

North-South Rivalry and Offshore Balancing in Sub-Saharan Africa

Michael Kluth – Roskilde University (kluth@ruc.dk)

Jess Pilegaard – Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Denmark (jespil@um.dk)

ABSTRACT

Sub-Saharan Africa constitutes a distinct security region and hosts a high proportion of fragile and failed states presiding over territories with abundant resources – but no indigenous great powers! Following offensive neorealist logic, the absence of local great powers explains the continued benign neglect of the US. External influence from European powers is nonetheless significant, albeit several BRIC countries are challenging the position of the former colonial masters. In response France and the United Kingdom (UK) have turned to European foreign and security policy integration to pool resources and promote burden sharing with other EU partners, in order to maintain power in the region. This European mobilization has kept rivals at bay but has also instigated balancing behaviour as revisionist suitors boost their conventional power projection capabilities.

Introduction

Sub-Saharan Africa hosts the highest concentration of failed and fragile states on the globe. In addition, the sub-continent has consistently exhibited the world's most appalling human development indicators. In this environment of political disorder and poverty, little in the way of a native aspiring regional hegemon has emerged. **Following offensive neorealist logic, it is a puzzle that rising great powers such as China and India has not utilized this opportunity to expand their onshore military presence!**

European powers dominated the sub-continent for more than a century and continued to do so after de-colonization. The Cold War introduced Russia (then the Soviet Union) as a player assisted by its Warsaw Pact partners. In addition, China sporadically entered the field with a select handful of often highly visible projects such as the Dar Es Salam – Lusaka railroad. The United States largely left it for its West European allies to counter the inroads made by the Soviet Union and her allies. With the collapse of the Soviet Union Europe seemed poised to roam the sub-continent by itself.

Beginning with the Nairobi Embassy bombing and culminating with the 9/11 attacks, the US seemed to take an interest in African security, potentially challenging European domination. In keeping with offensive neorealist predictions, the world's only regional hegemon has however remained aloof in its dealing with the continent, which is characterised by the absence of a regional great power. Other emerging revisionist great powers, in part fuelled by a desire to access untapped raw materials but primarily bent on enhance their share of world power; have stepped up their economic and political presence on the continent. This is especially true of China, as witnessed by the explosion of Sino-African trade, aid projects and political collaboration. But a similar pattern can be observed with regards to the remaining BRIC countries.

This paper argues that the aspiration of maintaining a dominant influence on African security issues has spurred French and British leadership of EU foreign and security policy integration, just as it has informed defence acquisitions and military capability expansions by

the armed forces of the main EU powers. The assets which the UK and France have agreed could be shared at the groundbreaking Lancaster House Summit in November 2010 are central in this context: amphibious forces, aircraft carriers, strategic airlift and nuclear submarines are all power projection assets critical to any effort to assert the status of great powers and maintain their dominant position in African security (See also Kluth & Pilegaard, 2011)! The paper will substantiate this argument by tracking capability changes among EU members since the end of the Cold War coupled with data on military deployments and base installations. These data will be contrasted with similar data covering China, India and Russia.

The study is informed by offensive neorealism, especially as represented by John Mearsheimer. This choice poses a series of challenges in its own right. For a start neorealism and students of African security issues have suffered a tenuous relationship (See e.g. Clark, 2001). While the former looks for general patterns, the latter has had a preference for contextualising security. Secondly in his most prominent contributions Mearsheimer basically ignores contemporary Africa. The absence of local great powers and the restraint external powers have exhibited with regards to repeating nineteenth century colonization would seem to be a puzzle for offensive realism. Third and most fundamentally at odds with the work of Mearsheimer, we treat the European Union as a major power rather than an international organization incorporating potentially rivalling sovereign states! Mearsheimer is highly sceptical of the notion that the EU can or should be studied as an independent actor!

In the following section we shall set out by elaborating our theoretical vantage point, including the additions and modifications we propose in order to adapt it to the present study. This is followed by a section depicting the security landscape of Sub-Saharan Africa. In the process we substantiate our claim that none of the states situated in Sub-Saharan Africa are about to become great powers. The third section seeks to underscore that the US – in spite of its alleged ‘new’ interest in Africa – has remained largely disengaged. The fourth section introduces the European Union as security actor and points to the prominence of African security concerns in the CFSP – aspirations on the part of the major powers to maintain their great power status by preserving their special role in African security is offered as explanation for European military and foreign policy integration. The next section (5) presents the empirical manifestations through collaborative EU capability expansions, deployments and the military bases in and around the sub-continent sustaining the EU’s presence. The sixth section tracks the same data for several BRIC countries. The final section concludes on our findings.

An Offensive Neorealist Take on Sub-Saharan Security

John Mearsheimer’s book ‘The Tragedy of Great Power Politics’ first published in 2001 proposes an offensive structural realist account which incorporates elements of geopolitics (Mearsheimer, 2001). Geography matters as the international system is inhabited by states located in regions. Exactly how regions are delimited varies over time. One enduring barrier separating regions are the great oceans. Great powers cannot conquer one another if separated by physical barriers such as oceans. Hence regional hegemony can be attained in areas with over land access (Mearsheimer, 2001:41-42). This Mearsheimer denotes the ‘stopping power of water’ (Mearsheimer, 2001:114). While Africa is considered a continent we argue it constitutes at least two distinct regions in a security sense. In light of the levels of latent

(wealth and population) and actual (military capability) power among African states, the Sahara constitutes a natural security barrier between Northern Africa and the rest of the continent – Sahara essentially represents ‘the stopping power of sand’. Libya’s disastrous forays into Chad in the eighties bear witness to this claim.

Contemporary offensive neo-realism was formulated after the collapse of the Cold War order. Mearsheimer sketches an international system composed of ‘insular’ and ‘continental’ great powers engaging in regional balancing simultaneously with wider cross regional balancing and rejects the notion that the post-Cold War era is unipolar and that the US is a global hegemon (Mearsheimer, 2001: 140, 381).

In his systemic depiction, all great powers strive for regional hegemony. Great powers attain their status by virtue of their military capabilities (Mearsheimer, 2001: 55). The United States is the preponderant military power in the world and the only state to have obtained regional hegemony. Mearsheimer identifies two other great powers in Russia and China which, while unable to match US military might, are nonetheless able to contest and possibly thwart a US invasion of their homeland and in addition possess a credible nuclear deterrent and limited power projection capability (Mearsheimer, 2001: 381).

