

Center for International Policy

Lobbying in the U.S. by Countries in Africa: An Overview



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About the Center for International Policy

The Center for International Policy (CIP) is an independent nonprofit center for research, public education, and advocacy on U.S. foreign policy. CIP works to make a peaceful, just, and sustainable world the central pursuit of U.S. foreign policy. CIP was founded in 1975 in the wake of the Vietnam War by former diplomats and peace activists who sought to reorient U.S. foreign policy to advance international cooperation as the primary vehicle for solving global challenges and promoting human rights. Today, we bring diverse voices to bear on key foreign policy decisions and make the evidence-based case for why and how the United States must redefine the concept of national security in the 21st century.

Cover photo is of U.S. Army Africa commander aserma Ederle as part of a Command Sponsored Visit coordinated by U.S. Army Africa. Photo via Sgt. Lance Pounds/DVIDS.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Extensive media and public policy attention has been devoted to the legal and illegal influence operations conducted by foreign governments in America. Despite this, scant attention has been devoted to the extensive lobbying activities done on behalf of countries in Africa. To remedy this deficiency in our understanding of the myriad ways in which this influence seeks to alter U.S. foreign policy, the Center for International Policy analyzed Foreign Agents Registration Act (FARA) filings from all countries in Africa from 2016 to 2020. From this analysis, we found:

- From 2016 to 2020, firms registered under FARA received nearly \$161 million from African government and non-governmental sources;
- Spending by African countries peaked at \$43 million in 2019, before dropping appreciably to \$27 million in 2020 during the coronavirus pandemic;
- More than two-thirds, \$114 million, of all FARA spending by countries in Africa came from just the top five spending countries: Liberia, Morocco, South Africa, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, and Egypt.
- Lobbying spending by countries in Africa appears correlated with U.S. assistance--development, military, and pandemic response--to countries in Africa, posing an “inequality trap” where the nations most in need of assistance can’t afford to lobby for it.

The report, additionally, provides spotlights on the top ten biggest spenders on foreign lobbying during this time period. And, finally, the conclusion discusses the implications of this research for U.S. foreign policy and provides recommendations for future research.

INTRODUCTION

Since Russian interference in the 2016 elections, stories of illicit foreign influence operations in the U.S. have become commonplace. Chinese, Iranian, and North Korean influence operations have been well-documented, and even supposed “friends” of the U.S., like the United Arab Emirates, have repeatedly been caught covertly meddling in American politics.

While these stories of illicit influence operations have garnered front-page headlines, the legal foreign influence industry in America has been thriving. Every year foreign governments, political parties, and foreign organizations or individuals spend nearly half a billion dollars on lobbying, public relations, and other firms registered under the U.S. Foreign Agents Registration Act (FARA). While imperfect, FARA provides an extraordinary amount of transparency and insights about how foreign powers are wielding influence in America. This has led to extensive analyses of the influence operations of countries around the world.



Military officers from 42 nations break into small groups during Africa Endeavor, 2019. Photo via Petty Officer 2nd Class Eric Coffey/DVIDS.

Despite this, little attention is given to lobbying done on behalf of countries in Africa.

This is a noteworthy omission from the small, but growing, field of research investigating foreign influence operations in America for a variety of reasons. First, a number of extraordinarily tumultuous events that unfolded in Africa were all preceded or followed by extensive influence campaigns in the U.S. For example, according to FARA records, Sudan’s lobbying spending increased to \$5 million after the overthrow of former President Omar Al-Bashir in 2019 following his nearly 30-year reign in office. Similarly, Kenya’s U.S. lobbying spending

increased in 2019 and 2020 as negotiations on a new free trade agreement began with the Trump administration. Libya's lobbying spending skyrocketed in 2019 as the U.S.-backed Government of National Accord (GNA) continued its fight against the Libyan National Army (LNA) forces.



President Omar Al-Bashir at the 12th African Union Summit in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. Photo via Combined Joint Task Force - Horn of Africa/DVIDS.

