

The Case against DOD and CIA Involvement in Funding the Study of Africa

Scholars of Africa vs. the Department of Defense and the CIA

Since the 1970s, many scholars of Africa have rejected all connections with intelligence and military agencies based on long-standing commitments to honesty and integrity in their relationships with African institutions and individuals. The hard-won protection of African studies from military and intelligence agencies' agendas is now threatened by the implementation of the National Security Education Program (NSEP). The NSEP is funding scholars and programs in Africa despite repeated assertions by Africanists that DoD and CIA involvement in African studies is inimical to the independence of scholarship. All national African studies organizations - African Studies Association (ASA), Association of African Studies Programs (AASP), directors of the Title VI African Studies Centers in 19 universities, and ACAS - have maintained this clear stance (see quotes p.2-3).

The CIA, DoD, and Africa

This resistance to linkages with and funding from U.S. intelligence agencies and the Pentagon has been so strong because of the long history of Western interventions, the supporting of repressive rulers, and the ventures against legitimate and elected leaders in Africa. For more than 30 years, U.S. military and intelligence agencies have:

- Provided both direct and covert support to colonial and settler regimes - including the white-minority regime in Southern Rhodesia; the Portuguese colonial regimes in Angola, Mozambique, and Guinea Bissau; and the apartheid regime in South Africa.
- Subverted progressive leaders and their governments and national liberation movements - including Patrice Lumumba in the Congo, Kwame Nkrumah in Ghana, and Nelson Mandela and the ANC in the apartheid era.
- With other Western intelligence agencies, installed and/or supported dictators such as General Mobutu in Zaire, Idi Amin in Uganda, Nimeiry in Sudan, and Siad Barre in Somalia.

- Fomented civil war and conflicts through direct or indirect covert support for 'contra' factions such as UNITA in Angola and Renamo in Mozambique.

Moreover, the end of the Cold War has not eliminated the inclination for covert intervention against popularly supported governments and movements. Recent Congressional investigations reveal that the CIA not only has pushed forward highly misleading analyses but has played a direct role in subverting popular movements - for example, in undermining the elected government of Jean Bertrand Aristide in Haiti.

Some U.S. scholars of Africa and academic institutions have been linked to military and intelligence agency programs. This has raised broad suspicions in Africa about the bona fides of U.S. African studies and individual scholars. Now, the NSEP is reinvolving scholars of Africa with the DoD and CIA.

The NSEP Program

NSEP funds (1) scholarships for undergraduate students for study abroad, (2) fellowships to U.S. students in graduate programs, and (3) grants to institutions of higher education.

Such funding is urgently needed in most U.S. international studies programs. The people of the U.S. certainly need more study and understanding of world areas beyond the borders of Europe and North America, and especially of Africa. However, the NSEP program was compromised at its inception when it was firmly lodged in the military and intelligence agencies. As the NSEP's brochure notes, "Program policies and direction are provided by the Secretary of Defense in consultation with the 13 member National Security Education Board."

The majority of Board members are representatives of federal agencies, including the DoD and the Director of Central Intelligence. While an advisory committee of outside experts assists the Board and regranteeing agencies recommend student grant recipients, the criteria for selection of students and priorities among world regions, languages, and academic fields is determined by the Secretary of DoD.

Association of Concerned Africa Scholars

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The Changing Institutional Complexion of the NSEP: Camouflaging the Linkages

ACAS and other scholarly associations opposed NSEP from the outset because its funding and direction come from the DoD and CIA. Congressional hawks who insist that the military and intelligence should benefit directly from NSEP (which is funded from intelligence budgets) and supporters of the NSEP in the higher education community who seek to distance NSEP from the national security establishment have fought over the service requirement of the NSEP.

The Service Requirement

The outcome of this political struggle is that the service requirement has been changed to tie the NSEP even more directly to national security agendas. A new provision requires students who receive at least 12 months of funding from the NSEP to work for agencies with national security interests for a period equal to their scholarship or fellowship. In October 1995, the Congress had adopted language drafted by Rep. Bill Young (R-Fla.), Chair of the House Appropriations Subcommittee on National Security, requiring that student awardees "serve at least two years with the Department of Defense or the intelligence community." This threw the NSEP and its supporters into crisis, and NSEP awards were suspended temporarily.

Then, in September 1996, with lobbying from the study abroad community and the Association of American Universities (AAU), Senator Paul Simon (D-Ill.) convinced

the Congress to replace this language with the current provision requiring students to work in a sector of the federal government "having national security responsibilities." (Work in higher education could be substituted only if a government job were not available.) This new provision is much more restrictive than the original service requirement in 1992 that allowed the work to be done either in any federal agency or in a higher education institution.

The President's annual National Security Strategy report is being used as the basis for interpreting "national security." Applicants are being informed that acceptable jobs might be in offices and organizations within the Departments of Defense, intelligence agencies, National Security Council, Commerce, Energy, Justice, State, and Treasury, Arms Control and Disarmament Agency, Office of the U.S. Trade Representative, certain Congressional committees, and federally funded laboratories and research and development centers such as RAND and the Lincoln Laboratory at MIT.

Defining National Security Priorities

While the service requirement has been a lightning rod for criticism of the program, the NSEP Board has been quietly narrowing what countries, languages, and fields of study are critical to U.S. national security and will be targeted for grants. Concerning Africa, emphasis is being given to four countries (Egypt, Morocco, Nigeria, and South Africa) and only one African language - Arabic.