Offensive neorealism assumes that if the international system contains only one regional hegemon, it will be a status quo power and thus unlikely to militarily engage in other regions separated from its own realm by water, if no indigenous state has prospects of becoming a regional hegemon in the said area (Mearsheimer, 2001: 42). Other great powers which have not ascended to hegemony are by contrast revisionist. In case another state becomes a regional hegemon, all major powers turn revisionist! Revisionist states seek to maximize their share of world power!

Mearsheimer establishes a case for US balancing of China which, by nature of its great power status, has regional hegemonic aspirations for Northeast Asia. Europe is, by contrast, presented as being subject to stable bipolarity, with Russia constituting one pole and the United States occupying the other pole as an offshore balancer. Europe is seen as basically counting on the US to balance Russia, thus conforming to the bandwagoning concept (Mearsheimer, 2001: 380).

Although Mearsheimer is highly critical of Europe’s ability to constitute a pole in its own right (Mearsheimer, 2009), we nonetheless purport that the European Union has attained great power status through enlargement and military integration. Since the 2001 publication of ‘The Tragedy of Great power Politics’, the Europeans have been highly successful in their eastward expansion making substantial inroads into Russia’s power sphere with the inclusion of all the former Warsaw Pact members and the Baltic Republics. In line with this we have in previous research concluded that the EU has boosted its military muscle to assert its interests abroad (Kluth & Pilegaard, 2011). As a great power the EU aims to prevent rivals from gaining ground in Sub-Saharan Africa where several of its member states have enjoyed privileged positions.

In further challenging the world order depicted by Mearsheimer, we propose that India is sufficiently close to assume great power status to actively engage other major players in

efforts to maximize its share of world power. India possesses nuclear weapons and is in the process of obtaining a credible deterrent with the launch of the Arihant class submarine in 2009 and the subsequent introduction of the medium range Sagarika K-12 submarine launched ballistic missiles in 2010. Given the size and level of sophistication in India's armed forces she would be able to 'put up a serious fight in an all-out conventional war' if attacked by the most powerful state in the world (Mearsheimer, 2001: 5).

Sub-Saharan Africa hosts no indigenous great power; a fact which explain why Africa is basically missing in Mearsheimers depiction of contemporary great power behaviour. He does propose a set of generic statements on great power behaviour conforming to offensive realism such as states "look for opportunities to alter the balance of power by acquiring additional increments of power at the expense of potential rivals" (Mearsheimer, 2001:34). This would account for the colonial expansion instigated by European powers in the second half of the nineteenth century. Hence in a world abiding to offensive realism Africa is up for grabs!

But while the great powers of the world have increased their interest in Sub-Saharan Africa, there has been a startling lack of onshore expeditions in spite of the profusion of failed and fragile states. Since the ill-fated landing of US Marines on the shores of Somalia in 1991, only the European Union and its member states have carried out autonomous non-UN on-the-ground military operations on Sub-Saharan soil. While the benign neglect of Africa by the USA can be attributed to the latter's position as sole regional hegemon and its associated status quo bias, the restraint on the part of the other revisionist great powers in staging military operations remains a puzzle when seen in a neo-realist perspective.

As extra-regional great powers engage in Sub-Saharan Africa with a view to "acquiring additional increments of power at the expense of potential rivals" Europe has been in the defence. In response Europe has taken extraordinary measures to hold its own such as pooling its foreign and security resources (Pilegaard & kluth, 2011). This has decisively strengthened their position in the sub-continent.

In consequence, the challengers essentially remain offshore. They may seek alliances and special relationships with promising African states, but in military terms they refrain from onshore deployments while boosting their conventional power projection capabilities with a view to alter the balance in their own favour. Hence the defence acquisitions among the revisionist great powers are fuelled by developments in said capabilities among peer rivals rather than changes in posture among the Sub-Saharan states.

Below we have phrased our application of an offensive neorealist perspective on the current Sub-Saharan security situation in three core propositions:

1. The US, as regional hegemon, has a status quo bias and thus little appetite for Sub-Saharan Africa since there are no aspiring hegemons. It maintains a low key presence in the hard security domain and refrains from onshore power expansion.
2. The European Union is the only great power regularly commencing onshore military missions and it upholds superiority over the contending suitors in its power projection capability vis-à-vis the region.

3. China, Russia and India lack the capability to challenge Europe by instigating onshore operations in Sub-Saharan Africa. They seek to maximize their presence through contributions to UN missions and cautious deployments of naval assets. In parallel they challenge the EU by acquiring conventional power projection assets.

In this study we aspire to substantiate the above propositions empirically. Methodologically we assess the overall capability of each great power for launching autonomous military incursions in Sub-Saharan Africa, trace capability changes since 2000 of relevance to such incursions, list non-UN military deployments and present data on relevant off- and onshore military bases in the region. Data on capabilities and defence spending are, unless another source is given, extracted from various editions of 'The Military Balance' published annually by the International Institute for Strategic Studies (IISS). Data on the capabilities of different types of military hardware is taken from Janes Military Hardware Reference books.

Sub-Saharan Africa – Security and States

Africa has laid territory to numerous military interventions by great powers. Colonization in the eighteenth and nineteenth century was replaced by proxy wars and direct interventions after de-colonization.

Since the collapse of the apartheid regime and the folding of its nuclear weapons programme, Sub-Saharan Africa has not hosted a credible candidate for great power status. A number of countries command huge territories and sizable populations, but they lack economic means and military capability to yield influence throughout the sub-continent. Some countries have the potential to become minor powers. The Republic of South Africa with its relatively advanced economy, state apparatus and armed forces is the top candidate. As the only Sub-Saharan state South Africa's armed forces are considered reliable, well trained and well equipped. It boasts the sub-continent's only navy capable of fielding modern major surface combatants, submarines and a limited amphibious capability. It also has the largest operational fleet of transport airplanes and the most modern combat planes piloted by the best trained crews on the sub-continent. The draw is that these assets are only available in very limited numbers. The country will have 26 first line jets once deliveries are completed. The fleet of operational transport planes consist of more than 40 aircraft, but only the 9 Hercules transports have the lift and range required for power projection beyond the immediate neighbourhood.

South Africa buys Western equipment including spares and training packages at Western prices and has the sub-continent's largest military budget amounting to 4,35 billion US\$ in 2009. She is followed by Angola which spend 2.77 billion US\$ the same year. Sudan is estimated to have total military expenditure of roughly 2 billion US\$ - but reliable figures are hard to obtain (SIPRI, 2010). Fourth is Nigeria which spends 1.49 billion US\$ - more than twice as much as the fifth biggest spender – Kenya which used 696 million US\$. Sixth is either Côte d'Ivoire or Eritrea (SIPRI, 2010) both with roughly half of Kenya's budget.