Second, lobbying by countries in Africa is particularly remarkable because, in many cases, regimes who provide few resources to their citizens and are mired in debt are devoting millions of dollars to garnering influence in the U.S. Thus, it's important to understand whether these funds are being squandered by autocratic regimes or used to good effect and yielding positive benefits for the citizens of these countries. This will, hopefully, serve to explain why low- and middle-income developing countries are dedicating this much money to lobbying in the U.S. rather than investing in infrastructure, social welfare, healthcare, and other important resources back at home.

This report seeks to fill these voids in our understanding by providing an overview of African countries' lobbying in America. Our hope is that this research will be both informative and provocative. Above all, we hope that this report will provide policymakers, the media, and the general public in both the U.S. and Africa with a better understanding of what countries in Africa are doing to garner influence in the U.S. In addition to the what and how of these influence efforts, we also hope this report will provoke further discussions about why these countries are seeking influence in America. Are they working to prop up a dictator? Get the U.S. to turn a blind eye to human rights abuses? Seeking U.S. economic or military assistance?

In hopes of answering these and many more questions, the remainder of this report will proceed in three parts. The first section provides an analysis of all the spending on FARA registered firms by all the countries in Africa in the last five years. The second section provides country “snapshots” that provide more in-depth analyses of the ten highest-spending African nations. Finally, the report concludes with a brief discussion of the current state of lobbying on behalf of countries in Africa, as well as recommendations for further research and policy reforms to increase the transparency of these influence operations.

THE TOP SPENDERS ON LOBBYING IN THE U.S.

From 2016 to 2020, firms registered under FARA received nearly \$161 million from African government and non-governmental sources.¹ Of this total, the vast majority—\$117 million—came directly from governments in Africa. From 2016 to 2019, FARA spending by countries in Africa increased nearly 75 percent, from \$25 million in 2016 to \$43 million in 2019. In 2020, spending by foreign principals in Africa plummeted to just \$27 million, reflecting an industry-wide reduction in spending on lobbying and influence operations due to Covid-19.

Within these totals for FARA spending by all countries in Africa, there are considerable inequalities in FARA spending across countries. Table 1, below, provides a list of the total amount of FARA spending from 2016-2020 by all the countries in Africa.

Several things are noteworthy about Table 1. First, more than a quarter of all reported FARA spending from foreign principals in Africa came from just one country: Liberia. The vast majority of Liberia’s reported FARA spending was from the Liberian government and, as discussed later in this report, was primarily focused on the creation of a Liberia Congressional Caucus. The Friedlander Group was one of the main lobbying firms working toward this, collaborating mostly with the Liberian Embassy and focusing their efforts heavily on Members of Congress like Representative Karen Bass (D-CA), who is the leading Democrat and Chair of the House Foreign Affairs Subcommittee on Africa, Global Health, and Global Human Rights. MWW was another FARA registered firm working closely with Liberia, but instead of the U.S. Congress, the firm was focused on helping Alexander Cummings run an ultimately unsuccessful campaign for president of Liberia with the Alternative National Congress (ANC) party.²

Up North in Africa, Morocco was primarily focused on lobbying for an increase in tourism

1. Unless otherwise noted, all figures presented in this section are derived from Center for International Policy analyses of FARA spending data compiled by OpenSecrets. This data can be found at OpenSecrets’ Foreign Lobby Watch at: <https://www.opensecrets.org/fara>

2. MWW Group LL, “Exhibit A to Registration Statement,” U.S. Department of Justice, September 30, 2016, <https://efile.fara.gov/docs/6381-Exhibit-AB-20160930-1.pdf>

through public relations campaigns. The Moroccan Embassy employed Third Circle, run by Richard Smotkin, to advise Embassy officials about the possibility of attracting film industry representatives to utilize more locations and sights in Morocco. Perhaps more interestingly, in 2018, Third Circle facilitated a meeting between the Moroccan ambassador to the UAE, Princess Lalla Joumala Alaoui, and the former head of the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, Scott Pruitt, who happened to be friends with Smotkin. This led to an official visit to Rabat by Pruitt, costing about \$100,000, which wasn't officially declared until after the trip, and was later discovered to be the result of a \$40,000 contract to "promote the country as a film and world-class golf destination."³



The Embassy of Morocco in Washington, D.C. Photo via NCinDC/Flirck.

