worthy of greater support.⁵⁶

Surprisingly few commentators, however, have analysed how such donor considerations have been effected by the 9/11 attacks on the US and subsequent declaration by Washington of a ‘Global War on Terror’. Several note that Kampala has offered considerable support to donor anti-terror initiatives as part of the ‘War’ and has consequently received a number of indulgences from donors. Pinkney notes, for example, that donors were persuaded to ‘lift the ceiling on Uganda’s defence budget in 2003’ after Kampala announced its support for

⁵³ Clark (1998), p.10

⁵⁴ Clark (1998), p.11

⁵⁵ Twaddle and Hansen (1998), p.6

⁵⁶ Ottaway (1999), p.4; Doom and Vlassenroot (1999), p.28; Clark (2001), p.266;

military action against Iraq.⁵⁷ Oloka-Onyango also attributes George W Bush's visit to Uganda that year as a symbolic gesture of gratitude for this action.⁵⁸ Moreover, a number of scholars have suggested that Uganda's close cooperation with donors in fighting terrorism in Africa itself have led donors to increase support and limit criticism. Heilman and Ndumbaro, for example, argue that Kampala's passing of 'anti-terror legislation' and facilitation of joint FBI-Ugandan counter-terrorism operations have encouraged donors to only 'gingerly' push for political reform in the country for fear of compromising the security relationship.⁵⁹ Likewise, Tangri and Mwenda observe that Uganda's decision to deploy troops to Somalia since 2007 has not only resulted in an increase in 'US money and logistics' for the country's armed forces but also 'has encouraged Washington to damp criticism' of the regime because of its 'strategic role' in the battle against terrorism.⁶⁰ Uganda's strategic importance to donors as a reason for continued international support is also alluded to by Rubongoya as part of a more general exploration of how power has been exercised by the Museveni government; there has been 'muted international condemnation' of Kampala's increasingly autocratic behaviour, he contends, because 'Uganda is on the front line of the regional war on terror'.⁶¹

There is little indication in these arguments, however, that commentators see 9/11 as any kind of turning point in donor-Ugandan relations and, indeed, most focus more on how Kampala has used anti-terror legislation 'as a handy excuse...to assault freedoms'⁶² and 'curtail civil liberties'.⁶³ This stems in part from the fact that the literature on this subject is under-

⁵⁷ Pinkney (2005), p.126

⁵⁸ Oloka-Onyango (2004), p.47

⁵⁹ Heilman and Ndumbaro (2004), pp.148-155

⁶⁰ Tangri and Mwenda (2008), p.191

⁶¹ Rubongoya (2007), p.193

⁶² Oloka-Onyango (2004), pp.46-47

⁶³ Pinkney (2005), p.122

developed in general but also, perhaps, because commentators are aware that donor perceptions of Uganda as a strategic ally were formed several years prior to 2001 (see above). This point is not highlighted by any scholar, however, and merits further study. Furthermore, the literature does not attempt to explain in any detail why donors have come to see Uganda as an ally in the War on Terror but not, to the same degree, Kenya which, as Heilman and Ndumbaro point out has also ‘cooperated closely’ with the West on security matters.⁶⁴ These scholars do note that ‘Uganda has exploited’ donor agendas more effectively in this area than its eastern neighbour but a thorough analysis of how this has been done is overdue.⁶⁵

International perceptions and African agency

That these three ‘images’ of Uganda - economic success story, guarantor of stability and ally against terrorism - have genuinely represented the main rationales for continued donor support is beyond doubt. One or more of these three justifications were provided in almost every interview carried out for this thesis and the same tropes have regularly peppered the public and private statements of Western policy-makers when discussing Uganda. What is particularly striking is the fact that policy-makers from every time period, at every level of government and in numerous different contexts have made reference to these images. Thus US Secretary of State Madeleine Albright told journalists in 1997 that ‘it is very encouraging to see the advances Uganda has made [including] your strong economic growth’⁶⁶ while US officials in Kampala made clear to me in a 2009 interview that ‘Uganda is seen as doing really positive things [and has secured] solid economic growth’.⁶⁷ Likewise, in 2001 the UK

⁶⁴ Heilman and Ndumbaro (2004), p.148

⁶⁵ *ibid*

⁶⁶ Department of State (1997)

⁶⁷ Anonymous interview 9 (2009)

Secretary of State for International Development lauded Uganda for being ‘a star and..role model for other countries, not only in Africa but also in the rest of the world’⁶⁸ and these sentiments were echoed in 2009 by a UK government official who called Uganda ‘the star of Africa...because of strong economic growth rates and cutting edge economic reform’.⁶⁹

The same is true for Uganda’s image as a guarantor of stability. In 2002 several European development ministers praised Kampala for ‘striving to bring peace to the [East African] region’⁷⁰ while a former Clinton administration official noted in 2009 how valued the Ugandan leader remains as a ‘leader of regional initiatives’.⁷¹ Furthermore, numerous US officials from junior personnel to President Bush himself have made clear how important ‘Uganda’s role as a regional player’ has been to Washington⁷², which has often sought out Museveni’s ‘regional knowledge and insights’⁷³ and seen him as a ‘beacon of hope’ throughout the region⁷⁴ and ‘a strong leader...in solving regional conflicts’.⁷⁵ Even employees of the World Bank have subscribed to this narrative with one former Uganda Country Director observing in 2009 that ‘Museveni brought stability and security to...Uganda’.⁷⁶

Though rhetoric on Uganda’s role in the War on Terror has been a more recent development for obvious reasons it is clear that it too has been internalised by officials from different countries and at different levels. Thus in 2007 George W Bush told the US media that ‘the

⁶⁸ *New Vision* (29/07/00)

⁶⁹ Anonymous interview 15 (2009)

⁷⁰ *New Vision* (14/02/02)

⁷¹ Anonymous interview 18 (2009)

⁷² Anonymous interview 28 (2009)

⁷³ Anonymous interview 26 (2009)

⁷⁴ Department of State (1997)

⁷⁵ White House (2008)

⁷⁶ Adams interview (2009)

President [Museveni] has got...good judgment when it comes to issues like Somalia and Sudan’⁷⁷ while a US official noted in a 2010 interview that ‘Uganda is playing an important and constructive role in Somalia...they’ve stepped up [in the War on Terror] and done more than anyone else [in Africa]’.⁷⁸ A senior civil servant at DFID has also opined that the US has been ‘more tolerant of Uganda because of counter-terrorism in the Horn [of Africa]’⁷⁹ as has a Western diplomat in Kampala who stressed in a 2009 interview that ‘geopolitics has been very important’ in donor-Ugandan relations.⁸⁰

In many respects, then, commentators have been correct to point to these donor views to explain why Uganda has been treated so favourably over the years. Though some issues, particularly related to terrorism, have become more important for donors because of global events it is also clear that Uganda’s reputation as an economic success story and guarantor of stability, though formed decades ago, still resonates with policy-makers. These characterisations of Kampala, indeed, have come to represent a donor ‘narrative’ on the Museveni regime which, though challenged at times, continues to endure.

Whether this narrative actually reflects reality, however, is not satisfactorily explored in the literature. Indeed the current scholarship on this subject is flawed in two significant ways. Firstly, it frequently fails to distinguish between statements of fact and donor perceptions of Uganda. Haynes observes, for example, that ‘Museveni has been able to bring political stability and economic steadiness’ to Uganda although both of these assertions are (donor)

⁷⁷ White House (2007)

⁷⁸ Anonymous interview 31 (2010)

⁷⁹ Fish interview (2009)

⁸⁰ Anonymous interview 10 (2009)

perspectives rather than outright truths.⁸¹ Analysts such as van de Walle, for example, argue that Uganda's 'success story' is open to interpretation, pointing to fiscal deficits, pervasive corruption and rent-seeking since the early 1990s.⁸² Likewise the persistent failure by Kampala to neutralise violent rebellions in northern and western Uganda along with its military involvement in Congo calls into question the claim that the regime has genuinely maintained 'political stability' throughout its tenure.

Secondly, even those scholars who do acknowledge that it is international perceptions, not necessarily Ugandan reality, which explain donor forbearance nevertheless neglect to adequately examine the provenance of such perceptions. Though accepting, on occasion, that Kampala has been a skilful diplomatic operator they nonetheless imply that Uganda has played almost no active role in influencing how donors perceive it.⁸³ Thus Heilman and Ndumbaro speak of 'donor foreign policy interests', 'goals' and 'security interests' in Uganda without considering how far Ugandan actors have worked to convince policy-makers to conceive of these 'interests' in the first place. The regime is therefore shown to have been largely passive in bringing about the unusual degree of donor assistance it has received since 1986.

This thesis hopes to address these flaws and will focus firmly on showing how the Ugandan regime has, in fact, secured very considerable agency in its relations with donors through managing international perceptions. Far from being the inert but fortunate possessor of certain donor-friendly attributes, Kampala has worked continuously to construct, mould, manage and bolster three major images of itself to win and retain international support. The

⁸¹ Haynes (2001b), p.238

⁸² Van de Walle (2001), p.186

⁸³ Haynes (2001b), p.239; Heilman and Ndumbaro (2004), p.148

employment of this ‘image management’ strategy, it is argued, is the key to understanding the Ugandan-donor relationship. It also provides a novel means for academics to conceptualise the exercise of agency by aid-dependent states.

One ‘image’ not explored in any depth by these commentators, however, but of clear relevance for this study is that of Uganda as an ‘HIV/AIDS success story’. One of the countries most severely affected by the outbreak of the HIV epidemic in the 1980s, Uganda became an ‘inspiration’ and ‘model’ case for tackling this problem by the early 2000s after it emerged that national prevalence rates of the disease had started to decline.⁸⁴ In 2000, Museveni announced that these rates had been ‘reduced from around 30% in the early 1990s to around 8% in the late 1990s’ although most academic commentators have suggested a more cautious figure – from around 15% to 6% .⁸⁵ These statistics have been the subject of extended debate among epidemiologists, some of whom question how representative of all Ugandans the primary data which they rely upon has been⁸⁶, how prevalent HIV/AIDS actually was in the mid-1980s⁸⁷ and what had caused this apparent decline.⁸⁸

Regardless of this, however, Western donors rapidly accepted that this success put Uganda, as a 1998 UNAIDS report asserts, ‘in the forefront of the fight against HIV/AIDS’, particularly because the NRM and Museveni himself had, from 1986, made dealing with the epidemic a very clear government priority in contrast to many of their African colleagues.⁸⁹ Having

⁸⁴ Parkhurst (2001), p.69

⁸⁵ See, for example, Grundfest Schoepf (2004), p.372; Tumushabe (2006), pp.6-7

⁸⁶ Parkhurst notes that urban antenatal clinics have been used as ‘sentinel surveillance sites’ to extrapolate national statistics but information gathered from these sources does not necessarily ‘represent Uganda as a whole’ (Parkhurst (2001), pp.70-72

⁸⁷ *ibid*; Tumushabe (2006), pp.7-8

⁸⁸ Parkhurst (2001), pp.72-83; Epstein (2007), pp.186-187

⁸⁹ UNAIDS (1998), p.5; Patel (2001), pp.82-83

invested a great deal in HIV programmes worldwide over the previous two decades, therefore, donors could now point to a country, as Tumushabe argues, where this effort had paid off.⁹⁰ As with the ‘economic success story’ narrative Uganda could also now be used by its international benefactors as a ‘model case’ for their global health policies. This became even more the case from c.2003, as Epstein and Tumushabe argue, when conservative US legislators, relying on somewhat dubious research and testimony from Janet Museveni, the president’s wife, contended that increased marital faithfulness and, particularly, abstinence had been the primary reason for Uganda’s declining prevalence rates.⁹¹ They were then able to use this ‘evidence’ from Uganda to push for a \$1 billion earmark for funding of abstinence and faithfulness prevention programmes to be included in the landmark 2003 President’s Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR) to serve their own ideological agendas, and those of their supporters.⁹²

That Kampala has used this reputation since 2000 to raise its profile with donors, as it has with the other three images discussed above, is beyond doubt. The regime’s success in ‘fighting AIDS’ has been recounted in a number of speeches by Museveni to donor audiences and in private meetings with US leaders.⁹³ Likewise there is little question that donors have themselves internalised this narrative; a former senior US official noted in 2009 that Uganda ‘has a good reputation in the US on AIDS’⁹⁴, for example, while a former UK official has claimed that ‘Uganda got brownie points [from donors] because of [its policy on]

⁹⁰ Tumushabe (2006), p.6

⁹¹ Epstein (2007), pp.187-188

⁹² *ibid*

⁹³ Council on Foreign Relations (2005); State House, Uganda (2005)

⁹⁴ Cohen interview (2009)

HIV/AIDS’.⁹⁵ A number of factors, however, complicate the incorporation of this fourth ‘image’ into the overall argument of this thesis and, for the reasons set out below, it is necessary to exclude it from the main analysis.

Firstly, the link between donors holding this particular perception and supporting the Ugandan government directly is far less clear than with the other three images. Unlike budgetary support (increasingly provided by donors to the Ugandan treasury to support the ‘economic success story’) or military aid (provided to the country’s security forces to bolster the ‘ally against terrorism’), international funds to fight HIV/AIDS largely by-pass Kampala, instead being used to support NGOs and civil society groups focused on fighting the disease. Parkhurst notes, for example, that NGOs have played a particularly central role in Uganda’s HIV/AIDS strategies and have thus benefited, far more than Kampala, from aid funds in this regard.⁹⁶ Likewise, Patel observes that ‘scores of..foreign-financed..non-governmental organizations’ have been the primary beneficiaries of international AIDS money since Kampala realised at an early stage it could do ‘only a limited amount’ with state resources.⁹⁷ That is not to say, however, that corrupt Ugandan ministers have not been able to siphon-off some of these funds for political ends⁹⁸ nor that NGOs with close links to Museveni, notably Janet Museveni’s National Youth Forum, have not indirectly received money from

⁹⁵ Anonymous interview 16 (2009)

⁹⁶ Parkhurst (2001), pp.78-79

⁹⁷ Patel (2001), p.82

⁹⁸ Human Rights Watch notes that, in 2004, money from the US Presidential Initiative on AIDS Strategy for Communication to Youth funded a ‘government-sponsored youth rally’ which blended ‘health messages’ with appeals to participants to support Museveni’s ‘bid for a third term’ (HRW (2005), p.3). Likewise Epstein (2007, pp.202-203) claims that some of the money embezzled by Ugandan ministers from the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria was also ‘spent on campaigns for the lifting of presidential term limits’.

PEPFAR.⁹⁹ It is extremely unclear, though, from a practical perspective, how donor acceptance of this narrative has resulted in specific support for Kampala itself.

Secondly, the extent to which the different elements of the ‘HIV success story’ have been successful in terms of managing donor perceptions is extremely uncertain. While US policy-makers in the mid-2000s may well have viewed Kampala more favourably because of its increasing denigration of condoms as a valid prevention strategy¹⁰⁰, for example, European donors were extremely alarmed by this development. At a February 2005 meeting of European ambassadors, for example, envoys agreed that ‘HIV/AIDS policy was being confused and undermined by the de-campaigning of condoms’ and thus for as much as this strategy by the regime attracted support on one side of the Atlantic it potentially undermined its support base on the other.¹⁰¹

Finally, since the early 2000s, many US evangelical Christian organisations have become involved in the fight against HIV/AIDS in Uganda and this has led to discussions on the subject becoming confused and increasingly loaded with other issues and connotations.¹⁰² The paucity of verifiable information on this controversial subject has resulted in the growing prevalence of somewhat speculative, even sensationalist, accounts of the international politics of Ugandan AIDS policy. Sharlet, for example, argues that a secretive US Christian cult (‘The Family’) has been using Museveni since 1997 to carry out its own pro-abstinence agenda in Uganda.¹⁰³ Similarly, a number of commentators have seen the influence of this

⁹⁹ This group does not, however, have an outright political agenda. (HRW (2005), pp.44-46)

¹⁰⁰ See HRW (2005), pp.61-67

¹⁰¹ FOI document 1

¹⁰² Epstein (2007), p.185

¹⁰³ Sharlet (2008), p.23, pp.328-329

community in other areas of Ugandan domestic policy including a 2009 bill, widely condemned by donors (see chapter 2), proposing the death penalty for HIV-positive men engaging in homosexual sex.¹⁰⁴ As well as skewing debate on Uganda's 'HIV success story' such associations have also seemingly tarnished the narrative itself and certainly Kampala has been much less forthcoming in promoting this narrative in recent years. As such, while accepting the relevance of the HIV narrative to the central debates of this thesis, it has been decided not to include it alongside the other three 'images' interrogated throughout.

Methodological and Conceptual considerations

While a comparative approach to the questions raised in this study may have been illuminating it was decided that a small-*n* approach, focusing on Uganda alone, would be used. This method will, it is hoped, allow for a more detailed and extensive examination of the donor-recipient relationship than a comparative approach might permit. As noted, the most significant problem with the current literature is that it does not look at the questions posed in this introduction in enough detail or with sufficient analytical depth thereby failing to go beyond the donor narrative. Attempting to consider two or more countries' relationships with donors would have prevented as full an analysis as otherwise possible. In addition, by concentrating on Uganda alone it was feasible to make several fieldwork trips to the country and speak to a wide variety of actors in Europe, the US and Uganda. This may not have been as feasible if other countries' foreign relations were also being examined. Comparisons with other African regimes will nevertheless be considered in chapter 7 in order to show the wider relevance of Uganda's experience and to draw broader conclusions about the nature of contemporary African-donor relations.

¹⁰⁴ Gettleman, *New York Times* (03/01/10)

Primary Source material

The most central sources used in researching this thesis these were semi-structured oral elite interviews conducted with current and former donor policy-makers. It was hoped that by speaking to those Western diplomats, donor officials, legislators and politicians who have been most involved in donor-Ugandan relations since 1986 it would be possible to better understand why they have come to view the regime in the way they have and what role Kampala has played in this process. Ultimately around 50 such individuals were interviewed, primarily in person on three fieldwork trips. Two of these trips were to Kampala, Uganda and took place between May-June 2009 and February-March 2010 while the third was to Washington DC and New York City, USA between October-November 2009. Between October 2008-July 2010 a number of current and former UK officials were also interviewed and, with one exception, these took place in London.

In order to capture as broad a perspective as possible it was necessary to approach current and former officials at every level of government, from every time period since 1986 and from every relevant policy-making body (including the White House, UK Foreign Office (FCO), UK Department for International Development (DFID), US Congress, State Department, US Agency for International Development (USAID) and UK Parliament) and the majority of those approached were happy to be interviewed. Many were not, however, prepared to speak ‘on the record’ or have their comments attributed to them by name. Considering the sensitive subject matter of this study and the fact that many interviewees are still serving in their national foreign policy-making structures this was to be expected. In order to make use of these donor interviews, therefore, it was necessary to anonymise just under half of those

referred to. Each anonymous interview was then assigned a number and is listed in the Appendix in this way together with information on when and where it took place. A small amount of general biographical information has been given for each anonymous interviewee in this appendix to give the reader some idea of their background and expertise *vis a vis* Uganda. ‘On the record’ interviewees are also listed alphabetically in the Appendix along with interviews which were undertaken but not, ultimately, used in the text. Every interviewee cited by name in the thesis gave permission, either at the time of the interview or in subsequent correspondence, for their comments to be attributed in this manner.

A second group of individuals interviewed were, of course, Ugandans themselves. It was hoped that by speaking to current and former Ugandan policy-makers (along with some opposition figures who have lobbied donors in the past) it would be possible to gain additional information about how Kampala has attempted to manage donor perceptions on the international stage. As anticipated, however, this was made very difficult by several factors. Firstly, few officials were willing to speak to me, even though research clearance was obtained. Likely suspicious of my intentions and motivations, most NRM and state personnel refused to be interviewed. Opposition figures and disaffected former members of the regime were more happy to meet with me but, perhaps understandably, were often highly partial in their depiction of the regime and its foreign policy.

Secondly, the majority of those who did agree to be interviewed were extremely reluctant to provide anything other than ‘official’ accounts of the government’s foreign policy processes and planning. As noted in chapter 2, Uganda is a highly-personalised and semi-authoritarian state and this, no doubt, prevented many of those officials interviewed from giving a more

open perspective in our meetings. As such, while a number of interviews took place (see Appendix), both in Kampala and the US, with Ugandan governmental and parliamentary officials, only a few of these supplied useful information. In order to circumvent these problems it would have been necessary to extend my trips to Uganda for much longer than planned enabling me to forge closer and more trusting relationships with some officials and gain better access to them. Unfortunately, for both practical and financial reasons, this was not possible.

Finally, it was essential to speak to those from academia, the media, think tank community, lobbying world and civil society as knowledgeable observers of Ugandan-donor relations but also as groups who have been actively ‘targeted’ by Kampala in its image management strategies. As explained in chapter 3, the regime has often made use of Western journalists, lobbyists and universities in promoting images of itself. Around 20 such individuals were therefore interviewed (see Appendix), almost all ‘on the record’, in London, Washington, New York and Kampala.

There were several advantages to speaking to these individuals. Firstly, most had encountered Uganda from several different perspectives (many lobbyists and NGO officials have previously worked in government; many academics are also contributors to think tanks) and could thus simultaneously provide insight from a number of angles. Secondly, while many have worked in government in the past, they now exist outside it in an environment which is less secretive. As such, some of these interviewees were able to speak more openly about issues than donors allowing for the making of more rigorous assessments of bias, under-emphasis and omission in the latter’s comments.

Official documents and statements released by Western governments on Uganda were also made use of. Assessments and reports on aid programmes and disbursements are regularly made and published by Western government departments, institutions and aid agencies either independently or, more often, jointly with other donors and these are often available for consultation on government websites. Furthermore, donors sometimes commission the writing of reports and assessments from academics and think tank personnel. In some cases these have related to Uganda and these sources, most of which are also available on government websites or (as with a 2004 World Bank-commissioned report on Uganda) have been leaked to the media, have also been consulted. In one case it was necessary to gain access to such a study (a 2005 DFID-commissioned report on political conditionality) through a UK Freedom of Information (FOI) request since it was not otherwise available and, it was clear that the report contained substantial analysis of the DFID-Ugandan relationship based on interviews with a number of DFID personnel. The report, which would have been reviewed by senior DFID officials, contains a number of important pieces of information on the UK-Ugandan relationship not available elsewhere (including a review of instances where aid has not been cut despite such an action being arguably merited) as well as an exploration of how unsatisfactory political analysis at DFID has affected UK democracy promotion policy in Africa. Limited use was also made of documents published by the Ugandan government.

Official statements of donor and Ugandan policy-makers have also been consulted. Usually available in the form of a press release and, since the late 1990s, published on government websites (including that of State House, Uganda) these documents usually put across a donor

government's official view of Kampala or an official account of a meeting or discussion which took place between donor officials and Ugandan policy-makers. This kind of official discourse is useful not only for what it says (eg. sentiments expressed, policies announced, stances taken) but also for what it does not say (eg. which issues both parties decide not to comment on in public). In some cases it was possible to read transcripts of joint US-Ugandan press conferences via the White House or State Department websites, in others it was even feasible to watch recorded footage of such events.

Gaining access to private documentary sources on donor-Ugandan relations was, of course, far more problematic since governments do not generally release such information. A number of FOI requests were made, however, to the FCO, DFID and Ministry of Defence asking for access to such material, mainly in relation to post-2004 UK-Ugandan relations. While the latter two departments proved to be extremely reluctant to release anything, the FCO, on a number of occasions, provided a considerable number of documents (primarily cables from the High Commission in Kampala and internal FCO memos) and these have been particularly important in two major ways. Firstly, they reveal the extent of internal disagreement within the UK government and between the UK and other donors on how to deal with the 2005-2006 Ugandan crisis (see chapters 2 and 6); no documents in the public domain currently exist which provide any information on this subject. Secondly, they support and, in some cases, undermine the comments and assertions of interviewees on this issue and therefore are also useful for purposes of triangulation. FOI documents referred to in this thesis are contained in section 3 of the bibliography.

It was also possible to review footage of several private meetings held between Ugandan policy-makers and donor officials from 1995-1996. These were included in a two-part 1997 UK Channel 4-commissioned film entitled *The Bank, the President and the Pearl of Africa*. Though all those appearing in the footage were aware that their comments would be broadcast, and therefore may have acted in a more guarded manner than usual, the film, directed by Peter Chappell, nevertheless provides a unique and exciting opportunity to view the donor-Ugandan relationship ‘behind the scenes’ and compare the tone of private negotiations with official statements.

As will be discussed in chapter 3, understanding how Kampala has managed donor perceptions also requires a thorough examination of how it has engaged with, and been treated by, the international media. These sources can also provide valuable information on general donor-Ugandan relations and thus a wide range of Western (mainly UK and US) newspapers and magazines (eg. *Time* or *The Economist*) have been consulted and used throughout the research for this thesis. It has also been possible to review online media sources (eg. the *BBC*) as well as transcripts and footage of Western media interviews with Museveni since the late 1990s.

Ugandan media sources have also been used in this study. Though increasingly stifled by government heavy-handedness, the Ugandan media has long had a reputation for being vibrant, largely free and, most importantly, reliable. Several publications, notably the *Daily Monitor* (one of two national newspapers), *Independent* and *Weekly Observer* (read mainly in Kampala), have become well-known for their professionalism and independence. Prior to the mid-2000s this was also true, to a lesser degree, of the government-owned national *New*

Vision though its editorial independence has been greatly eroded since 2006¹⁰⁵; more recent versions of this publication have therefore been reviewed with considerable caution. During the 2000s these newspapers have maintained websites and it has, therefore, been possible to consult many articles from this period via the internet. Paper archives also exist from the early 1990s at the Centre for Basic Research, Kampala and this facility was made use of on two fieldwork trips to the country. Articles consulted are referenced, in abbreviated form, in footnotes which, in each case, state the document's author (if known), provenance and date of publication. Fuller details (including headline and, where relevant, web address) are provided in section 2 of the bibliography which lists articles according to author or, if unknown, the name of the newspaper or agency.

Uganda's engagement with Western think tanks, universities and NGOs provided a further source of information. Ugandan policy-makers have frequently spoken at events or discussions hosted by institutions such as the Woodrow Wilson Center, Council on Foreign Relations or Royal African Society and transcripts of these events (available via the websites of these bodies or media sources) have been consulted where feasible. It was also possible to attend two such events myself (at the Royal Commonwealth Society, London) and hear Ugandan officials and Musveni himself speak in person. Reports and analyses by these institutions have also been reviewed as sources of data on Ugandan-donor relations.

Finally, it was important to make use of sources associated with Western, mainly US, public and strategic relations firms (hereafter 'lobbyists') who have represented the Ugandan government in London and Washington. These sources were particularly important for

¹⁰⁵ BBC (12/10/06)

exploring and understanding how Kampala has attempted to communicate ‘images’ of itself to UK and, particularly, US donor officials. Indeed, many firms hired by Uganda (see chapter 3), as its government acknowledges, have been retained specifically to manage how the country is seen in Western capitals.¹⁰⁶ Sources related to their activities, therefore, were extremely useful not only as evidence for Kampala’s interest in this area but also because they directly reveal the ways in which the regime has hoped to be perceived by donors. Lobbyists work closely with their clients to identify the most effective strategies for obtaining their ultimate goal. Uganda’s lobbyists, therefore, have played a central role in managing and promoting those narratives on the regime which are most likely to secure its continued and increased Western support – the focus of this thesis.

Obtaining information on activities undertaken by these organisations, however, was not straightforward since, as private businesses, they are under little obligation to divulge much information at any official level. In the US, lobbying firms retained by foreign governments are required by law (the Foreign Agents Registration Act (FARA) 1938) to register their contracts and other supplemental documents with the Justice Department (DOJ) and Congress and all submitted documentation is available at www.fara.gov. Regrettably, however, not all lobbyists do this. Between 2004-2008, for example, DOJ officials estimated that at least 130 lobbyists for foreign agents (both firms and individuals) who potentially had an ‘obligation to register’ had not done so and this figure may well have been greater since the Department’s strategy for identifying such firms leaves considerable room for inadvertently overlooking

¹⁰⁶ Olupot and Karugaba, *New Vision* (10/04/09)

more secretive transgressors.¹⁰⁷ Over the course of these four years, 275 lobbying firms registered new contracts with the DOJ and thus, approximately, for every two firms that registered during this period at least one did not.¹⁰⁸ Furthermore, it is important to note that violators of FARA are rarely punished; indeed, since 1990 only one firm has been prosecuted for any FARA-related offence.¹⁰⁹ In addition, few registered firms provide much information on their activities under FARA beyond ‘limited information about whom they contact’.¹¹⁰ In the UK no such regulations exist at all, making it even more difficult to identify lobbyists and obtain information on their work.

Some of Uganda’s US lobbyists, such as Revell Communications and the Whitaker Group, have provided a considerable amount of information on their activities undertaken on Kampala’s behalf via documents submitted to the DOJ while others, such as Scribe Strategies, have provided as little as possible. Limited reporting on their work and the work of UK lobbyists exists in the media and on lobbyist websites and these sources were also used, with some caution. It was also possible to interview lobbyists retained by Uganda although few consented to being interviewed with the exception of the Whitaker Group’s Managing Director. Lynda Chalker, Chairman of Africa Matters Limited, was also interviewed but provided only cursory information on her firm’s work and was not happy for her comments to be attributed in any form.

¹⁰⁷ US Government Accountability Office (2008), p.11, the report notes that, in tracking down lobbyists who have not registered, the DOJ ‘reviews publications such as *Congressional Quarterly*; monitors the Lobbying Disclosure Website; and acts on tips provided by various sources’ (p.11)

¹⁰⁸ Number of new contracts calculated using data from semi-annual DOJ reports on FARA between 2004-2008 (see DOJ (2004a), p.I-2; (2004b), p.I-2; (2005a), p.I-2; (2005b), p.I-2; (2006a), p.I-2; (2006b), p.I-2; (2007a), p.I-2; (2007b), p.I-2 and (2008), p.I-2

¹⁰⁹ US Government Accountability Office (2010), p.17

¹¹⁰ Silverstein (2007)

Several FOI requests were also made to the FCO regarding lobbying activity on Uganda's behalf but only one document was released. No information was released on contacts between Africa Matters Limited and the FCO despite it being clear from interviews undertaken for this thesis that such contact has continued to be made at least until 2009. Owing to the restricted availability of source material on lobbyist activities, therefore, much evidence used in this thesis has been taken from documents submitted by the firms in question to the DOJ. These documents are generally included with many others in often lengthy PDF files (links to which are given in section 5 of the bibliography) and these are not paginated internally. Page numbers provided in footnotes for these sources, therefore, refer to the page number of the PDF document itself.

The subject matter of this thesis and varied nature of the sources therefore necessitates a broadly empirical, qualitative and multi-disciplinary methodological approach which combines methods of historical and social scientific analysis. The theoretical underpinning of the study, as discussed, relates to understanding the nature of agency in the asymmetrical context of African-donor relations and this concept will be explored further in chapter 1. It will also be necessary to assign a general definition to the concept of 'international assistance' which goes beyond simply measuring the amount of aid disbursed to a country by donors over time and this is provided in chapter 2.

Structure of the thesis

The thesis is composed of seven chapters. Chapter 1 will explore the theoretical aspects of securing agency in the international system. It will seek to explore the varieties of ways in which aid-dependent African regimes can carve out agency for themselves from even the

most powerless of positions. The greatest agency can be gained, it will be argued, by regimes who attempt to manage how they are perceived by donors and who seek to mould donor perceptions through actions and rhetoric. Chapter 2 will outline the history and politics of Uganda since 1986 and review the country's relationship with donors during this period. In doing so it will argue for the two main suppositions on which this study rests: 1) that Uganda's regime has continuously acted to thwart the development of democracy, perpetuate high-level corruption and conduct a belligerent regional policy and 2) that, in spite of this, donors have offered increasingly high levels of support to it.

Chapters 3, 4, 5 and 6 represent the main body of the thesis and will explore how the regime has sought to control Western perceptions of its value to them in order to secure their continued support through 'image management'. They will argue that Kampala has employed a number of image management strategies, including use of lobbyists, personalisation of foreign policy and engagement with the international media, to promote certain images of itself to donors and thereby secure greater agency. Chapter 3, having examined the Ugandan foreign policy-making process, will attempt to conceptualise 'image management' and analyse the main ways in which it can and has been used by the Ugandan government. Chapters 4 and 5 will then explore how Kampala has used image management in the domestic and foreign policy spheres respectively, drawing attention to policies undertaken to establish particular images and rhetorical/lobbying activity employed to promote such images to donors. Chapter 4 will interrogate Uganda's image as an 'economic success story' while chapter 5 will investigate the regime's reputation for being an 'ally in the War on Terror' and 'guarantor of regional stability'. In all three instances it will be argued that these narratives have been consciously managed, advanced and bolstered by the Ugandan government in an

attempt to manage Western perceptions. Chapter 6 will then look at inter- and intra-donor relations with regard to Uganda. It will argue that disagreements between donors and indeed within donor polities themselves have frequently resulted in Uganda escaping censure for its more controversial actions. It will also show how Kampala has exploited these divisions to its advantage through image management strategies.

Finally, Chapter 7 will take a comparative approach and attempt to draw broader conclusions about donor-African relations by reviewing the relationship between donors and the governments of Kenya, Ethiopia and Rwanda during the 1990s and 2000s. Having outlined what strategies these governments have employed to achieve agency in their relations with donors, their experiences will be compared and contrasted to Uganda's in order to establish to what extent other, aid-dependent African regimes have employed these tactics and to what effect. The chapter will argue that Rwanda and Ethiopia, like Uganda, have also used image management strategies to successfully achieve agency in the international system. Kenya, however, has expended limited energy upon influencing international perceptions and has consequently secured far less independence in its relations with donors.

Chapter 1

African Agency in the International System: Theoretical and Conceptual Issues

Africa in Political Science discourse

Understanding Uganda's relationship with its Western donors entails consideration of wider, more theoretical, questions. What is the place of Africa in the contemporary international system? How should scholars understand the nature of Western-African governmental interaction in such a seemingly asymmetric context as the international aid system? How should they conceptualise the degree of agency or 'wiggle room' available to African governments in their relations with donors? In what circumstances can aid-dependent African regimes overcome their global structural weaknesses and seize the initiative in dealing with powerful Western states?

Addressing these questions is vital to understanding the broader context of this thesis. Uganda's successful engagement with donors, despite its flawed democratic credentials, suggests that there are conditions where donors are willing to forego political conditionality and embrace regimes which they would otherwise condemn. As noted above, the conditions which lead to this situation-and sustain it-are not necessarily purely a donor affair; the African role in bringing about this supportive relationship is gravely under-explored. In order to more fully grasp the opportunities available to aid-dependent regimes such as Uganda it is therefore necessary to look at how scholars have come to understand the place of African

states in the international system and how, if at all, they have managed to secure agency in this context.

Disappointingly, political scientists from a variety of disciplinary backgrounds have either downplayed or ignored African agency in their discussions and debates. Two very different, but similarly influential, intellectual traditions have been particularly prominent in this regard: those of mainstream (primarily realist and neo-realist) International Relations (IR) together with scholars of 'dependency theory'. The latter have argued that Africa, and the Third World in general, has little or no room for manoeuvre in an international system controlled by Western powers. International Relations (IR) scholars, for different reasons, have also disregarded ideas of African agency, largely failing to incorporate the continent into their analyses of international power. In justifying this latter generalisation, a number of arguments are outlined below.

Firstly, few mainstream IR scholars refer to Africa in their work even when the subject matter would seemingly merit it. Walt, for example, fails to mention Africa once in a discussion focused on 'taming American power'.¹ This paper discusses global responses to US hegemony surveying options and opportunities available to leaders and governments of varying economic and military capacities to 'deal with US power.' He takes in examples from many regions and countries across the Middle East, Europe and Asia but not Africa. Likewise Krasner sidelines the continent in his book ostensibly focused on 'the Third World against Global Liberalism'.² In exploring how 'Third World states want power and try to get it by changing the rules of the game', Krasner mentions Mexico alone more times than all of his

¹ Walt (2005), pp.105-120

² Krasner (1985)

African examples put together. The book, in fact, appears to focus primarily on Central and Latin American states with the African parts of the Third World accorded surprisingly limited coverage. Furthermore, Burchill et al mention the continent only once in their edited volume on 'Theories of International Relations' and do this only transiently, grouping it together with 'East Asia and Latin America' in a brief aside.³

Other influential realist and neo-realist IR commentators have written-off the usefulness of studying Africa more openly. Morgenthau, for example, dismisses pre-1939 Africa as a 'politically empty space'.⁴ Waltz also argues for the marginalisation of the developing world in IR theory. In his prominent *Theory of International Politics* he makes clear that 'a general theory of international politics is necessarily based on the great powers', suggesting that:

It would be as ridiculous to construct a theory of international politics based on Malaysia and Costa Rica as it would be to construct an economic theory of oligopolistic competition based on the minor firms in a sector of an economy. The fates of all the states and of all the firms in a system are affected much more by the acts and the interactions of the major ones than of the minor ones. Concern with international politics as a system requires concentration on the states that make the most difference.⁵

While Waltz's basic argument here may be fairly convincing, the wider implications of his and Morgenthau's comments are clear: for those interested in understanding the international system and contributing to IR debates on the subject, the study of the Third World in general and Africa specifically has little, if anything, of value to offer the ambitious scholar.

IR's neglect of Africa is also demonstrated by the fact that several of the discipline's key conceptual and theoretical frameworks seemingly do not fit comfortably when applied to

³ Burchill et al (2005), p.56

⁴ Morgenthau (1973), p.369

⁵ Waltz (1979), p.72

Africa. The idea propounded by Waltz, for example, that there is a clear distinction between politics within states ('politics conducted in a condition of settled rules') and politics between states ('politics conducted in a condition of anarchy'), what many have labelled the 'hierarchy vs anarchy' concept, is difficult to sustain from an African perspective according to some scholars including Dunn, Shaw and Neuman.⁶ For while the 'great powers' may perceive the international system to be a somewhat unregulated space where states fend for themselves and where each 'is the equal of all the others', Neuman argues, African governments certainly do not. Dependent to a large degree on development aid and economic transfers from major powers and institutions, the international system appears extremely hierarchical and ordered from Africa's viewpoint.⁷ Furthermore, there remain a number of states on the African continent such as Somalia where domestic politics is characterised by a near absence of 'settled rules' making Waltz and others' distinction between 'hierarchy and anarchy' applicable to Africa only if the model is reversed so 'hierarchy' applies to relations between states and 'anarchy' to relations within states. While scholars such as Alexander Wendt have sought to modify the starkness of this distinction by suggesting the existence of 'informal authority structures' in the international system they nevertheless do not go far enough to make this fundamental assumption of many IR commentators particularly meaningful from an African perspective.⁸

The concept of 'the state' as used in much IR literature is also argued to be problematic when applied to Africa. As noted by Jackson and Rosberg, the classical Weberian idea of statehood as used by many political scientists (determined, they suggest, by 'whether or not its national

⁶ Waltz (1979), pp.61-63; Neuman (1998), p.3; Dunn and Shaw (2001), pp.1-11

⁷ Neuman, p.3

⁸ Wendt (1993), p.335

government can lay claim to a monopoly of force in the territory under its jurisdiction') would disqualify a number of African states from holding this position.⁹ They nevertheless point to the 'juridical statehood' accorded these states by other governments in the international system who, following a number of international conventions and legal practices, recognise particular entities as 'states' despite the fact that the supposed governments of these states do not enjoy full control of their territory.¹⁰ They conclude, therefore, by differentiating between *de facto* states such as those in the West which possess 'positive sovereignty' and conform to Weber's model and the *de jure* states present to varying degrees in much of Africa which possess only 'negative sovereignty' and do not conform.

Barry Buzan also attempts to reconcile IR's understanding of the state with Africa's experience by categorising some non-Western states as part of a 'different class of state' which possess little 'institutional and ideological character' and are 'pre-occupied with domestic threats to [their] existence'.¹¹ There appears to be limited discussion in IR however, as Neuman observes, as to how such a 'different class of state' should be conceptualised and how, and with what implications, its relationship with the international system differs from that of more traditional Western states.¹²

Finally, the small number of scholars, mainly from an Africanist background, who have attempted to apply IR theory to Africa have equally observed that the continent has been neglected in IR literature. Dunn and Shaw note, for example, that Africa is 'absent' from most IR scholarship, dismissed by realists for its irrelevance to 'great power' politics,

⁹ Jackson and Rosberg (1982), pp.2-3

¹⁰ Jackson and Rosberg, pp.12-16

¹¹ Buzan (1991), pp.65-69

¹² Neuman (1998), p.7

‘ignored’ by neo-liberals for its lack of power and mentioned only by structuralists to ‘illustrate exploitation and the hierarchical international system’; for Dunn and Shaw, Africa exists in IR only as an entity that is ‘acted upon’ by others.¹³ Likewise, Neuman asserts that the ‘role of the Third World in international politics remains relatively unexplored in the [IR] literature...[which is]...founded almost exclusively on what happened in the West... few [scholars] look to the Third World to seek evidence for their arguments’.¹⁴

Similarly Croft briefly charts the development of IR as a discipline and its continuous failure to include Africa, commenting that ‘the many paradigms [of IR] have collectively and uniquely excluded Africa’. Other regions have all ‘played central roles’ in certain sections of IR debate according to Croft but Africa, consequently, remains ‘uniquely disadvantaged in IR scholarship.’¹⁵ Similar observations have been made by Engel and Olsen who bemoan the ‘lack of theoretical interest in Africa and its place in global politics’ among IR scholars and Bayart, who has characterised Africa’s position in IR as little more than an odd, isolated ‘limbo’.¹⁶

IR’s neglect of Africa is perhaps not surprising given the discipline’s central focus on the relative power of states in the international system. However sympathetic one is to including Africa in IR grand theories it is inescapable that the continent rarely ‘makes the weather’ on a global scale. By traditional measures of international power (what Nye has termed ‘hard power’ and which includes a state’s ‘possession of certain resources...territory, natural

¹³ Dunn and Shaw (2001), pp.2-4

¹⁴ Neuman (1998), pp.1-3

¹⁵ Croft (1997), p.609

¹⁶ Bayart (2000), p.217; Engel and Olsen (2005), p.1

resources, economic size, military forces and political stability’¹⁷) African states rank firmly among the least powerful. Those that possess natural resources rarely have the infrastructural capacity to extract these without external assistance, few have avoided political instability or war in the last two decades, none have the military capacity to rival any Western force and only South Africa’s economy is even remotely competitive on a world scale. The continent is so economically insignificant, in fact, that its entire combined GDP in 2008 was smaller than that of the UK alone.¹⁸ Africa is also ‘uniquely disadvantaged’, to use Croft’s phrase, in the international power balance through its dependence on development aid flows from-mainly Western-donors. While a number of non-African states are also in this position such as Nepal, Sri Lanka and Afghanistan as a result of recent conflict and civil war, only Africa contains dozens of regimes which exist in a state of permanent and chronic aid dependence to the extent that some states would collapse without constant foreign assistance.¹⁹ Western governments are therefore theoretically in a much stronger position *vis a vis* influencing African regimes than they are with any other group of states in the international system. For while Western powers can impose economic sanctions and trade embargoes, usually with considerable difficulty²⁰, on recalcitrant regimes which they oppose, in the case of Africa they can instantly and easily suspend or divert aid flows emanating directly from their national treasuries.²¹ With African states’ power bounded by such seemingly strict structural international constraints it is therefore, perhaps, to be expected that mainstream IR theorists have not focused on it in expounding ‘theories of international politics’.

¹⁷ Nye (1990), p.154

¹⁸ World Bank website (http://siteresources.worldbank.org/DATASTATISTICS/Resources/GDP_PPP.pdf; accessed 01/12/10)

¹⁹ Since the mid-1990s the Ugandan government, for example, has relied on aid to fund over half of its budget (see chapter 2)

²⁰ For more on this see Martin (1992)

²¹ See Crawford (2000), p.187, pp.201-206

The most unfortunate result of this scholarly neglect, however, has been to imply, by rarely mentioning it, that Africa lacks *any* form of meaningful power or agency in the international system. Interestingly, such a view has also been advanced by scholars of dependency theory. Indebted to an intellectual tradition with very few links to mainstream IR, dependency theorists have nevertheless also come to downplay the degree of agency available to African states and it is important to note, therefore, that IR has not been alone in this regard.

Influenced by Marxist and neo-Marxist analyses of imperialism, dependency theorists have argued that the Third World's entry into the global capitalist system, as managed by dominant Western powers, has been premised on a wholly unequal structure of economic exchange. Endowed with 'technological, commercial, capital and socio-political predominance' over colonies and developing countries, Western states, they contend, 'exploit and extract' raw materials ('products') from these territories, insisting upon highly advantageous terms of trade, in order to reduce the 'capital' which would otherwise be used to acquire them domestically in the West.²²

Consequently, Western capital has been used purely to develop the portions of Third World economies which are of use to the dominant powers with the remainder being left entirely underdeveloped. This has fostered a structural and near total 'dependence' of these economies on those in the West and the formalisation of an 'international division of labour which allows industrial development to take place in some countries while restricting it in others'.²³ For many dependency theorists, this division of labour has entailed the creation of,

²² Dos Santos (1973, 1978), p.76; Amin (1972), p.516

²³ Dos Santos (1973, 1978), pp.76-77

as Furtado puts it, 'a dualistic economy' where two distinct types of states exist: one being the dependent, 'peripheral' Third World state which is used as a market for raw materials by the other, 'metropolitan' Western state.²⁴

Though much of dependency theory has focused on Latin America, its ideas have also frequently been applied to Africa. Ake, for example, has argued that Nigeria has become increasingly dependent on the West ('both technologically and financially') as a result of its oil boom. Western investment in this sector of its economy, he suggests, has not been forthcoming in others meaning that the country has 'grown progressively incapable of feeding herself' and become 'dependent on food imports from the West'.²⁵ Likewise, Leys, in a study of capitalism in Kenya, has emphasised how dependent on foreign capital the 'non-agricultural sectors' of the nation's economy were in the decade after independence.²⁶ Similar observations have been made by Amin in relation to Cote d'Ivoire.²⁷

One of the major problems with this presentation of Africa's place in the international system, however, has been its failure to acknowledge that economic dependence does not preclude agency. Dependency theorists have frequently depicted Third World states as passive, marginalised entities whose room for manoeuvre is virtually non-existent owing to the preponderance of fixed, structural conditions outside of their control. Even former defenders of the approach, however, have shown that this deterministic position is untenable. Cardoso and Faletto, for example, have argued that Latin American states adopted a number of successful strategies in the 1960s-1970s to decrease their dependence on the US and

²⁴ Furtado (1964), p.129; Frank (1967, 1969), pp.3-12

²⁵ Ake (1981), p.136

²⁶ Leys (1975, 1977), pp.118-148

²⁷ Amin (1971)

conclude that the ‘historical situation of economic transformations must be considered as well as the structural limitations’.²⁸ In other words, one cannot ignore the role of actors regardless of how restrictive the structures which constrain their actions are.

Uganda, for example, has, in spite of its dependence on donor aid, seemingly outmanoeuvred its Western patrons in the last few decades in acting contrary to their stated wishes in domestic or foreign policy but nevertheless retaining their financial and diplomatic support. In order to better understand how African regimes can secure agency in this way, therefore, it is necessary to explore this concept and examples of it in more detail. Political science debates are, for this purpose, far more useful and this chapter will now consider the work of two groups of scholars in particular: those concerned with the ‘structure-agency problem’ and those, mainly political economists and Africanists, who take a rational choice/game theory approach to the question of donor-recipient relations.

Defining ‘agency’

Before reviewing this literature, however, it is important to attempt to define what is meant here by ‘agency’ and to settle upon a definition which both draws on the existing scholarly literature and can be meaningfully applied to the empirical work of this thesis. Such a task is complicated by two issues. Firstly that ‘agency’ as used in some disciplines (notably philosophy) refers to something that belongs only to an individual, rather than a corporate entity such as a state or government.²⁹ In IR, however, the construction of the ‘state as agent’ or ‘state as actor’, as Wendt phrases it, is a basic assumption of the discipline, an assumption

²⁸ Cardoso and Faletto (1979), p.172, pp.192-197

²⁹ Wight (2006)

which, according to Wight, ‘its identity might be said to depend’ considering its widespread use of the state as the basic unit of theoretical analysis.³⁰ For scholars such as Wendt the state is presented basically as an individual which can therefore possess agency; ‘states’, he asserts, ‘are people too’.³¹ Some scholars contest this usage. Wight, for example, argues that it reduces the individual actors within a government or state, who make decisions on the state’s behalf, to ‘ciphers for structural forces’.³² In the same vein, Jessop makes clear that ‘it is not the state which acts: it is always specific sets of politicians and state officials located in specific parts of the state system’.³³ For these commentators, the state can only be said to possess agency vicariously ‘through the agency of individuals’.³⁴

They are nevertheless right to concede that ‘ultimately, reference to collectives as agents at the level of everyday discourse may be unavoidable as a result of the limits of language’.³⁵ For while it is desirable to disaggregate the different actors within any corporate entity it is at the very least cumbersome to do so when discussing a state’s foreign policy in a broad sense. As Hill points out, most states do generally take a united position on any given subject in the foreign policy arena (having internally debated what this position should be) so that it makes sense to discuss ‘Uganda’s actions’ rather than ‘the Ugandan president’s actions’, they behave as individual actors even if they are composed of multiple ones.³⁶ Indeed, to talk of a state’s actions is often shorthand for talking about a particular government’s actions. The

³⁰ Wight (2006), p.177

³¹ Wendt (1993), p.397

³² Wight (2006), p.183

³³ Jessop (2006), p.367

³⁴ Wight (2006), p.189

³⁵ Wight (2006), p.215

³⁶ Hill (2003), p.51

demands of such limits of language make discussing the agency of a state not only possible but necessary and this will be the position taken in this study.

Secondly, the meaning of ‘agency’ is remarkably vague even within IR itself and the concept overlaps with a number of other ideas including ‘power’, ‘control’ and, within aid literature, that of ‘ownership’. ‘Rarely is it clear’, notes Wright, ‘what agency is, what it means to exercise agency, or who and what might do so’.³⁷ As such, reaching a solid definition of the concept potentially necessitates the thorough interrogation of some of the central concepts of political science, all of which have a vast amount of literature devoted to them. A brief summary of the main definitions proposed by IR scholars will therefore be advanced below with the proviso that far more work needs to be done by scholars to tease out the nuances of this concept.

For most IR scholars, for a state to exercise ‘agency’ it must be capable of two things. First, and most basically, agency entails the ‘faculty or state of acting’.³⁸ In order to do this a state must have what Hill describes as ‘freedom of choice’, in other words the structural context it finds itself in (be it political, economic, military or normative) must not constrain its actions to the extent that it cannot act independently at all.³⁹ The second element of agency involves ‘exerting power’, what Hill calls ‘capacity for impact’.⁴⁰ This is perhaps self-evident in that in order to show that a state has acted one must be able to see that its actions have had an effect. Thus, for Hay, agency and power (and, indeed, causality) are inseparable: ‘to attribute

³⁷ Wight (2006), p.178

³⁸ Buzan, Jones and Little (1993), p.103

³⁹ Hill (2003), p.26

⁴⁰ Buzan, Jones and Little (1993), p.103; Hill (2003), p.26

agency', he argues, 'is to attribute power'.⁴¹ Likewise, Bhaskar describes an agent as 'anything which is capable of bringing about a change in something'.⁴² Wight summarises the IR position by saying that agency is generally 'theorised as the exercise of power'.⁴³

This leads us to consider what 'exercising power' could mean, particularly in the African context where, as noted, room for manoeuvre at an international level is especially constrained. Nye notes that the dictionary definition of power is 'the ability to...control others, to get others to do what they otherwise would not do' and this is also the definition proposed by Dahl who lists six methods ranging from persuasion to physical force where an individual (or state) might feasibly get another to 'do something they would otherwise not do'.⁴⁴ Power in this context relies to a considerable degree on the resources of the parties attempting to exercise it: ultimately, for one state to force another to do something physically it must possess the economic and military strength to do so – a form of power which Strange terms 'relational power'.⁴⁵

For most African states, exercising this kind of power (and therefore exercising agency) is generally not possible. In the case of Uganda, aware that receiving vital donor aid has often been contingent upon maintaining a democratic and open polity, the Museveni regime's main concern has been to ensure that donors do not explicitly attach political conditions to their aid and do not withdraw it for political or human rights reasons where they otherwise would do (and have done elsewhere in the past). In other words, the Museveni regime, like many other

⁴¹ Hay (1995), p.191

⁴² Bhaskar (1975), p.109

⁴³ Wight, p.206

⁴⁴ Dahl (1957), pp.202-203; Nye (1990), p.154

⁴⁵ Strange (1996), pp.19-26

African governments, is not especially concerned with getting donors to do things they would otherwise not do but rather to *not* do things they otherwise would do.

Lukes suggests that power can indeed be exercised in this way and can entail acting to prevent 'politicians, officials and others from raising issues or proposals' even arguing that this can be achieved 'by influencing his [another individual or state's] very wants. Indeed it is the supreme exercise of power to get another...to have the desires you want them to have...'.⁴⁶ Echoes of such an analysis can also be found in Nye's exposition of 'soft power', a phenomenon which he sees as being based not on military or economic resources but on communication, culture and ideology. For Nye such power is 'less transferable, less coercive and less tangible' than traditional 'hard power' but increasingly relevant in an inter-dependent world.⁴⁷ Though Nye clearly sees 'soft power' as something potentially exercised by major Western economies such as the US and Japan it is, along with Lukes' analysis, nevertheless a useful idea for those interested in African agency. For while few African states can hope to exercise the kind of 'hard power' described by Dahl and others, many can potentially secure agency through exercising the less quantifiable power of Lukes and Nye.

In moving towards a definition of agency relevant for this study, therefore, one should not expect to see the exercise of power at an international level by a state such as Uganda as evident from it getting donors to do something they would not otherwise do but instead from preventing them, through largely intangible and unquantifiable means, from doing something they ordinarily would. Thus for Uganda to exercise agency it would need to undertake various actions which would at the very least discourage donors from reducing aid on the

⁴⁶ Lukes (1974), pp.23-37

⁴⁷ Nye (1990), p.154

basis of other actions of the regime which they disagree with (democratic backsliding, corruption, regional military belligerence) or even encourage them to increase their support to it despite its continuing transgressions. By linking regime actions with the lack of donor political conditionality in Uganda, therefore, it will be possible to say that the Ugandan, or any other African, regime possesses agency.

To do so, consideration must be given to the final element of agency outlined by IR scholars, that of intention. To exercise agency, a state must not only ‘act’ and ‘exert power’ but also *intend* to act in that manner to exert power. These actions and their effects should be an intention of the state in question rather than a chance by-product or random event. Wight makes clear that Buzan’s ‘state of acting or exerting power’ can be observed even in nature – ‘an oxidising agent’, for example, acts and exerts power but should clearly not be seen as exercising agency in the sense that IR scholars use the term.⁴⁸ It is the fact that such action stems from ‘meaning and intentionality’, Wight adds, that makes it significant. As such, it must be possible to tie Ugandan actions or their consequences to Ugandan intentions in order to speak properly of Ugandan agency. Agency for this thesis, therefore, can be defined as ‘the intended exercising of power’ by a state with the qualification that ‘exercising power’ for aid-dependent African states is likely to be particularly constrained. It will therefore be conducted more through acting to prevent donor conditionality (getting others to not do what they otherwise would do) than through actively attempting to coerce donors into adopting a particular policy (getting others to do what they otherwise would not do).

⁴⁸ Wight (2006), p.206

Agent and Structure in IR

Implicit in any discussion of agency is the relationship between agency and structure and, indeed, this is one of the central debates in IR. As noted, the agency of African states in particular is constrained by a number of established international structures which limit its room for manoeuvre, especially the international aid system. IR scholars have disputed the degree to which international ‘structures’ – which can be political, economic, normative or even conceptual – limit the capacity for states’ agency for a number of decades and engaging with this literature will inform the wider questions of this study.

As Hay notes, in the earlier phases of the structure-agency debate a number of scholars took opposing views on whether state actions could be explained by looking to international structures or the agency of actors, with one group (‘structuralists’) privileging the former and another group (‘intentionalists’) the latter.⁴⁹ While both viewpoints have been influential they have also been heavily criticised; Hay notes that structuralists have been attacked for ignoring the role of human beings in the international system while intentionalists have been condemned for presenting human or state agency as wholly unconstrained by any contextual or structural factors.⁵⁰ By and large such oppositional approaches to the question have now been superseded by scholarly attempts to reconcile the two ideas.⁵¹

Krasner, for example, while taking a primarily structuralist position in his analysis of North-South relations nevertheless concludes that while economic structures and power asymmetry dramatically limit Third World states’ room for agency they are not entirely constrained by

⁴⁹ Hay (1995), pp.193-197

⁵⁰ Hay (1995), pp.195-196

⁵¹ See Hay (1995), pp.193-198 for a more in-depth review of the main ideas propounded by structuralists and intentionalists and a discussion of the main contributors

such structures. In his exposition of ‘metapower’ he demonstrates how Third World states (primarily Latin American) have been able to challenge the dominant liberal international order upheld by the major Western powers (characterised by limited economic tariffs and market-oriented modes of property and wealth allocation) through supporting ‘regimes’ (structures) more sympathetic to their needs (needs which are primarily, according to Krasner, bound up in direct government allocation of resources and limiting the property rights of non-state actors).⁵² He sees the call of many developing states for a ‘New International Economic Order’ (NIEO) aimed at improving the terms of their trade through the UN Conference on Trade and Development as a key example of this and the UN’s ‘principle of sovereign equality’ of states which includes equal voting rights and equal access to UN agencies as a key structural regime which Third World states can use to their advantage.⁵³ The UN, he argues, provides Third World states with a forum to present their demands on an equal footing to the major powers along with a platform to organise and group around a single, coherent ideological argument (the NIEO), it is a structure, in other words, which can be used to undermine other Western-dominated structures. In calling for a ‘New Order’ and using the UN to achieve this, developing states have attempted to employ ‘meta-power’, defined by Krasner as the power ‘to change institutions [structures] themselves’ as opposed to merely maximising power within existing structures.⁵⁴ This analysis suggests that international structures are not wholly inflexible and that agency can be exercised by the weak not only in challenging existing structures head-on but also in subverting them or working through other, rival, structures.

⁵² Krasner (1985), pp.3-6

⁵³ Krasner (1985), p.8

⁵⁴ Krasner (1985), p.14

The inter-relatedness of structure and agency has also been an idea developed by several other commentators. Giddens, for example, in his exposition of ‘structuration’ argues that the two are mutually-dependent since ‘structures are constituted by human agency and yet at the same time are the very medium of this constitution’; human agency creates structures but is simultaneously constrained by them.⁵⁵ Likewise, Carlsnaes stresses how neither agency nor structure alone can be accounted for without ‘invoking the other’.⁵⁶ Bhaskar takes a similar position, positing that ‘society [or structure] is both the ever-present condition of and continually reproduced outcome of human agency’.⁵⁷ Such arguments make clear that structures are not ‘fixed’ and the extent to which they constrain a state’s agency is changeable. The structures of the international system, as Hill argues, are not ‘highly determined’ since they are constantly influenced by agents. Within such an unpredictable structural environment, space for action will often open up unexpectedly allowing a state previously constrained by a structure to exercise agency, potentially through a different or changed structure.⁵⁸ At the same time, however, the range of options for agency available to states at any one time will nevertheless be partly-determined by the constraints of existing structures. As Hay emphasises, structures are both ‘constraining and enabling’ for actors.⁵⁹

With this in mind, how should one understand the agency of a state such as Uganda? If structures and agency are mutually-constituted is it even possible to speak of a state’s agency as a separate entity? Cerny, like Hill, concludes that owing to the ever-changing nature of structure and agency in the international system, where structures simultaneously harden and

⁵⁵ Giddens (1976), p.121

⁵⁶ Carlsnaes (1992), p.246

⁵⁷ Bhaskar (1979), p.79

⁵⁸ Hill (2003), p.26

⁵⁹ Hay (1995), p.205

fracture thereby both empowering and constraining the agency of different states, it is necessary to look at the issue in its particular historical context.⁶⁰ In doing so it is possible to assess the state and nature of international structures existing at that time and thereby determine the room for agency available for states.

He nevertheless suggests a general model for theorising the relationship between structure and agency in any given situation. He does this by proposing two structural contexts – ‘tight’, where structural conditions severely limit room for agency, and ‘loose’ where more room for manoeuvre is available – and two types of actors – ‘structure-bound’, where actors have limited intent to change their relationship with the system, and ‘transformational’, where a greater desire to alter the overall relationship exists in the actor. This in turn produces four types of scenario: 1) tight structure-structure-bound actor, 2) loose structure-structure-bound actor, 3) tight structure-transformational actor and 4) loose structure-transformational actor.⁶¹

In the African context it is, as discussed, not possible to speak of a ‘loose’ structural context owing to widespread aid dependence. The extent to which an African state can exercise agency according to Cerny, therefore, is determined by the inclinations of the states themselves. As in the earlier analysis of agency, intentions of actors are key in the securing of agency, regardless of how constrained the context is. For actors uninterested in securing agency (type 1) interaction with structures is likely to result in little more than ‘passive adjustment’ to external changes whereas actors intent on effecting change (type 3) can potentially secure ‘unpredictable conjunctural upheavals’ in their relationship with the

⁶⁰ Cerny (2000), pp.436-439

⁶¹ Cerny (2000), p.438

international system thereby augmenting their power.⁶² For Cerny, then, the agency available to a state is context-specific but, ultimately, reliant on whether it *chooses* to challenge or subvert the structures which constrain its actions. Understanding how an aid-dependent state can feasibly challenge these international structures, be they the policies of individual donors, the convention of political conditionality or the aid system itself, requires consideration of a different body of scholarship – that found primarily in international political economy and Africanist literature.

International Political Economy and Africanist approaches to agency

A number of political economists, particularly those interested in aid relations, have undertaken work such as this in an attempt to understand the reasons for the failure of 1980s multilateral (World Bank and IMF) policy conditionality in Africa. Several have constructed game theoretical models aimed at highlighting why IFI conditionality has rarely been implemented despite the plethora of conditionalities in donor-African aid agreements, many of which have been broken by the African regimes in question but not punished by donors. This literature has been recently critiqued by Whitfield in her edited volume on aid ownership (which will be discussed below) and this author broadly agrees with her criticisms, namely that while such models have been useful in many respects they nevertheless, as their authors freely admit, have not been able to adequately account for influencing factors outside the aid relationship such as geostrategy.⁶³ These factors appear to be of vital importance to understanding the issue of African agency and explaining why, in cases such as Uganda's,

⁶² *ibid*

⁶³ Whitfield and Fraser (2009), pp.27-44

donors have not employed political conditionality. It is nevertheless instructive to review the more prominent and influential contributors to this literature.

Mosley et al attempt to understand the failure of 1980s World Bank conditionality through modelling the donor-recipient relationship as a 'strategic game'.⁶⁴ The two players, they suggest, are likely to have differing interests to some extent since while the donor hopes to promote particular economic policies in the recipient state, the recipient, they posit, is likely to oppose any donor demands which it does not support. Within such a relationship policy conditionality represents a bargaining chip for donors to attempt to impose their will and the challenge for recipients is to avoid punishment for non-implementation of certain conditionalities. Using this 'bargaining' model, the authors set out a number of hypotheses which they then test on several, mainly African, case studies. The main hypothesis (which they term 'economistic') being the assumption that the more a recipient needs the donor (as a provider of financial support) the less leverage they possess and thus the less able they will be to resist full implementation of donor conditionalities. Though they do not engage with IR theory, such a hypothesis draws on ideas of 'relational power' discussed above – that a state's room for agency in the international system is determined by its own possession of certain resources.

Though they discover a number of cases where domestic economic crisis and dependence on Bank aid weaken a recipient's bargaining position and force it to comply more readily with Bank conditionalities, they nevertheless conclude that the economistic hypothesis is not borne out by the evidence thereby supporting Cerny's assertion that 'wriggle room' is always

⁶⁴ Mosley, Harrigan and Toye (1991)

available to states regardless of the structural constraints.. A number of states highly-dependent on the Bank including Malawi and the Philippines, they reveal, did not comply with many conditionalities (a practice the authors term ‘slippage’) but escaped punishment nonetheless, even signing further loan agreements in time.⁶⁵ Such a finding is directly relevant for this study since Uganda is also highly-dependent on donor aid and has also largely escaped punishment for ignoring what might be considered at least informal donor conditionalities in the political and military spheres. Mosley et al make clear that explaining the Bank’s reluctance to apply conditionality in these instances requires analysis of two issues.

Firstly, the position of the Bank itself which, as a bank, may be reluctant to reduce lending in some cases both because of the damage this might do to relations with ‘clients’ who may be at least partially implementing conditions and re-paying loans (‘defensive lending’) but also because internal pressure exists within the institution itself to lend as much as possible (‘disbursing dilemma’ – see chapter 6). Secondly, the position of the recipients is shown to be important. The authors note that some regimes (such as Kenya’s Moi administration) were more aware of the Bank’s reluctance to enforce conditionalities than others and were more willing to risk slippage, despite their reliance on the Bank’s support, in the knowledge that it might go unpunished. Furthermore, some regimes (such as the Philippines under Marcos) made use of their geostrategic importance to the US to gain leverage in their relations with the Bank.⁶⁶ The work of Mosley et al is therefore very useful in highlighting the importance of factors outside the aid relationship for understanding why some states achieve more

⁶⁵ Mosley, Harrigan and Toye (1991), Volume 1, pp.168-9

⁶⁶ Mosley, Harrigan and Toye (1991), Volume 1, p.171

agency in their relations with donors. Unfortunately, as the authors acknowledge and as Whitfield has also observed, interrogating and accounting for these issues within the confines of the theoretical model proposed is not possible and requires a broader approach.⁶⁷

The same is true to a certain extent of the work of Killick in this area. Killick also attempts to explain IFI failure to implement policy conditionality using theoretical modelling, adopting a principal-agent framework.⁶⁸ This framework, adapted from models of employer-employee relations in economics, looks at how an agreement or ‘contract’ can be drawn up between a principal (donor) and an agent (recipient) ‘when the maximisation of more than one party’s utility requires some form of co-operative action and when the objective functions of the parties differ’, in other words a contract which mixes rewards (financial support) and penalties (imposing conditionality) to encourage the agent to carry out the demands (policy reform) of the principal.⁶⁹ As with Mosley et al’s model, Killick’s assumes that recipients will be reluctant to implement reforms which they do not wish to implement and thus whether or not they do this is dependent on their assessment of whether the rewards for implementation outweigh the costs incurred for non-implementation.⁷⁰ A key aspect of this model is the issue of ‘information asymmetry’, an idea developed elsewhere by Hawkins et al in their study of delegation by international organisations.⁷¹ An agent or aid recipient, Killick argues, will always have better information than a principal or donor regarding the extent to which it has implemented policy conditionalities. Consequently, regardless of how thoroughly a donor ‘monitors’ implementation there will always be room for a skilled recipient to not fully

⁶⁷ Whitfield and Fraser (2009), p.34

⁶⁸ Killick (1997) and (1998)

⁶⁹ Killick (1997), p.487

⁷⁰ Killick (1998), p.101

⁷¹ Hawkins et al (2006)

implement a set of reforms but escape punishment nonetheless since the donor has not been able to recognise fully that this has occurred.⁷² From these assumptions, Killick derives a number of hypotheses relating to what will lessen the likelihood of implementation including differing principal-agent objectives and principal failure to punish agent non-implementation, and tests them on 21 countries, nine of which are African.⁷³

Killick's work shows that the rewards and penalties system designed in the principal-agent relationship is not powerful enough to ensure recipient implementation of conditionalities when the latter is reluctant to do so. His main finding, however, like Mosley et al, is that the Bank's failure to punish slippage is the main reason for such non-implementation as this encourages recipients to ignore conditionalities in the knowledge that they will likely retain the Bank's support.⁷⁴ In explaining the Bank's reluctance to punish slippage he points to the same arguments made by Mosley et al. Firstly that 'internal pressures' within the Bank often compel it to lend even to non-compliers in order to protect previous investments. Secondly, that 'external factors', particularly the 'perceived strategic importance' of alliances of major Bank shareholders, especially the US, with certain recipients, encourage the institution to lend to states even when they do not implement conditionalities.⁷⁵ Killick's model, as he admits, does not allow for a more thorough interrogation of these two pressures which renders it, like the strategic game model proposed by Mosley et al, only useful up to a certain point to account for donor failure to implement conditionality in certain cases.⁷⁶

⁷² Killick (1998), p.149

⁷³ The 15 hypotheses tested are summarised in a Master Table in the appendix to Killick (1998)

⁷⁴ Killick (1998), p.140

⁷⁵ Killick (1998), pp.140-144; in some cases, such as with Argentina, the US applied severe pressure on the Bank to waive the usual criteria [for being granted a loan] and lend despite Argentina's poor implementation record

⁷⁶ Killick (1998), p.103

It should also be noted that both Mosley et al and Killick concentrate solely on economic conditionality as designed by the World Bank and IMF in the 1980s and early 1990s.⁷⁷ Political conditionality (the focus of this thesis) differs considerably from economic in that it is rarely manifested as a set of specific conditions laid out in a contract or agreement between a donor and recipient. More often, donor expectations of a recipient's political and human rights activities are only vaguely stated in formal documents and conditionality is invoked only in *reaction* to events (such as regime violence, rigged elections, unsanctioned invasion of a neighbour) rather than in response to a failure to implement a stated, donor-prescribed reform in this area. The 'long term development partnership arrangement' signed between the UK and Ugandan governments in November 2007, for example, notes only that the Ugandan regime commits to promoting 'a democratic state in line with international conventions on good governance under the UN and NEPAD'.⁷⁸ It is not possible, therefore, to look simply at specific aid agreements and conditions, as Mosley and Killick do, in order to understand donor reluctance to punish Uganda; a much broader view of the relationship and its overall tenor must be taken.

Both models are also problematic, as their devisers admit, in their reduction of donors and recipients to self-contained, single units. As will be discussed in chapter 6, African regimes receive aid from a considerable number of sources which often disagree on policy priorities or emphases, if not policies themselves. Indeed, individual donors themselves frequently speak with multiple voices whether it be from the mouthpiece of an aid agency, foreign ministry or presidential palace. The objectives of recipient regimes are also rarely singular

⁷⁷ Killick discusses political conditionality very briefly in a postscript (1998, pp.194-5)

⁷⁸ DFID (2007), Item 3.1

since different elites or parts of a government may see the non-implementation of some conditionalities as more necessary than others.