In projecting power beyond its immediate neighbours, South Africa does not have overwhelming advantages of proximity given the vast territories of many states in southern Africa and the wanting condition of most infrastructure. Given its size, the country has a modest standing army with a peacetime strength of roughly 35000 troops and officers. Its

stock of 167 main battle tanks (MBT) is comprised entirely by home-grown and outdated Olifant's and most are in storage. This is partly offset by the addition of modern and capable infantry fighting vehicles (IFV's). Again, the total number of state-of-the-art IFV's supplied amounts to 264, which does boost the expeditionary capability, but such quantities quickly thin out in the vast African plains.

South Africa is the only naval power in the sub-continent with offensive capabilities. Its inventory encompasses three modern diesel-electric submarines, four modern frigates and a mix of patrol vessels, fast attack crafts etc. of slightly dated design. It moreover has a fleet replenishment ship with provisions for landing crafts and an arctic surface vessel. Both of the latter carry up to two medium helicopters giving the navy limited shore assault ability.

While its fleet of frigates are formidable by African standards they do not have sufficient air defence capability to operate autonomously in hostile waters. Although only very few Sub-Saharan countries have combat navel assets, many African states have ground attack combat jets. But South Africa's air force would be hard pressed to provide air cover beyond the 800 km combat radius of its first line fighters as the country operates no military bases outside of South Africa and does not have aerial refuelling or aircraft carriers at its disposal. The JAS-39 fighter aircrafts ability to start and land from ordinary roads in combination with the large fleet of ageing but nonetheless operational tactical lift helicopters does add credibility to the expeditionary qualities of South Africa's armed forces.

Angola has the largest army in Southern Africa when discounting the fictitious forces reported by the Democratic Republic of Congo. It has grown in response to a need for ensuring internal security and relies on massive conscription combined with an obligation to integrate former guerrilla fighters. The latter has added to existing problems of widespread illiteracy among rank and file. Growing oil proceeds and persistent internal security challenges in spite of the demobilization of UNITA has fuelled substantial procurements in the past ten years. Most of the additions are Soviet-era design such as the T-72 main battle tank to complement the vast arsenal of dated T-55's and SU-27 air superiority fighters replacing and supplementing vintage MiG-21's.

But Angola has no navy to speak off and its large army has struggled for decades to obtain territorial control. Its expeditionary abilities are very limited although it can enlist a reasonable fleet of medium weight tactical lift helicopters and transport planes including six An-12 and one Hercules. The air force's sole strategic airlift asset was lost in an accident in 2009. Intelligence reports indicating that several Angolan military planes are operated by Ukrainian, Russian, South African and Israeli mercenaries suggest technical vulnerabilities likely to affect maintenance and support services as well.

Nigeria's armed forces are smaller than Angola's and reports suggest various groups of military assets are non-operational. But dependence on foreign operational and maintenance crews is less pronounced than in the Angolan case. Nigeria's air force relies on very dated fighter designs – MiG-21 and derivatives. Its ground strike ability is limited due to the modest capability of its fleet of L-39 Albatross and the non-operational status of its Jaguar's. It does have reasonable fixed wing airlift capability on par with that of South Africa but it

trails behind both Angola and South Africa in terms of attack and medium weight tactical lift helicopters.

The Nigerian army operates a relatively large fleet of light and dated main battle tanks. Its capability in this domain is on par with that of Angola although no new procurements have been made since the late seventies. Its fleet of armoured land assets lacks modern infantry fighting vehicles (IFV's). Nigeria's navy is the only Sub-Saharan maritime force other than South Africa's capable of fielding large surface combatants. Yet the single frigate has suffered a downgrade with the withdrawal from operational service of its embarked Lynx helicopter. The ship has experienced numerous breakdowns, two groundings and a serious collision since it entered service in 1982. It was widely considered non-operational when it reappeared at sea in 2005 after being moored for several years. The Nigerian navy's power projection capability is trailing that of South Africa by a wide margin.

Kenya has a significantly smaller armed service than the countries presented above. Although possessing a large fleet of relatively capable main battle tanks the army has only limited stocks of other armoured vehicles severely limiting its expeditionary capability. This is underscored by the absence of tactical lift capabilities in both its fixed wing and helicopter inventory. The fighter arm of the air force is equipped with 22 dated F5 Tiger planes – the original inventory has been replaced by second hand units from Jordan. They are inferior to the aircraft fielded by other contenders for Sub-Saharan African minor power status.

Kenya's navy is considered the most capable in East Africa but its fighting strength is comprised of two missile armed crafts in the 400 ton range and two similar sized patrol vessels armed with cannons. The navy is still awaiting delivery of the 1000 tonnes corvette sized gunboat/research vessel KNS Jasiri – reported complete by the Spanish builder in 2005!

Sudan, Eritrea and Ethiopia comprise the most heavily militarized cluster in Sub-Saharan Africa. Between them, the three states have more than 500,000 men under arms. But local security challenges seem to have affected force sizes more than great power aspirations. Sudan has fought a long civil war on several fronts and is now about to be partitioned. Ethiopia underwent partitioning in the early nineties leaving it landlocked. Eritrea and Ethiopia have fought several wars and their border is heavily fortified. Eritrea has allegedly assisted South Sudan separatists while the Khartoum government has assisted Ethiopia in its struggles against Eritrea! The latter country is too small and strained by the constant war footage if its economy to be a contender for great power status. Ethiopia's recent intervention to stabilize the Mogadishu government on the other hand suggests that Addis Ababa is ready to rejoin the ranks of powers to be reckoned with after its loss of Eritrea.

Sudan's inability to maintain a credible grip over its national territory potentially excludes her from attaining minor power status until at the very least the implications of South Sudanese secession on its oil revenues are clear. Yet Sudan's support for Chadian rebels (Debos, 2008: 227) which assaulted the capital N'Djamena in early 2008 in a bid to prevent the deployment of an EU force, bears witness to its aspiration of being a sub-regional power.

The US in Africa after 911

Given the might of US military power, the United States could achieve domination of vast swaths of the sub-continent in a single assault. One of the 11 US super carriers could attain air superiority against all Sub-Saharan air forces combined. US Marines and army airborne divisions can land a first wave of 50,000 soldiers with the full scale of weaponry including main battle tanks, artillery, attack helicopters etc. easily defeating any Sub-Saharan army given its technical, tactical and logistical superiority. Only South Africa would be able to deploy a fleet to challenge the approach of an amphibious force, but it would be vastly outnumbered and outgunned! Yet the US has largely refrained from engaging itself in land based military operations in the region.