South Africa spent over \$14 million on FARA registered firms between 2016 and 2020. Like Morocco, South Africa was also more focused on tourism and media networking, working with firm IPG DXTRA, to continue talking about South African Tourism during the Cape Town water crisis. They helped organize numerous meetings between prominent media companies and the CEOs of large South Africa tourism companies. The company Brand South Africa also registered under FARA for work to convene a luncheon with Foreign Policy in 2018 talking about AI, technology, and economic development.⁴

In Central Africa, the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) worked closely with the firm Dickens and Madson in an "attempt to reduce or eliminate the influence of former President

3. Fahd Iraqi, "US-Morocco: Rabat plays the Washington DC influence game," The Africa Report, November 15, 2019, <https://www.theafricareport.com/20108/us-morocco-rabat-plays-the-washington-dc-influence-game/>

4. Brand South Africa, "Registration Statement," U.S. Department of Justice, March 21, 2016, <https://efile.fara.gov/docs/6342-Registration-Statement-20160321-1.pdf>.

Joseph Kabila.”⁵ The Government of the Congo also hired Baker & McKenzie to help build multilateral relations with the International Monetary Fund.⁶ DRC owes over \$685.3 million in outstanding loans to the IMF as of September 2021.⁷

Egypt’s influence operations have focused mostly on building up a positive relationship with the United States, both through public relations and personal relationship building. The Government of Egypt hired APCO Worldwide to run an extensive communications campaign including digital advertisements and website services to promote its economy, society, and culture in the U.S.



Secretary of the Navy (SECNAV) Ray Mabus meets with Lt. Gen. Sedky Subhi, Egyptian minister of defense. Photo via U.S. Navy/DVIDS.

THE LOBBYING INEQUALITY TRAP

Second, beyond Liberia, Table 1 reveals that the vast majority of FARA spending from African nations was made by foreign principals in just a handful of countries. Specifically, just the top five highest-spending countries—Liberia, Morocco, South Africa, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, and Egypt—accounted for \$114 million dollars of FARA spending, more than two-thirds of spending by all of Africa.

5. Dickens & Madson Canada Inc, “Exhibit A to Registration Statement,” U.S. Department of Justice, July 24, 2018, <https://efile.fara.gov/docs/6200-Exhibit-AB-20180724-7.pdf>.

6. Baker & McKenzie, “Registration Statement,” U.S. Department of Justice, May 8, 2020, <https://efile.fara.gov/docs/6821-Registration-Statement-20200508-1.pdf>.

7. International Monetary Fund, “Democratic Republic of the Congo - At a Glance”, September 30, 2021, <https://www.imf.org/en/Countries/COD>.

On the other end of this spectrum were 19 of the 54 African states which had absolutely zero FARA spending from 2016-2020. This lobbying inequality between richer and impoverished African nations appears to have a significant impact on U.S. relations with countries in Africa. South Africa, Egypt, and Morocco for example are three of the largest economies in Africa, and DRC is one of the most resource-rich nations on the continent.

African economic inequalities can lead to lobbying inequalities, and countries unable to lobby are then less likely to receive U.S. financial aid than their counterparts that are lobbying for it. This becomes apparent when comparing top FARA spending countries with the states that could not afford to lobby. For example, the highest spending FARA country, Liberia, received \$167,407,669 of disbursed funds in U.S. foreign assistance in 2019.⁸ In stunning contrast, Sierra Leone, which spent \$0 in FARA lobbying, only received 29% of Liberia's assistance, totaling a limited \$48,823,130 of disbursed U.S. foreign assistance in 2019.⁹ The bilateral relations of countries that face greater economic challenges and less capital to spend on retaining lobbying firms in Washington D.C. are punished in the long run. This cycle continues to be reinforced by U.S. aid mechanisms, rewarding countries with lobbyists more resources and money. In the U.S. especially, foreign lobbying has a statistically significant effect on levels of U.S. foreign bilateral aid, studies show.¹⁰ This all culminates in the harmful practice of the U.S. distributing aid based more on the money states spend to get it than the actual needs of those states. Money talks in D.C. and a significant number of African countries are being left without a voice in bargaining for much-needed foreign aid.

