

STUDY PACK 21

AFRICAN NATION STATES

“A serious study of Africa’s interminable and innumerable crises reveals that they all share a similar evolution. Each crisis begins when an “educated” buffoon, civilian or military, assumes power through an election or a coup d’état. He then proceeds to entrench himself in office by amassing power and surreptitiously debauching all key government institutions: the military, the civil service, the judiciary, and the banking system. With all powers in his hands, he transforms the state into his personal property – to benefit himself, his cronies, and tribesmen, who all then proceed to plunder the treasury. All other who do not belong to this privileged class are excluded, as the politics of exclusion is practiced.

The tyrant employs a variety of tactics to decimate opposition to his rule: co-optation, bribery, infiltration, intimidation, and “divide and conquer.” Opposition leaders compound their weakness by their constant bickering. Out of frustration, a rebel group emerges from the excluded class and mounts a guerrilla campaign to oust the despot and his cohorts from power or to secede, as in the Biafran secession in 1967. In the course of the insurgency, the guerrilla movement splits into several factions, often along tribal lines. If the campaign to overthrow the regime is unsuccessful, the war drags on for years, even decades, as in Angola, Mozambique, and Sudan. If the head of state is ousted or killed, a power vacuum emerges and factional leaders battle ferociously to fill the void, as in Somalia and Liberia.

Chaos and carnage ensue. Infrastructure is destroyed. Food production and delivery are disrupted. Thousands are dislocated and flee, becoming internal refugees and placing severe strains on the social systems of the resident population. Food supplies run out. Starvation looms.

The Western media bombards the international community with horrific pictures of rail-thin famine victims. Unable to bear the horror, the international community is stirred to mount eleventh-hour humanitarian rescue missions. Food, tents, blankets, portable toilets, high protein biscuits, and other relief supplies are airlifted to the refugees.

Factional leaders, who initially welcomed the humanitarian mission to feed refugees, turn against the mission and refuse to cooperate with it because its presence accords some legitimacy and recognition to the hated regime. Factional leaders thus demand that relief organizations deal with them and not the regime. The demands soon turn into extortion. At some point, relief supplies are attacked and aid workers are taken hostage or killed. The mission loses public support and is terminated; relief workers are pulled out and the starving refugees are left to fend for themselves. That is, until another African country blows up and the whole macabre ritual is repeated. Nothing – absolutely nothing, it seems – has been learned.”

~ George Ayettey, *Africa in Chaos*, p. 23-24 ~

I. PRE-COLONIAL AFRICA

- A. Before European colonization, Africa was divided among _____ Most of these were organized into kingdoms, society was based upon agriculture and warfare between tribes was constant. _____ practiced slavery.
- B. The potential for slave trade attracted European attention in the Eighteenth Century. Most tribes were willing to _____ for European goods. These slaves could then be sold in European countries or _____.

II. THE AFRICAN CONTINENT ATTRACTS EUROPEAN COLONIZATION

- A. As European traders became more familiar with Africa, they became more and more aware of _____ this continent. This led to European trading posts, growing European influence and eventual colonization.
- B. In the Nineteenth Century, almost all of Africa came under European control. This was the last wave of colonization by European nations. By 1909, only _____ existed in Africa: Egypt and Ethiopia (which were never colonized) Liberia (established by the United States) and the Union of South Africa (established by Great Britain).
- C. Britain, France, Holland, Germany, Portugal, Spain, Italy and Belgium all colonized parts of Africa.

III. THE ADVANTAGES OF EUROPEAN COLONIZATION

- A. _____ and _____.
- B. Freedom and _____ replaced tribal living.
- C. _____, at least partially, _____.
- D. The spread of Christianity.
- E. The spread of technology.
- F. The end of cannibalism.
- G. The influence of modern medieval practices and hygiene.
- H. The development of _____.

IV. THE DISADVANTAGES OF EUROPEAN COLONIZATIONS

- A. Mercantilism – the Colonies were administered for the perceived good of the mother country.
- B. Over a period of time, colonial administrators became more and more corrupt. There were _____ to prevent or deal with corruption.
- C. When a group of people became ready for self-government, there were no options available to them.

V. AFRICAN NATURAL RESOURCES

“There is not another continent blessed with such abundance and diversity.”
~~ Ayittey, *Africa in Chaos*, p.6~~

- A. Africa possesses 30% of the world’s uranium.
- B. Africa possesses 40% of the world’s potential hydro-electric power.
- C. Africa possesses 50% of the world’s gold.
- D. Africa possesses 90% of the world’s cobalt.
- E. Africa possesses 40% of the world’s platinum.
- F. Africa possesses 75% of the world’s coal.
- G. Africa possesses 20 % of the world’s petroleum.
- H. Africa has many _____ of good farmland.

VI. THE END OF SLAVERY

“The west is not unique in having slavery but _____.”
~ Dinesh D’Souza, *What’s So Great about America*, p.55~

- A. In the 1830’s, Britain abolished the slave trade (under the influence of Christianity) and began to use its navy to try and _____.
- B. The United States abolished slavery in 1862.
- C. In 1889, the _____ called upon all European nations to end slavery upon the European continent and throughout all their world-wide colonies. This led to _____.

VII. NATIONALISM

- A. Rise of Nationalism

During the 1950’s and 1960’s, nationalist groups became common throughout Africa. These movements wanted to end European colonization and become independent nations. Ancient tribal rivalries, local socialism, and Russian and Cuban communist imperialism soon became part of these movements. The abuses and corruption of colonial administrations were highlighted to arouse opposition. Some nationalist movements were peaceful, others very violent.

- B. European Multi-Culturalism

It became common in Europe to denigrate the continents past Christian influence and to declare _____. There was a rush to turn colonies into independent nations. Many of these regions became independent countries without being ready for the challenge. The Europeans thought that _____. They were wrong.

- C. African Independence

By 1990, Africa consisted of 54 independent countries. There were four main racial groups, 2,000 ethnic communities and over 700,000,000 people.

VIII. AFRICAN CHAOS

- A. The Failure of African Socialism

Before colonization, most African tribes practiced limited economic freedom. As new nations were established, both European and African socialists saw an opportunity to establish socialist states. _____ just as it does everywhere. People who were looking forward to economic abundance as a result of the end of colonialism, soon found themselves in deep poverty as the result of socialism. Their socialist leader, living in great luxury, told them to work harder.

B. Violence and Revolutions

Soon revolutions and tribal violence became common in Africa. “Strongmen” dictators seized control. In 1990, only _____ of the 54 African countries were democracies.

C. The Spread of Democracy

During the 1990’s and early in the twenty-first century, several African nations turned to democracy and a longing for political freedom is clearly on the rise throughout the continent.

D. The Threat of Islam

Islamic rebel groups are seizing control of more and more territories in Africa. Islamic fundamentalism is quickly becoming Africa’s greatest problem.