Some commentators have attempted to resolve this issue still within a modelling framework such as Dijkstra who produces what Whitfield and Fraser call an ‘augmented principal-agent framework’, which seeks to include the balances of power in the donor and recipient regimes, to improve on Killick’s model.⁷⁹ As with the previous models, however, Dijkstra’s is still not flexible enough to examine each factor and concept to a reasonable degree of specificity and I am inclined to agree with Whitfield and Fraser who criticise Dijkstra’s over-simplification of ‘domestic actors’.⁸⁰ Whitfield and Fraser argue that the methodological approaches taken by Mosley, Killick, Dijkstra and others, while useful to an extent, are unable to sufficiently capture the number of external and contextual variables existing in any donor-recipient relationship to satisfactorily be employed in a study such as this which seeks to understand specifically why certain donors in a particular historical context have decided not to apply political conditionality to Uganda and what role the Ugandan regime has had in engineering this scenario.⁸¹ This criticism is, it seems, quite fair. The models designed and employed by these scholars are innovative and suggest a number of important answers to the questions posed in this chapter. Nonetheless the answers proposed by the models themselves throw up important questions which they cannot adequately address. As such, while accepting the conclusions of Killick and Mosley et al and the relevance of their models to this study, their frameworks will not be used as organising principles in this work.

⁷⁹ Dijkstra (2004); Whitfield and Fraser (2009), p.35

⁸⁰ Whitfield and Fraser (2009), p.35

⁸¹ *ibid*, p.37

Whitfield et al argue that it is necessary to move beyond such methods to consider the political, economic and geostrategic context of aid relations in more depth. Aid negotiations⁸², they argue, ‘are not just strategic games based on the choices of engaged agents; the interests and preferences of the actors are shaped by the global economic, political and ideological contexts in which each actor and the negotiations themselves are embedded, and indeed by the vagaries of human consciousness’.⁸³ They therefore adopt a more qualitative, ‘thick’ approach to the question of donor-recipient relations, informed by a number of general assumptions (many of which have been outlined above) about the structural constraints in which African regimes operate. They tackle this by looking at African ‘ownership’ of aid which they define as the ‘degree of control recipient governments are able to secure over implemented policy outcomes’.⁸⁴ Their choice of the term ‘ownership’ as opposed to ‘control’ appears to have been primarily based on normative rather than substantial differences between these two ideas (as used by them)⁸⁵ though their conceptual and practical approach to aid relations still differs from that employed in this agency-focused thesis in two important ways.

Firstly, they are interested in analysing African control over a development policy agenda rather than the overall dynamics of donor-African foreign relations which include transfers of military and other non-developmental forms of financial support. Secondly, this remit is largely limited to understanding agency within the confines of specific transfers of aid money

⁸² They characterise the overall donor-recipient relationship in relation to aid as a ‘negotiation’ since, regardless of a recipient’s dependence on a donor it is still empowered to reject aid from it or at least to discuss the terms, manner and size of any transfer before accepting it (Whitfield and Fraser (2009), p.28)

⁸³ *ibid*

⁸⁴ Whitfield (2009a), p.4

⁸⁵ They state that they wish to remain ‘politically engaged in a major contemporary debate over aid policy and practice...trying to measure how much control African governments have over policy because we believe that they *should* have it, and aim to convince readers of our case. We thus use the term ownership in part because aid practitioners themselves sometimes deploy the argument that we make’. (Whitfield (2009a), p.5)

occurring at specific times in the manner of Killick and Mosley et al (see above).⁸⁶ Indeed, many of the case studies, including those on Rwanda and Mali, appear to concentrate on the implementation or non-implementation of aspects of Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers (PRSPs) – documents which set out donor expectations quite explicitly and primarily focus on spending allocations and priorities.⁸⁷ A wider understanding of donor-African agency is necessary in this thesis since ‘not institutionalising semi-authoritarianism’ or ‘not invading a neighbour’ are rarely the formal conditions donors attach to any aid transfer. Such expectations are much broader and, according to donor rhetoric, underpin, in part, the entire relationship with recipients.

Whitfield et al’s work is nevertheless very useful in that it seeks to explain how aid-dependent African governments can exercise agency within asymmetric relations with donors. While they note that structural conditions have been important in increasing the negotiating capital of certain states (eg. Botswana) and decreasing that of others (eg. Zambia), some states, such as Ethiopia and Rwanda, which should seemingly be heavily constrained by structural factors (both rely heavily on donor aid and suffered economically as a result of civil conflict in the 1990s) have nevertheless secured considerable agency in their relations with donors during aid negotiations.⁸⁸ Both regimes, Whitfield notes, have ‘obtained a large degree of control over [their] policy agenda’, thereby securing what could be considered significant agency within a highly-structured environment.⁸⁹ Indeed, they conclude, like Mosley et al, that the strength of an aid-dependent state’s negotiating capacity (or its degree

⁸⁶ Whitfield and Fraser (2009), p.39

⁸⁷ Hayman (2009), pp.166-7; Bergamaschi (2009), pp.226-229

⁸⁸ Whitfield (2009b), pp.329-333; pp.362-363

⁸⁹ Whitfield (2009b), pp.330-331

of agency) is ‘not linked to the importance of aid to its economy’.⁹⁰ Instead, the determinant of recipient control is based on the extent to which a recipient knows donors will not withdraw support regardless of its activities. If a state is relatively sure that donors will not cut off assistance it can therefore afford to not comply with donor preferences.⁹¹ According to Whitfield, recipients can be relatively sure of such donor support if they are perceived to be valuable as an ally, be it geostrategically, politically, diplomatically or as an exemplar of an aid ‘success story’, *outside* the narrow confines of the aid relationship. Both Ethiopia and Rwanda, she concludes, are ‘geostrategically and politically important to donors’ and can therefore ‘project an image of non-negotiability’ when negotiating aid conditionalities.⁹² This analysis chimes with common explanations put forward for donor tolerance of the Ugandan regime’s political transgressions as outlined in the introduction.

Whitfield et al raise-but do not develop-two important points within this debate. Firstly, that donor perceptions that some African states are geo-politically valuable to them (and therefore worthy of support despite non-compliance with policy conditionalities) are based on just that-perceptions- rather than fact. Whitfield and Fraser note that donor support for a regime is often founded on ‘the vagaries of diplomatic, civil society and media representations’ of such a regime rather than any objective truth existing outside personal or institutionally-derived mindsets (a contestable notion, obviously).⁹³ Secondly that, if suitably skilled, African regimes can engineer themselves into fitting such donor perceptions. On several occasions Whitfield and Fraser mention how recipients can ‘manoeuvre themselves into the position of key ally of a major donor’ (Ethiopia and Rwanda) or ‘play the card of the ‘donor darling’ and

⁹⁰ Whitfield (2009b), p.331

⁹¹ Whitfield (2009b), p.356

⁹² Whitfield (2009b), p.331

⁹³ Whitfield and Fraser (2009), p.40

‘good reformer’ (Tanzania) to increase their amount of leverage or agency in relations with donors.⁹⁴ It is not clear in their analysis, however, how this is done or can be shown to have occurred.

Some Africanist scholars have nevertheless explored in greater depth the role of perception and subversion in African engagement with donors. Clapham, for example, in his masterful analysis of how Africa’s states and leaders (which he suggests, in some cases, can be conflated) have survived since independence, contends that ‘subversion’ has been one of three ‘possible responses’ (together with compliance and defiance) of African governments to political conditionality.⁹⁵ Leaders such as Mobutu and Paul Biya of Cameroon, he notes, have made use of a number of schemes to convince donors intent on promoting political reform to hold back. Biya, it is claimed, has played on French fears of ‘an anglophone Cameroonian president which might endanger’ Paris’s position in the nation in order to avoid censure for ‘falsifying election results’. Likewise, Mobutu’s ‘allowing [of] Zairean territory to be used as a base by the French intervention force’ during the Rwanda crisis is also shown to be a tactic employed by the dictator to ‘restore himself to French favour’ in the face of international pressure over human rights abuses in the country.⁹⁶ He also describes how regimes in Togo, Kenya, Nigeria and Cote d’Ivoire adopted similarly savvy strategies to ‘cling on’ to power during the 1990s in spite of prevailing donor discourse on democracy and good governance.

Bayart has also referred to these cases as part of a more general argument on Africa’s place in the international system. While acknowledging the ‘dependence’ of many African states on

⁹⁴ Whitfield and Fraser (2009), p.41; Whitfield (2009b), p.344

⁹⁵ Clapham (1996), p.201

⁹⁶ *ibid*, pp.203-204

donor countries, he nevertheless rejects the ‘meanderings of dependency theory’ (see above) and asserts that, despite their ‘unequal entry’ into global politics, African states and rulers have never been the ‘passive objects of a process of dependency’.⁹⁷ Instead, it is argued, they have been ‘active agents in the *mis en dependence* of their societies’ and have used their very dependence on external actors to ‘mobilise resources’ aimed at shoring-up their own hold on power; a ‘dynamic mode’ of action he terms ‘extraversion’.⁹⁸

In demonstrating how certain African regimes have made use of extraversion to forestall donor pressure for political reform, Bayart, like Clapham, also points to Mobutu, Biya and other leaders from the 1990s in Kenya, Togo, Gabon and Zimbabwe. He notes that all of them have used ‘democracy or...the discourse of democracy’ in their interactions with donors as a means to extract resources (including aid money, political support, fuel and even motor vehicles) and discusses the matter very much in terms of African leaders using ‘duplicity’ and ‘make-believe’ to manipulate their Western patrons.⁹⁹

Neither scholar, however, details how exactly this process of African regimes managing how donors see them actually works in practice. This should, of course, be expected since both are attempting to draw general conclusions about the entire continent over decades, even centuries, and thus investigating this subject in depth is not feasible. Furthermore, the focus of both Clapham and Bayart’s analyses is ultimately the survival of the African state itself and thus their conceptualisation of African agency is somewhat wider than that suggested in this study (see above). Their work is nevertheless important since it introduces the idea of an

⁹⁷ Bayart (2000), p.219; (2009), p.20

⁹⁸ Bayart (2000), pp.219-220; (2009), pp.20-27

⁹⁹ Bayart (2000), pp.225-226

interaction between managing donor perceptions and the carving out of agency by African regimes.

To return to Whitfield and Fraser, then: if, as they, Clapham and Bayart imply, aid-dependent regimes such as Uganda's are capable of partly-constructing, through management of their international image, an environment where donors are discouraged from cutting aid for external reasons they could be said to be exercising the kind of power discussed by Lukes where certain options (such as suspending aid or imposing political conditionality) are not raised where normally they would be. Actions undertaken by a regime to create such an environment would arguably fit into the definition of agency set out above as long as regime actions to ensure this (eg. the passing of an anti-terrorism act) were partly-based on an intention to influence donor perceptions in such a way.

This study contends that the Ugandan government has employed this strategy, 'image management', throughout most of its engagement with the donor community. In doing so it has acquired a greater degree of agency in the highly asymmetrical donor-recipient relationship than most of its African counterparts. This agency is demonstrated by the fact that geostrategic, economic and diplomatic images of Uganda held by donors have shielded it from criticism and political conditionality despite its more controversial political activities. These images, it is argued, have been purposefully-developed and augmented by the Ugandan regime over time to serve such a purpose and an examination of how this has been done and what its effects have been will, it is hoped, build on the analyses of agency in the international system reviewed above but also go beyond them.

Conceptualising ‘image management’

In order to show that a particular regime has attempted to employ image management as a foreign policy strategy it is necessary to establish that it has taken action in various areas to actively promote one or more images of itself to the donor community. The way in which this can be done will be explored in greater depth in chapter 3 but appears to consist of two major elements: 1) the undertaking of various policies and positions, covert or open, which can then be presented as part of an overall image of that regime and 2) the use of a variety of media to ‘sell’ such images to donors. Moi of Kenya and Mobutu of Zaire both seem to have employed the first element of image management in the 1990s in order to make sure that donors saw them as guarantors of stability in their respective countries.

Moi, for example, fostered ethnic violence in Kenya’s Rift Valley in the lead-up to the country’s 1992 elections thereby being able to ‘show’ donors that, if he were replaced with a ‘weaker’ figure, these ‘tribal clashes’ were merely the harbingers of much greater chaos.¹⁰⁰ Largely convinced by this fiction, Western states were willing to overlook the undemocratic nature of these elections and Moi’s tainted victory despite originally intending to be harsh on him for any electoral malpractice.¹⁰¹ This process was repeated for the 1997 elections which Moi also won under dubious circumstances.¹⁰² By ensuring that yet another election be accompanied by a bout of ‘ethnic conflict’ Moi was able to reinforce donor views of his putative stabilising role in the country.

¹⁰⁰ Brown (2001), p.727

¹⁰¹ Brown (2007), pp.303-331

¹⁰² Brown (2001), pp.727-728, 732-734

Mobutu too was successful in managing his leadership's international image in this manner, 'stirring the ethnic pot' to frighten donors into permitting his excesses.¹⁰³ Between 1990-1993, while Zaire's donors attempted to force Mobutu into holding a National Conference which would lead to a democratic constitution and an end to his one-man rule, he supported and encouraged ethnic clashes in Shaba and Kivu provinces where, McNulty notes, 'memories of earlier internecine conflicts remained painfully clear', both for Zairians and Western observers.¹⁰⁴ This enabled him to crush the emerging democratisation movement and suspend the Conference with limited donor opposition. Like Moi, Mobutu ensured that similar clashes took place in Shaba again in 1996 as donors began to push more strongly for his removal from power.¹⁰⁵ By cultivating the very instability that donors feared at the key moments when their regimes' authority were most under attack, Moi and Mobutu were able to present and manage post-Cold War images of their regimes as vital guarantors of stability. Indeed, then US Assistant Secretary Herman Cohen declared in November 1991 that he was unsure 'whether anyone else [other than Mobutu] could maintain national unity in Zaire'.¹⁰⁶ The belief among donors that it was 'Mobutu or chaos' ensnared them in what Root has called a 'commitment trap'; forcing them to support questionable regimes for fear of what may replace them.¹⁰⁷

Moi and Mobutu, therefore, carved out a very significant degree of agency in their relations with Western donors even after the Cold War by managing perceptions of their indispensability. Nevertheless, while Mobutu survived for eight years and Moi for thirteen

¹⁰³ McNulty (1999), p.68

¹⁰⁴ *ibid*

¹⁰⁵ *ibid*

¹⁰⁶ *ibid*

¹⁰⁷ Root (2008), pp.9-10

after the fall of the Berlin Wall, Museveni has endured for over twenty. Furthermore, his management of Western perceptions of his rule has gone beyond presenting his regime narrowly as a guarantor of peace and stability; other 'images' including 'economic success story' and 'War on Terror ally' have also been advanced. Museveni has therefore taken a more thoroughgoing and multi-pronged approach to managing Uganda's image and has thereby achieved a much greater degree of agency for his regime with donors than either Moi or Mobutu.

He has also been far more adept in the second and most crucial part of image management – the use of certain strategies to portray regime actions to donors in line with images being promoted. Such strategies will be investigated fully in chapter 3 and here it will suffice to note that there appear to be three major ways in which regimes such as Uganda's can present their actions in accordance with images being propagated to donors: 1) through the personalisation of foreign policy; 2) through the use of Western lobbying firms and 3) through engagement with Western media organisations, universities and think tanks.

Providing evidence for image management

For image management to be accepted as an integral part of a regime's foreign policy and a means to secure agency it must be established that the regime's actions have indeed been intended to influence donor views of that regime. It is also vital to show that donors have actually been influenced by the regime's activities or rhetoric in building their view of it. As Whitfield and Fraser note, however, strategies adopted by African regimes to gain ownership of the policy-making process 'are unlikely to be explicitly stated and may well never be

written down or consciously designed', and the same is true for image management.¹⁰⁸ Indeed, the gradual, evolutionary nature of the process whereby actions and policies undertaken by a regime build-up and strengthen particular images and narratives makes it likely that the regime's intention to manage donor perceptions emerged slowly, with no definitive initial moment existing where the strategy was consciously conceived. It is also clear that very few regime actions undertaken to influence donor perceptions will have been motivated solely by that intention. Uganda's decision to send troops to Somalia in 2007, for example, may well have been partly-designed to augment Kampala's international image as a fighter of terrorism but was also, almost certainly, inspired by ideas of African solidarity and other domestic and regional interests (see chapter 5).

Owing to these limitations, it will not be possible to say without doubt that particular actions by the Ugandan regime were intended to promote particular images or were successful, without question, in doing so. As with most studies of human behaviour, though, it will be possible to infer this based on a number of contextual factors including the timing of actions, the views of Ugandan policy-makers carrying out such actions (as expressed privately in semi-structured interviews and publicly in speeches and media interviews), the views of donors influenced by such actions and the regime's past activities in these areas. These factors will be assessed and analysed in relation to specific decisions and policies in the four central chapters of this study.

¹⁰⁸ Whitfield and Fraser (2009), p.39

Conclusion

In conclusion, despite IR's neglect of Africa, scholarly discussion of agency, power and control in the international system is extremely useful for understanding the dynamics of the continent's relationship with Western donors. Contributors to the structure-agency debate such as Giddens, Hill and Cerny make clear that regardless of the constraining nature of international structures (such as dependence on donor aid) there will always be 'wiggle room' or agency available to even the weakest states if they choose to seek it. The amount of room available, they contend, depends on the historical context since structures are never fixed. A number of political economists who have studied aid relationships including Mosley et al, Killick and Whitfield et al draw similar conclusions. They conclude that even the most aid-dependent African states can escape the punishments usually dispensed by donors for not complying with their demands if they are important to them for reasons outside the aid relationship. Such reasons appear to be related to donor perceptions of the value of particular states, usually geostrategic, economic or political.

The available literature does not, however, look in depth at how such perceptions are formed and the extent to which African governments themselves play a role in this process. This study will attempt to address this gap in the literature and argue that the Ugandan government has played a major part in attempting to influence donor perceptions of it in order to retain their support despite acting against their wishes in the political arena, a strategy referred to here as 'image management'. In doing so, it is contended, it has secured considerable agency in its international relations. Following a number of scholarly debates, agency is here defined as a state's intended exercising of power. In the context of African foreign policy, however, the conceptualisation of 'exercising power' is restricted to recognise the uniquely constrained

position of most African states in the international system. The exercise of power *vis a vis* donors, therefore, is conceived of not as ‘making them do what they otherwise would not do’ (to paraphrase Dahl) but, instead, ‘making them *not do* what they otherwise would do’, that is, reducing aid for political reasons.

The different aspects of Uganda’s image management strategy will be explored in depth in chapters 3, 4, 5 and 6. It is first important, however, to outline Uganda’s political history under Museveni and to set out the nature and level of international support his regime has received during this period by way of introduction to this case study. This will be attempted in the following chapter.

Chapter 2

Uganda under Museveni

An outline of the country's political history and international relations since 1986

Before progressing to the main part of this thesis it is necessary to interrogate more closely the two main premises of this study. Firstly that Kampala's domestic and regional activities have been increasingly at odds with donor models of acceptable behaviour in the areas of democratisation, corruption, human rights and regional conflict. Secondly, that in spite of this, donor support for the regime has not only been largely unaffected but, in fact, has been increased consistently since the late 1980s. This chapter will therefore present an overview of Uganda's political history since 1986. As well as placing Uganda's relations with donors in context, this will also provide an opportunity to justify the claim made that the regime has increasingly failed to behave as donors would like. Subsequently, a summary of the Ugandan-donor relationship since 1986 will be provided to demonstrate how international support for the regime has grown steadily over the last two decades despite Kampala's more controversial activities.

A Political History of Uganda since 1986

Uganda before Museveni

In general, Ugandan history during the period between 1962 (when it gained independence from the UK) and 1986 was characterised by dictatorship, unstable government, violence, civil war and insecurity. Two leaders from the north of the country, the now notorious Milton Obote and Idi Amin, dominated Ugandan politics for the majority of these years (Obote

between 1962-1971 and 1980-1985; Amin between 1971-1979) with their authoritarian regimes occasionally replaced by the short-lived, military governments of Yusuf Lule (1979), Godfrey Binaisa (1979-80) and Tito and Basilio Okello (1985-1986). Both Obote, who lead the Ugandan People's Congress (UPC) and Amin, a former Army Commander, came to power through the military and relied heavily upon it to maintain their rule. They also lost power violently; Obote being overthrown in 1971 and 1985 by his own officers and Amin by invading Tanzanian troops reacting to his failed attempt to annex their country.¹

Obote also used the UPC to institutionalise his hold on power – declaring it the only legal party in 1966 and, with the connivance of occupying Tanzanian forces, using its structures to rig the 1980 election to allow him to regain the presidency. Many rival parties and anti-Amin military groups strongly resented this and, in 1980, begun a protracted guerrilla war against the UPC government.² One such group was the National Resistance Army/Movement (NRA/M), led by a former junior defence minister – Yoweri Museveni. Museveni was an unusually cerebral soldier and held strongly left-leaning views about how Uganda should be governed, developed during his years studying economics and political science under the socialist Walter Rodney at Dar es Salaam University.

Museveni instilled a high degree of discipline and ideological cohesion in his troops, even drawing-up a political manifesto – *The NRM Ten-Point Programme*- while fighting ‘in the bush’.³ This vaguely socialist document set-out the NRA/M's priorities should they gain power and is particularly notable for its condemnation of political parties. ‘Politics in

¹ Ofcansky (1996), pp.39-58

² *ibid*, pp.51-53

³ Houdek interview (2009)

Uganda', it declared, 'have been manipulated by...politicians along sectarian religious and tribal cleavages...these manufactured divisions have ensured that people could not unite...'.⁴ Referring to the long and destructive association in Uganda between political parties, Christian denominations and regions (the UPC with Protestants and northerners, the Democratic Party (DP) with Catholics and Baganda⁵) this point was to become the major inspiration behind the NRM's 'no-party democracy' during its first two decades in power (see below).

As a result of this organisational and philosophical cohesion, the NRA succeeded in steadily accruing more support and territory during its five years of combat until, in mid-1985 it was invited by Tito Okello to join a new 'government of national unity'. Museveni rejected this offer and in the latter months of 1985 won a number of significant victories over government forces, taking Jinja in early 1986. Finally, on 26 January 1986, the NRA took Kampala itself after heavy fighting and declared itself the new government of the country.

The era of the 'broad-based government': 1986-1989

On becoming president, Museveni hoped to bring an end to years of conflict and violence by uniting Uganda's divided political forces into one, 'broad-based government' and announced, in early 1986, an intention to 'form...a nationwide coalition of political and social forces that could usher in a new and better future...' and kept his word initially.⁶ The first few NRM Cabinets, for example, were composed primarily of prominent opposition figures, though the NRM reserved the presidency, vice-presidency and defence portfolio for its own personnel.

⁴ Museveni (1992), p.279

⁵ 'Baganda' refers to those Ugandans from the Buganda region in the south-west of the country.

⁶ Khadiagala (1995), p.39

Opposition officials were invited to join the government as individuals, rather than representatives of parties, as part of a ‘gentlemen’s agreement’ whereby partisan activity would be suspended until the adoption of a new constitution.⁷ This spirit of national reconciliation was also extended to the new regime’s armed opponents with a law being passed in 1987 giving amnesty to all rebels and former rebels.⁸ The regime also entered into negotiations with various rebel groups to encourage them to put down their arms and join the NRA.⁹ The regime also established, in May 1986, a Commission of Inquiry which would investigate government human rights abuses from 1962-1986 in an effort to further promote reconciliation and to draw a line under the country’s tragic past.¹⁰

The new regime also established its democratic credentials by introducing nationwide the ‘Resistance Council’ (RC) system, an institution which it had previously launched between 1980-1985 in NRA-occupied regions. Described in 2000 by Kasfir as ‘probably still [the NRM’s] most momentous political intervention’, the RC system attempted to establish local, democratic ‘self-government’ throughout Uganda by installing a hierarchy of five levels of RCs in every village (RC1) ascending to district level (RC5).¹¹ The Councils represented a system of direct and indirect democracy with villagers electing officials to their local RC1, RC1 officials electing those to RC2 and so on up the chain and the bodies were empowered by legislation passed in 1987 and 1988 to ‘make policy’ in local affairs.¹² As with the government itself, RC candidates stood for election on the basis of individual merit rather

⁷ Mutibwa (1991), pp.189-190; Khadiagala (1995), p.39; Kasfir (2000), p.67

⁸ Tripp (2010), p.140

⁹ Mutibwa (1991), p.190; Rubongoya (2007), p.201

¹⁰ Ofcansky (1996), p.65

¹¹ Kasfir (2000), p.65

¹² de Torrente (2001), pp.188-189

than party platform and initially the system was hailed both domestically and internationally as a novel form of decentralisation and grassroots participation in the political process.¹³

Nonetheless, a number of features of NRM-rule in these early years indicated a regime not entirely at ease with open, competitive civilian politics. As de Torrente points out, the NRM's original political dispensation established a highly-centralised and top-down system whereby 'the NRM/A's organs merged with those of the state' and Museveni became head of the executive (presidency), legislative (Chair of National Resistance Council (NRC)) and military (Chair of NRA Council).¹⁴ Legal Notice 1 (1986) which legitimised the NRM's seizure of power and drew up an interim four-year transitional government also placed the military firmly at the centre of the new arrangement.¹⁵ Furthermore, while some opposition politicians and rebel groups were treated cordially in the spirit of reconciliation, others were not. In October 1986 former vice-president Muwango was arrested for treason while some former Obote and Amin officials were executed.¹⁶

The regime's commitment to human rights during this period has also been called into question. It is clear that it committed a number of abuses against civilians between 1986-1988 during its attempts to defeat the UPDA and Holy Spirit Movement rebel groups in northern Uganda. Dolan reports a number of atrocities committed by the NRA against northern Ugandans caught up in these conflicts and particularly notable is the forced clearing of around 100,000 Gulu civilians from their homes into camps between October-December 1988

¹³ Tripp (2010), p.77

¹⁴ de Torrente (2001), pp.184-185

¹⁵ *ibid*

¹⁶ de Torrente (2001), p.186; Rubongoya (2007), p.201

and the committing by NRA soldiers of ‘hundreds of extra-judicial executions as they forced people out of their homes’.¹⁷

The RCs themselves have also been criticised as thinly-veiled attempts to spread NRM control and ideology throughout the country. The regime, for example, insisted that RC officials were all ‘guided’ by daily ‘political education classes’ (*mchaka mchaka*) which instructed even the lowest of RC1 representatives in NRM ideology and involved the ‘chanting of pro-NRM slogans’ in an effort to spread and consolidate regime influence.¹⁸ Furthermore, the regime extended its control over the entire RC system by appointing NRM members as ‘District Administrators’ who would oversee the running of the enterprise at a local level.¹⁹ This use of decentralisation machinery to increase state control over the periphery would become a growing priority for the regime in later years.

In the economic sphere, the NRM’s early years in power saw the regime begin to abandon its faith in dirigiste, statist financial policies which had caused the rate of inflation to double from 120% to 240% in its first year alone. In 1987, it signed an Economic Recovery Programme (ERP) agreement with the previously-maligned IMF and World Bank which would see IFI aid being given in return for the implementation of various liberal economic reforms including currency reform and devaluation of the Ugandan exchange rate. Kampala was initially unwilling to implement these recommendations wholeheartedly, however, since many left-wingers in the NRM opposed key elements of the IFI programme.²⁰

¹⁷ Dolan (2009), pp.43-45

¹⁸ Tripp (2010), p.77

¹⁹ de Torrente (2001), p.189

²⁰ Brett (1996), p.315; Whitworth and Williamson (2009), p.4

The institutionalisation of the ‘Movement system’: 1989-1995

In 1989, with its interim four-year rule coming to an end, the regime expanded the NRC to 279 members and held indirect elections via the RC system to fill 169 of the seats in this new parliament.²¹ The elections have been criticised by some as being designed to further entrench NRM rule: not only were 24% of the ‘elected’ representatives selected by the president as army appointees but the short time-frame of the elections made it very difficult for NRM opponents to mobilise support effectively. In addition, voting was not by secret ballot and the regime sought to further solidify its control over the newly-elected parliament by establishing a special NRM-dominated National Executive Committee (NEC) which would, according to Kasfir, ‘have an automatic majority to determine policies and oversee the government...in short, if the NRM did poorly in these elections, the...parliament would still find it extremely difficult to wrest political control from the...NRM’.²² Following the poll, which returned a heavily NRM-dominated NRC, Museveni extended his regime’s interim period of rule for a further five years declaring that there was still ‘unfinished business’ to attend to.²³

With regard to the economy, in 1992 Museveni finally rejected the views of his more leftist colleagues and merged the Marxist-dominated Finance Ministry with that of Planning and Economic Development, a department which, according to Brett, had long housed a ‘key source of internal support for the [IFI] programme’.²⁴ The Ugandan leader then placed a large degree of authority in the hands of the technocratic team from the Planning ministry and

²¹ Kasfir (2000), p.72

²² Kasfir (2000), pp.72-72

²³ de Torrente (2001), p.191

²⁴ Brett (1996), p.320

allowed them to take the lead in setting the regime's economic policies.²⁵ The new Ministry of Finance, Planning and Economic Development (MFPED) team then instituted a number of radical but necessary reforms to bring the country's macroeconomic stability under control including the liberalisation of the exchange rate, privatisation of a large number of state enterprises, retrenchment of the civil service and demobilisation of the armed forces.²⁶

The regime also extended an invitation in 1991 to the Asian-Ugandan community expelled in 1971 to return and re-invest in the country while a Leadership Code was implemented in 1992 in an effort to stamp out corruption (the Code required public servants to declare their assets).²⁷ Not only did these efforts impress Uganda's donors (see below), they also lead to a dramatic improvement in the national economy: inflation was reduced by half between 1987-1992 and the World Bank reported economic growth of 5% in 1992, predicting a 10% annual rise by 1995.²⁸

The regime also appears to have made positive progress in other areas during the early 1990s. Unlike most other African leaders, Museveni turned his attention to the AIDS epidemic very soon after gaining power. In 1986, for example, the government established a national AIDS Control Programme in the Health Ministry which set-up a number of initiatives as an early, formal response to the epidemic.²⁹ Furthermore, in 1992, the regime created the Uganda AIDS Commission in the Office of the President in order to oversee and coordinate the design and implementation of a national HIV/AIDS strategy.³⁰ Kampala's approach to the

²⁵ Whitworth and Williamson (2009), pp.4-13

²⁶ *ibid*; Khadiagala (1995), pp.44-45

²⁷ *ibid*; Watt, Flanary and Theobald (1999), p.54

²⁸ Khadiagala (1995), pp.44-45

²⁹ Parkhurst (2001), pp.73-74

³⁰ *ibid*; Ofcansky (1996), p.84

problem in the 1990s combined working with non-governmental and civil society organisations to promote abstinence, condom usage and monogamy ('zero grazing') and educating Ugandans on HIV prevention. It was widely praised and led to a dramatic decline in HIV prevalence rates in the decade after 1990.³¹

Similarly, after several years of fighting a new and extremely brutal northern rebel group – the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA) – Kampala adopted a different tack, entering into peace negotiations with the group in 1993.³² This followed the launching of the first Northern Uganda Recovery Programme in 1992 which was 'aimed at restoring basic economic and social infrastructure' to the war-torn region.³³ By 1993 violence decreased in the north for the first time since 1986 and the regime came close to signing a peace deal with Joseph Kony, the LRA leader, in 1994. The two parties unfortunately returned to conflict by the following year, however, after Museveni refused to take the peace talks seriously, issuing an ultimatum to the group in February 1994 to surrender within a week or face renewed hostilities.³⁴ This behaviour, according to Tripp, 'basically ended the peace process' and was an early indication that the Ugandan regime favoured military, rather than diplomatic, approaches to ending the conflict, regardless of the impact on civilians.³⁵ This enthusiasm for military solutions was also demonstrated in these years through the growing increases in defence spending. In the 1990s, Uganda's annual military expenditure regularly exceeded the 1.9% of

³¹ Epstein (2007), pp.187-188; World Health Organisation (2008)

³² Tripp (2010), p.165; Dolan (2009), pp.45-46

³³ *ibid*

³⁴ *ibid*; Dolan (2009), p.97

³⁵ Tripp (2010), p.165

total government spending prescribed by donors and NRA forces rose from 20,000 in 1986 to 80,000 in 1991.³⁶

This period was also notable for the constitutional and political reforms which took place and ultimately resulted in the enshrinement in law of the ‘no-party’ Movement system of government. In 1989, the regime appointed a Constitutional Commission (CC) whose task was to ‘tour the country and consult the people...on what they wanted to see in the new constitution’ promised by Kampala since 1986.³⁷ The CC exercise was widely praised for its ambition, originality and attempt to involve the entire Ugandan population in the constitution-making process but has also been criticised for being staffed wholly by pro-Movement figures, being directed in its work by a government minister and for approaching popular consultation more as an opportunity to ‘educate’ Ugandans on the Movement system than to collect and consider their views impartially.³⁸ Ultimately, the CC decided to refer the draft constitution it had produced to a specially-elected Constituent Assembly (CA) so that this body could discuss its final contents and consider especially whether multi-partyism should be restored.³⁹

As in 1989, the regime attempted to ensure that its own NRM/Movement supporters took the majority of seats in the 1994 CA by again reserving a number of seats (74 of 288) for special interest delegates and presidential appointees.⁴⁰ The 1994 CA elections therefore returned an Assembly packed with pro-NRM representatives who formed a parliamentary caucus (the

³⁶ Tripp (2010), pp.140-141

³⁷ Furley (2000), p.81

³⁸ Tripp (2010), p.78; Furley (2000), pp.81-83

³⁹ Furley (2000), p.82

⁴⁰ Khadiagala (1995), p.40

NRM caucus) of such a size that defeat of proposals to end the Movement system by UPC and DP multi-party agitators was virtually guaranteed before the 1995 debate on political systems begun. This debate, as de Torrente points out, highlighted the degree to which Museveni and his colleagues had come to reject opposition parties; the president reportedly referred to them as ‘rubbish’, ‘divisive’ and ‘destructive’.⁴¹ Despite an unusual intervention by the US Embassy and disagreement among some NRM delegates on the issue, the NRM caucus was successful in perpetuating the ban on political party activity and in constitutionalising the Movement system.⁴²

The CA decided that presidential and parliamentary elections would take place in 1996 under the Movement system. A referendum was to take place four years later (2000) where voters could decide if this system should continue. Until then the 1995 Constitution banned political parties from the ‘opening and operating of branch offices; holding delegates conferences; holding public rallies, sponsoring or offering a platform to or in any way campaigning for or against a candidate for any public elections; ...any activities that may interfere with the Movement political system for the time being in operation’.⁴³ Most commentators have consequently seen the events of 1995 as the successful culmination of NRM attempts to establish itself as a ‘de facto single ruling party’.⁴⁴

⁴¹ de Torrente (2001), p.201

⁴² de Torrente (2001), pp.200-202

⁴³ Constitution of the Republic of Uganda 1995, Article 70

⁴⁴ de Torrente (2001), p.202; Tripp (2010), p.81

Museveni's first term: 1996-2001

The 1996 polls saw the elevation of Museveni to his first 'official' presidential term and the election of an overwhelmingly NRM-dominated legislative.⁴⁵ Election day itself was largely peaceful with little more than irregularities being reported by most domestic and international observers and though his margin of victory (75%) was almost certainly pushed up by small-scale rigging, Museveni would undoubtedly have carried the day regardless. Just as in 1989 and 1994, however, the regime had sought to ensure victory for itself well in advance of polling day by tilting the rules of the game in its favour. De Torrente notes how the ban on political party activity severely restricted opposition groups' ability to campaign with security forces frequently breaking-up their rallies.⁴⁶ The NRM also took full advantage of its ten-year incumbency and arrogated a number of state resources (notably the nationwide RC system) for its own campaigning purposes, availing itself of financial and organisational advantages which opposition parties lacked.⁴⁷

The regime spent much of its first term further entrenching its hold on power. A number of pieces of legislation were passed to ensure the Movement's continued dominance including the 1997 Movement Act which required all Ugandans to belong to the Movement system and incorporated many state institutions (notably the RCs, now renamed 'Local Councils' (LCs)) into the NRM/Movement's own organisational machinery.⁴⁸ Furthermore, in 1999 a Referendum Bill (aimed at setting-up the constitutionally-mandated 2000 referendum on continuing the Movement system) was introduced and passed at the last minute by NRM MPs

⁴⁵ Furley notes that 'about three-quarters of the new parliament was reckoned to be 'Movement men' on whom the President could rely' (Furley (2000), p.87)

⁴⁶ de Torrente (2001), p.207

⁴⁷ de Torrente (2001), pp.205-207

⁴⁸ Tripp (2010), p.84

and signed by Museveni despite not having the necessary quorum of lawmakers present during the bill's passage.⁴⁹ The subsequent referendum, which saw political party activities once again heavily restricted by the regime, was boycotted by opposition supporters and won by the Movement whose 'no-party' system was endorsed by 94% of voters on only a 50% turnout.⁵⁰ A further act aimed at constraining opposition parties – the Political Parties and Organisations Bill – was passed in 2002. This legislation banned parties from 'using party symbols, colours and slogans in campaigns, sponsoring platforms [and] campaigning for candidates in...elections' and extended the regime's monopoly over organised political activity.⁵¹

Museveni also consolidated his personal and political dominance during this period in other ways, increasingly using strategies employed in classic neopatrimonial systems of rule. Annual Cabinet reshuffles prevented upstart ministers from establishing an independent support base while an expansion of executive-appointed ministers allowed Museveni to weaken the power of parliament by making one quarter of its membership dependent on him for their job.⁵² Indeed, this period saw a massive expansion of executive patronage in an effort to buy the support of much of the Ugandan elite. As Mwenda and Tangri have noted, between 1996-2001 the number of Cabinet ministers more than doubled (from 21 to 57). Likewise, the number of presidential advisers, diplomats, MPs, military personnel, state security organisations and local government officials increased dramatically; by 2003

⁴⁹ *ibid*

⁵⁰ Bratton and Lambright (2001), pp.441-451

⁵¹ Tripp (2010), pp.84-85

⁵² Tripp (2010), p.91 (this statistic includes the military representatives appointed by the president)

parliament was nearly three times the size it had been in 1996, the military had grown by 40% and Uganda had 100 ambassadors for only twelve foreign embassies.⁵³

Furthermore, state resources became increasingly concentrated in the hands of individuals from Museveni's region (the West), ethnic group (Bahima) and family.⁵⁴ This growing link between regional/ethnic affiliation, power and access to resources has resulted in a steady institutionalisation of regime-sanctioned, high-level corruption in Uganda. Now commonplace, its origins can be found in this period when a number of senior politicians, civil servants and military officers (most notably Salim Saleh, Museveni's brother, Kwame Ruyondo, Museveni's foster child and the vice president, Speciosa Kabzibwe) were implicated in corruption scandals involving the procurement of helicopter gunships (1996) and jet fighter aircraft (1998), the privatisation of the Uganda Commercial Bank, mismanagement of funds in the agriculture ministry (1998) and the tendering process for computerising the Ministry of Finance.⁵⁵ Though a growing number of anti-corruption bodies were created by the regime ostensibly to combat such misdeeds (for example, the National Fraud Squad and Ministry of Ethics and Integrity) none of them were provided with the resources, political will or authority to have any real effect.⁵⁶ Likewise, while a number of junior ministers including Sam Kutesa (now foreign minister) were censured by parliament

⁵³ Mwenda and Tangri (2005), pp.458-460

⁵⁴ Furley (2000), p.95; Mwenda and Tangri (2005), p.460; Tripp (2010), pp.51-54

⁵⁵ Watt, Flanary and Theobald (1999), pp.54-55; Tangri and Mwenda (2003), pp.539-552; World Bank (2004), pp.14-15

⁵⁶ Watt, Flanary and Theobald (1999), pp.53-55; Furley (2000), pp.90-91; Tangri and Mwenda (2003), pp.540-544; Tripp (2010), p.131 Salim Saleh, Amama Mbabazi, Sam Kuteesa and Jim Muhwezi are perhaps the best examples of close Museveni associates who have been continuously involved in corruption scandals but have nevertheless consistently been treated lightly.

for corrupt practices and several dismissed by State House, little action was taken against most, particularly more senior offenders.⁵⁷

The late 1990s also saw Uganda become embroiled in a number of regional conflicts. Simmering tensions with the Sudanese government boiled over in 1995 when, after accusing Khartoum of funding the LRA, the regime severed ties with the Bashir government. Following this, Kampala increased its own support for the southern Sudanese rebel movement the SPLA/M and a proxy war continued between the two powers until US-sponsored peace talks began in 2000.⁵⁸ More controversially, however, Uganda invaded neighbouring Zaire/Congo during this period on two occasions. In 1996 Ugandan, Rwandan and Burundian forces entered the country purportedly to deal with the deteriorating security situation in the Kivus. They nevertheless joined with the Congolese rebel group the AFDL (Alliance of the Democratic Forces for the Liberation of Congo/Zaire) and marched all the way to Kinshasa, deposing the ruling Mobutu regime and installing AFDL leader Laurent Kabila as president in his place.⁵⁹

When Kabila turned out to be less pliable than expected and ordered all foreign troops to leave Congo in July 1998, Kampala, Kigali and Bujumbura retaliated by re-invading.⁶⁰ The following five-year conflict saw the country effectively 'partitioned' into four with Uganda and Rwanda backing rival rebel groups and lead to the deaths of over three million people and the displacement of many more.⁶¹ It also sucked in numerous other African governments

⁵⁷ Furley (2000), pp.90-91

⁵⁸ Khadiagala (2007), pp.202-236

⁵⁹ Reyntjens (1998), p.10

⁶⁰ Reyntjens (1999), pp.246-247

⁶¹ BBC (20/01/10); Tripp (2010), pp.172-175

who supported Kabila (including Zimbabwe, Angola, Chad and Namibia) and saw violent clashes take place between Ugandan and Rwandan forces themselves over control of Kisangani in 1999 and 2000.⁶² These actions greatly undermined the claim that Uganda under Museveni represented a force for regional stability. Regardless of its efforts in peacekeeping and conflict mediation in Liberia, Somalia, Burundi and Kenya, the regime's central involvement in the most devastating and widespread conflict in recent African history shows, at best, a deep ambiguity in its commitment to regional peace.

Museveni's second term and the return to multi-partyism: 2001-2006

Museveni was re-elected to his second and constitutionally-last term⁶³ as Ugandan president in March 2001, beating his nearest opponent – Kizza Besigye – by a sizable margin and taking 69% of the national vote.⁶⁴ A parliamentary election, in June 2001, followed and saw supporters of the Movement take the vast majority of the 214 seats being contested.⁶⁵ As in previous elections, opposition candidates were seriously disadvantaged both by restrictions placed upon their ability to organise by the Movement system and limited resources. This did not, however, prevent twelve ministers (one quarter of the Cabinet) losing their seats to NRM opponents.⁶⁶

The 2001 elections differed from previous polls, nevertheless, because of the unprecedented degree of bitterness, violence and intimidation unleashed by the regime during the campaign.

Besigye, a former close ally of Museveni who deserted the Movement in 2000, was subjected

⁶² *ibid*

⁶³ Uganda's 1995 Constitution, Article 105 (2) stated that 'A person shall not be elected under this Constitution to hold office as President for more than two terms as prescribed by this article'

⁶⁴ Tripp (2010), p.60

⁶⁵ Inter-Parliamentary Union (2001)

⁶⁶ *ibid*

to a number of vicious and highly-personal attacks from the Ugandan leader.⁶⁷ Furthermore, opposition rallies were frequently cancelled or broken-up by police even when permits had been granted while Besigye supporters were harassed, arbitrarily arrested and subjected to a number of violent acts by regime security agencies and the armed forces.⁶⁸ There was also considerable intimidation by regime agents reported on both election days themselves including an incident where a minister's bodyguard shot a supporter of an opposition candidate.⁶⁹

Employment of these tactics revealed a rising tendency on the part of Kampala to bring the extralegal use of force into Uganda's political dispensation. Indeed, the early 2000s can be seen as the beginning of a thoroughgoing militarisation and securitisation of Ugandan politics by the Museveni regime. This has entailed the creation and expansion of several paramilitary organisations which work with the formal security forces (police and army) but are not bound by the same legal and constitutional rules. Such groups include the Presidential Guard Brigade – Museveni's 12,000-strong 'praetorian guard', Chieftaincy of Military Intelligence, Kalangala Action Plan – a group particularly involved in the 2001 violence and the notorious Black Mamba Urban Hit Squad, many of whose members have been accused of torturing regime opponents by *Human Rights Watch* and *Amnesty International*.⁷⁰

Furthermore, the police force has increasingly been brought under the control of the NRM-dominated military in an effort to solidify regime control over this institution.⁷¹ This process

⁶⁷ Tangri and Mwenda (2003), p.549

⁶⁸ *ibid*; Banégas (2006), p.228; Barkan (2009), p. 81

⁶⁹ Inter-Parliamentary Union (2001)

⁷⁰ Mwenda (2007), p.32; Tripp (2010), pp.135-140

⁷¹ Banégas (2006), p.228

accelerated in the aftermath of 9/11 and the passing, in 2002 and 2003, of Anti-Terrorism Acts, legislation which granted the regime a number of powers over restricting freedom of assembly and freedom of speech. These laws would also be used to clamp down on Uganda's independent media as the decade progressed (see below).⁷² Continued military involvement in Congo and the north at this time also saw the country's military expenditure reach its highest point under the NRM – US\$197 million in 2005 – with the same amount allocated to defence spending as to healthcare.⁷³

In addition, the situation in northern Uganda became particularly militarised during this period after the failure in spring 2002 of 'Operation Iron Fist' – a Khartoum-sanctioned UPDF attack on LRA bases in southern Sudan – drove LRA rebels back into northern Uganda.⁷⁴ The return of the rebels to Ugandan soil saw a tragic rise in abductions, attacks and displacements to which Kampala responded by deploying 30,000 UPDF soldiers to the region. It also diverted 25% of the social security budget to build roads for military use throughout northern Uganda and sponsored the formation, arming and training of local militias such as the 'Rhino Boys' and 'Frontier Guards' to fight the LRA on its behalf.⁷⁵ Little emphasis, however, was put on caring for and protecting the 1.6 million civilians who had been displaced by the conflict, many of whom lived in unsanitary, crowded IDP camps.⁷⁶

Museveni's second term, however, also focused on constitutional arrangements. Perhaps surprisingly for a regime which had spent the previous two decades institutionalising a 'no-

⁷² Tripp (2010), pp.100-101

⁷³ Tripp (2010), p.140

⁷⁴ Dolan (2009), p.54

⁷⁵ Dolan (2009), pp.55-56

⁷⁶ *ibid*

party system' it became clear from early on in this period that Kampala was intent on re-establishing a multi-party system in Uganda. Thus in December 2001 the NRM's NEC set-up an ad-hoc committee to 'examine...calls to open up to political party pluralism' and Museveni himself argued for a return to multi-partyism for reasons of political pragmatism.⁷⁷ The committee reported in April 2002, laying out three options for the Movement's future and concluding that restoring 'political pluralism' was the one it favoured.⁷⁸ A Constitutional Review Commission (CRC) was then established to examine how this might be brought about and it recommended, in December 2003, that a referendum be held on the subject.⁷⁹ As such, in July 2005 a referendum on political systems took place. Museveni and the NRM campaigned for a return to multi-partyism and convinced 92.5% of voters to support this change although the turnout, at between 30-45% was not considerable.⁸⁰ Consequently, political parties were restored, setting the stage for Uganda's first multi-party presidential and parliamentary elections for a quarter of a century in February 2006.

On the face of it, the regime's actions herein, seemed inconsistent with its former rhetoric on political parties and, for some commentators, this represented a shift on the part of the NRM towards 'greater democratic governance'.⁸¹ This, regrettably, was not the case and the restoration of multi-partyism should instead be seen as a smokescreen for the NRM in general and Museveni personally to increase and prolong their political dominance in Uganda. By 2001 the Movement had become somewhat 'ossified', as a US observer put it, with various factions emerging who were increasingly at odds with the leadership; Besigye's defection in

⁷⁷ Kannyo (2004), p.137

⁷⁸ Makara, Rakner and Svåsand (2009), p.188

⁷⁹ Rubongoya (2007), pp.214-215

⁸⁰ Rubongoya (2007), p.222

⁸¹ Kannyo (2004), p.125

2000 was a prominent example of this unravelling of NRM unity.⁸² For the Movement's senior figures, turning their 'system' into a 'party' would allow for a reinvigoration of the NRM and, more importantly, would provide it with 'the opportunity to purify itself of those people that are in the system because of the concept of broadbasedness'.⁸³ In other words it would be much easier to identify opponents in a multi-party system. Furthermore, the constitutional tinkering that was required to bring about the change provided an opportunity for the regime to increase the powers of the executive. In December 2004, for example, the regime introduced an 'Omnibus bill' to parliament which included 119 proposed constitutional amendments which, aside from setting the terms for the referendum, also sought to close the Ugandan Human Rights Commission (UHRC), limit the powers of the IGG, give the president the right to dissolve parliament and remove parliament's right to approve government appointments and censure ministers for corruption.⁸⁴

The regime's promotion of pluralism during these years also appears to have been a direct *quid pro quo* for the removal of presidential term limits. Though previously insistent that he would step down after his 'second and final term', Museveni intimated early on in this period that he would be interested in running again in 2006 and, in 2003, the Cabinet asked the CRC to look into the possibility of changing the constitution to allow this.⁸⁵ Over the next two years, there followed a series of actions and manipulations on the part of the Ugandan leader to ensure that this became inevitable. As Tangri has noted, the regime placed heavy pressure upon the CRC on the third term issue, particularly after learning that its draft report initially rejected the Cabinet's proposal to remove term limits. Consequently, the Commission's final

⁸² Anonymous Interview 25 (2009)

⁸³ Makara, Rakner and Svåsand (2009), p.188

⁸⁴ Tripp (2010), p.85

⁸⁵ Tangri (2004), pp.179-180

report was ‘virtually identical to the Cabinet’s proposal on the subject’ and recommended a referendum to decide the issue.⁸⁶ Ultimately, however, the decision fell to parliament and thus the regime set-about on various attempts to manage and control the parliamentary processes which would lead to the amendment’s passage. This included mobilising NRM MPs to gain control of the committee which was overseeing the constitutional review, attempting to remove secret ballots so that MPs would be forced to openly oppose the government if they objected to the amendment and even bribing over 200 MPs with 5 million Ugandan Shillings (US\$3,000) each to vote for the final bill.⁸⁷

Furthermore, during 2003, Museveni steadily purged Uganda’s major institutions of individuals seen as being opposed to the abolition of term limits. Most prominently, this involved the dismissal of long-term allies Eriya Kategaya, Bidandi Ssali and Miria Matembe from the Cabinet in May after they spoke out against the government’s proposals. The director-general of the External Security Organisation, David Pulkol, was also fired in December for the same reason.⁸⁸ Around 60 senior army officers including UPDF Commander James Kazini and former Internal Security Organisation director-general Henry Tumukunde were also dismissed in December.⁸⁹ Purportedly this was because of corruption charges although it was well-known that many of these officers, particularly Tumukunde, had expressed opposition to the removal of term limits.⁹⁰ Having therefore made such a concerted effort to control the political process leading-up to the abolition and having sidelined the majority of those figures opposed to such action, the regime was successful in November

⁸⁶ *ibid*

⁸⁷ Tangri (2004), pp.185-186; Tripp (2010), pp.85-86

⁸⁸ Tangri (2004), p.180

⁸⁹ Rubongoya (2007), p.215

⁹⁰ *Daily Monitor* (29/05/05)

2005 in securing the amending of the constitution to allow Museveni, or any subsequent president, to run for as many terms as he or she wished.

Uganda today: 2006 – present

Results of Uganda's 2006 multi-party elections, the first since 1980, showed little erosion of NRM support, with the ruling party again taking over 200 of the 319 seats.⁹¹ The presidential race, however, appears to have been much closer than in prior elections; Besigye, who again became Museveni's main opponent, took 37% of the vote while the president won with 59%, a reduction of 10% on the 2001 results.⁹² Furthermore, while some cases of violence and intimidation by regime security forces were reported on polling day itself, this was not as widespread as it had been in 2001.⁹³

Such appearances of order and competitiveness, however, masked what was actually another highly circumscribed electoral process where opposition parties and candidates had little to no chance of overturning regime dominance, particularly in the race for the presidency. As in earlier elections, the NRM had organised for the polls to take place on the most uneven of playing fields by commandeering the structures and resources of the state, including the LCs, to recruit supporters and raise money for its candidates; Tangri and Mwenda note, for example, that this enabled Besigye's party, the Forum for Democratic Change (FDC) to raise only US\$850,000 during the election compared to the NRM's US\$26 million.⁹⁴ Furthermore, the legislation required to legally permit political parties to register, organise and build a national infrastructure was enacted by the NRM-dominated parliament very late in the

⁹¹ Makara, Rakner and Kiiza (2008), p.291

⁹² Barkan (2009), pp.81-82

⁹³ Gloppen et al (2006), pp.21-22

⁹⁴ Makara, Rakner and Kiiza (2008), pp.292-293; Tangri and Mwenda (2010), p.41

election process giving opposition parties limited time to set-up a nationwide presence in comparison to the well-established NRM.⁹⁵ This institutional disadvantage was compounded by the bringing forward of the polls by three weeks and the late confirmation of official registration of opposition parties by the Registrar-General.⁹⁶

Most controversially, the regime made a concerted effort between 2005-2006 to undermine, even invalidate, Besigye's candidacy. Shortly after his return from self-imposed exile, Besigye was arrested for 'treason, concealment of treason and rape', the latter apparently having taken place in 1997.⁹⁷ These charges, which were of such gravity that bail could not be granted (ensuring that Besigye could not leave prison until after the election) were, for many commentators and international donors, seen as being politically-motivated and several days of violence followed the arrest.

The regime also sought-unsuccessfully- to pressure the Electoral Commission into rejecting Besigye's candidacy with the Attorney-General advising the Commission's head that the FDC leader's nomination would be 'tainted with illegalities'.⁹⁸ Concurrently, when the High Court released Besigye on bail in November 2005, members of the government-backed Black Mamba paramilitary squad stormed the court in an effort to have him re-arrested, an illegal action which was strongly condemned by donors, judges and the UHRC.⁹⁹

From the mid-2000s, the regime also begun to place greater restrictions on the Ugandan media. Well-known for its vibrant and opinionated local press, Uganda has increasingly seen

⁹⁵ Makara, Rakner and Kiiza (2008), p.294; Tripp (2010), p.86

⁹⁶ Makara, Rakner and Svåsand (2009), p.196

⁹⁷ Makara, Rakner and Svåsand (2009), p.197

⁹⁸ Makara, Rakner and Rwengabo (2008), p.104

⁹⁹ Tripp (2010), p.90

the voices of its journalists, radio personalities and independent television networks stifled by arbitrary arrests and closures. In August 2005, KFM, an independent radio station, was shut down and one of its more outspoken talk-show hosts, Andrew Mwenda, imprisoned for ‘sedition’. In November 2005, the regime also demanded that the country’s main non-government newspaper, the *Daily Monitor* be shutdown for similar reasons.¹⁰⁰ Since then, the offices of numerous independent newspapers, including the *Weekly Observer*, *Citizen* and *Crusader*, have been raided by police and their editors arrested as have those of television and radio networks including NTV in 2007.¹⁰¹ The regime has also attempted to clamp down on critical reporting by foreign journalists with, in January 2006, a law being passed to compel all foreign journalists to register with the new ‘Media Centre’, based in the Office of the President, for accreditation.¹⁰²

The regime’s failure to invest any of the country’s anti-corruption bodies with any real authority has also lead to the further normalisation of corruption as an acceptable and commonplace part of the political process. Since 2005 a number of high-profile corruption scandals have occurred in Uganda involving very senior government ministers, including the vice president and ministers for finance, foreign affairs, defence, security, public works, agriculture and health; few of these have been punished or censured by the regime for their misdemeanours. In 2005 it emerged that a number of ministers, including Health Minister Jim Muhwezi, had siphoned-off large sums of money from the Global Fund to Fight Aids, Tuberculosis and Malaria’s US\$54 million Uganda programme for personal and political gain (that is, to finance NRM election candidates). This lead the Fund to temporarily suspend all

¹⁰⁰ Mwenda (2007), p.25

¹⁰¹ Tripp (2010), p.98

¹⁰² Rubongoya (2007), p.226; Tripp (2010), p.98

its disbursements to the country.¹⁰³ Similarly, in 2008 it was discovered that Amama Mbabazi, the then Defence Minister, and Ezra Suruma, Finance Minister, had pressured the National Social Security Fund (NSSF), a government agency, to buy land owned by Mbabazi himself. The money gained from this sale was then used by the defence minister to buy shares in the National Bank of Commerce in clear violation of the law.¹⁰⁴ Most recently, a number of senior ministers have been implicated in a scandal involving the misuse of public funds and interference in procurement procedures in the lead-up to the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting (CHOGM) in Kampala in November 2007. Among other things, a 2010 parliamentary report accused these individuals of ‘conniving with suppliers to inflate bills to enrich themselves’.¹⁰⁵

In all of these cases, the regime showed limited interest in prosecuting any of those involved. Initially reluctant to discipline Muhwezi, a long-time ally, Museveni dismissed the conclusions of a 2006 Commission of Inquiry which accused the health minister of corruption as ‘not serious’.¹⁰⁶ Similarly, the Ugandan leader intervened directly, in 2008, to protect Mbabazi from parliamentary censure over the NSSF scandal. He also instructed NRM MPs at a meeting in State House to reject the majority report recommending sanctions against the defence minister and instead to adopt the minority report which argued that the evidence against Mbabazi was ‘insufficient’ for any further action to be proposed.¹⁰⁷ The MPs reluctantly obliged and, as of 2010, Mbabazi remains a senior member of the Cabinet.

¹⁰³ Epstein (2007), pp.202-209; Tangri and Mwenda (2008), pp.184-185

¹⁰⁴ Kazooba, *East African* (14/09/08); Tangri and Mwenda (2010), pp.39-40

¹⁰⁵ Mugerwa, *Daily Monitor* (27/10/10)

¹⁰⁶ Epstein (2007), p.204; Museveni subsequently dismissed Muhwezi although the legal case against the former health minister is still pending (Tangri and Mwenda (2010), p.40)

¹⁰⁷ Tangri and Mwenda (2010), pp.39-40

Though highly-damaging to Uganda's long-term future, the prevalence of such corruption scandals does not yet appear to have restricted the country's capacity for economic growth. Indeed, in spite of the global financial crisis of 2008-2009, Uganda's economy has continued to grow throughout the later 2000s. The 2006 discovery of oil reserves on the western border with Congo may also balance-out, to some extent, the harm done to the national coffers by predating ministers; the reserves are expected to last up to thirty years starting in 2011 and be worth US\$2 billion per year.¹⁰⁸ Unfortunately, the regime's past propensity for using national funds as patronage resources would suggest that oil money will not be used wholly in the national interest.

Indeed, the period since 2006 has seen the Museveni regime increasingly modify its economic policies to solidify its hold over potential patronage resources, no doubt in reaction to growing dissatisfaction with the president among his party and Baganda particularly.¹⁰⁹ This has involved, in the words of two British former MFPED employees, the adoption by Kampala of a 'somewhat more interventionist stance' towards the economy and can be seen, for example, in its simultaneous never-ending creation of new districts and the suspension of the local Graduated Tax which has allowed it to both gain new sources of patronage (new districts require state-funded officials to administer them) and to increase its control over the periphery.¹¹⁰ It can also be seen in its increasingly statist approach to organisations like the National Agriculture Advisory Service (NAADS).¹¹¹

¹⁰⁸ Tripp (2010), pp.184-185

¹⁰⁹ Tangri and Mwenda (2010), pp.42-44

¹¹⁰ Whitworth and Williamson (2009), pp.24-25

¹¹¹ Joughin and Kjaer (2010)

From the mid-2000s, Uganda has largely improved relations with its neighbours. Aside from a briefly-heated dispute with Kenya in 2009 over claims to Migingo, a small island in Lake Victoria, Kampala has re-focused much of its regional policies around joint military operations and peacekeeping, notably in Somalia as part of AMISOM since 2007.¹¹² This move away from previous regional strategies based around brinkmanship and unilateral action has come about more for pragmatic reasons than because Museveni has reneged on his former belief in the centrality of military force in foreign policy.

Since 2006, the LRA has been driven from Ugandan borders and set up base in a number of neighbouring states between 2006-2009. The problem has therefore been internationalised since Juba (capital of the autonomous Government of Southern Sudan since 2005) Kinshasa and Bangui have been keen to assist Uganda in military operations aimed at eliminating the rebels, most particularly in late 2008/early 2009 as part of Operation Lightning Thunder.¹¹³ These offers of assistance have been welcomed by the Museveni regime which clearly believes that sending troops into neighbouring states is far easier with that state's cooperation than without. In private talks with US officials, however, the Ugandan leader has made clear that he is and has always been prepared to dispatch armed forces across Uganda's borders 'with or without' permission from regional and international actors, thereby demonstrating how potentially short-lived this new era of cooperation could be.¹¹⁴

The discovery of oil has also persuaded Kampala to improve its relations with Kinshasa. In August 2009, the two countries formally restored full diplomatic relations, severed in 1994

¹¹² *BBC* (21/07/09)

¹¹³ Atkinson (2009), pp.13-16; Atkinson notes, however, that this particular exercise was nevertheless 'an overwhelmingly UPDF affair'.

¹¹⁴ Anonymous interview 28 (2009)

during the Mobutu dictatorship.¹¹⁵ That this *rapprochement* was primarily motivated by a desire to facilitate oil exploration is quite likely though it is nevertheless encouraging that the regime chose a diplomatic rather than military approach to handling the issue. Kampala's involvement in the Burundi peace process between 2003-2009 along with its aborted attempts to play a mediating role after the violent 2007 Kenyan elections (see chapter 5) can also be seen as positive steps in its approach to the region.

Summary

Having summarised Uganda's political history since 1986, it is now clear that the Museveni regime's behaviour in a number of areas has been at odds with donor expectations. Firstly, though it has largely followed IFI-recommended liberal economic reforms since the early 1990s, the regime has steadily undermined Uganda's long-term development and good governance by permitting, condoning and even taking part in corrupt activities for patronage and regime maintenance purposes. The extent to which it has been reluctant to tackle this problem is demonstrated both by the fact that very few high-level ministers involved in such scandals are ultimately prosecuted and by the president's personal intervention on a number of occasions to prevent parliament or another body censuring these figures.

Furthermore, while initially advocating a broad-based, decentralised and participatory polity, the NRM in general and Museveni personally have steadily entrenched a semi-authoritarian political system which affords limited space to opposition parties to compete for power. Though often 'free' in a technical sense, no election under the NRM has been 'fair' in that the playing field, under both the Movement and multiparty systems, has always been skewed in

¹¹⁵ Balimwikungu and Mukasa, *New Vision* (25/08/09)

the regime's favour long before campaigning has begun. In addition, State House has not been afraid to change the 'rules of the game' to ensure continued NRM/Museveni dominance as with the abolition of term limits in 2005.

Finally, the Ugandan military (a key base of regime support) have often played a destabilising role both regionally and in regime attempts to deal with the LRA. Ugandan involvement in Congo between 1996-2003 stands out as the most prominent example of this although the forced removal of over one million northern Ugandans into crowded IDP camps in the 1990s has also been an egregious case. Kampala's frequent scuppering of northern Ugandan peace processes with ill-judged or under-prepared military campaigns have also served to prolong that conflict and perpetuate the lack of security throughout much of the region. This problem has been exacerbated by regular increases in defence spending which have allowed Kampala to finance its foreign wars and to expand its domestic security networks.

Ordinarily, donors withdraw support from African regimes which behave in these ways although, as noted, this has not been the case with Uganda. The final part of this chapter will therefore outline and examine the international assistance provided to the Museveni regime by donors since 1986 as evidence for this claim. It will first be necessary, however, to briefly examine what 'international assistance' or 'international support' entails and how it can be measured or demonstrated.

International Support for the Museveni regime since 1986:

An overview of the donor-Ugandan relationship

The concept of ‘international support’

How can one understand, demonstrate and compare levels of international support to any given regime? While political science scholars have frequently used this concept (together with ‘international assistance’) in their work, few have attempted to operationalise it and elaborate on its contents.¹¹⁶ Most use it as a proxy for the amount of development aid provided to a particular government by donors. International support, however, can equally be seen in disbursements of other donor funds or resources not captured in aid statistics - notably military aid and training. Furthermore, other donor actions, for example, bilateral visits or public statements by senior officials, can be seen as indications of support but are hardly measurable in any meaningful way. Reflecting on these issues, Clapham has attempted to take apart the concept and succinctly reduces it to three categories: ‘people, money and force’.¹¹⁷ These three areas will be discussed below and form the conceptual basis for understanding how international actors have provided support and assistance to the Ugandan government since 1986.

‘Force’

‘Force’ is the use of military power, training or aid to strengthen, weaken, preserve or remove a government by international actors. This form of support can consist of a donor providing a foreign government with arms, military vehicles and military and logistical experts in order

¹¹⁶ Clapham (1996) is an exception, see below

¹¹⁷ Clapham (1996), p.88

to fight insurgents or keep control over territory, it can also involve supplying ‘credits’ to them to purchase such weaponry from Western capitals. Military aid can also entail grants to train and educate military personnel either in the recipient country itself or in Western-run institutions. In addition, this form of support can involve a donor directly supporting a recipient’s specific military offensive in a planning, strategic or logistical role or inviting that recipient to take part in a donor-led regional security alliance. Both more controversial and more liable to fluctuate than development aid (see below), the provision of military aid by a donor indicates a very high degree of support since it directly enables the regime in question to strengthen its hold on power.¹¹⁸ It also indicates a certain confidence on the part of the donor that a regime’s armed forces will not be used irresponsibly.

Unfortunately, information on military aid provided to countries such as Uganda is not widely available. The primary European providers of military aid – France and the UK – do not publish this sensitive information and it is usually obtainable only informally. Statistics on US military aid disbursements are more easily accessible through consulting annual Congressional Budget Justifications for Foreign Operations which list allocations of US military aid according to a number of accounts – primarily International Military Education and Training (IMET), Foreign Military Financing (FMF, a programme which provides grants and loans for the purchase of US weaponry and military training) and Excess Defense Articles (EDA, where ‘excess’ US military equipment is transferred to foreign states).

Budget Justifications do not, however, provide complete military aid information by country, however, and some accounts are only listed by region (eg the East African Counter-Terrorism Initiative) but benefit multiple states. Other accounts (such as the Economic Support Fund

¹¹⁸ Clapham (1996), p.95

(ESF)) include allocations of both military and non-military aid but this is not differentiated in the figures provided. Furthermore, instances where US (and other donor) special forces or agents involve themselves in specific military operations to support a foreign ally are highly unlikely to be publicised by Washington for security and political reasons. As such, the ‘force’ element of international support can be delineated and measured only to a certain extent.

Money

‘Money’ is what is most commonly understood to be the meaning of ‘international assistance’. The amount of ODA (Official Development Assistance¹¹⁹) provided to a regime by international actors (both multilateral and bilateral) represents both the most widely-recognisable and most easily measurable indication of the level of support enjoyed by that regime, particularly in indebted sub-Saharan Africa. Levels of aid disbursed by the 23 OECD Development Assistance Committee members (which include all of Uganda’s major bilateral and multilateral donors) are published annually by the OECD in its *Geographical Distribution of Financial Flows to Developing Countries* and referring to the figures in these volumes is therefore the simplest way to ascertain, measure and compare over time international financial support to a government such as Uganda’s.¹²⁰

It is important, however, to also bear in mind the *type* of aid disbursed in assessing levels of support. Aid can be disbursed both in grant and loan form with bilaterals mainly favouring

¹¹⁹ ODA is defined by the OECD as ‘Flows of official financing administered with the promotion of the economic development and welfare of developing countries as the main objective, and which are concessional in character with a grant element of at least 25 percent (using a fixed 10 percent rate of discount)’. (‘OECD Glossary of Statistical Terms – ODA’, available at <http://stats.oecd.org/glossary/detail.asp?ID=6043>; accessed 01/12/10)

¹²⁰ OECD (1986-2005); In 1986 there were only 19 members

the former and the IFIs the latter. Providing aid in the form of a grant suggests a greater degree of donor trust in the recipient since it does not expect to be paid back. Aid can also be disbursed in programme or project form. Project aid generally by-passes governments to support specific ventures or non-governmental organisations and now generally indicates donor unease about supporting a particular regime, for example Zimbabwe during the 2000s.¹²¹ Programme aid, however, is distributed directly to a government or ministry and affords the regime much greater freedom in how money is spent. This is particularly the case with ‘sectoral’ programme support (money allotted to particular sectors/ministries) and general budgetary support (GBS) where donor funds are transferred directly to a recipient’s treasury and allocated internally by the regime after consultation with donors. The more programme aid given to a recipient by donors, it can be assumed, the greater trust donors have in that government, especially because programme aid (particularly GBS) is fungible.

People

‘People’ is the final and most problematic category of international assistance to define. It includes a large and vague number of features: donor bilateral visits, extending invitations to Western summits and support in international and regional organisations, donor acceptance or rejection of election results, praise or criticism by foreign government officials and even the degree of personal chemistry between rulers. Aspects of this can, of course, be measured. It is possible to list the number of bilateral visits by Western governmental officials to Uganda or to note occasions where the country is granted a leadership role in international organisations by Western allies. Such efforts, however, provide an extremely imprecise measure of the *level* of assistance indicated therein and arguably applying any kind of quantitative approach to this

¹²¹ *Economist* (18/07/09)

personal aspect of international diplomacy is quite misguided. This is even more the case with regard to the public remarks of donors since often intra-donor disagreements mean that the views of some officials are disregarded when overall policy is made. Furthermore, what donors say publicly about a regime may be different to what they say privately to its officials.