Table 1: African Countries' FARA Spending, from 2016-2020

Country	Total FARA Spending
Liberia	\$43,672,013
Morocco	\$27,521,167
South Africa	\$19,400,952
Democratic Republic of the Congo	\$13,541,795
Egypt	\$10,058,570
Sudan	\$7,310,812
Cote d'Ivoire	\$5,419,806
Kenya	\$4,295,487
Angola	\$4,174,378

8. U.S. Department of State and U.S. Agency for International Development, "Foreign Assistance 2019 Disbursements by Country," November 11, 2021, <https://foreignassistance.gov/>

9. Ibid.

10. Batty Fodei, "Rethinking Third World Relations With Developed Countries: Does Lobbying Washington D.C. Reward Sub-Saharan African Governments," *Journal of Third World Studies*, 2011, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/45194770>; Gabriel Montes-Rojas, "Can Poor Countries Lobby for More US Bilateral Aid," *World Development Journal*, 2013, <https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0305750X12003002>

Libya	\$3,898,280
Algeria	\$2,504,596
Cameroon	\$2,394,924
Ethiopia	\$2,237,304
Ghana	\$2,165,285
Somali Democratic Republic	\$1,885,073
Republic of the Congo	\$1,362,429
Zimbabwe	\$1,259,895
Mauritania	\$1,203,385
Tunisia	\$1,159,965
Seychelles	\$779,384
Nigeria	\$749,882
Mauritius	\$723,150
Gabon	\$673,380
Uganda	\$649,639
Rwanda	\$611,270
Burundi	\$369,207
Malawi	\$330,500
Togo	\$311,238
Guinea	\$170,000
Mali	\$103,148
Equatorial Guinea	\$28,109
Senegal	\$15,000
Niger	\$2,529
Benin	\$0
Botswana	\$0
Burkina Faso	\$0
Cabo Verde	\$0
Central African Republic	\$0
Chad	\$0
Comoro Islands	\$0
Djibouti	\$0
Eritrea	\$0
Gambia	\$0
Guinea-Bissau	\$0

Lesotho	\$0
Madagascar	\$0
Mozambique	\$0
Namibia	\$0
Sao Tome and Principe	\$0
Sierra Leone	\$0
South Sudan	\$0
Tanzania	\$0
Zambia	\$0

COUNTRY SPOTLIGHTS

This section provides a brief overview of each of the top ten spenders on FARA registrants amongst countries in Africa from 2016-2020, with additional background to put this spending on influence in America in context.

Liberia

The U.S. and Liberia engage on a number of issues, including economic, military, and, in recent years, healthcare systems. The focus on health issues grew substantially after the 2014 Ebola crisis hit Liberia. During this epidemic, Liberia's then-president, Ellen Johnson Sirleaf, utilized her partnership with lobbyist K Riva Levinson to spread the message about the danger of the Ebola threat to a special congressional hearing.

More recently, in 2019 the Government of Liberia spent over \$11.5 million on lobbying in the U.S., with \$11.4 million of it going to the Liberian International Ship and Corporate Registry (LISCR, LLC). LISCR is a U.S.-owned shipping and corporate registry and is the second largest of such companies in the world. This registry is recognized around the world as a successful, safe shipping company, including by the International Maritime Organization. The registry allows Liberia international recognition as flagging some of the world's safest ships, which matches with Liberia's traditional goals and promises of maritime safety and security. This registry has recently ensured that Liberia also maintains an active non-government lobby. For example, LISCR, LLC became a non-government funded lobby in 2020 and spent over \$3 million on lobbying in the U.S.

Liberia is also an African Growth and Opportunity Act (AGOA) beneficiary country. AGOA allows certain Sub-Saharan African countries duty-free trade with the U.S. in exchange for improvements in rule of law, human rights, and labor standards within said country.