During the Cold War, the United States left it for its West European allies to counter the inroads made by the Soviet Union and her allies in Africa (Schraeder, 1994: 15). US strategic thinking on Africa gained new prominence after the Nairobi bombing of 1998 and the attacks on New York in 2001. Hence development assistance has been directed towards projects addressing US security concerns (Olsen, 2008). Key concerns are that fragile and failed states may facilitate the creation of and provide shelter for terrorist groups (Hills, 2006).

The 'war on terror' has been the pretext for increased American military presence in Africa. This has resulted in the formation of the US Africa Command – AFRICOM – and a number of security initiatives. Below we examine if these developments challenge the proposition that the US as a status quo power refrains from military balancing engagements in Sub-Saharan.

The United States have placed their Africa Command in Stuttgart! Moreover, it is unlikely that it will be relocated to Africa in the coming years, if ever (Ploch, 2010: 1). Although academics have lamented the unilateral establishment of this entity (e.g. Nathan, 2009: 60, Burgess, 2009, Berman, 2009) and African politicians have pleaded not to host it on their soil (Ploch, 2010: 26), in an offensive neorealist perspective the decision to locate AFRICOM in Europe is pretty solid evidence of a US preference for remaining a non-participant in African balancing. Preponderant states eager to maximise their share of world power are not intimidated by academics and weak states!

A military mission and a number of security arrangements make up the US presence in Sub-Saharan. In terms of power projection and balancing the most important is the Combined Joint Task Force: Horn of Africa (CJTF-HOA) located on the former French military base Camp Lemonnier in Djibouti. This is the only permanent US military base in Africa and was established in 2002 to support Operation Enduring Freedom combating terrorism and piracy at the Horn of Africa. It houses roughly 1125 military personnel (The Military Balance, 2010: 42). This is approximately half the size of the nearby French military contingent. While civilian and rotational staff serve to boost the actual presence of Americans attached to the facility, the US Department of Defence has expressly stated it plans no large scale permanent deployment of American military forces in Africa (Ploch, 2010: iii). The US presence in Djibouti is arguably more aimed at the Middle East than Africa!

The US Navy has taken the lead role in establishing Coalition Task Force 151 (CTF-151) which patrols the waters of East Africa combating terrorist related activities and piracy.

Several EU member states contribute to this force as well. This mission remains decidedly offshore! The same applies to the African Partnership Station (APS) where US Navy and Coast Guard vessels operate as ‘floating school houses’ initially in West Africa but since 2009 also in East Africa. They operate training courses for staff members of local navies which often lack operational vessels to practice skills of seamanship, maritime surveillance and on-sea boarding manoeuvres. An additional set of training programmes are operated – some target specific groups of states considered vulnerable to trans-border terrorist activities and some are more broadly aimed at enhancing the performance of African armed forces in partaking in peacekeeping operations. The programmes are listed below:

1. Operation Enduring Freedom: Trans Sahara (OEF-TS)/Trans Sahara Counter-Terrorism Partnership (TSCTP)
2. International Military Education and Training (IMET)
3. The African Contingency Operations Training and Assistance Program (ACOTA)/Global Peace Operations Initiative (GPOI)

While the US maintains formidable air and naval assets in the vicinity principle by means of the fifth fleet centred in Bahrain, direct US incursions onshore in Sub-Sahara Africa are limited. Besides non-published covert operations targeting specific terrorist groups recent examples include air support for the Ethiopian attack on the Union of Islamic Courts in Somalia in 2006. The US, however, largely left it for Ethiopia to manage the incursion and the subsequent presence on ground! In conclusion, the US by and large seems to conform to our proposition, staying aloof vis-à-vis power expansion games in Africa.

The European Union as a Security Actor in Sub-Sahara Africa

This study starts from the premise that the European Union should be analysed as an international security actor on par with states. While realists have analysed the EU as an actor in relation to WTO negotiations (Grieco, 1993), most classical realists (Kissinger, 2001) and neorealists (Mearsheimer, 2001: 366), deem it unlikely that the EU should ever become a unified actor. Applying more heterodox approaches, John McCormick (McCormick, 2007) and Parag Khanna (Khanna, 2009) represent recent examples of scholarship which accepts the EU as a great power on par with the US and China.

Treating the EU as a security actor in an offensive neorealist analysis is thus a controversial choice. While Mearsheimer acknowledged in 2001 that the EU is building its own military (Mearsheimer, 2001: 491), he treated the development in the context of alliance formation rather than nation building! Resistance to treat the EU as an international actor by advocates of realism stems in part from the propensity among proponents of EU actorness to frame the Union as an entirely new entity with the promise of unseating the Westphalian order. Alternative perspectives depict the EU as an ‘ethical’ (Aggestam, 2008), ‘civilian’ (Orbie 2008) or ‘normative’ (Manners, 2002) power. These scholarly contributions share an intellectual affinity with EU-Studies literature stipulating the sui generis character of the European Union whose polity traits are sought captured with concepts such as e.g. ‘Multi-level Governance’ (Boerzel & Risse, 2000).

By aligning to a more traditional constitutionalist perspective, we echo William Wallace in arguing that the EU has developed beyond an international organization (Wallace, 1983) and

raise the stakes even further by analytically treating the Union like a state in international relations. Through the ratification of the Lisbon Treaty, appointment of a president, the formation of a foreign service headed by a de facto foreign minister, an explicit common defence and security policy, a collective process of capability enhancements including joint R&D, production and procurement and finally through autonomous EU military deployments – we claim the Union has passed the threshold of a confederation! And both confederations and federations are capable of waging wars as evidenced e.g. by events in North America between 1861 and 1865!

As a unified security actor the EU faces institutional impediments such as reliance on national military contributions to deployments, absence of a permanent military headquarter, inability to obtain recognition and member state veto rights in decision making bodies. This may retard response times and produce operational inefficiencies impairing the overall power the European Union vis-à-vis other major players. But several of these shortcomings such as international recognition and headquarter establishment are actively sought remedied and at the very least the EU in its current post-Lisbon form is a fully fledged confederation with evolving federal traits.