Operationalising ‘international support’

Despite the importance of Clapham’s ‘people’, therefore, overall aid levels must provide the main ‘baseline’ for assessing the level of donor support for a regime such as Uganda’s. Not only can such statistics be gathered and compared more easily and meaningfully across time, they also represent the solid foundation of the bilateral relationship. Even if a donor entirely ostracises an aid recipient, barring it from summits it holds sway over and criticising it at every turn, overall support could not be said to be reduced unless the latter’s aid disbursements were cut or slowed by the donor too. The recipient, after all, derives a benefit from international support not so much because of the kudos it can claim from a close friendship with the White House, for example, but from the material assistance that this friendship provides it with. Less measurable indices (visits, comments, statements, etc) can nevertheless be used as evidence of growing or decreasing donor support. They can also provide a vital ‘flavour’ of donor feelings about the regime which cannot be ascertained from statistics alone.

International support to Uganda since 1986

‘Force’: Donor military support to Uganda since 1986

The NRM government, as noted, grew out of a military organisation – the NRA – and has maintained a strong link to the armed forces ever since. Not only have almost all of its senior figures come from military backgrounds, in addition seats for military officers have long been reserved in the Ugandan parliament. In expanding and maintaining its domestic and regional dominance, the regime has also increasingly come to rely on the military, using it both to repress actual and perceived opponents and to open-up new patronage resources such as procurement of weaponry or exploitation of Congolese minerals. Donor assistance to the UPDF and the Ugandan security sector in general, therefore, has been extremely useful for regime maintenance purposes.

That some donors, particularly the US, have provided such assistance (in the form of weaponry, training, logistical and technical assistance and joint military exercises) is clear, particularly from the mid-2000s. The situation is, nevertheless, ambiguous. Between c.1992-2004, the World Bank, IMF and European donors appear to have been fairly critical of the size and cost of the country’s armed forces and did not provide the regime with much in the way of military training or equipment, although the UK worked with Kampala on an extensive Defence Review between 2002-2004.¹²² For much of this period, these donors successfully pushed for the demobilisation and resettlement of around half of the Ugandan

¹²² King’s College London (KCL) and Makerere University (2007), p.10

army with the World Bank and ten other donors financing a US\$40 million demobilisation programme between 1992-1995.¹²³

They also pushed strongly for a reduction in defence spending, placing a 2% of GDP cap on the defence budget in 1999.¹²⁴ At World Bank-chaired Consultative Group (CG) meetings in 1998 and 2001, donors publicly condemned the regime for its ballooning military expenditure and the increasingly obvious links between this problem, corruption and Kampala's activities in Congo.¹²⁵ Furthermore, in 2000, the Netherlands threatened to part-suspend Dutch aid to Uganda unless defence spending was reduced while in 2002 and 2004 respectively, the Netherlands, Denmark and UK did just this for the same reason.¹²⁶

A number of factors, however, undermined this apparently united show of donor criticism. Firstly, the IFIs restricted their interest in the problem to budgetary considerations, stating clearly that the *activities* of the UPDF, particularly involvement in Congo, were not their concern as long as 'the 2%' cap was not exceeded.¹²⁷ In addition, despite wrangling with State House over the issue since the early 1990s, concrete punitive actions from donors did not follow harsh rhetoric until 2002 despite Kampala's continuous ignoring of international prescriptions. Between 1993-1997, defence spending as a percentage of total government spending had risen from 17% to 23% with limited repercussions.¹²⁸ Furthermore, in 2004-2005, the regime proposed a 19% rise in defence spending from 2003-2004 and the diversion of 23% from the budgets of all other government departments to the army to fund the wars in Congo and northern Uganda. While donors stated their objections to these proposals and

¹²³ Banégas (2006), pp.227-228

¹²⁴ KCL and Makerere University (2007), p.24

¹²⁵ Banégas (2006), pp.229-230

¹²⁶ HRW (2000); Mwenda, *Daily Monitor* (18/04/04)

¹²⁷ Banégas (2006), p.231

¹²⁸ Banégas (2006), pp.227-228

refused to endorse the 2004-2005 budget, they nevertheless provided full funding for it, entirely undercutting their criticisms.¹²⁹

More significantly, however, the United States, consistently Uganda's top bilateral donor since 2001, has not been as critical of Kampala's military budgeting as its European allies. In fact, aside from a brief withdrawal of military support between 2000-2002 over involvement in Congo, Washington has long provided a very substantial amount of military assistance to the Museveni regime. This has served to occasionally undercut general donor rhetoric on defence expenditure. In November 2002, for example, shortly after both Denmark and the Netherlands had cut aid over excessive military spending, the US ambassador to Uganda voiced his support for an increased defence budget, arguing that '...Uganda needs to get proper equipment for a well-trained force. That is certainly important for any country...especially since terrorism set in...We have to devise ways of fighting it including the military.'¹³⁰

Between 2000-2008, the US more than doubled its annual IMET programme in Uganda from US\$247,000 to US\$625,000¹³¹ and in July 2003 the country became one of five African states to benefit from a US\$100 million Anti-Terrorist Assistance Programme which provides military 'training, equipment and technology' to US allies to help them in the 'deterring or capturing and prosecuting [of] terrorists'.¹³² Since 9/11, Uganda has also become eligible for the purchase of weaponry and vehicles from the US through the EDA and FMF programmes;

¹²⁹ Akwapt, *East African* (20/06/05)

¹³⁰ Wasike, *New Vision* (14/11/02)

¹³¹ 'Africa' in Department of State (2001), p.71 ('Uganda'); 'Annex: Regional Perspectives' in Department of State (2010), p.198

¹³² Department of State (2006b), p.1; Branch (2007), pp.198-199

between 2004-2005 it received nearly US\$4 million through these initiatives to purchase weapons, equipment and training to ‘counter threats from terrorist organizations such as the LRA and Allied Democratic Forces (ADF)’.¹³³

Since 2007, when Ugandan troops were sent to Somalia, US support for the UPDF has become even more extensive. Ugandan operations in Mogadishu rely heavily on intelligence, weaponry, logistical support and strategic advice provided by Washington.¹³⁴ The US has also paid for a number of training and capacity-building programmes for Ugandan troops involved in Somalia as have the UK and some European governments.¹³⁵ Between 2007-2009, in fact, the UK funded over 40 military training courses for Ugandan army personnel.

Furthermore, the US military has become increasingly more involved in the joint-planning and execution of Ugandan operations against the LRA. Preparation for Operation Lightning Thunder, for example, relied on the use of ‘sophisticated electronic monitoring devices and other high-tech equipment provided by the US’¹³⁶ and a number of interviewees have confirmed that the State Department and Pentagon were heavily-involved at every stage of the mission.¹³⁷ Likewise, in November 2010 the White House published a plan aimed at tackling the LRA issue which would include the US providing the UPDF with ‘political, economic, military and intelligence support...to apprehend or remove from the battlefield Joseph Kony and senior [LRA] commanders’.¹³⁸

¹³³ ‘Request by region: Africa’ in Department of State (2004), pp.265-266 and ‘Request by region: Africa’ in Department of State (2005), pp.310-311

¹³⁴ Anonymous interview 28 (2009)

¹³⁵ FOI document 6; Anonymous interview 7 (2009)

¹³⁶ Atkinson (2009), pp.13-14

¹³⁷ Anonymous interview 28 (2009)

¹³⁸ White House (2010b)

The amount of US assistance, however, grew considerably in the mid-1990s when Uganda positioned itself as a useful ally against the Sudanese government, declared a state sponsor of terrorism by the State Department in 1993 (see chapter 4/5). As one of Sudan's neighbours, Kampala was included in the 'Frontline States Initiative', a programme which saw the provision by Washington of 'non-lethal military assistance' to the UPDF 'so that they can defend themselves against [Sudanese] aggression'.¹³⁹ This included the transfer of US\$3.85 million worth of equipment in 1997-1998 along with a US\$400,000 IMET grant to improve 'professionalisation in the Ugandan army'.¹⁴⁰ In addition, Uganda was invited to play a role in the US's new regional security framework – the African Crisis Response Initiative (ACRI) – from 1997. As part of this programme, US soldiers would be sent to Kampala to train and offer support to Ugandan forces and enhance their conflict-resolving capabilities.¹⁴¹ Furthermore, it is highly likely that Kampala received substantial military supplies from Washington (including US\$20 million worth of military equipment, 'including radios, uniforms and tents' in 1996-1997) both in return for its supporting of the southern Sudanese rebel group the SPLA and, indeed, for passing these supplies along to them in their US-backed campaign against Khartoum.¹⁴²

Frustratingly, the true extent of donor military support for the Museveni regime is difficult to ascertain. US officials, for example, have actively tried to prevent information on their support for the UPDF against the LRA becoming widely available. Branch notes how, in 2003, the Ugandan Minister for the Presidency, Gilbert Bukenya, 'publicly thanked the new

¹³⁹ US Congress (1998)

¹⁴⁰ *ibid*

¹⁴¹ Omach (2000), p.84; Uganda's participation in the ACRI was eventually suspended in 2000 over its involvement in Congo

¹⁴² Branch (2007), pp.197-199

US ambassador, Jimmy Kolker, for having given Uganda \$3 million to fight the LRA...before Bukenya could give details, Kolker interjected, saying it was not necessary to do so'. Similarly, in a March 2004 interview with the *BBC*, General Charles Wald, head of US operations in Africa, acknowledged that his government was providing military support to Ugandan forces fighting the LRA but was unwilling to divulge details, saying: 'it's not just moral support [being provided], but some things need to be kept a bit more private'.¹⁴³

Money: Development aid to Uganda since 1986

Overall trends

As detailed in *Figure 1* below (p.115), official ODA flows to Uganda have increased regularly since 1987 when Kampala accepted an ERP from the World Bank.¹⁴⁴ Such increases have not been seen to the same degree in donor disbursements to many other African states as the following comparison with Kenya and Ethiopia shows:

¹⁴³ *ibid*

¹⁴⁴ Ofcansky (1996), p.130

Year:	Total ODA flows	Total ODA flows	Total ODA flows
	(US\$ millions):	(US\$ millions):	(US\$ millions):
	Uganda	Kenya	Ethiopia
1987	303	699	-
1991	646	1082	1070 ¹⁴⁵
1993	593	760	1123
1995	811	497	854
1997	763	368	632
1999	557	337	656
2001	757	566	1060
2003	991	567	1635
2005	1241	1081	1918
2008¹⁴⁶	1891	1380	3188

Figure 1: Comparison of ODA flows to Uganda, Kenya and Ethiopia, 1987-2008 (Source: OECD (1987-2010))

Both Kenya and Ethiopia have much larger populations than Uganda (Kenya's is around 33% larger, Ethiopia's is closer to 60% larger) and are arguably much more important to donors from a geostrategic perspective (see chapter 7). Surprisingly, however, donors have consistently provided more aid to Uganda than Kenya since the mid-1990s, sometimes

¹⁴⁵ As noted in chapter 7, prior to 1991 Ethiopia was governed by a Marxist-Leninist regime and thus, as a Soviet ally, received limited support from Western donors. Pre-1991 ODA figures are not included in this comparison, therefore, to avoid confusion.

¹⁴⁶ 2008 has been used instead of 2007 as the latter was an election year in Kenya and thus donors disbursed a much larger amount of aid to the country in preparation for this event. The 2007 figure for Kenya (US\$2372 million) is therefore a relative anomaly in terms of recent donor disbursements to the country.

disbursing as much as 43% more to Kampala (2003). Likewise, Uganda has done far better than might be expected when compared to Ethiopia, especially between 1995-2000.

Uganda has also been prioritised by donor agencies and governments when compared to other recipients of their aid. In 2008, the country was the second-largest recipient of Danish aid (US\$97 million) and the lead recipient of Irish aid (US\$73 million) as well as being in the top ten beneficiaries of Swedish, Norwegian and US aid.¹⁴⁷ This is particularly remarkable in the case of the US when one considers the nine states which are given more than Uganda including Iraq, Afghanistan, Pakistan, Egypt, Palestinian Territories, as noted in the Introduction.¹⁴⁸

As **Figure 1** shows, however, ODA flows to Uganda have not increased at a steady rate since 1987. There have been two phases of rapid ODA increases (1987-1995 and 2003-present) along with a period, between 1995-2002, when the level of aid fluctuated. During the first phase of increase, ODA contributions rose by 63% - from US\$303 million to US\$812 million between 1987-1995 and these disbursements represented an average of 15% of Uganda's GDP.¹⁴⁹ Similarly, a 90% increase in ODA support occurred between 2003-2008, with aid levels rising from US\$991 million to US\$1891 million (an average of 14.5% of GDP).¹⁵⁰ Between 1996-2002, however, the amount of ODA received by Uganda fluctuated around an average of US\$680 million per year (11.6% of GDP).¹⁵¹ There is a clear lack of consistency during this period, nonetheless, in terms of the total amount of aid being reduced and the

¹⁴⁷ Information compiled by OECD and listed by donor at http://www.oecd.org/countrylist/0,3349,en_2649_34447_1783495_1_1_1_100.html (accessed 01/12/10)

¹⁴⁸ *ibid*

¹⁴⁹ OECD (1987-2010); 'GDP (current US\$)', historical data viewable at World Bank website (available at <http://data.worldbank.org/indicator/NY.GDP.MKTP.CD>; accessed 01/12/10)

¹⁵⁰ *ibid*

¹⁵¹ *ibid*

individual donors reducing their contributions. Between 1998-1999, for example, donors cut aid to Uganda by 20% (from US\$699 million to US\$557 million) only to increase their support by 45% (to US\$805 million) a year later. Similarly, Uganda's main donors do not appear to have followed general trends during these years. Thus while overall aid flows to Uganda fell between 1998-1999 and 2000-2001, both the US and World Bank increased their support to Kampala during the same years. The same is true of 2001-2002 when both London and Washington boosted their financial assistance to the country when, in general, donor disbursements fell.

In terms of the relative contributions of donors themselves, multilateral bodies (particularly the World Bank) have generally provided as much as 65% of Uganda's aid budget (1992) although this figure has declined during the 2000s as a number of bilateral donors (particularly the US) have upped their disbursements. The Bank has consistently been Uganda's largest multilateral donor while the UK, US and Denmark have been the largest bilaterals. During the 1990s, Italy, Sweden and Germany provided substantial amounts of aid (all featured in Uganda's top three donors between 1989-1997) to the country although their positions have increasingly been usurped by the Netherlands and Japan in the 2000s. Interestingly, while ODA provided by both the Bank and UK has steadily decreased, relative to the size of the overall aid budget, since the 1990s, that of the US has gone up. Thus in 1994, Bank contributions supplied 30% of Uganda's total aid budget, while the UK gave 23% and the US only 6%. By 2007, however, UK aid had been reduced to 12% and that of the Bank to 21% while US disbursements have risen to 17%. These statistics do not, however, suffice to fully explain how ODA disbursements have served to support the Museveni regime. It is therefore necessary to explore more thoroughly the nature of donor aid to Uganda since

1987 and how continuation or suspension of aid flows have or have not attempted to influence regime policies.

Modalities

It is clear that the aid modalities chosen by Uganda's donors have been specifically designed to be as directly supportive of the regime as possible. At the request of Kampala, donors began to move their provision of aid from project form to programme form in the mid-1990s. According to former MFPED employees, the fact that Uganda had by then established macroeconomic stability meant that traditional programme aid, 'provided in support of structural adjustment and balance of payments support...could no longer be justified'.¹⁵² Instead, a number of donors led by the World Bank and UK, created a new form of programme aid – budget support – which 'explicitly supported government expenditure through the budget'. Between 1998-1999 aid was allocated according to sectors of the budget and, from 2000-2001 un-earmarked GBS was first disbursed by a consortium of donors (the Bank, UK, Netherlands, Ireland, Norway, Sweden and Denmark) to the Ugandan treasury so it could use it to 'fund all government expenditures' as it saw fit according to its budget.¹⁵³ Since 2000, donors have considerably reduced the amount of project aid they provide to Uganda (Japan and France are exceptions) but have continuously boosted the share of aid disbursed in GBS form. Between 2000-2004, for example, the amount of GBS provided by donors tripled from US\$165 million to US\$477 million while, by 2004, 41% of UK aid to

¹⁵² Whitworth and Williamson (2009), p.25

¹⁵³ Whitworth and Williamson (2009), p.26

Uganda was allocated in this form.¹⁵⁴ As of 2008-2009, half of Uganda's entire aid budget is provided using this modality.¹⁵⁵

The US has never provided budgetary support programmes in any of the countries it disburses aid to. Its MCA, however, comes close. Created in 2004, this programme, administered by the Department of State, enters into 'compacts' with developing countries (selected according to a variety of indicators including economic policies and good governance) and provides their governments with direct funds to 'promote growth and reduce poverty'.¹⁵⁶ Though Kampala's poor governance indicators and refusal to provide Washington with various statistics continues to make it ineligible for 'full compact' status, in 2004 it was granted 'threshold status' allowing it to receive US\$10.5 million between 2004-2006 to 'fight public sector corruption'.¹⁵⁷

Donors have also shown their support to the Museveni regime by making Uganda the centrepiece for various international aid initiatives. In 2000, Uganda became the first country to qualify for the World Bank/IMF-initiated enhanced Heavily Indebted Poor Countries (HIPC) debt relief fund and instantly had US\$2 billion of its US\$4 billion national debt wiped out by donors.¹⁵⁸ Similarly, in 2003, the US government chose Uganda to be the showcase country for its new AIDS-prevention programme, the President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR), providing it with US\$91 million in 2004, US\$148 million in 2005, US\$170

¹⁵⁴ FOI document 4, p.18

¹⁵⁵ Matsiko, *Independent* (Uganda) (09/08/10)

¹⁵⁶ USAID (2002)

¹⁵⁷ MCC (2007)

¹⁵⁸ Tripp (2010), p.184

million in 2006, US\$237 million in 2007 and US\$284 million in 2008.¹⁵⁹ Though PEPFAR funding tends to be distributed via NGOs its resources have the potential to be abused by the regime indirectly as a *Human Rights Watch* report of 2005 has shown.¹⁶⁰

Regardless of whether money received from PEPFAR, the MCA or through GBS has actually been used by Kampala to fund activities of which donors would disapprove the very fact that Uganda has received aid through these programmes represents a large show of international support for its government. HIPC, PEPFAR and GBS have been central elements of donor development plans in the 2000s and so by choosing Uganda as a ‘showcase’ for all three, donors have clearly indicated their overall support for its government and the direction it is taking the country in.

Aid cuts and ‘non-cases’ of political conditionality

International support can also be shown in the increasing of aid by donors at particular moments. Though ODA is primarily provided to alleviate poverty, few commentators would interpret a donor’s failure to reduce aid to a government which had just committed human rights abuses as anything other than a tacit show of confidence in that government. Similarly, by refusing to link aid disbursements to the resolving of certain issues (such as the invasion of a neighbour) by a recipient, donors appear to suggest that they do not consider such matters serious enough to merit endangering the bilateral relationship.

¹⁵⁹ Information available from PEPFAR Website (<http://www.pepfar.gov/countries/uganda/index.htm>; accessed 01/12/10)

¹⁶⁰ HRW (2005), pp.41-42

On occasion, donors have indeed used the threat of aid cuts to pressure Kampala into certain courses of action. The most notable (and, thus far, successful) example of this being during 2009-2010 after an NRM MP (though not a member of the government), David Bahati, introduced an 'Anti-Homosexuality Bill' which proposed life imprisonment for those found 'guilty' of committing homosexual acts, and the death penalty for others.¹⁶¹ The bill was roundly and rapidly condemned as 'odious', 'appalling' and 'wretched' by numerous international figures including the US President and Secretary of State along with the leaders of the UK, Australia, Canada, Sweden and EU.¹⁶² The Ugandan leader quickly disowned the bill, noting how it had become a 'foreign policy issue', and stressed that he and his regime did not support it; it has since languished in a parliamentary procedural mire and seems unlikely to receive a reading in parliament, let alone reach the president's desk for approval.¹⁶³

Where donors have actually reduced aid to Kampala, however, the meagre amount cut and subsequent speedy restoration of normal aid levels has served to undermine any symbolic messages of disapproval such suspensions have been aimed at sending. As mentioned, the Netherlands and UK cut aid to Uganda over defence spending in 2002 and 2004 respectively. The UK, however, reduced its disbursements to Uganda by only 12% (US\$10 million of US\$85 million) and in the two years following the cut more than doubled its ODA contributions to the country. The Netherlands also increased its aid to Uganda during these years, albeit not by so much (from US\$74.7 million in 2004 to US\$84.6 million in 2006).

¹⁶¹ Tripp (2010), p.96

¹⁶² Muhumuza, *Daily Monitor* (03/12/09); *Associated Foreign Press (AFP)* (18/12/09); Spetalnick, *Reuters* (04/02/10)

¹⁶³ *BBC* (13/01/10)

Likewise, between 2005-2006 several European donors suspended aid to Uganda over democratisation concerns – the first and only time the Museveni regime has been subject to political conditionality. These cuts, primarily carried out in protest at the arrest of Besigye and Kampala's slow progress in the field of democratisation, lead ultimately to around US\$60 million being cut or diverted by the UK, Ireland, Netherlands, Norway and Sweden between March 2005 – January 2006 from their original combined 2005 commitment of US\$325 million.¹⁶⁴ The degree to which this 20% reduction in aid represented a true decline in support from these donors is again, however, questionable. Firstly, no donor cut more than 30% of their aid in total. Secondly, donors did not act in unison and announced aid suspensions erratically over the course of ten months. Thirdly, by 2007 all but the Netherlands had increased their aid disbursements to Uganda to levels exceeding those originally pledged in 2005. Indeed, in the two years after the cuts, Swedish aid to Uganda rose by 28%, Irish aid by 38%, Norwegian aid by 53% and UK aid by 98%. By 2008, Dutch aid too had returned to previous levels and, indeed, this year saw the Hague disburse more aid to Kampala (US\$87.2) than ever before.¹⁶⁵ As such it is difficult to argue that these donors had intended for their aid reductions in 2005-6 to seriously pressure the Ugandan regime on democratisation.

Though donors have often shown indirect support to the regime through funding elections perceived to be biased towards Kampala (notably the 1996 election and 2000 referendum), the reluctance by donors to cut aid in response to problems has been the most common way in which ODA has assisted the Ugandan government. Indeed, the donor community's preference for private 'dialogue' above political conditionality has frequently lead to

¹⁶⁴ Calculated using figures from OECD (1987-2010) and Olupot, *New Vision* (21/12/05)

¹⁶⁵ OECD (1987-2010)

controversial behaviour on the part of Kampala seemingly going unacknowledged and ‘unpunished’. A 2005 DFID-commissioned report has referred to these instances as ‘non-cases’ of political conditionality and noted how, by not suspending aid, donors appear to be acting inconsistently with their professed support for ‘the application of democratic principles’ in general.¹⁶⁶

The most obvious examples of such donor behaviour came during the mid-1990s multi-partyism debates and in the areas of defence spending and corruption. In both of the latter cases, donors condemned Kampala in private and (occasionally) in public for not acting to curb the extent of these problems from c.1994-5 but failed to attach any aid cuts to their rhetoric until the 2000s. The 2005 report also points to the regime’s activities in the north as another notable ‘non-case’. It records that ‘the Government has been involved in a war...which has caused massive internal displacements (over 1m persons) and systematic human rights abuses..’ but that DFID has not responded despite the ‘gravity and impact’ of this situation.¹⁶⁷

People: Personal demonstrations of donor support since 1986

The different elements of personal support will be explored below in three different categories: Visits, Statements and Endorsements; Visits and Summitry; Criticisms and Non-Criticisms.

¹⁶⁶ FOI document 4, p.34

¹⁶⁷ *ibid*

Visits, Statements and Endorsements

In international diplomacy, what senior Western politicians say and where they say it is a matter of supreme significance because a leader's comments and travel schedule are some of the clearest ways in which they can underline their personal feelings on an issue or government. Demands on the schedules of high-profile donor figures are such that foreign visits by these officials can be easily interpreted as shows of support to the foreign government hosting them. This is especially the case with African countries which, as outlined in chapter 6, are rarely prioritised in Western foreign policy-making.

The fact that several of the most senior political figures in the US and UK since the mid-1990s have made high-profile visits to Uganda should therefore be seen as a considerable demonstration of support for Kampala by London and Washington. Particularly notable US trips were made by First Lady Hillary Clinton in March 1997, Secretaries of State Madeleine Albright and Colin Powell in December 1997 and May 2001 respectively and Presidents Bill Clinton and George W Bush in March 1998 and July 2003 respectively.¹⁶⁸ For the same African country to be visited twice in five years by successive US presidents is extremely rare.¹⁶⁹ The fact that Clinton's visit was also the first to Uganda by any US president also represented a significant show of support for the Museveni regime. In the case of the UK, Foreign Secretaries Jack Straw and David Miliband visited in January 2002 and November 2007, Prime Minister Gordon Brown in November 2007 and several senior members of the

¹⁶⁸ *New Vision* (26/05/01); Rosenblum (2002), p.195; *BBC* (11/07/03)

¹⁶⁹ Nigeria and South Africa are perhaps the only exceptions to this statement

Royal Family including the Queen in the same month to attend the CHOGM.¹⁷⁰ Once again, the seniority of these figures endowed their visits with much significance, particularly since the 2007 trip was the first to Uganda by the Queen since before Ugandan independence and was also Gordon Brown's first major international summit as prime minister.¹⁷¹

Aside from these prestigious visits, the UK and US have also shown their continued support for Kampala by sending, on an almost annual basis, ministers with specific responsibility for Africa or aid to the country. This has served to permanently remind international commentators and the regime itself that Uganda is a long-term and important ally of these donors. Thus it is possible to identify for almost every year since 1994 at least one ministerial visit to Uganda from London or Washington whether this be from the FCO, DFID or State Department. Indeed, in several years more than one trip was made by the same official¹⁷².

Clearly the comments made and behaviour displayed by these dignitaries while in Uganda have also played an important role in the level of international support their presence has conveyed. Visits by Lynda Chalker¹⁷³, Short, Clinton and Albright between c.1994-2002 all appear to have been used to reify Museveni personally and his regime's policies in general and to express international support for Uganda's 'no-party' political system. During his 1998 Entebbe speech, Clinton lauded Museveni as the prime figure in a 'new generation of African leaders' and signed a Joint Declaration of Principles which, among other things, gave credence to the Movement system in its statement that 'there is no fixed model for democratic

¹⁷⁰ Ashley, *Guardian* (28/01/02); 'Uganda's Relations with the UK: Visits', FCO Website (available at <http://www.fco.gov.uk/en/travel-and-living-abroad/travel-advice-by-country/country-profile/sub-saharan-africa/uganda/?profile=intRelations>; accessed 01/12/10)

¹⁷¹ The Queen previously visited Uganda in 1954; Branigan, *Guardian* (26/04/07)

¹⁷² For example, Clare Short in 2002 and Walter Kansteiner in 2003

¹⁷³ UK Minister of State for both Overseas Development and Africa between 1986-1997

institutions or transformations’.¹⁷⁴ In addition, Albright, in a 1997 press conference during her visit to Uganda refused to take a position when asked if she supported the US ambassador’s call for a return to multi-partyism. Instead she praised Uganda as a ‘beacon in the Central African region’ and commended Museveni’s ‘progressive role and supportive role of democracy [sic] throughout the region’.¹⁷⁵ Similarly, on her first visit to Uganda in 1997, Short announced that the UK would not push for a return to pluralism in the country, adding that ‘I do not think that it is necessarily right for Uganda to have the same political system as Britain’.¹⁷⁶

A speech made by George W Bush during his July 2003 visit was also extremely generous in the praise it bestowed on Museveni. Turning directly to the Ugandan leader, Bush said:

Mr President, you have been a world leader – not just a leader on the continent of Africa but a world leader...we come to herald your leadership and to assure you and to assure the people of Uganda that when it comes to struggle against hopelessness and poverty and disease that you’ve got a friend in the United States.¹⁷⁷

Even a sometime strong critic of the Ugandan government, former US ambassador Johnnie Carson, has been unable to remain disparaging since his 2009 appointment as Assistant Secretary of State for Africa. In a July 2010 visit to Uganda he rowed back on comments made in a 2005 *Boston Globe* article where he had mused that Uganda ‘could return to the dictatorial past if Museveni continued his controversial push for the removal of ...term limits’

¹⁷⁴ HRW (1999), p.149

¹⁷⁵ *ibid*

¹⁷⁶ *ibid*

¹⁷⁷ White House (2003b)

instead reassuring reporters that ‘I do not believe President Museveni is a dictator. He is a president duly elected in a free and fair election’.¹⁷⁸

This highlights a further area in which donor comments have served to support the Ugandan regime – the endorsement of election results. The rejection by major powers of a country’s election result as ‘not free and fair’ can seriously undermine the domestic and international legitimacy of whichever leader has been putatively re-elected. In 2008, for example, donors refused to recognise Mwai Kibaki of Kenya and Robert Mugabe of Zimbabwe as the legitimately re-elected leaders of their states after disputed elections, eventually forcing both into power-sharing agreements in order to retain international recognition.¹⁷⁹

It is important to note, then, that despite the fact that no elections in Uganda under the NRM regime have been truly fair, donors have nevertheless been careful to endorse the results in as supportive a manner as possible. The 1994 CA election and 1996 presidential and parliamentary elections were therefore described as ‘transparent’ and ‘representative of the will of the people’.¹⁸⁰ Likewise, the US government endorsed the 2000 referendum as having represented a ‘free and open decision’ despite the fact that many of the conditions set by donors for a legitimate plebiscite were not met.¹⁸¹ On occasion, donors have even attempted to dissuade opposition parties from contesting the results of elections; in June 1996 the EU Parliamentary Committee on Development asserted that Paul Ssemogerere should desist from

¹⁷⁸ Mukasa, *New Vision* (27/07/10)

¹⁷⁹ Gitau, *Daily Nation* (26/01/08); Philp, *Times* (05/07/08)

¹⁸⁰ Hauser (1997), p.108

¹⁸¹ Tripp (2004), p.21

challenging the 1996 presidential election outcome since ‘losers should not contest the results’.¹⁸²

Visits and Summitry

Donors have also shown their support for the Ugandan regime by frequently welcoming its leader to their own capitals; Museveni has visited both the UK and US on an almost annual basis since the 1990s (see chapter 6). Thus the Ugandan president travelled to London in 1999, 2000, 2001 (twice), 2002 (twice), 2003, 2004, 2005, 2006, 2008 and 2009 and to Washington in 1995, 1997, 2002, 2003 (twice), 2005, 2007 and 2009.¹⁸³ Sam Kutesa, Ugandan foreign minister since 2005, has also visited the UK on eight occasions during his tenure. The frequency of this footfall stands in stark contrast to visits made by Kenyan president Kibaki who has journeyed to both the US and UK only once each since his election in 2003 (see chapter 6).

Donors have also demonstrated their confidence in Kampala through inviting it to play a leading role in the Commonwealth and UN during the later 2000s. In 2003, Commonwealth officials chose the Ugandan capital as the host city for the 2007 CHOGM, a meeting which would be attended by dozens of world leaders and dignitaries. Though Britain did not necessarily have a casting vote in allowing Kampala to host such an internationally-significant event, its Foreign Office would have been able to veto the decision or to ruin its chances of success by advising the Queen not to attend for political or security reasons.¹⁸⁴

¹⁸² Hauser (1999), p.631

¹⁸³ ‘Country Profile: Uganda: International Relations: Visits’, FCO Website (<http://www.fco.gov.uk/en/travel-and-living-abroad/travel-advice-by-country/country-profile/sub-saharan-africa/uganda?profile=intRelations>; accessed 01/12/10)

¹⁸⁴ Branigan, *Guardian* (26/04/07)

Notwithstanding the controversial events in Uganda of 2005-6 (which had prompted London to suspend part of its aid package), Britain nevertheless did not attempt to do this and, indeed, invested a great deal of time, money and organisation into ensuring that the event was successful.¹⁸⁵

Furthermore, in October 2008, Uganda was unanimously elected to replace South Africa as the African non-permanent member of the UN Security Council, a position it held until December 2010. As with the CHOGM, it is impossible to say how far Uganda's major donors (particularly the US and UK) orchestrated or supported the country's bid for a seat. All 192 members of the General Assembly voted in the 2008 poll and only 11 failed to vote for Uganda in the race for the Africa seat.¹⁸⁶ Washington is known, however, for having a large degree of influence among General Assembly members in such votes and would have been unlikely to allow a regime it did not support to run uncontested for a seat.¹⁸⁷ Moreover, it is clear that donors were at least very satisfied with the result. A former senior UK official has spoken of the 'pleasure' felt at the time in London and Washington on Uganda's election and how these governments were delighted to have a 'supportive international partner' join them on the Council.¹⁸⁸

The symbolic importance of Uganda receiving leadership roles in these two major global organisations cannot be underestimated. As Kampala's UN envoy, Francis Butagira, said of his country's election to the Council: '[this is] a vote of confidence in our country Uganda

¹⁸⁵ Anonymous interview 16 (2009)

¹⁸⁶ Izama, *Daily Monitor* (26/08/08)

¹⁸⁷ *Independent* (Uganda) (25/12/08)

¹⁸⁸ Anonymous interview 32 (2010)

and the success of our foreign policy’ and this is how most other diplomats and commentators have interpreted it.¹⁸⁹

Criticisms and Non-Criticisms

Donors have not, however, held back from openly criticising the Ugandan government, particularly since the late 1990s. On a number of occasions, they have publicly denounced the regime’s slow progress on democratisation, failure to rein-in high-level corruption and destabilising involvement in Congo. The impact of such statements, though, has been considerably reduced by a number of factors. Critical comments have almost invariably been made only by mid-level donor officials such as ambassadors, embassy officers and aid agency delegates and often without backing from their metropolitan superiors. Thus, in the 1990s, it had been the US ambassador (Southwick) who had emphasised, via a press release, that a ‘fully democratic system’ should be written into the 1995 constitution and the UK High Commissioner, who had condemned the *mchaka mchaka* ‘public education’ courses as a ‘form of indoctrination commonly dispensed in dictatorial regimes’.¹⁹⁰ Similarly, in the lead-up to the 2000 referendum, UK High Commissioner Michael Cook stressed the importance of the NRM giving a ‘proper platform’ to opposition parties and set a number of fundamental conditions for the poll which would have to be met in return for donor endorsement of the result.¹⁹¹ The lack of support forthcoming for such comments from London and Washington after they were made, however, gave the distinct impression that the envoys in question did not have the confidence of their own governments. Southwick’s criticisms were not backed by the White House and Cook’s tough-talking was entirely undermined when the UK

¹⁸⁹ *Independent* (Uganda) (29/10/08)

¹⁹⁰ Dicklitch (1998), p.261, note 72; Hauser (1999), p.628

¹⁹¹ HRW (1999), p.51

government accepted the results of the referendum despite most of his conditions having not been met.¹⁹²

Likewise, a number of US and UK ambassadors have condemned the Museveni regime for its lack of action in tackling corruption. In 2004, UK High Commissioner Adam Wood told reporters that ‘corruption weakens the credibility of security organs’ while in 2009, outgoing US ambassador Steven Browning attacked Kampala’s record, saying ‘the ability to fight and control corruption is not as strong as we think it should be...all I am going to say is, ‘you had your chance; you didn’t do it’.¹⁹³ Once again, these comments were not backed-up by any statements made or actions taken in donor capitals.

The few occasions where mid-level officials are perceived to have, without question, the direct backing of their governments has been at donor CG meetings (held in Kampala since 1998).¹⁹⁴ During several of these gatherings, donor representatives have issued critical statements jointly-condemning the regime’s anti-corruption strategies. In 2003, this included condemning ‘large-scale corruption and embezzlement at the top, which is carried out with impunity’ and followed a similarly strongly-worded statement issued after the 1998 CG meeting.¹⁹⁵ On neither of these occasions, however, did the donors link their criticisms to substantial aid cuts, indeed the World Bank, which chairs the meetings, increased its aid to Kampala by 19% between 1998-1999 and by 13% between 2003-2004. In terms of measuring international support, therefore, it would be difficult to view these statements as indications of an overall decline during these years.

¹⁹² de Torrente (2001), p.226

¹⁹³ Osike and Musoke, *New Vision* (15/10/04); Gyezaho, *Daily Monitor* (13/01/09)

¹⁹⁴ Mallaby (2004), p.217

¹⁹⁵ ‘Uganda’s Development Partners’ (2003), p.1

Finally, just as ‘non-cases’ of political conditionality can be seen as tacit signs of donor support, so too can ‘non-cases’ of donor criticism. Though donors have long been comfortable criticising Kampala on anti-corruption measures (or lack thereof) their apparent silence on other topics has been seen as, at least, inadvertent indications of their support. Thus the lack of donor comment after the NRM extended its temporary administration in 1989 for a further five years or after it fused party and state machinery in passing the 2000 Movement Act was seen by many as an endorsement, on the part of the international community, of the regime’s steady entrenchment of its power over the country.¹⁹⁶

Likewise, donors have been reluctant to discuss the war in northern Uganda in any terms which might call into question the legality or morality of UPDF actions.¹⁹⁷ This too could be taken as a gesture of support as commentators, analysts and UN officials have, since the 1990s, increasingly come to see the Ugandan regime itself as a major contributor to the violence and destruction seen in that conflict (see chapter 5). In not condemning UPDF behaviour throughout the anti-insurgency campaign, particularly the forced displacement and internment of civilians in the 1990s, donors have appeared to indirectly endorse the tactics employed by Kampala herein. This non-criticism is particularly striking as a show of support, as Mamdani points out, when one considers how the international community has, rightly, demonised Khartoum for its violent attempts to stem rebellion in Darfur during the 2000s.¹⁹⁸

¹⁹⁶ de Torrente (2001), p.218

¹⁹⁷ de Torrente (2001), pp.109-110

¹⁹⁸ Mamdani (2009), p.281

Conclusion

This chapter has served to introduce the Ugandan case study which will be the focus of this thesis. In detailing the country's political history since 1986 it has been possible to highlight a number of trends in the Museveni regime's behaviour which one might ordinarily expect donors to 'punish' through aid cuts and public criticisms. These include its steady circumscribing of the democratic process, involvement in a number of destabilising regional conflicts, increased high-level participation in and condoning of corruption and a disregard for civilian safety in dealing, usually militarily, with domestic rebels. The second part of the chapter, however, has established how donors have rarely responded to such misdemeanours by cutting aid substantially or issuing strong statements of disapproval as they have elsewhere in Africa. Indeed, donor support for the Museveni regime has grown almost every year since the early 1990s in spite of these mounting problems.

The reason for this donor forbearance has been primarily related to international perceptions of Uganda's 'value' as an economic success story, guarantor of stability, ally against terrorism etc. The regime has played a dominant role in constructing, maintaining and promoting these 'images' of itself to its donor partners, thereby securing agency in its international relations. The 'image management' strategies it has employed to this end will be explored more fully in the following chapters.

Chapter 3

Image Management

Introduction

The Ugandan regime has adopted a strategy conceptualised in this study as ‘image management’ in its attempts to secure agency in relations with donors. This approach has involved the construction and management, on the part of Kampala, of how donors perceive it and its usefulness to them as a recipient of their support. Through shaping and developing various ‘images’ in donor minds, the regime has been able to persuade donors to continue supporting it despite its more objectionable domestic and regional activities. This chapter will consider in more depth what is entailed in image management – how, in a practical sense, has the Ugandan regime ‘played the card’ of an economic success story or donor ally against terrorism?

Conceptualising Image Management

The construction and maintenance of images by African regimes is clearly a two-stage process. As detailed in Chapter 1, an image is primarily founded upon actions and policies. What a regime *does*, be it contributing to regional peacekeeping or implementing neo-liberal economic reforms, represents the fundamental basis for how donors will assess it. Implementing this stage alone, however, gives regimes limited control over how they will be seen. As Dunn notes, donor governments form perceptions of regimes based on a ‘gradual layering and connecting of events and meanings’. There are few guarantees, nonetheless, regarding ‘which events will be selected’ by policy-makers when forming these perceptions

and, indeed, which versions of these events will be deemed most credible in official discourses.¹

The second, and more vital, stage of image management therefore involves the communication by the regime of the significance and ‘meaning’ of actions taken or policies pursued to donors themselves. This requires the regime to directly engage with donor officials both in person and through the various media which influence their opinions. If suitably skilled at this, regimes can succeed in representing actions or policies to donors as part of an overall positive narrative or image (eg ‘economic success story’) which has previously represented, or will increasingly in the future represent, a major rationale for donor support. The three most common ways in which regimes have communicated such narratives are: 1) in personalising foreign policy; 2) in using Western lobbying firms and 3) in engaging with Western media, think tank, academic and business organisations. The Museveni regime, it is argued, has been particularly skilled in employing all three strategies and the ways in which it has done so will now be surveyed.

Image Management Strategies: 1. Personalisation of Foreign Policy

A major strategy employed by the Ugandan regime to connect events to narratives has been the fostering of close personal relationships with donor officials at the highest levels. In doing so, President Museveni and his most loyal regime allies have worked to ensure that relationships with key Western figures are based as far as possible on informal, personal ties rather than business-like, institutional links. Such an environment not only encourages the resolution of Ugandan-donor disputes through ‘private dialogue’ rather than public criticism

¹ Dunn (2004), pp.124-125

or sanctions but also provides an ideal context to personally promote a particular image or understanding of his regime's activities to donor officials. By personalising high-level donor relations, Museveni has thereby fostered a donor-Ugandan foreign policy framework where senior Western officials base their assessments of Kampala not only on traditional concerns such as 'interests' but also on more 'emotional' preoccupations such as 'trust'. This strategy has been particularly successful owing to the overwhelming personal dominance of Museveni himself in Uganda's foreign policy decision-making since 1986.

Ugandan foreign policy-making under Museveni

The few commentators who have analysed the internal dynamics of foreign policy-making in Uganda have agreed that, in spite of the existence of multiple institutions which theoretically contribute to the process (such as Parliament, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MOFA) and the Cabinet), policies have generally been decided upon inside the walls of State House.² The 1998 decision to intervene in Congo, for example, was apparently made 'by the president himself' without reference to Parliament, 'important civilian advisors' or MOFA.³ Likewise, while Museveni consulted his Cabinet over the decision to support the 2003 US-led war on Iraq, they were permitted limited influence over the final verdict; the majority speaking out against Ugandan support but being overruled by the president (see chapter 5).⁴ Furthermore, it is clear that MOFA, which has limited funding, plays a minimal role in decision-making.⁵ One observer, for example, has suggested that MOFA is 'more about process than policy'

² Wafula Bichachi (2004), p.78; Thakur (2005), pp.123-124

³ Clark (2001), pp.262-263

⁴ Butime interview (2010)

⁵ Thakur (2005), p.127; Anonymous interview 11 (2009)

while one of the Ministry's own officials has summarised his institution's contribution to Ugandan foreign policy as 'technical support and advice'.⁶

Indeed, within State House itself there is limited evidence of a process of policy formulation which goes beyond Museveni and his closest advisers. Though over 70 presidential assistants and advisers are employed by the executive, many of whom theoretically focus on foreign affairs, the majority of these posts are simply created for patronage purposes (see chapter 2) and observers assert that most holders 'have very little access' to Museveni and, indeed, 'some have never even met him'.⁷ Instead, the few civilian and military individuals regularly consulted by the president on foreign policy owe their influence not to any office held but to their personal relationship with Museveni the man.

This group ('the State House complex') has included some of the 40 original members of the NRA such as Eriya Kategaya, Ruhakana Rugunda and Kahinda Otafiire, senior figures in the military and security services such as Amama Mbabazi, David Tinyefuza and Arona Nyakairima as well as presidential relatives such as Salim Saleh (Museveni's brother), Muhoozi Kainerugaba (his son), Jim Muhwezi (an in-law) and Sam Kutesa (also an in-law).⁸ Almost invariably drawn from military ranks and the west of the country (Museveni's home region), members of this 'NRM elite' are given influence only as long as they remain loyal to, and dependent upon, the president; 'faithfulness is far more important than particular skills', one observer has noted in relation to membership of Museveni's 'inner circle'.⁹ It is appropriate, therefore, to present Ugandan foreign policy, as this thesis does, as largely the

⁶ Anonymous interview 11 (2009); Muganda Guma interview (2009)

⁷ Matsiko wa Mucoori, *Independent* (08/04/09); Anonymous interview 23 (2009)

⁸ Thakur (2005), pp.130-131; *Independent* (25/03/09)

⁹ Thakur (2005), pp.130-131; Tripp (2010), pp.52-57; Anonymous interview 6 (2009)

result of decisions made by one man. Certainly this is how the vast majority of those interviewed have conceived of it.¹⁰

This extreme personalisation of foreign policy-making is not, however, unique to Uganda; Clapham has made similar observations about a number of African states.¹¹ Nor, indeed, is Museveni's the first regime in Uganda itself to have behaved in this manner. East's study of MOFA in the 1970s makes comparable claims for the policy-making styles of both Obote and Amin.¹² The Museveni case stands out, however, for two reasons. Firstly, Museveni's unchallenged personal dominance of foreign policy decision-making has endured for an unusually lengthy period of time. Secondly, other Ugandan officials have represented and presented their leader's policies in the West since 1986 in a remarkably unified, disciplined and coherent manner, particularly in contrast to disorganised diplomatic networks such as Kenya's.¹³

Factors relating to the internal dynamics and sociology of the NRM regime appear to have been at play in bringing about this state of affairs. On the first point, as noted above, Museveni has consistently acted to prevent politicians or institutions building-up sufficient independent power to challenge his position. Thus respected NRM cadres such as Besigye, Kategaya and Tumukunde have been isolated, dismissed and even prosecuted after becoming dissenters while corrupt loyalists such as Kutesa, Mbabazi and Saleh have been repeatedly promoted and protected from censure (see chapter 2). Museveni has also made heavy use of patronage to ensure that the leadership of the UPDF remains loyal, and dependent upon him

¹⁰ Anonymous interviews 2 (2009); 6 (2009); 11 (2009); 26 (2009) and 32 (2010)

¹¹ Clapham (1996), pp.88-93

¹² East (1973)

¹³ Throup and Hornsby (1998), pp.58-60

for preferment, thereby precluding them from establishing rival power bases to the presidency. Tripp notes, for example, that during the 2000s, the UPDF was gradually purged of non-western officers so that, by 2010, ‘there were no longer any nonwesterners in the core group of commanders’.¹⁴ Consequently, senior army personnel are universally aware that promotion is based primarily upon ties to the president.

On the second point, the influence of the NRA’s guerilla heritage must be taken into account. As explained in chapter 2, the NRA, as a rebel group, was particularly notable among its African counterparts for its emphasis on internal discipline and ideological consistency. During the bush war, NRA soldiers would receive daily instruction in ‘political education’ from the leadership and a strict ‘code of conduct’ was enforced to maintain organisational coherence.¹⁵ There was also a strict hierarchy of command and Museveni’s primacy was accepted without question.¹⁶ That this sense of guerilla discipline, unity of purpose and obedience has influenced the way in which the NRM regime deals with the outside world can be assumed since most Ugandan officials who engage with donors on Museveni’s behalf are current or former NRA/UPDF soldiers. Furthermore, Museveni has publicly maintained the discourse of guerilla solidarity and military discipline throughout his presidency, remaining a member of the armed forces until 2004, frequently describing himself as a ‘freedom fighter’ and regularly holding ‘Heroes day’ ceremonies to decorate former NRA soldiers for their role in the ‘liberation’ of Uganda in 1986.¹⁷ Ugandan officials, therefore, conduct diplomacy as if carrying out the orders of a commanding officer in wartime; NRM MPs, for example,

¹⁴ Tripp (2010), p.52

¹⁵ Ngoga (1998), pp.96-102

¹⁶ *ibid*

¹⁷ Ross, *BBC* (06/04/04); Bareebe, *Daily Monitor* (06/03/11); Ssempogo, Kagolo and Kiwanuka, *New Vision* (09/06/10)

frequently cite the president's role as 'commander-in-chief' when justifying foreign policy actions.¹⁸ Together with Museveni's personal dominance of foreign policy, this means that whichever minister donors deal with, they are ultimately dealing with Museveni.

The personalisation of donor-Ugandan relations

Ugandan-donor relations have been highly personalised at senior levels from the early days of the Museveni regime and it is undoubtedly the case that this has had a considerable impact on the overall relationship. Indeed, in nearly every interview with donor personnel carried out during research for this thesis the interviewee would emphasise the personal element of the donor-Ugandan relationship, even in response to very general questions. Thus, former donor envoys have commented on Museveni's 'jovial'¹⁹, 'intelligent', 'thoughtful'²⁰ and 'smart'²¹ nature, describing him as 'thespian'²², 'disarmingly frank'²³ and someone who 'could give it to you straight'²⁴, positively contrasting their meetings with him to those held with other African leaders by characterising the former experience as 'like opening a bottle of champagne'.²⁵ Some senior donor figures have made clear explicitly that they 'like Museveni', while language employed by others regarding the Ugandan leader would seem to be more appropriately used in the arena of friendship rather than diplomacy. Clare Short, for example, described her reaction to Uganda's intervention in Congo in terms of

¹⁸ Nyakairu, *Daily Monitor* (06/07/06); Anonymous interview 8 (2009)

¹⁹ Cook interview (2009)

²⁰ Anonymous interview 14 (2009)

²¹ Kansteiner interview (2008)

²² Houdek interview (2009)

²³ Cullimore interview (2008)

²⁴ Anonymous interview 11 (2009)

²⁵ Anonymous interview 22 (2009)

disappointment with Museveni, clearly indicative of the personal trust she had in the president and the degree to which she saw donor-Ugandan relations through this lens.²⁶

Furthermore, it is clear that certain key individuals or groups have been particularly prioritised by Museveni in the fostering of these personal relationships. He has, for example, established close links with specific senior donor figures whose institutional or ideological background has made them more inclined to accept one or more of Uganda's projected 'images' and therefore support, even defend, his regime as a result (see chapter 6). In the UK the two officials most cited in this regard have been Lynda, later Baroness, Chalker and her successor as development minister, Clare Short. Indeed, Chalker's dealings with Uganda, more than those of any other Western official before or since, appear to have been most strongly centred around a close, personal relationship with Museveni. Certainly the 'personal chemistry' between the two has been commented upon by numerous observers, diplomats and civil servants.²⁷ Two UK civil servants have noted that a trusting, personal relationship was established between her and Museveni 'very early on' in the president's tenure²⁸ and one has even noted his surprise at the warmth and informality of this alliance claiming that it came as a 'revelation' to him that a minister could seemingly compromise her 'objectivity' to such a degree.²⁹ Museveni appears to have maintained his ties with Chalker since 1997 by hiring her, through her firm Africa Matters, as a lobbyist for the Ugandan government (see below). A 'strong personal bond' also appears to have characterised the relationship between Museveni

²⁶ Short interview (2008)

²⁷ Cumming (2001), p.326; Dowden, *Independent* (UK) (27/03/93); Anonymous interview 11 (2009)

²⁸ Anonymous interview 12 (2009)

²⁹ Anonymous interview 14 (2009)

and Short with the latter describing the atmospherics at bilateral talks in Kampala as ‘like old friends’ and her links with Museveni as ‘like a friendship’.³⁰

In the US, Museveni appears to have initially fostered close ties with Africanist members of the Clinton administration, particularly Assistant Secretary Susan Rice and NSC staffer Gayle Smith. The architects of the failed ‘African new leaders’ project, these figures’ relationships with the Ugandan regime and several other ‘African renaissance’ governments have been invariably described by commentators as based primarily on ‘personalities more... than policies’ and ‘personalised links with leaders’.³¹ The Ugandan leader also developed a ‘close friendship’ with Clinton’s, and later George W Bush’s, Trade Representative for African Affairs (1998-2003) Rosa Whitaker whose consultancy firm, the Whitaker Group, represented Kampala in Washington between 2003-2010.³²

The most significant US personal relationship cultivated by Museveni, however, appears to have been that built with Jendayi Frazer, NSC Senior Director 2001-2003 and Assistant Secretary 2005-2009. A former White House official has commented on the ‘very close personal friendship’ that developed between Museveni and Frazer between 2001-9.³³ Similarly, a State Department official has noted the degree to which her friendship with Museveni was perceived by many in the Department to have resulted in her failing to take a stronger line with Uganda on issues such as democratisation and corruption.³⁴ For him, the close links between the two robbed Frazer of the ‘finesse’ required from such a senior

³⁰ Short interview (2008)

³¹ Schraeder (2001), p.396; Rosenblum (2002), p.202

³² Silverstein, *Los Angeles Times* (02/03/04)

³³ Anonymous interview 28 (2009)

³⁴ Anonymous interview 27 (2009)

diplomat when conducting foreign policy.³⁵ As with Chalker and Whitaker, Museveni appears to have maintained his ties with Frazer even after her departure from public office. Shortly after leaving the State Department in 2009 she joined the Whitaker Group as a strategic advisor and, as one of her first acts working for that firm, authored an editorial urging President Barack Obama to ‘hold a summit at the White House with the presidents of Congo, Rwanda and Uganda’.³⁶

Museveni has also fostered close ties with certain US legislators as a means of gaining support in Congress. While this has more often been a responsibility of Kampala’s Washington lobbyists (see below) rather than Museveni himself, the president and his wife, Janet, have repeatedly reached out personally to congressmen of the Christian Right and African-American communities to build links with these groups and their supporters. Thus strong personal links have been established with Congressman Don Payne, former chairman of the Congressional Black Caucus, along with Congressman Christopher Smith and other leading congressional members of the Christian Right.

Museveni appears to have made use of a number of tactics in efforts to encourage and entrench the development of personalised relations with these key figures. Firstly, he has usually maintained an apparent air of openness in discussions with donor officials. Regardless of the level of controversy surrounding the subject, he has frequently been prepared to discuss issues with donors openly, frankly and candidly even if he disagrees with their views publicly.³⁷ Thus Chalker, speaking to donor colleagues in 1995 about a recent meeting with

³⁵ *ibid*

³⁶ Frazer, *Wall Street Journal* (25/08/09)

³⁷ Cook interview (2009); Kansteiner interview (2009)

Museveni noted how ‘very open’ the president had been about ‘the army having failed in northern areas’.³⁸

In contrast to many other African heads of state whom donors perceive as disingenuous or frustratingly secretive, Museveni has presented himself as ‘straightforward’³⁹ and easily ‘confrontable’⁴⁰ by Western officials who maintain that ‘you can talk to him and he is flexible’⁴¹ and [will] ‘entertain other ideas’⁴². This openness has been complemented by the degree of access and time Museveni has willingly granted to donors wishing to see him. This is particularly true for his cultivation of ties with Chalker who, on her first visit to NRM-ruled Uganda in 1986, was granted a full three days’ meeting with Museveni⁴³, an extraordinary show of welcome which no doubt laid the foundations for a much more personal relationship than Chalker had with other African rulers. Other donor officials have also stressed the ‘incredible access’ afforded to them by Museveni and have noted how willing he has been to discuss issues at length, often for several hours.⁴⁴ Museveni has also made clear his accessibility and openness to senior donors in his casual mode of dress when receiving them. Kayunga notes, for example, how the president frequently dressed informally, often wearing his trademark Stetson hat, when receiving Chalker where usually African leaders wear suits or military uniform to greet such dignitaries. This represented a symbolic gesture, he posits,

³⁸ *The Bank, the President and the Pearl of Africa*, Channel 4 film (1997)

³⁹ Kansteiner interview (2009)

⁴⁰ Anonymous interview 18 (2009)

⁴¹ Anonymous interview 27 (2009)

⁴² Brennan interview (2009)

⁴³ Cullimore interview (2008)

⁴⁴ Anonymous interview 11 (2009) and 17 (2009))

on the part of Museveni aimed at casting the meeting as one between friendly colleagues rather than between senior politicians.⁴⁵

The degree of personal trust engendered by Museveni among certain individuals in these displays of transparency and accessibility has been bolstered by the president's affable, familiar and personable manner. Unlike Kenya's presidents Moi and Kibaki (see chapter 7), Museveni is well-liked by many senior donor figures as a result of his relaxed and often witty exchanges with foreign colleagues. Few African leaders are renowned in donor circles for their charm or sense of humour. In the case of Museveni, however, almost every Western interviewee was keen to tell an anecdote or story demonstrating the Ugandan president's use of wit as diplomacy.⁴⁶ This has included jokes, quips, plays on words, puns (discussing the catching of 'big fish' with DFID official Dave Fish in talks on corruption) and the making of humorous historical, personal and geographical comparisons.⁴⁷ A former US ambassador relates, for example, how when President Ronald Reagan in an Oval Office meeting chastised Museveni sternly for his links with the Libyan regime, warning him 'you have got to watch who you associate with', Museveni disarmed the US leader by describing with a broad grin how he, as part of the Ugandan National Liberation Front (UNLF), had 'fought against Libya' in 1979 even 'taking a battalion' in the last days of the war against Amin.⁴⁸ Reagan broke into an equally broad grin, put his arm around Museveni, and commented 'It looks like you know what you're doing!'.⁴⁹ Similarly, in a 1995 meeting with senior donor officials, Museveni deftly batted away criticisms of Uganda's level of defence spending by making

⁴⁵ Kayunga Interview (2009)

⁴⁶ Cullimore interview (2009); Fish interview (2009); Crocker interview (2009)

⁴⁷ Fish interview (2009)

⁴⁸ A reference to Libyan support for Amin during the Ugandan-Tanzanian war of 1978-1979

⁴⁹ Houdek interview (2009)

mocking comparisons with UK defence expenditure and comically arguing that he deserved a ‘medal from the World Bank’ for fighting rebel groups alone ‘on multiple fronts’ for so long.⁵⁰ The footage of this meeting, shows how difficult the assembled donor audience found it to maintain a stern exterior in the face of such joviality and, as noted above, the Ugandan regime escaped any substantial pressure in this area until the mid-2000s.

Furthermore, Museveni has employed his extensive intellectual training in these meetings to strengthen personal alliances and marginalise areas of bilateral tension. A UK official notes how a 1990s meeting held between him and Museveni to discuss defence spending was transformed by the latter into a broader academic debate on the influence of the Western world in developing countries.⁵¹ A US observer also emphasises how talks between Museveni and senior US officials often ended up, at the Ugandan president’s instigation, as meditations on ‘linguistics or geology’, leaving departing Western leaders impressed at ‘how bright Museveni was’.⁵²

This strategy is also, of course, aimed at securing the personal trust and admiration of donor officials, most of whom have been extremely impressed by Museveni’s ‘smart’⁵³ and ‘intelligent’⁵⁴ nature, particularly as few African leaders have been educated to his standards.⁵⁵ Furthermore, it has been employed as a means for Museveni to move conversations with donors away from areas of controversy such as defence spending or term

⁵⁰ *The Bank, the President and the Pearl of Africa*, Channel 4 film (1997)

⁵¹ Anonymous interview 11 (2009)

⁵² Anonymous interview 25 (2009)

⁵³ Kansteiner interview (2009)

⁵⁴ Anonymous interview 27 (2009)

⁵⁵ Anonymous interview 1 (2009); While a number of post-independence African leaders were educated to a high standard, by 1986 much of Africa was governed by military or civilian personnel with few or no academic qualifications.

limits – a US observer has noted that Museveni's loquacious approach to meetings with senior US officials allowed him to verbally manoeuvre certain subjects 'off the table'⁵⁶ and this has been confirmed by other donor personnel who have talked about the latter's conversational 'tangents'.⁵⁷

Finally, Museveni has used international travel and private visits to personalise relationships with key donor figures. This has firstly involved the making of almost annual visits to London, Washington and other donor capitals to meet with particular individuals and to forge ever closer bonds of trust herein (see chapter 2). The regularity of such international visits considerably exceeds the average for African leaders: while Museveni has visited London four times between 2005-2009 his regional counterparts have done so much less: Jakaya Kikwete of Tanzania visited the UK twice between 2005-9 with Armando Guebuza of Mozambique and Mwai Kibaki of Kenya managing only one trip.⁵⁸

Furthermore, Museveni has, with the assistance of consulting firms though equally through personal endeavour, constantly lobbied for high-profile Western figures to visit Uganda. He repeatedly invited Chalker and Short, for example, to Kampala during their respective tenures and both visited Uganda unusually frequently. Chalker, for example, visited on at least a yearly basis between 1986-1997 at Museveni's invitation.⁵⁹ Indeed, her recurrent presence in

⁵⁶ Anonymous interview 25 (2009)

⁵⁷ Anonymous interview 27 (2009)

⁵⁸ Information compiled from 'Relations with the UK: Visits' section of 'Country Profiles' on FCO Website for Uganda (<http://www.fco.gov.uk/en/travel-and-living-abroad/travel-advice-by-country/country-profile/sub-saharan-africa/uganda?profile=intRelations>), Tanzania (<http://www.fco.gov.uk/en/travel-and-living-abroad/travel-advice-by-country/country-profile/sub-saharan-africa/tanzania?profile=intRelations>), Mozambique (<http://www.fco.gov.uk/en/travel-and-living-abroad/travel-advice-by-country/country-profile/sub-saharan-africa/mozambique?profile=intRelations>) and Kenya (<http://www.fco.gov.uk/en/travel-and-living-abroad/travel-advice-by-country/country-profile/sub-saharan-africa/kenya?profile=intRelations>); all accessed 01/12/10)

⁵⁹ Kayunga interview (2009)

the country earned her a nickname in the Ugandan media ('Auntie Lynda') and, according to a Makerere academic, a near 'position in the body politic of Uganda'.⁶⁰ Museveni also worked to secure frequent visits from US allies including Rice, Frazer and, once, George W Bush. These visits were personalised as far as possible in being held or part-held at the president's family home, a sizable farm in the west of Uganda, a relaxed setting allowing for informal 'fireside chats' to take place between the president and his guests, once again building relationships on a personal rather than diplomatic level.⁶¹

Perhaps the clearest example of Museveni's personalised approach to diplomacy can be seen in his private invitation to the US Trade Representative, Rosa Whitaker, for her to spend the Christmas holidays at his farm in 2001 – an invitation she accepted.⁶² Aside from visits, Museveni has attempted to nurture these relationships from afar through telephone conversations on issues of mutual interests; a former White House official has noted how the Ugandan leader would 'often reach out' to Bush and Frazer in this manner between 2005-9.⁶³ Museveni has even sent some of his cattle as a gift to Bush, a fellow 'rancher', to maintain the personal link.⁶⁴

The Ugandan leader, therefore, has employed a variety of strategies to personalise links with donors, particularly with some key figures in London and Washington. By doing so, Museveni has been able to earn their trust and support and create a system of dialogue which relies, to a considerable degree, on often informal one-to-one 'chats' to resolve formal

⁶⁰ *ibid*

⁶¹ Anonymous interview 17 (2009)

⁶² Silverstein, *Los Angeles Times* (02/03/04)

⁶³ Anonymous interview 28 (2009)

⁶⁴ *ibid*

bilateral issues. Within this supportive context there is a great deal of room for Museveni to promote particular interpretations of events or actions of his government, interpretations which enhance the particular images of his regime outlined in this thesis – economic success story, regional peacekeeper, ally against terrorism etc.

Image Management Strategies: 2. Use of lobbyists and consultants

A second strategy employed by the Ugandan regime has been the hiring of public relations and consultancy firms-‘lobbying groups’-in the US and UK who promote and manage the regime’s image in those countries. Uganda is not unusual in this regard; numerous African and non-African governments employ lobbyists, particularly in Washington DC, to look after their interests. Indeed, several studies have shown that governments of developed states, particularly those of Japan, the UK, Taiwan, France and Israel, have traditionally retained far more lobbyists in the US than any African state.⁶⁵

Kampala’s use of lobbyists, however, is noteworthy since it represents a key element of its ‘image management’ approach to foreign policy. The regime has been particularly discerning in selecting lobbying firms to represent it, placing a high premium on using firms owned or run by influential former donor policy-makers and supporters of the regime, for example Lynda Chalker’s Africa Matters Limited (UK) and Rosa Whitaker’s The Whitaker Group (USA). In so doing, not only can the regime be sure that its lobbyist representatives will still have the highest access in donor capitals but in dealing with the firm itself its officials can also build-on trusting and established relationships with former donor allies, rather than with individuals who are unfamiliar with the major Uganda ‘narratives’.

⁶⁵ See, for example, Lee (2006), p.100

Uganda's Lobbyists 1986-2010

Since 1986 the Ugandan regime has retained at least five lobbying firms in the US and at least two in the UK. The first two firms contracted by Kampala (formally hired by the Ugandan Embassy in Washington DC) in January 1989⁶⁶ and March 1993⁶⁷ respectively were Revell Communications and Foley Hoag LLP. Revell Communications, a relatively small public relations firm run by Dennis Revell, (husband to Ronald Reagan's eldest daughter, Maureen⁶⁸) was an unusual choice in that it was based in California rather than Washington.⁶⁹ It also appears to have, officially, had no other major clients aside from Uganda for the four-year duration of its relationship with the Museveni regime, terminated in August 1993. The regime's decision to hire a seemingly minor lobbying firm based several thousand miles away from Washington could perhaps be explained by its inexperience in this area; it was, after all, the first attempt by the Ugandan government to hire such a company.

It seems more likely, however, that the decision was motivated by a desire to select a firm which had strong personal connections with senior Republicans - something Dennis Revell, as Reagan's son-in-law, certainly had.⁷⁰ This explanation is particularly credible since the firm's main activities on Kampala's behalf appear to have centred around organising two visits by Museveni to Washington in February 1989⁷¹ and Autumn 1990 (the latter being a

⁶⁶ Revell Communications (1989)

⁶⁷ According to documents submitted to FARA, Foley Hoag was initially hired by Kampala in 1993 through the 'Law Offices of Paul Reichler', a partner in the firm, (see Foley Hoag (1994a)) but, when the contract was renewed in 2001, this was done with Foley Hoag (Foley Hoag (2001))

⁶⁸ Radcliffe, *Washington Post* (07/02/89)

⁶⁹ The firm opened an office in Washington DC shortly after being hired by Uganda, in early 1989 (ibid)

⁷⁰ Radcliffe, *Washington Post* (07/02/89)

⁷¹ Revell Communications (1990a), pp.3-28

private visit)⁷². In the extremely successful 1989 visit, Revell in fact secured Museveni a meeting with Reagan (3 February) along with his former vice president and recently-inaugurated successor, George H W Bush (2 February)⁷³. This stands in stark contrast to an earlier 1987 visit by Museveni to Washington where, according to Reagan's former Assistant Secretary for African Affairs, the Ugandan delegation had 'not worked the system' and was bluntly told that there were 'no plans' for Reagan or his Secretary of State to meet with Museveni or any of his advisers during their visit.⁷⁴ No doubt this humiliating experience taught the Ugandan president the importance of having influential and well-organised representation in the US capital, something Revell provided for a fee of \$5,000 to \$7,500 per month.⁷⁵

Kampala's hiring of Foley Hoag in March 1993 represented a more traditional choice of lobbyist and, indeed, their services were retained for longer than any other of Uganda's contracted consultants with the relationship not being terminated until February 2002⁷⁶. As with Revell, however, the choice to hire the firm also appears to have been based on personal links. Paul Reichler, a partner at Foley Hoag, had previously provided legal counsel to the Ugandan regime between 1986-1989 and was the key figure dealing with Uganda's representation throughout 1993-2002. Unlike Revell Communications, Foley Hoag appears to have played a much more general role in representing Uganda in the US focusing on the overall relationship rather than simply bilateral visits. The firm's primary activity centred around arranging personal and telephone meetings between Reichler and his colleagues and

⁷² Revell Communications (1991), pp.10-14

⁷³ Revell Communications (1990a), pp.24-25

⁷⁴ Crocker interview (2009)

⁷⁵ Revell Communications (1989), p.9 and (1990b), pp.6-7

⁷⁶ Foley Hoag (2001), p.3

members of the Administration and Congress to discuss ongoing US-Ugandan issues in the political, economic and diplomatic spheres and presenting the Ugandan perspective.⁷⁷

These responsibilities, together with the task of organising and arranging high-level Ugandan visits to the US, were taken up by the Whitaker Group (TWG), hired by Kampala between February 2003-January 2010.⁷⁸ Uganda's decision to hire this firm clearly represented the culmination of lessons learned in this area over the years. In being represented by TWG, Uganda would gain not only an ally with key links to senior Administration and congressional officials (as well as being a former Trade Representative, Whitaker had previously worked as a staffer on Capitol Hill) but also one with a longstanding relationship and familiarity with the Ugandan government. As Trade Representative, Whitaker had visited Uganda on several occasions and got to know its president well. While she denies ever having discussed the future possibility of undertaking private consulting for the regime while still in office it is clear that the positive relationship established between the two during this period made it a strong likelihood that this would come about early on in TWG's life.⁷⁹ Indeed, less than a week after leaving government, Whitaker was invited by the Ugandan government to travel to the country and within two months was hired, for \$25,000 per month, as their lobbyist in Washington.⁸⁰ While the Group's work for Uganda appears to have been primarily based around 'trade and investment promotional services' (the contract with Uganda was

⁷⁷ Foley Hoag (1994b), pp.17-19 and (1995), p.14

⁷⁸ Whitaker Group (2003a); Personal communication, Aubrey Hruby, Managing Director, The Whitaker Group (20/12/10)

⁷⁹ Kakande, *New Vision* (17/03/04)

⁸⁰ Silverstein, *LA Times* (02/03/04); Whitaker Group (2003a), p.6

signed, for example, with MFPED rather than the Washington Embassy)⁸¹ it is clear that it undertook a much wider range of activities on Kampala's behalf than this (see below).⁸²

In the UK, Lynda Chalker's Africa Matters Limited appears to have been hired by Uganda for the same purpose and, like Rosa Whitaker, Chalker's high-level connections within the UK Government, civil service and business community cultivated while a minister no doubt made her firm extremely attractive as a London lobbyist. The firm, hired by Kampala since 1997, appears to have been primarily retained to promote the country as a haven for private investors and an international centre for doing business (see below). It is clear, however, that it has also worked on promoting the country's political image along with facilitating links with UK government officials as the company's website makes clear.⁸³ Unfortunately there is limited information available as to the extent and nature of these activities aside from that released by the firm itself.

Finally, on several occasions, the Ugandan regime has hired lobbying firms for short-term, specific purposes. Between 2005-2007, for example, the Ugandan Ministry of Defence retained, for \$15,000 per month, Scribe Strategies and Advisors, a strategic consulting and communications firm.⁸⁴ Scribe's role was seemingly based solely around representing Kampala's interests as a US partner in the War on Terror, particularly in relation to its involvement with the East Africa Counter Terrorism Initiative.⁸⁵ Their activities on Uganda's behalf, as will be noted below, nevertheless extended beyond this limited remit. In addition,

⁸¹ *ibid*

⁸² The Group's Managing Director has nevertheless insisted that the primary work it undertook on Kampala's behalf involved 'outreach to strategic investors in the US' and, for this reason, rejects the use of the label 'lobbyist' to describe the Group (Personal communication, Aubrey Hruby (20/12/10).