Morocco

U.S.- Morocco relations have typically revolved around economic development and investment. In 2006, the United States and Morocco began the U.S.-Morocco Free Trade Agreement (FTA), which served to increase foreign direct investment in Morocco and the overall business and financial climate between the U.S. and Morocco. Along with this economic relationship, Morocco has an active lobby in the United States and has attempted to shift American policymakers' opinions on Western Sahara and Morocco's regional status within North Africa. Although Morocco and the Western Sahara liberation movement, the Polisario Front, signed a ceasefire in 1991, Western Sahara's status within the international space has not been fully resolved. In this uncertainty, Morocco claims territorial sovereignty over Western Sahara and has lobbied the US to garner support for this stance. Additionally, Morocco has pushed an image of stability through its lobbying. North Africa has been tumultuous in the past decade since the beginning of the Arab Spring in 2011. Morocco portrays itself as a stable country within this region, with the ability to guarantee security and stability that American and European governments want to work with. In 2020, Moroccan government spending exceeded \$1.3 billion, while non-government spending was just above \$13.2 million.

South Africa

After the 1994 collapse of South Africa's apartheid regime, the U.S. and the new South African government reestablished relations, with healthcare, education, and the environment becoming key collaboration points. South Africa is the United States' largest trading partner under AGOA and received over \$480 million in economic assistance in 2020. Importantly, according to FARA records, South Africa has a long history of lobbying in the United States, particularly after the 1986 Comprehensive Anti-Apartheid Act, in which Congress imposed sanctions on South Africa because of their racist apartheid policy. During the 1980s and 1990s, the apartheid government spent millions of dollars attempting to improve its image in Washington. In the 1980's for example, the South African government gave William A. Keyes, a Black American lobbyist, \$390,000 a year to help limit the opposition of Black Americans to apartheid and South Africa.¹¹ Despite some skepticism about lobbying following apartheid South Africa's lobbying attempts, modern South African companies and state-owned enterprises are still spending lavishly on lobbying in America. In 2020, the government of South Africa spent \$557,730 on FARA registrants. In particular, in 2020 the largest lobbyist for South Africa was the South African Tourism board, indicating a strong push for American tourist travel to South Africa. On the non-governmental front, the African Energy

11. Juan Williams, "South Africa's Newest Lobbyist is a Black American," The Washington Post, November 21, 1985, <https://www.washingtonpost.com/archive/politics/1985/11/21/south-africas-newest-lobbyist-is-a-black-american/4f9f0406-4f41-4d7f-be51-c2604c7f4881/>

Chamber and Dave Sheer Gunsmithing and Firearm Exchange combined to spend a total of approximately \$200,000 on lobbying efforts in the U.S.

Democratic Republic of Congo

The 2018 election and peaceful transition of power to current DRC President Félix Tshisekedi marked the beginning of a new era of formal American-Congolese relations. Currently, American and Congolese relations revolve around improving democratic institutions, humanitarian assistance, and advancing economic opportunities across the DRC. In 2019 the two countries established the U.S.-DRC Privileged Partnership for Peace and Prosperity to address corruption, human rights, potential pandemics, and security in the Congo. Additionally, in December 2020, the U.S. reinstated the DRC to AGOA. This makes the DRC eligible for trade preferences with the U.S. However, the connection between Tshisekedi's country and the United States began before the former's election into office. During his campaign for president, Tshisekedi hired Pamoja USA to promote his reform agenda in Washington and gain input from U.S. government officials, NGOs, and businesses about the expectations for the DRC's reforms.¹² In 2018, that election year, Congolese non-government spending on lobbying totaled just over \$3 million.

Egypt

Egypt and the United States have long held a strong military relationship, with the U.S. providing over \$50 billion in military assistance since 1978.¹³ Stability in Egypt is seen as pivotal for stability in the Middle East, so the U.S. has maintained this military partnership to strengthen Egypt's armed forces and develop its capacity to fight terrorism. However, Egyptian lobbying practices and spending shifted slightly during the transition from the Trump presidency to the Biden administration. The new administration and American Congress are now taking particular interest in Egypt's continuous human rights violations. This increased focus led the Egyptian government to go on a hiring blitz in late 2020, adding to its payroll former Members of Congress and the former Chief of Staff to House Speaker Nancy Pelosi.¹⁴ In February 2021, Cairo bolstered its lobbying team by hiring Josh Holly, the former head of communications for the House Armed Service Committee.¹⁵ One of Egypt's main priorities through this lobbying is, as previously mentioned, improving the legitimacy, image, and

12. Pamoja USA, "Exhibit AB," U.S. Department of Justice, July 23, 2018, <https://efile.fara.gov/docs/6575-Exhibit-AB-20180723-1.pdf>.

