

Kevin Govern

This article will assess the roles and responsibilities of Special Operations Forces (SOF) within the newly-created U.S. Africa Command (AFRICOM), as an active proponent of a so-called “smart power” national security strategy. In particular, it will outline the economic, political, and military challenges faced in Africa, and specifically how and why Special Operations Command Africa (SOCAFRICA) is the U.S. force of choice for promoting human rights and rule of law in Africa. With the goals of the U.S. military in mind, questions will necessarily arise as to “what success looks like” for both the U.S. and African nations, and the roles of each in joint (multiservice) and combined (multinational) civil-military initiatives, so concluding comments reflect on how these forces must model “what right looks like,” and provide specific modeling failures, and the consequences when that modeling did not take place.