⁸³ Africa Matters Limited (2010)

⁸⁴ Scribe Strategies (2005a), p.3

⁸⁵ *ibid*

the regime has, on several occasions, hired firms specifically to engage with US and UK media organisations and this was the rationale behind its retaining of Burston-Marsteller in June 2003 and the London branch of Hill and Knowlton in April-May 2005, the latter at a cost of at least US\$700,000 (see below).⁸⁶

The Ugandan regime, therefore, has made continuous use of lobbyists since 1989⁸⁷ and appears to have hired firms for both specific and general purposes. Though it has retained constant representation in London and Washington since the 1990s by far the most frantic lobbying activity seems to have occurred between c.2003-2007-a period where the regime's international reputation took a considerable blow. Between 2001-2002 the regime paid around \$120,000 per annum in fees to one US firm, however, in 2003 this rose to \$300,000 to two firms and in 2005, \$1.2 million to at least three.⁸⁸ This information is telling as it reveals the growing importance of lobbying firms to the Ugandan regime for promoting and maintaining its international image. It also shows the extent to which Museveni valued them as useful foreign policy instruments when his regime's positive reputation was coming under more severe international scrutiny.

Lobbying Activities Undertaken

A limited amount of scholarly work has been done on firms lobbying for foreign governments in the US, primarily in communication, public relations and journalism studies literature.⁸⁹

⁸⁶ *Weekly Observer* (19/05/05); Mayanja, *New Vision* (25/05/05); Wasike, *New Vision* (27/05/05)

⁸⁷ As of January 2010 the regime does not have a registered lobbyist of any kind in the US.

⁸⁸ These figures are based on the monthly fees charged by these firms as stated in the text. They do not, however, include money paid to Burston-Marsteller in 2003 or to Africa Matters Limited since this information is not publicly available. The total amount paid by Uganda to lobbyists during these years, therefore, would certainly have been more than suggested above.

⁸⁹ See, for example, Grunig (1993); Manheim (1994); Lee (2005); Zhang (2005)

These studies conclude that lobbying firms pursue a number of activities in promoting the interests of their clients in Washington. The most common activity has been the contacting and arranging of meetings with administration officials, legislators, journalists, business people or other individuals of note (this was the most frequent activity of 21% of registered firms in 2002) followed by the dissemination of ‘information’ on the client government inside and outside government (19%). Other types of activity have included ‘event promotion/advertising’ (18%), ‘advice/counselling’ (17%), ‘media relations’ (9%), ‘government representation’ (7%), ‘research’ (4%) and even speech-writing for client embassy officials or visiting ministers (3%).⁹⁰

The activities pursued by Uganda’s lobbyists have, to varying degrees depended on their background and focus, with some concentrating more on meeting with government officials, others with disseminating information and still others with media relations. In the case of TWG and Africa Matters, business groups have been far more important than the media in their lobbying activities while for Hill and Knowlton or Burston-Marsteller the opposite has been the case (see below). Clearly, however, tactics employed to influence all of these groups have many similarities and there is much cross-over between the three worlds (usually politicians, journalists and businessmen and women will all be present at lobbying events or will all be targeted in advertising campaigns).

In attempting to influence the perceptions of Western donors, lobbying groups employ a number of strategies. In the US, with its multiple centres of power, this has often amounted to the firm fostering strong links with certain influential politicians who will consequently be

⁹⁰ Lee (2005), pp.99-102

happy to listen, frequently, to the firm's (and thus regime's) perspective on certain issues. In such an atmosphere some issues or events can be highlighted above others to present a particular narrative which the politician may accept and propagate elsewhere to the regime's advantage. In 2004-5 Scribe Strategies, for example, played a key role in encouraging a number of congressmen to set up a Uganda Caucus in the House whose aim would be to improve 'relations and communications between the United States and Uganda...recognizing the common concerns of our two countries'.⁹¹ The group's members spoke positively in the House about Uganda on a number of occasions and highlighted, in their speeches, its role in the War on Terror one of the regime's key 'images'.⁹² The group also appears to have been cultivated by Scribe as a tool to defend the regime against criticism from other lawmakers. In September 2005, for example, the Caucus Co-Chair, Congressman Christopher Smith, and another member, Congressman Dave Wadon, both criticised US political opposition to the abolition of term limits in Uganda with Smith stating that 'whenever they have brought [the issue] up in congress I have opposed it strongly'.⁹³ Scribe's tactic for gaining this group's support appears to have been linked to political campaign donations. Between May-June 2005, for example, the firm donated \$4,900 to the congressional campaigns of seven individuals, six of whom were founding members of the Uganda Congressional Caucus.⁹⁴

TWG forged comparably useful links with members of the Congressional Black Caucus, particularly Congressmen Charles Rangel (Whitaker's former employer), Ed Royce and Don Payne. It also seems to have built firm ties with Jendayi Frazer while she worked at the NSC-

⁹¹ *PR Newswire* (23/11/04)

⁹² *ibid*; US Congress (2005)

⁹³ State House, Uganda (2005)

⁹⁴ Scribe Strategies (2005b), p.7. The donations went to Ken Calvert (\$500), Jeff Fortenberry (\$100), David Hobson (\$1,000), Dan Burton (\$2,000), Robert Simmons (\$300) and Edolphus Towns (\$500).

Whitaker would no doubt have come across her frequently as Trade Representative. Frazer, who clearly saw the Museveni regime through the ‘ally against terror’ lens, undoubtedly worked to undermine elements in the US Government who wished to put greater pressure on Kampala over democratisation (see chapter 6) at both the NSC and State Department and was therefore an extremely valuable ally for TWG and the Ugandan regime.

Uganda’s lobbyists have also fostered the support of individuals and groups in Washington through frequently inviting them to dinners, receptions and other events, often held in honour of a visiting Ugandan delegation. During Museveni’s June 2004 visit to Washington for example, TWG organised a ‘breakfast meeting’ to be held by the Ugandan leader and invited Connie Newman, Assistant Secretary, Cindy Courville, NSC Africa Director and Frazer who, at the time, had no official involvement with US-Ugandan affairs.⁹⁵ The invitation stressed how Museveni wanted to ‘share perspectives on development assistance and Uganda’ with the three women and is just one example of an event organised by TWG whose aim was to strengthen ties between influential political figures and the Ugandan regime.⁹⁶

Such events also have provided a forum for Museveni, or one of his advisers, to present particular narratives on their regime’s activities to powerful donor individuals. In November 2003, for example, TWG organised a meeting between Museveni and US Trade Representative Robert Zoellick to discuss AGOA and other trade issues.⁹⁷ Later, in 2006, the Group successfully lobbied for a meeting to take place between Museveni and President Bush ‘on the margins’ of the upcoming UN General Assembly Meeting to discuss security issues—a highly sought-after prize considering the number of other presidents and prime ministers

⁹⁵ Whitaker Group (2004b), p.44 and p.47

⁹⁶ *ibid*

⁹⁷ Whitaker Group (2004a), p.3

attending and seeking the same thing.⁹⁸ In April 2004, during the visit of Ugandan Minister in the Office of the President Crispus Kiyonga to Washington, the Group arranged meetings with Zoellick, Frazer, Charles Snyder, Acting Assistant Secretary, Congressmen Rangel, Royce and Payne and a number of mid-level officials from USAID, the State Department and Treasury; an impressive line-up for the visit of a junior African minister.⁹⁹ Furthermore, in April 2005, Hill and Knowlton had attempted to arrange a meeting between a visiting senior Ugandan delegation to London and Foreign Secretary Jack Straw to present the regime's perspective on various recent controversies including plans to abolish presidential term limits.¹⁰⁰ They were ultimately unsuccessful in securing this high-level appointment but nevertheless were met by Tim Hitchens, a civil servant.¹⁰¹ Other lobbyists, such as Revell and Foley Hoag, have devoted considerable time to monitoring whether any Ugandan delegations are planning to travel to the US in the future with a view to maximising the number and nature of appointments and meetings that can be arranged during these trips.¹⁰²

A final strategy employed by Uganda's lobbyists has involved the production and dissemination of 'information' about Uganda to influential political figures. TWG and Africa Matters, for example, have produced regular *Uganda Updates* and 'briefings' about the regime's activities which are then distributed to a wide array of individuals; TWG's distribution list includes senior and mid-level personnel at the White House, State Department, Treasury, Commerce Department, USAID and Congress.¹⁰³ Within these updates lobbyists are free to emphasise or play down whatever events or issues they wish and

⁹⁸ Whitaker Group (2006a), pp.52-53

⁹⁹ Whitaker Group (2004a), pp.4-5

¹⁰⁰ *Weekly Observer* (19/05/05); Mayanja, *New Vision* (25/05/05)

¹⁰¹ FOI document 5

¹⁰² See, for example, Revell Communications (1991), pp.10-14 and Foley Hoag (1994b), p.17

¹⁰³ One such distribution list (from 2007) is available in Whitaker Group (2007), pp.74-89

the briefings generally cover ‘business, political and economic’ matters.¹⁰⁴ For some of the readers of these materials, the narrative presented may well influence or change their views on the Museveni regime and cause them to view it more positively through the lens suggested by the lobbyist and Kampala. For others who already see it in this way the briefing will confirm and bolster their views and give them further concrete information to use in discussion with other officials who hold more sceptical positions on Uganda.

Kampala’s lobbyists also distribute ‘information’ on the regime in a more direct and personal manner usually to rebut perceived criticism or to argue for better treatment for the regime in terms of aid or military equipment transfers. In some cases this has taken the form of the lobbyist writing directly to one or two senior figures (such as the Assistant Secretary or National Security Advisor) about a particular matter (eg Uganda’s entitlement to a full compact with the MCC).¹⁰⁵ In such letters it is again possible to push for a particular interpretation of Uganda’s importance to the US (or UK) which may or may not be accepted and imbibed by the official in question.

In other cases, lobbyists have attempted to convince, in writing or through speaking by telephone, Congressmen, Senators, MPs or aid administrators to re-think, their sometimes critical, positions on certain Uganda-related issues. TWG's Managing Director notes, for example, how the Group has 'shared information with members of Congress [and kept them] informed of facts from the government'. This has sometimes meant tackling congressional criticism of Kampala's handling of the situation in northern Uganda by engaging with interested legislators such as Senator Russ Feingold on the, heavily-contested, 'facts on the

¹⁰⁴ Africa Matters Limited (2010)

¹⁰⁵ Whitaker Group (2004b), pp.48-57

ground' such as the gradual moving of civilians from IDP camps in the 2000s.¹⁰⁶ In the UK, this approach has taken the form of lobbying MPs about the 'true nature' of Uganda's 'violent' and 'divisive' opposition groups in order to convince parliamentarians not to further reduce aid or cancel Uganda's hosting of the 2007 CHOGM.¹⁰⁷ While the 'information' disseminated by lobbyists is, in most cases, grounded in reality it is, of course, based on a positive interpretation of the regime which builds on specific appealing narratives.

Effectiveness of Lobbying Activities

In assessing the overall effectiveness of Uganda's lobbyists in their promotion of certain images of the regime to donors, it is necessary to keep in mind a number of complications. Lobbyist activities are, by their very nature, somewhat subtle and under-stated and few politicians are likely to admit in any public arena that a lobbyist changed their view on an issue. In addition, few individuals would even be able to disaggregate the efforts of lobbyists from the myriad of other information sources relied upon if asked to explain how they have come to perceive of the Ugandan regime in particular ways.

By some specific standards Kampala's lobbying firms appear not to have succeeded in major parts of their Uganda strategy; TWG, for example, did not secure a full MCC compact for Uganda during its six year involvement with the regime despite pushing strongly for this on several fronts for a number of years. Equally, other lobbying campaigns have arguably been entirely successful: in 2004 Kampala qualified, for the first time, for over US\$1 million of US

¹⁰⁶ Hruby Interview (2009)

¹⁰⁷ Olupot and Karugaba, *New Vision* (10/04/09)

Foreign Military Financing aid after TWG lobbied Washington for such a grant to help Uganda fight the LRA and other ‘terrorist groups’.¹⁰⁸

It is possible, of course, that these appropriations would have been made without the efforts of a lobbyist. Grunig notes, for example, that, in the wake of Iraq’s 1990 invasion of Kuwait, though some in the US saw Hill and Knowlton’s work on behalf of the Kuwaiti government as persuading officials to go to war against Baghdad, in fact, the firm’s campaign probably just ‘encouraged decision makers and public opinion to move in a direction in which they were already headed’.¹⁰⁹ Clearly the image management achievements of lobbyists cannot, therefore, be assessed in isolation, it is also vital to consider how the Ugandan regime itself has used the international media and think tank community to promote certain narratives.

Image Management Strategies: 3. Engagement with the international media and business community

The final way in which the Ugandan regime has promoted particular images of itself to donors is in its engagement with the international media, policy analysis¹¹⁰ and business communities. Reaching out to these groups, as with donor officials, has also involved the use of lobbyists although the direct fostering of relationships by Museveni and a number of other prominent regime actors has also been common. This final facet of image management, therefore, will be analysed independently of the above discussion on lobbying.

¹⁰⁸ ‘Africa’ in Department of State (2004), p.292; Whitaker Group (2003b), pp.17-23

¹⁰⁹ Grunig (1993), pp.137-38

¹¹⁰ This latter group includes academics, think tanks, charities and other non-governmental organizations

The presentation of a regime in major newspapers, international television networks and widely-read think tank reports can heavily influence how donors perceive it. Journalists and news reporters are highly selective in the way they portray and report a regime's nature and activities, particularly one such as Uganda's which rarely makes the news. The Ugandan government and its lobbyists, therefore, have attempted to ensure that global media representation of the regime is both positive and conforms to the particular narratives highlighted throughout this thesis. Indeed, on two occasions, Kampala has hired firms specifically to manage its portrayal in Western media publications. In June 2003, for example, the Ugandan Embassy in Washington briefly hired Burston-Marsteller, a global public relations company, to 'secure press interviews' and 'attract high profile press' for Museveni's June 2003 visit to the city.¹¹¹ Similarly, in April-May 2005 the regime temporarily hired the UK office of Hill and Knowlton, another large communications agency, through the law firm Hunton and Williams.¹¹² Their job was specifically to 'generate positive publicity for the Government of Uganda and neutralise Western [media] criticism' in Britain through more aggressive engagement with the media, these criticisms had arisen in response to Museveni's push for removal of presidential term limits.¹¹³ Other firms retained by Uganda have also attempted to manage how the regime is depicted by Western news agencies and Museveni himself has engaged independently with media organisations in donor countries on a regular basis, including in August 2002 when he agreed to be interviewed on Canadian television.¹¹⁴

¹¹¹ Burston-Marsteller (2003), p.5

¹¹² *Weekly Observer* (19/05/05); Mayanja, *New Vision* (25/05/05); Wasike, *New Vision* (27/05/05)

¹¹³ *ibid*

¹¹⁴ CTV (30/08/02)

In order to increase the likelihood that these organisations will promote particular images of Uganda, the regime and its US lobbyists have regularly solicited interviews for Museveni with major TV news networks during his near-annual trips to the country. During his 1989 visit, for example, Museveni was interviewed on *Larry King*, *CBS*, *US News and World Report*, *ABC* and by reporters at the *Washington Times* *Washington Post*, *USA Today* and *Legal Times*.¹¹⁵ All of these appointments had been arranged by Revell Communications. Likewise, during Museveni's 2003 visit, Burson-Marsteller organised for the leader to be interviewed on *ABC* and *CNN* as well as by reporters at *Associated Press*.¹¹⁶ During these interviews, Museveni was able to put across particular perspectives on himself and his regime, emphasising publicly certain images of Uganda and downplaying others to influence policy-makers watching or reading. During the 2003 *AP* interview, for example, the Ugandan president played-down his government's controversial involvement in Congo and stressed instead the link between 'fighters from the al-Qaida terror network' and 'rebel groups in northern Uganda', repeatedly noting the malevolent role played by Sudan ('those Islamists who are our neighbours') in the forging of this association.¹¹⁷ This was clearly an attempt on Museveni's part to augment his regime's international reputation as a key frontline donor ally in the War on Terror (see chapter 5) and certainly it was this narrative, rather than that on Congo, which dominated the title and text of the final article.

In other interviews, to ensure that the interviewer would ask questions which would allow this kind of regime promotion, lobbyists such as Revell have enclosed with interview requests

¹¹⁵ Revell Communications (1990a), pp.20-28

¹¹⁶ Burston-Marsteller (2003), p.7

¹¹⁷ Dunphy, *AP* (13/06/03)

to networks and reporters selective ‘background information’ kits on the Museveni regime.¹¹⁸ These kits have included press clippings which present a positive image of Museveni along with particular speeches or economic information designed to play the same role and encourage the interviewer to pursue some lines of enquiry above others. Prior to a 1989 TV interview Museveni was to attend on the US *Financial News Network*, for example, Revell sent the show’s executive producer, Tom Houghton, a ‘World Bank Report entitled “Uganda Toward Stabilization and Economic Recovery”’ in an effort to encourage the production team to focus the interview on Museveni’s positive economic achievements, particularly the restoration of relative economic stability to Uganda.¹¹⁹

Clearly journalists and other analysts have not always accepted the regime’s narratives without question. During periods of difficulty in donor-Ugandan relations such as during the Congo intervention or between 2005-2006 the regime and its lobbyists have attempted to reverse this trend through engagement with the media and wider think-tank, NGO and policy analysis community. Indeed, Hill and Knowlton were hired in 2005 to do precisely this. In these situations Ugandan delegations have agreed to interviews with more critical organisations. Thus, as outlined by an associate director of Hill and Knowlton in May 2005:

What we are doing [as part of our work for the Government of Uganda] is encouraging dialogue between the Ugandan government and people like Human Rights Watch, Amnesty, Oxfam. It’s not about spinning a different version of the truth, it’s about making sure that the Ugandans are having the right conversations with the right people.¹²⁰

¹¹⁸ Revell Communications (1990a), p.11

¹¹⁹ *ibid*, p.12

¹²⁰ Vasagar, *Guardian* (21/05/05)

The results of such meetings rarely result in a highly-positive editorial or report but, as was the case with an interview arranged between journalists at the *Economist* and senior NRM personnel in London in April 2005, elements of the ‘narratives’ promoted by the regime can nevertheless make it into the final story. On this occasion, the Ugandan foreign minister, defence minister and a senior presidential adviser were unable to prevent *Economist* writers from attacking Museveni’s ‘mixed legacy’, ‘long suppression of multi-party politics’ and illiberal ‘attitude to dissidents’.¹²¹ They were, nonetheless, in a position to personally counter some criticisms - on leaders overstaying their time in power, on the presence of ‘ghost soldiers’ on the UPDF payroll and on allegations of torture by state security forces – as well as to advance positive images of the regime. Consequently, the published article, though balanced, nevertheless upheld a number of these narratives, referring to Museveni, for example, as ‘the man who brought peace and growth to Uganda’ and praising his ‘impressive’ record, ‘his pragmatic, business-friendly policies’ and his success in ‘restoring order’ to the country since 1986.¹²²

By appearing open to honest debate and questioning, the regime’s representatives can at least appear reasonable and willing to argue their case in a candid manner in front of interested Western observers. Hence, in October 2003, Museveni agreed to be interviewed by an Australian broadcaster on a programme which, in parts, criticised his government’s failure to protect civilians caught-up in the northern Ugandan conflict. Indeed, at one point, another interviewee, whose lips had been ‘cut off’ with machetes by the LRA, directly upbraided the president, saying ‘Museveni, I got this injury under your government but you don’t care about

¹²¹ *Economist* (14/04/05)

¹²² *ibid*

us. You should care especially about me. I've been to your office twice.'¹²³ A similar desire on the part of the regime to be seen as accessible and prepared to accept international scrutiny also explains why, in May 2005, the Ugandan Ministers of Foreign Affairs, Defence and Local Government attended a debate in London, organised by the Royal Africa Society, entitled 'Should President Museveni be allowed to serve another term?'.¹²⁴ The ministerial delegation (and regime)'s support for an abolition of term limits was strongly condemned by opposition representatives in attendance, including the recently-defected former Internal Affairs Minister Eriya Kategaya, who argued that 'our leaders have never retired...the only peaceful hand-over in our country was when the British were leaving'. The ministers also submitted themselves to 'tough' questions, including on the conflict in the north, from a considerably hostile audience thus further demonstrating their willingness to engage with critics in a Western setting.¹²⁵

More often, however, the regime has engaged with think-tank personnel, NGO activists and academics in less antagonistic contexts. Museveni regularly speaks at prominent Western centres of scholarship and policy analysis such as the University of Oxford (1998), Woodrow Wilson Center (2002), Council on Foreign Relations (2003 and 2005) and Royal Commonwealth Society (2009) on his trips to the US and UK.¹²⁶ As the guest of honour at such events, the Ugandan leader has been permitted to discuss whatever issues he chooses and has therefore often used these occasions to promote particular narratives on his government. In June 2003, for example, he spoke at a Council on Foreign Relations event in

¹²³ ABC-TV (07/10/03)

¹²⁴ Price, *New Vision* (28/05/05); FOI document 5

¹²⁵ *ibid*

¹²⁶ University of Oxford (1998); Woodrow Wilson Center (2002); Council on Foreign Relations (2003) and (2005); Royal Commonwealth Society (2009)

Washington DC (heavily attended by the US media and a number of policy-makers) entitled ‘Freedom from Fear: Forging US-Africa Partnerships Against Terror’.¹²⁷ Such a terrorism-themed event clearly permitted him to stress Uganda’s image as a US ally in the War on Terror before all else and, indeed, his speech did just this (see chapter 5). Similarly, the regime has used presentations at Western universities and a book launch at the Royal Commonwealth Society in 2009 to advance and bolster its image as an ‘economic success story’ (see chapter 4).

In addition, the regime has attempted to shape its public image through organising or attending events where the international media is likely to be present and through using rhetoric at such events which will potentially be quoted by journalists thus perpetuate particular narratives of Uganda. This final ‘summitry’ strategy has usually involved Museveni’s attendance of highly-publicised international conferences or his organisation of such events in Uganda itself. To ensure maximum international attention, the Ugandan leader has frequently attempted to invite senior international statesmen, such as Bill Clinton in his 1998 visit to Entebbe.

Perhaps the most successful example of this can be seen in Kampala’s hosting of the 2007 CHOGM, attended by numerous heads of state and political leaders. The scale and significance of the event attracted worldwide media attention for several days and provided the Ugandan regime with one of the best opportunities it has ever had to promote itself, via the attending media delegations, to the international community. Museveni had clearly lobbied for his country to host the Meeting for many years for this reason and later made

¹²⁷ Council on Foreign Relations (2003)

clear that the event ‘gave us a chance to showcase Uganda’ to the international community.¹²⁸

A former Commonwealth official notes that the idea to lobby for a Kampala conference came to Museveni as long ago as 2000 and that, from then, he was clearly determined to secure it in order to ‘flex [Uganda’s] muscles’ on the international stage.¹²⁹ Indeed, this determination lead the Commonwealth to tacitly agree to Kampala’s hosting in 2007 at the 2002 CHOGM in Australia, an unprecedented advance selection.¹³⁰

This presentation of Western media sources as a pliant victim of Ugandan manipulation is arguably misleading; Western journalists have often written critical accounts of the Museveni government, particularly during its involvement in Congo and in the mid-2000s. A considerable number of government and academic studies, nonetheless, have shown the ease at which many well-established news networks and publications have relied upon government or lobbyist propaganda, particularly when writing about countries of which they have very little knowledge. Herman, for example, highlights the mainstream US media’s ‘acceptance and transmittance without verification’ of a story about the removal of Kuwaiti babies from incubators by Iraqi soldiers during Iraq’s 1991 occupation of that state. The story, ‘created by a Kuwaiti-financed propaganda operation’, later turned out to be invented but had nevertheless been widely-reported as true by CNN and other networks; their reporters having apparently not looked into the veracity of the account or potential bias of its main source.¹³¹

Furthermore, as Manheim and Albritton have pointed out, few media organisations devote

¹²⁸ Museveni, *New Vision* (02/12/07)

¹²⁹ Anonymous interview 3 (2009)

¹³⁰ CHOGMs are usually held every two years, however the 2001 CHOGM was postponed to 2002 after the 9/11 attacks on the United States. The Commonwealth Secretariat decided that the next Meeting after 2002 should return to the normal timetable and thus should be held in 2003, as would normally have been the case, rather than 2004. (Anonymous interview 3 (2009))

¹³¹ Herman (1993), pp.39-40

large amounts of resources to international affairs and none prioritise Africa when assigning foreign correspondents and representatives.¹³² In Uganda's case, most, aside from the *BBC* which has its own reporter based in Kampala, rely on local Ugandan journalists, interviews with Ugandan ministers passing through donor capitals and official statements from State House in writing stories about the country. This makes them considerably vulnerable to manipulation from the regime.

Finally, the Ugandan government has engaged with Western (primarily US and UK) businesses as a means to advance certain images of itself to donors. In terms of foreign policy, it has done so for two reasons. Firstly, to promote Uganda as a trade and investment opportunity internationally. Secondly, and following on from this, to foster links with a large and influential community whose views are taken very seriously by Western governments and, indeed, shape these governments' views of foreign nations. If a country such as Uganda is perceived by major donors as economically successful and open to international trade this reputation is likely to protect it, to some degree, from donor ire in relation to other areas. Certainly Uganda's reputation as an 'economic success story' has had this effect.

In influencing the views of this community, Kampala has usually followed the same pattern as with donor officials (see above). Thus business groups also receive the briefings and updates distributed by firms such as TWG and Africa Matters and business leaders and representatives will also be invited to specific Uganda-themed events. Sometimes Uganda's lobbying firms will hold events specifically designed to influence the views of this community, such as the East African Investment Conference joint-organised by Africa

¹³² Manheim and Albritton (1984), p.643

Matters and the City of London in March 2009.¹³³ TWG, Revell Communications and Africa Matters have also facilitated meetings between private companies, such as Prudential Bache and Price Waterhouse, and Ugandan delegations in London, Washington and elsewhere thereby providing a context where deals and regulatory issues can be discussed and the regime can present itself as ‘open for business’.¹³⁴ The regime has also attempted to engage with this community through the media. During Museveni’s 1989 visit to Washington, for example, Revell Communications organised for the president to be interviewed on the *Financial News Network*, on a programme called ‘Business Tonight’, where he was able to promote Uganda as a haven for private investors and a growing venue for international commerce.¹³⁵ Similarly, in 2005, Museveni directed his finance minister, Ezra Suruma, to ‘use funds...[from]...the Tourism Infrastructure Development account to market Uganda to the global business community on the “Inside Africa” programme of the CNN’.¹³⁶ This initiative, organised with the assistance of Hill and Knowlton, involved the running of a six-month TV advertising campaign on the network with one of its primary objectives being to ‘give exposure to investment opportunities in the country in a more robust way and to a wider [that is, Western] audience’.¹³⁷

In addition, Museveni has frequently reached out to US and UK businesses directly in attempts to foster links with these communities. In 1995, for example, he invited a number of US ‘corporate investors’ to the Ugandan embassy in Washington in order to promote Uganda to them as a ‘good place for doing business’ (see chapter 4). Furthermore, during the 1990s,

¹³³ Africa Matters Limited (2009)

¹³⁴ *ibid*; Revell Communications (1990a), pp.19-28; Whitaker Group (2006b), pp.51-53

¹³⁵ *ibid*

¹³⁶ Public Procurement Disposal of Public Assets Authority (2006), p.3

¹³⁷ *ibid*; Mwanguhya, *Daily Monitor* (26/09/05)

the Ugandan leader personally visited a number of prominent Asian-Ugandan business magnates in the UK and elsewhere, expelled by Amin in the 1970s, in an attempt to convince them to return to Uganda and invest in its economy (see chapter 4).¹³⁸ In doing so he was able to emphasise a major narrative on his regime's economic focus not only to the entrepreneurs themselves but also to their Western host governments.

Conclusion

The Ugandan regime has therefore used personalised relationships with donor officials, lobbying firms, media interviews and speeches to connect its policies or actions to narratives or images in the minds of donors. In so doing it has attempted to manage and control how it is perceived by donor governments in the hope that being seen as a valuable ally in the War on Terror or a useful guarantor of regional stability by these administrations will protect it from aid cuts or criticism implemented by them in connection to its more controversial domestic activities. Having set out how, in general, these three strategies have been employed to promote particular narratives it is now possible to analyse how specifically this has been done with regard to the three main images of the Ugandan regime advanced by Kampala. This will be attempted in the following three chapters – Chapters 4, 5 and 6.

¹³⁸ Hruby interview (2009)

Chapter 4

Image Management and Ugandan Domestic Policy

In domestic policy, the Ugandan government has cultivated one major image of itself among donors since the late 1980s – that of an economic success story. Though other reforms have been made and advertised to donors by Kampala partly in an effort to develop other narratives, notably in HIV/AIDS prevention (see Introduction), education and constitutional reform, this narrative has been especially significant and enduring. This chapter will examine this image and seek to explain how Kampala has employed the image management strategies outlined in Chapter 2 to promote it to Western donors. In doing so it will first set-out the policies made and stances taken by the regime to establish a basis for the narratives and assess the degree to which such actions were taken to manage donor perceptions. It will then be necessary to outline the ways in which Museveni, his ministers and Uganda's lobbyists have sought to promote and popularise the images among donors.

Uganda the economic reformer

Actions taken

In many respects, images of Uganda as an 'economic success story' and 'model case' of donor-recommended development strategies provided the main rationale for donors to begin fully-supporting the nascent Museveni regime between 1987-1992 (see chapter 2). Furthermore, it has been in the developing and bolstering of this image in the 1990s and 2000s that the Ugandan regime has learned both of the importance of donor perceptions in securing international support and how such perceptions can be most effectively managed.

It is ironic, then, that the two founding actions undertaken by Kampala which lead to the ‘creation’ of this image - namely the adoption of an IFI-recommended Economic Recovery Plan (ERP) in 1987 and the return of confiscated properties to Asian-Ugandans between 1987-1992 – came about mainly as a result of donor pressure, rather than recipient initiative. While some, such as Clare Short¹, have suggested that the GoU’s u-turn on market economics came about as a result of a genuine change of heart on Museveni’s part rather than as a donor imposition, policy-makers from the time make clear that Museveni’s ‘choice’ was severely circumscribed by donor ultimatums. This early demonstration of the potential influence of donors, however, no doubt shaped Kampala’s understanding of how important a regime’s image and reputation is in securing donor support.

Early decisions (1987-1992): ERP and the return of Asian-Ugandan properties

Though Museveni made the choice to abandon Uganda’s vaguely socialist, barter-orientated economic approach (despite his intellectual sympathies) in 1987 in favour of a World Bank ERP it is clear that he did so initially at the behest of donors rather than as part of a grand strategy to influence their perceptions. As soon as Museveni became Ugandan president, senior US and British officials made clear to him that the GoU would receive full financial support from their governments only when it adopted an ERP and other prescribed economic reforms. This was done initially through lengthy discussions which were aimed at persuading Museveni of the wisdom of a market economy approach. Lynda Chalker, for example, spent several days in early 1986 with Museveni in Uganda, discussing such policy issues.² Similarly the US Ambassador in Kampala, Robert Houdek, frequently attempted to convince

¹ Short interview (2008)

² Cullimore interview (2008)

Museveni of the weaknesses of his economic policies (for example, the bartering of non-quota coffee to Cuba in 1986) during open, in-depth discussions.³ He, along with his World Bank counterpart, also commissioned several PhD economists from the USAID mission to produce papers and provide briefings to Museveni throughout 1986-7 to persuade him of the wisdom of implementing IFI recommendations.⁴

Donors bolstered this discursive approach with ultimatums. On his first trips to London and Washington DC as President of Uganda in 1987 Museveni was told by both administrations that he could expect no more than token assistance from them unless he adopted an ERP and fulfilled several other economic conditions.⁵ Desperate for assistance to help re-build his country's shattered state and economy and aware that only Western donors could provide this level of support, Museveni was forced to go with the IFIs; to chose not to would have been to condemn Uganda to complete collapse.

The GoU's decision to return properties confiscated from Asian-Ugandans expelled in 1972 by the Amin regime also came about mainly as a result of donor pressure rather than through a strategic initiative of Museveni. The World Bank, UK and US all made the return of these properties (or, at least, the payment of restitution to the original owners) a condition of their support.⁶ Indeed, 'resolving the Asian property issue' was one of three conditions set by USAID in 1991 for the continuation of US aid flows to Uganda.⁷ As with the ERP adoption,

³ Houdek interview (2009)

⁴ *ibid*; Anonymous interview 22 (2009)

⁵ They also insisted that he abandon his links with Colonel Gadaffi and the Government of Libya; Mukwaya interview (2009)

⁶ Hauser (1997), p.105; Anonymous interview 11 (2009)

⁷ Dicklitch (1998), p.95

the GoU was largely compelled to take this action in order to be sure of continued vital donor support.

That these two GoU actions were not primarily long-term strategic attempts to manage donor perceptions is made clear by considering the slow progress made by the regime in implementing both between 1987-1992. It was only after the IMF and other donors suspended aid to Uganda in 1992 and demanded that certain fundamental economic reforms be undertaken (such as the liberalisation of the exchange rate) that the government wholeheartedly embraced IFI-led economic reforms and laid the foundations for the ‘success story’ of the 1990s.⁸ As such it is difficult to argue that these two major reforms, as influential on donor views of the GoU as they were, were undertaken as part of an image management initiative; they were, to a large degree, forced upon Kampala by donors.

In spite of this, however, Museveni’s attitudes and actions during these negotiations served to both differentiate him in the minds of donors from other reluctant African reformers (such as Moi) and allowed him to sow the seeds for a more proactive approach to managing donors. Firstly, despite his attachment to socialism, he was always prepared to discuss alternative approaches with donor officials at length and with an open mind. He would not only listen to other perspectives but would actively encourage donors to ‘give me a paper on that’ so he could study these arguments in depth and use them to challenge thinking in his Cabinet.⁹ He was also fully prepared to alter or reverse a position held if he was convinced this was necessary. In this regard he claimed to have been entirely persuaded of the merits of a market economy by 1987 and effectively abandoned his socialist beliefs, maintaining this position

⁸ Dijkstra and van Donge (2001), p.843

⁹ Houdek interview (2009)

ever since. This willingness to discuss issues frankly, exhaustively and with an open mind made Museveni a much more trustworthy and formidable figure for donors than neighbouring dinosaurs who would accuse donors of neo-imperialism whenever they suggested different economic approaches. It also made donors more inclined to deal with bilateral disagreements quietly and behind the scenes since the Ugandan leader seemed to them an entirely reasonable and receptive person, an approach to resolving Ugandan-donor disagreements which would become increasingly problematic for democracy promotion in the 1990s (see chapter 2).

Furthermore, Museveni's professed personal commitment to implementing such donor-driven reforms in the face of considerable domestic opposition engendered even greater trust between him the donors as a result of the wider Ugandan political context. Siding with the IFIs was strongly resisted by Museveni's left-wing Cabinet and government who identified these institutions with the despised Obote regime.¹⁰ The return of the previously Asian-owned properties was also highly unpopular since most were now owned or rented by native Ugandans, many of whom were NRM supporters.¹¹ Nevertheless, Museveni ensured that the reforms took place in the face of widespread opposition, telling unconvinced Cabinet ministers in public and private that they were 'not rejecting World Bank recommendations but decisions of their president'.¹² He (eventually) forced through the return of the Asian properties and, in 1992, dismissed his left-wing Finance Minister, Crispus Kiyonga, and his team, merging his ministry with the Planning ministry to create the Ministry of Finance, Planning and Economic Development (MFPED) under the leadership of several pro-IFI

¹⁰ Kayunga interview (2009)

¹¹ Anonymous interview 11 (2009)

¹² Houdek interview (2009)

technocrats lead by civil servant Emmanuel Tumusiime-Mutebile.¹³ This new economic team represented, according to Brett, the ‘key source of internal support for the [economic reform] programme’, along with Museveni himself.¹⁴

By embracing donor recommendations and forcing them through despite internal opposition, Museveni demonstrated that he was personally committed to the donors’ agenda and could be trusted to act in their interests, whatever his cowed colleagues thought. His seemingly reasonable and commendable approach caused donors to view him as a reformer and an innovator. This view of Museveni and his regime, despite being initially a result of pressure that could not be avoided, would later be manipulated and managed by the president through more innovative and proactive actions.

The evolution of Uganda’s economic image management (1990-2010)

Indeed, by the early 1990s the regime appears to have begun demonstrating an increased awareness of how carrying out economic reforms of which donors would approve could result in an improved image and, consequently, a larger injection of international support. In March 1990, for example, it voluntarily announced the legalisation of the parallel exchange rate and its unification with the official exchange rate which, since 1986, had been maintained by the Bank of Uganda ‘at an artificially strong level’.¹⁵ This action, though strongly welcomed by donors, had not been laid down as a condition for future aid and this enthusiastic show of support by Kampala for neo-liberal economic policy, according to a

¹³ Brett (1986), p.320

¹⁴ *ibid*

¹⁵ Whitworth and Williamson (2009), p.5

British macroeconomic adviser in MFPED, took the IFIs wholly ‘by surprise’.¹⁶ Furthermore, in 1992, Museveni announced a programme to reduce military expenditure and ensure the ‘progressive retrenchment of army officers and public servants’.¹⁷ This too had not been a demand made of him by donors (though it would later become one) but was made nonetheless.

The announcement of these reforms appeared to indicate a growing realisation by Kampala that donor views could be influenced to its advantage and that donor perceptions of Uganda’s government could be moulded. That international considerations were prominent in the decision-making processes behind these policies is clear from the fact that the 1992 announcements on military spending cuts were made shortly before an annual Consultative Group meeting.¹⁸ Such meetings, as discussed in chapter 2, are highly significant moments in donor-recipient relations and the lead-up to them is perhaps the main period in a year when donors are completely focused on the future support they intend to provide to a government. The timing of the announcement, therefore, suggests that Museveni was keen to influence donor views of his government at this pivotal moment.

As the 1990s progressed, however, the regime became increasingly ambitious in the actions it took to persuade donors of its importance as a model case for IFI economic reforms, carrying out a number of highly-original and wide-ranging reforms in Uganda’s budget-making process and structural relationship with donors. These reforms tapped into emerging conceptual development trends prevalent among Western donors. Their implementation

¹⁶ Mark Henstridge, Macroeconomic Advisor, MFPED, as quoted in Hauser (1997), p.64

¹⁷ Hansen and Twaddle (1995), p.6

¹⁸ *ibid*

served to enhance Museveni's international reputation as an economically-liberal leader but also further linked, in donor minds, the success of Uganda's development 'model' to that of donor development programmes in general.

The first of these reforms was the introduction of a Public Investment Plan (PIP) in 1995 and a Poverty Eradication Action Plan in 1997. Both consciously 'bought into' the nascent donor idea of 'alignment' and 'set out the government's priorities for eradicating poverty along with its expenditure plans for achieving them'.¹⁹ They encouraged donors to 'align' their development plans for Uganda with the priorities set out by Kampala, rather than concentrating on isolated projects (then the prevailing modality of donor assistance to Africa). The reforms were extremely popular with donors and later became the model for the World Bank Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers (PRSPs), the writing of which has become a *sine qua non* for nations seeking debt relief from the IFIs. Indeed, Museveni later ensured that Uganda became the first country to write a PRSP and the first to receive PRSP funding from the Bank.²⁰ He was also instrumental in ensuring that donors were increasingly aligned with his government and its development agenda at a structural level. World Bank officials have emphasised his frequent, lengthy meetings with their representatives in Kampala (highly unusual among African leaders at the time) and his establishing of multiple Ugandan-donor working groups to discuss each area of the budget.²¹ Elsewhere in the continent few leaders had taken the initiative to personally act to 'align' their different donors in such a thorough manner.

¹⁹ Whitworth, *Guardian* (03/12/09)

²⁰ DFID (2006), p.S1; Anonymous interview 23 (2009)

²¹ Adams interview (2009); Blake interview (2009)

The PEAP and PRSP, written by Ugandans and based on a lengthy and novel consultation process with Ugandan stakeholders, also positioned Kampala as an early champion of aid ‘ownership’.²² This too had become a highly influential concept among donors since the abandonment of their less than successful experimentation with economic and political conditionalities in the 1980s and 1990s.²³ This impression of a regime keen to ‘own’ its development was bolstered by the GoU’s continued insistence on receiving aid via sectoral or direct budgetary support rather than through allocation to individual projects. Making clear that this was its preferred aid modality, the GoU attempted to persuade donors that it could be trusted with such a direct and fungible source of finance by creating a Poverty Action Fund in 1998-1999 where budgetary funding could be transferred to and tracked by donors to ensure that it was spent only on ‘public services that directly contribute to poverty reduction’.²⁴ This tactic was successful and Uganda became the first country to receive general budgetary support funding from the World Bank, UK and several other bilateral donors in 1998.²⁵ Uganda has consequently been referred to enthusiastically as a ‘pioneer’ and ‘active innovator’ in this area by donors in a 2006 joint evaluation of the regime’s progress.²⁶

Museveni has also been anxious for Uganda to be seen as a ‘test case’ country for other donor-led development initiatives and as a desirable venue for foreign direct investment from Western companies. In the late 1990s, for example, he manoeuvred Uganda to the head of a list of states eligible for World Bank Heavily Indebted Poor Countries (HIPC) debt relief. Uganda qualified promptly in 1998 and became the first nation to receive HIPC funding,

²² Whitworth and Williamson (2009), pp.14-15

²³ World Bank (2005)

²⁴ Whitworth and Williamson (2009), p.20; Anonymous interview 15 (2009)

²⁵ DFID (2006), p.S3

²⁶ *ibid*, p.S2

having been exempted by donors from the mandated six-year qualifying period.²⁷ Similarly, Museveni was keen to be associated with the 2000 US African Growth and Opportunity Act (AGOA) after being alerted to its potential significance by his ambassador in Washington, Edith Ssempala, rapidly embracing it in contrast to other African leaders such as Mbeki of South Africa.²⁸ The Ugandan embassy in Washington has since acknowledged privately that it has not been able to take advantage of AGOA owing to ‘supply issues’ on the Ugandan side, though this is not how Kampala’s involvement in AGOA has been presented internationally by Museveni.²⁹

His regime has also removed countless regulations and bureaucratic ‘red tape’ to make it as easy as possible for donors to invest in Uganda and start-up creative development projects there.³⁰ It has also lead donors to see Uganda as *the* country where innovative and novel economic ideas can be experimented with. Donors have noted how easy it has been to ‘get things started’ in Uganda³¹ compared to countries like Ethiopia or Zambia, even declaring ‘if it can’t work in Uganda, it can’t work’.³² This impression has come as a direct result of Museveni’s sustained focus on being seen as associated with neo-liberal, free market economic reforms.

Moreover, the Ugandan regime has also attempted to bolster its image among donors as an economic success story by seemingly championing anti-corruption reforms; ‘good governance’, ‘accountability’ and ‘transparency’ being key priorities for donor development

²⁷ Tumushabe (2006),p.4

²⁸ Brennan interview (2009)

²⁹ Ssentongo interview (2009)

³⁰ Brennan interview (2009)

³¹ Brennan interview (2009)

³² ‘US Official’ quoted in Hauser (1999), p.633

programmes in Africa. Since the mid-1990s, therefore, Kampala has established numerous anti-corruption institutions with limited donor pressure- but with considerable donor support- including the Inspectorate-General of Government (1995, with prosecuting power from 2002), Leadership Code (1995), an Anti-Corruption Unit (1996), a Directorate of Ethics and Integrity (1998) and an Anti-Corruption Court (2008).³³ A number of Commissions of Enquiry into corruption have also been held, looking into areas such as procurement of 'junk helicopters' in 2000³⁴ and paying 'ghost soldiers' (2003)³⁵ and 'ghost civil servants' (2006 and ongoing).³⁶ All of this activity has apparently lead donors to believe that Museveni and the GoU are 'serious about corruption'.

That these reforms have largely been made to influence the views of donors, rather than to genuinely stamp-out corruption is fairly certain. As explained in chapter 2, Kampala has consistently refused to invest any of these institutions with the requisite authority or political will to have any significant impact on the problem of corruption. In addition, the regime has actively protected a number of senior ministers and allies of the president from prosecution or even punishment for involvement in corruption scandals. The occasional 'capturing' of 'big fish' such as Muhwezi in 2007 has more often occurred as a result of internal regime dynamics than any renewed commitment to fighting corruption.³⁷ Such instances, as one Ugandan commentator has put it, should be seen simply as Kampala's putting forward of

³³ Watt, Flanary and Theobald (1999), pp.54-57; 'Judiciary Uganda-Anti-Corruption Division', Judiciary of Uganda Website (available at http://www.judicature.go.ug/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=118&Itemid=157; accessed 01/12/10)

³⁴ Harrison (2001), p.675

³⁵ Tangri and Mwenda (2006), pp.117-118

³⁶ Namutebi, *New Vision* (19/09/06); *BBC* (28/05/07)

³⁷ Furthermore, while Muhwezi was (eventually) dismissed in 2007 for involvement in corruption he has not yet been formally prosecuted (see chapter 2)

‘sacrificial lambs’ to satisfy donors and bolster regime rhetoric³⁸ while high-level corruption remains widespread and usually condoned by State House.³⁹

Donors themselves have been less convinced by this aspect of Ugandan image management. As noted in Chapter 1, they have become increasingly critical of how little progress the country has made in this area from the late-1990s and in the later 2000s have begun to link reductions in aid to the resolution of the problem. Prior to c.1998, however, they appear to have been convinced, as Tangri and Mwenda argue, ‘...that Uganda’s political leadership was committed to fighting corruption...[accepting]...Museveni’s oft-repeated statements that top ministers would not be protected...if accusations...against them’ were proven to be credible.⁴⁰ Similarly, donors have continued to welcome every new anti-corruption reform in spite of growing cynicism. On each occasion, they have seemingly tried to believe that ‘it will be different this time’⁴¹; a DFID official, for example, has explained British enthusiasm for the 2008 Anti-Corruption Court as borne out of a realisation that ‘none of the others [institutions] have worked’.⁴² To a certain extent, therefore, even this aspect of Kampala’s image management strategy remains productive – donors are still sufficiently persuaded of the regime’s anti-corruption credentials to view every new institution created as potentially the start of a genuine solution.

³⁸ Tabaire interview (2009)

³⁹ Harrison (2001), p.675

⁴⁰ Tangri and Mwenda (2006), p.119

⁴¹ *ibid*

⁴² Anonymous interview 29 (2009)

Communication of image

In terms of communicating this image of itself as an ‘economic success story’ and ‘model development showcase’, Kampala has never advanced one overriding theme in its engagement with donors. Just as actions taken to promote this image have involved activities in different areas (macroeconomic reform, budget management, debt relief, aid modalities, anti-corruption measures etc), so too has the presentation of it involved the delivery of three different, but complimentary, ‘messages’. These include promoting Uganda: 1) as a ‘model’ of economic reform; 2) as a key supporter of economic liberalism and 3) as an example of a developing country striving for economic self-sufficiency.

Uganda as a ‘model case’ for liberal economic reforms

One of the main ways in which Museveni himself has promoted this narrative has been through placing constant emphasis in speeches and interviews on two particular statistics: Uganda’s rate of economic growth and proportion of foreign direct investment (FDI). The frequent repetition of these figures by the Museveni regime has been designed to emphasise their importance to donors and create an association, in donor minds, between Uganda and economic growth/FDI. Museveni has repeated the economic growth figure (which varies between 6.5-7% per annum in each speech) in numerous addresses to Western donor and policy-making audiences including in a 1998 speech to Oxford University’s Centre for the Study of African Economies⁴³, a 2005 ‘conversation’ at the Council on Foreign Relations⁴⁴, a

⁴³ University of Oxford (1998), pp.7-8; This event was attended by a number of senior donor figures including World Bank’s Vice President Joseph Stiglitz and Chief Economist for Africa, Alan Gelb

⁴⁴ Council on Foreign Relations (2005)

2009 speech in Berlin⁴⁵ and a 2009 speech at the UN General Assembly.⁴⁶ The same is true for the FDI statistic (which, again, varies from year to year but has generally been stated by Museveni to be between 15-19% growth per annum) which was employed, among other occasions, during a 2007 ‘lunch discussion’ in Washington with US business leaders and policy-makers.⁴⁷ Kampala’s lobbyists have also stressed these two figures above all others in their presentation of Uganda’s economic position to donors. Thus in a 2007 letter to Henry Paulson, US Treasury Secretary, Rosa Whitaker stated that ‘Uganda is East Africa’s leader in attracting FDI, much of it from the United States....[and]...the economy has grown at an average rate of 5.5% since 2005’⁴⁸. Similarly in their Winter 2008/2009 *Uganda Update*, TWG highlighted an IMF projection that Uganda’s economic growth would climb from 7-8% between 2008-2011, making this one of their major ‘Economy’ stories.⁴⁹ In doing so, the regime and its lobbyists have attempted to ensure that donors and Western business leaders (who, as noted, can influence donor policy both directly and indirectly) continue to see Uganda as a country whose economy is growing quickly and attracting outside investment as a result of government/donor economic policies.

The regime has also adopted an increasingly pedagogic style in discussing economic matters with Western audiences in order to portray itself as a ‘model’ of economic success that others can learn from. This has even extended to the funding of a ‘Museveni Scholarship’ at the University of Oxford since 1998 which sponsors African doctoral students working on ‘issues

⁴⁵ Uganda Media Centre (2009)

⁴⁶ Uganda Media Centre (2009b)

⁴⁷ Whitaker Group (2008), pp.94-95

⁴⁸ *ibid*, p.71

⁴⁹ Whitaker Group (2009), p.3

relating to African economies'.⁵⁰ Since the late 1990s, Museveni's economic speeches have progressively taken on a more lecturing manner in order to stress to the audience (usually policy-makers or academics) that they are hearing from an 'expert' in the subject. This tactic further underlines to donors how the Ugandan leadership continues to represent a valuable asset in promoting liberal economic reform in Africa; indeed, Museveni does this for them in many of his statements. In his 1998 Oxford speech, for example, Museveni stressed how his government's economic reforms were 'in line' with the World Bank and IMF and that the rest of Africa could benefit from following Uganda's example.⁵¹ Likewise in a March 2009 talk at London's Royal Commonwealth Society, the Ugandan president expounded his own philosophy on how Africa could develop economically, like Uganda. This included building a better infrastructure for electricity supply and increasing industrialisation in order to create a genuine and prosperous 'middle class' across the continent.⁵² Having been present at this event, I was struck by the professorial mantle adopted by Museveni when presenting his views on economic development. The audience, which included a number of UK diplomats and donor officials, was clearly meant to see Uganda as a 'test case' whose successes could and should be emulated across Africa.

Indeed, the presentation of Uganda in this manner has even entailed the regime's involvement in the publication of books and studies in Western countries which put across this perspective. In 2009, for example, Oxford University Press published an edited volume entitled *Uganda's Economic Reforms: Insider Accounts* which included contributions from

⁵⁰ University of Oxford (1998), p.9

⁵¹ *ibid*

⁵² Speech by Yoweri Museveni at 'Uganda Through an Artist's Eyes', Royal Commonwealth Society, London (10/03/09)

over a dozen current and former MFPED employees and attempted to explain both the ‘success’ and potential wider applicability of Uganda’s economic reforms since the early 1990s.⁵³ The book, part-funded by DFID, makes clear in its preface that it has not been written ‘on behalf of the Uganda government’.⁵⁴ The fact, however, that only two of its 21 contributors were not current or former employees of the Ugandan government⁵⁵ and that several senior Ugandan officials (including the Governor of the Bank of Uganda and Accountant-General of Uganda) were heavily-involved in the project does bring its neutrality into question. Certainly the view presented of Uganda’s economic reforms – that of a successful model, which followed donor prescriptions and should be emulated elsewhere – differs little from that put forward by Museveni and Kampala’s US lobbyists in speeches and media material. The book is also extremely uncritical of the regime’s failure to tackle corruption, instead blaming the Uganda Revenue Authority and a sluggish judicial system for the prevalence of this problem in one instance.⁵⁶

Furthermore, the promotional events associated with the launch of the book also portrayed Uganda’s economy using the same narratives and statistics as Museveni. Indeed, the event, which I attended, held at the Royal African Society, London in December 2009 for this purpose appeared to have been as equal a part of Kampala’s image management strategy than any other event discussed above.⁵⁷ Opened by Uganda’s High Commissioner to the UK who lauded Museveni’s economic record, the launch was dominated by a speech from

⁵³ Kuteesa et al (2009)

⁵⁴ *ibid*, p.viii

⁵⁵ It should be noted, however, that several of these 19 individuals were foreigners (British) who worked at MFPED during the 1990s and 2000s on secondment from DFID and its ODA predecessor.

⁵⁶ Cawley and Zake (2009), pp.119-120

⁵⁷ ‘Building Success. Uganda’s Economic Reforms: Lessons from Africa’, event held at Royal African Society, London (09/12/09)

Tumusiime-Mutebile, now Uganda's Central Bank Governor but formerly Museveni's chief economic adviser and a co-editor of the book, who, like the Ugandan leader previously, used his time to draw attention to his country's '7.3% GDP growth rate per annum' and 'sixfold increase in private investment'.⁵⁸ He also discussed why Uganda's donor-sponsored 'structural reforms' had been so successful but, tellingly, refused to answer 'political questions' which criticised the regime. This event, once again, sought to portray the Ugandan government as an experienced model and exemplar of economic success in Africa and the Ugandan government contingent present was clearly unwilling to allow any alternate narrative to be introduced.

Finally, the Ugandan regime has made sure to present the results of its economic reforms not only as achievements of the government in general but also of Museveni personally. Thus in her 2007 letter to Paulson, Whitaker notes how 'President Museveni...works diligently to bring private investment to Uganda'⁵⁹ and her firm's Managing Director, along with Ugandan policy-makers, stress how Museveni personally, in the early 1990s, visited prominent Asian-Ugandan businessmen (particularly the wealthy Madhvani family) who had been expelled by Amin in order to convince them to return to the country and help re-grow its economy.⁶⁰

Furthermore, during the launch of *Uganda's Economic Reforms* in 2009, Joan Rwabyomere, Uganda's envoy in London, made clear to the audience how Museveni's 'leadership' from the start had been pivotal in securing the success of the reforms undertaken and the foundation of

⁵⁸ *ibid* (from personal notes taken during event)

⁵⁹ Whitaker Group (2008), p.71

⁶⁰ Hruby interview (2009)

Uganda as a ‘model’ of economic achievement in Africa.⁶¹ The president himself, in fact, has often claimed personal responsibility for bringing about Uganda’s economic ‘miracle’. In his 1998 Oxford speech, for example, he noted how ‘a new leadership [in the country] is the one which has made the difference’.⁶²

That Museveni’s personal role in ensuring Uganda implemented IFI reforms, particularly between 1992-1995, was very significant, even critical, is not a matter of debate. It is vital to note, however, that in promoting itself as a model of economic reform, Kampala has continuously attempted to keep the Ugandan leader at the centre of the narrative. As argued above, this ensures that donors not only associate the regime with a positive image (‘economic success story’) but also the person of Museveni with the regime and the image. By linking the man so strongly with the narrative the regime has consciously attempted to prevent donors from seeing its perceived successes (their reasons for supporting it) as separable from the continuation of Museveni as president. This has meant that at times of crisis in the donor-Ugandan relationship (such as during 2005-6) donors have drawn back from openly calling for the leader’s retirement since they cannot comfortably conceive of a post-Museveni Uganda which also conforms to the positive narratives associated with a Museveni-led Uganda.

Uganda as a promoter and defender of economic liberal ideals

The Ugandan leader has also encouraged donors to see his regime as an economic success story and supporter of IFI reform recommendations through his frequent defence of liberal

⁶¹ ‘Building Success. Uganda’s Economic Reforms: Lessons from Africa’, event held at Royal African Society, London (09/12/09) (from personal notes taken during event)

⁶² University of Oxford (1998), p.9

economic ideas in speeches to Western audiences. As a former socialist and neighbour in the 1980s-90s to other socialist regimes (Tanzania) and reluctant economic reformers (Kenya), Museveni needed to go further than most to convince donors that his government's support for liberal economic policy was both genuine and thoroughgoing. He has succeeded in doing this through presenting himself to donor audiences as a 'born-again' liberal. This has sometimes involved openly condemning socialist theory and philosophy. In a 1997 interview with *Time Magazine*, for example, he criticised 'Leninism' for misconstruing the reality of economics ('you have to base your production strategy on the selfish individual, not the altruistic minority') and discouraging hard work ('communal property was nobody's property...so nobody worked. The problem was motivation. None of these fellows had a stake').⁶³ Similarly, he has condemned both state intervention and protectionism. In a 2002 address to policy-makers and scholars at the Woodrow Wilson Center he stressed that 'all protectionism...must end...if we are talking of a "global village" of symbiosis and not parasitism'.⁶⁴ Likewise, he told UN delegates in 1997 that 'the greatest structural constraint that has inhibited Africa's growth in the last 35 years...has been the phenomenon of sustained state intervention in business' – an extraordinarily strong statement from a man who barely ten years earlier had spent his first year in power implementing an economic system based on quotas and fixed prices.⁶⁵ The apparently Damascene change in Museveni's stance here, made at such a high-profile international event, of course, served only to add power and credibility to his words.

⁶³ McGeary et al, *Time Magazine* (01/09/97)

⁶⁴ Woodrow Wilson Center (2002)

⁶⁵ Haynes (2001a), p.239

More often, Museveni has promoted his liberal economic credentials simply through praising and defending its major tenets in front of international audiences. He has often spoken highly of (economic) ‘liberalisation’ and in his Oxford speech told policy-makers of the importance of a ‘liberalised economic environment’ for economic success in Africa.⁶⁶ He has also emphasised the centrality of ‘access to markets’ and government ‘commitment to private enterprise’⁶⁷ and has even spoken of the ‘sanctity of private property’ in his 2002 Woodrow Wilson Center address, a statement which impressed many policy-makers in attendance including former US Assistant Secretary Herman Cohen.⁶⁸ Indeed Cohen has noted how this represented an example of Museveni ‘knowing how to speak the language of Americans’ and ‘saying things people like to hear: people fall in love with him for this’.⁶⁹ TWG has also promoted this image of the Ugandan leader, describing him in a 2007 invitation letter to the US Treasury Secretary as ‘a stalwart supporter of free trade and open markets throughout his presidency’. In presenting himself to donor audiences as a staunch defender of economic liberalism, therefore, Museveni has further promoted his regime as one which should appeal to them for economic reasons.⁷⁰

This strategy has also involved reaching out to and building relationships with business people in donor countries. By encouraging private investment in Uganda the regime has, in a practical sense, attempted to grow its economy. More generally, it has also been an image management strategy since the more Western businesses have become involved in Uganda, the more donors have noted the importance of business links between their own citizens and

⁶⁶ University of Oxford (1998), pp.7-8; see also ‘Speech by Yoweri Museveni’, CHOGM, Port of Spain Trinidad and Tobago (27/11/09) where he discussed the importance of ‘liberalisation’

⁶⁷ University of Oxford (1998), p.7

⁶⁸ Woodrow Wilson Center (2002)

⁶⁹ Cohen interview (2009)

⁷⁰ Whitaker Group (2008), p.71

Kampala. This has not only resulted in donors perceiving the regime in a more positive light (it represents, after all, an important business partner for companies in donor states) but also in deterring them from damaging relations with the regime since this may incur the wrath of major Western corporations involved in the country.

From early on in the Museveni government's dealings with donor audiences, then, establishing relationships with major Western companies has been a key priority. During Museveni's 1989 trip to Washington, for example, Revell Communications ensured that he had as many face-to-face meetings with CEOs and business leaders as with policy-makers and NGO personnel. On this visit the Ugandan president met with senior figures from Price Waterhouse, Prudential Bache, Hyatt and the Export-Import Bank of the United States. He was also interviewed on 'Business Tonight', a programme on *Financial News Network* which gave him a further opportunity to address US business leaders who he had not met personally.⁷¹

This 'commercial diplomacy', as TWG has characterised it, has also involved the arranging of events in donor capitals attended heavily by businesses people and with Museveni as the guest of honour. In October 2007, for example, they organised a lunch in Washington sponsored by insurance company AIG and the US Chamber of Commerce and invited a number of 'emerging market fund managers' to meet Museveni and hear him speak about 'Building the Financial Infrastructure to Transform Africa'.⁷² On such occasions the Ugandan leader has often used humour and light-hearted anecdotes to endear himself to his audience – a tactic he has also used with policy-makers (see above). In a 1995 'Corporate Investors

⁷¹ Revell Communications (1990a), pp.19-28

⁷² Whitaker Group (2004), pp.94-95

Breakfast' hosted at Uganda's Washington Embassy, for example, he amused US business people present with a pithy tale of African entrepreneurship recounting how some Zimbabwean businessmen had recently started crocodile farms. 'Of course, we [in Uganda] had been with crocodiles all this time,' he said, 'but they had been eating us! These people had turned them into cows!'.⁷³ This story, however, was employed to put across the main argument Kampala has advanced throughout its engagement with donor business communities – that Africa in general and Uganda specifically is a 'good place for doing business'.⁷⁴

This image has also been advanced by Kampala's lobbyists who have played an important role in promoting Uganda to Western businesses as a haven of economic liberalism. In their April-June 2004 *Uganda Update*, for example, TWG note how 'Uganda is one of the most entrepreneurially-spirited countries in the world and one of the easiest in which to launch a business'.⁷⁵ They demonstrate this claim with two graphs, drawn from information gathered by 'the Global Entrepreneurship Monitor', the first reveals how few days it takes to start a business in Uganda (40 on average) compared to the rest of Africa (70 on average) and Europe (50). The second suggests that a higher proportion of adults in Uganda 'started or ran a new business in 2003' (29%) than many other Western and African countries, including the US (12%), UK (5.5%), South Africa (5%) and Taiwan (4%).⁷⁶ This narrative is repeated in a Winter 2008/2009 TWG *Uganda Update* which again stresses the ease of starting and running a business in Uganda: 'starting a business in Uganda takes an average of 28 days, compared to the world average of 38 days...Uganda's flexible labor regulations enhance

⁷³ *The Bank, the President and the Pearl of Africa*, Channel 4 documentary (1997)

⁷⁴ *ibid*

⁷⁵ Whitaker Group (2004b), p.39

⁷⁶ *ibid*

overall employment and productivity growth'.⁷⁷ In reaching out to Western business leaders and using the language of economic liberalism in portraying Uganda, Kampala, therefore, has further sought to promote itself as an economic ally of Western policy-makers and a defender of market values even though this characterisation is becoming increasingly implausible.⁷⁸

Uganda as a model of self-reliance

Finally, the Museveni regime has also promoted itself as an economic success story through emphasising its long-term intention to become self-sufficient, reliant on trade and industrialisation, rather than development aid, to fund government spending. Museveni has done this both through his continuous praise for AGOA and in his discussion of efforts to create an east African monetary and economic union through the East African Community (EAC). That the regime is deeply committed to both of these projects (indeed, played a major role in bringing them to fruition) is beyond doubt. What is striking, though, is how it has used its dedication to them to promote itself to donors as a government striving for economic self-sufficiency. This image is particularly appealing for Western donors to Africa since its aid money sustains the 'economies' of most of the continent, including aid-dependent Uganda. That an African leader would want to release his country from such dependence is unusual and attractive to donors, who would not only prefer to reduce their international aid contributions if justifiable but are also far more willing to support regimes which do not see aid as a long-term solution. Indeed, were a country like Uganda to become self-reliant economically only decades after international actors funded over half of its budget annually

⁷⁷ Whitaker Group (2009), p.4 which notes that such statistics are taken from a survey of economic freedom in 46 African countries 'published...by the *Wall Street Journal* and the Heritage Foundation, a Washington-based think tank'

⁷⁸ Joughin and Kjaer (2010), p.75

this would represent a very significant vindication of the entire 'aid industry' and this is also, therefore, why this narrative of Kampala's might appeal to Western policy-makers. Furthermore, Africans 'relying on themselves' (as Museveni characterised his economic and political policies in a 1997 *Time Magazine* interview) is also a major theme Kampala has promoted in advancing other narratives on itself (particularly on its role in securing regional stability) and thus is likely to resonate even more with policy-makers since it points to a consistent overall regime philosophy on self-reliance.⁷⁹

On several occasions, therefore, Museveni has described AGOA to US audiences as a means for Uganda to move away from 'parasitism' since 'our farmers can compete on their own - trade not aid is the long-term solution to Africa's problems'.⁸⁰ Similarly, he stressed to an audience of US businessmen and Treasury officials in 2007 how AGOA and EAC financial union plans allowed Uganda to break 'old paradigms in order to integrate itself profitably into the global economy and liberate itself from the charity of strangers'.⁸¹ These strong statements would undoubtedly have been aimed at convincing policy-makers that Kampala did not accept their aid through its own choice and that, if given the opportunity to compete and become self-sufficient would take it immediately.

These three economic narratives, therefore, have been employed internationally by the Ugandan regime since the late 1980s to convince donors both directly and indirectly (through business leaders) that it represents a real economic success story. It is worth supporting, according to this argument, not only to vindicate donor structural adjustment packages in

⁷⁹ McGeary et al, *Time Magazine* (01/09/97)

⁸⁰ Woodrow Wilson Center (2002)

⁸¹ Department of State (2007b)

Africa but also to bolster a regime which promotes liberal economic ideas in a very statist continent. As with several other images Kampala has constructed of itself, the person of Yoweri Museveni is central to narratives on the 'economic success story'. This ensures that donor perceptions of Uganda as an economic success are based not simply around the idea of 'the Ugandan model' but instead 'the Museveni model'. Such a perspective makes donors, it is argued, less willing to undercut the president's personal hold on power in their formulation of policies to promote democracy and good governance in the country.

Conclusion

In conclusion, the Ugandan regime has employed a number of strategies to promote one major domestic image of itself to donors: economic success story. This narrative has been developed gradually since the early 1990s and, consequently, accrued a number of different 'voices' which present Kampala according to several mutually-supportive narratives. It is in the arena of foreign policy, however, where the regime has made use of image management to maximum effect. This is particularly so since the 9/11 attacks on New York and Washington which transformed rebel groups in far-off lands from neglected curiosities into potential threats to Western security. The two main images Kampala has promoted of itself in foreign policy – that of a force for regional stability and donor ally against terrorism – will be explored in the following chapter.

Chapter 5

Image Management and Ugandan Foreign Policy

Leaders in the developing world have a much freer hand in foreign policy than domestic since many of the key aspects of the former (eg defence spending or military operations) are often excluded from donor-recipient discussions. As such, Museveni and his government have had even greater freedom in this area to make decisions and carry out policies in order to influence donor perceptions. In this case, such actions have been undertaken to shape and promote two images of Uganda: 1) as a geostrategic ally in the US-led fight against Islamic terrorism and 2) as a guarantor of regional stability. The policies undertaken and strategies employed to promote these images among donors will be explored in this chapter.

1. Uganda the ally against terrorism

Since the late 1990s, the image of Uganda most commonly-projected by Museveni to donors has been that of a geostrategic ally against terrorism. Certainly for many policy-makers it is Uganda's status as a 'partner' in this global battle against Islamic militancy that best explains donor tolerance of the regime's transgressions, particularly since Ugandan involvement in Somalia since c.2005. Interestingly, Kampala's depiction of itself as an enemy of Islamic fundamentalism predates both 9/11 and the 1998 attacks on US embassies in East Africa. Originating in the regime's mid-1990s Sudan policies, this image has since been developed through a number of domestic, regional and international activities as will be outlined below.