13. U.S. Department of State, "U.S. Relations with Egypt," January 5, 2021, <https://www.state.gov/u-s-relations-with-egypt/>

14. Caitlin Oprysko, "Egypt Continues to Add Lobbyists," Politico Influence, December 18, 2020, <https://www.politico.com/newsletters/politico-influence/2020/12/18/egypt-continues-to-add-lobbyists-792413>

15. Holly Strategies Incorporated, "Exhibit A to Registration Statement," U.S. Department of Justice, March 17, 2021, <https://efile.fara.gov/docs/6605-Exhibit-AB-20210317-3.pdf>.

overall American opinion of Egypt. However, even more critically is the maintenance of U.S. military aid, which totaled around \$1.3 billion in 2020.

| Sudan

Following the overthrow of Omar al-Bashir in April 2019 and Sudan's removal from the U.S. state sponsors of terrorism list, the American-Sudanese relationship turned to focus on a democratic transition, strengthening democratic institutions in the country, human rights, and humanitarian assistance within the country. During the transition period between Al-Bashir's ousting and the creation of a transitional government in August 2019, military leader General Mohamed Hamdan Dagalo notably employed lobbyists in the U.S. to represent Sudan and his new government. Firms like Sanitas International and Dickens and Madson Canada lobbied on Sudan's behalf in an attempt to boost the new Sudanese government's legitimacy in the international sphere. The 2019 lobby also worked to improve American links to benefit economic and political relations between the two countries. In 2019, the year of the coup, the Sudanese government and non-government lobbying totaled close to \$6 million dollars.

| Côte d'Ivoire

Côte D'Ivoire's economic prosperity has made the country a prominent actor in West Africa. However, President Alassane Ouattara recently winning a third term as president sparked regional violence. Throughout Côte d'Ivoire's tumultuous political history, the U.S. has provided unwavering economic and development assistance to help fight HIV/AIDS and spur economic investment. Côte d'Ivoire's lobbying efforts have historically attempted to improve its image in the U.S. and provide legitimacy for its leaders. For example, in 2011 Alassane Ouattara won his first Presidential term and employed the Jefferson Waterman International (JWI) lobbying firm to pressure Washington and the American public to get his predecessor to step aside peacefully.¹⁶ More recently, FARA registrants activities included advising the Government of Côte d'Ivoire on policy reforms to improve the country's governance, security, and economic growth. In 2019 the Millennium Challenge Corporation (MCC) approved a \$524.7 million MCC compact for Côte d'Ivoire while the government was employing JWI, which advertises their expertise on MCC assistance and lobbying.¹⁷ Côte d'Ivo-

16. Jefferson Waterman International LLC, "Exhibit B to Registration Statement," U.S. Department of Justice, August 1, 2011, <https://efile.fara.gov/docs/4990-Exhibit-AB-20110801-18.pdf>.

17. Millennium Challenge Corporation, "Côte d'Ivoire Compact," September 30, 2021, <https://www.mcc.gov/where-we-work/program/cote-divoire-compact>.

ire's lobbying activities align with the country's greater economic and development focus.

Kenya

Kenya maintains a strong relationship with the United States, focusing on trade, economic assistance, and security within the region. American-Kenyan trade is influenced by AGOA, which allows Kenya to export key goods, like coffee, to the U.S. while U.S. businesses invest heavily in service and tourism industries. In 2020, Kenya also spent close to \$1.4 million on lobbying efforts in the U.S. Kenya started lobbying in Washington in 2010 with the hope of mending its image as a stable country in East Africa. In 2007 Kenya descended into political violence following turbulent elections, which prompted the creation of a new constitution in 2010. This new constitution has since helped strengthen the democracy of the country, despite continuing corruption in multiple sections of the government. Along with its improved image, Kenya was also attempting to improve security ties with the United States, concentrating on terrorism within the region. Kenya was hoping the U.S. would focus more on terrorist groups in Somalia, with whom Kenya shares a border. Since the Biden administration recently came to power Kenya has hired a pair of lobbyists to increase its influence and presence in Washington, along with focusing on Kenya's image and public relations.