Neo-realist explanations of European defence and security integration have pointed to a desire of containing a reunified Germany (Jones, 2003), balancing of the US and ensuring independent global influence for the European Union (Posen, 2006: 184, Kluth & Pilegaard, 2010). This study starts from the latter position. The decision of several minor powers to integrate in order to become a great power seems to contradict the bedrock assumption that states above all strive to ensure their sovereignty and are thus unlikely to be absorbed into confederations, federations or empires voluntarily. But offensive neorealism deals with great power behaviour and does not purport to ‘answer every question that arises in world politics’ (Mearsheimer, 2001: 11).

While the initial impetus for defence and security integration may have been to keep Germany in check, frustrations over the inability to contribute militarily to peacemaking in the Balkan spurred capability upgrade collaboration (Treacher, 2004). We argue that the current phase of European defence, foreign policy and security integration is driven by Anglo-French aspirations of regaining great power status by means of pooling their assets and efforts, and enlisting Union partners in sharing the burdens of maintaining Europe’s position as the dominant power in Sub-Saharan Africa.

Mearsheimer argues that France lost its great power status in 1940, Italy in 1943 and Germany and the United Kingdom in 1945 (Mearsheimer, 2001: 404). But both France and the UK emerged as victors of the war, were accorded a privileged status in the UN and their right to attain nuclear weapons was not seriously challenged. Decolonisation eroded the global impact of European powers creating room for expansion of the US and Soviet spheres of influence. In the Western alliance, however, Europe was allotted the role of countering Soviet incursions in its former Sub-Saharan colonies (Schraeder, 1994). These factors combined to bestow a status of semi-great power on the leading EU member states.

With the end of the Cold War, European custodianship of Sub-Sahara is challenged. Calls for reform of the UN threaten the permanent seats of France and the UK in the Security Council,

and several new countries openly exhibiting their nuclear weapon stockpile have emerged. This threatens to relegate France and the UK to full minor power status. In response the major European powers have joined forces under the aegis of European integration and have developed autonomous capacity to launch military operations outside of Europe. The emphasis on 'autonomous capability' formed a cornerstone of the Anglo-French Saint-Malo accord of 1998 and targets potential rivalry with other powers exhibiting a fresh appetite for Sub-Saharan Africa.

The Saint-Malo accord provided the impetus for EU security and defence integration. It also contained a separate agreement on Anglo-French collaboration in Africa (Chafer & Cumming 2010a Pp. 5). An African chapter has been included in all subsequent Anglo-French summits and ministerial representation has expanded to deal with the complexities of coordinating aid and security actions in Africa. In addition regular meetings between relevant national ministries are conducted and a number of 'on the ground initiatives' linked to the bilateral accord are running. Several of these have been integrated into the EU proper such as the EURO CAMP military training initiative. Moreover, at the EU level Africa figures prominently in the overall foreign and security strategy of the Union and a specific African security strategy has been published. These developments are compounded by the growing emphasis on security issues in EU aid projects in the region (Orbie & Versluys, 2009: 77) and the explicit emphasis on security issues and conflict management in Africa at EU-Africa summits (Olsen, 2009).

In fielding military missions in Sub-Saharan Africa Europe aims both to stabilize parts of the sub-continent beset by civil wars and state failure and signal to African leaders, the international community in addition to Asian and other external suitors that Europe is able and willing to take responsibility for African security by itself. This conforms to the basic neorealist logic of keeping rivals at bay and upholding great powers status including permanent membership of the UN Security Council in which African issues have made up 70% of the workload in recent years (Chafer & Cumming, 2010b P. 1133).

Anglo-French leadership in European security and defence integration reached a high point with the historical Anglo-French Defence & Security Co-operation Treaty in 2010. The latter emphasises collaboration and pooling of power projection assets such as transport planes, amphibious forces, nuclear warhead development and aircraft carriers. In a neorealist world where the key source of power is military capability, Europe's share of global power is chiefly measured in its military posture and deployments. As shall be demonstrated in the next section, empirical data on capability changes and deployments strongly point to the prominence of Africa in Europe's global quest for influence.

EU and Sub-Saharan Power Expansion

The European Union's combined conventional armed forces are only dwarfed in size, level of sophistication and training and power projection capability by those of the United States. Since the end of the Cold War, European military budgets have declined in proportion of GDP and force levels have been trimmed. There has been a general shift towards deployable professional armies at the expense of mass conscription armies geared towards territorial defence.

In the process of trimming force levels, experiences gained from operations in the Balkans were utilized and led to reducing stocks of free fall bombs and conventional artillery. Efforts were made to upgrade the precision strike capability of combat aircrafts and enhance the mobility of land forces. The former has resulted in avionics upgrade packages and introduction of smart munitions while the latter has resulted in acquisitions of tactical lift helicopters and infantry fighting vehicles at the expense of traditional armoured personnel carriers and heavy main battle tanks.

However, the most spectacular capability enhancements clearly point beyond the European neighbourhood. These include long range transport planes, aerial refuelling tankers, aircraft carriers and amphibious assault ships in addition to large surface combatants such as destroyers and frigates.

The leading EU powers have jointly developed the Airbus A400M and ordered 160 units of the long range heavy transport plane, which besides cargo and paratroopers will be able to function as an air-to-air refuelling plane. Several infantry fighting vehicles, specifically designed to be air portable by the A400M have been ordered, including 630 French VBCI's, 472 Dutch-German Boxer's and 475 Austro-Spanish ASCOD's.

Introducing the A400M expands combined EU strategic/tactical airlift by a factor of three. It is designed for operating on unprepared airfields and with a 20 tonnes payload it can reach all of Africa from Southern Europe. In its aerial refuelling capacity it can extend the combat radius of the long range combat aircrafts which have been acquired by EU countries, including the pan-European Eurofighter Typhoon and the French Rafale.

EU countries have placed orders and started to take delivery of 487 Eurofighter Typhoon multi-role combat aircraft while France has acquired 180 Dassault Rafale. Both planes can supercruise meaning they can sustain supersonic speeds for long stretches and thus be deployed in Sub-Saharan airspace from bases in Europe in a couple of hours.

Other air capability extensions concern medium lift tactical helicopters such as the pan-European NH-90 and the Anglo-Italian Merlin. In addition the EU states have invested in attack helicopters including the pan-European Eurocopter Tiger. In total the EU countries have ordered some 300 attack helicopters and more than 600 medium weight helicopters suitable for tactical lift. Many of these can be embarked from the growing fleet of large oceanic vessels EU navies have acquired after the end of the Cold War.