Actions Taken

Uganda and Sudan: 1993-2001

For the Clinton Administration, the Sudanese Government's sponsoring of terrorism in the 1990s represented one of the biggest threats to US security worldwide and, as Clark notes, by 1996 Sudan had become '...the new *bête noire* of US foreign policy...'.¹ The CIA widely suspected the Bashir regime (in power since 1989) of allowing extremist Islamic organisations to establish bases in Sudan and train militants to carry out terrorist attacks in the West.² The Administration was also extremely alarmed at Sudan's provision of support to fundamentalist organisations and individuals such as Algerian Islamic Salvation Front, Hamas, the Taleban and Osama bin Laden along with menacing government rhetoric which spoke of its commitment to spreading its form of Islam throughout the African continent and beyond.³ Following the emergence of evidence that Sudan had been complicit in the 1993 bombing of New York's World Trade Centre, the US designated the country a 'supporter of international terrorism' and suspended all but humanitarian assistance to Khartoum.⁴ US hostility to the Bashir regime increased throughout the 1990s as it was implicated in a 1996 plot to assassinate the Egyptian President and the 1998 bombings of US embassies in Kenya and Tanzania and, therefore, in November 1997, Clinton signed an Executive Order (13067) which declared Sudan to be an 'unusual and extraordinary threat to the national security and foreign policy of the United States' requiring the declaration of a 'national emergency to deal with that threat'.⁵

¹ Clark (1998), pp.10-11

² Schraeder (1996), pp.197-8

³ Connell and Smyth (1998), p.92

⁴ Khadiagala (2007), p.193

⁵ Clark (1998), pp.10-11; White House (1997)

Despite its own uneasy relationship with Sudan since 1989 (see chapter 2), however, the Museveni regime publicly maintained until 1995 that the two countries were not in conflict and that any issues were an internal Sudanese issue. In the early 1990s, for example, the Ugandan leader declared that ‘...the problem on our northern border is sometimes presented as one between Uganda and Sudan. Our view is that this is primarily a Sudanese problem that started before independence’.⁶

In early 1995, however, and coinciding with Washington’s own change of policy regarding Khartoum, Museveni completely reversed this position announcing to Parliament that Sudan was supporting anti-government ‘terrorists’ (the LRA) in Uganda and that relations between the two countries would be severed.⁷ In April 1995, he ordered Ugandan intelligence agents to surround the Sudanese Embassy in Kampala and search its premises for evidence of terrorist plots.⁸ Furthermore, he ordered the Ugandan Internal Security Organisation to trail the Sudanese ambassador in Kampala in order to unearth the ‘smoking gun’ which would link Sudan to Ugandan rebels and, later that month, recalled all Ugandan diplomatic personnel from Khartoum and expelled Sudan’s entire Kampala mission.⁹ By 1996, Museveni had begun to refer to the Sudanese president as his ‘only enemy on the continent’ and had initiated a very public crackdown on Islamic NGOs connected to Sudan operating in Uganda.¹⁰ Throughout 1995 many of these (such as Munazamat al-Da’wa al-Islamiyya) were shut down and their members expelled from Ugandan territory.¹¹

⁶ Wafula Bichachi (2004), pp.79-80

⁷ *ibid*; Khadiagala (2007), p.202

⁸ *ibid*

⁹ *Daily Monitor* (12/04/95); *Daily Monitor* (24/04/95)

¹⁰ *Crusader* (24/12/96); Naluswa (2004), pp.44-46

¹¹ *ibid*

From 1995, the regime also positioned itself as the leading US ally in containing purported Sudanese ‘aggression’ by encouraging continuous and close dialogue with Washington and hosting international summits on the subject. The 1998 Entebbe Summit for example, attended by the US leader, centred around a meeting between US Assistant Secretary Susan Rice and the main regional opponents of Sudan where the main point of discussion was how best to confront Khartoum’s ‘promotion of radical Islam in East Africa’.¹² Museveni also ensured that his government fully supported any US regional initiative aimed at confronting Sudan such as the 1995 Frontline States Strategy which involved the imposing of sanctions on Khartoum along with the strengthening of the military capacities of the Ugandan, Eritrean and Ethiopian armies by US forces.¹³ The regime also strongly backed US efforts at the UN to condemn Sudan for its alleged involvement in the 1996 assassination attempt on the Egyptian President’s life; this culminated in the passing of UN Security Council Resolution 1044 which attacked Khartoum’s ‘activities of assisting, supporting and facilitating terrorist activities’.¹⁴

That Kampala aligned itself with Washington so strongly on this issue during this period is not wholly surprising; the regime would likely have supported any nation-donor or otherwise-seeking to undermine Khartoum’s ability to fund foreign rebels. As noted, Museveni had held Sudan’s government in contempt long before the US. Furthermore, Uganda benefited considerably and directly from supporting the US stance in the form of military aid, equipment and training (see chapter 2). What is noteworthy, however, is the fact that the regime chose to reverse its Sudan policy, from studied neutrality to outright brinkmanship, at

¹² Houdek interview (2009)

¹³ Khadiagala (2007), p.202

¹⁴ UN Security Council (1996a) and (1996b)

the precise time that US attitudes to the Bashir regime hardened, suggesting a direct link between Washington's *volte-face* and Kampala's decision to do the same. Indeed, the timing of Uganda's change in policy seems to have been motivated more by a desire to align itself with the US than to react to Sudanese aggression. Ugandan-Sudanese relations, for example, were no worse in 1995 than two years earlier when Museveni had been happy to work with Bashir and IGAD to resolve the Sudanese civil war.¹⁵ Nor, indeed, was Sudanese support for the LRA (Museveni's stated reason for cutting ties with its neighbour) a new problem in 1995. Prunier notes, for example, that the organisation had received 'serious military aid' from Khartoum from at least 1993 while Tripp suggests that Sudan had also 'armed the UPDA', another northern Ugandan rebel movement, in the late 1980s.¹⁶

Furthermore, one of the senior Africanists in the White House during this period has observed that Museveni was keen to keep Sudan on the US—Ugandan agenda in 2001-'putting it on the agenda more than us'¹⁷-and reportedly made this the subject of his first meeting with Bush at the UN in September of the same year, in the immediate aftermath of the 9/11 attacks.¹⁸ Some analysts have even suggested that Museveni was reluctant to seek a genuine solution to the mutual Ugandan/Sudanese backing of anti-government rebel groups during this period for fear of sidelining the Sudanese as a supposed threat to Ugandan security.¹⁹ By trying to keep Sudan on the US-Ugandan agenda, Museveni was therefore attempting to maintain the relevance of an issue on which Uganda had been perceived as invaluable by the US Government. In addition, just as the regime publicly changed its attitude towards Sudan at

¹⁵ Khadiagala (2007), p.195

¹⁶ Prunier (2004), p.366; Tripp (2010), p.159

¹⁷ Frazer interview (2009)

¹⁸ Kansteiner interview (2009)

¹⁹ Doom and Vlassenroot (1999), pp.28-9

the same time as the Clinton Administration in 1995, so also, in 2001, when the Bush Administration took office and adopted a more conciliatory approach to Sudan did it again alter its stance, this time restoring relations with Khartoum in 2002.²⁰ Kampala's policies towards engaging with Sudan between 1995-2001, therefore, were partly-undertaken to posit, in donor minds, an image of Uganda as a vital ally against a state supporting Islamic terrorism. This image would be considerably bolstered in the aftermath of the 9/11 attacks through a number of different actions.

Anti-terror legislation and actions: 2001-present

One such action involved the introduction of a number of counter-terrorism measures to reassure donors that Uganda represented a reliable ally against terrorism. In 2002, for example, the Ugandan Parliament passed the 'Anti-Terrorism Act' which consciously echoed the 2001 US Patriot Act in both its broad definition of what constitutes 'terrorism' and its conferring of sweeping powers upon the Ugandan Government.²¹ Clearly beneficial to Kampala for regime maintenance reasons (the act has been used to arrest political opponents and anti-government protesters, most recently in late 2009²²), the swift passing of the bill was aimed at reassuring donors that it was as committed to fighting terrorism as they were. It also represented a strong contrast to other African regimes' actions in this area, particularly Kenya's (see chapter 7).

In addition, the regime has frequently acted to reinforce the view that, unlike its neighbours, it is a leading and dedicated opponent of terrorism. It has, for example, welcomed regional US

²⁰ Khadiagala (2007), p.236

²¹ Mukwaya (2004), pp.51-52

²² Kasfir interview (2009)

anti-terror initiatives such as FBI personnel working alongside Ugandan police officers and the holding of joint US-Ugandan military counter-terrorism exercises.²³ Furthermore, where, after considerable US pressure, Djibouti's Government was, in 2003, ultimately forced to expel non-nationals from its borders (for fear that they may involve themselves in terrorist activities), Kampala has frequently and independently pursued non-Ugandans without donor encouragement in anti-terrorism investigations.²⁴ Similarly, in 2002-2003 when Nairobi was severely criticised by the US for permitting the release of seven individuals suspected of involvement in the 2002 bombing of a Mombasa hotel²⁵, Kampala simultaneously announced the arrest of several men who were supposedly plotting an attack in Kampala and subsequently detained 'about 200 foreigners, mainly from Somalia, Arab countries and Asia'.²⁶ While all of these actions have undoubtedly been undertaken by the regime in order to strengthen its own internal security they have also certainly been enacted to augment the international image of Uganda as an anti-terror ally.

The Iraq War and International Criminal Court: 2003

The Ugandan regime has also been eager to align itself at an international level with wider US security policy to promote itself as an ally against terrorism. In June 2003, for example, it signed a bilateral agreement with the US permanently exempting any US personnel in Uganda from being extradited to the recently-established International Criminal Court (ICC). The US insisted that its citizens and military personnel be excluded from extradition to the Hague by signing so-called 'Article 98 agreements' with as many ICC signatory states as

²³ Okanya (2003), pp.40-46, p.67; Heilman and Ndumbaro (2004), pp.147-148

²⁴ Haynes (2006), p.503

²⁵ Mulama, *IOL News Website* (07/09/05)

²⁶ Haynes (2006), p.503

possible. These agreements guaranteed that US citizens could not be extradited from Article 98 countries even if an ICC warrant for their arrest were issued.²⁷ Uganda became one of the first African states to sign such an agreement in June 2003.²⁸ Though it was not alone in doing so, its swift action nevertheless reiterated to the US Government how solid an ally it was. This was particularly so since several neighbouring regimes (notably Kenya and Tanzania) had pointedly refused to sign similar agreements (see chapter 7).²⁹ While there was considerable opposition to the agreements in both the Kenyan and Ugandan parliaments, only in Uganda did the regime ensure that it passed and this was duly noted by a grateful US administration.³⁰

Kampala also made a more high-profile demonstration of its apparent reliability in the ‘War against Terror’ in supporting the 2003 US-led invasion of Iraq. While Uganda was one of many African states to present itself as a US ally in the wake of the 9/11 attacks it was one of only five to also join the so-called ‘Coalition of the Willing’ against Iraq.³¹ In March 2003, Ugandan Foreign Minister James Waphakabulo announced his country’s support claiming that ‘the potential link between terrorism and weapons of mass destruction [in Iraq] poses a very serious threat to international peace and security’ and while Uganda never sent any troops to support the Coalition it did promise that ‘if the need arises, Uganda will be ready to assist in any way possible’.³²

²⁷ Pinkney (2005), p.126

²⁸ *ibid*

²⁹ Oluoch, *East African* (22/04/05)

³⁰ Pinkney (2005), p.126

³¹ White House (2003a)

³² *IOL News Website* (23/03/03)

While clearly not beneficial militarily, Uganda's support was greatly welcomed by the US Government (indeed, Clare Short suggests it was solicited by them throughout 2002-2003)³³ both because it allowed them to add another government to their list of 'partners' regarding Iraq and, more importantly, because so many other African regimes had angrily opposed the planned invasion.³⁴ Uganda's support could be pointed to by US officials as evidence that non-Western governments were also convinced that war was necessary. It also confirmed their view that the GoU was a regional 'ally' in the War on Terror and could be counted upon when necessary.

Certainly a number of Western and Ugandan officials have interpreted Kampala's support for the venture as a means for Museveni to influence donors. The UK's Africa minister between 2003-2005, for example, understood Uganda's participation in this way, pointing to occasions when, in conversation with donor officials, Museveni would refer to his country's involvement in the 'Coalition of the Willing with a twinkle in his eye, suggesting that he was just going through the motions'.³⁵ This was also the view taken by the Ugandan State Minister for International Cooperation at the time, Tom Butime. He was present at the 'very stormy' 2003 Cabinet meeting in Gulu where Ugandan involvement in Iraq was nominally agreed upon by ministers. He claims that, in propounding the case for Uganda to join the 'Coalition', Museveni put forward a number of unconvincing arguments which attempted to link isolated acts of terrorism in Uganda in the late 1990s to al-Qaeda and the Iraqi regime (the latter two being apparently linked in Museveni's judgment).³⁶ The President's arguments did not, Butime claims, win over the 'majority' of the Cabinet who reportedly rejected

³³ Short interview (2008)

³⁴ Thompson, *New York Times* (08/04/03)

³⁵ Mullin interview (2009)

³⁶ Butime interview (2010)

Museveni's logic and remained reluctant for Uganda to join the intervention. It was nevertheless forced through at the President's insistence leaving Butime and his colleagues with the strong impression that the decision was based on reasoning that was not provided to the Cabinet, relating to Uganda's 'relationship with the US and UK'.³⁷ In addition, there was little evidence in 2003 that Saddam Hussein's regime posed any real threat to Uganda. It is apparent, therefore, that Kampala's decision to support the US and UK in its invasion of Iraq was made primarily in order to influence their perceptions of Uganda, it was also the result of a purely personal –as opposed to governmental – calculation.

Uganda and Somalia: 2005-present

Ugandan involvement in Somalia since 2005 should also be seen in part as an attempt by the GoU to consolidate its reputation among donors as an enemy of Islamic militancy. Since 2007, nearly 3,000 Ugandan troops have been provided to support the African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM) with the assistance and gratitude of donors who have long feared the repercussions of recurring instability in that country.

Indeed, Western concerns about the threat of terrorism from Somali-based groups had been considerable since 9/11. In the immediate aftermath of the 2001 attacks, Somalia was being suggested as 'next up in the War on Terrorism [after, presumably, Afghanistan]' by US experts after fears that the country's lack of government would allow fundamentalist Islamist groups a safe haven to train militants and plot attacks on the West.³⁸ Indeed, discussions

³⁷ *ibid*

³⁸ Menkhaus (2002), pp.1-9

appear to have taken place in late 2001 between US and UK military officials about the possibility of bombing suspected ‘terror bases’ in Somalia.³⁹

Western fears about the threat from Somalia grew during the 2000s with the subject increasingly becoming a priority for Washington in George W Bush’s second term. A former White House official has noted, for example, that between 2006-2008 discussions about Somali fundamentalist groups such as al-Shabab were on the president’s desk ‘on a daily basis’ (highly unusual for an African issue).⁴⁰ Uganda’s provision of peace-keeping troops to protect the US-backed Somali Transitional Federal Government (TFG) and its institutions since 2007 has therefore made it a key part of Western strategy in establishing a moderate Islamic government in Mogadishu. It has also reaffirmed donor views of the GoU as an ally against terrorism. Indeed, a senior US official has admitted that Uganda’s involvement in Somalia made the US far less inclined to criticise Museveni and his regime in the latter Bush years.⁴¹ The Obama Administration appears to be in the same mindset, anxious not to ‘bite the hand that feeds it’.⁴² Even the French Government, with its limited interest in Anglophone Africa, has strengthened its relationship with Uganda in order to assist the latter’s Somali operations, sending a number of military teams from French bases in Djibouti to help train Ugandan forces between 2007-9.⁴³ As of 2010 the EU also has plans to train Ugandan troops fighting in Somalia.⁴⁴

³⁹ Fox and Berry, *Daily Telegraph* (09/12/01)

⁴⁰ Anonymous interview 28 (2009)

⁴¹ Anonymous interview 27 (2009)

⁴² Attributed to senior US official, source requested complete anonymity

⁴³ Anonymous interview 7 (2009)

⁴⁴ Anonymous interview 31 (2010)

Uganda's importance to donors in this regard has been magnified by the fact that it was the first and (at the time) only government to send troops to support AMISOM. While other nations, such as Tanzania, Rwanda, Kenya, Ghana, Nigeria and Malawi pledged support in various forms⁴⁵ these, according to the then US Assistant Secretary, never materialised; only Uganda stayed true to its word.⁴⁶ While, as of 2010, Burundian troops have joined AMISOM, Uganda remains the largest contributor of manpower (2,700 of the 5,250 AMISOM troops are Ugandan) and the main coordinator of AMISOM forces.⁴⁷ The UPDF's military skills on the ground have also impressed donors with a senior US official arguing that Uganda's tenacity is 'the primary reason that al-Shabab hasn't taken on more power than they have now'.⁴⁸

Predictably, the US and Ugandan administrations have both denied the charge that Washington asked Museveni to help in Somalia. Senior US officials have insisted that the 'US did not ask Uganda to get involved', instead suggesting that Uganda's support was offered independently and that the US was willing to support any government prepared to contribute in this area.⁴⁹ The Ugandan Foreign Ministry has claimed, quite absurdly, that Uganda's presence in Somalia has 'nothing to do with the US'⁵⁰ and propounds the official US/Ugandan line that: 'We are in Somalia on behalf of the African Union and on behalf of the UN Security Council...there is no earthly reason that we are in Somalia other than to make sure another African state doesn't become a failed state'.⁵¹ This 'official explanation'

⁴⁵ BBC (02/03/07);

⁴⁶ Frazer interview (2009)

⁴⁷ AFP (01/08/09)

⁴⁸ Attributed to senior US official, source requested complete anonymity

⁴⁹ Frazer interview (2009); Anonymous interview 19 (2009)

⁵⁰ Muganda Guma interview (2009)

⁵¹ Wilkerson, *Foreign Policy* (10/08/09)

has not been widely accepted by many Ugandans and even a Defence Ministry official has conceded in private that it is not ‘very convincing’ an argument.⁵²

Nor, indeed, does it tally with the British explanation for Ugandan involvement which makes clear that Uganda was one of several countries actively ‘targeted’ and ‘encouraged’ by the ‘international community’ to supply troops for the mission.⁵³ Several mid-level US and Ugandan officials have also argued for this version of events.⁵⁴ Considering how closely Museveni and his foreign policy team have worked with donors on terrorism-related issues it is perhaps pointless to try and establish exactly which government asked the other for assistance and when; certainly Uganda was discussing contributing troops with the British Foreign Office by early 2005 as part of an earlier IGAD initiative.⁵⁵ One should also be careful not to dismiss the regional and domestic rationales behind Ugandan involvement. Many have attested to Museveni’s desire to be seen as a regional statesman by his fellow African leaders, a *mwali* in the mould of Tanzania’s Nyerere.⁵⁶ Resolving neighbours’ conflicts, it is argued, has been a major way for Museveni to demonstrate such dominance. It has also allowed him to show solidarity with his African ‘brothers’, pan-Africanism holding a strong ideological place in Museveni’s personal philosophy.⁵⁷ Finally, joining AMISOM provided the regime with an opportunity to re-deploy recently-returned UPDF troops from Congo to another conflict zone thus preventing the expensive necessity to reintegrate thousands of soldiers into civilian life.

⁵² Anonymous interview 30 (2010)

⁵³ Fish interview (2009)

⁵⁴ Anonymous interview 8 (2009) and 28 (2009)

⁵⁵ FOI document 5

⁵⁶ Anonymous interview 27 (2009)

⁵⁷ See, for example, Museveni (1992), pp.234-243

It is clear, though, that a desire to further shape donor perceptions of Uganda as an anti-terror partner have played a strong role in Kampala's decision to commit troops and become involved in the Somali conflict. Museveni did not send troops to Somalia of his own accord; Uganda's entry was encouraged and facilitated by donors, particularly the US. Former Bush Administration officials have noted, nevertheless, how enthusiastic the Ugandan leader was about becoming involved, being surprised by the president's 'alacrity in volunteering for this fool's errand'.⁵⁸ They have also reported how impressed the Administration was by Uganda's obvious commitment to the mission despite casualties and threats to Ugandan forces. In their first meeting with Museveni as members of the Obama Administration, US Ambassador to the UN Susan Rice and Assistant Secretary for African Affairs Johnnie Carson both praised Museveni's 'commitment to the peace-keeping mission in Somalia' thereby demonstrating to him how the issue could span Administrations (unlike Sudan in the 1990s).⁵⁹ The US Government's obvious desire for support on Somalia coupled with the GoU's swift provision of such support is therefore a further example of the latter's use of foreign policy decisions to influence donor perceptions of its reliability and indispensability.

Uganda and Eritrea: 2006-present

Finally, Kampala has promoted its anti-terror credentials in its dealings with Eritrea since 2006. Increasingly regarded with hostility by the US Government, Asmara has long been suspected in Washington of supporting Somali terrorist groups. The Bush Administration considered designating Eritrea a 'state sponsor of terrorism' in 2007⁶⁰ while, in July 2009, Washington's deputy UN ambassador stated that his government was 'deeply concerned

⁵⁸ Anonymous interview 28 (2009)

⁵⁹ *New Vision* (21/09/09)

⁶⁰ *AP* (17/08/07)

about Eritrea's actions in the region...[particularly its provision of]...funding , weapons and training to armed insurgents in Somalia' and that a more hardline US response was likely to result should Asmara not desist 'rapidly'.⁶¹ Furthermore, in an August 2009 trip to Nairobi, US Secretary of State Hillary Clinton, made clear that:

It is long past time for Eritrea to cease and desist its support of al-Shabab and to start being a productive rather than a destabilizing neighbour. We are making it very clear that their actions are unacceptable. We intend to take action if they do not cease.⁶²

Museveni has seized upon US fears herein by acting on Washington's behalf to discourage and punish Asmara's actions. A Bush era official has noted that by 2007 the US-Eritrean relationship had deteriorated to such a degree that the two states had 'virtually no relationship'.⁶³ Consequently, Museveni offered himself as a US conduit, making a 'pretty critical' visit to Massawa, Eritrea in March 2007 and delivering a 'tough message [regarding Eritrean support to Somali militants] that we [the US Government] couldn't deliver in person'.⁶⁴ He also apparently gave a full briefing of his trip, including his meeting with Eritrean leader Isaias Afewerki, to the US State Department and NSC on his return to Kampala, affording them a novel 'insight into Isaias' thinking'.⁶⁵

The Ugandan regime has also spearheaded international efforts to punish the Eritrean regime for its role in supporting Somali terrorists. For example, in May 2009 it corralled its IGAD allies in calling for the UN Security Council to impose sanctions on Asmara 'without delay' for these activities having already implored the African Union to make a similar call in

⁶¹ US Mission to the UN (2009a)

⁶² *BBC* (06/08/09)

⁶³ Anonymous interview 28 (2009)

⁶⁴ *ibid*

⁶⁵ *ibid*

2008.⁶⁶ As a non-permanent member of the Security Council between 2008-2010, Uganda was undoubtedly working alongside US in this regard. From at least 2007, for example, the Ugandan leader had been in discussion with State Department officials about using the UN Security Council to deal with Eritrea's destabilising activities with 'a big stick' and, in late 2009, this culminated in its tabling of a draft UN resolution (1907) which sought to impose economic sanctions on Eritrea for its role in assisting Somali terrorist groups.⁶⁷ Following the resolution's successful passage, Kampala made it very clear how involved it had been in the process. The State Minister for Regional Affairs Isaac Musumba, for example, stressed how 'we petitioned for sanctions on behalf of IGAD and it is gratifying that members of the UN Security Council adopted the resolution'.⁶⁸ Soon after, the US envoy to the UN, Susan Rice, welcomed the move as an 'African initiative' strongly supported (albeit 'not...with any joy') by the Obama administration which had 'for many, many months sought a constructive dialogue with...Eritrea' but to no avail.⁶⁹

The demonisation of Eritrea has certainly been in the GoU's practical interests: the Isaias regime publicly opposes the UPDF presence in Somalia and has been accused of supplying weapons to groups who have killed Ugandan soldiers there.⁷⁰ There is much to suggest, however, that this policy has also been part of Kampala's image management strategy. Just as with its Sudan policy in the 1990s (see above), the regime has used US hostility to Eritrea in the 2000s to bolster its reputation in Washington as an enemy of terrorism. By aligning itself with the US on this issue and providing evidence of its sincerity to US policy-makers both

⁶⁶ *Daily Nation* (09/12/10)

⁶⁷ *Daily Nation* (09/12/09); (UN Security Council (2009))

⁶⁸ Mukasa, *New Vision* (28/12/09)

⁶⁹ US Mission to the UN (2009b)

⁷⁰ *Daily Monitor* (04/04/07)

publicly (for example, in tabling Resolution 1907 and making clear its crucial role in securing its passage) and privately (for example, in delivering ‘tough messages’ to Isaias in 2007 and then ‘debriefing’ State Department personnel afterwards), the regime has again demonstrated a willingness to use regional policy as a means to shape international perceptions.

Communication of Image

The regime has adopted several approaches to connecting these events and actions to the overall narrative of ‘Uganda as an ally against terrorism’. The primary method employed has involved using domestic rebellions in the north and west of the country to present Uganda internationally as a victim of terrorism and therefore a major ‘player’ in the War on Terror.

Uganda as a ‘victim of terrorism’

Since 1986, Uganda’s domestic stability has mainly been threatened by two largely unconnected military organisations: the LRA and Allied Democratic Forces (ADF). The former group has gained international notoriety for its brutal assaults on communities and settlements in northern Uganda and for its practice of abducting children and violently ‘recruiting’ them therein to its ranks.⁷¹ Based in northern Uganda until the mid-2000s, the LRA has steadily prosecuted a bloody but low-intensity war against northern Ugandans for several decades. The Ugandan regime’s attempts to end the northern war since 1987, as outlined in chapter 2, have fluctuated between offering peace talks and, more often, full-scale

⁷¹ see HRW (2003b), pp.4-20; (2003c), pp.16-39 and ICG (2004), p.6 for more detailed accounts of the violent tactics employed by the LRA since the 1980s

military tactics and while the LRA has occasionally gained control of areas of northern Uganda it has never represented a substantial threat to the rest of the country.⁷²

The ADF appears to have been founded in 1995 as a union of various anti-Museveni groups operating from eastern Zaire and, like the LRA, received Sudanese support until 2001-2.⁷³

The group has largely been characterised by commentators as ‘Muslim’ and whose primary objective has been to overthrow the Museveni regime and replace it with an Islamic *sharia* government.⁷⁴ Prunier argues, however, that, at least in explaining its foundation, this issue

has been overstated, it is clear, however, that it rapidly became identified with radical Islam and ADF fighters certainly received training and assistance from al-Qaeda in 1996-1997.⁷⁵

Furthermore, in 2003, US troops in Baghdad discovered a document in the headquarters of Iraq’s intelligence agency which purported to be a 2001 missive from a senior ADF commander to an Iraqi diplomat in which the former stressed ‘we in the ADF forces are ready to run the African mujahideen headquarters...whose special mission will be to smuggle arms on a global scale to holy warriors fighting against US, British and Israeli influences in Africa’.⁷⁶ If genuine, such a document serves as further evidence of the Islamic

fundamentalist nature of the ADF or, at the very least, its desire to be seen as such. The group, dormant for much of the 2000s, carried out several attacks in western Uganda in the late 1990s and was also held responsible for a series of bomb attacks in Kampala between 1998-2001.⁷⁷ While it has managed to attack Ugandans in the west of the country and in Kampala itself, the ADF, like the LRA, has never represented any form of significant threat

⁷² Tripp (2010), p.178

⁷³ Prunier (2004), p.359

⁷⁴ Shinn (2007), p.37

⁷⁵ Prunier (2004), p.375, p.379, p.382; Haynes (2006), p.503

⁷⁶ Smucker and Faye, *Christian Science Monitor* (18/04/03)

⁷⁷ Haynes (2006), p.502; Butime interview (2010)

to the NRM's military dominance in Uganda. In spite of this, the Museveni regime has used its experiences with both groups to promote an image of itself to donors as a victim of terrorism. In doing so it has been able to portray itself as a natural donor ally on this vital issue and as a geostrategically important regime worth bolstering regardless of its more controversial political activities.

A major way in which it has done this has been in its use of the words 'terrorist' and 'terrorism' themselves when engaging with donor audiences. Museveni appears to have become quickly aware of the growing significance of these terms for US foreign policy officials during the 1990s. Consequently, he began to increasingly use them himself to describe the LRA and ADF from this time, particularly in contexts where media and donor officials were likely to be present. During a 1997 press conference held in Entebbe and co-hosted with US Secretary of State Madeleine Albright, for example, Museveni noted how he and the US chief diplomat had been 'discussing...how to put out the fire of this terrorism', referring to the LRA. He also described those killed in the northern conflict as 'victims of Sudan-supported terrorism'.⁷⁸ Similarly in an 2002 interview with *Canada TV (CTV)* he argued that the LRA and 'another group called the ADF, a group of Muslim people' were 'directly linked to world terrorism'.⁷⁹ He also characterised LRA activity as 'terrorism' in a 2005 interview with IRIN and called the organisation a 'terrorist group' in a speech to the US Council on Foreign Relations, attended by a number of high-profile policy-makers, academics, think tank employees and media personnel, in the same year.⁸⁰ Furthermore, in a

⁷⁸ Dolan (2009), p.66

⁷⁹ 'Interview with President Lt. General Yoweri Kaguta Museveni', *Canada Television (CTV)* (30/08/02)

⁸⁰ *Integrated Regional News Agency (IRIN)* (09/06/05); Council on Foreign Relations (2005)

2003 letter to the *Monitor* the Ugandan leader referred to Kony or the LRA as ‘terrorists’ or perpetrators of ‘terrorism’ eleven times.⁸¹

That this use of language has been opportunistic is apparent from the fact that, during the 1990s, before the international popularisation of this term, the Ugandan regime generally referred to the northern rebels instead as ‘criminals’, ‘nuisances’ or, most commonly, ‘bandits’.⁸² Thus in a 1995 meeting with Western diplomats in Kampala, Museveni discussed the handling of the conflict in terms of ‘dealing with bandits’.⁸³ The same is true of language he employed in a March 1998 visit to Amuru IDP camp where he again called LRA rebels ‘bandits’.⁸⁴ Likewise, on several occasions in the 1990s he portrayed Kony as merely an ‘ordinary lawbreaker’.⁸⁵ Conversely, there is also very little evidence of Kampala using the term ‘terrorist’ to describe the group prior to 2001.

In discussing image management, this distinction between words is of great significance because their meanings differ so considerably. According to *Chambers*, a ‘bandit’ is simply ‘an armed robber...[or]...member of a gang which attacks travellers’, a ‘terrorist’, however, is someone who employs the ‘systematic and organised use of violence and intimidation to force a government...to act in a certain way’.⁸⁶ Furthermore, to be designated a ‘terrorist’ group in the US has legal implications which reach far beyond that of mere criminality.⁸⁷ In adopting this latter terminology, therefore, Kampala has clearly sought to portray the LRA as

⁸¹ Museveni, *Daily Monitor* (14/11/03)

⁸² Atkinson interview (2010); Tripp (2010), p.171

⁸³ *The Bank, the President and the Pearl of Africa*, Channel 4 documentary (1997)

⁸⁴ Dolan (2009), p.97

⁸⁵ Doom and Vlassenroot (1999), p.20

⁸⁶ Chambers (1994)

⁸⁷ Bhatia (2005), pp.15-16

a far more menacing, structured and politically-motivated group than previously and to ‘buy into’ Western discourses on terrorism which distinguish between ‘ordinary’ criminal groups and ‘terrorist’ organisations. This point is supported by the fact that Museveni’s public characterisations of the LRA in this manner have often occurred in situations where donors are either present or likely to be influenced by the audience hearing them.

Since 9/11 Kampala has also rhetorically linking its experience of ‘terrorism’ with the wider US-prosecuted War on Terror. This has been done indirectly through frequent public regime descriptions of Uganda’s fight against the LRA and ADF as ‘Uganda’s war on terror’.⁸⁸ On a 2004 trip to Washington, for example, Ugandan Defence Minister Amama Mbabazi made clear to US media organisations that ‘Uganda has been a front-line state in the war on terror for more than a decade’.⁸⁹ Furthermore, in an April 2003 letter to Walter Kansteiner, for example, Rosa Whitaker noted that ‘Uganda is fighting its own war against terrorism’.⁹⁰ Similarly, in a 2005 speech to legislators Edolphus Towns, a Uganda Caucus member and major recipient of campaign donations from Scribe Strategies, emphasised how ‘Uganda has faced its own, home-grown terrorism, in the form of the brutal Lord’s Resistance Army...[and]...the smaller, but no less deadly, Allied Democratic Forces’.⁹¹ Uganda’s Deputy Ambassador to the US also made clear to this author how his country was a ‘victim of terrorism’.⁹² The regime has been keen to stress the fact that, since 2001, both the LRA and ADF have appeared on the State Department’s Terrorist Exclusion List and in doing so has once again attempted to make clear the apparent relevance of the link between Uganda and

⁸⁸ Museveni used this phrase during an interview with CTV (30/08/02)

⁸⁹ *PR Newswire* (30/09/04)

⁹⁰ Whitaker Group (2003b), p.17

⁹¹ United States Congress (2005)

⁹² Ssentongo interview (2009)

the War on Terror. Thus variations of the phrase ‘as included on the State Department’s Terrorist Exclusion List’ appear countless times after ‘LRA’ or ‘ADF’ in speeches by Museveni to US think tanks⁹³ or other audiences, in speeches by pro-Museveni Congressmen, in letters to policy-makers and donor officials from Uganda’s lobbyists and even in US legislation which lobbyists such as the Whitaker Group and Scribe Strategies have attempted to influence (see below).

The Ugandan regime has also attempted to make this connection more explicitly, focusing particularly on the ADF’s supposed links with al-Qaeda. In various US media interviews and speeches Museveni has claimed that Uganda’s war on terrorism is directly linked to Washington’s since ‘Osama bin Laden was in the Sudan, and he was the one who started arming...the ADF...our fight is directly linked to world terrorism’.⁹⁴ In a 2003 speech on terrorism to the Council on Foreign Relations, he also argued that both the LRA and ADF ‘have been trained by al-Qaeda and operated out of Sudan and ... Congo since the 1990s’.⁹⁵ He even claimed less than six weeks after 9/11 that he had received documentation from US intelligence agencies that al-Qaeda, via the ADF, had even plotted to attack Kampala and kill him in 1999⁹⁶, stating that ‘Uganda was targeted for “liberation” by those terrorists. They planned to attack us. We have more evidence that...bin Laden misled our children and took them for terrorism training in Afghanistan, the Sudan, Pakistan and other places to cause chaos here’.⁹⁷

⁹³ Woodrow Wilson Center (2002); Council on Foreign Relations (2003)

⁹⁴ CTV (30/08/02)

⁹⁵ Council on Foreign Relations (2003)

⁹⁶ Haynes (2006), p.38

⁹⁷ Wasike, *New Vision* (17/12/01)

The regime and its lobbyists have also attempted, somewhat disingenuously, to link the LRA to al-Qaeda. Museveni, for example, has occasionally referred to the group as ‘al-Qaeda trainees’.⁹⁸ Likewise, in Whitaker’s April 2003 letter to Kansteiner, she asserts, somewhat equivocally, that ‘I am told that the LRA, operating out of Sudan, has connections to Al-Queda [sic]’.⁹⁹ Similar assertions have been made by both Museveni and Mbabazi in speeches delivered in Washington and Kampala during the 2000s.¹⁰⁰ The Ugandan leader has also attempted to confound donor perceptions of the LRA as a non-Muslim terrorist group by stressing its ‘Arab’ (that is, Sudanese) links. In a 2008 speech in Arua, for example, he appealed to domestic and international commentators to not ‘have a narrow understanding of this affair [the northern war]’, stressing that ‘Our fight was not with Kony but with the Arabs of Khartoum’.¹⁰¹

While many of Kampala’s claims regarding ADF links to al-Qaeda are widely accepted by commentators, those made connecting bin Laden’s organisation to the LRA are extremely dubious. Indeed, one of the foremost experts on northern Uganda, Ronald Atkinson, has stated that he has never come across any suggestion of such a link aside from the fact that Khartoum hosted Kony and trained LRA soldiers in a Juba seminary that was also used, though probably not simultaneously, to host bin Laden.¹⁰² In frequently promoting this tenuous claim, the Museveni regime has therefore demonstrated its eagerness to publicly connect its own ‘war on terror’ with that of the Bush administration. In portraying the LRA and ADF as effectively proxies of the same group which attacked the US on 9/11, Kampala

⁹⁸ Finnström (2003), pp.127-128

⁹⁹ Whitaker Group (2003b), p.17

¹⁰⁰ CTV (30/0802); Council on Foreign Relations (2003); *PR Newswire* (30/09/04)

¹⁰¹ Mugabi, *New Vision* (29/04/08)

¹⁰² Personal communication, Professor Ronald Atkinson (12/03/10)

has attempted to convince its donors that it has been equally affected by Islamic terrorism and therefore merits donor support in spite of failings in democratisation.

Indeed, this tactic has also been employed more instrumentally to secure donor support over defence and counter-terrorism funding. Whitaker's 2003 letter to Kansteiner, for example, which was also sent to the Pentagon, expressed 'disappointment' that Uganda did not receive counter-terrorism funding in Congress's 2002 Defense Appropriation Supplemental Budget. Underlining Uganda's suffering at the hands of the LRA, the letter sets out a 'modest request' to ensure the country's government received adequate counter-terrorism support in the 2004 Foreign Operations Appropriations Bill, including, 'infrared air scans (estimated cost: \$2 million), access to the ..."Excess Defense Articles" program...and inclusion in the African Contingency Operation Training Program'.¹⁰³ Similarly, between c.1995-2004 while Uganda's donors were attempting to convince Kampala to decrease its defence spending, the regime constantly raised the spectre of Kony as a counter to this argument.¹⁰⁴ Indeed, in 2003 Museveni claimed that his implementation of donor demands for security spending be reduced to 2% of GDP had actively prevented the UPDF from finally defeating the LRA in May 2002.¹⁰⁵ Such cuts had not, of course, prevented Ugandan forces from invading Congo in the previous five years.

Clearly for the ADF/LRA threat to have been of long-term use to Kampala in its image management strategies it has been necessary for the regime to continuously emphasise the

¹⁰³ Whitaker Group (2003b), pp.17-23

¹⁰⁴ *The Bank, the President and the Pearl of Africa*, Channel 4 documentary (1997)

¹⁰⁵ Museveni, *Daily Monitor* (14/11/03)

unremitting and persistent menace posed by both organisations over several decades. This has not necessarily been easy since both groups have undergone lengthy periods of apparent inactivity in the 1990s and 2000s (see chapter 2 and below). The regime has therefore, since the late 1990s, sought to convince donors that Uganda's domestic terrorists are a constant, dangerous presence and therefore should be of perpetual relevance to donors.

One way this has been achieved is simply in regime personnel continuously raising the subject in meetings with donor officials. Jendayi Frazer has noted that the LRA were one of the 'biggest things on [her] agenda' not only with regard to Africa in general, both in 2001 when first appointed NSC Senior Director and in 2009 when leaving office as Assistant Secretary.¹⁰⁶ It is clear from her comments that the Ugandan president 'pushed' the subject in their frequent meetings and clearly succeeded in sustaining the supposed salience of the LRA threat in US-Ugandan relations throughout an entire two-term presidential administration. The same is true of Ugandan discussions with London; a UK official notes that the LRA and northern Uganda were 'really the only' subject of importance debated at UK-Ugandan meetings, often at Kampala's insistence.¹⁰⁷

Indeed, Museveni himself has reportedly changed the subject at meetings with donors to focus discussion on the LRA on occasion to the same end. In a mid-2000s meeting with a diplomat, for example, he constantly moved the conversation away from issues of democratic and electoral reform (the main subject under consideration) to that of the LRA threat, to the

¹⁰⁶ Frazer interview (2009)

¹⁰⁷ Anonymous interview 2 (2009)

frustration of the diplomat concerned.¹⁰⁸ In doing so he was able not only to emphasise the continued relevance of the LRA but also to switch conversation from a narrative which could potentially damage the regime in the diplomat's mind to one which would underline its value to his government and its foreign policy priorities.

The Ugandan security services have also played a role in this image management strategy. By 2005, for example, the ADF had apparently failed to carry out any attacks within Uganda for nearly half a decade. According to many reports it had been reduced to an insignificant rump in eastern Congo and was therefore removed by the State Department from Washington's Terrorist Exclusion List.¹⁰⁹ In response to this, the Ugandan Army's operations chief for anti-terrorism, Joseph Kamusiime, declared that the ADF were re-grouping, not defeated as thought, and were receiving material support from a wide array of terrorist-recruiting hotspots including Saudi Arabia, Pakistan and Afghanistan.¹¹⁰ He also noted that ADF leader, Jamil Mukulu, whom he characterised as 'the next bin Laden', had recently distributed tape recordings-not released to the press- to his followers which implored them to 'kill non-Muslims, and kill also Muslims who are not fighting for jihad', and declared 'Let curses be to Bush, Blair, the president of France – and more curse goes to Museveni and all those fighting Islam'.¹¹¹ The continued threat to Uganda supposedly still posed by the rebel group was again emphasised in 2010 by UPDF spokesman Felix Kulaigye who told Western reporters that 'ADF was never annihilated and...these elements are now re-grouping'.¹¹²

¹⁰⁸ Anonymous interview 22 (2009)

¹⁰⁹ Sheikh, *Institute for War and Peace Reporting* (IWPR) (17/11/05); Tripp (2010), pp.156-157

¹¹⁰ *ibid*

¹¹¹ *ibid*

¹¹² *Reuters* (28/05/10)

In the same vein, Kampala announced in January 2008 that it had foiled an ADF plot to bomb the CHOGM held the previous November in the Ugandan capital and attended by the Queen, Gordon Brown and 44 other Commonwealth leaders. Without providing any evidence, Kulaigye and Internal Affairs Minister Ruhukana Rugunda both pronounced that the ADF – ‘a terrorist group linked to al-Qaeda’-had planned to use television broadcasting vehicles to convey bombs to the Meeting but were ‘neutralised’ by the Ugandan security forces before they could do so.¹¹³ For members of the British Royal Family and dozens of world leaders to have come so perilously close to destruction but for the intervention of Uganda’s security forces would certainly have been a real indication of the danger still posed by the ADF. The credibility of the threat, however, has been called into question by a number of commentators who argue that the group’s small numbers would have made carrying out a successful attack ‘extraordinary’, particularly considering the level of security surrounding CHOGM.¹¹⁴ The plot was also barely reported in the UK media, further demonstrating the degree of suspicion among Western commentators regarding the reliability of the Ugandan regime’s claims.¹¹⁵ As such, it is fair to assume that the threat posed by the plot, or even the plot itself, had been exaggerated by the Ugandan regime in order to emphasise to donors the country’s supposedly central position in the War on Terror and the continued danger posed to Museveni’s rule by Islamic militant groups

Indeed, scholars have increasingly begun to argue that Kampala’s failure to end the war in northern Uganda in general has also been, in part, a conscious strategy to maintain the LRA

¹¹³ Chivers, *Daily Telegraph* (13/01/08) *Daily Telegraph* (14/01/08)

¹¹⁴ *Daily Telegraph* (14/01/08)

¹¹⁵ It should be noted that of the major UK ‘broadsheet’ newspapers only the *Telegraph* reported the story and even they characterized it as a ‘Ugandan claim’ for which ‘no evidence was provided’. It was also covered briefly in the *Daily Express* and *Spectator* magazine.

threat for regime image management purposes. Branch, for example, contends that Kampala has consistently undermined peace talks, failed to follow-up military and diplomatic victories against the LRA, diverted vital military resources to Congo and generally acted to prolong the northern conflict for a number of reasons including to ‘re-invent’ itself as a key US ally in the War on Terror.¹¹⁶ Certainly Museveni has been extremely reluctant to pursue a peaceful end to the violence, even when circumstances have made this feasible (see chapter 2). Omach points out that the Ugandan leader has dismissed peace talks as ‘soft landings’ on several occasions and indicated his lack of interest in engaging with diplomacy at the Juba peace talks.¹¹⁷ He also told a UN interviewer in 2005 that ‘there are those who believe in the magic of the peace talks – which I do not believe in’.¹¹⁸ A number of senior donor officials have also suggested (though not necessarily explicitly) that Kampala has, for its own purposes, sought to prolong the war. Clare Short, for example, has said how she believes ‘Museveni needed a conflict’ and has expressed surprise at how ‘pitifully under-equipped’ the UPDF appeared to be during the late 1990s, noting that despite the amount spent on them by the Ugandan regime, ‘they weren’t making as much effort as one might expect’ in preparing for a full-scale military offensive against the LRA.¹¹⁹

Clearly the LRA have not been an easy opponent to negotiate with – they have, on several occasions, failed to turn up for the signing of peace agreements or ceasefires.¹²⁰ Likewise, even if one accepts that Kampala has purposefully prolonged the northern war there are plenty of explanations for this behaviour unrelated to the regime’s international image and

¹¹⁶ Branch (2007), pp.183-186

¹¹⁷ Omach (2009), p.19

¹¹⁸ IRIN (09/06/05)

¹¹⁹ Short interview (2008)

¹²⁰ Omach (2009), p.19

foreign policy. Some commentators, Branch notes, assert that Kampala has drawn out the war to ‘punish’ the Acholi for the violence committed by Acholi soldiers against Museveni’s supporters in the 1980s civil war and to prevent any significant political organisation emerging from their community to challenge the NRM.¹²¹ The regime has also benefited domestically from the war’s persistence in being able to use the threat of LRA terrorism to ‘silence political dissent in the name of counter-terrorism’.¹²² Economic incentives exist too, including that the longer the war continues, the longer the Ugandan regime has been able to justify the maintenance of a large, unreformed army composed mainly of westerners – Museveni’s primary supporters.¹²³ It remains the case, however, that Kampala has also stood to benefit very considerably internationally from the continuation of the conflict.

In promoting and sustaining this narrative, however, the regime has also been obliged to protect against the popularisation of alternative narratives which might undermine it. The most ‘dangerous’ of these has been the suggestion made in Congress and in the international media that, far from being the innocent victim of LRA terrorism, Kampala has been an active belligerent in the conflict. Such a narrative clearly complicates the idea of a ‘good’ GoU vs ‘evil’ terrorists and Kampala has sought to ‘correct’ those attempting to promote this characterisation, often through its Washington lobbyists. In 2005, for example, Kampala hired Scribe Strategies specifically to ‘provide services, counsel, advice and consulting services in connection to the crisis in Northern Uganda, issues of concern regarding the LRA...and ensuring Uganda’s interest...on [sic] the War on Terrorism’.¹²⁴ Similarly, TWG

¹²¹ Branch, p.185

¹²² *ibid*

¹²³ Finnström (2003), p.155

¹²⁴ Scribe Strategies (2005a), p.3

has frequently engaged former Senator Russ Feingold (one of the most high-profile US legislators to focus on the conflict) on this subject in order to ‘make sure he is informed’ that, for example, civilians were being moved out of northern IDP camps in the mid-2000s or on the details of the Ugandan government’s Northern Recovery Plan.¹²⁵ In March 2007, for example, a representative of the Group contacted one of Feingold’s staffers to discuss a ‘Uganda [Congressional] resolution’ introduced into the Senate by Feingold six days previously.¹²⁶ The resolution, S. Con. Res. 16 ‘Calling on the Government of Uganda and the LRA to recommit to a political solution to the conflict in northern Uganda’, highlighted a number of humanitarian issues associated with the regime’s response to the crisis but not dwelt upon by it in its public discourse on the subject, particularly the ‘displacement of more than 1,600,000 civilians from eastern and northern Uganda’.¹²⁷ This communication, identified in documents submitted by the Group to the DOJ simply as ‘Topic: Uganda Resolution’, is a clear example of TWG engaging influential Western legislators whose views on the Museveni regime are not always positive.¹²⁸ In promoting an image of itself as a victim of terrorism and key player in the War on Terror therefore, the Museveni regime has also acted to combat, as far as possible, the propagation of narratives which may conflict with these portrayals.

¹²⁵ Hruby interview (2009)

¹²⁶ Whitaker Group (2007), p.47

¹²⁷ US Congress (2007b), see also US Congress (2007a) for the concurrent House of Representatives resolution

¹²⁸ Whitaker Group (2007), p.47

Uganda as an ‘ally in the War on Terror’

The Ugandan regime has also used its experiences with terrorism to develop a second narrative which depicts Kampala to donors as a source of expertise to draw upon in designing counter-terrorism strategies. In 2003, for example, Burston-Marsteller organised for Museveni to address the Council on Foreign Relations on ‘forging US-Africa Partnerships Against Terrorism’.¹²⁹ In this lecture, attended by a number of US diplomats, policy-makers and media organisations, Museveni noted that Uganda had been dealing with terrorism ‘decades before the tragedies of September 11th’ and that, having successfully secured ‘Freedom from Fear’ for his own people, he was now able to offer advice (‘a message of hope’) to US officials on how they might do the same.¹³⁰ A similar image was promoted by Mbabazi in his 2004 trip to Washington where he advised Pentagon officials on how Kampala had foiled a 1998 plot to bomb the US embassy in Uganda, commenting that ‘we knew about Osama bin Laden before you did’.¹³¹ Furthermore, in a 2008 address to US soldiers at Fort Leavenworth, Kansas, Museveni stated how he had recently suggested to President Bush the idea of holding a joint US-Africa Counter-Terrorism conference where Uganda could share more widely with its American allies its knowledge on defeating terrorism.¹³² The Ugandan leader has also, on several occasions, independently contacted senior US government figures in order to provide counsel on certain aspects of US-led anti-terrorism initiatives including on, for example, the vulnerability of US armoured vehicles to roadside bombs in Iraq.¹³³ According to Frazer, Museveni always gave the impression that he

¹²⁹ Burston-Marsteller (2003), p.6

¹³⁰ Council on Foreign Relations (2003)

¹³¹ *PR Newswire* (30/09/04)

¹³² ‘Speech by Yoweri Museveni’, Fort Leavenworth, Kansas, September 2008

¹³³ Frazer interview (2009)

felt his government to be a full 'part of the Global War on Terror coalition' but that its expertise in prosecuting this kind of war was not 'utilised enough' by donors.¹³⁴

In promoting this image, Museveni has also found it necessary to advertise Kampala's supposed successes in eliminating the LRA. Clearly, to be a credible international source of knowledge on vanquishing terrorism, a government must have at least a moderately good record of doing so in its own territory. For this reason, the Ugandan regime has consistently and dishonestly, throughout the 2000s, suggested to donors that the war against the rebel group is either over or near its end. During 2001-2003, for example, Museveni frequently gave Kansteiner the impression that the LRA were 'on the ropes' and that very little was required for Kampala to 'finish them off'.¹³⁵ This was also how the Ugandan president depicted the situation to Kansteiner's UK counterpart, Chris Mullin, who recalls being told by Museveni throughout his tenure that the conflict would be 'over by the rainy season'.¹³⁶

In a 2005 lecture at the Council on Foreign Relations, Museveni even claimed that '...we have actually ended that conflict [with the LRA]. We have defeated that terrorist group',¹³⁷ an assertion repeated during a 2007 *Al Jazeera* interview ('we have defeated these terrorists supported by Sudan').¹³⁸ Though it is true that at various points in the 2000s Kampala had a much stronger chance than previously of defeating the group (see chapter 2) and that by the

¹³⁴ *ibid*

¹³⁵ Kansteiner interview (2009)

¹³⁶ Mullin interview (2009)

¹³⁷ Council on Foreign Relations (2003)

¹³⁸ 'Interview with Yoweri Museveni', *Frost over the World, Al-Jazeera English* (23/11/07)

end of the decade had successfully driven them from Uganda's borders, at no point has the LRA been 'defeated'. Indeed, the group is still active in central Africa as of 2010.¹³⁹

The extent to which donors have accepted these assertions by Kampala is open to question. Interviews with donor officials between 2008-2010 certainly indicate a real level of scepticism in that community regarding the regime's commitment and ability to fully eliminate the LRA threat.¹⁴⁰ Observers have noted, however, that until at least the mid-2000s, Uganda's major donors (particularly the US) were far more willing to accept Museveni's characterisations of the war and his army's involvement in it, usually deferring to him in matters related to it.¹⁴¹ *Resolve Uganda*, a US-based NGO committed to raising awareness about the conflict, was in fact formed in 2007 in order to change what one of its co-founders has described as a 'Museveni knows best' attitude on the part of Washington.¹⁴²

Curiously, the Ugandan regime's projection of this narrative contrasts with, even contradicts, the other LRA narrative it has constructed to manage its image among donors (see above): that of perpetual victim of terrorism. It is hardly convincing, after all, for a regime to have both 'defeated' a rebel group while simultaneously being under constant threat from it. While these two images may have been promoted by Kampala at times to different audiences in different contexts they have nevertheless largely co-existed, sometimes undermining each other, sometimes supporting each other. This does not seem to have been a concern for

¹³⁹ BBC (27/09/10)

¹⁴⁰ Many donor interviewees, particularly US officials, expressed such views 'off the record'; those who were willing to be cited here included Clay (2009), Mullin (2009) and Kansteiner (2009)

¹⁴¹ Anonymous interview 20 (2009)

¹⁴² Poffenberger interview (2009)

donors, however, and none have commented on it in public or in interviews. It remains, perhaps, one of the many paradoxes of Uganda's foreign policy under Museveni.

Finally, the Ugandan regime has also attempted to promote itself as a reliable donor ally against terrorism by referring to its regional foreign policy activities. Often this has meant ensuring that issues where Uganda has assisted donors to defeat terrorism are high on the agenda in Ugandan-donor meetings in order to remind them of Kampala's helpful actions in this area. Since 2007 this has meant the prioritisation of Somalia in bilateral discussions. As such, accounts of most meetings between Museveni and senior US officials note early on how 'Somalia' was talked about, including those of Museveni's 2007 White House meeting with Bush¹⁴³, 2008 meeting with Gordon Brown¹⁴⁴ and a number of meetings with the US Assistant Secretary for African Affairs since 2007; Frazer has also noted how Somalia was one of two major issues at the top of her agenda as Assistant Secretary at the time she left the State Department in 2009.¹⁴⁵ The subject has certainly been a major concern to Western governments during this period independent of Uganda's contribution and it is perhaps entirely unsurprising that the country's donors would see fit to discuss it often in meetings with the president. The language used about these discussions, however, suggests that Museveni was keen to raise the topic specifically and expound on it at length. George Bush, for example, noted that 'the President [Museveni] has got good advice and has got good judgment when it comes to issues like Somalia...' while a report of the meeting with Brown records how 'Mr Museveni briefed Mr Brown about the developments in Somalia'.¹⁴⁶ These

¹⁴³ White House (2007)

¹⁴⁴ State House, Uganda (2008)

¹⁴⁵ Frazer interview (2009)

¹⁴⁶ White House (2007); State House, Uganda (2008)

accounts imply a more active, even lecturing, approach being taken by the Ugandan leader (a tone which, as noted in chapters 3 and 4, Museveni has been known to adopt in conversations with donors and Western audiences in other contexts); usually reports on high-level meetings such as this instead suggest a more equal dialogue – ‘we discussed’ Somalia for example. It is also known (see above) that Museveni has sometimes contacted Bush, Frazer or other US personnel directly in order to raise the subject of Somalia with a former White House official noting that he ‘would often reach out directly’ to these figures regarding Kampala’s role in Mogadishu.¹⁴⁷ In doing so, the Ugandan leader has worked to guarantee that his main interactions with the most senior donor representatives centre around Somalia and his regime’s role in fighting the War on Terror.

The Ugandan regime has also promoted this image in speeches, interviews and through lobbying activities. In his 2004 address to Pentagon officials, for example, Mbabazi stressed Kampala’s cooperation with its US allies in allowing ‘possible US bases at Entebbe airport’ as part of Washington’s ‘cooperative security locations’ policy counter-terror strategy.¹⁴⁸ Museveni raised the same issue in relation to European security activities in his 2003 ‘Freedom from Fear’ speech to the Council on Foreign Relations.¹⁴⁹ More generally, the regime and its lobbyists have frequently stressed to donor officials the enduring and cooperative nature of Uganda’s alliance with them against terrorism. Ugandan Foreign Minister Sam Kutesa, in a 2009 interview, pointed to ‘our long-standing relationship with the United States against terrorism’.¹⁵⁰ Similarly, letters from TWG to USAID Administrator

¹⁴⁷ Anonymous interview 28 (2009)

¹⁴⁸ *PR Newswire* (30/09/04)

¹⁴⁹ Council on Foreign Relations (2003)

¹⁵⁰ Wilkerson, *Foreign Policy* (10/08/09)

Andrew Natsios (April 2004) and National Security Advisor Stephen Hadley (August 2006) both emphasise the fact that ‘Uganda is one of America’s most reliable and steadfast partners...supporting the US in the global war against terrorism’¹⁵¹ and that Museveni ‘was among the first African Heads of State to support President Bush in the war on terrorism and has provided the United States with near unanimous support in the UN, WTO and other international forums’.¹⁵² Once again, in constantly re-iterating its cooperative relationship on terrorism the regime has been able to promote this image above others in its dealings with donors. This has continually strengthened the association made in donor minds between support for Kampala and assistance in the War against Terror.

2. Uganda the guarantor of stability

Museveni has also, since the early 1990s, attempted to present Uganda to donors as an indispensable regional player. By ‘representing’ US or other donor interests in regional forums and conflicts, Museveni has positioned Uganda as a valuable donor ‘proxy’ in East/Central Africa. He has also endeavoured to project an image of the country as a reliable and committed peacekeeper and peacemaker through involvement in donor military initiatives as well as through offering himself as a central mediator in regional peace processes.

¹⁵¹ Whitaker Group (2004b), p.61

¹⁵² Whitaker Group (2006a), p.52

Actions Taken

Mediator and proxy: Sudan and Somalia

From the early 1990s, the regime presented itself as an indispensable regional US ally by providing support to the southern SPLA/M, a Sudanese rebel movement.¹⁵³ Purportedly this was in response to Sudan's supplying of the LRA although most commentators suggest that Uganda actually initiated this 'tit for tat' exercise. Furthermore, Museveni was close to the SPLA/M's leader John Garang (they had reportedly met as students in the 1960s in Tanzania¹⁵⁴) and had long publicly espoused the cause of an independent southern Sudan albeit waiting until 1995 to even acknowledge that Uganda was providing 'moral support' to the rebel movement.¹⁵⁵

Clearly, then, Museveni had a number of reasons to militarily support the SPLA/M regardless of donor politics. Nonetheless, this support was greatly welcomed in the US for several reasons. Firstly, many in the US evangelical Christian community (which included a number of legislators) had come to see the Sudanese conflict as one between oppressive Muslim Arabs and Christian 'Africans'. Much of this community, therefore, strongly supported their Christian 'brothers' in the SPLA and praised Kampala for seemingly doing the same.¹⁵⁶ Secondly, the US Government itself is believed to have covertly supported the SPLA/M as a means to undermine Khartoum and, it is claimed, used Uganda as a proxy to supply arms and ammunition to the organisation. The full extent of US involvement in this issue is not entirely clear. Senior State Department officials from the time have claimed that Museveni's support

¹⁵³ Prunier (2004), p.364

¹⁵⁴ Houdek interview (2009) but see also Prunier (2004), p.364

¹⁵⁵ *Daily Monitor* (06/12/95); Wafula Bichachi (2004), p.81

¹⁵⁶ Copson (2007), p. 16, p.88

for the SPLA/M was ‘never encouraged by the US’ although there was ‘lots of US sympathy for this [Uganda’s actions]’.¹⁵⁷ A former British official, however, has claimed that a senior US colleague warned him in 2005 not to ‘expect us to be hard on him [Museveni, over term limits] he’s done a lot of heavy lifting for us’, which the official took to be a reference to US support for the SPLA’.¹⁵⁸

A number of journalists have also claimed that the US\$20 million worth of military equipment provided by the US in 1996 to the militaries of Uganda, Ethiopia and Eritrea would in fact ‘be passed on to the SPLA’¹⁵⁹, with some even arguing that ‘the Clinton administration has used northern Uganda as a military training ground for southern Sudanese rebels...’.¹⁶⁰ In 1997 John Prendergast, East Africa Director in Clinton’s NSC, even compared the US relationship with the SPLA to that between Washington and ‘Central America in the 1980s’ where ‘the US provided covert aid to the Contras’ in an attempt to undermine the left-wing Sandinista dictatorship in Managua. Describing the parallels between the two situations as ‘stark’ Prendergast (who, as an NSC staffer, would have been more aware than most of US covert actions in Africa) implied, by making such a comparison, that US support to the SPLA was indeed fairly direct since it was widely known that the Reagan administration had supplied the Contras with financial and military assistance throughout the 1980s.¹⁶¹ Regardless of the depth of US involvement, it is clear that Washington supported Museveni’s actions and that, to some extent, he had positioned Kampala as a US proxy in this particular conflict.

¹⁵⁷ Cohen interview (2009)

¹⁵⁸ Mullin interview (2009)

¹⁵⁹ Adams, *Times* (17/11/99)

¹⁶⁰ *Boston Globe* (08/12/99)

¹⁶¹ Prendergast (1997), p.77

Since the early 2000s, Uganda has continued to present itself as a US regional proxy in respect to Khartoum. During the Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA) negotiations on ending Sudan's civil war, for example, the US relied heavily on Kampala to work on its behalf to secure a workable agreement, apparently hoping to prevent the Russian and Chinese Governments playing a larger role in the process.¹⁶² The US also hopes that Museveni will play a central 'diplomatic role' in the lead-up to elections and the potential independence of southern Sudan in 2011.¹⁶³ This suggests that successive US governments have continued to believe that Uganda can be relied upon to act in a way that will protect their interests with Sudan and no doubt Museveni's willingness to represent these interests, despite changing circumstances, has gone a long way to cementing this belief in Washington.

Kampala has also acted to project this image in Somalia since 2007. The US has been reluctant to commit its own forces to the region since its disastrous 1993 involvement in Mogadishu.¹⁶⁴ Uganda's vocal backing of AMISOM, sponsoring of the IGAD and AU processes which recommended such involvement (see above) and commitment of Ugandan troops themselves to the mission has therefore been of great value to US policy-makers. Unable to go into Somalia directly, the US and other donors can be assured that Uganda will represent their 'interests', with force if necessary, in Mogadishu and elsewhere in the region. This is evidenced by the fact that, whatever the GoU's own thoughts on the Somali political process, it has pragmatically supported the US-backed Somali TFG regardless of its changing leadership.¹⁶⁵ The same is true of Uganda's engagement with Eritrea in the same period (see

¹⁶² Butime interview (2010)

¹⁶³ Anonymous interview 31 (2010)

¹⁶⁴ Rosenblum (2002), p.195

¹⁶⁵ Anonymous interview 13 (2009)

above); Museveni has taken the US ‘message’ to Asmara where Washington has been unable to do so itself.¹⁶⁶ It should also be noted that the GoU has consistently attempted to play a leading role in donor-led regional security operations including the 1996 US ACRI, a training and capacity-building initiative.¹⁶⁷ In so doing it has reinforced the international image of Uganda as a reliable regional donor ally.

Peacekeeping and Conflict Resolution

Museveni has been eager, however, to position his regime as more than simply a reliable donor proxy. Over time he has acted to convince donors that Uganda is a force for regional stability even in conflicts which they have not suggested he become involved with. Thus in January 1994, Uganda sent nearly 800 troops to join the ECOMOG peacekeeping force in Liberia and remained committed militarily long after many other African forces had abandoned the mission.¹⁶⁸ While the UPDF was praised by some commentators for its ‘exemplary behaviour and discipline’ during this deployment, Museveni also impressed donors since (aside from Tanzania) no other African government outside of Liberia’s immediate neighbourhood had been prepared to support the mission.¹⁶⁹ For a country such as Uganda which, in 1994, was still recovering from decades of war and civil strife to involve itself in a peacekeeping exercise of such logistical complexity and strategic insignificance (from a Ugandan perspective) would no doubt have sent a strong message to donors regarding

¹⁶⁶ Anonymous interview 28 (2009)

¹⁶⁷ Omach (2000), pp.73-95

¹⁶⁸ United Nations (1995), p.18; Adibe (1997), p.478

¹⁶⁹ de Torrente (2001), p.116

Kampala's positive regional role. Museveni, who apparently pushed hard at the OAU for the sending of a military force, was undoubtedly very aware of this.¹⁷⁰

Museveni's personal involvement in the conflict resolution process in Kenya in 2008 can also be interpreted in this manner. Museveni was eager to ensure that he play a leading role in the peace talks which followed Kenya's violent 2007-8 elections.¹⁷¹ After South Africa's Desmond Tutu failed to move either party (the Kibaki Government and opposition Orange Democratic Movement (ODM)) toward any kind of accord, Museveni (under the auspices of the EAC) attempted to place the process under Ugandan management by meeting with Kibaki and ODM's Raila Odinga and discussing how 'an amicable and immediate solution to the problem' could be found.¹⁷²

Various factors mitigated against Museveni being successful in this objective, not least his regime's swift endorsement of Kibaki's 're-election' in early January which caused Odinga to distrust Kampala's motives.¹⁷³ As such, within a few days, Museveni's mediation efforts had collapsed, the AU seized the initiative and, unlike Museveni, succeeded in getting both parties to agree to 'use dialogue and constitutional means to resolve the conflict' and to 'work together with a panel...headed by Mr Kofi Annan...towards resolving their differences'.¹⁷⁴ Museveni, however, does not appear to have been willing to work with Annan towards achieving peace but instead tried to put in place a parallel process. Thus while Annan begun to meet with Kibaki and Odinga, Museveni did the same, albeit separately, and put forward a

¹⁷⁰ Adibe (1997), p.473

¹⁷¹ Khadiagala (2009), p.438

¹⁷² Khadiagala (2009), p.437

¹⁷³ *Weekly Observer* (10/01/08)

¹⁷⁴ Khadiagala (2009), p.438

number of new proposals such as the setting up of a judicial commission of inquiry.¹⁷⁵ Kampala lauded Museveni's renewed efforts as a 'major breakthrough' but his actions were condemned by the ODM as 'not efficient' since they introduced another layer of mediation on top of the Annan-led talks.¹⁷⁶ Ultimately, the GoU was quickly sidelined by the Kenyan parties and Museveni left his proposals at Annan's 'table' for him to take or leave.¹⁷⁷

Without doubt Uganda's failed intervention in this peace process was partly motivated by domestic concerns; the violence in Kenya had severely interrupted the vital flow of imports from Mombasa and quickly caused severe fuel shortages throughout Uganda.¹⁷⁸ Museveni's reluctance, however, to cede the limelight to other mediators and willingness to potentially complicate a delicate process by introducing parallel apparatuses is noteworthy. He was obviously keen that he personally be seen by observers as the main force in the peace talks and appears to have had this as his main priority throughout early 2008.

Communication of Image

Playing on the past: reminders of Obote and Amin

While emphasising its purportedly positive regional role has been a major way in which Kampala has promoted this final 'stability' image to donors, the primary means by which it has done this has been through contrasting itself to its predecessors – the governments of Milton Obote and, particularly, Idi Amin. Obote, already disliked and distrusted by donors for his venal, violent and tyrannical rule, became irredeemably associated with brutality and

¹⁷⁵ Khadiagala (2009), p.439

¹⁷⁶ *ibid*; *BBC* (24/01/08)

¹⁷⁷ *ibid*

¹⁷⁸ 'Fuel shortage hits Uganda', *New Vision*, 1 January 2008; Grimes interview (2009)

lawlessness by 1985 after it emerged that more than 100,000 Ugandans in the Luwero Triangle had been killed by government forces in an attempt to defeat rebels.¹⁷⁹ A senior US official from the time has since, for example, recalled the ‘horrendous human rights abuses’ the regime perpetrated in Luwero during this period and how he felt that Obote’s government had very much ‘lost its way’.¹⁸⁰

Likewise, the regime of Idi Amin has become internationally notorious. Potentially responsible for over 300,000 deaths, the military dictator’s rule was characterised by sporadic political repression, widespread human rights abuses and a belligerent and confrontational foreign policy which saw Uganda invade Tanzania and threaten Kenya with the same.¹⁸¹ Amin’s political and economic misrule led to chaos throughout the country by the time of his overthrow and left a deeply negative impression on the US and UK governments particularly. The devastation wreaked upon Uganda by Amin has led to an enduring and emotive association between his name and the country in the minds of many donors and international commentators. An official from Uganda’s Tourism Ministry, for example, noted in 2002 how the country is still identified worldwide with Amin’s abuses and that ‘the only thing that was known in the international media about Uganda was Iddi Amin [*sic*]’.¹⁸² This association has continued into the 21st Century as a result of films and documentaries produced about the Amin period including *The Rise and Fall of Idi Amin* (1981), *The Man Who Ate His Archbishop’s Liver* (2004) and, most influentially, *The Last King of Scotland* (2006).

¹⁷⁹ *New York Times* (25/09/84) US Embassy, Kampala (1997), p.9

¹⁸⁰ Crocker interview (2009)

¹⁸¹ Ullman (1978), pp.529-530; Southall (1980), pp.630-640; Khadiagala (1995), pp.35-38

¹⁸² Lepp and Harris (2008), p.530

The Museveni regime's two predecessors, therefore, have become intimately associated, in the minds of donors, with violent chaos and instability. Kampala has attempted to use these associations to portray itself, by contrast, as the opposite. By constantly invoking the memory of perhaps the most notorious dictatorship in modern African history, Museveni has subtly attempted to remind donors of the anarchy which came before him, implying that his regime represents a break from such domestic insecurity and is therefore worthy of continued support and assistance. This is particularly the case since Museveni frequently claims to have played a leading role in overthrowing Amin and Obote (and thus ending their chaotic rules), an assertion which is at least partly true.¹⁸³

Amin and Obote receive frequent mentions in speeches delivered by Museveni in the US and UK and often foreign policy decisions are justified with reference to Amin's brutal policies. During a 1995 meeting with World Bank officials, for example, Museveni explained his regime's ballooning defence budget with reference to the 'chaos' Uganda had faced before 1986, asking-rhetorically-whether it was 'bad to fight Idi Amin? Is that what European donors are saying? Should we have left him in place?'¹⁸⁴ The regime has also attempted to defend its more militaristic foreign activities by referring to Amin. Thus Kutesa compared Kampala's 2007 intervention in Somalia to that of the Tanzanians (who 'got rid of Idi Amin') in Uganda in 1979.¹⁸⁵ Similarly, Museveni characterised his regime's invasions of Congo as

¹⁸³ Museveni's Front for National Salvation (FRONASA) joined with several other military organisations founded by exiled Ugandans in 1979 to form the UNLA which fought alongside the Tanzanian Army in its successful invasion of Uganda in the same year. This invasion led to the overthrow of Amin.

¹⁸⁴ *The Bank, the President and the Pearl of Africa*, Channel 4 documentary (1997)

¹⁸⁵ Wilkerson, *Foreign Policy* (10/08/09)

part of its 'own doctrine of prevention beginning with the "regime change" of Idi Amin in 1979' during a 2003 address to US policy-makers.¹⁸⁶

Amin and Obote have also been introduced into conversation by Museveni in response to a variety of media questions including on the War on Terror¹⁸⁷, NEPAD¹⁸⁸ and the size of Uganda's GDP¹⁸⁹. Uganda's Washington allies have also sought to ensure that donors do not forget Museveni's cruel predecessors. Congressman Edolphus Towns, for example, stressed in a 2005 speech to US legislators that 'Americans must remember the terror and oppression of the Idi Amin regime...its effects are still being felt. In 1986...Yoweri Museveni came into office with promises to stabilize the country...'.¹⁹⁰ These constant references appear to be calculated to remind donors and Western commentators of the instability Uganda experienced before Museveni and, implicitly, the comparative stability it has enjoyed under him. Eriya Kategaya, a former Ugandan foreign minister, has even written a book entitled *Uganda: Struggle Against Idi Amin* (2006), an action which indicates at the very least a desire to keep memories of the dictator's rule alive.¹⁹¹ Some donors appear to have noticed this tendency and feel that the Ugandan leader has used the Amin legacy for his own ends, particularly to secure donor support. A former US official, for example, has argued that 'Museveni lived off the fact that he was post-Amin, post-Obote'¹⁹² while a former European diplomat expressed

¹⁸⁶ Council on Foreign Relations (2003)

¹⁸⁷ CTV (20/08/02)

¹⁸⁸ Woodrow Wilson Center (2002)

¹⁸⁹ Council on Foreign Relations (2005)

¹⁹⁰ US Congress (2005)

¹⁹¹ Kategaya (2006); Kategaya has been a close political of Museveni since the 1980s. His book was published after his return to government in 2006 however it should be noted that between 2003-6 he was estranged from the regime and was even involved in establishing the opposition FDC in 2004.