Angola

Since the establishment of diplomatic relations in 1993, the U.S. and Angola have maintained ties mainly through economic development and trade. However, since coming to power in September 2017, Angolan President João Lourenço has aimed to diversify the Angolan economy away from oil exports. Oil has traditionally accounted for 90% of Angolan exports, which can harm Angolan economic development should oil prices drop. The U.S. and Angola have also previously worked together on health, and peace and safety initiatives, such as removing landmines and returning refugees to their homes following the Angolan Civil War. As recently as 2019, President Lourenço and the Angolan government have been lobbying in Washington in hopes of developing stronger ties with the U.S. and gaining more political allies across Washington. Furthermore, Angola is hoping to attract aid in reforming its banking sector and overall foreign investment in the country. In 2020, the Angolan government spent over \$2 million on lobbying in the United States.

Libya

After the overthrow of President Muammar Gaddafi in 2011, Libya fell into a civil war that is still dividing the country. The fight for power between the internationally recognized interim government, Government of National Accord (GNA), and the main rebel force, the Libyan National Army (LNA), continues to impact Libya and its international interactions. Since 2011, the U.S. has provided Libya with more than \$850 million in assistance, mainly focusing

on Libya's democratic institutions, elections, security, and overall peace in the country.¹⁸ The U.S. government has also provided more than \$11 million in covid assistance to Libya.¹⁹



U.S. Secretary of State John Kerry, joined by United Nations Special Representative for Libya Martin Kobler. Photo via /Flirck.

Libya's government and non-government lobbying activities focus on improving American-Libyan political relations and economic ties. The internationally recognized Libyan government, GNA, has hired public relations and lobbying firms in Washington. In particular, the LNA has focused on energy markets and policies and hopes to utilize the oil reserves they control to gain recognition and trade internationally. Overall, the internationally recognized government of Libya spent close to \$2 million on lobbying in the U.S. in 2019, while non-government Libyan lobbying in the same year was just under \$1 million.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

While the burgeoning field investigating foreign influence in America has focused considerable attention on the influence of Russia, China, and countries in the Middle East, Africa has remained an after-thought. This report sought to show why overlooking African countries' influence has been a mistake.

From 2016 to 2020, FARA registrants received nearly \$161 million from African government and non-governmental sources. And, in many cases, this spending was directed towards influencing U.S. foreign policy decisions of critical importance to the U.S. and countries in

18. U.S. Department of State, "The United States and Libya," June 23, 2021, <https://www.state.gov/the-united-states-and-libya/>

19. Ibid.

Africa. For example, when Sudan's President, Omar Al-Bashir, was overthrown in 2019 after a nearly 30-year reign in office, the Sudanese government spent millions attempting to normalize relations with the U.S. Similarly, while Kenya was negotiating a new free trade agreement with the Trump administration, behind the scenes, Kenya was spending lavishly to influence the talks. And, Libya's lobbying spending skyrocketed in 2019 as the U.S.-backed Government of National Accord (GNA) continued its fight against the Libyan National Army (LNA) forces.

In addition to documenting the size and scope of the influence African nations attempt to exert in America, this report also found at least a surface level connection between FARA spending on lobbying and influence operations and U.S. aid allocations to African nations. This apparent connection merits further investigation, as it raises the specter of an inequality trap wherein the countries with the greatest ability to lobby in the U.S. receive a disproportionate share of U.S. support and are then subsequently in an even better position to lobby for additional support. Their less affluent counterparts, on the other hand, lack the means to fund expensive lobbying endeavors, don't receive the spoils of these influence operations, and thus remain ill-equipped to provide for their citizens, let alone fund multi-million dollar influence operations in America.

In addition to the need for more research investigating how spending on influence operations can exacerbate this inequality trap in Africa, the research here points to another critical recommendation: analyses of U.S. foreign policy in Africa that overlook lobbying by these countries are incomplete, as they ignore a critically important driver of U.S. foreign policy on the continent. This analysis found that countries in Africa spend lavishly, at times, on efforts to influence U.S. foreign policy. And, those efforts can have significant payoffs, like Egypt continuing to secure enormous military assistance from the U.S. or Kenya nearing the finish line of a trade deal with the U.S. In short, those that ignore the influence of African nations in the U.S. do so at their own peril.



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