In the past decade over thirty new major surface combatants averaging around 6500 ton at full load have joined the EU fleets. In 1990 the average displacement of EU destroyers and frigates was 3972 metric tons, in 2000 it had gone up to 4071 tons and by 2010 it had reached 4663 tons. The increased size of EU vessels is reflected in their capabilities. Since 1990 smaller frigates specialized in anti submarine warfare has been replaced by more capable multi role vessels able to counter submerged, surface and aerial threats. Autonomous deployment has informed acquisition choices in Europe.

Between 2000 and 2010 multi role vessels have grown further to accommodate area air defence systems which can provide fleet cover against aircrafts and sea skimming missiles.

With the commissioning of 36 new ships more than $\frac{3}{4}$ of the EU's area air defence vessels have been renewed since 2000 (Kluth & Pilegaard, 2011).

But the key expansion of naval capability relates to amphibious assault vessels. As the Cold War came to a close Europe had a total of 9 vessels suitable for long range amphibious missions. In the year 2000 the fleet comprised 13 vessels and by 2011 it totals 21 ships. Seven of the new vessels commissioned by three different navies are based on a common design. In tonnage the figure has gone up from around 96.000 tonne in 1990 over 164.000 tonnes in 2000. By 2011 this figure has more than doubled to 340.000 tonnes compared to the year 2000 and more than tripled since 1990 (Kluth & Pilegaard, 2011). Combined the Europeans would be able to land a fully equipped force of roughly 25.000 posing a formidable threat to any state in the region.

Two of the vessels can operate fixed wing aviation as Short-Take-Off and Vertical-Landing (STOVL) carriers. In addition member states have two dedicated STOVL and one Catapult-Assisted-Take-Off-But-Arrested-Recovery (CATOBAR). Hence following the retirement of the Royal Navy's Invincible-class STOVL carriers Europe can field 5 aircraft carriers. Only the French navy's Charles de Gaulle, commissioned in 2001, has an air wing capable of overcoming the most advanced Sub-Saharan air forces. Two even more capable Royal Navy carriers are under construction bringing the future EU fleet of first line carriers to three vessels.

Europe is not solely dependent on carriers for air cover in Sub-Saharan Africa. The supercruise ability of its latest combat airplanes combined with the air-to-air refuelling capacity of the A400M and the existing fleet of 36 dedicated tanker aircraft enable dispatching fighters directly from European bases. More importantly, however, Europe operates a number of military bases in Sub-Saharan Africa and in addition has sovereign territories in close proximity to the sub-region.

Spain's Canary Islands are situated 1.200 km from the Northern shoreline of Senegal. The British Overseas Territory of St. Helena is 2000 km of the Namibian coast. The French Overseas Departement of Moyette is only 500 km from the Northern coast of Mozambique, further ashore are the British territories of Diego Garcia and Reunion Island which is part of France. Most of these islands house military installations but the French bases in Senegal, Gabon and Djibouti are evidently even better positioned to project European power. A briefing paper prepared for the European Parliament estimates total French military personnel in the three onshore installations to 5000. The bases comprise both harbours and airfields housing permanently stationed transport and combat airplanes (Rogers & Simón, 2008). These forces are backed up additional forces in the nearby sovereign territories.

Onshore bases and military installations on nearby sovereign territories have played a vital role in the military deployments of the EU and its member states. The EU has carried out four major military missions in Sub-Saharan Africa: Artemis and EUFOR in the Democratic Republic of Congo, EUFOR Chad and Atalanta of the Somali coast. In total the four missions deployed upwards of 10.000 military personnel between 2003 and 2010 (Vines, 2010). In addition the UK intervened in Sierra Leone's civil war in 2000 with more than 1200 troops on the ground backed up by a sizable naval fleet including a carrier. France maintains its 'la

force Licorne' in Côte D'Ivoire where it has been deployed since 2002. Its current strength is around 1000 men. In Chad operation Epervier encompasses 1200 French troops.

As is evident, the EU and its key member states are very actively engaged in Sub-Saharan security and keep a sizable presence onshore and have boosted its ability to project power offshore. These observations will be contrasted with data on Russia and the Asian suitors for 'additional increments of power' in Sub-Sahara.

India and Sub-Saharan Power Expansion

India is in a geographically favourable position vis-à-vis other suitors for Sub-Saharan influence as the distance from the Lakshadweep Islands are 2300 km of unobstructed ocean to the Somali coastline. Unlike the Europeans, Indian navigators and aviators need not circumvent North Africa nor seek permission to pass the Suez Canal in order to reach Sub-Saharan destinations. Below we examine the capabilities at India's disposal to exploit this advantage.

India's huge army has a strong emphasis on heavy armour. In relative terms the number of IFV's and Armoured Personnel Carriers (APC) is modest. Unusually the factor of MBT's to IFV's + APC's is 2:1. Half the 4000+ MBT fleet is composed of dated T-55's and derivatives. This suggests an emphasis on territorial defence fielding heavy armour, traditional artillery and on-the-ground infantry as opposed to overseas mobility and deployability. Still India's army is of such a formidable strength that provided it can be landed and obtain air cover it could overcome any Sub-Saharan adversary.

Two-thirds of the country's 632 combat jets are composed of obsolete airframes such as MiG-21's (280), MiG-27's (88) and Jaguars (90). This leaves a sizable force of more modern aircraft most of which could reach Sub-Sahara Africa. But they would depend on a fleet of only 6 tanker aircraft to make a safe return. India in addition operates an STOVL aircraft carrier with a fixed-wing complement of 11 Sea Harriers. These would be no match for the more advanced air forces of Angola, South Africa, Ethiopia, Sudan and Eritrea. India has obtained a license to build the long range Su-30MKI and it plans to field in excess of 280 planes by 2015. It has in addition order 48 of the less capable domestically developed HAL Tejas paving the way for retiring the MiG-21 fleet.

Fleet air cover for limited onshore operations can be provided by naval vessels designed for the task. The Indian Navy has 8 air defence destroyers and frigates with excellent self protection systems against aerial threats including sea-skimming missiles but no genuine area air defence capability!

These vessels are suitable for autonomous offshore deployment but of limited value in support of onshore operations. The fleet of Indian surface combatants is being renewed at a high rate. A total of three Shivalik frigates have been launched with two currently commissioned and Russia is building an additional 3 Talwar frigates to complement the three vessels commissioned since 2003. They resemble the capability of the three ship Delhi class destroyers commissioned from 1997 to 2001 with strong anti-surface and anti-submarine capabilities, point defence against sea-skimming missiles and medium range air defences. In addition three Kolkata class destroyers have been launched but await commissioning due to

technical issues. Together with the Shivalik frigates these ships incorporate stealth features making them comparable with contemporary European designs. Once fully outfitted the Kolkata class will feature genuine area air defence capability.