¹⁹² Cohen interview (2009)

the view that the regime ‘is still surfing on [Uganda’s] previous reputation of Amin and Obote’.¹⁹³

Uganda the regional ‘fixer’

The regime has also been keen to promote itself as a peacekeeper and force for stability at a regional level in an attempt to convince donors that it represents an indispensable ally in maintaining order in East/Central Africa. This has been achieved through Museveni’s offering of regional ‘advice’ to donors, both solicited and unsolicited, thereby positing himself as a purported authority on keeping peace in his neighbourhood. It has already been noted that the Ugandan leader frequently telephoned George W Bush to offer such counsel, to the extent that he in turn was consulted by the White House on occasion to discuss Washington’s regional strategy.¹⁹⁴ Indeed, Museveni presented himself to Bush as a valued purveyor of regional advice from early on in the latter’s presidency, successfully arranging a meeting with Bush, Kansteiner and several other senior officials to discuss bringing about peace in Sudan at the US leader’s first UN General Assembly Meeting in 2001.¹⁹⁵ Promoting his regime as a regional lynchpin and stabilising presence in Africa remained a high priority for Museveni throughout the 2000s and thus in 2006 Rosa Whitaker, acting on Kampala’s behalf, sent an ‘urgent’ note to Bush’s National Security Advisor, Stephen Hadley, asking that he arrange for the president to meet with Museveni at the upcoming UN General Assembly to discuss ‘regional issues’ of importance including Somalia and Sudan. The note made clear how Museveni, ‘one of the continent’s strongest leaders’, was ‘determined to maintain peace and order in the region’ and was keen to discuss with Bush how to deal with

¹⁹³ Anonymous interview 7 (2009)

¹⁹⁴ Anonymous interview 28 (2009)

¹⁹⁵ Kansteiner interview (2009)

Somalia – a ‘writhing hotbed of terrorism’ with a ‘lack of governance’.¹⁹⁶ This note encapsulates perfectly how the Ugandan regime wished donors to see its regional role: proactive (raising the issue of the Somali crisis), determined (eager to secure a high-level meeting to discuss the issue), committed to regional peace and full of valuable insights into how to bring stability to African trouble-spots.

Kampala has also advanced this image through highlighting its positive regional activities in interviews and speeches to Western audiences. In a 2002 speech to the Woodrow Wilson Center, for example, Museveni emphasised Uganda’s role (‘I served as the Chair of the Regional Initiative’) in helping secure a ceasefire and talks in Burundi after years of civil war.¹⁹⁷ He also repeated these sentiments in a 2003 speech to the Council on Foreign Relations, noting how Uganda’s chairing of the Regional Peace Initiative in Burundi ‘led to successful transition and deployment of the first AU peacekeeping mission’ to that nation.¹⁹⁸ The regime’s supposedly prominent role in bringing peace to Burundi has also been stressed by Uganda’s foreign minister (Sam Kutesa, in a 2009 interview with *Foreign Policy*, called it ‘without a doubt’ the leading model of post-conflict peace-building¹⁹⁹), and several other officials of varying seniority²⁰⁰ While the extent to which Uganda, rather than South Africa or Tanzania, played any significant role in the Burundi peace process has been questioned by

¹⁹⁶ Whitaker Group (2006a), p.52

¹⁹⁷ Woodrow Wilson Center (2002)

¹⁹⁸ Council on Foreign Relations (2003)

¹⁹⁹ Wilkerson, *Foreign Policy* (10/08/09)

²⁰⁰ Anonymous interview 8 (2009) and 21 (2009)

some scholars it has clearly, nonetheless, provided an important image management opportunity to Kampala.²⁰¹

The regime has also attempted to include some of its more controversial regional activities in promoting this image. It has, for example, pointed to its ‘intervention to stop the 1994 genocide in Rwanda’²⁰² on several occasions as well as its ‘leadership’ in resolving the Sudanese civil war in the early 2000s in promoting its image as a regional guarantor of stability.²⁰³ It has even sought to depict its much criticised 1996-2003 involvement in Congo in the same vein, arguing that it simply ‘joined regional coalitions to intervene’ in Congo in order to remove the ‘safe haven’ Kinshasa was providing to ‘the genocidaires terrorists’ and that it was ‘now implementing international agreements to establish peace and security in Sudan and...Congo’.²⁰⁴ Indeed a senior Ugandan official has noted, somewhat disingenuously, how his government has ‘played an active role...in a number of different ways’ in the Congo.²⁰⁵

Despite Uganda’s controversial involvement in these conflicts (particularly Congo where it was one of the major combatants), many donors seem to have accepted the regime’s portrayal of its engagement therein as part of its ‘stability’ narrative. The US, for example, was keen for Kampala to play a leading role in the discussions on bringing peace to Sudan in the early

²⁰¹ Khadiagala barely mentions Uganda, for example, in his account of the Burundi peace process ((2007), pp.58-68)

²⁰² Woodrow Wilson Center (2002)

²⁰³ Anonymous interview 21 (2009)

²⁰⁴ Council on Foreign Relations (2003)

²⁰⁵ Anonymous interview 21 (2009)

2000s despite its role in prolonging the conflict.²⁰⁶ There is also considerable evidence that donor officials sought out Museveni's 'knowledge and insights' on Zaire, Rwanda and Sudan in the 1990s and desired to use his 'regional influence' to bring stability to these states in spite of Kampala's malign involvement in all three at the time.²⁰⁷

'African solutions to African problems'

A major reason why, despite its seemingly disruptive regional foreign policy, the Museveni regime has succeeded in convincing donors to see it as a genuine force for peace and stability relates to the manner in which it has constructed this image. In some respects, Museveni's portrayal of his regime in this way differs little from similar strategies pursued by Mobutu before him (see chapter 1). Like the late Zairian leader, Museveni has also sponsored peace talks and played a constructive role (as perceived by donors) in conflict resolution partly in order to portray himself to Western governments as an indispensable force for stability in a region cursed by chaos. Unlike Mobutu, however, Museveni has been keen to stress that appealing to donors has not been his motivation for doing so. Perhaps counter-intuitively (if one accepts the overall argument made in this thesis), the Ugandan leader has actively attempted to persuade donors, both publicly and privately, that his regional policies are *not* motivated by a desire to secure their approval. Donor officials note that Museveni has often presented Ugandan involvement in regional peacekeeping activities as something he will carry out 'with or without' their support.²⁰⁸ Indeed, a former senior donor official has emphasised how Museveni frequently emphasised in meetings how he 'did not want to be a

²⁰⁶ Butime interview (2010)

²⁰⁷ Anonymous interview 26 (2009)

²⁰⁸ Anonymous interview 28 (2009)

conduit' for Western-African relations nor to be seen as the 'US voice in the region', feeling that he was 'caught in the middle' in many respects.²⁰⁹

Instead, the Ugandan leader has presented his regime's regional role in terms of seizing the initiative and dealing with Africa's security 'problems' using African armies and 'African solutions' rather than relying on 'Western salvation'. Since the late-1990s, the Museveni regime has made clear to donors in a number of contexts how Africans 'must liberate themselves' and help to end local conflicts because it will benefit Africa, rather than because donors wish it.²¹⁰ Museveni told *Time Magazine* in 1997, for example, that 'we are building Afrocentric, not Eurocentric, countries' and thus regional peace and stability initiatives should be African-led and Africa-focused rather than donor-led.²¹¹ Similarly, when asked about Uganda's role in regional conflict resolution in an interview with the *New York Times* in the same year, he stressed that 'what is new now is that you are having more and more people [in Africa] who are like minded, of the same thinking, and once you have such people, they work together [to resolve conflicts]'.²¹² He has also expressed similar sentiments when addressing Western think tanks (he emphasised 'African leadership' and 'the leadership in our region' when speaking on conflict resolution at the Woodrow Wilson Center in 2002) and at the UN, telling the body's Security Council in September 2010 that 'all the major African problems that have been solved have been regional-led'.²¹³ While Museveni's desire to pursue an independent, Africa-centred foreign policy such as this is well-documented and

²⁰⁹ Anonymous interview 24 (2009)

²¹⁰ McGeary et al, *Time Magazine* (01/09/97)

²¹¹ *ibid*

²¹² McKinley, *New York Times* (15/06/97)

²¹³ Woodrow Wilson Center (2002); *New Vision* (24/09/10)

easy to accept²¹⁴, his frequent adoption of this ‘self-reliance’ language when engaging with Western audiences nevertheless suggests a strong desire on Museveni’s part to influence donor perceptions of his regime’s regional activities and mindset.

Certainly Kampala’s rhetoric chimes with the change in attitude to Africa in the Clinton administration and, to some extent, among its European allies from the mid-1990s. After being heavily criticised for policy failures in Somalia and Rwanda between 1993-1994, the US attempted to move away from a policy of intervening to restore order in Africa towards one which sponsored and worked closely with regimes prepared to do this themselves.²¹⁵ The Ugandan regime, along with the governments of Rwanda, Ethiopia and Eritrea, appears to have become aware of this donor change in stance quickly and Kampala’s use of ‘self-reliance’ language in international contexts indicates that it wished to be seen in Washington, London and elsewhere as a useful ally in this exercise. Not only has this further endeared the Museveni regime to donors but it has also served to reify and strengthen their perception that it represents a genuinely indispensable force for stability in its region.

Conclusion

This chapter has, therefore, shown how the Ugandan regime has promoted two major images of itself in foreign policy – that of an ally against terrorism and of a regional guarantor of stability. In many respects these images have complemented each other and this has made their transmission particularly easy both for Kampala to advance and for donors to remember. The chapter has also noted, albeit in less detail, how often actions taken by the regime as part

²¹⁴ See, for example, his October 1987 speech to the UN General Assembly in Museveni (1992), pp.199-207

²¹⁵ Khadiagala (2001), pp.261-264

of image management strategies have also been intended to serve other purposes such as establishing Museveni's credentials as a regional elder statesman or providing employment for restive Ugandan soldiers whose support the regime relies on.

Indeed, it is important here to note, that nearly every activity undertaken by Kampala for image management reasons has also had additional, often domestic, rationales and that Museveni has not enthusiastically taken every opportunity to embellish donor images of his regime. In the later 2000s, for example, he twice rejected UK Prime Minister Gordon Brown's proposal that Uganda assist in resolving the Darfur crisis saying, in 2008, 'that the fundamental problems of Darfur must be addressed [first]' and, in 2009, 'that Darfur is a long way from Uganda'.²¹⁶ This latter justification was particularly disingenuous since Darfur is not much further from Uganda than Mogadishu where Ugandan soldiers have been serving since 2007.

With London clearly viewing Uganda through the lense of 'regional mediator and peacekeeper', it is initially difficult to understand why Museveni would have rejected such a perfect offer to augment this image in UK policy-makers' minds. It is possible that he considered the benefits of assisting the UK and further shaping Uganda's image in London to not outweigh the costs of over-extending an army already fighting on several fronts. Certainly the logistical complexities of undertaking this operation such a 'long way from Uganda' were his primary stated objections to the proposal in 2009. In addition, Brown's popularity in the UK was extremely low from late-2007 and polls continuously predicted that his Labour party

²¹⁶ State House, Uganda (2008); *Indian Ocean Newsletter* (01/08/09)

would not win re-election.²¹⁷ Museveni, therefore, may not have been particularly interested in winning the favour of a Western leader whose political future seemed so uncertain. Whatever influenced his calculations it is clear that the Ugandan leader has not been prepared to support every venture which will help shape his image in donor capitals; image management has not been the sole consideration in most policy-making decisions.

²¹⁷ Porter, Kirkup and Swaine, *Daily Telegraph* (01/08/08)

Chapter 6

Donor divisions and recipient manipulation

Introduction

The previous three chapters have explored in detail the strategies employed by the Museveni regime to manage donor perceptions and thereby retain international support and secure greater agency in the international system. This central focus on the role played by Kampala herein has been defended throughout as a means to address existing flaws in the literature and to better understand all sides of the interplay between donors, recipients and agency. It is important, however, not to ignore the significance of internal donor dynamics in explaining why Uganda has received such enthusiastic and long-standing international support. This chapter will therefore take a step back from questions of African agency to investigate how far inter- and intra-donor disagreements have contributed to bringing about this situation. Sometimes these divisions have benefited Kampala but come about entirely without its involvement. It has nevertheless certainly taken advantage of them as part of its overall image management strategy and this issue will also be addressed in this chapter.

Inter-donor relations

Simplicity demands that donors are usually referred to jointly as just that – ‘donors’, and the majority of this study is no exception. This convention, however, is unfortunate in that it conveys the idea that the ‘donors’ to a country such as Uganda are homogenous – they are, of course, not. Uganda’s donors vary considerably in type, size, approach, priorities and objectives. Indeed, even donors individually cannot be classified as homogenous since numerous domestic agencies, departments, institutions and ministries contribute to and

influence, to differing degrees, their foreign policy. Every one of these divisions represents a potential ‘veto point’¹, where different donors or donor ministries may disagree on the extent of a problem (eg corruption), whether to take action as a result of it (such as suspending aid) and, if action is to be taken, how strong a response is merited. The more ‘veto points’ that exist, the more likely an internal disagreement on policy will occur and that any donor response will be muted or more limited as a reflection of these disagreements.

These ‘veto points’ are present in the structures governing Western foreign relations with all nations though they are especially significant in Western relations with Africa for two reasons. Firstly, these relations are primarily based around the disbursement and management of substantial aid flows and therefore development ministries, agencies and country offices are also pivotal to the overall relationship. This creates an additional apparatus where disagreement can occur. Secondly, relations with African countries rarely command high-level executive attention in Western governments outside of major crises and, in general, African affairs are normally delegated to sub-Cabinet level officials.² This means that rarely is there any senior figure in a Western government who provides the final voice on policy towards an African country and instead a number of different, sometimes opposing, institutions and individuals vie for influence. That state’s Africa policy, therefore, is acutely vulnerable to being challenged by different parts of its government and very likely to be effected by the institutional or personal biases of whichever ministry or official who has the upper hand at any particular time. The sheer number of states dealt with by these officials also makes them more prone to viewing African regimes in a simplistic and unnuanced

¹ Lancaster interview (2009)

² Schraeder (1991), pp.374-375

manner, often relying on exactly the kind of basic characterisations which Museveni has so successfully developed and maintained in donor minds for decades.

In Western relations with Uganda, as with the rest of Africa, these divisions occur at three basic levels – between multilateral and bilateral donors, between bilateral donors themselves and between parts of each individual donor – and this chapter will explore each one of these areas. The divisions which will be explored here are essentially structural and could theoretically lead to muted Western criticism of any problematic African regime. Uganda has nevertheless been treated far more leniently than many of its neighbours and this chapter will therefore also show how Kampala has contributed to and taken advantage of these rifts as part of its foreign policy strategies.

Multilateral vs Bilateral

Perhaps the most longstanding and serious disagreement within the Ugandan donor community has been that between the IFIs and bilateral donors on political matters. While almost all of Uganda's major bilateral donors take the country's political situation and development into account when disbursing aid, the World Bank and IMF do not. Indeed, they are prohibited from doing so by their founding Articles of Agreement. For example, the Bank's concessional lending arm, the International Development Association (IDA), is, forbidden from interfering in:

...the political affairs of any member; nor shall they [the Association and its officers] be influenced in their decisions by the political character of the member or members concerned. Only economic

considerations shall be relevant to their decisions, and these considerations shall be weighed impartially...³

Consequently, the Bank and Fund have been theoretically prohibited from disrupting or reducing aid to Uganda as a result of any ‘political’ actions of the regime including democratic backsliding, invading Congo or forcing millions in northern Uganda into IDP camps. These restrictions on IFI political activity present a huge roadblock to the development of more unified and forceful donor responses to the Museveni regime’s political transgressions since the Bank especially has consistently provided a large percentage of Uganda’s overall aid (see chapter 2).

In addition, the nature of Bank aid to Uganda has been extremely supportive of the regime with nearly half (45%) being disbursed via general budgetary, rather than donor-administered programme or project, support by 2005.⁴ Similarly, despite being primarily a lending institution unlike bilateral donor agencies, the Bank has been the fourth most generous provider of grants to Uganda between 1998-2008, delivering 11.2% of Kampala’s total amount and being out-spent in this regard by only the UK, US and EU.⁵ Finally, owing to its status as Uganda’s major donor, the Bank has played a key role in coordinating other donors and their programmes around general budget support mechanisms and poverty reduction strategies as well as through its chairing of annual donor consultative group meetings.⁶ In summary, the World Bank is, by a long way, Uganda’s largest, most supportive and most influential donor. No other Ugandan donor could bring the Museveni regime to its knees

³ World Bank (1960), Article V, Section 6

⁴ Barkan (2009), p.68

⁵ Uganda National NGO Forum (2010), p.24

⁶ Blake interview (2009)

instantly by unilaterally suspending its aid programme and yet the Bank, along with the Fund, is one of the only donors constitutionally prevented from doing so for ‘political’ reasons.

The Bank’s reluctance to pursue a political agenda in Uganda has led to a number of disagreements with bilateral donors since the mid-1990s and has also contributed to overall donor tolerance of corruption, military misbehaviour and democratic backsliding by the regime. Bilateral donors have long been aware of the uniquely powerful position the Bank is in to influence Kampala’s actions and has occasionally attempted to enlist its assistance in certain areas but been rebuffed. Between c. 1995-2003 bilateral donors, particularly the UK, Denmark and the Netherlands, attempted to involve the Bank in their efforts to pressure the regime into reducing corruption and defence spending in multilateral talks. The Bank, however, resisted these efforts and a number of former officials have spoken of the ‘significant difference in stance’ taken by the Bank and bilateral donors on defence spending⁷, even suggesting that the Bank considered the defence budget as ‘off limits’ for donors.⁸ Similarly, the Bank has been criticised for being ‘slow’ and ‘unwilling to get involved in policy matters like corruption’ by donor officials⁹; certainly it refused to incorporate conditionalities linked to corruption into Uganda’s PRSC until 2002 despite the UK and other donors petitioning for this to be done from the mid-1990s.¹⁰ Likewise, when alerted to corrupt regime interference in Bank-sponsored privatisation schemes in 1999 a

⁷ DFID (2006), p.111

⁸ Blake interview (2009)

⁹ Clay interview (2009)

¹⁰ FOI document 4, p.3-4

representative reportedly refused to become involved claiming that ‘the mandate of his organisation precluded it from dealing with the political side of anti-corruption work’.¹¹

The Bank also appears to have been hesitant in associating itself with donor condemnations of Uganda’s 1996 and 1997 invasions of Congo leading to ‘tension’ with other donors according to a former Bank official.¹² Considering the issue too political, the Bank did not join Uganda’s other development partners in criticising the interventions thereby robbing the donor community of the appearance of unity on the subject. Later the Bank was reprimanded by the UN for neglecting to note that the growth in exports of gold and diamonds from Uganda by 2001 had come about as a result of Kampala’s violent and rapacious involvement with its western neighbour.¹³ Finally, the Bank has also withstood calls from other donors to put pressure on the regime with regard to democratisation and political pluralism. This appears to have been most advantageous to Kampala during the 2003-2005 debate on removing presidential term limits. While senior figures from many bilateral donor governments privately, and occasionally publicly, expressed their opposition to Museveni’s pursuit of a third term the Bank refused to become involved for political reasons, despite other donors pushing for it to do so.¹⁴

Bilateral donors have become increasingly frustrated with this non-political approach. In 2003, for example, a Dutch-commissioned report condemned the Bank’s obfuscatory role in tackling Uganda’s corruption problems noting how it ‘takes a less critical approach [to the Ugandan government]...their evaluations giving a more positive picture of how the

¹¹ Tangri and Mwenda (2006), p.121

¹² Blake interview (2009)

¹³ Tangri and Mwenda (2003), p.547

¹⁴ Anonymous interview 23 (2009)

institutions of Uganda are performing than they really are'.¹⁵ In the same year, bilateral donors established a 'governance matrix' which excluded the Bank in an attempt to bring donors together and engage the regime on issues which the Bank perceived as being beyond its mandate including democratisation, human rights, transparency and security.¹⁶ As such, until the mid-2000s the Bank has consistently acted as a hindrance in donor attempts to take a stronger line on political issues with the GoU.

The Bank's disagreements with bilateral donors on political issues and its general lack of engagement in 'politics' remains, nevertheless, somewhat ambiguous. While donors have certainly attempted to push it beyond its mandate in certain areas they have also, to a degree, hidden behind the same mandate to avoid having to expressly criticise Kampala on a number of political issues. A 2005 DFID-commissioned report on political conditionality, for example, noted how the British development ministry had occasionally used the limited scrutiny of corruption inherent to IFI programmes as a 'cover' for neglecting this issue itself in its development partnerships, including Uganda.¹⁷

Furthermore, as a senior Bank official has pointed out, bilateral donors have major influence over Bank policies and programmes as its main shareholders and funders and can, if they wish, impose their views in many areas through their voting powers.¹⁸ Indeed, within the IDA which contains 169 member countries, UK and US voting power alone constitutes 16.47% of the total.¹⁹ Clearly there would be a large number of complicated and difficult practicalities

¹⁵ Royal Netherlands Embassy (2003), p.20

¹⁶ DFID (2006), p.111

¹⁷ FOI document 4, p.35

¹⁸ Adams interview (2009)

¹⁹ Percentages taken from World Bank Website (available at <http://siteresources.worldbank.org/BODINT/Resources/278027-1215524804501/IDACountryVotingTable.pdf>; accessed 01/12/10)

involved in any attempt by these donors to use their influence to re-orientate or modify the basic non-political agenda of the Bank.²⁰ Nonetheless, it is important to be aware that Uganda's main bilateral donors have a very significant role in the management of the Bank and Fund and can, if they wish, formally or informally influence its lending policies and programmes substantially. Despite the disagreements between these donors and the Bank noted above the former clearly did not view their political agenda as important enough to merit more formal action in Washington to this end.

In addition, the Bank has not always been entirely apolitical with regard to Uganda. Despite its restricted mandate it has increasingly strayed into the murky conceptual arena of 'governance', particularly since the early 1990s. Harrison has charted extensively the Bank's shifting understanding of this concept from 'a putatively more neutral' one involving 'civil service reform, legal reform, accountability in fiscal management and budgetary discipline' to a much more political definition including ideas of corruption and 'popular participation'.²¹ While ultimately concluding that the Bank's understanding of governance has been 'fairly abstract' with only vague, insipid meanings being attached to seemingly political terms to avoid controversy, Harrison does reveal the extent to which Bank policy-makers have felt able to encroach upon 'political' territory.

Certainly a former Bank employee has argued that the institution's hazy comprehension of its limits in this area allowed considerable 'wriggle-room' to country directors and officers when designing programmes for Uganda.²² During the 1990s, for example, the Bank undertook

²⁰ Kapur (2002), p.58

²¹ Harrison (2005), pp.241-243

²² Adams interview (2009)

analytical work into the financing of Uganda's 1996 and 2001 elections and steadily incorporated corruption-based conditionalities into its agreements with the Ugandan regime.²³ In 2002 these conditionalities were included in the Bank's PRSC Matrix for Uganda in reaction to a bribery scandal and Uganda's second World Bank PRSC contained a 'floating tranche' of \$50m which would be disbursed only after the passing of the Leadership Code Act (see chapter 2).²⁴

It is also clear that the Bank took steps to broaden its political understanding of Uganda and the political impact its involvement there was having. In the early-2000s, for example, it commissioned a number of thorough and detailed analyses of the country's political economy and the implications of the political situation for World Bank policies. The final 2004 report was highly critical of the regime arguing that it had slowly created a corrupt, increasingly autocratic and divisive political system which despite 'getting macroeconomic policies right' had not 'institutionalised procedures to ensure long-term self-sustaining growth'.²⁵ Obviously unconstrained by any non-political agenda, the report recommended a re-think on the provision of GBS to Uganda by the Bank and even suggested that the institution should 'plan for the possibility of a reduced lending programme' in response to Kampala's economic and political transgressions.²⁶

This evidence of the Bank's considerable political engagement with Kampala makes it somewhat difficult to accept that its mandate alone prevented it from supporting other donors in their efforts to encourage democratisation in Uganda. Indeed the Bank's reluctance to

²³ *ibid*; FOI document 4, pp.3-4

²⁴ *ibid*

²⁵ World Bank (2004), p.57

²⁶ *ibid*

condemn many aspects of the Museveni regime appears to have come about also as a result of other factors, primarily personalities and the pressure to disburse money. Particularly in the mid-2000s, the forbearance of particular senior officials appears to have protected Uganda against Bank criticism. One such official, it has been claimed, strongly supported Museveni for his neo-liberal economic approach and the putative ‘success story’ this provided the Bank. Fully aware of the political controversies the regime had been involved in she nevertheless ensured that the 2004 report mentioned above was not circulated among Bank staff and refused petitions from donor governments that its findings be discussed in a seminar.²⁷ She and others have both been attacked by colleagues for refusing to listen to criticism of Uganda and being ‘mesmerised by Museveni’.²⁸ Their personal support for the regime, therefore, must be taken into consideration when explaining the Bank’s obstinacy in refusing to assist donors pushing for political reform in Kampala in the 2000s.

It must also be remembered that the World Bank is principally a genuine bank and, as such, relies on lending and the interest accrued on loan repayments by members to survive.²⁹ There is, therefore, an institutional imperative to lend at the Bank which has led to the development of an ‘approval and disbursement culture’ where officials are strongly encouraged to disburse as much money to as many states as possible.³⁰ Emails from a former Bank Vice-President for Africa, for example, frequently implored staff to ‘meet our lending targets’ and ‘moving the money’, as Barkan has noted, is seen as vital for career development at the Bank.³¹ Bank employees lending to a government such as Uganda’s, therefore, find themselves faced with

²⁷ Joel Barkan interview (2009)

²⁸ *ibid*

²⁹ Barkan (2009), p.73

³⁰ World Bank (1998), p.6

³¹ Barkan (2009), p.73

what Mosley et al have termed a ‘disbursement dilemma’ where insistence on conditionalities or reduction of aid for whatever reason may put the Bank’s ‘disbursement and financial position at risk’ and, indeed, jeopardise the career prospects of the officials in question who would be directly challenging the inherent ‘disbursement culture’.³² This is particularly true for a case like Uganda which has, as noted, been heavily supported by the Bank since the 1980s and has been heralded by it as a ‘success story’.

The Ugandan role in Bank-bilateral donor division

The Museveni regime has been proactive in taking advantage of these issues as part of its overall image management strategy. It has actively sought, for example, to augment Bank supremacy over other donors in Kampala and enhance its central position in the Ugandan donor community in order to remove, as far as possible, politics from the Uganda-donor dialogue. This has been achieved through the advancing of the highly-technical MFPED as the primary government institution for managing relations with donors and through the promotion of the budget-making process as the main arena for donor coordination. Endowed with Museveni’s personal support, Uganda’s most capable economists and civil servants and a vast budget, the department has been described by donors as ‘very powerful’³³ and, consequently, the only ministry worth dealing with to secure results.³⁴ Its senior officials, unlike those in any other department, enjoy sufficient confidence from State House to sign agreements and plan programmes with donors without express presidential consent.³⁵ In contrast, other ministries, such as Public Service have been described by donors as ‘weak’

³² Mosley, Harrigan and Toye (1991), Volume I, pp.176-177

³³ Blake interview (2009)

³⁴ Anonymous interview 23 (2009)

³⁵ *ibid*

and unable to take any significant decisions ‘without MFPED support’ because State House is ‘not interested’ in them.³⁶ MFPED, however, is also a highly-technical ministry overwhelmingly staffed by technocrats and is primarily concerned with ‘non-political’ issues.

This is a consequence of the department’s institutional history. Formed by the merger of two existing ministries (Finance and Planning), its creation in 1992 represented a substantial victory for Planning’s senior civil servant, the UK-educated Emmanuel Tumusiime-Mutebile, who, having gained Museveni’s trust, was granted virtual exclusive control of designing and implementing Ugandan economic policy.³⁷ Unlike many of his colleagues, Tumusiime was convinced that pursuing neoliberal, IFI-recommended reforms was the only way to rebuild Uganda’s economy and thus, during his tenure at MFPED, steadily filled the department with young, technical-minded economists, often promoting talented specialists over longer-serving officials, and, according to one donor, ‘trained a second generation of technocrats’ to run the ministry in the same vein after his retirement.³⁸ This group of economists (dubbed ‘Team Tumusiime’ by one commentator) has been universally characterised as youthful, well-educated and extremely technical by observers.³⁹

Like the World Bank, therefore, they take a non-political approach to policy-making and, as such, tend to downplay political questions in their dealings with donors. The regime has ensured that MFPED maintains closer links with the Bank than any other donor and numerous observers have commented upon the ‘very close relationship’ that has developed

³⁶ *ibid*

³⁷ Brett (1996), p.320

³⁸ Harrison (2001), pp.665-666; Mallaby (2004), pp.219-221; Tumusiime-Mutebile (2009), pp.44-45; Anonymous interview 15 (2009); the current Permanent Secretary at MFPED, Chris Kassami, is one of the more prominent of this ‘second generation’ (Anonymous interview 15 (2009))

³⁹ *ibid*; Harrison (2001), pp.660-661

between the two institutions.⁴⁰ One way in which the regime has been achieved this has been through its encouragement of increased contact between MFPED officials (who ‘speak the same language’ as Bank staff on economic reform) and their counterparts at the Bank.⁴¹ Thus, according to Mallaby, ‘a cadre of Ugandan technocrats’ have been sent to Washington over the years for Bank-sponsored economic ‘training courses’ while, simultaneously, expatriate Bank economists have been welcomed into MFPED as technical assistants.⁴² The remarkable extent to which the regime has pursued this strategy can be seen in the example of one such expatriate adviser, Allister Moon, who recalls being invited to sit-in on Ugandan Cabinet meetings themselves.⁴³ By establishing such close links, therefore, the regime has acted to ensure that donors deal with it in as non-political a context as possible and that within this context the Bank has greater influence than other, more politically-concerned donors.

Connected to this, the regime has also attempted to structure Ugandan-donor relations around the equally technical and non-political budget-making process. A former Bank official has noted, for example, how from the mid-1990s, State House increasingly worked to make the budget, managed by MFPED, the focal point for coordinating and dealing with donors.⁴⁴ By producing poverty papers and plans such as PEAP and PRSP which have aligned the regime’s priorities with those of donors and actively involving donors in budgetary discussions through including them in sector working groups and wider spending debates, Kampala has introduced the budget itself as the major donor coordinating mechanism, with the World

⁴⁰ Blake interview (2009); this interviewee has pointed out, however, that DFID also enjoyed ‘equally close access’ to MFPED at times.

⁴¹ Harrison (2001), p.664

⁴² Mallaby (2004), p.221

⁴³ Mallaby (2004), pp.432-433

⁴⁴ *ibid*

Bank as chair and major sponsor.⁴⁵ In this way, the regime has directly manoeuvred the Bank into position as a ‘conduit between donors and itself’⁴⁶ placing a supposedly non-political body in charge of a non-political process which nevertheless is designed to structure the entire donor-Ugandan relationship.

The regime has also worked to marginalise the influence of donor coordinating structures which do not include the Bank and which focus on more political questions. The 2003 Governance Matrix, for example, has been judged to have failed to ‘become an effective framework’ for addressing bilateral donor concerns on political issues because the regime has refused to integrate it into MFPED.⁴⁷ Instead it has engaged with it only through the Office of the Prime Minister, a department widely regarded by donors and Ugandans alike as distant from State House.⁴⁸ Likewise, other similar projects such as the current Partners for Democracy and Governance group (PDG) have not always had a significant impact in areas such as democratisation as a result of limited engagement by the regime, to the frustration of many European donors who have characterised the group’s activities as being little more than ‘banging on tables’.⁴⁹ By ensuring as far as possible, therefore, that the Bank and its non-political agenda remain at the heart of donor relations and as a conduit between Kampala and bilateral donors, the regime has been able to take advantage of Bank-donor divisions on political issues and thereby escape, to some degree, criticism in ‘political’ areas such as democratisation, corruption and military activities.

⁴⁵ *ibid*

⁴⁶ *ibid*

⁴⁷ FOI document 4, pp.23-24

⁴⁸ Anonymous interview 19 (2009)

⁴⁹ Anonymous interview 10 (2009)

Donors vs Donors

Disagreements between Uganda's main bilateral donors have also lead to a lessening of international pressure on Kampala in a number of areas. These have rarely been caused, however, by concerns regarding mandates, with the possible exception of Japan.⁵⁰ Nor, indeed, have some donors refused to accept that the regime's main transgressions are indeed significant problems worth dealing with. Donors have consistently disagreed, however, on how best to tackle such issues, divided between those supporting joint approaches and those preferring to act alone and between those recommending a confrontational strategy and those favouring quiet dialogue. Despite having designed one of the most complex donor coordination architectures in the developing world, Uganda's bilateral donors have nevertheless regularly failed to agree on a united response to major issues and have instead opted for a disorganised mixture of reactions. In so doing they have allowed the Ugandan regime to escape overall censure for these actions and have also presented it with an ideal opportunity to 'divide and conquer' its donors.

Donors disagreed, for example, on how to respond to Uganda's involvement in Zaire/Congo. While all donors saw the crisis as a hugely destabilising and problematic issue which needed to be resolved swiftly they were divided on how to do this. In 1996 the US and UK, for example, refused to join other donors in condemning the Ugandan intervention and while Denmark forcefully called for an immediate withdrawal of troops, Washington was reluctant

⁵⁰ According to the Japanese embassy in Kampala, Tokyo 'does not consider it effective to put any pressure on the [Ugandan] government to change their political system' out of consideration for Ugandan 'ownership'. It also, like France and the US, does not provide aid in the form of budget support and attends joint donor budget support meetings where issues of governance are often discussed only as an 'observer'. (Itakura interview (2009)). Its limited financial contribution to Uganda (9th highest bilateral donor in 2008), however, has made its failure to take a stance on political issues ultimately inconsequential.

to put any public pressure on Kampala, choosing to pursue private dialogue instead.⁵¹ Indeed, some of the State Department's 1996-1999 statements on the crisis appeared to suggest that Washington did not wish to acknowledge that Uganda was even fully-involved in the conflict.⁵² These varied donor responses to Uganda's intervention undoubtedly made it much more straightforward for the regime to continue pursuing its belligerent agenda. Without backing from the US and UK, Denmark and other more minor donors who had condemned Kampala's actions looked isolated and their demands for Uganda's withdrawal were much more easily evaded by Museveni as a result.

Donors also appear to have been heavily divided on how to encourage the Ugandan regime to democratise; these disagreements ultimately frustrated external efforts in 1994-1995 and 2005-2006 to prevent the further institutionalisation of a Museveni autocracy. As noted elsewhere, during the height of discussions about continuing with the 'no-party' Movement system in the 1995 Ugandan CA, the US embassy in Kampala attempted to openly pressure the Ugandan regime into returning the country to a multi-party system of government by pledging such a transition in the new constitution. A May 1995 embassy press release was unusually critical of the Ugandan political system, condemning it as 'a system of government which falls seriously short of full democracy and political enfranchisement'.⁵³ Indeed, the statement made very clear that the US wished for a swift return to multi-partyism in Uganda and even, as Hauser points out, appeared to threaten political conditionality were this not to occur.⁵⁴ Though senior embassy staff almost certainly did not receive support from Washington in taking this antagonistic stance the embassy also failed to maintain pressure on

⁵¹ An approach which, as has been noted, was unsuccessful; de Torrente (2001), p.122

⁵² Lee Myers, *New York Times* (06/02/97)

⁵³ Hauser (1997), Appendix A

⁵⁴ *ibid*; Hauser (1996), p.110

Kampala because other donors refused to join their call for reform. Hauser notes that the US statement was met with almost total silence from European donors with the only vaguely supportive voice coming from Denmark which nevertheless cautioned against too hasty a change.⁵⁵ Indeed while most European diplomats in Kampala privately agreed with the US assessment that Uganda needed to restore multi-partyism they disagreed with its ‘megaphone’ approach, preferring to influence the regime privately for fear of being seen as interfering in Uganda’s political process.⁵⁶ By failing to publicly support the US, however, European donors made Washington look reactionary, interfering and isolated.⁵⁷ They also, in their silence, appeared to wrongly suggest to the Museveni regime that they did not support a return to multi-partyism and the subsequent Assembly debate on political systems therefore transformed into one on the negative US role in Ugandan politics.⁵⁸

Donor divisions on tactics also militated against the development of a strong, united approach being taken during the 2005-2006 third term and election crisis. While all donors opposed Museveni’s plan to remove term limits they disagreed as a group on how best to tackle the issue. Attempts in Spring 2005 by Norway, Sweden, Ireland and the Netherlands to combine their influence via a joint approach were twice thwarted by the UK and Denmark. In March 2005 DFID, for example, blocked the sending to State House of a ‘joint donor Utstein letter’ proposed by Oslo which was intended to raise concerns with the Museveni regime over ‘slippage in the timetable for the move to multi-partyism, the handling of the process of constitutional change, and the specific third-term issue’.⁵⁹ Believing that this would ‘use

⁵⁵ Hauser (1996), p.111

⁵⁶ Hauser (1996), pp.152-153

⁵⁷ *East African* (5-11/06/95)

⁵⁸ Amaza (1998), pp.201-203

⁵⁹ FOI document 2

up...political capital', DFID instead argued for donors to send individual bilateral letters if they wished.⁶⁰ Likewise, the Danish Government made clear to these donors in a 2005 PDG meeting that it 'would not touch' its aid for fear of undermining its development 'themes' in its Uganda programmes.⁶¹

Similarly, disagreements on tactics in the lead-up to the controversial 2006 elections resulted in a weak, uncoordinated and scattered response from the donor community. With Denmark using its PDG chairmanship to block donor attempts at taking a joint approach and the US later refusing to support what a US official has disapprovingly called 'public displays of dissatisfaction' advocated by some donors, those who wanted to influence the democratisation process more strongly were forced to act outside official coordination mechanisms.⁶² As such, during 2005 a number of donors suspended or re-directed part of their aid to Uganda citing 'concerns about political transition and other governance issues'.⁶³ These cuts, together with the condemnatory statements which accompanied them, were designed to publicly pressure Kampala into speeding up the democratisation process (see chapter 2). With five donors linking their aid budgets to this cause in a matter of months, the Ugandan regime was undoubtedly placed under more pressure in this area than ever before or since. Nevertheless, the absence of the US and Denmark from the movement undoubtedly weakened its impact and would have reassured Museveni that he was not facing the kind of united donor conditionality that had occurred in Malawi and Kenya in the 1990s. Furthermore, because the five donors were prevented from organising their scheme through

⁶⁰ *ibid*

⁶¹ Anonymous interview 25 (2009)

⁶² *ibid*; Anonymous interview 19 (2009)

⁶³ Kaheru, *New Vision* (20/07/05)

joint, formal mechanisms they were unable to coordinate the proposed cuts to be announced simultaneously, robbing donors of the impact a joint announcement would have had.

Clearly it would be unrealistic to expect donors to agree on every issue, particularly ones as sensitive as democratisation and military affairs. Individuals in any group are unlikely to always agree with their peers on the best way to respond to every situation and this must be acknowledged in any critique of donor-donor relations. Nonetheless, in Uganda's case it would appear that donor-donor disagreements have frustrated *every* significant attempt by the international community to act as one with regards to democratisation. How can this be explained? There is no absence of coordinating machinery for donors in Kampala which could account for such recurring failure to reach agreement. Indeed Uganda's donor coordination structures have become extremely complex and formalised. Donors have met regularly to discuss governance and human rights issues as part of a number of groups including the Referendum Support Group, Post-Referendum Support Group, Donor Democracy and Governance Group, the Uganda Joint Assistance Strategy Group and the current PDG group which meets at least once a fortnight.⁶⁴ There are also a number of budgetary and sector working groups where donors meet and can engage with one another on different issues on the sidelines if not in the meetings themselves. Furthermore, it is clear from interviews that ambassadors and donor officials in Kampala frequently arrange informal meetings with one another to discuss progress in areas such as democratisation.⁶⁵ What is also clear, however, is that these frequent formal and informal meetings have not been successful arenas for the fostering of united donor responses to political crises. While each case has undoubtedly been influenced by specific and individual factors it is possible to draw

⁶⁴ Osborn interview (2010)

⁶⁵ Anonymous interview 22 (2009); Cook interview (2009)

out a number of more general explanations for the frequency and destructiveness of donor disagreements.

‘Interests’

Uganda’s major donors have different motives for continuing to support the Museveni regime and protecting their individual interests in the country have often led to some wishing to be less openly critical of the government in Kampala than others. Commentators have argued that Uganda’s bilateral donors tend to fall into two fairly distinct groups. The first, which includes the US, UK and France, have been called ‘security-minded donors, characterised as being primarily interested in Uganda as a regional ally and keen to support its government as a means to promote their own security ‘agenda’ in the region.’⁶⁶ The second group, including Norway, Sweden, the Netherlands, Ireland and occasionally Denmark, have been labelled ‘development-minded donors’ or the ‘Nordic Plus’ donors.⁶⁷ This group is frequently portrayed as more non-aligned and lacking the political ‘agenda’ of the larger donors. One Nordic Plus envoy has described his country’s engagement with Kampala as having ‘no vested interests’, and has listed its priorities as encouraging the country ‘to develop on a democratic path with respect for human rights and with a social and economic development that addresses poverty’.⁶⁸ Another has stressed her country’s lack of a ‘hidden agenda’ in dealing with Uganda, implying that developmental concerns are its only interest.⁶⁹

Consequently it could be argued that ‘security’ donors such as the US and UK have frustrated ‘development’ donors in their attempts to organise public and unified donor pressure on

⁶⁶ De Torrente (2001), pp.113-118; Mwenda interview (2009)

⁶⁷ *ibid*; Anonymous interview 10 (2009)

⁶⁸ Anonymous interview 6 (2009)

⁶⁹ Anonymous interview 5 (2009)

Kampala over certain issues because they believe that such a confrontational approach will compromise their security alliance with the Ugandan regime. Certainly this appears to be a key reason why the US and Nordic Plus donors disagreed so strongly during 2005-2006 on how to respond to the crisis; several senior State Department officials have noted how paramount Uganda's proposed involvement in Somalia was for Washington at the time.⁷⁰

It should be made clear, however, that this division between 'security' and 'development' donors is overly-simplistic and can only explain disagreements to a limited degree. The UK, for example, cannot be dismissed purely as a 'security-minded' donor since the creation of DFID in 1997. This department's thoroughgoing commitment to reducing poverty make it as much of a 'development' donor as any in the Nordic Plus group. It remains undeniable, nevertheless, that the UK has a security and regional agenda in its relationship with Kampala. Denmark's role is also ambiguous since it too has acted to block the placing of more open donor pressure on Kampala over stalled democratisation but has done so to protect its developmental, as opposed to security, interests in Uganda.

Donor coordination groups

Another reason for the continued failure of donors to reach united positions is that some donors are more willing to work through, and be bound by decisions of, coordinating groups such as the PDG than others. The EU, for example, has attempted to turn the PDG into a 'clearing house' for all donor statements on human rights, democracy and governance arguing that donors should not decide on positions and policies unilaterally but instead debate

⁷⁰ Anonymous interview 27 (2009)

them together and agree on a joint approach.⁷¹ This has been rejected, even resented, by a number of larger donors but strongly supported by smaller ones such as Belgium and Austria whose small financial contribution gives them limited influence over events in Uganda when acting alone.⁷² For a coordinating mechanism like the PDG to be effective in fostering genuine joint action among donors, however, it requires the full support of the largest and most influential powers. While the UK has attempted to provide this, the US – Uganda's largest bilateral donor - certainly has not.

A number of US officials, for example, have expressed reservations about what role the PDG should play and how the US should engage with it. Jendayi Frazer has made clear her considerable personal scepticism of 'donor groups in-country' such as the PDG even describing them as having a 'neo-colonial smell' to them.⁷³ Consequently, during her tenure at the NSC and State Department she came to the view that the US should not involve itself too directly in such groups even instructing US embassy officials in Kampala not to attend PDG meetings since it 'muddied the waters'.⁷⁴ For her, and other US policy-makers, US envoys were to see donor coordination structures more as opportunities for 'informal comparing of notes' over 'coffees'⁷⁵ than as mechanisms for adopting joint stances, though she insists that she did not see the two as 'mutually-exclusive'.⁷⁶

⁷¹ Anonymous interview 19 (2009)

⁷² *ibid*; Cook interview (2009)

⁷³ Frazer interview (2009), 'neo-colonial' because of the assumption that only Western capitals were 'natural' members of such clusters; in Democratic Republic of Congo Frazer pushed for South Africa's inclusion in a similar group.

⁷⁴ Anonymous interview 19 (2009)

⁷⁵ *ibid*

⁷⁶ Frazer interview (2009), she notes, for example, how the US used coordinating groups to deliver 'joint demarches' along with other donors and that this was, in her view, 'beneficial'

Having adopted this attitude, the US has, during the 2000s especially, actively chosen to distance itself from donor groups in Uganda. European diplomatic colleagues have often commented upon the ‘marginal’ presence of US officials in inter-donor discussions on democratisation or human rights,⁷⁷ and have characterised their involvement as designed to project merely a ‘veneer of participation’.⁷⁸ This has greatly weakened the coordinating capacity of groups such as the PDG and this has lead directly to the proliferation of ineffective, disjointed and uncoordinated donor statements and actions during moments of controversy such as elections and regional conflagrations.

The Ugandan role: divide and conquer

The Ugandan Government has also attempted to undermine joint donor groups on democratisation and governance along with individual donors favouring united, confrontational diplomacy over separate, private dialogue. A European diplomat in Uganda has observed, for example, that the regime ‘can’t be bothered’ to join in discussions with the PDG and donors are therefore forced to approach State House on an individual basis to try and influence democratisation and governance.⁷⁹

Furthermore, Museveni has adopted a policy of ‘freezing out’ individual diplomats engaging in public criticism in order to prevent their activity becoming a rallying point for other donors concerned with the same issues. The UK envoy during the third term debacle, is said to have been treated in this manner after he made clear in public how opposed he was to the abolition of term limits. A number of senior British officials have noted that Museveni frequently

⁷⁷ Short interview (2008)

⁷⁸ Anonymous interview 10 (2009)

⁷⁹ *ibid*

‘refused to meet him’ and eventually ‘dealt with him through the media’ rather than in person as a result of his ‘megaphone diplomacy’.⁸⁰ Other former diplomats interviewed for this thesis have also observed how Museveni had restricted their access to him in response to their public criticisms.⁸¹ This strategy reveals how well the Ugandan president has come to understand the psyche of diplomats in Kampala. Ambassadors are also careerists, as well as diplomatic representatives, whose future prospects and, if they are retirees, reputation depend on achievements made while in post.

For a Western diplomat in Africa to have an impact, he or she must be able to influence, as well as observe, events on the ground. In a highly-personalised system such as in Uganda this necessitates the maintaining of a good and close relationship with the president himself and this is why most diplomats interviewed for this thesis appear to have measured their level of success while ambassador by recounting how frequently they met with Museveni.⁸² By being denied this access, diplomats rapidly lose influence and are usually, therefore, prevented from achieving much else during their tenure with potentially damaging consequences for their reputation. As such, many diplomats have been discouraged from joining with more outspoken colleagues to avoid losing their own access to State House.⁸³

Intra-donor relations

In the US and UK Africa policy is theoretically run by junior ministers in the Department of State and FCO respectively. In the former, this official is the Assistant Secretary of State for African Affairs and in the latter the ‘Minister for Africa’. As noted above, presidential or

⁸⁰ Anonymous interview 16 (2009)

⁸¹ Anonymous interview 7 (2009)

⁸² Anonymous interview 7 (2009), 10 (2009) and 16 (2009)

⁸³ *ibid*

prime ministerial intervention in Africa policy is rare in Western polities. When it occurs, however, neglected issues can be rapidly made a government priority as a former UK minister has noted regarding Tony Blair's brief 2004 interest in northern Uganda:

When I first raised the subject six months ago nobody wanted to know, but now (as a result of the conversation [I had] with the Man [Blair] on the plane home from Abuja) he has raised his little finger and the entire machine has suddenly sprung to life.⁸⁴

In the absence of such high-level direction, UK and US policy towards an African state such as Uganda can be effected, influenced or even hijacked by ministries, agencies or departments outside of the FCO and State Department since neither the Minister for Africa nor the Assistant Secretary for African Affairs possess adequate seniority to ensure that their office's views always prevail. Certainly all but the most personalised of political systems contain these competing bureaucratic influences on foreign relations. When looking at Western relations with Africa, however, the UK and US stand out as states where the foreign ministry's direction of policy, which, since the 1990s, has putatively included the promotion of democracy and human rights, has been particularly eroded by a development ministry (UK) and security agencies (US) which do not have the same priorities. Museveni's regime has benefited considerably from the FCO and State Department's loss of influence over Africa policy since the late 1990s and has taken advantage of these intra-donor divisions to ensure that issues such as democratisation, corruption and defence spending remain subjects which cause dissent rather than foster unity of purpose in London and Washington.

⁸⁴ Mullin (2009), pp.445-7

The making of UK Africa policy

The management of British Africa policy was radically altered in 1997 through the creation of a separate department of state – DFID – responsible for the management of foreign aid programmes and disbursement of aid. This department was to have its own Cabinet-level Secretary of State (Clare Short being the first) and, unlike its predecessor the Overseas Development Administration (ODA), total independence from the FCO. The ODA had, since 1979, constituted a ‘self-contained wing’ of the FCO with its own budget and staff although it was presided over by a junior minister who ultimately answered to the Foreign Secretary and thus, according to a former civil servant, had ‘no independent voice in the Cabinet’.⁸⁵ This meant that the ODA’s aid budget was frequently used for political, security or trade rather than developmental purposes, most notoriously as part of the 1977 Aid and Trade Provision scheme (ATP).⁸⁶ Short deserves (and has received) very considerable praise for fighting for and securing an independent department committed solely to the alleviation of poverty⁸⁷ and for doggedly promoting development and poverty alleviation within British politics.⁸⁸ DFID’s creation, however, has complicated UK Africa policy in two important ways: in the transfer of Africa foreign policy-making from the FCO to DFID and, consequently, the removal of short-term ‘political issues’ such as democratisation or corruption from the UK-Africa agenda in favour of a more technical, developmental approach.

⁸⁵ Anonymous interview 14 (2009)

⁸⁶ Killick (2005), p.669; Short interview (2008)

⁸⁷ DFID’s goal since 1997 has been ‘to promote sustainable development and eliminate world poverty’ and Short worked hard during her time as Secretary of State to ensure that the ATP scheme was discontinued (2000) and that the use of aid for non-developmental purposes be banned (enshrined in the 2002 International Development Act) (Killick (2005), p.669)

⁸⁸ Morrissey (2005), p.161

DFID's increasing size, budget and influence across government since 1997 in comparison to the FCO has resulted in the latter largely ceding control of UK Africa policy to DFID. Africa has been the main focus of DFID's energy and output, with the continent consistently consuming between one third and one half of the Department's total spending since 1997.⁸⁹ Indeed, of the top ten recipients of UK aid between 2008-2009 six have been African and, according to Morrissey, Eastern Africa has consistently received the 'largest share of bilateral aid'.⁹⁰ While the department has major programmes in non-African states its overwhelming priority has always been the African continent and, for this reason, has been referred to by some as the 'Ministry for sub-Saharan Africa'.⁹¹ It has never been in DFID's official remit to control or direct British foreign policy towards any of its African development 'partners' (this remains the prerogative of the FCO's Africa Directorate) but its ability to spend large amounts of money in African countries has made its opinion and stance of central importance.

The amount of money allotted to DFID by the British Government since 1997 has been very considerable both in comparison to the previous ODA's budget and to the contemporary FCO's. Between 1997-2000, for example, DFID's aid budget rose by 40% from £1.8 billion to £3 billion and was to rise again to nearly £4 billion by 2005/2006.⁹² By 2008/2009 this amount had increased again to £5.7 billion.⁹³ In contrast, the FCO received only £2.2 billion

⁸⁹ Killick (2005), p.666 (Figure 1); It should be noted that the ODA also had this central focus on Africa

⁹⁰ 'Tables Index: Table 9', DFID Website (available at <http://www.dfid.gov.uk/About-DFID/Finance-and-performance/Aid-Statistics/Statistics-on-International-Development-2009/Tables-index/>; accessed 01/12/10); Morrissey (2005), p.169

⁹¹ UK Parliament (2008), p.75

⁹² Morrissey (2005), p.161

⁹³ DFID (2009), p.3

in 2008/2009 to cover its entire budget.⁹⁴ The DFID budget has also increased at a much faster rate than that of the FCO. A UK parliamentary report, for example, notes that between 2005-2006 ‘DFID received an average annual growth rate...of 9.2% while the FCO was only allocated an average annual increase of 1.4%’.⁹⁵ Similarly, the numbers of staff dealing with Africa at the FCO has been significantly reduced since 1997 with a number of embassies and high commissions being closed and others taking on responsibility for a variety of different countries.⁹⁶ Conversely, DFID’s numbers have grown constantly since 1997.⁹⁷ Almost all British missions in Africa now have a (usually separate) DFID Office and representative alongside the embassy or High Commission (Uganda’s was established in 2000⁹⁸) and the extensive budget allocated to these Offices has often allowed local DFID personnel to ‘outbid’ high commissions and embassies ‘in recruiting local staff’.⁹⁹ This has led a former FCO Africa Minister, Lord Malloch-Brown, to note that ‘Abroad, [British] diplomats are usually outnumbered by trade, immigration and development officials with their own priorities’.¹⁰⁰

The FCO’s marginalisation on African affairs has been compounded by a serial decline in the quality and consistency of ministerial and diplomatic personnel allotted to it. During the 1997-2010 Labour administration, for example, DFID had only four Secretaries of State each holding office for an average of 3.3 years while the FCO has had seven Africa Ministers, each

⁹⁴ FCO website ‘How we spend our budget’ (available at <http://www.fco.gov.uk/en/about-us/what-we-do/spend-our-budget/>; accessed 01/12/10)

⁹⁵ UK Parliament (2007), p.17

⁹⁶ In 2004, for example, the FCO announced the closure of missions in Madagascar (now to be handled from Mauritius), Cameroon, Lesotho and Swaziland (the latter two becoming the responsibility of the UK High Commissioner in Pretoria) to make ‘savings’ (*Times* (15/12/04)); Porteous interview (2009)

⁹⁷ Anonymous interview 14 (2009)

⁹⁸ Fish interview (2009); Anonymous interview 12 (2009)

⁹⁹ UK Parliament (2007), p.17

¹⁰⁰ Malloch-Brown, *Financial Times* (13/01/10)

moving on from that position within two years.¹⁰¹ Furthermore, while DFID has often been lead by influential or upcoming political figures such as Short or Douglas Alexander, the FCO's Africa portfolio has seldom been a desirable office for the politically talented. Indeed, of its seven holders between 1997-2010 only two (Peter Hain and Valerie Amos) have gone on to join the Cabinet while four (Amos, David Triesman, Malloch-Brown and Glenys Kinnock) have been recruited from the House of Lords.¹⁰² Indeed, five permanently left the Government immediately after being Africa Minister, one bemoaning in his diaries of the 'utter lack of influence' he had while holding that portfolio.¹⁰³

DFID's rapid appropriation of responsibility for UK-African affairs can also be partly attributed to the forceful personality of Clare Short who lead the department during its first six years. She had fought for the establishment of a separate, independent development ministry while in opposition and strongly resented being 'told what to do' by the FCO with regard to African countries after DFID's creation.¹⁰⁴ She has frequently criticised the FCO's pre-1997 'use [of] the development budget to achieve foreign policy objectives' and was keen, during her tenure, to 'roll back' the FCO's influence and craft an 'intelligent development strategy'.¹⁰⁵ Since UK-Africa policy quickly became a major aspect of DFID's affairs, this was one of the areas which Short personally attempted to gain control over.

¹⁰¹ Baroness (Valerie) Amos is the only Labour Africa Minister to retain her position for longer than two years, she was promoted after two years and four months

¹⁰² By convention, members of the House of Lords are no longer appointed to senior positions within the British Government (Lord Mandelson represents a temporary exception between 2008-2010) and are effectively prevented from holding more high profile portfolios.

¹⁰³ Mullin (2009), p.203

¹⁰⁴ Anonymous interview 13 (2009)

¹⁰⁵ Short interview (2008)

Since 1997, therefore, DFID has become the ‘motor that drives UK policy in Africa’.¹⁰⁶ For many African leaders it is DFID rather than the FCO that represents British policy; a former senior civil servant notes, for example, that, when seeking to conduct bilateral relations, ‘the President of Malawi will go to the DFID Office rather than the High Commission’.¹⁰⁷ This has resulted in the development of considerable animosity between the two departments and officials in both buildings have talked about the ‘hostility’ and even ‘hatred’ that has characterised the relationship, especially between 1997-2003. These divisions have provided fertile ground for exploitation for skilled African leaders such as Museveni.

The FCO has not, of course, formally abandoned its claim to set UK-Africa policy and this represents one of the major issues in UK-Africa relations. For while DFID sets the agenda *de facto*, the FCO sets it *de jure* and this, according to a wide range of commentators including the House of Commons Foreign Affairs Committee, has often resulted in ‘two voices in the same capital’ and an unclear ‘understanding of who runs [UK] foreign policy’ in Africa.¹⁰⁸ There remains no ‘formalised responsibility for ultimate decisions’ on UK-Africa policy in Whitehall and there is little evidence that any sort of mechanism exists to ensure that the International Development Secretary’s and Africa Minister’s policies and statements are ‘joined-up’ aside from occasional, informal ‘catch-ups’.¹⁰⁹ A former DFID departmental Whip, Baroness Amos, suggested in 2001 that this be resolved by the Africa Minister ‘reporting through’ the International Development Secretary, rather than the Foreign Secretary, ‘since we [DFID] do so much business in Africa’ which, while potentially

¹⁰⁶ Porteous (2008), p.103

¹⁰⁷ Anonymous interview 12 (2009)

¹⁰⁸ UK Parliament (2007), pp.34-35

¹⁰⁹ FOI document 3

beneficial to smoother policy-making on Africa, was no doubt fiercely resisted by the Foreign Office.¹¹⁰

The most significant repercussion of DFID's dominance herein appears to have been the marginalisation of 'short-term', 'political' concerns such as democratisation and human rights in favour of a longer-term, more 'apolitical' developmental approach. Since its inception, DFID has prioritised poverty reduction over all other concerns in its relations with Africa, viewing development as 'holistic' and 'non-political'. Simultaneously, DFID officials have purposely ignored 'political' aspects of UK-Africa policy which are seen as being the overriding focus of the FCO. This attempt to remove politics from development has been much criticised by observers as naïve and problematic. A number of NGO personnel, for example, have argued that 'even the smaller projects [that DFID funds] involve a lot of politics' and that while the FCO contains much useful expertise on these political dimensions, 'the exchange of information between DFID and the FCO is not always what it should be'.¹¹¹

Indeed, an independent report on conditionality commissioned by DFID in 2005 concludes that 'DFID seems to consider civil and political rights as less serious issues than...corruption and security'.¹¹² It also notes that political analysis in the department has been limited and, consequently, DFID has not been able to create a 'standardised tool for governance assessments' leading to inadequate consideration of the political aspects of decisions.¹¹³ The report highlights, for example, the Department's 2000 decision to move towards GBS as a preferred aid modality and criticises DFID for not 'understanding how providing GBS can be

¹¹⁰ Mullin (2009), p.190

¹¹¹ Manby interview (2009)

¹¹² FOI document 4, p.30

¹¹³ *ibid*, p.37

taken as a political sign of support for the nature of a regime and not just for its perceived commitment to poverty reduction'.¹¹⁴ As a result, DFID's provision of GBS to democratically questionable regimes such as Uganda or Ethiopia may be perceived as 'bankrolling a regime with clear limitations on political rights' rather than simply moving towards a more efficient aid disbursement method.¹¹⁵

DFID's limited interest in political analysis is attested to by numerous interviewees including a UK government official who, when asked about the level of political analysis in the department, commented that 'the most important human right is getting people out of poverty...if you scratch most of us, you won't find democrats'.¹¹⁶ There also appears to have been an acknowledgment of the department's weakness in this area with the creation of a 'Governance and Conflict' advisory group in the mid-2000s coupled with a 'huge increase in [the recruiting of] research personnel' including some focusing on political analysis and a 'big growth of advisers with political science skills' also.¹¹⁷ 2006 also saw the publication of a DFID White Paper on governance ('Making Governance Work for the Poor') which this unit worked on; the integration of political analysis into DFID's work, however, remains embryonic and there is limited evidence that the department has attempted to work more closely with the FCO on political issues.

The Ugandan regime has benefited very considerably from DFID's rise and its staunch promotion of development as apolitical. During Ugandan involvement in Congo, for example, Short and DFID were apparently uninterested in investigating concerns expressed by the High

¹¹⁴ *ibid*, p.29

¹¹⁵ *ibid*

¹¹⁶ Anonymous Interview 14 (2009)

¹¹⁷ Anonymous interview 29 (2009)

Commission that aid funds were being diverted by Kampala to finance the military campaign ‘as long as they could claim that £x million was allocated to education or the like’.¹¹⁸ Short has argued that Uganda’s actions in Congo did present her department with a genuine ‘dilemma’ though she ultimately decided that British support should not be interrupted on this occasion since ‘aid budgets shouldn’t be used for short term political purposes’.¹¹⁹ Likewise, the UK’s attempt to tackle Uganda’s military over-spending in the late 1990s/early 2000s was compromised by DFID’s ‘largely technical’ approach to the issue, according to another report commissioned by the department.¹²⁰

DFID has also consistently overruled the FCO and High Commission on democratisation and multi-partyism in Uganda. In the early 2000s, for example, one Africa Minister, felt unable to ‘speak out’ against the absence of pluralism in Uganda for fear of ‘rocking the boat’, in other words publicly disagreeing with DFID’s more supportive stance.¹²¹ Indeed, a former UK government official has admitted that DFID officials were reluctant to ‘push Museveni harder’ on democratisation for fear of jeopardising the ‘development side of things’.¹²² In the aftermath of the 2001 elections, for example, it has been suggested that DFID persuaded a local election monitoring group (NEMgroup) to ‘tone down’ their initial post-election statement thereby leaving the UK envoy, Tom Phillips, with little choice but to do the same with a ‘strongly worded’ statement he himself had prepared on the basis of NEMgroup’s first report.¹²³

¹¹⁸ Cook interview (2009)

¹¹⁹ Short interview (2008))

¹²⁰ DFID Uganda (2004), p.45

¹²¹ Cook interview (2009)

¹²² Anonymous interview 12 (2009)

¹²³ Osborn interview (2010)

The DFID-FCO disagreement on Uganda between 2005-2006, however, represents the most significant case where the former's dominance of UK Africa policy resulted in a failure to hold the regime to account for political transgressions. The British Government appears to have been wholly divided on how to respond to Museveni's determination to remove presidential term limits and Kampala's arrest and imprisonment of opposition leader Kizza Besigye on the eve of the 2006 elections. While there was certainly considerable dialogue between the two departments it is clear that the FCO favoured a much more critical course of action than DFID. A senior DFID analyst has noted that his department feared that if London came down hard on the Museveni regime 'development gains already achieved' could be destroyed and, furthermore, that there was a general feeling at DFID that Uganda was moving in the right direction, albeit slowly.¹²⁴ DFID argued that full democracy in Uganda would come only with stability and was keen to work from 'within the system' to encourage progress.¹²⁵ The FCO, however, hoped to use the crisis to push for more rapid democratisation in Uganda. A DFID memo sent in March 2005 to International Development Secretary Hilary Benn, for example, makes clear that the High Commissioner aimed to issue a 'joint letter' with the Norwegian Government condemning the plan to lift term limits.¹²⁶ DFID was not in favour of this, however, and remained anxious to pursue a much less contentious strategy. The memo's author made clear that:

If the Secretary of State [Benn] were nonetheless minded to agree a joint letter, DFID officials would strongly advise that it should steer clear of the substantive issue of a third term, and concentrate instead on the issue of constitutional process, which has been our public line to date

¹²⁴ Anonymous interview 13 (2009)

¹²⁵ *ibid*

¹²⁶ FOI document 2

(the Secretary of State will recall that the Prime Minister [Blair] was briefed to raise the issue interrogatively in private with Museveni last year – not to press him to stand down).¹²⁷

This memo serves as just one example of DFID's attempts during this period to 'water down' a more critical UK response to the Uganda situation which was being promoted by the FCO. Whether the latter hoped to see a substantial reduction in British aid to Kampala at this time is not known but it is apparent that DFID prevented the FCO and High Commission from having any involvement in decisions regarding Ugandan aid cuts in 2005 and 2006.¹²⁸ Ultimately the UK's overall response to the crisis was limited, both in terms of public criticism and aid cuts (see chapter 2) and it is clear, therefore, that DFID prevailed over the FCO in ensuring such an outcome. Had the Foreign Office and High Commission had more influence here it seems very probable that 2005-6 would have represented a far more radical change to the London-Kampala relationship than occurred.

The making of US Africa policy

US Africa policy is influenced by an even wider range of departments and agencies as well as Congress.¹²⁹ Indeed, the US is unique among major donors in possessing a powerful legislative arm constitutionally separated from the executive.¹³⁰ Congress, with its ability to veto, amend or reduce any aid appropriations intended for African allies possesses, as Lancaster and van Dusen point out, 'greater influence over aid than any other legislature in an aid-giving country'.¹³¹ Skilled African regimes can, therefore, build-up blocs of allies in Congress who will argue for continued US assistance even when the executive plans

¹²⁷ *ibid*

¹²⁸ Anonymous interview 16 (2009)

¹²⁹ Copson (2007), pp.9-15; Lancaster and van Dusen (2005), pp.13-18

¹³⁰ Lancaster and van Dusen (2005), p.37

¹³¹ *ibid*

otherwise. It is important to note, however, that congressional support for or criticism of the Museveni regime has rarely been influential enough to significantly alter overall US Uganda policy.

Neither, indeed have the views of Washington's aid agencies. This is because, unlike in the UK, the US aid system is extremely fragmented and effectively controlled by the foreign ministry (State Department). The two major aid agencies – USAID and MCC – have separate coordinating mechanisms which has prevented the emergence of any single, influential aid body to speak on their behalf. Furthermore, USAID has, since the early 2000s, increasingly become incorporated into the State Department.¹³² The MCC, since its creation in 2004, has also been dominated by State, in that its board, which also includes several representatives of the private sector, is chaired by the Secretary of State and has the final decision on awarding full compacts to countries under consideration. As such, USAID, unlike DFID, has not emerged as an independent power centre in the making of Africa policy.

Instead, US Africa policy is dominated by divisions of three institutions – the Departments of State, Defense and National Security Council.¹³³ While many commentators have pointed to the importance of institutional rivalry between these former two departments for US Africa policy¹³⁴, particularly since the creation of AFRICOM in 2008, there is little evidence that such splits have emerged or been of great consequence in US-Ugandan relations.¹³⁵ Indeed, while it is clear that the Pentagon has often pursued an independent relationship with

¹³² Lancaster interview (2009)

¹³³ Schraeder (1994), pp.17-19; Schraeder does not, however, mention the NSC in detail in his discussion of US-Africa policy-making.

¹³⁴ Schraeder (1994), p.xiii;

¹³⁵ Volman (2008)

Kampala, none of the former State Department officials interviewed for this thesis appear to have felt that their authority in promoting democratisation or human rights was particularly undermined by such activity or by Pentagon policies.¹³⁶ In the case of Uganda, however, it is difficult to argue that the State Department represented a consistent (albeit marginalised) advocate for taking a stronger line on Kampala's democratisation or human rights record. While State has traditionally been seen as the main promoter of democratisation in the US foreign policy-making apparatus¹³⁷ it has rarely appeared to advocate such an agenda in Uganda. Indeed, State's African Affairs Bureau has, since the early 1990s, seldom argued for the US to take a more critical stance towards the Museveni regime and its policy on promoting democratisation in the country has often been inconsistent or under-emphasised. US ambassadors who have been openly critical of the regime have rarely been supported in Washington and it has even been suggested that one—Jimmy Kolker – was denied promotion as a result of his criticisms.¹³⁸ Furthermore, Kolker's immediate successors – Stephen Browning and Jerry Lanier – were explicitly told to 'lighten up' by Washington in their public statements about Museveni.¹³⁹

During Walter Kansteiner's period as Assistant Secretary, the Bureau appears to have nevertheless been more keen to encourage multi-partyism in Uganda, consistently bringing up the subject with Ugandan officials. Indeed, Kansteiner has expressed disappointment that his UK counterpart, Clare Short, was not 'more aggressive' with the Museveni regime on this issue.¹⁴⁰ Nevertheless, he appears to have been inconsistent in this area having made limited

¹³⁶ Cohen interview (2009)

¹³⁷ Clark (1998), p.12

¹³⁸ Barkan interview (2009)

¹³⁹ *ibid*

¹⁴⁰ Kansteiner interview (2009)

effort to prioritise democratisation in the US's overall relationship with Kampala and, indeed, Uganda remained a country of only secondary concern at State during his tenure.

State's inconsistent record herein should be seen in the context of the growing dominance of the NSC in US Africa policy. Based in the White House and staffed by the President's closest advisers, the NSC's Africa Directorate has, since the mid-1990s, taken on a much wider influence than previously. The Council's increased control of US-Africa relations can be seen in two developments. Firstly, the growth in size of the NSC's Africa Directorate since 1997. Previously the Directorate consisted only of a Senior Director and one other staff member but since 1997 the number of Africa staff has tripled with at least three junior directors serving at any one time.¹⁴¹ Secondly, there has been an increasing tendency for NSC Africa staff to subsequently be promoted to senior Africanist positions in the State Department. Thus, before the 1990s Assistant Secretaries were almost always drawn from the ranks of the career Foreign Service but since then it has become common for NSC Senior Directors for Africa to be appointed Assistant Secretary as has been the case with Herman Cohen, Susan Rice and Jendayi Frazer. Walter Kansteiner also served as a junior Director for African Affairs at the NSC between 1989-1991.

The main consequence of this expansion of NSC influence for US Africa policy has been the growing prioritisation of the NSC's agenda –security and geopolitical strategy – in the State Department and the marginalisation of 'internal' African issues such as democratisation in the foreign policy-making process. Thus while former ambassadors and diplomats have been more conscious of domestic African issues during their time as Assistant Secretary, former

¹⁴¹ Brookings Institution (established 1998, ongoing online project)

NSC hands such as Rice and Frazer have tended to pursue the same security agenda at State as they had at the NSC, viewing African regimes as geopolitical ‘allies’ or ‘problems’ rather than as ‘democratic’ or ‘undemocratic’.

In the case of Uganda this has occasionally meant that such security-minded officials have actively cracked down on State Department personnel who have sought to ‘undermine’ regimes considered as security allies. Rice, for example, is believed to have ‘severely criticised’ Southwick for his confrontational statements on the Museveni regime in 1995 (see chapter 2).¹⁴² Jendayi Frazer also appears to have made clear to her junior colleagues at State that the 2005-6 Ugandan crisis should not interfere with the positive US-Ugandan relationship, even dismissing evidence that Museveni had bribed parliamentary colleagues with \$5,000 each to ensure his third term bid passed as ‘just allegations’.¹⁴³

More frequently, however, these individuals have simply acted to ensure that State Department officials without sufficient interest in the security agenda are pushed to the periphery of the policy-making arena. There is no formal division of responsibilities between the NSC Senior Director for Africa and the Assistant Secretary and this can potentially lead to a clash on the question of how far to prioritise geopolitics over democracy promotion. Rice and Frazer have both attempted to minimise such potential by ensuring the appointment of allies such as Gayle Smith and Cindy Courville respectively as their successors at the NSC.¹⁴⁴ As NSC Senior Directors, nevertheless, they have both had to deal with Assistant Secretaries (Moose and Kansteiner) who have been more interested in democratisation in Uganda than

¹⁴² Rosenblum (2002), p.197

¹⁴³ Poffenberger interview (2009)

¹⁴⁴ Rosenblum, p.197

them. In both cases they appear to have used their proximity to the President to undermine the influence of these men. A US official working in State's Africa Bureau in the 1990s, for example, has noted that Moose initially provided Southwick 'lots of support' in his push to promote multi-partyism in Uganda 'unlike Rice'.¹⁴⁵ This support, however, ceased to be forthcoming 'towards the end' of Southwick's tenure reportedly after the intervention of 'some others in the administration' outside the State Department, most notably Rice.¹⁴⁶ Furthermore, Frazer actively sought to enhance NSC influence over Africa policy-making by insisting in 2001 on co-chairing the NSC Policy Coordination Committee (PCC) on Africa; other regional PCCs under Bush were chaired solely by the State Department.¹⁴⁷ She also promoted Museveni to Bush as a security ally, where Kansteiner hoped to create 'balance' in the US-Uganda relationship, through arranging bilateral meetings and a 2003 presidential visit to Kampala.¹⁴⁸ This was possible because the NSC, as the President's personal staff, has control over his diary and what information he sees in a way that State does not.

If UK tolerance of the Museveni regime can therefore be partially attributed to the rise of DFID in Africa at the expense of the FCO, US tolerance should be similarly attributed, to a degree, to the rise of the NSC and its officials both as an independent power centre and within State. It remains to be seen whether or not this will change in the future as a result of the 2009 appointment of Johnnie Carson as Assistant Secretary, the first Foreign Service appointee to this post since 1993.¹⁴⁹

¹⁴⁵ Anonymous interview 22 (2009)

¹⁴⁶ *ibid*

¹⁴⁷ Frazer interview (2009)

¹⁴⁸ Kansteiner interview (2009)

¹⁴⁹ *Washington Post* (23/03/09)

The Ugandan role in intra-donor rivalry

Arguably these intra-governmental rivalries described above should result in increased UK and US tolerance for all African regimes with questionable democratic and governance credentials. It has been established, however, that Uganda has been treated far more leniently than most of its neighbours by these two donors especially. Clearly, the Museveni regime has benefited by default from these intra-donor disagreements to a considerable extent. It has also, however, actively sought to capitalise on these divisions as part of its overall image management strategy.

The Museveni regime has, for example, forged close, personal relationships with senior officials at DFID and the NSC as noted in chapter 5. Clare Short, for example, has spoken of her ‘strong personal bond’ with Museveni and claimed she had felt, during her time at DFID, like almost ‘a member of the family’ in meetings with the president.¹⁵⁰ That Museveni failed to strike up a similar rapport with FCO Africa officials such as Valerie Amos or Chris Mullin or with State Department officials such as Kansteiner and Moose is revealing. It is quite apparent that the Ugandan president has nurtured relationships primarily with officials whose department or viewpoint has made them more inclined to support him without scrutinising his political activities. Thus the personal ties between Museveni and DFID/the NSC have been strong and those between Museveni and the FCO/State Department weak. Whether or not these personal links have actually caused officials such as Short or Frazer to defend the Ugandan regime more forcefully against its critics is an open question although it is clear that they have at least reinforced these individuals’ view that Kampala should be supported.

¹⁵⁰ Short interview (2008)

The regime has also presented itself in a particular manner in order to attract the support of DFID and the NSC. Thus, as noted, Kampala has consistently positioned itself at the forefront of the apolitical, highly-technical, poverty-focused approach to development espoused by DFID. It has in many respects led the way in terms of being the first African country to produce a PEAP and a PRSP, the first to qualify for HIPC funding and, after frequent entreaty from Ugandan officials, the first to receive UK aid via GBS.¹⁵¹ Throughout this process, the Museveni regime has been eager to allow donors (particularly the UK and World Bank) as much involvement in helping to plan and carry out its development strategies as they wish but has nevertheless engaged in thorough dialogue with them at every stage of the process. In so doing it has seemingly proven to DFID officials that it is strongly committed to cooperating with donors on development but also keen to secure Ugandan ‘ownership’, a major ‘buzz word’ and important concept within the department. The regime has, as far as possible, attempted to ensure that these wide-ranging discussions remain highly technical and non-political to suit DFID’s language and mentality. MFPED has also, at State House’s urging, recruited numerous DFID economic experts (see above) such as Alan Whitworth and Marcus Manuel to assist it in drawing up its plans and advise it on technical questions, this has obviously helped to bring the two departments closer together in thinking.¹⁵² Political questions have consequently rarely featured in the DFID-MFPED dialogue as a result of this strategy and Museveni’s socialisation of Uganda’s development policy in this manner has therefore been partly-designed to keep more controversial issues ‘off limits’ during donor-Ugandan discussions.

¹⁵¹ Anonymous interview 15 (2009)

¹⁵² Kuteesa et al (2009), pp.xxii-xxv

A similar strategy has been employed in Ugandan relations with the NSC where Kampala has emphasised its image as a geopolitical ally. As with DFID, State House and the Defence Ministry have maintained strong ties with the NSC's Africa staff, frequently using them as a conduit to presidential-level informal talks and discussions.¹⁵³ As explored in chapter 5, these discussions have always centred around geopolitical or security issues with the regime consistently presenting itself as willing to assist US regional policy. The same is true of the GoU's discussions with former NSC officials who have subsequently moved to the State Department; Frazer notes that even towards the end of her tenure as Assistant Secretary 'Somalia and the LRA', rather than anything related to domestic Ugandan politics, featured as the two most prominent subjects in her discussions with the Ugandan regime.¹⁵⁴ By promoting itself as a security ally to NSC staff and security-minded officials at State, Kampala has been able to endear itself to influential people thereby securing not only their protection against critics from elsewhere in the US government but also their active support in the foreign policy-making process. It has also actively sought to ensure that institutions and individuals less interested in internal African political issues are cultivated as allies through appealing to their institutional interests.

Conclusion

In conclusion, inter- and intra-donor disagreements at several levels have contributed to the development of a more lax international approach to areas such as democratisation, corruption, military brinkmanship and human rights in Uganda. This chapter has not only highlighted how the operation of numerous institutional 'veto points' within and between

¹⁵³ Anonymous interview 28 (2009)

¹⁵⁴ Frazer interview (2009)

Uganda's donors has lead to this situation but also, crucially, how Kampala has acted to sustain and magnify these divisions to prevent donors uniting in opposition to some of its more contentious policies. For while the surfeit of 'veto points' in donor-African relations has protected many other autocratic regimes from unified international pressure, they have not in all cases. Thus in 1991 and 1992 bilateral donors overcame their disagreements and joined together in suspending aid to Kenya and Malawi respectively to compel their regimes to introduce multi-partyism. While the World Bank was prevented, through its non-political mandate, from doing the same it nonetheless suspended aid too albeit for supposedly technical reasons.¹⁵⁵ Through image management and manipulation of donor divisions, however, the Ugandan regime has acted to ensure that it does not suffer the same fate.

¹⁵⁵ Marquette (2001), p.403

Chapter 7

Ugandan agency in comparative context: Exploring regional donor-African relations

Introduction

In order to gain as full as possible an understanding of donor support for Uganda and how image management has played a role in this arena, this study has consciously adopted a single-case approach. Comparisons, especially within Africa, are nonetheless instructive and will be made use of in this chapter. In comparing donor-African engagement elsewhere on the continent it will be possible to ascertain the extent to which image management has been employed successfully by other regimes in their international relations. For those regimes which have effectively made use of the strategy, such as Rwanda and Ethiopia, it will be possible to assess whether this has improved their room for maneuver and agency *vis-a-vis* donors. For those which have not or which have been unable to control donor narratives relating to them, such as Kenya, there will be an opportunity to review whether poor image management has effected their agency in the international system and their support from donors.

This chapter will therefore compare and contrast the case of Uganda with three other African regimes' experiences with donors. In each example, the regime's relations with donors will be reviewed in an effort to demonstrate whether or not they have been treated, as Uganda has, leniently by donors in areas such as democratisation, corruption and human rights. It will then be necessary to explore the reasons behind this leniency (or lack thereof) using image management as the dependent variable.

Clearly this is a qualitative exercise and does not claim to represent a systematic ‘testing’ of the primary conclusion of this study – that aid-dependent regimes can maximise agency in their relations with donors through managing donor perceptions of their value to them. It will, nevertheless, explore, compare and contrast the three cases using the same multi-disciplinary tools of analysis employed throughout the rest of the study in looking at Uganda and therefore represents a fair comparative method in this regard.

The chapter will examine three countries’ relations with donors: Rwanda under Paul Kagame since 1994¹; Ethiopia under Meles Zenawi since 1991 and Kenya under Daniel arap Moi and, subsequently, Mwai Kibaki since 1978. In the case of Kenya, analysis will primarily focus on the period from 1991 since the country’s relations with donors in the 1980s were heavily-related to Cold War considerations and preoccupations and thus cannot be easily compared to the mainly post-Cold War Ethiopian, Rwandan and Ugandan regimes. These three cases have been purposefully selected both because they can be easily compared to Uganda on a practical and contextual level and because they are the regimes most frequently compared and contrasted to that in Kampala by commentators.

Like the Museveni government, the regimes of Moi, Kibaki, Kagame and Meles are (or were – see **Figure 2** below) all aid-dependent, lacking in significant natural resources and all receive the majority of their aid from the same sources: the World Bank, US, UK and EU.²

¹ Paul Kagame did not become President of Rwanda until 2000, serving as Vice President between 1994-2000. In spite of this he was widely accepted as the *de facto* ruler of the country both domestically and internationally during these six years and thus this chapter will consider the ‘Kagame regime’ to have commenced in 1994.

² Kenya’s dependence on aid decreased considerably during the 1990s and 2000s and is no longer as aid-dependent as Ethiopia, Uganda and Rwanda (see **Figure 2**, below)

The regimes and their leaders have also been Anglophone.³ Their periods in office also coincide and they have therefore been faced with the same international environment and challenges as Uganda. Furthermore, they are all based in East Africa and are members of the same regional organisations. These contextual and practical similarities allow for a fair and meaningful comparison to be made between Rwanda, Ethiopia, Kenya and Uganda.

Year:	Aid as % of GDP: <u>Uganda</u>	Aid as % of GDP: <u>Ethiopia</u>	Aid as % of GDP: <u>Kenya</u>	Aid as % of GDP: <u>Rwanda</u>
1990	14.9%	-	16.3%	-
1992	25%	8.3% ⁴	11.6%	-
1994	22.3%	14.7%	6.1%	94.2%
1996	12.3%	9.9%	1.5%	48.9%
1998	10.6%	9.8%	3.7%	17.7%
2000	12.9%	8.4%	6.8%	18.4%
2002	11.3%	13.9%	2.6%	22%
2004	14.2%	16.7%	4.4%	24.8%
2006	15.7%	12.8%	3.5%	19.4%
2008	13.1%	12.3%	4.6%	21.3%

Figure 2: Comparison of Ugandan, Ethiopian, Kenyan and Rwandan aid dependency (1990-2008) (Source: OECD (1991-2010) and World Bank GDP data (1990-2008))⁵

³ The regimes which preceded Kagame's in Rwanda were Francophone and France and Belgium constituted the main donors to Kigali until 1994. This changed when the RPF took power, however, (see below) and the regime has promoted itself as Anglophone ever since.

⁴ Since this chapter deals only with Ethiopia and Rwanda under the Meles and Kagame regimes respectively aid dependency figures are provided here only from the time when these governments came to power (1991 and 1994 respectively).

⁵ This table calculates aid dependency based on ODA flows as a percentage of national GDP (GDP data available at <http://data.worldbank.org/indicator/NY.GDP.MKTP.CD/countries>; accessed 01/12/10) – one of two

The cases were also selected because commentators have continuously made these same country comparisons when discussing Uganda's foreign policy. The Meles and Kagame regimes have, along with that of Museveni, been flagged constantly by analysts since the late 1990s as examples of governments which donors have treated more indulgently than might be expected, considering their controversial domestic and regional activities.⁶ Likewise, commentators have often observed that the favourable way in which donors have treated Kampala 'strongly contrasts' with their more critical conduct towards the regimes of Moi and Kibaki of Kenya even though the latter's democratic misdemeanours have been at least comparable in their gravity to Museveni's.⁷ Consequently they are the most obvious cases to make use of in this chapter to explore the significance of African image management in relations with donors.

Ethiopia and Rwanda – the other 'donor darlings'

Ethiopian-donor relations (1991 -2010) and Rwandan-donor relations (1994 -2010)

In many respects, accounting for Uganda's positive relations with donors under Museveni would be lacking without making reference to the similarly permissive international relationships enjoyed by his Ethiopian and Rwandan counterparts since the early 1990s – Meles Zenawi and Paul Kagame.⁸ Not only have these two aid-dependent regimes also been treated very sympathetically by donors, they have, in addition, adopted comparable tactics for

measures of dependence commonly-used by scholars (Knack (1999), pp.314-315). An alternative, ODA as a percentage of central government expenditure, was not used owing to the lack of availability of budgetary data for each country for the entire period in question.

⁶ See, for example, Ottaway (1998), pp.209-213; Rosenblum (2002), pp.195-202

⁷ See, for example, Heilman and Ndumbaro (2004), p.157

⁸ Meles (Ethiopians use first names even in reference to senior politicians) has lead Ethiopia since 1991 having been president until 1995 and then prime minister in a parliamentary system thereafter.

dealing with the international community as Uganda. Indeed, the vast majority of subjects interviewed for this thesis made frequent comparisons between the three regimes, stressing that, while the Ethiopian and Rwandan leaders may have actually learned many of their international strategies from Kampala itself, a fuller understanding of Uganda's relationship with its donors could only be achieved by looking also at these regimes' experiences. This section will therefore outline donor relations with both Ethiopia and Rwanda since the early 1990s and show how both regimes have enjoyed sustained and largely uncritical international support throughout this period. It is important to point out, however, that, overall, Ethiopia has not depended on aid to quite the degree that both Kigali and Kampala have.

The early years: 1991-c.1998

As with Uganda, donor relations with the nascent Meles and Kagame regimes were initially tentative and cautious. In neither case were donors prepared to fully support the regimes either financially or through aid modalities; humanitarian aid, which by-passes government structures, was the preferred method of aid disbursement for donors in both countries until 1997-1998.⁹ Indeed, in the mid-1990s, donor aid to Rwanda and Ethiopia actually declined. Rwanda saw a 3% reduction in overall aid in this period, including a 72% drop in balance of payments support (the form of aid most directly distributed to the central government) while overall aid to Ethiopia fell by nearly 50% between 1992-1997.¹⁰ In the latter case, donor reticence can be explained by international fears concerning the political outlook of the Meles government; Meles, like Museveni, had espoused an explicitly Marxist ideology before seizing power and this apparently concerned many Western donors. The regime also *refused*

⁹ Hayman (2006), pp.98-100

¹⁰ Hayman (2006), p.98; Borchgrevink (2008), p.200

aid from some donors, notably the IMF, claiming it was unwilling to accept certain conditionalities attached to these transfers– potentially explainable by noting the country’s lesser dependence on aid in the 1990s compared to, for example, Uganda and Rwanda (see *Figure 2* above).¹¹

Apparent donor caution in Rwanda until 1997 must be understood against the background of the extraordinary, unique and tragic events which befell that country in 1994. The Rwandan genocide, which saw extremist Hutu militias massacring up to one million Tutsi and moderate Hutu civilians in a matter of months, lead to an unprecedented reordering of Rwandan-donor relations.¹² In response to this, not only did donors redirect the vast majority of their aid away from Kigali for humanitarian and emergency purposes but Rwanda’s main donors themselves (France and Belgium) considerably reduced their support to the country. This was because they viewed the Anglophone RPF government as an ‘invading’ force which had removed a major Francophone ally (the previous Habyarimana regime)¹³ but also because Kagame publicly attacked Paris and Brussels for their controversial role during the genocide.¹⁴ Other donors, confused and shocked by events in the country, also reviewed their aid contributions to Rwanda between 1994-7 and while increased support from previously minor donors including the US, Netherlands and, especially, UK gradually took the place of French and Belgian assistance, as a whole donor support for Kigali was not restored to pre-1994 levels for some time.¹⁵

¹¹ Borchgrevink (2008), p.201, Borchgrevink also refers to the general decline in aid levels seen globally in the 1990s although this is not especially convincing as an explanation – as noted in chapter 2, aid to Uganda more than doubled during this period; Furtado and Smith (2009), p.136

¹² Hayman (2006), pp.41-62

¹³ Prunier (1995, 2005), pp.336-341

¹⁴ Hayman (2009), p.164

¹⁵ *ibid*

In spite of this, both Meles and Kagame received considerable praise from Washington and London for their regimes' policies. Both, like Museveni, were commended by donors for their enthusiasm in implementing neo-liberal reforms. In 1997 and 1998, for example, the Rwandan government entered into negotiations to sign structural adjustment agreements with the IMF and World Bank thereby revealing its support for such measures.¹⁶ Similarly, the Meles regime rapidly confounded international perceptions by also agreeing a structural adjustment programme with the two IFIs in 1992.¹⁷ Addis Ababa, like Kampala, was committed to properly implementing these IFI recommendations and was duly lauded by the World Bank in a 2000 report as a 'highly satisfactory' reformer.¹⁸

Both regimes also impressed donors by embracing ideas of 'ownership' and poverty reduction strategies prevalent in the international development community. The Meles regime emphasised to donors from an early stage that it had a fixed and committed view on poverty reduction in Ethiopia (particularly focused on assisting small-scale agricultural enterprise) and would as readily reject international aid which did not support these goals as it would accept it.¹⁹ A European diplomat, for example, notes how Addis Ababa had 'a very clear development perspective and a very clear vision...it was only willing to go so far [with donor recommendations]'.²⁰ Such integrity and commitment to implementing a reform programme on the part of an African leader was greatly welcomed by donors. Similarly, the Kagame government increasingly embedded poverty reduction in its policy-making and planning

¹⁶ As Hayman (2006) notes in pp.105-120, these attempts were unsuccessful until 2000/2001 by which time donors agreed that Rwanda was 'ready' to begin implementing such measures.

¹⁷ Borchgrevink (2008), p.202

¹⁸ *ibid*

¹⁹ Furtado and Smith (2009), p.136; this kind of selectivity was available to Addis Ababa by virtue of its only moderate aid-dependency; Kampala and Kigali have not been in a position to date to be so discriminatory.

²⁰ Anonymous interview 10 (2009)

culminating, in 2002, in the adoption of Rwanda's first PRSP. Some commentators, including Hayman, have questioned the degree to which the PRSP was Rwandan-owned, as opposed to donor-drafted.²¹ The regime did, nevertheless, signal to donors by adopting the PRSP that it – like them – saw poverty reduction as a vital part of governing and this particularly impressed senior officials at DFID whose department had been established in 1997 primarily to tackle global poverty.

Both governments also impressed donors in other ways. The Meles regime, for example, enthusiastically aligned itself with the US against Sudan (as Uganda did also – see chapter 5) from the mid-1990s and received, in return, a considerable increase in US financial and military aid as well as a high-profile visit, in December 1997 from Secretary of State Madeleine Albright.²² Kagame too endeared himself to donors in his initial response to rebuilding Rwanda after the genocide. Rather than openly seeking violent revenge against genocidaires and immediately instituting a purely Tutsi administration in Kigali, the Rwandan leader instead emphasised unity and reconciliation and established, as Museveni had, a broad-based, multi-party government constituted of both Hutu and Tutsi politicians, taking for himself the more junior position of Vice President. The Rwandan government also sought to foster national reconciliation while also bringing those involved in the genocide to justice through the designing of the innovative *gacaca* system in the late 1990s. This system of community justice, adapted from traditional practices on settling disputes, allowed small, local village courts to try those accused of 'lesser crimes of genocide' thereby expediting the justice process but also encouraging local communities to come to terms personally with the

²¹ Hayman (2009), pp.159-160

²² Clark (1998), pp.9-10

events of the genocide.²³ Though Kagame's focus on 'unity' along with concerns regarding the legal standards and pro-RPF prejudices of the *gacaca* courts have increasingly worried donors, they initially welcomed both developments with great enthusiasm.²⁴ Most international policy-makers took them as evidence that Kigali was not only serious about rebuilding Rwanda but was also committed to ensuring that past ethnic tensions would be consigned to history. Indeed, the Rwandan regime was 'rewarded' for this progressive approach in March 1998 when US President Bill Clinton visited the country (the first such trip from a senior US politician in the country's history) and apologised on behalf of the international community for not doing 'as much as we could have or should have' to prevent the genocide.²⁵

Years of controversy and donor indulgence: c.1998-2005

Donor support for both the Ethiopian and Rwandan regimes begun to grow quite considerably from around 1997 and has remained either constant or increasing ever since. Donors appear to have become convinced by the late 1990s that both governments, like that in Uganda, represented novel, committed and valuable allies worth supporting. The strength of donor support for both Kigali and Addis Ababa was most strongly demonstrated in the period c.1998-2005 when the two regimes involved themselves in violent regional clashes and actively frustrated democratisation processes at home. Though criticised to a limited extent by their international supporters, both governments, like Uganda, largely escaped donor censure for these activities.

²³ Hayman (2009), pp.170-171

²⁴ *ibid*

²⁵ *CNN Online* (25/03/98)

Regionally, both Rwanda and Ethiopia threw themselves into devastating and bloody conflicts in the late 1990s; Rwanda (along with Uganda) invaded Zaire/Congo twice in 1996 and 1998 while Ethiopia fought a lengthy border war with Eritrea between 1998-2000. In total, both conflicts lead to the deaths of at least 970,000 people (potentially many more depending on estimates) and the creation of numerous IDPs and refugees throughout central Africa.²⁶ The Rwandan army, indeed, further disgraced itself during this period by clashing violently with its putative Ugandan allies at Kisangani in 1999 and 2000²⁷ and was also implicated, as was Uganda, in widespread looting of natural resources in eastern Congo by a high-profile UN panel.²⁸ A 2010 report from the UN also accused the RPF (and UPDF) of having committed a number of human rights violations too during its time in Congo.²⁹

While such destabilising actions would elsewhere have earned an African regime the ire of its international allies, neither Rwanda nor Ethiopia suffered any considerable loss of donor support for their belligerent regional policies – quite the reverse. In the case of Ethiopia, international reaction was uncoordinated, inconsistent and largely muted. Some donors (notably the European Commission and Norway) slightly reduced their aid, most (including Denmark and Sweden), however, kept their contributions level while others (such as the World Bank, Finland and Ireland) felt free to enter into new aid contracts with Addis while the fighting was still going on.³⁰ The US, in fact, increased its support for Meles during the violence with its financial contribution to Addis Ababa more than doubling between 1998-

²⁶ Analysts estimate that between 70,000-100,000 were killed in the Eritrea-Ethiopia conflict (HRW (2003a), p.4; Rice, *Times* (08/12/05); Rice, *Guardian* (31/10/06)). Estimates of the number of deaths caused by the Congolese conflict have been the subject of considerable debate and range from 900,000 (Human Security Report Project (2010), p.5) to 5.4 million (IRC (2007), p.ii).

²⁷ *BBC* (06/06/00)

²⁸ UN (2001), pp.32-45

²⁹ *CNN Online* (01/10/10)

³⁰ Borchgevink (2008), pp.203-208

2000 from c.US\$55 million to c.\$130 million.³¹ The UK also failed to hold Meles to account for the crisis and not only refused to use its aid programme in Ethiopia as leverage to end the war it in fact increased the percentage of aid it disbursed as GBS to 25% by 2004.³²

Rwanda too largely escaped censure by donors for its involvement in Congo. Certainly some European governments froze or delayed aid in response to Kigali's actions: Norway did the former in 1999 while the UK delayed disbursement of some budgetary support in 2004 after Rwandan troops had left Congo. Furthermore, some senior donor officials publicly condemned the violence.³³ Similarly, in private, US and UK representatives fiercely criticised Kagame and Museveni, particularly after the Kisangani clashes.³⁴ As with Ethiopia, though, international responses lacked consistency and were not backed-up by significant aid cuts or threats – indeed, the fact that private dialogue was chosen above political conditionality by most donors reveals how unwilling many Western capitals were to tackle Kigali's brinkmanship head-on.

Indeed, aid levels to Rwanda were not negatively affected by the regime's military activities, and in fact nearly tripled during Kigali's time in Congo, rising from 71 billion Rwandan Francs in 1996 to 196 billion in 2003.³⁵ It is also clear that the UK (Rwanda's largest bilateral donor from the late 1990s) actively worked to ensure that this crisis would not hurt Kigali. Not only did Clare Short offer a public defence of Rwanda's actions in the UK Parliament in June 2000³⁶, she reportedly also forbade her officials from discussing the conflict with

³¹ Borchgevink (2008), p.206

³² FOI document 4, p.18

³³ Hayman (2006), p.117; Hayman (2009), p.173; Mutond, *AP* (17/10/98)

³⁴ Short interview (2008)

³⁵ Hayman (2009), p.163

³⁶ Marriage (2006), pp.483-484

Rwandan officials during aid talks³⁷ and blamed the Kisangani clashes entirely on Uganda and the Museveni regime.³⁸ In addition, she refused to accept the UN's depiction of Rwanda's extractive activities in Congo, arguing that the panel had been unduly influenced by negative 'French propaganda' against the Kagame regime.³⁹

Moreover, London, along with several other major Rwandan donors, took a number of actions between 1998-2003 which clearly demonstrated their support for Kagame and willingness to overlook his military adventurism. In late 1999, for example, DFID established an office in Kigali and, by 2004 was providing 71% of its aid to the country in the form of GBS – more than any other recipient of UK aid.⁴⁰ Similarly, the World Bank began to provide aid to Rwanda in this form while troops were still in Congo and continued to disburse in 2004 even when the UK interrupted its contributions.⁴¹ Finally, the US lifted its arms embargo on Rwanda in July 2003 only days after a UN Resolution (1493) had imposed one on groups fighting in Congo.⁴²

Such donor forbearance can also be seen in international reactions to democratic backslidings on the part of Rwanda and Ethiopia during this period. Donors readily accepted Kigali's reasons for delaying, in 1999, elections and offered little criticism of the regime's subsequent closure of political space which included the imprisonment of former president Pasteur Bizimungu in 2001, the banning of the main opposition party in 2003 and the labelling of

³⁷ Reyntjens (2004), pp.206-207

³⁸ Porteous interview (2009)

³⁹ Beswick (2007), p.173

⁴⁰ Marriage (2006), p.481; FOI document 4, p.18

⁴¹ Hayman (2009), p.176

⁴² Reyntjens (2004), p.207

many government opponents as proliferators of ‘genocide ideology’.⁴³ Despite these worrying moves only the Netherlands withheld aid in response and then only after Kagame’s re-election in late 2003.⁴⁴ While the EU did criticise the lack of space afforded to the opposition by the Rwandan regime it applied little pressure on Kigali over the issue, delaying aid to the government for a mere matter of months before restoring it again.⁴⁵ Furthermore, neither the US, UK or World Bank made any significant criticisms of the increasing autocracy being institutionalised by the regime. Indeed, a report commissioned by DFID has characterised the UK-Rwanda relationship during this period as a notable ‘non-case’ of political conditionality and notes that ‘despite [these Rwandan events]...gravity and impact [they] did not trigger any reaction by DFID’.⁴⁶

This report also records the limited reaction in London to ‘human rights violations and limitation of civil liberties...perpetrated by [Ethiopian] government forces to stifle student demonstrations and political opposition’.⁴⁷ Indeed, most of Ethiopia’s donors paid little attention to the regime’s heavy-handed treatment of critics in the late-1990s/early 2000s. Notably the UK, while agreeing that greater freedom of expression and association was desirable in principle, often appeared to discount the Ethiopian and Rwandan governments’ restrictions on independent criticism and organisation in its aid decision-making and DFID frequently dismissed the importance of NGOs in the policy-making process; ‘we see your perspective’, an adviser to Short reportedly told a Human Rights Watch researcher in 2002,

⁴³ Hayman (2009), p.172; It is interesting to note the similarities between the Museveni and Kagame regimes in this regard; both came to power insisting they would hold elections within five years but both reneged on this, delaying polls for a further five years in 1989 and 1999 respectively.

⁴⁴ Hayman (2006), p.115; Hayman (2009), pp.171-172

⁴⁵ Hayman (2006), p.115

⁴⁶ FOI document 4, p.35

⁴⁷ *ibid*

‘but the Secretary of State is not interested’.⁴⁸ Indeed, instead of reducing aid between 2000-2005 to demonstrate disapproval at Addis’s behaviour donors in fact more than tripled their contributions to the country and the Meles regime became the largest African recipient of World Bank loans in 2000.⁴⁹

Donor support was also demonstrated in other areas. Neither the UK nor the US, for example, placed any significant pressure on Addis Ababa to accept the findings of the Eritrea-Ethiopia Boundary Commission’s 2002 report which clearly stated that a number of regions under Ethiopian occupation belonged to Eritrea.⁵⁰ The Meles regime refused to cede these areas to its furious neighbour in 2002, despite having previously agreed to do so, and, instead of using their influence to resolve this situation, London and Washington took no position. Indeed, in 2004 DFID explicitly made clear that it would not make any aid to Ethiopia conditional upon Addis Ababa’s acceptance of the Commission’s decisions.⁵¹ London also demonstrated its confidence in Meles personally by inviting him in 2004 to become a commissioner on the UK’s ‘Commission for Africa’ – a high-profile body set up by Prime Minister Tony Blair to advise and report on poverty reduction.⁵² The fact that Meles was selected as one of only two serving African leaders to join the Commission⁵³ clearly revealed a high degree of personal trust and enthusiasm for him and his government on the part of the UK.

⁴⁸ Hayman (2006), p.159; Manby interview (2009)

⁴⁹ Lambert, *African Business* (01/02/00)

⁵⁰ UN (2002)

⁵¹ Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (2004), p.6

⁵² Bolderson, *BBC* (06/07/05)

⁵³ The other being Benjamin Mkapa, then President of Tanzania

Current donor relations with Ethiopia and Rwanda: 2005-2010

This trust, however, was dramatically compromised in 2005 when the Ethiopian government violently clamped down on opposition demonstrations in the wake of an unexpectedly close-run parliamentary election.⁵⁴ The Meles regime reacted harshly – declaring demonstrations to be ‘illegal’ and breaking them up with police and the armed forces, arresting thousands of opposition supporters and politicians and causing the deaths of at least 82 people in the ensuing violence.⁵⁵

Even the regime’s most supportive international donors were unwilling to ignore these events and, indeed, swiftly condemned Addis Ababa’s actions.⁵⁶ The EU and US issued an extremely unusual joint statement calling for an immediate release of political detainees and an end to the arrests in November after the second and largest mass detention took place while Ethiopia’s budget support donors announced a plan to withhold \$375 million of assistance earmarked for the regime in December – a figure equal to over 20% of the country’s entire aid budget.⁵⁷ Indeed, London was particularly hard on the Meles government with International Development Secretary Hilary Benn bemoaning the ‘breach of trust’ which had now occurred between the UK and the Ethiopian regime.⁵⁸ In November 2005 and January 2006 respectively he announced diversions of £20 million and £50 million of aid away from Addis Ababa (44% of London’s overall contribution to Ethiopia) and declared that

⁵⁴ Harbeson (2005), pp.152-153

⁵⁵ *Reuters* (29/12/05)

⁵⁶ Harbeson (2005), p.153

⁵⁷ Borchgrevink (2008), p.211. The donors planned to reallocate this money to other projects and programmes within Ethiopia not administered by the government.

⁵⁸ *BBC* (19/01/06)

UK GBS would cease immediately – a very clear signal that the Blair government was unprepared to continue bolstering Meles and his cohorts.⁵⁹

An analysis of the Ethiopian-donor relationship since 2005, however, reveals that this crisis did not damage the overall relationship significantly. As Borchgrevink points out, many donors had fully restored their programmes in Ethiopia by the end of 2006 and, in fact, of Ethiopia's main international allies, only the Netherlands, Sweden and the US reduced their financial support to Addis Ababa substantially between 2005-6. UK aid, in fact, increased during this period from US\$89 million to \$157 million while generous hikes in contributions from Italy and Japan especially ensured that total international aid to Ethiopia actually *rose* by US\$23 million.⁶⁰

Indeed, donor support has grown dramatically in recent years- with overall levels nearly doubling from US\$1942 to US\$3188 between 2006-2008 – and the relationship has increasingly centred around the country's role in Somalia which, in 2006, it invaded and occupied with donor backing (see below).⁶¹ Assistance from the UK, World Bank and – particularly the US – has risen especially quickly to the extent that Washington now provides over 30% of Ethiopia's entire aid budget, having tripled its financial contributions since 2006.⁶² That the Meles regime is still strongly supported by Western donors was demonstrated most clearly in the lead-up to and after the country's 2010 parliamentary elections. Unlike in 2005, the polls took place in an extremely closed political environment: determined to avoid another contestable result, the government ensured between 2008-2010

⁵⁹ *ibid*

⁶⁰ Borchgrevink (2008), p.211-214; OECD (1987-2010)

⁶¹ *ibid*

⁶² *ibid*

that opposition parties would not compete with it on a remotely level playing field by passing restrictive laws on political activism and journalism, continuing the ban on political demonstrations and refusing to release from prison prominent opposition leaders such as Birtukan Medekas arrested in 2005.⁶³ Donors remained silent on these developments and, after the regime won a landslide victory taking 499 of the 547 parliamentary seats (172 more than in 2005) offered only muted criticism. EU Chief Election Observer, Thijs Berman, for example noted that the electoral playing field was ‘not sufficiently balanced’⁶⁴ while US Assistant Secretary of State for African Affairs Johnnie Carson cautiously admitted that the elections did not ‘meet international standards’ but nevertheless took place in an environment which was ‘calm and peaceful and largely without any kind of violence’.⁶⁵

The Kagame regime has also received much support from donors in recent years despite similar attempts on Kigali’s part to undermine democratisation. In the six months which preceded Rwanda’s 2010 presidential elections, government harassment of opposition figures became open and widespread with the arrests of a number of party leaders, closure of several anti-government newspapers and the breaking-up of many opposition rallies by security forces.⁶⁶ As in the case of Ethiopia, however, donor criticisms of this behaviour were limited and, when Kagame won re-election with 93% of the vote donors raised objections only tentatively while stressing the ‘remarkable progress’ made by the Rwandan government since 1994 in other areas.⁶⁷ This followed nearly a decade of constantly-increasing injections of international aid and a number of strong gestures of support from donors including, in 2006, a

⁶³ HRW (2010); Medekas had in fact been pardoned and released in late 2007 but was re-arrested, with her sentence being reinstated, in December 2008.

⁶⁴ *BBC* (25/05/10)

⁶⁵ *Reuters* (25/05/10)

⁶⁶ Walker, *BBC* (06/08/10)

⁶⁷ quote taken from US statement on the elections, see White House (2010a)

commitment by the UK to provide two-thirds of its assistance in the form of GBS and, in 2007, Rwanda's selection by the US Millennium Challenge Corporation for a Threshold Programme.⁶⁸ In the latter case, Washington made clear that Kigali had been selected because of its 'impressive track record on economic reform' but hoped that a 'Threshold program would offer it an opportunity to pursue greater democratic reform.'⁶⁹ Thus far there is little evidence, however, that Kigali has taken advantage of this 'opportunity'.

Donors also showed uncritical support for the Kagame regime in other areas during this period. In the justice sector, they poured immense amounts of money into bolstering the *gacaca* courts from 2004-5 but refrained from questioning Kigali's double standards in excluding RPF crimes from these bodies' remit.⁷⁰ Similarly, several donors (notably the UK) begun to assist in training Rwandan soldiers to participate in peacekeeping operations in light of Kigali's involvement in the UN/AU peacekeeping mission in Sudan (AMIS) from 2004.⁷¹ This is in spite of the fact that when discussions in London begun on this issue Rwandan troops were still an occupying force in neighbouring Congo and training continued despite growing international suspicion between 2008-2009 that Rwanda's soldiers were covertly offering support to the destructive military campaign of Laurent Nkunda in eastern Congo who was, in early 2009, arrested for war crimes.⁷² Donor support has also been provided to Kagame and Meles since 2004 in the form of frequent, usually laudatory, ministerial trips by US and UK officials being made to both countries; prominent visitors have included David

⁶⁸ Beswick (2007), p.85, p.122

⁶⁹ MCC (2006)

⁷⁰ Oomen (2005), pp.905-906

⁷¹ Beswick (2010), pp.746-748

⁷² Grete, *BBC* (23/01/09)

Miliband, who travelled to Kigali in October 2008⁷³; Tony Blair, who visited Ethiopia in 2004⁷⁴ and Rwanda in 2007, 2008, 2009⁷⁵ and 2010⁷⁶; David Cameron, UK Leader of the Opposition (and Prime Minister from May 2010) who called on Kagame during a 2007 trip to Kigali⁷⁷; George W Bush – in Rwanda as part of his 2008 tour of five African countries⁷⁸ and Condoleezza Rice who travelled to Ethiopia in December 2007.⁷⁹

Both the Rwandan and Ethiopian regimes, therefore, have largely enjoyed very positive relations with donors – particularly the World Bank, US and UK. Unlike with Kenya (see below), this support has grown steadily and constantly over the course of the 1990s and 2000s and has remained basically uninterrupted in spite of numerous transgressions on the part of Kigali and Addis Ababa on democratisation, regional militarism and domestic civil activism. As with Uganda, both governments have been subjected to occasional aid cuts and criticisms from Western capitals for their activities but these have never been applied consistently, thoroughly or for any extended period. Moreover, attempts by some donors to reduce international support to both regimes have frequently been frustrated by London and Washington whose strong support for Kagame and Meles has continuously undercut external criticism from elsewhere. Like the Museveni regime, therefore, both governments have been treated surprisingly leniently by the donor community considering their controversial records in several areas.

⁷³ 'Country Profile: Rwanda: Visits', FCO Website (available at <http://www.fco.gov.uk/en/travel-and-living-abroad/travel-advice-by-country/country-profile/sub-saharan-africa/rwanda/?profile=intRelations>; accessed 01/12/10)

⁷⁴ *BBC* (07/10/04)

⁷⁵ Mazimpaka, *Independent* (Uganda) (24/06/09)

⁷⁶ Nambi, *New Times* (10/06/10)

⁷⁷ Pflanz, *Daily Telegraph* (25/07/07)

⁷⁸ McGreal, *Guardian* (19/02/08)

⁷⁹ Pleming, *Reuters* (29/11/07)

Understanding donor support for Ethiopia and Rwanda: Assessing the role of image management

How can one account for this leniency? To what extent have attempts by the two regimes to manage how donors perceive them played a role in this international forbearance? In the case of Ethiopia, uncritical donor support could debatably be explained purely by referring to that country's important geostrategic position. Located at the crossroads between Arab north and 'black' sub-Saharan Africa, Ethiopia, unlike Uganda, has long been seen by Western states as being in a crucial global strategic situation. Certainly such considerations were the main reason why the US and Soviet Union competed for Addis's allegiances during the later Cold War and this was also the main explanation given by the US State Department for its continued support for both the imperial Haile Selassie and Marxist Mengistu regimes until April 1977.⁸⁰

Similarly, donor support for Rwanda can be, and often is, explained as a result of collective international guilt over failings to predict, prevent or halt the 1994 genocide. Unusually for an African issue, this crisis evoked strong feelings among senior policy-makers, in London, Washington and the Hague especially, and many (notably Bill Clinton's White House Africa team, Clare Short and her Dutch counterpart Jan Pronk) believed that heavily-supporting Rwanda and its government was vital not only to prevent future violence but also, on a moral level, because they 'owed it' to the country after neglecting it during its time of real need.⁸¹ Furthermore, the fact that Rwanda's major donors since 1994 (UK, US, Netherlands, Sweden) only became such after the genocide clearly indicates the likelihood of a strong

⁸⁰ Lefebvre (1987), pp.465-468; Wrong (2005), pp.274-275

⁸¹ Porteous (2008), pp.21-22; Marriage (2006), p.483

association in donor minds between support for the post-genocide government and repaying the moral 'debt' accrued by them between April-July 1994.⁸² As such, it could be argued that strong, uncritical donor support for the Kagame regime has simply been a reaction by Western capitals to their own feelings of guilt and obligation.

On a basic level, these arguments are convincing: it is clear that donor rationales for supporting Ethiopia and Rwanda have primarily been based around questions of geostrategy and preventing future genocides respectively. These arguments, however, lack depth because they fail to consider the part played by both sides in the donor-recipient relationship. In the case of Ethiopia, its geographical position has not changed since 1991 but donor support has. Indeed, when Addis Ababa was arguably of most practical use to donors (particularly the US) during the 1992-3 UNOSOM and UNITAF missions in neighbouring Somalia (the latter including a contingent of 25,000 US soldiers) donor support to the Meles regime was in fact extremely limited. International perceptions of the government as a vital security ally only appear to have developed fully during the late-1990s/early 2000s. Furthermore, in many respects, neighbouring Kenya represents an even more important geostrategic ally for donors since it has a coastline and therefore does not need to rely on other states for access to the sea. As detailed below, however, Nairobi has not enjoyed the same level of sustained, uncritical international support as Addis. Both of these facts suggest that other forces have played a role in convincing donors of the Meles regime's significance as a geostrategic and security ally.

Likewise, without frequent reminders it seems unlikely that donors would continue to rationalise their support for Kigali with reference to the genocide over fifteen years after the

⁸² Hayman (2009), p.164

event had occurred. This is particularly so because the RPF's international reputation as the heroic force which ended the carnage in 1994 has gradually been eroded by claims from NGOs, commentators and some foreign governments that Kagame's forces themselves have taken part in arguably genocidal activities. Even a former strong critic of this 'double genocide' theory, Gerard Prunier, whose 1995 book *The Rwanda Crisis*, dismissed the accusation as 'an absolute shame' comparable to Nazi justifications of the Holocaust, has since acknowledged that 'the RPF carried out a large number of killings' and that these were at least arguably 'aimed at terrorizing the Hutu' – that is, focused on one ethnic community.⁸³ That such counter-narratives and the passing of time has not lead donors to substantially re-think their interpretations of the Kagame regime and the 'debt' it owes it suggests, again, that other forces have influenced their perceptions of the situation.

In both cases, I would argue, that these 'other forces' have primarily been the governments of Ethiopia and Rwanda themselves. They, like the Museveni regime, have used multiple media and implemented particular policies in order to develop and manage donor views of them as a vital security ally and victim/fighter of genocide respectively. In so doing they have ensured that their main supporters view them through these, rather than more negative, narratives, protecting them, to a considerable extent, from the international censure and criticism which has frequently been levelled at regimes such as Kibaki's in Kenya.

Ethiopia's image management under Meles

In the case of Ethiopia, though the Meles regime played a key regional role on behalf of the US in the mid to late-1990s in opposing Sudan's Islamic government, it did not attempt to

⁸³ Prunier (1995, 2005), p.339, pp.359-362

transform this into any kind of narrative *vis-a-vis* its relations with donors. Nor is there much evidence, in fact, that donors saw Addis as an indispensable geostrategic ally during Meles' first decade in power. Neighbouring Eritrea was located in an equally-useful position, was also lead by one of the anti-Khartoum 'African new leaders' (Isaias Afwerki) and arguably was better placed to play the role of regional donor lynchpin since it, unlike Ethiopia, had a coastline and had previously hosted a US army base (Kagnew) between 1943-1977.⁸⁴

It is clear, nonetheless, that from the early 2000s (especially after 9/11) Addis Ababa concentrated more thoroughly on convincing donors that it represented their major security ally in the region and undoubtedly by 2006, when Ethiopian forces – with US support – invaded Somalia to prop-up the weak Transitional Federal Government (TFG) in Mogadishu, this was the foremost image of the regime most donors had in their minds. Initial Ethiopian strategies on the promotion of this image appear to have been based around undermining Eritrea's reputation among donor, particularly US, officials and the boundary dispute between the two states was chosen as a means to do this. Between 1999-2007, for example, the Meles regime hired at least three different US lobbying firms (Zemi Communications, Hunton and Williams and Dewey and LeBoeuf) whose stated aims were to 'explain the Ethiopian position [to policy-makers and the international media] in its dispute with Eritrea...[and]...develop articles in the press which we hope will influence the administration and State Department to support Ethiopia...'.⁸⁵

Meles himself has also played a key role in discrediting Eritrea to this end during numerous interviews with Western media organisations and speeches at US and UK universities, in a

⁸⁴ Wrong (2005), pp.201-236, pp.268-279

⁸⁵ Zemi Communications (2000), p.4; see also Hunton Williams (2004), p.4 and Dewey and LeBoeuf (2007), p.3

2000 appearance on US television for example he emphasised that ‘the war was started by Eritrea’.⁸⁶ Since the mid-2000s, Meles has elaborated on this characterisation by depicting Eritrea as fundamentally belligerent and dangerous to regional stability, noting in a 2006 BBC interview that Eritrea supported the Somali Union of Islamic Courts (ICU) because of its ‘strong motive to destabilize the Horn [of Africa] and mess up the regional peace’ and, in 2008, that ‘Eritrea has publicly...stated that it is training and equipping Ethiopian rebels...’.⁸⁷ This diplomatic offensive has clearly been successful since donor attitudes to Eritrea hardened very considerably between 2004-2006 (helped, admittedly, by Asmara’s own unpredictability). A mid-2000s decision by Washington, for example, to set-up a military base in Djibouti rather than Eritrea, despite the latter’s enthusiastic lobbying to play host to the installation, came as an early indication that Addis Ababa’s campaign to convince donors of Eritrea’s unreliability as a regional security ally had been triumphant.⁸⁸

Having neutralised Eritrea as a potential competitor in the eyes of donors, the Meles regime has, like Uganda, concentrated very strongly on promoting an image of itself as an indispensable donor ally in the War on Terror. To achieve this, the regime has focused primarily on positioning itself as the major regional opponent of Islamic militancy in Somalia. This image management has been carried out privately: Meles, like Museveni, has made frequent visits to Washington in the 2000s and fostered close ties with Bush, Frazer and key national security officials by discussing the crisis in Somalia. Indeed, a former White House official has noted that Meles, like Museveni, would often directly contact Bush and Frazer between 2006-2009 to discuss Somalia and other regional issues and that,

⁸⁶ ‘Interview: Ethiopian Prime Minister Meles Zenawi discusses the cease-fire between his country and neighboring Eritrea’, *NPR Morning Edition* (12/09/00)

⁸⁷ *US Federal News Service* (03/08/06); McClure, *Newsweek International* (21/04/08)

⁸⁸ Alexander Strategy Group (2004), pp.3-4; Wrong (2005), p.382

consequently, the US leader considered his regime to be one of the most trustworthy and reliable allies on the continent in strategic matters.⁸⁹

Addis Ababa has also promoted this image through its engagement with the international media, continuously stressing not only the presence of terrorists in Somalia but also the threat they pose to global security. Even before Ethiopia's part-occupation of Somalia, Meles had begun depicting his government's policy towards its neighbour in terms of opposing 'terrorists'. In a 2005 interview with *Associated Press*, for example, he warned of a 'very active al-Qaida [sic] cell' in Mogadishu which 'had been involved' in the 1998 US embassy bombing in Kenya and stressed how Ethiopia was keen to do all it could to 'eliminate the terrorist threat' in Somalia.⁹⁰ Meles has been particularly skilled at using emotive language to connect, in donor minds, Ethiopia's involvement in Somalia to the Global War on Terror. Thus in a 2006 interview with *The Washington Post* he not only referred to the ICU as 'terrorists' but also claimed they were 'hell- bent on establishing a Taliban regime in Somalia...it wants to Talibanize all of Somalia'.⁹¹ Likewise in a 2008 interview with *Newsweek International* he emphasised how al-Shabaab had 'declared jihad against Ethiopia'.⁹² Terms such as 'Taleban' and 'jihad' have constituted core 'War on Terror' vocabulary in Washington, London and elsewhere since 9/11 and by using such language, Meles clearly intended to convince donors that his fight against Somali groups has been as much a vital part of the War as US/UK operations in Afghanistan. This form of image management also clearly plays on and appeals to the simplistic understandings of Somali politics held by some senior donor officials such as Frazer.

⁸⁹ Anonymous interview 28 (2009)

⁹⁰ Tomlinson, *AP Worldstream* (12/05/05)

⁹¹ McCrummen, *Washington Post* (14/12/06)

⁹² McClure, *Newsweek International* (21/08/08)

Furthermore, Ethiopia's Washington lobbyists have often promoted this security image alone in their dealings with policy-makers both in arguing for greater US support for Addis Ababa and in defending the regime from criticism. Between 2006-2008, for example, several congressmen lead by Representatives Christopher Smith and Donald Payne attempted to pass two items of legislation, the 'Ethiopia Democracy and Accountability Act of 2006' and 'Ethiopia Freedom, Democracy and Human Rights Advancement Act of 2007' (H.R. 2003), which would, among other things, have lead to the withholding of US military aid to Ethiopia unless Addis Ababa improved its human rights record.⁹³ Though both passed in the House of Representatives, the bills floundered in the Senate ultimately failing to be put to a vote after a fierce and extensive lobbying of legislators by DLA Piper (a firm retained by the Meles regime since 1999).

To this end, between September-November 2007 the firm contacted representatives of 14 senators and over 30 congressmen and women on more than 130 occasions in relation to the 2007 bill and on many occasions linked the issue, according to their own records, with the 'War on Terror'.⁹⁴ Furthermore, in defending Ethiopia, DLA Piper sent out a memo to lawmakers which also made this connection explicit and argued that 'the bill will prohibit critical security assistance to Ethiopia at a time when volatility in Somalia...more than ever demand that the US make full use of...Ethiopia, its strongest and only democratic ally in the region'.⁹⁵ It also made clear that passage of the bill would compromise 'the national security interests of the United States' since it would undermine this 'vital ally of the United States in

⁹³ US Congress (2007c), Section 4 (b) (2)

⁹⁴ DLA Piper (2008), pp.23-32

⁹⁵ *ibid*, pp.112-114

the fight against terrorism’.⁹⁶ They also publicised a similar statement by the Ethiopian ambassador to Washington which stressed that ‘Ethiopia is a close ally of the United States in the fight against terrorism’⁹⁷ and gained the support of James Inhofe, a senator whose office they had contacted in September, who publicly condemned the bill saying ‘Ethiopia...is a close friend of the United States and a strong ally in the War on Terror’.⁹⁸ Once again, therefore, the Meles regime, through its US lobbyists, attempted to engender donor support through promoting itself, above all else, as a key security ally.

Rwanda’s image management under Kagame

For the Kagame regime, laying claim to geostrategic importance would be far more difficult; its primary tactic for retaining donor support since 1994 has not, therefore, been based around promoting itself as of value to donors *per se* but instead reminding them of their moral obligation to support the Rwandan government and playing on their sense of guilt for ignoring the country during the genocide. In practice this has meant a systematic and constant effort to not only continuously re-emphasise the genocide and its consequences but also to link its contemporary activities, however controversial, to this narrative. Hayman has described Kigali’s focus on the genocide as providing the ‘overarching framework which has opened up policy space’ in its relations with donors and other commentators including Reyntjens, Pottier, Uvin and Beswick have analysed the ‘political capital’ the Kagame regime has made of this ‘genocide credit’ on an international level.⁹⁹ Unlike with Uganda or

⁹⁶ *ibid*

⁹⁷ *ibid*, p.117

⁹⁸ ‘Inhofe statement on Ethiopia resolution’, Senator James Inhofe Website (available at http://inhofe.senate.gov/public/index.cfm?FuseAction=PressRoom.PressReleases&ContentRecord_id=afc9b1c1-802a-23ad-4b98-1a6bbe23992b; accessed 01/12/10)

⁹⁹ Uvin (2001), p.179; Reyntjens (2004), pp.199-200; Hayman (2009), pp.175-176

Ethiopia, therefore, Rwanda's image management strategies have been studied in some depth by academics and much of the following analysis relies on their work.

The Rwandan genocide was a horrific and tragic event and it is not this author's intention to suggest otherwise. Individuals, communities and governments who live through such appalling bloodshed are likely to be affected and influenced by their experiences for life; for Rwandan officials to mention the genocide even decades later therefore should not always be seen as part of a cynical ploy to manage donor perceptions. It is curious, nonetheless, that as time has passed Kigali's international focus on the genocide has increased rather than waned. Indeed, Hayman notes that in its first few years, the Kagame regime made very little mention of the subject, instead referring only to the 'tragic events of 1994', whereas by 2004 'a real discourse' had been built by Kigali around the genocide whereby 'policy documents and government rhetoric [were] all set in the context of the consequences of genocide'.¹⁰⁰ This appears to have culminated, in 2004, in a series of stage-managed international events attended by Kagame commemorating the tenth anniversary of the genocide. One such event was a speech delivered by the Rwandan president to US policy-makers, academics and journalists at the Woodrow Wilson Center in May which reminded the international community of their 'failure...to prevent the genocide' and, indeed, mentioned the word 'genocide' itself on sixteen occasions.¹⁰¹ He also compared Rwanda's experience in 1994 to that of Europe's Jewry during the Holocaust. Just as the Museveni government's rhetoric on the LRA, therefore, transformed between 1986-2004 to link Uganda more firmly to international discourses on terrorism (see chapter 5), so the Kagame regime, between 1994-

¹⁰⁰ Hayman (2009), pp.175-176

¹⁰¹ Woodrow Wilson Center (2004)

2004 did the same to rhetorically link its own coming to power with Western feelings of guilt about genocide.

Moreover, since the early 2000s, the Kagame regime has further promoted this ‘genocide narrative’ when explaining and justifying numerous actions to donors. Beswick notes, for example, that Kigali has partly portrayed its involvement in the African Union Mission in Sudan (AMIS) since 2005 in terms of ‘not remain[ing] silent in the face of genocide’.¹⁰² Such rhetoric serves not only to remind donors, once again, of the Rwandan genocide and their own ‘silence’ in response to it but also of the RPF’s heroic role in ending it, and its perceived continued sense of moral responsibility to tackle present and future genocides in Africa.

The regime has also drawn on this narrative when combating donor criticisms of its domestic and regional activities. Arrests of political leaders, including former president Bizimungu in 2001 and opposition leader Victoire Ingabire in 2010, have been explained to international critics as reactions to these individuals’ ‘genocide denial...downplaying the genocide...[and] fomenting ethnic divisions’.¹⁰³ Likewise, Kigali has presented its involvement in Congo to donors by drawing on this anti-genocide image. In a September 2009 address to the International Peace Institute in New York, for example, Kagame argued to an audience composed of policy-makers, media organisations and think tank personnel that Rwanda had had ‘no option’ *but* to invade Congo in 1996 since ‘the international community did not intervene’ to stop the continuation of genocide against Tutsi refugees in camps in eastern

¹⁰² Beswick (2007), pp.223-225; Beswick (2010), pp.748-749; AMIS (and its successor UNAMID) forces carried out peacekeeping largely in Darfur, a region where some donors have argued that government-sponsored genocide has occurred

¹⁰³ Beswick (2007), p.113; *East African* (21/04/10)

Zaire.¹⁰⁴ ‘We had to deal with this’, he said, again stressing his own government’s determination to prevent another genocide, ‘because we understood what would happen in the future [if we did not]’. Such rhetoric drew on very similar arguments made by regime officials at the time of the interventions; in 1996 Bizimungu told a group of Western journalists in Kigali that Rwanda’s intervention in Zaire (which he denied had occurred) would be ‘morally’ right to prevent a ‘genocide against Zairian Tutsi’.¹⁰⁵ Similarly, in 2004 Kagame told scholars at the Woodrow Wilson Center of the ‘threat’ still posed by interahamwe soldiers in eastern Zaire who ‘were reorganising to come and complete their campaign of genocide’, noting that such groups needed to be ‘dealt with appropriately’.¹⁰⁶

Interestingly, by the time of his 2009 New York speech, Kagame was also using these arguments to attack Western critics (including the UN) who accused his regime of exploiting Congo’s natural resources, saying this was a ‘distorted’ explanation for Rwanda’s presence in the country. This served to purposefully conflate two separate events (the 1996 invasion to remove Mobutu and 1998 invasion to remove Kabila) and two different assertions (that the RPF had, arguably justifiably, intervened in Congo to neutralise genocidaires but had remained there to exploit the country’s natural resources) in the minds of those present and subsume them all into a simplistic narrative which explained the entire 1996-2003 Rwandan involvement in Congo in terms of opposing genocide. As before, Kagame had used references to genocide both to remind donors (and those who influence their policies) why they had originally supported his regime and to refute international criticisms of it.

¹⁰⁴ International Peace Institute (2009)

¹⁰⁵ Pottier (2002), p.171

¹⁰⁶ Woodrow Wilson Center (2004)

One of the most interesting aspects of the regime's image management strategy is the degree to which it has attempted to control international accounts of its actions during and after the genocide. While images promoted to donors by Kampala and Addis Ababa rely, to a limited extent, on concrete facts (economic growth statistics, for example), the credibility of Rwanda's anti-genocide narrative depends entirely on donor acceptance that the RPF's military record between 1994-5 was honourable. Though commentators have since linked Kagame's forces to arguably genocidal activities during this period the overall regime narrative has remained convincing for most donors (particularly the US and UK) and, as Reyntjens notes, 'they reasoned in terms of 'good guys' and 'bad guys', the RPF naturally being the 'good guys'.¹⁰⁷ In an effort to 'protect' this perception, the Kagame regime has, since 1994, critically engaged with international commentators, policy-makers, NGOs and journalists to an unprecedented degree for an African leader. In doing so it has sought to control information available to them on Rwanda and to rebut or discredit claims on its reported activities which do not 'fit' with the official 'good guys – bad guys' dichotomy. Kagame has himself openly acknowledged on several occasions that this is the case. In 1998, for example, he told journalist Nik Gowing that 'we used communication and information warfare better than anyone. We have found a new way of doing things.'¹⁰⁸

This 'information warfare' has partly involved the regime's controlling of what donors and Western NGO personnel 'see' and have access to in Rwanda. Since 1994, Kigali has routinely denied many foreign NGOs and journalists access to sites where RPF-instigated violence had taken place, excluding them from press conferences and other fora where the

¹⁰⁷ Reyntjens (2004), p.179

¹⁰⁸ Pottier (2002), p.53

regime would impart ‘information’ on what was occurring.¹⁰⁹ This has even extended to denying certain Western reporters visas to visit Rwanda itself or expelling them for unwelcome remarks.¹¹⁰ In contrast, more ‘sympathetic’ observers, and those who have little knowledge of the country’s recent history and politics, have been welcomed by the regime and provided with much ‘information’ on issues denied to others. This, as Pottier and Oomen argue, has enabled the Kagame regime to continue to promote certain pro-RPF narratives internationally through unwitting mediaries.

Furthermore, just as the Museveni government routinely controlled donor access to northern Uganda for many years, so Kigali has done the same in Rwanda to advance its own narratives. Pottier details an extraordinary incident in April 1995 where the Rwandan government invited a number of donor ambassadors to ‘a meeting with the Head of State’ in Kibeho, a town in southern Rwanda where several days previously RPF troops had massacred several thousand suspected Hutu genocidaires in IDP camps.¹¹¹ In an effort to forestall growing international outrage and a potential alienation of donor support, the regime welcomed the diplomats to visit and explore the site where the alleged killings had taken place and see for themselves the number of dead bodies. Bizimungu himself escorted the delegation around the camps.

While presenting the visit as an attempt to be open and transparent in the face of criticism the regime, in fact, had organised a heavily-staged managed event which involved the ‘exhumation’ of only 338 corpses (thousands more had been removed days before by

¹⁰⁹ Pottier (2002), pp.51-53

¹¹⁰ Reyntjens (2004), p.202

¹¹¹ Pottier (2002), pp.160-166

Rwandan troops) so that the assembled donors could 'see' that initial international claims of 'thousands dead' were false. Presented with such 'evidence', Bizimungu challenged the visitors to contest what they had seen and therefore challenge Kigali's account of the incident: 'It is 338 corpses. If you pretend there are more, tell me where they are, show them to me!'. The diplomats, of course, could not and while the EU later froze some aid in reaction to the massacre, many donors accepted Kigali's version of events while the UN revised-down its estimate of how many had been killed shortly after the 'meeting', halving its initial figure. This reveals both the very early employment by Kigali of image management strategies as well as the length to which it has gone to prevent anti-genocide narratives being undermined.

Finally, when unable to co-opt sceptical foreign observers or deny them enough information to produce a critical analysis, the regime has resorted to more combative tactics to protect its image as a victim and enemy of genocide. On occasion this has involved Kigali flatly denying claims made about its activities. Indeed, both Hayman and Pottier have spoken of the regime's 'doctrine built around denial', highlighting particularly its persistent refusal to acknowledge its destructive involvement in Congo when confronted on the subject by foreign commentators.¹¹² Another example came in December 1997 when the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, Mary Robinson, issued a statement accusing Kigali of human rights violations. The regime responded by categorically denying the claims and argued that Robinson had been misled by 'informants whose aims are to mislead international public opinion on Rwanda'.¹¹³

¹¹² Hayman (2006), pp.131-132; Pottier (2002), p.55

¹¹³ Reyntjens (2004), p.203

More often, the Kagame regime has taken to vilifying foreign journalists and NGO officials whose work undermines the anti-genocide narrative. The *BBC*, *Voice of America*, UN and French government have all been accused of ‘biased reporting’ and propagating ‘misinformation’ to this end but the regime’s bile has been especially reserved for human rights NGOs. *Amnesty International*, *Human Rights Watch (HRW)* and *International Crisis Group* have all been targeted by Kigali as the ringleaders of an ‘anti-Rwanda misinformation campaign’ for publishing reports critical of the government’s human rights record. In attempting to discredit the work of these organisations, Kigali has not only attacked their source material as partial but even accused individual researchers, such as HRW’s Alison Des Forges, of being ‘Hutu supremacists who believe the Tutsi had no place in Rwanda’, again promoting a dichotomous view which posits critics of the regime as genocidaire sympathisers.¹¹⁴ Academics have also been pursued as part of this ‘information warfare’. In 1997, Gerard Prunier, for example, was upbraided by Kigali for writing a semi-critical book on the Rwandan political environment and even charged with indirect responsibility for the genocide itself.¹¹⁵

The extent to which these tactics have succeeded in reassuring donors that the RPF and Kagame alone should be supported as opponents of genocide is open to debate. There is very little evidence, however, that the country’s main donors have ever departed from the view that the ‘good guys’ took power in Rwanda in 1994. Furthermore, the fact that DFID and Clare Short shared Kagame’s dislike for NGOs in the formative years of the UK-Rwandan relationship (see above) no doubt made the latter’s accusations of bias among these

¹¹⁴ Reyntjens (2004), pp.203-204

¹¹⁵ Reyntjens (2004), p.202

organisations even more credible at least in London. At the very least it is important to note here that the Kagame regime has clearly been very aware of the importance of image management for many years and has worked hard to control how it is perceived not only by donors but also by Western journalists, think tanks, academics and NGO personnel. In many ways this demonstrates the Rwandan government's excellent understanding of the effect these groups' opinions can have on its international support. An enormous amount of scholarly and human rights work has been done on Rwanda since 1994 and this has strongly influenced donors – many of whom had very little personal or institutional knowledge of the country prior to the genocide and consequently commissioned much of this work.

Other images

Unfortunately, space does not allow for greater consideration of additional images promoted by Kigali and Addis Ababa which have also undoubtedly enabled it to foster increased support from the donor community. As much as has been written on these two governments' foreign policies over the last two decades there remains a great deal still to explore.

It is important to note here, nonetheless, that the two governments, like that in Uganda, have not relied on only one narrative in managing donor perceptions, although those explored above have been their primary focus. Both regimes have also sought to promote themselves as economic and development success stories in the same vein as Kampala, having implemented IFI recommendations thoroughly in the 1990s and 2000s and been at the forefront of poverty agenda initiatives such as debt relief and PRSPs. In addition, Kigali has attempted to convince donors that it is a key believer in 'African solutions to African problems' with Kagame frequently using the rhetoric of 'self-reliance' with donors or

Western journalists.¹¹⁶ Finally, the Rwandan regime, again like that of Museveni, has promoted the country as a haven for Western investment and an ‘easy place to do business’. Unlike Kampala, however, it has concentrated on attracting companies from one industry in particular – science and technology.

In constructing and managing these narratives, both governments have employed the same image management tactics discussed and analysed throughout this study. Both, for example, have fostered close personal relationships of trust with donor officials in order to benefit from their protection in inter- and intra-donor discussions and to cultivate a sympathetic audience for the promotion of certain narratives. Meles, for example, during the 1990s, worked hard to build ties with Joseph Stiglitz, World Bank Chief Economist 1997-2000, in order to promote Ethiopia as a model of economic reform and secure the Bank’s continued support. The extent to which this latter relationship helped Addis Ababa in retaining Bank assistance is open to debate. Stiglitz’s continued praise for Meles which has involved lauding his ‘honesty...personal integrity...[and]...intellectual attributes’ and stressing a clear belief in his economic prowess (‘Meles showed a deeper understanding...than many of the international economic bureaucrats I had to deal with [at the Bank]...’) is nevertheless telling, as is the fact that the Bank continued lending during his tenure despite the border war.¹¹⁷ He was also personally intervened in the Bank-Ethiopia aid negotiations during this period despite this not being in his official purview.¹¹⁸

¹¹⁶ Hayman (2006), pp.126-127; Beswick (2010), pp.739-742

¹¹⁷ Stiglitz (2002), pp.26-29

¹¹⁸ *ibid*; *Indian Ocean Newsletter* (04/06/02)

Likewise, Kagame has fostered close ties with a number of senior UK officials in an effort to promote his government as a poverty reduction and development ‘success story’. Clare Short, as noted, was an early figure whose personal trust and support was nurtured by the Rwandan leader to this end. Kigali has also, however, built relationships with former UK prime minister Tony Blair and the shadow DFID team of the UK Conservative Party (the main UK governing party from May 2010) since 2005.¹¹⁹ In both cases, Kagame appears to have offered himself and his country as a model case of development success to these groups and allowed them to involve themselves in helping Rwanda for their own political purposes.

Finally, like Museveni, both Meles and Kagame have used public lectures in donor countries and formed ties with Western business communities in order to promote their countries as economic success stories and hubs for international trade and investment. Meles has frequently delivered addresses at think tanks, and US/UK universities on economic reform in Ethiopia and how his government’s actions have set an example for the continent, notably at Columbia University, New York (September 2010) where he delivered a speech, after being introduced by Joseph Stiglitz, entitled ‘The Current Global Environment and its Impact on Africa’.¹²⁰ Kagame has done the same and, in addition, much of Kigali’s lobbying activity in Washington has been focused around advancing an image of Rwanda to US ‘business organizations’ as a place with many investment opportunities for Western companies.¹²¹ As part of this effort, the regime’s main US lobbyist since 2005 (GoodWorks International) put

¹¹⁹ In the former case allowing Rwanda to become a major part of Blair’s post-premiership Africa Governance Initiative (<http://www.tonyblairoffice.org/africa/pages/projects-rwanda/>; accessed 01/12/10), in the latter permitting Conservative parliamentarians and activists to organise ‘Project Umubano’ in the country as part of the Party’s post-2005 international development agenda (<http://conservativehome.blogs.com/platform/2008/07/andrew-mitchell.html>; accessed 01/12/10)

¹²⁰ ‘Prime Minister of Ethiopia, Meles Zenawi’, speech delivered at Columbia University (22/09/10)

¹²¹ For example, Fleishman-Hillard, retained by Kigali 2003-2004, (2003), p.4

together a film in 2007 ('Rwanda Rising') shown on *CNN* and featuring interviews with several celebrities and Kagame himself which portrayed the country as ripe for investment from Western entrepreneurs.¹²² Indeed, much of GoodWorks International's work on Kigali's behalf between 2007-2008 involved publicising this film to different US audiences, even securing a deal with Delta Airlines to have them 'show it on all [their] international flights'.¹²³

As with Uganda, therefore, successful image management strategies can also explain to a considerable degree the level and consistency of donor support for both Rwanda and Ethiopia since the early 1990s, despite the various transgressions of their governments. By personalising relationships with key donor officials, using lobbyists and engaging heavily with policy-makers, journalists and other commentators through a variety of media, both regimes have been able to persuade donors to view them in line with particular positive narratives or images and, consequently, support them regardless of their faults. In the case of Kigali, this can perhaps be seen as a direct continuation and expansion of the approach employed by Museveni to secure international agency; Kagame, after all, lived in Uganda from the age of two, fought alongside the future Ugandan leader in the bush war between 1979-1986 and even became head of Ugandan military intelligence in 1986, returning to Rwanda only on becoming vice-president in 1994.¹²⁴

¹²² GoodWorks International (2007), p.16 and (2008), p.15

¹²³ *ibid*

¹²⁴ Prunier (1995, 2005), p.68, pp.91-92

Kenya – the reluctant ally

Kenyan-donor relations under Moi (1978-2002) and Kibaki (2002-2010)

Unlike Uganda, Rwanda and Ethiopia, Kenya has had constantly difficult relations with donors since the end of the Cold War, experiencing, as Pinkney puts it, ‘frequent occupation of the doghouse’.¹²⁵ Indeed, aside from two brief periods of cordiality (2000-2001 and 2003) the relationship has primarily been characterised by resentment and defensiveness on the part of Nairobi and intense frustration on the part of its donors. While politically no more autocratic (particularly between 2002-2007) and economically little more corrupt than Uganda today, both Kenyan regimes have faced numerous aid cuts and sometimes very strong diplomatic criticism for their lack of progress in these areas since the early 1990s. Similarly, neither Moi nor Kibaki has succeeded in endearing themselves to any major donor official or administration as Museveni, Meles and Kagame have. The Kenyan-donor relationship has been very much what one might expect from an economistic view of African-donor relations; its two governments have rarely exercised any significant influence over how they are perceived in London, Washington and elsewhere and have often been forced to change policy domestically at the behest of donors. Kenya, in other words, has received the opposite treatment to Uganda in its dealings with donors: relentless criticism, qualified support and unenthusiastic personal diplomacy.