In addition India expects to receive a long delayed Russian Kiev class aircraft carrier in late 2012 after extensive refit has been carried out on the vessel which was purchased in 2004. India hopes to commission the ship before 2014 – thirty-five years after the keel was laid in the Soviet Union! Its fixed air wing will be sixteen MiG-29K's and enable India to challenge any Sub-Saharan air force. The keel was laid for an indigenous aircraft carrier in early 2009. Once commissioned it will host an air wing similar to that of the carrier delivered by Russia. By the time it enters service the aging VTOL carrier will be decommissioned leaving the navy with two vessels capable of providing credible air cover for onshore operations in Sub-Saharan Africa. This leaves the country with the challenge of getting its troops and their equipment to their destination.

India's fleet of military transports comprise 200 planes. This includes 24 Il-76 which have the range and payload to sustain power projection in Sub-Saharan Africa. The Il-76 is set to be replaced with larger C-17's albeit not on a one-to-one basis. Given vehicles are to be employed on the ground the transport fleet does not have sufficient capacity to deploy and sustain autonomous forces of a strength representing a threat to the strongest Sub-Saharan armies. The Indian navy has only one amphibious ship suitable for long range power projection – the ex-USN Austin class LPD which can carry and disembark 1000 soldiers including equipment. Additional troops may be carried on other warships which typically have two helicopters on board, but they would lack armoured vehicles and artillery support making such a force very vulnerable.

India has no bases in Africa and never deployed ground troops in autonomous operations on the continent. It has contributed vastly to various UN missions particularly in DRC. This seems the only opportunity to obtain an onshore footprint in view of the capability deficiencies vis-à-vis both the EU and the strongest Sub-Saharan states. Indian army performance in UN operations has at times been less than glamorous as witnessed in e.g. Sierra Leone at the turn of the millennium. But the expansion of its carrier fleet and the addition of advanced surface combatants capable of autonomous deployment suggest India will become an even more potent suitor for 'additional increments of power' in Sub-Saharan in the near future.

China and Sub-Saharan Power Expansion

China faces severe logistical challenges in its Sub-Saharan quest for 'additional increments of power'. Military forces seeking to deploy autonomously have to traverse more than 3600 km crossing India, Pakistan and vast stretches of ocean to reach the nearest Somali coastline. They would need to assemble in one of the remotest parts of the Peoples Republic to minimize the distance. A more realistic point of embarkation would increase the distance to 4000 km and they would still need permission to pass Pakistani airspace. Naval vessels would have to cover a distance of more than 8700 km from their base in Hainan to reach the same shores! With an air tanker fleet comprising 18 aircraft China is not capable of providing air cover for onshore operations since the country has no bases in or near the continent. The country's fleet of transport planes would be hard pressed to reach the sub-continent with

useful payloads and only the 30 IL-76 ordered in Russia can carry equipment required for autonomous deployments.

China's army is the largest in the world and discounting its enormous inventory of entirely obsolete armoury it can field 2250 modern MBT's out of which the 250 Type-99 are at contemporary Western standard. The MBT to IFV + APC ratio is 6:4 reflecting the movement from a traditional mass mobilization territorial army towards a more mobile modern force structure. Yet the majority of the IFV's and APC's are of very dated design with only the 200 ZBD-97 IFV's being up to present Western standards.

A similar pattern can be discerned for the Chinese air force. Of its more than 1600 fixed wing combat aircrafts only the 73 Su-27/30 supplied by Russia and the 160+ local J-11 derivatives in addition to the 120+ not entirely reliable J-10 qualify as modern airframes.

But in spite of the numerical excess of the Chinese army and air force, the country will rely on ship borne air cover and logistics to attain a credible autonomous onshore presence. China's navy has 80 destroyers and frigates. Of these 30 Type-53 frigates (Jianghu I-V) and 12 Type-51 destroyers (Luda I-III) are unsuitable for autonomous deployment due to their weak air defences. The 6 Jiangkai II frigates and the 2 Luyang II and the 2 Luzhou destroyers can provide area air defence. The remaining 28 frigates and destroyers have adequate capability for autonomous deployment.

The first Jiangkai II frigate was commissioned in 2008 and there are four new vessels in the pipeline bringing the total fleet to 10 vessels. Both Luzhou destroyers were commissioned after 2006. The two Luyang II class destroyers were commissioned after 2004 and they appear similar in capability to the most advanced Western vessels with long range anti-air missiles and phased-array radars. Two more vessels are under construction. Hence the Chinese navy has boosted its blue water capability and can deploy autonomous surface combatants and in addition provide limited air defence support of onshore operations through the introduction of area air defence vessels. But the navy possesses only one ship suitable for long range amphibious operations. It can carry 800 troops and their equipment, possibly less on an 8700 km voyage, and set them ashore using both heavy lift helicopters and indigenously produced air cushioned landing crafts. Another vessel of the class is under construction.

China has purchased an unfinished Soviet aircraft carrier from Ukraine. It has been undergoing completion and outfitting at the Dalian naval yard since 2002. The ship is of the same class as Russia's sole operational STOBAR (Short Take Off But Arrested Recovery) carrier. She is expected to undergo sea trials in 2011. The aviation fixed wing will comprise 12-24 Sukhoi Su-33 or the Chinese Shenyang J-15 clone. An air wing will not be available for a couple of years. The first official recognition that China plans to field a carrier was reported in late 2010 (Dickie & Hille, 2010: 8). Unconfirmed reports suggest that blocks for one or possibly two copies of the modified design are under construction and that construction plans for the even larger aborted Soviet Project 1143.7 Ul'yanovsk class has been acquired from the original builder (Fisher, 2011).

China has made no autonomous onshore deployments in Africa although Chinese military advisors have assisted with inducting weapons systems delivered to Sub-Saharan states. Sudan has apparently also received assistance with ensuring the security of oil related installations threatened by rebel activity. China's only naval deployment beyond East Asia in modern times has been the stationing of two frigates and a supply vessel of the African Horn in response to the piracy menace. In addition the country has been a solid contributor to UN missions albeit it trails far behind India in this regard.

In conclusion China is a cautious offshore balancer lacking the capability to move ashore in view of the EU presence but the country is rapidly expanding its capabilities balancing the Europeans with the introduction of aircraft carriers and expansion of its amphibious fleet.