The Moi years: 1978-2002

During the Cold War, donors were supportive of the Moi regime and Kenya’s one-party state as a result of its pro-Western and pro-capitalist alignment. The US in particular tolerated the

¹²⁵ Pinkney (2001a), p.142

regime's undemocratic behaviour because of Kenya's strategic significance, it being situated on the Indian Ocean and near the Persian Gulf. Indeed, Washington considerably increased its financial assistance to the country in the mid-1980s after securing permission from Moi to make use of a major naval base in Mombasa for security purposes.¹²⁶ The World Bank also boosted its support for Nairobi during this period and, as Brown notes, total aid to Kenya more than tripled between 1978 to 1991 – from \$334 million to \$1.2 billion.¹²⁷

The end of the Cold War, however, dramatically altered the donor-Kenyan relationship and the country's strategic importance to Western states dwindled rapidly between 1989-1991. From 1990, therefore, donors (led by the US Embassy, Congress and some Scandinavian governments) began to turn a more critical eye towards Moi's domestic activities, openly attacking arrests of political opponents, lack of political freedom, human rights violations and economic mismanagement and suspending disbursements of aid on political and economic grounds throughout the year. In 1991, after the suspicious murder of foreign minister Robert Ouko and the circulation of increased reports of high-level corruption, previously supportive donors (notably the UK and the White House) also reviewed their support for Kenya and began cancelling loans and aid subsidies. This approach culminated, in November 1991, in a suspension, by Kenya's main donors including the World Bank, of all new aid to the country (\$350 million out of \$1 billion) until 'greater pluralism' were introduced, along with 'respect for human rights...basic freedoms of expression and assembly'. Donors also insisted that 'firm action to deal with issues of corruption' be taken'.¹²⁸ Though not specifically mentioned, these demands were taken to mean, at the very least, the restoration of multi-party

¹²⁶ Brown (2007), pp.316-317

¹²⁷ *ibid*

¹²⁸ *ibid*

politics in Kenya. Moi, heavily reliant on donor aid at this time (see *Figure 2* above) obliged less than a week later by abolishing the one-party state. Thus, while next door in Uganda donors were praising Museveni's equivalent 'no-party' system as 'your own kind of democracy', Moi was forced by his international supporters to restore political pluralism in a matter of days.¹²⁹

Donor support for Kenya throughout Moi's remaining decade in power remained faltering. Certainly, donors offered only limited criticism of the violent and controversial 1992 and 1997 elections – both won by Moi and declared neither free nor fair by observers.¹³⁰ They did not, however, fully return to 'business as usual'. Most European donors refused to restore aid to the regime throughout the 1990s while London, which did so in 1993, withheld \$17 million and suspended new project aid in July 1995 until 'satisfactory improvements had been made with human rights and political and economic reform' in the wake of regime crackdowns on media organisations, opposition legislators and party members.¹³¹ The World Bank and IMF also froze substantial loans (\$160 million and \$200 million respectively) in summer 1995 in protest at Nairobi's failure to tackle corruption.¹³² Similarly, in the lead-up to the 1997 elections which saw anti-government demonstrations violently suppressed by regime security forces, a number of major donors including the World Bank, IMF and EU again suspended new loans and grants (totaling \$400 million) citing 'poor economic governance and corruption'.¹³³ Following this, the IMF withdrew entirely from the country until 2000.¹³⁴

¹²⁹ A much more in-depth account of the domestic and international pressures which led to the 1991 aid suspension can be found in Throup and Hornsby (1998)

¹³⁰ Brown (2001), p.734

¹³¹ Brown (2007), pp.316-317

¹³² *ibid*

¹³³ *ibid*

¹³⁴ Pinkney (2001a), p.146

It is also important to note that the overall modality of donor aid to Kenya during Moi's final decade was intended to be extremely unsupportive of the regime. While neighbouring states increasingly began to receive GBS during this period, donors to Kenya specifically designed their aid packages, according to a 2005 DFID-commissioned report, 'so as not to provide support to government and to take into account risks of corruption'.¹³⁵ Thus, in 1998, DFID announced that it would 'increasingly channel its resources [in Kenya] direct to NGOs, the private sector and other civil society organisations [because of Nairobi's]...inadequate commitment to reform and transparency'.¹³⁶ As such, by the time Moi left office in 2002, Kenya (along with Zambia) received only 8% of its aid from London as GBS; no other African recipients of UK budgetary aid during this period received so little financial assistance in this form.¹³⁷

In 2000, donor support for the Moi government briefly increased after an economic 'dream team', headed by Richard Leakey, a renowned conservationist, was brought in from the private sector to tackle the country's burgeoning economic difficulties and corruption problems. The team, according to DFID, were 'perceived as credible' internationally and the UK therefore increased its allocation of budgetary support to Kenya (£30 million) while the IMF, under pressure from other donors, also resumed lending to Nairobi.¹³⁸ This period of positive relations was, however, short-lived. In March 2001, Leakey and his 'team' resigned from the government, citing the difficulty of tackling 'deeply entrenched corruption', and the new IMF programme rapidly went off-track to the frustration and consternation of donors.¹³⁹

¹³⁵ FOI document 4, p.26

¹³⁶ Pinkney (2001a), p.142

¹³⁷ FOI document 4, p.18

¹³⁸ *ibid*, pp.30-31; Brown (2007), p.321

¹³⁹ *ibid*; Mbitiru, *Independent* (UK), (26/03/01)

In response, the UK refused to disburse the remaining £15 million of GBS which it had allocated for the country only a year previously and the IFIs also withdrew from Kenya again.¹⁴⁰ By the time of Moi's retirement in 2002, therefore, Kenyan-donor relations were considerably strained, as they had been for most of the previous decade.

The Kibaki presidency: 2002 - 2010

The peaceful election of Mwai Kibaki to the presidency in December 2002 and the first electoral alternation of power in Kenyan history again temporarily lead to a growth in international support for Kenya. For many donors, the advent of a fresh, seemingly sincere new government was extremely welcome. This was particularly true because Kibaki showed all the signs, despite his age (71) of being a committed reformer, taking a 'zero tolerance' approach to corruption and establishing, soon after his inauguration, the Kenya Anti-Corruption Commission based at State House.¹⁴¹ He also appointed John Githongo, a respected former journalist and anti-corruption activist, as Permanent Secretary for Governance and Ethics, giving him full access to the President's Office and wide powers to track down and prosecute corrupt officials.¹⁴² The regime's promotion of free universal primary education as a flagship policy in 2003 also lead donors to increase their support for the new government and attracted support for Kibaki personally from a number of prominent international figures including Bill Clinton, the former US president.¹⁴³ Consequently, donors (particularly the World Bank, UK, US and Germany) boosted their financial support for

¹⁴⁰ FOI document 4, p.31; Barkan (2004), p.95

¹⁴¹ Wrong (2009), p.66

¹⁴² Barkan (2004), p.95; Wrong (2009), pp.14-20

¹⁴³ Orwel, *Daily Nation* (23/11/04)

Nairobi in 2003-4 and the IMF once more restored its lending programme, consenting to the disbursement of a \$250 million loan in November 2003.¹⁴⁴

Despite this promising start, donors quickly became disillusioned with the new regime as the hollowness of its pledge to end corruption became clear. Between 2004-5, evidence began to emerge of the regime's continued involvement in a number of corruption scandals, notably that relating to the procurement of passport-making and forensic laboratory equipment by a phantom entity – Anglo Leasing Finance – which apparently involved several senior politicians including the Vice President, finance minister, energy minister and transport minister.¹⁴⁵ According to Brown, Western diplomats in 2005 publicly 'alleged that corruption had cost the treasury \$1 billion since Kibaki took office' and several donor envoys including the UK High Commissioner issued very strong statements condemning Nairobi's actions in this area.¹⁴⁶

After the resignation and self-imposed exile of Githongo in February 2005, donor support for Kibaki plummeted and several key donors once more cut off aid; the US and Germany suspending US\$9 million intended for anti-corruption programmes in the same month with the World Bank delaying the release of a US\$260 million loan citing 'corruption allegations' the following year.¹⁴⁷ Kibaki's response to the criticisms - a reshuffle of the Kenyan Cabinet in 2005 which saw corrupt ministers retain their positions in the government – was also attacked by donors as 'not going far enough' and was taken as further evidence, along with the official clearing of the energy minister from corruption charges, by the international

¹⁴⁴ Brown (2007), p.322

¹⁴⁵ BBC (01/02/06)

¹⁴⁶ Brown (2007), p.322; BBC (03/02/05)

¹⁴⁷ BBC (19/02/05) and (01/02/06); Brown (2007), p.322; Githongo's story is told in Wrong (2009)

community, of Nairobi's unwillingness to extricate itself from corrupt practices.¹⁴⁸ Indeed, between 2005-2006, overall aid to Kenya was reduced by one quarter (from US\$ 1067 million to US\$798 million) with cuts from the UK (US\$171 million to US \$86 million) and US (US\$403 million to US\$135 million) being particularly stringent.¹⁴⁹

Donor support for the Kibaki government, particularly in Washington and London, has also been reduced since 9/11 as a result of dissatisfaction with Nairobi's domestic and international counter-terrorism policies. In contrast to Uganda and Ethiopia, Kenya has frequently appeared to these donors as only a reluctant supporter, even occasional outright opponent, of donor counter-terrorism priorities. This is the case in spite of the fact that, as Whitaker and Barkan have noted, Nairobi has privately cooperated with Washington in fighting terrorism since the late 1990s, establishing, with US funds, an Anti Terrorism Police Unit in 2003 and a National Counter-Terrorism Center in 2004.¹⁵⁰ It has also allowed FBI agents to work alongside Kenyan security forces in the country itself as well as taking part in US counter-terrorism training programmes and joining the US-funded Terrorist Interdiction Program.¹⁵¹

Perceived lack of cooperation in other areas, however, has alienated support from donors. Firstly, the Kibaki government, unlike the neighbouring Ugandan regime, has been unable to pass anti-terrorism legislation promoted by the US and UK despite several attempts at doing so in 2003, and 2006.¹⁵² The 2003 Suppression of Terrorism Act, for example, was

¹⁴⁸ Dagne (2009), p.12

¹⁴⁹ OECD (1987-2010)

¹⁵⁰ Barkan (2004), pp.97-98; Whitaker (2008), p.257

¹⁵¹ Whitaker (2008), p.258

¹⁵² Whitaker (2008), pp.259-260

withdrawn from the National Assembly later that year after considerable domestic pressure which saw the bill presented by opponents as a donor imposition. A 2006 equivalent bill was similarly blocked in committee by legislators who argued that ‘the American government is not going to have its way’.¹⁵³ Though Nairobi’s failure to pass the legislation has come about more as a result of parliamentary opposition and democratic debate (as Barkan points out) than regime disinterest, the fact that Kenya has remained without such laws for several years has frustrated and angered donors, particularly after several men arrested for alleged involvement in the 1998 Nairobi US Embassy bombing were released and acquitted in 2005 as a result of legal loopholes which legislation may have plugged.¹⁵⁴ Donors were also alarmed by Nairobi’s 2005 decision to disband the Joint Terrorism Task Force – an interagency counter-terrorism structure formed only in the previous year.¹⁵⁵ Successive US and UK envoys have therefore openly criticised Kenya’s current anti-terrorism laws and characterised them as ‘less than adequate’.¹⁵⁶

In addition, Washington has been angered by Nairobi’s opposition to the 2003 Iraq War and its refusal throughout the early 2000s to sign an ‘Article 98’ agreement with the US (see chapter 4) – something Uganda, Ethiopia and Rwanda agreed to without question.¹⁵⁷ Indeed, the US Congress suspended \$7.8 million of military aid to Kenya as a result of this in 2005 along with \$9.2 million in 2006.¹⁵⁸

¹⁵³ *ibid*

¹⁵⁴ Whitaker (2008), p.259

¹⁵⁵ Whitaker (2008), p.257

¹⁵⁶ Mulama, *IOL News Online* (07/09/05)

¹⁵⁷ Oluoch, *East African* (22/03/05)

¹⁵⁸ Whitaker (2008), p.262; these suspensions, as Whitaker points out, came about as a result of legislation passed by the US Congress in 2002 and 2005 concerning recipients of US aid who did not sign Article 98 agreements, these restrictions were lifted in October 2006 (Dagne (2009), p.12)

Donor fears regarding insecurity in Kenya were further complicated, albeit unexpectedly, following the outbreak of election-related violence throughout the country in early 2008. The violence, which led to the deaths of over 1,000 people in only a few weeks, took place between supporters and opponents of Kibaki's government (supplied, it has been alleged, by senior party figures on both sides) with the latter accusing the former of rigging December 2007 elections in the ruling party's favour.¹⁵⁹ While donors were initially unsure about how to respond to the crisis— the US firstly recognising Kibaki's victory and then withdrawing this recognition, the EU simultaneously criticising the election as 'foul' but nonetheless disbursing €40 million of budgetary support to Nairobi¹⁶⁰ - they quickly turned their fire on Kibaki, insisting he enter into dialogue with opposition leader Raila Odinga, and threatened aid freezes if an agreement was not reached.¹⁶¹

Since April 2008, when Kibaki and Odinga joined forces to inaugurate a 'Government of National Unity', Kenyan-donor relations have remained tense, particularly regarding non-implementation of proposed constitutional reforms included in the Unity Government's Accord and failure to bring to justice some of those involved in orchestrating the violence. The Obama administration especially has continuously indicated its dissatisfaction with the regime's progress in these areas. In his first visit to Africa as US president in July 2009, for example, Barack Obama (whose father was born in Kenya) pointedly refused to visit the country, instead travelling to Ghana – an action which was interpreted as a deliberate 'snub' by Kenyan officials.¹⁶² Both Obama and his Assistant Secretary (former US ambassador to Kenya Johnnie Carson) have publicly criticised the Unity Government's two main parties for

¹⁵⁹ Dagne (2009), pp.6-7

¹⁶⁰ Brown (2009), pp.393-394; Amis (2010)

¹⁶¹ Brown (2009), p.396

¹⁶² Clayton and McConnell, *Times* (10/07/09)

‘not...moving into a permanent reconciliation that would allow the country to move forward’ and not offering sufficient support to ‘the reform agenda’ while the State Department banned, in late 2009, 15 senior Kenyan politicians (including Attorney-General Amos Wako) from entering the US for ‘obstructing reforms’ and being ‘obstructive in the fight against corruption’.¹⁶³ The relationship has been further soured by Nairobi’s belligerent responses to these actions: Moses Wetangula condemned Obama and Carson’s comments as ‘unacceptable and reckless statements’ while, in November, Wako announced his intention to ‘sue’ the US Government for ‘defamation’ following the imposition of the travel bans.¹⁶⁴

Since 1991, therefore, donor support for Kenya has frequently faltered; aid flows have been regularly interrupted and good diplomatic relations have rarely been maintained for more than a year. Indeed, while donor relations with Ethiopia, Rwanda or Uganda during the same period might be characterised as ‘warm, with occasional periods of difficulty’, those with Kenya have been quite the reverse – difficult, with occasional periods of warmth. Certainly, aid cuts were employed more freely by Western states during Moi’s tenure than during Kibaki’s, though the latter has been subjected to several military aid freezes since 2003. It is clear, nevertheless, that by the mid-2000s, the donor view of Kenya under Kibaki differed little from that of Kenya under Moi: that being a country presided over by a disagreeable, uncooperative and uninspiring septuagenarian whose administration not only condones but has institutionalised widespread corruption and whose disinterest in political reform and tackling terrorism has left its political system stagnant and the country at large at greater risk of attack from extremists than its neighbours.

¹⁶³ *ibid*; Dagne (2009), p 1; Kanina, *Reuters* (26/10/09); Clarke, *Reuters* (01/11/09)

¹⁶⁴ *ibid*; Mwaura, *Daily Nation* (13/11/09)

Understanding lack of donor support for Kenya: Assessing the role of image management

What accounts for these differences in the degree of donor support shown to Kenya compared to Uganda? Issues of chronology have been pointed to by some commentators in answering these questions. De Torrente notes that the ‘heyday’ of donor political conditionality came about between 1990-1993, and this is attested to by other commentators who argue that donors moved away from the ‘punitive’ measures employed against Kenya in 1991 by the mid-1990s.¹⁶⁵ During this period the Museveni regime, only a few years old, was seen by donors as going through a period of transition. The Moi regime, in contrast, had been in power for over a decade and was strongly resistant to making any such reforms. Arguably, then, the fact that Museveni had been around for less time than his Kenyan counterpart meant that donors were willing to give him the benefit of the doubt they were no longer prepared to afford to Moi. This argument does not, however, account for the discrepancy in later years (donors suspended aid to Nairobi in 1995, 1997 and 2000), and the fact that, by 2005, Museveni had been in power for nearly two decades and yet donors were still more critical of the nascent Kibaki government than his.

Many donor and diplomatic officials have argued instead that Kenya has simply been more important to donors (particularly the US and UK) economically, strategically and diplomatically than Uganda and has therefore been held to a higher standard by the international community than neighbouring regimes. They have also noted that while Museveni, Meles and Kagame came to power when their respective states were riven with

¹⁶⁵ de Torrente (2001), p.218; Cumming (2001), p.115

conflict and civil strife, Moi and Kibaki inherited a relatively stable country without this history; they therefore had a much less challenging job to perform, as donors saw it, than their East African counterparts who were literally ‘re-building’ their nations. Sir Edward Clay, for example, when asked by Moi in the early 2000s to explain international ‘double standards’ on Kenya, told him that ‘people expect more from Kenya, that’s the price of being relatively successful – faults are exposed more quickly’.¹⁶⁶ Similar sentiments have been reiterated by other senior donor officials.

Certainly Kenya has traditionally been prioritised by Western donors in their African policies. Until the early 2000s when DFID began opening offices in each major African country which received UK aid Nairobi, rather than Kampala, was the location of the department’s regional office (and had previously also served this purpose for DFID’s predecessor, ODA¹⁶⁷). Similarly, British civil servants maintain that while the Foreign Office’s loss of control over Africa since DFID’s creation has left large swathes of the continent firmly outside its purview, Kenya, along with Nigeria and South Africa, is an exception to this generalisation.¹⁶⁸ The same is true for Washington – Barkan notes that Kenya, with Nigeria and South Africa, is considered by US policy-makers to be ‘one of three “anchor states” in Sub-Saharan Africa.’¹⁶⁹ Kenya has also been one of few African countries to be genuinely important to donors (particularly the UK but also, perhaps surprisingly, France) as an economic and trade partner.¹⁷⁰ In addition, there is a considerable British expatriate community in the country which, at over 30,000 members, represents the second largest

¹⁶⁶ Clay interview (2009)

¹⁶⁷ Anonymous interview 14 (2009)

¹⁶⁸ Anonymous interview 12 (2009)

¹⁶⁹ Barkan (2004), p.88

¹⁷⁰ Brown (2007), pp.315-316

collection (after South Africa) of such individuals in any African state. Kenya has been perceived as more important to London than these countries for this reason also.¹⁷¹

This analysis, however, needs to be interrogated more thoroughly since, as this study has shown, being considered an important ally should give a regime such as Kenya's *greater* agency with donors, not less. Donors need Kenya's cooperation more than almost any other African state, surely their approach to its government, therefore, should be more magnanimous than it has been? This is particularly true because Kenya, unlike Uganda, Rwanda or Ethiopia, has ceased to be aid-dependent in the 2000s (as shown in **Figure 2**, aid has not accounted for more than 7% of Kenya's GDP since 1994) and thus one might expect donors to be more generous with Nairobi than with these other regimes since their leverage has been so much reduced in this crucial area.

Furthermore, in two areas where donors have seen Uganda as an ally (and have therefore held back from criticising the regime elsewhere) – regional stability and terrorism – Kenya has, arguably, a much greater claim to indispensability. Under Moi and Kibaki until 2007/2008, Kenya had never experienced civil war or significant instability. Museveni's regime, however, took power after a devastating and bloody national conflict which continued in various regions (notably the north and east) for decades after 1986 and was exported by the LRA to Congo, Sudan and Central African Republic. It has been Uganda, however, rather than Kenya, which donors have seen as an 'oasis of stability' in east Africa since the 1990s.

Similarly, Kenya has been the confirmed victim of al-Qaeda-orchestrated terrorism on several occasions under both Moi and Kibaki¹⁷² and borders both African states Washington

¹⁷¹ BBC (11/12/06)

has been most watchful of as supporters and hosts of terrorism since the late 1990s – Sudan and Somalia. US commentators and diplomats have also frequently made clear that counter-terrorism is Washington's 'top priority' in its engagement with Kenya.¹⁷³ Uganda, however, was not successfully attacked by al-Qaeda operatives until July 2010¹⁷⁴ and lies a considerable distance from Mogadishu. It is Uganda, not Kenya, though which donors have turned to first in planning their regional counter-terrorism strategies.

It is clear, then, that explaining differing donor relationships with Uganda and Kenya requires an exploration of why, rather than being seen by donors as an indispensable force for regional stability, centre for trade or ally against terrorism, Kenya has actually been perceived as corrupt, uncooperative and politically stale.

It is difficult to escape the conclusion that Kenya's problematic relations with donors have stemmed primarily from an unwillingness or inability on Nairobi's part to try and influence how it is seen by officials in Washington, London and elsewhere. Instead, 'images' of Kenya have developed and been controlled by donor officials and Western NGOs with little input from Nairobi. Both Moi and Kibaki's engagement with the international community, it must be emphasised, has been almost entirely defensive. While Museveni, Kagame and Meles have constructed and promoted grand narratives about their regimes and their usefulness to donors, the Moi and Kibaki regimes have usually done little more than rebut criticism or attack their Western opponents.

¹⁷² Notably in 1998 when the US embassy in Nairobi was bombed and in 2002 when an Israel-owned hotel and passenger plane were targeted. (Dagne (2009), p.11)

¹⁷³ Whitaker (2008), p.265

¹⁷⁴ Kampala has, as outlined in chapter 5, nevertheless linked both the ADF and LRA to al Qaeda.

The activities of Kenya's Washington lobbyists reflect this defensiveness. Black Manafort Stone and Kelly, retained by Nairobi under various names from 1984-1999, appear to have spent most of their time working for Moi trying to simply convince sceptical US legislators that the regime's human rights record was not as bad as many thought. In May 1989, for example, three of six meetings arranged between the firm and US officials focused on clarifying the 'human rights situation' in the country in an effort to convince legislators not to reduce Nairobi's aid package in an 'upcoming appropriations bill'.¹⁷⁵ That they also attempted to influence the media's perceptions on the issues is less clear. If they did, however, such a public relations 'war' was clearly lost by Nairobi by 1991 as major Western newspapers and NGOs, including the *New York Times*, *Observer*, *Robert F Kennedy Center for Human Rights* and *Africa Watch*, increasingly focused on the regime's human rights abuses above all else in reports on Kenya.¹⁷⁶ Likewise, in late 2003 the Kibaki government hired John Maina of Baraka Services purely to lobby Washington to modify its travel advisories on US citizens visiting Kenya.¹⁷⁷ Though clearly a vital problem to be resolved, the firm's strategy was extremely deferential to Washington ('to negotiate with Department of State officials how to fulfil the conditions and lift the ban') and was again an indication that Kenya's engagement with donors has mainly been based around resolving disputes and mitigating punishments rather than attempting to control donor views of the regime itself.

This was further confirmed in 2009 when Kibaki, in an effort to 'put a positive spin', as a Kenyan journalist observed, 'on Kenya's activities', hired Chlopak Leonard Schecter (CLS)

¹⁷⁵ Black, Manafort, Stone and Kelly (1989), p.12

¹⁷⁶ Brown (2007), pp.307-310

¹⁷⁷ Baraka Services (2004), p.3

to promote his regime in the US.¹⁷⁸ The agreement, signed with the Office of the Presidency, acknowledged that Kenya had received much ‘negative publicity’ in the US and that ‘there appears to be an impression among many key policymakers in Washington that Kenya is “not what it used to be”’.¹⁷⁹ The strategy proposed by CLS, however, appears to have been based around reassuring US policy-makers that Kenya was making ‘progress’ in some areas (including political reform, ‘with the ICC’ and on anti-corruption), ‘working towards healing ethnic divisions’ and ‘raising awareness [to] show Washington that Kenya has secured Nairobi’s airport’.¹⁸⁰ This approach was, again, wholly defensive in that it sought to influence already negative donor perceptions on Kenya (corrupt, unstable, ethnically-divided) rather than introduce positive, novel narratives which might attract donor support.

Indeed, the only ‘image management’ CLS appears to have advocated in this regard concerned ‘ramping up Kenya’s image as a poster-child for climate change in Africa...this will be a priority’.¹⁸¹ Interestingly, this narrative presenting Kenya as a defender of conservation and ‘green’ initiatives has been one of very few images Kenyan regimes have continuously tried to promote of themselves – in 1989, Moi set fire to 12 tonnes of elephant tusks in an effort to portray his regime as a staunch opponent of the ivory trade.¹⁸² Attempts by Nairobi to advance this image, however, have constantly failed because competing donor-initiated narratives on security, governance and conflict have always been more significant; the regimes appear, in this case, to have picked the wrong issue.

¹⁷⁸ *Daily Nation* (27/08/09)

¹⁷⁹ Chlopak, Leonard, Schechter and Associates (2010), p.14

¹⁸⁰ *ibid*, pp.14-18

¹⁸¹ *ibid*, p.17

¹⁸² Perlez, *New York Times* (19/07/89)

This has, in fact, been a recurring problem in Kenyan foreign policy. Unlike the Ugandan, Rwandan and Ethiopian regimes, Nairobi has rarely attempted to attach itself to a narrative which donors are actually influenced by. During the 1991 Gulf War, for example, the Moi regime failed to take advantage of how useful its naval and air bases had been for the US during the conflict. Though it received US\$5 million in US military aid as gratitude in February that year it still fell victim to a US\$28 million overall aid cut in November (see above).¹⁸³ A more savvy regime, such as Museveni's, may well have been able to promote its assistance during the conflict as part of a grand narrative on Kenya's vital importance as a US security ally and thereby escape aid cuts later in the year. Similarly, despite providing much-needed support to donors in their humanitarian operations in East Africa in the mid-1990s (including during the UN interventions in Somalia and Rwanda), the Moi regime did not, unlike that of Museveni, endeavour to persuade donors that these actions showed Kenya's central role as a promoter of regional stability. Doing so may well have given Nairobi some wriggle-room when donors threatened to re-impose aid conditionalities in 1995 and 1997.

Indeed, both the Moi and Kibaki regimes have actively avoided accessing potentially positive narratives, further preventing them from influencing how donors perceive them. In 2003, after failing to sign an Article 98 agreement with the US, Nairobi responded to Washington's disappointment not by pointing out how its refusal stemmed from consideration of the views of Kenyans (thereby revealing the vibrancy and strength of Kenyan democracy) but instead by belligerently suggesting that it would not be dictated to by the US.¹⁸⁴

¹⁸³ Brown (2007), p.309

¹⁸⁴ Oluoch, *East African* (22/04/05)

Likewise, as a mounting interest in Somalia grew in Washington from the mid-2000s the Kibaki regime, which had been intimately involved (via IGAD) in trying to resolve the crisis for many years, did not, like Uganda, present itself to donors as a willing ally in the fight against Somali extremists. Instead, it publicly and privately sniped at US approaches to the issue. Furthermore, in the same year it complained about being left out of the US-sponsored 'International Somalia Contact Group' which included several European countries and Tanzania; 'they have called everyone except us...this kind of exclusive conduct is not helpful', Kenyan assistant foreign minister Moses Wetangula lamented to one scholar in 2007.¹⁸⁵

Another striking difference between Kenyan and Ugandan engagement with donors relates to the role played by leaders in promoting their regimes abroad. Unlike Museveni, Meles and Kagame who have regularly travelled to London, Washington and other donor capitals, speaking to newspapers, TV interviewers, think tanks and NGO groups and building-up close personal relationships with senior donor officials, neither Moi nor Kibaki have made any significant effort in this regard. Moi, for example, did not speak to a US newspaper until June 1987 – nearly a decade after he became Kenya's leader – and numerous Western journalists have commented on how difficult it has been for them to secure an interview with him.¹⁸⁶ Moi has defended this secretive approach by stressing that 'I do not give interviews or press conferences. I do not like to advertise myself'.¹⁸⁷ Kibaki, too, has largely avoided speaking to foreign media and reports on his domestic press conferences (he has never held any internationally except for at the White House), even in Kenya itself, invariably emphasise the

¹⁸⁵ Whitaker (2008), pp.262-263

¹⁸⁶ Harden, *Washington Post* (12/06/87a); Kamau, *New African* (01/02/99); Keane, *Independent* (UK) (28/12/02)

¹⁸⁷ Harden, *Washington Post* (12/06/87b)

‘rare’ nature of the occasion. Similarly, while Museveni has visited both the US and UK on a nearly annual basis since 1987, Moi and Kibaki have not. Indeed, since 2002 Kibaki appears to have visited the UK twice (in 2002, as a presidential candidate and then only to seek medical treatment, and 2005) and the US only once (in 2003).¹⁸⁸ On none of these occasions, however, has his schedule involved much diversion from official political meetings.

This lack of contact between Kenya’s leaders and the international community (donors, media groups and civil society in Western states) has not only meant that Nairobi’s control over how it is perceived by donors has been limited, it has also ensured that its regimes have been unable to foster links with important officials or groups who might defend them against proposed aid cuts or criticisms. Indeed, the few personal interactions Moi and Kibaki have had with Western journalists and politicians have done little but cause further damage to their regimes’ reputations. Moi’s personal style, for example, has often jarred with donors and journalists. Always dressed in a suit, he has been described by one former envoy as ‘dignified, well-tailored, rather stiff and unbending with foreigners’.¹⁸⁹ Observers have frequently commented on his ‘unsmiling rigidity’ and contrasted him unfavourably with Museveni who ‘prefers a khaki safari suit...to a suit and tie, delivers riveting speeches...and rarely misses a chance to crack a joke’.¹⁹⁰ Moi’s international reputation has not been helped by his antagonistic personal manner in one-on-one encounters. Unlike Museveni, who has used meetings with donors and journalists to build relationships of trust and promote various

¹⁸⁸ *BBC* (05/12/02) ‘Kenya: International Relations: Visits’, FCO Website (available at <http://www.fco.gov.uk/en/travel-and-living-abroad/travel-advice-by-country/country-profile/sub-saharan-africa/kenya?profile=intRelations>; accessed 01/12/10) ; it should be noted that Kibaki has also attended the UN General Assembly Meeting in New York during his presidency but these are not officially considered ‘US visits’.

¹⁸⁹ Clay interview (2009)

¹⁹⁰ *New York Times* (29/01/95)

images of his regime, Moi has used the few occasions where he has spoken to either of these groups to complain about his treatment at the hands of Western governments, journalists or both. Even attempts by Moi to promote a new narrative about Kenya have been undermined by self-pitying protests. For example, in a 1987 interview, he briefly deflected discussion of Nairobi's human rights record by emphasising the security problems the country faced only to criticise a perceived lack of US support in this area and ask 'how would you feel? We have been taken for granted as a friend. The US is not interested in us.'¹⁹¹

Kibaki, too, has failed to make any kind of personal impact on donors or the international media. Having suffered a stroke shortly after becoming president, his health has not been robust and he has adopted what has been described as a 'laid-back' approach both to governing and to foreign relations.¹⁹² Diplomats have portrayed him as 'comatose' and lacking in any enthusiasm for building strong relationships with donor officials. Indeed, some have even noted how in meetings between the Kenyan leader and diplomats the former would 'fall asleep' and remain so until the conclusion of the gathering.¹⁹³

Kenya's leaders have therefore failed to put a 'public face' on their regimes and have shown little interest in attempting to manage how they are perceived by Western donors. Neither Moi nor Kibaki have made any effort to build personal relationships with senior donor officials (as Museveni has with Clare Short, Lynda Chalker, George W Bush and Jendayi Frazer) and these individuals' views of Kenya have consequently been influenced not by regime rhetoric (where it has existed) but by other non-Kenyan sources over which Nairobi

¹⁹¹ Harden, *Washington Post* (12/06/87)

¹⁹² Barkan (2004), p.92

¹⁹³ Anonymous interview 4 (2009)

has had little control. Where Ugandan-donor relations have frequently been described by Western personnel in terms of ‘trust’, Nairobi’s listless approach to engaging with donors has caused it to be viewed with, at best, suspicion. Though the two regimes have had much to work with, in terms of actual and potential leverage over donors, they have rarely used these resources effectively and thus instead of persuading donors that they are indispensable to them have instead allowed a perception of Kenya as unreliable, corrupt and intransigent to develop and take hold among this community. This, it is argued, is the main reason why donors have been more critical of Nairobi than of Kampala or Kigali.

Understanding *why* Kenyan governments have been unable, or unwilling, to employ these strategies, in contrast to their counterparts in Uganda, Ethiopia and Rwanda, requires a much more thorough analysis of these states’ political economies. Providing such an analysis is not possible in a work of this length and focus but it is nevertheless important to make two points which speak to this question by way of conclusion.

Firstly, since the mid-1990s, Kenyan regimes have been much less dependent on aid than those in Uganda, Ethiopia and Rwanda (see above). Consequently, the gaining and maintaining of power in Nairobi has become far more about winning the support and approval of certain ‘swing’ ethnic and regional groups-whose collective vote can alter the results of an election-than that of the international community.¹⁹⁴ Likewise, with domestic opposition (both within and outside the ruling party) having been steadily neutralised by the regimes in Rwanda and Ethiopia during the 2000s, retaining power in these countries relies more upon regimes maintaining the support of donors than of fellow Rwandans or

¹⁹⁴ The importance of such regional and ethnic dynamics in Kenyan elections is discussed in detail in Throup and Hornsby (1998) (1992 election), Rutten et al (2001) (1997 election) and Ndegwa (2003) (2002 election)

Ethiopians.¹⁹⁵ Arguably, therefore, Nairobi has simply needed donors less than Kigali, Addis Ababa and Kampala and has, as a result, felt less need to devise and employ strategies, such as image management, aimed at securing their favour.

Secondly, the very different characters of regimes in Kenya, in comparison to those in Uganda, Rwanda and Ethiopia, may also explain why Nairobi has failed to manage donor perceptions as well. Like the Ugandan government, the Meles and Kagame regimes both begun as guerrilla movements (the Tigray People's Liberation Front (TPLF) and RPF respectively), indeed, as an exile in Uganda in the 1980s, Kagame himself played a prominent role under Museveni's command in the NRA's war against the Obote government.¹⁹⁶ Furthermore, also like the NRA, the RPF and TPLF gained a strong reputation for organisational discipline, unity of purpose and ideological cohesion while fighting for power in their respective states and commentators have argued that these traits have been retained by both regimes in their style of governing.¹⁹⁷ This guerilla heritage, as explained in chapter 3, has arguably enabled these governments to foster much greater internal unity and consistency in practising diplomacy.

The Moi and Kibaki regimes, however, emerged in very different circumstances. As Mueller points out, Kenyan political parties have largely been 'non-programmatic' and have mobilised support along ethnic or regional lines rather than ideological ones.¹⁹⁸ Those seeking to exercise power in Nairobi, therefore, have needed to build and manage delicately-balanced coalitions of (often competing) parties and groups which have frequently mutated or

¹⁹⁵ Reyntjens (2006), pp.1104-1111; Aalen and Tronvoll (2009), pp.111-120; Tronvoll (2009), pp.210-212

¹⁹⁶ Ngoga (1998), p.105

¹⁹⁷ Gilkes (1999), pp.37-41; Waugh (2004), pp.147-152

¹⁹⁸ Mueller (2008), p.200

collapsed. In doing so, political leaders have often been forced to align themselves with former rivals to gain or regain influence; thus Kibaki served in Moi's government until 1988 but then stood against him in the 1992 and 1997 elections, likewise Raila Odinga was also a minister under Moi and an ally of Kibaki's National Rainbow Coalition in the 2002 election but stood against the former in the 1997 poll and the latter in that of 2007.¹⁹⁹ This 'politics of coalition-building' has been particularly important in Kenya since the abolition of the one-party state in 1991 but a number of commentators have underlined the degree to which this has been a constant feature of Kenyan politics since independence.²⁰⁰ Policy-making has therefore involved relentless compromise and, often, stalemate and this lack of regime cohesion, it is argued, has also prevented Nairobi from successfully managing its image in donor capitals.²⁰¹

Conclusion

This chapter has outlined the different ways in which donors have dealt with the governments of Kenya, Ethiopia and Rwanda since the Cold War and revealed that, despite being arguably more significant geostrategically and economically, Nairobi has been consistently treated with much less leniency than either Kigali or Addis Ababa. In trying to understand why this has been the case, the chapter has continued to stress the main argument of this thesis – that

¹⁹⁹ *ibid*

²⁰⁰ Throup and Hornsby (1998), pp.26-50; Anderson (2005), pp.548-549

²⁰¹ It should be noted that coalition-building has also been part of the Ethiopian government's political dispensation; in 1989 the TPLF joined with a number of other rebel groups representing different ethnic groups (including Oromo and Amhara) to form the Ethiopian People's Revolutionary Democratic Front (EPRDF) and this coalition has formed the country's government since 1991 (Young (1998), pp.48-49). The EPRDF has been a much more durable alliance than those formed by Moi or Kibaki owing to a highly-centralised and disciplined internal structure and the absolute dominance of the TPLF and Meles within the coalition (Gilkes (1999), pp.37-40). Indeed, the only significant internal disagreement which has afflicted the EPRDF-a 2001 dispute on the handling of relations with Eritrea-was primarily an intra-TPLF affair and resulted in the swift removal of dissenters from the party by Meles (Tronvoll (2009), pp.210-212)

donors hold back from criticising or cutting aid to aid-dependent states because they perceive them as valuable or worthy of support for various reasons. With Rwanda and Ethiopia, these donor perceptions have been heavily managed by the regimes in those countries and, just as in Uganda, donors have overlooked domestic transgressions including democratic backsliding and human rights abuses largely because they accept the narratives promoted by Kigali and Addis. Kenya's two post-Cold War leaders, Moi and Kibaki, have made little effort to influence how they are seen in Western capitals and consequently have been unable to prevent criticisms of their own failings in governance and democracy from dominating relations with donors. Successful image management, therefore, is argued to be the main reason for continued, uncritical international support for the Kagame and Meles governments while lack of interest in image management can equally explain Kenya's very different experiences with donors.

This comparative exercise places the Ugandan case in context and demonstrates that the tactics employed by Kampala for dealing with donors are part of a wider phenomenon. Other African regimes have used image management to secure agency in their international relations. The leaders of Uganda, Ethiopia and Rwanda have frequently been characterised as 'new leaders' and in many respects their strategies for engaging with donors are new. The fall of the Berlin Wall and ending of a bipolar world has forced Africa's governments to adapt and employ new approaches to retain Western support while pursuing, unchallenged, their own domestic agenda. Museveni, Meles and Kagame are pioneers in developing such new approaches and it will be interesting to see whether other African regimes follow their lead in the years to come.

Conclusion

This thesis opened by presenting a puzzle: why have donors consistently supported the Ugandan government despite its transgressions? Aid-dependent and seemingly of marginal economic and geostrategic significance, Kampala has nonetheless continuously escaped international censure for its more controversial activities where many of its African counterparts, notably Kenya, have not. An examination of the available literature on this subject raised several important questions on international perceptions and African agency which this study has sought to address. This conclusion will present the main findings of the research and explore its implications.

It is clear that Western donors have supported the Museveni regime because they see it as a useful, even indispensable, ally in Africa. They perceive of it primarily according to three major narratives: as an economic success story, an ally against terrorism and a guarantor of stability.¹ These narratives, or images, however, are not necessarily accurate representations of Kampala but have nevertheless been internalised by donors who believe that, since it fulfills these roles, Uganda should be treated more leniently than many of its neighbours in areas such as democratisation and military affairs.

In addition, a number of inter- and intra-donor disagreements have prevented the international community, on numerous occasions, from adopting a more critical approach to the regime. These divisions have come about as a result of internal donor regulations, conflicting institutional priorities within donor polities and even personal debates between policy-makers

¹ See the introduction for a discussion of the existing literature on these explanations for donor support.

(see chapter 6). Furthermore, while donor envoys have sometimes advocated more confrontational stances in their dealings with Kampala, they have rarely been backed-up in these efforts by their metropolitan superiors.

This thesis has established, nevertheless, that the Ugandan government itself has played a crucial role in bringing about both of these situations. Using strategies of varying subtlety including adopting certain policies, using Western lobbyists, engaging with Western media, academia and intelligentsia and personalising relations with senior donor officials (see chapter 3), Kampala has played a central role in creating, managing and promoting those three narratives described above in an effort to positively influence donor perceptions of Uganda and thereby secure further international support. Often certain images have been ‘targeted’ at particular individuals or institutions including the World Bank, DFID and NSC (see chapter 6) in order to exploit donor divisions. Furthermore, the governments of Rwanda and Ethiopia have also employed such ‘image management’ strategies to develop more favourable relationships with donors. Those of Moi and Kibaki of Kenya, however, have not and this, to an extent, explains why they have been treated with far less leniency by their international partners (see chapter 7).

Uganda’s success in doing so, it has been argued, has allowed it to secure a significant degree of agency with donors in what is, in economic terms, a highly asymmetrical power relationship. This reasoning, explored in chapter 1, is based on a re-consideration of how agency (‘ability to act’) can be feasibly exercised by African states. This argument stated that the structures, notably aid dependence and, in many cases, lack of resources, which constrain African governments’ ‘ability to act’ *vis-a-vis* donors are very considerable. Consequently, it

would be difficult for regimes such as Uganda's to exercise the sort of power over donors described by Dahl ('get others to do what they otherwise would not do').² A more subtle form of agency can nevertheless be carved out through the management of perceptions. Developing Lukes' idea of 'influencing [the] very wants' of a dominant state, it is possible to conceive of seemingly weak powers like Uganda using a variety of strategies to manage how donors see them ('image management') and thereby influence their policies.³ The agency secured by an African state herein is perhaps, therefore, more appropriately characterised as 'making them [donors] not do what they otherwise would do' – that is, not reducing support after political transgressions where they otherwise would. The success of Uganda's image management strategies can thus be seen not only as the main reason why donors have supported its government for so long but also as evidence that power asymmetries and structural constraints are not necessarily barriers to agency if a regime is sufficiently savvy as the work of Whitfield et al has suggested.⁴

Before considering the implications of these findings it is important to set-out some of the broader observations that can be made on two related issues : image management and the role of donor foreign policy-making structures in democracy promotion in Africa. In exploring how, in a practical sense, Uganda and some of its neighbours have attempted to employ image management strategies, a number of common features emerge regarding this phenomenon.

² Dahl (1957), pp.202-3

³ Lukes (1974), pp.23-37

⁴ Whitfield (2009b), p.329-331; Whitfield and Fraser (2009), pp.40-41; see the Introduction for a more lengthy discussion of this literature and that relating to agency

Firstly, though clearly pre-meditated in some respects, it is striking how opportunistic and reactionary many elements of these strategies have been. Chapters 4 and 5 reveal, for example, the gradual development by Kampala of its main donor ‘narratives’ and how specific issues such as 9/11 or US fears on terrorism in Somalia have been seized upon by the regime to augment and bolster existing images. Likewise, chapters 5 and 7 show how language used by the Ugandan and Rwandan regimes respectively in their image management strategies (on the LRA in the former case and on the 1994 genocide in the latter) has developed and changed over time as narratives being promoted have become more firm, clear and direct. These observations are important in that they balance potentially more conspiratorial interpretations of these governments’ external relations which argue for long-term, Machiavellian motives behind every decision.⁵

Secondly, although the ‘donors’ referred to and ‘images’ investigated in this thesis have often been described in general terms it has also been clear that, in advancing perspectives on themselves, Kampala, Kigali and Addis Ababa have been careful to target the right audiences. Aware that certain narratives are more salient to some than others, these regimes have rarely attempted to be ‘all things to all men’. In chapter 7, for example, it was shown how Meles has primarily addressed US policy-makers when portraying Ethiopia’s presence in Somalia as part of an ‘ally against terrorism’ narrative. Similarly, chapters 4 and 6 make clear how different elements of the same image (‘economic success story’) have been promoted to different donors. Thus Uganda’s enthusiasm for neo-liberal economics and the free market have been a major theme in strategies directed at US officials and business groups while aid

⁵ Onyango-Obbo, for example, takes on a variation on this debate by asking whether Museveni is a ‘foreign policy schemer’ or if he is ‘just getting by’ (Onyango-Obbo, *East African* (28/04-04/05/97))

modalities, 'ownership' and 'poverty reduction' have been stressed more with World Bank and DFID personnel. The regimes have also focused on particular communities and groups within donor countries. Thus both Kampala and Kigali have built key ties with business leaders in London and Washington in promoting themselves as economies to invest in. Likewise, the Kagame government has exerted considerable energy in influencing Western academic audiences in an effort to ensure that narratives on the genocide continue to portray the RPF in a positive manner.

The example of Kenya under both Moi and Kibaki, as detailed in chapter 7, contrasts strongly with these cases. Unlike the regimes discussed above, neither of these governments has attempted to engage donors or communities in any strategic manner when conducting foreign policy. Indeed, the one major image of Kenya promoted by both governments (that of a pro-green, ecological 'success story') has been flawed as an image management tactic since, unlike the economic, geostrategic and security narratives advanced by Kampala et al, such qualities are of secondary importance to most major donors.

Additionally, as noted in chapter 5, very few image management strategies employed by the Ugandan regime have served purely foreign policy purposes. Indeed, Museveni's reluctance to send troops to Darfur in 2008-2009, even after being asked twice by the UK prime minister to do so, demonstrates that each decision described in this thesis has been weighed-up by State House for its internal, as well as external, advantages and disadvantages. Kampala's refusal to assist the UK in 'dealing with Mugabe', in spite of frequent requests for assistance in this area from the Foreign Office and High Commission during the 2000s, also provides

evidence for this argument.⁶ Most image management decisions outlined in this thesis, therefore, have also been used for domestic purposes, often related to regime maintenance. Thus Ugandan involvement in Liberia, Iraq and Somalia has also created an opportunity for UPDF troops, a major NRM constituency, to remain active, paid and therefore content with the *status quo* in Kampala.⁷ It is perhaps not coincidental, for example, that the regime's willingness to send troops to Mogadishu came during a period when many soldiers formerly fighting in Congo had returned home and the regime feared that 'these redundant officers may find fertile ground in the opposition'.⁸ Similarly, anti-terrorist legislation and rhetoric has been used just as much to crack-down on regime opponents in the media and politics as it has to manage donor perceptions, for example in the temporary closure of the *Monitor* in 2002 or the arrests of some Bugandan protesters in 2009.⁹ The same is true, to some extent, in Rwanda where the Kagame government has used its 'genocide narrative' to close political space and persecute perceived regime critics including several opposition leaders and a former president (see chapter 7). In identifying multiple benefits to pursuing such policies, these leaders demonstrate not only their skillfulness as politicians but also how important it is for scholars to see foreign policy decisions in a wider context. Western donors remain, after all, only one of many vital sources of regime security for African governments.

Finally, it is apparent how important personalities have been not only in image management strategies but also in Ugandan-donor relations in general. Chapters 3 and 6, particularly, reveal how pivotal several key donor figures in the UK and US have been in ensuring that their respective governments take particular lines on Uganda and how often official,

⁶ Mullin (2009), pp.430-431; Cook Interview (2009)

⁷ Matsiko, *Daily Monitor* (13/03/08)

⁸ Tangri and Mwenda (2010), p.44

⁹ Oloka-Onyango (2004), p.47; Kasfir interview (2009)

diplomatic relationships with State House have been muddled by personal ties and friendship with the Ugandan leader. The same can, of course, be said of UK/US relations with Rwanda and Ethiopia and this thesis has attempted to go beyond simply noting the significance of this issue by elucidating how, in a practical sense, this has affected donor policy, for example, on democratisation in the 1990s and mid-2000s. The impact of senior officials' personal views on foreign policy in general, however, remains an area in which much further study is merited.

It should also be noted how important the personalities of African leaders have been in successfully deploying image management strategies. Chapters 3, 5 and 7 outline how frequently the personal qualities of Museveni, Kagame and Meles have been lauded by Western donors and journalists alike, in contrast to those of Moi and Kibaki, even resulting in them being categorised as 'new' or 'Renaissance' leaders in the 1990s.¹⁰ The significance of this cannot be underestimated owing to the dominance these individuals have over their countries' polity and the weakness of foreign policy-making machinery in most African capitals. When an entire national foreign policy is judged by Western donors and the media according to the personal qualities of one person this gives enormous leeway to the person in question (if they are perceived positively) in presenting and defending their actions and achievements. Museveni, Meles and Kagame have taken full advantage of this both privately and publicly in portraying their administrations.

This thesis has also attempted to understand the role of internal donor dynamics in explaining continued international support for Kampala. For reasons of clarity 'donors' have often been

¹⁰ See, for example, McCreary et al, *Time Magazine* (01/09/97); Ottaway (1999), pp.1-14; Oloka-Onyango (2004), pp.30-34

discussed as a unit but it has been emphasised throughout that they rarely ‘speak with one voice’. It is clear, for example, that many individual donors and parts of donors have been keen to take a more critical approach to the Museveni regime, notably the US embassy in 1995, Norway in 2005 and the UK Foreign Office in 2005-2006, but have been blocked by fellow donors or departments (see chapter 6). Equally, some have been more inclined to use forms of political conditionality to influence Kampala than others such as the Netherlands, Sweden and Norway since the early 2000s. It is not fully accurate, therefore, to say, as Oloka-Onyango does, that political liberalisation is not a ‘real goal of Western governments’ in Uganda.¹¹ Chapter 6 revealed that it has been a ‘real goal’ for some donors some of the time but never for all donors all of the time. A more productive approach, and that taken in this work, seeks instead to explain why these more critical elements have rarely been able to influence overall donor policy, and how the Ugandan regime has played a role in this.

To this end, chapter 6 explained how a number of factors have prevented questions of ‘internal politics’ such as democratisation and good governance being fully integrated into the policies of several major donors towards Uganda. The World Bank and IMF, for example, are forbidden, in their Articles of Agreement, from taking such issues into account in their lending programmes.¹² Furthermore, certain agendas which either downplay or fail to adequately consider ‘politics’ have come to dominate US and UK Uganda/Africa policy since the 1990s as evidenced by the growing importance of the NSC and DFID respectively in the policy-making process of these states. Bolstered by increased funding, staff and high-level influence, these institutions have been courted by Museveni and other leaders both as a means

¹¹ Oloka-Onyango (2004), p.46

¹² World Bank (1960), Article 5 Section 6

to promote regime narratives but also to alienate bodies such as the UK Foreign Office who have advocated a more critical approach to Kampala.

Chapter 6 also made clear how sophisticated and long-standing donor coordination mechanisms have been in Uganda. This has seldom, however, resulted in more united donor approaches being taken on issues such as democratisation when events have made this most necessary. In 2005-6, for example, those donors who cut aid for political reasons did so almost entirely outside of official coordinating structures over a long period, rather than simultaneously as a group as they had in Kenya in 1991 or Malawi in 1992.¹³ This is not only because other major donors opposed such behavior (notably the US and Denmark) but also because Kampala has been extremely dexterous in undermining the influence of these groups. A variety of internal and external factors, therefore, have prevented donors from joining together at any point since the early 1990s to force changes upon the regime.

A number of implications arise from the findings of this study for political science scholars, particularly those in IR, international political economy, development studies and African studies. Firstly, it has been demonstrated that perceptions are important in international relations. They not only determine, to a considerable extent, how and why one state behaves a certain way towards another but also how they are liable be managed and manipulated by numerous actors to secure particular foreign policy ends. Contestable, malleable and easily-influenced, perceptions are at the heart of international diplomacy and merit more consideration in studies of foreign policy.

¹³ Stokke (1995), pp.47-56

In addition, it has been established that agency in the international system is fluidic, changeable and securable in multiple contexts. Governments can rely upon the support of other states for their own survival but still, in certain contexts, exercise agency in relations with those states. Aid dependence does not preclude agency and scholars should be as imaginative as possible when exploring the use of power on the global stage.

The findings of this thesis also suggest a number of implications for donor countries in their dealings with Uganda and other governments of a similar disposition. The question of how to prevent another ‘Museveni scenario’ is particularly salient in 2011 since this is the year when, most likely, a new African leader, government and state will be introduced, in the form of Southern Sudan, for the first time since 1993. Coupled with the probable emergence of new, younger leaders in Kenya and Zimbabwe in the next few years, donors may again be tempted to look towards charismatic, dynamic rulers in dealing with Africa. With this in mind a number of conclusions drawn from this study are of particular relevance. Firstly, the fungible nature of GBS along with the symbolic show of donor support it implies renders this aid modality extremely valuable to any African regime. With Uganda, Rwanda and Ethiopia, most donors moved quickly to provide their aid in this form without fully considering the political and practical implications of doing so beforehand. In future, donors may decide to exercise more caution when deciding upon aid modalities to avoid bolstering governments whose democratic credentials and intentions are unclear.

In addition, and for different reasons, the World Bank and UK government have failed to integrate thorough and detailed political analysis into planning their aid programmes in Uganda and elsewhere. This has resulted in questions of democratisation and human rights

being sidelined in several cases. Though the Bank is constitutionally prevented from acting in an overtly political manner, chapter 6 shows that its Articles of Agreement provide it with more latitude in this area than some officials have suggested, particularly with regard to issues such as election financing. Likewise, DFID's decision to expand its political research team since 2006 (see chapter 6) confirms this study's contention that work of this kind is not only important for informing aid policy but also that politics and development are not anathema to one another. Having ably fended off threats to its independence since 1997, DFID might now consider incorporating other sources of 'political' knowledge into its policy-making processes, particularly those available elsewhere in Whitehall.

Finally, while keeping in mind the political realities of many African polities it is clear that donors nevertheless create a 'self-fulfilling prophecy', as one European diplomat put it, when they deal with one leader as if he were his country's entire foreign policy machinery.¹⁴ Leaders like Museveni convince themselves that they alone are competent enough to rule their nations¹⁵, to the detriment of democracy and institution-building, and donors who turn to State House for every issue of bilateral concern inadvertently contribute to the promotion of this image. This thesis has revealed how problematic the personalisation of diplomacy can be for the promotion of democracy in Africa and how easily it can be manipulated for political ends. It is clear, then, that donors should invest as much time in developing relationships with those outside presidential palaces as they do with those inside.

¹⁴ Anonymous interview 6 (2009)

¹⁵ The Ugandan leader has expressed this viewpoint both publicly and privately on a number of occasions, most recently in May 2009 where he reportedly told a group of his MPs that 'I first have to develop faith in an alternative leadership before I can leave [the presidency]...at the moment I see nobody [who could replace me]' (Kiggundu, *Weekly Observer* (18/05/09))

A number of areas for further study have been identified during this exploration of image management, many of which have already been referred to, including the role of personalities in diplomacy. There is clearly, nonetheless, much work still to do on assessing how donors come to form their views of foreign governments and where their main sources of ‘knowledge’ on it are drawn from. A wider study of this subject, which would need to consider the role played by lobbying firms, businesses, foreign states, media sources, academics and others in a more systematic manner, would perhaps be most effective if focused on particular donor departments in order to compare and contrast how information is gathered and processed on a number of different states. In relation to ‘international assistance’, this thesis has also not looked in detail at how donor governments encourage Western companies to invest in African states and this is therefore a form of ‘international support’ which merits further study.

It would also be extremely illuminating to investigate the extent to which use of image management strategies has been linked to a country’s dependence on aid. It is perhaps telling, for example, that of the four African regimes discussed in this study the two which have made most use of such tactics – Uganda and Rwanda – have also been the most consistently dependent on aid (see **Figure 2** in chapter 7). Likewise, the government which has made the least effort in this area – Kenya - has also relied the least on international support to remain in power.

Indeed, since 2008 the Museveni regime itself has begun to show signs of abandoning image management as the discovery of oil has signaled a likely end to its reliance on aid in the future. January 2010, for example, was the first month for over two decades when Kampala

had no registered lobbyist in Washington and, as of January 2011, there is little sign of this situation being altered.¹⁶ Furthermore, between 2008-2010 the regime has pursued a number of policies domestically and internationally which have undermined its international image including failing to support US policy on Burma at the UN in 2008 and 2009, inviting Iranian president Mahmood Ahmadinejad to visit Uganda in April 2010 despite his controversial reputation in donor capitals and refusing to clarify its position on the 2009 Anti-Homosexuality Bill (see chapter 2) for some time despite the instant outrage expressed by Western leaders.¹⁷

Whether this represents a move by Kampala away from the policies described throughout this thesis remains to be seen. It is clear, however, that becoming a producer of oil will dramatically change Uganda's place in the international system and how it is viewed by donors. This may lead to the dissemination of new 'images' by State House and the growing relevance of non-Western states in Ugandan foreign policy. It may also encourage current donors to re-evaluate once more their relationship with Kampala and the place of democracy promotion in that relationship. Whatever the future holds, Uganda's international relations will continue to pose substantial questions and problems for those interested in Africa, agency and international relations.

¹⁶ Aubrey Hruby, Managing Director of TWG, has confirmed that 'we ended our work for Uganda in January of 2010' (personal communication 20/12/10).

¹⁷ Izama, *Daily Monitor* (30/11/10)

Bibliography

This thesis makes use of a wide range of sources some of which are unpublished or only available online. In the latter case, web addresses have been provided below. Where possible, web addresses have also been provided for sources also available in print.

Reflecting the array of sources consulted in this thesis, the bibliography is organised according to the following eight main headings:

1. **Official sources** (both donor and Ugandan)
2. **Media sources**
3. **Freedom of Information (FOI) sources**
4. **Speeches by, and interviews with, Museveni, Kagame and Meles**
5. **Lobbyist sources**
6. **Websites consulted**
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DFID refused to release this report in its entirety and blocked out one section on p.32 of the document and one on p.34. I was able to gain access to an uncensored copy of the report, however, courtesy of an interviewee (who has requested complete anonymity in this thesis) and thus references to p.32 and p.34 in footnotes refer to text in the uncensored report.

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Appendix: List of Interviews

'On the record' interviews:

The following individuals consented at the time of interview, or in subsequent correspondence, to being identified by name in connection to citations attributed to them in the thesis.

Adams, James: Washington DC (03/11/09)

Country Director for Tanzania and Uganda, World Bank (1995-2002).

Atkinson, Ronald: Kampala (11/02/10)

Associate Professor, Department of History, University of South Carolina. Northern Uganda specialist.

Barkan, Joel: Washington DC (27/10/09)

Emeritus Professor, Department of Political Science, University of Iowa. Democratisation and East Africa specialist. Former Senior Consultant on Governance, Public Sector Reform Unit, Africa Region, World Bank and Governance Adviser, East and Southern Africa, USAID (1992-1994).

Blake, Bob: Washington DC (13/11/09)

Country Manager for Uganda, World Bank (1999-2003). Country Economist for Uganda, World Bank (1997-2003).

Brennan, Martin: by telephone (12/11/09)

US Ambassador to Uganda (1999-2002)

Butime, Tom: Kampala (12/02/10)

Ugandan State Minister for Karamoja Affairs (2006). State Minister for Communications (2005-2006). Acting Foreign Minister (2004-2005). State Minister for International Cooperation (2001-2005). State Minister for Refugees and Disaster Preparedness (2001). Minister of Internal Affairs (1996-2001).

Clay, Sir Edward: London (20/07/09)

UK High Commissioner to Kenya (2001-2005). High Commissioner to Uganda (1993-1997).

Cohen, Herman: Washington DC (04/11/09)

President, Cohen and Woods International. US Assistant Secretary of State for African Affairs (1989-1993). Senior Director for African Affairs, National Security Council (1987-1989).

Cook, Michael: East Sussex (25/06/09)

Non-executive Chairman, Orient Bank, Uganda. UK High Commissioner to Uganda (1997-2000).

Crocker, Chester: Washington DC (11/11/09)

James R Schlesinger Professor of Strategic Studies, Edmund A Walsh School of Foreign Service, Georgetown University. US Assistant Secretary of State for African Affairs (1981-1989).

Cullimore, Charles: London (08/10/08)

UK High Commissioner to Uganda (1989-1993).

Fish, Dave: London (30/03/09)

Director, East and Central Africa, DFID.

Frazer, Jendayi: Washington DC (05/11/09)

Strategic Adviser, The Whitaker Group. US Assistant Secretary of State for African Affairs (2005-2009). US Ambassador to South Africa (2003-2004). Senior Director for African Affairs, National Security Council (2001-2004).

Grimes, Jason: Kampala (22/05/09)

Political Officer, UK High Commission, Kampala (since 2007)

Houdek, Robert: Washington DC (02/11/09)

National Intelligence Officer for Africa, US National Intelligence Council (1997-2006). Ambassador to Eritrea (1993-1996). Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for African Affairs (1991-1993). Ambassador to Ethiopia (1989-1991). Ambassador to Uganda (1985-1989).

Hruby, Aubrey: Washington DC (12/11/09)

Managing Director, The Whitaker Group (since 2005).

Itakura, Kotoha: Kampala (18/05/09)

Third Secretary, Embassy of Japan, Kampala (2007-2009).

Kansteiner, Walter: Washington DC (10/11/09)

Founding Principal Member, Scowcroft Group. US Assistant Secretary of State for African Affairs (2001-2003). Director for African Affairs, National Security Council (1991-1992).

Kasfir, Nelson: by telephone (14/11/09)

Professor of Government, Department of Government, Dartmouth University. Uganda specialist.

Kayunga, Simba Sallie: Kampala (15/05/09)

Head, Department of Political Science, Makerere University.

Lancaster, Carol: Washington DC (16/11/09)

Dean and Professor of Politics, Edmund A Walsh School of Foreign Service, Georgetown University. Deputy Administrator, USAID (1993-1996).

Manby, Bronwen: London (12/08/09)

Senior Adviser, AfriMAP. Deputy Director, Africa Division and other positions at Human Rights Watch (1994-2004).

Muganda Guma, Patrick: Kampala (26/05/09)

Foreign Service Officer and Spokesperson, Ugandan Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

Mukwaya, Aaron: Kampala (20/05/09)

Senior Lecturer, Department of Political Science, Makerere University.

Mullin, Chris: London (14/10/09)

UK Minister of State (for Africa), FCO (2003-2005). Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State, DFID (2001).

Mwenda, Andrew: Kampala (27/05/09)

Founder and Editor, *The Independent* (Uganda). Political Editor and other positions, *Daily Monitor* (1994-2007).

Osborn, Simon: Kampala (09/02/10)

Component Manager, Deepening Democracy Programme, Kampala. Former consultant for development programmes in Uganda, Ethiopia and Kenya in the 1990s and 2000s.

Poffenberger, Michael: Washington DC (04/11/09)

Executive Director, *Resolve Uganda* (since 2005).

Porteous, Tom: London (01/05/09)

Director, Human Rights Watch (London office) (since 2003). Conflict management adviser, FCO (2001-2003).

Short, Clare: London (27/11/08)

UK Secretary of State for International Development (1997-2003).

Ssentongo, Charles: Washington DC (06/11/09)

Deputy Head of Mission, Embassy of Uganda, USA (since 2006).

Tabaire, Bernard: Kampala (16/05/09)

Consultant. Former Deputy Editor, *Daily Monitor*

Anonymous interviews:

As noted in the introduction, a number of interviewees did not wish to be identified and thus each one of these interviews (which in some cases includes more than one subject) has been assigned a number (eg 'Anonymous Interview 1') so that it may be identified. The date and location of each interview, along with a small amount of biographical information about each interviewee, is provided below. In one case it was not possible to disclose the location of an interview since this would have compromised the anonymity of the interviewee.

Interview 1: London (12/02/09)

A former Commonwealth Secretariat official and journalist with many decades' involvement with and experience of Uganda and Africa in general.

Interview 2: London (19/03/09)

A junior UK government official with several years' experience in UK policy-making on Africa, including Uganda.

Interview 3: London (15/04/09)

Second interview with the same subject as Interview 1 (see above).

Interview 4: London (05/05/09)

A senior UK government official involved in UK-Africa diplomacy for many decades, both in London and Africa.

Interview 5: Kampala (14/05/09)

A Nordic diplomat in Uganda in the late 2000s.

Interview 6: Kampala (19/05/09)

A Nordic diplomat in Uganda in the late 2000s.

Interview 7: Kampala (20/05/09)

A European diplomat in Kampala in the late 2000s

Interview 8: Kampala (27/05/09)

A Ugandan MP (NRM) with several years' experience working with the regime on foreign policy issues.

Interview 9: Kampala (28/05/09)

Two US officials in Uganda in the late 2000s.

Interview 10: Kampala(01/06/09)

This interviewee was happy to be cited only as a 'Western diplomat'. He has been based in Uganda during the late 2000s but has previously served in a number of missions in other African states.

Interview 11: London (19/08/09)

A retired UK diplomat who was posted to Uganda, during the 1990s and also held several mid-level positions at the FCO.

Interview 12: by telephone (03/09/09)

This interviewee wished to be cited as 'a former senior DFID civil servant'.

Interview 13: London (23/09/09)

A DFID official with several decades' experience working on East Africa policy particularly.

Interview 14: London (24/09/09)

A retired DFID civil servant who also worked in the FCO's Overseas Development Administration (ODA) for a number of decades prior to 1997.

Interview 15: London (25/09/09)

A UK government official now of some seniority who was based in Kampala during the 1990s.

Interview 16: London (03/10/09)

A retired UK diplomat, based in Kampala during the 2000s.

Interview 17: London (16/10/09)

A senior UK civil servant based in the ODA during the 1990s.

Interview 18: Washington DC (22/10/09)

A US official with considerable experience in US-African diplomacy, he worked on US relations with East Africa during the Clinton administration.

Interview 19: Washington DC (28/10/09)

A US diplomat based in Kampala during the 2000s.

Interview 20: Washington DC (29/10/09)

This interviewee wished to be cited as a 'Senate staffer on the Senate subcommittee on Africa'.

Interview 21: Location not disclosed (30/10/09)

A senior Ugandan politician (NRM) who has served in a number of high-profile government positions in both the domestic and foreign policy spheres.

Interview 22: Washington DC (10/11/09)

A US diplomat based in Kampala during the 1990s, he also held several mid-level positions in the State Department.

Interview 23: Washington DC (13/11/09)

This interviewee wished to be cited as a 'World Bank employee'.

Interview 24: Washington DC (13/11/09)

A US diplomat based in Kampala during the 1990s.

Interview 25: by telephone (17/11/09)

This interviewee wished to be cited as a 'US diplomatic observer' of events in Uganda during the 2000s.

Interview 26: Washington DC (17/11/09)

A retired US diplomat and former ambassador to several African states, he also attained considerable seniority at the State Department.

Interview 27: Washington DC (18/11/09)

Two subjects were interviewed on this occasion. The first, who dominated the discussion, wished to be identified as a 'senior US official' and has held a number of diplomatic positions in Africa and in Washington. The second was a mid-level official with some experience of US-Ugandan relations.

Interview 28: Washington (19/11/09)

This interviewee wished to be cited as a former 'White House official' during the latter years of the (George W) Bush administration.

Interview 29: London (30/11/09)

A DFID official with many decades' experience of working on development policy both inside and outside of government.

Interview 30: Kampala (09/02/10)

A donor official posted to Uganda at the end of the 2000s.

Interview 31: by telephone (17/02/10)

A US official who has been involved in US-Africa policy for over two decades.

Interview 32: by telephone (09/06/10)

A former senior UK official based in the FCO.

Interviewed but not cited:

A number of interviews carried out for the thesis were ultimately not cited in any form in the text although many were useful as background. These interviewees, who all consented at the time of interview to having their names listed in this appendix, are listed below.

Burnett, Maria: Kampala (11/02/10)

Uganda Researcher, Human Rights Watch (since 2007).

Chaka, Malik: Washington DC (09/11/09)

Director, Threshold Programs (Africa), Millennium Challenge Corporation.

Chalker, Lynda (Baroness Chalker of Wallasey): London (21/12/09)

Chairman, Africa Matters Ltd. UK Minister of State for Overseas Aid (1989-1997) and Africa (1986-1997), FCO.

Cohen, Jonathan: by telephone (09/11/09)

Director, Law and Health Initiative, Open Society Institute (since 2006). HIV/AIDS and Human Rights Program, Human Rights Watch (2002-2006).

Godfrey, Asiimwe: Kampala (09/02/10)
Head, Department of History, Makerere University.

Kamuntu, Ephraim: Kampala (21/05/09)
Ugandan State Minister for Planning (since 2009). State Minister for Industry (2006-2009).

Kanyagonya, Elizabeth: Kampala (13/05/09)
Commonwealth Unit, Ugandan Ministry of Foreign Affairs (since 2006). Private Secretary to the President for Literary Affairs (1988-2001).

Kiwanuka, Achilles: Kampala (28/05/09)
Press Attaché, Embassy of France, Kampala (since 2005).

Ogwol, Cecilia: Kampala (27/05/09)
Ugandan MP (Independent; FDC, from 2010). Former Secretary-General, Uganda People's Congress.

Oloka-Onyango, Joseph: Kampala (01/06/09)
Professor of Law and Director, Human Rights and Peace Centre, Makerere University.

Omach, Paul: Kampala (21/05/09)
Senior Lecturer, Department of Political Science, Makerere University.

Ottaway, Marina: Washington DC (29/10/09)
Senior Associate, Democracy and Rule of Law Project, Carnegie Endowment for International Peace. Democratisation specialist.