Russia and Sub-Saharan Power Expansion

Russia faces geographical restraints in vying for Sub-Saharan power expansion similar to those of China! Direct routes are obstructed by rivals and detours will add distance to an already long voyage! Moreover, Russia's power projection capability has diminished since the collapse of the Soviet Union. And even at its height of power, conventional long range power projection was not the primary priority. During the Cold War naval based offshore assets were limited by the inability to provide air cover due to the modest Soviet carrier fleet. Emphasis was thus on coastal amphibious assault in the European theatre. Most of these assets have since been retired. Russia does, however, possess conventional offshore balancing capabilities and have the means to launch onshore operations.

Russia's army is extravagantly equipped as staff trimming has left it oversupplied with gear. Hence the 395,000 soldiers share 50,000 armoured vehicles between them nearly half of which are MBT's. Most of this is outdated and procurements have been modest. Still the army have around 5000 modern MBT's and the 300 T-90's are technologically on par with contemporary Western models. The same applies to its stocks of 15000+ IFV's where 2/3 is outdated. The roughly 300 BMP-3's are considered modern but more importantly Russia has about 1000 BMD-3's which are capable designs in their own right and in addition air-droppable with crew! An additional 500 upgraded versions of this vehicle are on order. Out of the 205,000 professional army soldiers 35,000 belong to airborne units.

Russia's fleet of military transport planes have adequate range to serve missions in Sub-Saharan Africa. Hence of the nearly 300 large military transports in the air force inventory 210 are of the type Il-76M with a range of 3650 km with max payload which equals the distance from Russia's most South-Western point to Khartoum. With half the 45 tonnes payload the range is likely considerably longer. The country also operates roughly 50 dated An-12 planes with similar range but only half the payload. In addition 21 An-22 aircraft and roughly twenty An-124 supersize transports both capable of carrying heavy main battle tanks forms part of the inventory. Russia maintains an aerial refuelling fleet of 20 IL-78. This can extend the range of the above planes but only for operations of limited scale.

Renewing the combat capability of the country's air force is progressing at a slow rate. Overall inventories of combat planes have declined to 1743. Roughly half are fighter bombers or close air support planes out of which twenty SU-34P are on par with Western designs. Of the fighter wing the majority are modern planes. The 50 upgraded SU-27's and

MiG-29's are approaching the standards of contemporary Western designs. Russia retains a sizable long range bomber capability.

Russia's inventory of blue water surface vessels has also declined. In 2000 stocks of principal surface combatants numbered 35 vessels. This compares with 34 principal surface combatants in 2010. Since 2000, Russia has launched or nearly completed construction of only 5 principal surface combatants. The Russian additions include one new frigate of the dated Neustrashimy class, the late Cold War designed Gepard class light frigate (2) and the Admiral Sergey Gorshkov class frigates (2). Only the latter are comparable to contemporary Western units.

But the country nonetheless does possess long range power projection capabilities. Russia has a single large carrier and a single landing platform dock suitable for launching amphibious attacks on distant shores – both built during the Cold War. It moreover maintains an enormous submarine fleet. The core of the country's power projection capability, however, rests with its long range bombers and sizable airborne troop component with associated aerial strategic lift fleet. The latter assets will, however, be extremely vulnerable due to the absence of air cover.

The rate of renewing assets in Russia's military inventory has been low since the collapse of the Soviet Union. This makes it difficult to deduce balancing behaviour or power expansion aspirations from changes in the arsenal! Recent moves may constitute more solid proofs of Russian aspirations to assume a stake in Africa. Hence negotiations are conducted with French naval contractor DCNS about the acquisition of large amphibious landing ships of the Mistral class.

Conclusion

The overarching question guiding this study is: how can we explain the lacking onshore presence of the four great powers USA, Russia, China and India in Sub-Saharan Africa using offensive neorealism. The onshore absence of the above countries is a theoretical puzzle since offensive neorealism predicts power maximization behaviour and it's an empirical puzzle since Sub-Saharan Africa with its profusion of failed and fragile states and absence of militarily strong local players seems ripe for great power expansion.

Three propositions were put forth.

1. The US, as regional hegemon, has a status quo bias and thus little appetite for Sub-Saharan Africa since there are no aspiring hegemons. It maintains a low key presence in the hard security domain and refrains from onshore power expansion.
2. The European Union is the only great power regularly commencing onshore military missions and it upholds superiority over the contending suitors in its power projection capability vis-à-vis the region.
3. China, Russia and India lack the capability to challenge Europe by instigating onshore operations in Sub-Saharan Africa. They seek to maximize their presence through contributions to UN missions and cautious deployments of naval assets. In parallel they challenge the EU by acquiring conventional power projection assets.

The US largely conforms to proposition 1 by staying aloof vis-à-vis power expansion games in Sub-Saharan Africa. This is particularly evident in the decision to locate AFRICOM outside the continent.

In compliance with proposition 2, the EU has maintained European security dominance through a coordinated and collaborative upgrading of power projection assets which are pooled in European Battle Groups and through bilateral accords between the major member states. It augments its position through permanent military presence and regular offshore and onshore deployments.

In accordance with proposition 3, China, India and Russia lack the means to challenge the Europeans in the Sub-Saharan theatre. They have no permanent bases in the vicinity. Their amphibious forces are short of vessels suitable for long range deployments. India and China are unable to provide air cover for ground operations in quantities required to match both the most advanced local air forces and the air combat assets the Europeans are capable of fielding. Russia has a capable air craft carrier suited for this purpose, but given the state of its remaining surface fleet it would be vulnerable. The same applies to Russia's 35,000 man strong air borne forces which could be deployed by means of its vast air transport fleet. The transport planes would, however, be vulnerable en-route and the troops lack air cover once on the ground. Moreover most of the planes would be unable to make a safe return due to the shortage of aerial refuelling aircrafts.

This picture is about to change. Hence a carrier race seem about to commence suggesting intensified competition in the future. While Russia, the militarily most potent suitor, is unlikely to radically expand its inventories in this domain, India and China are in the midst of acquiring assets which will rival Europe's even after the Queen Elizabeth class vessels are commissioned. China is in addition expanding its long range amphibious capability while Russia may procure LHD's in Europe.

In an offensive neorealist perspective, an even more radical change of the game will occur if the US, in line with this study, perceives the EU as a security actor. Once recognised as a sovereign entity on par with other states, the EU may assume the status of a regional hegemon prompting the USA to become a revisionist great power with implications for its conduct in Africa.

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