Organizations Opposing the NSEP

"We ... reaffirm our conviction that scholars and programs conducting research in Africa, teaching about Africa, and conducting exchange programs with Africa, should not accept research, fellowship, travel, programmatic, and other funding from military and intelligence agencies - or their contractual representatives - for work in the United States or abroad."

**Association of African Studies Programs (AASP),
December 1993 (reaffirmed in April 1997)**

"We ... strongly object to the passing of the National Security Education Act... The link which the legislation seeks to make between U.S. intelligence/defence and funding for African scholarship will seriously compromise the virtues of honesty and integrity among both American and African scholars and institutions."

**Association of University Teachers,
University of Zimbabwe, August 1992**

"The credibility and integrity of American university-based scholarship in the African studies field depend upon arrangements which ensure the independence of academic research and publication from the military and political interests of the government... The Board ... calls upon African scholars to refrain from participation in the Central Intelligence Agency's program for research and support and to oppose participation in other activities it sponsors."

**African Studies Association, April 28, 1990
(reaffirmed in December 1993)**

"The American Council of Learned Societies ... cannot support ... either the present location of the NSEA within the Department of Defense or its present oversight structure."

**American Council of Learned Societies,
January 1993**

The fields of study given primary emphasis are business and economics, engineering and applied sciences, international affairs, political science, history, and policy sciences. With these changes, Thomas Farrell, vice-president of exchange programs at Institution of International Education (IIE) - which administers the NSEP undergraduate scholarships - now describes NSEP as "a niche program" that focuses on a narrower arena of academic fields (Chronicle of Higher Education (CHE) 5/30/97).

Because of these changes in the service requirement and focus of the NSEP and the resultant confusion, the number of applicants for NSEP scholarships and fellowships dropped by more than two-thirds and the number of awards was cut by more than half from 1995 to 1997. The NSEP now is aggressively promoting the program. Because of its narrower focus, NSEP plans to market the program more heavily to students interested in working in national security (CHE, 3/14/97).

NSEP Funding for Students of Africa

A relatively small number of NSEP's approximately 1,400 student awards have gone for study of Africa - about nine percent of fellowships and scholarships funded in 1994-97. This is due at least in part to the greater opposition to NSEP from scholars of Africa than from other world areas and the relatively low priority the NSEP is giving to Africa.

The NSEP has given 35 graduate fellowships for study in 18 Sub-Saharan African countries and 11 African languages as well as 88 undergraduate scholarships for study in 11 Sub-Saharan African countries and 9 African languages. In many cases, the host African institutions and even the sponsoring U.S. study abroad programs through which undergraduate students have traveled to Africa have not known that the source of students' funding is the DoD's NSEP program.

NSEP Direct Institutional Grants

The NSEP has made a total of \$6.8 million in grants to 22 higher education institutions in 1994-97. Although the AAU and other associations that support NSEP have cited the importance of "regranting agencies" to ensure independence of the programs it funds, there has been no public outcry against the institutional grants being administered directly by the NSEP Office within DOD (with peer-review mechanisms that are standard for government grants). By far, the largest number of institutional programs focus on Asia. Two focus on Africa - an internship program to examine the role played by African women (Clark Atlanta University) and study by doctoral students of Arabic and classical Islamic thought offered in Morocco (Washington University, St. Louis). Another grant is to a consortium of 10 medical universities in the U.S., Africa, Asia, and Latin America to internationalize medical training (University of California - Davis).

More Organizations Opposing the NSEP

Since 1981, the directors of the Title VI African National Resource Centers have agreed not to apply for, accept, or recommend to students any military or intelligence funding from the Defense Intelligence Agency, the NSEP, or other sources. This stance was reaffirmed by the directors gathered in Washington, D.C. at their meeting in April 1997.

**Title VI African Studies Center Directors
Policy since 1980s, reaffirmed April 1997**

"[The Social Science Research Council's] board determined, even before the provisions for implementation of the program had been finalized, that they were sufficiently flawed that the council should not even enter into discussions and negotiations about its possible participation in the program."

**Stanley J. Heginbotham, former Vice President
of SSRC, in Bulletin of Concerned Asian
Scholars, January-March 1997**

"We are gravely concerned ... at the presence of the Director of the CIA in the oversight of the program... Linking university based research to U.S. national security agencies will restrict our already narrow research opportunities; it will endanger the physical safety of scholars and our students studying abroad; and it will jeopardize the cooperation and safety of those we study and collaborate with in these regions."

**Presidents of the African Studies Association,
Latin American Studies Association, and
Middle East Studies Association, February 1992**

"Past experience, in South Asia as elsewhere, amply demonstrates the perils of connections, however tenuous, between scholars and U.S. national security agencies. Possible consequences range from mistrust and lack of cooperation to physical violence against U.S. scholars and their colleagues abroad..."

South Asia Council, April 1992

Why say No to NSEP Funding?

Cooperation among scholars of North America and Africa can be maintained only if scholarly activities and exchanges are public, transparent, and based on academic integrity. This is impossible if academic inquiry about Africa is defined using "national security" and military goals.

NSEP represents an attempt to use intelligence and Pentagon funding to direct undergraduate overseas experience, graduate scholarship, and programs at higher education institutions toward national security purposes and priorities.

Indeed, funding from NSEP imperils academic relations with Africa and the heritage of trust that has developed between African and North American scholars because of

between African and North American scholars because of shared commitments to broader humane values and the disavowal of military and intelligence funding. Now, with some scholars accepting NSEP funding in Africa, all who are engaged in research in the field may be suspect and find themselves in unpleasant and even dangerous situations.

Over 100 scholars have protested NSEP in a statement sponsored by ACAS in the Chronicle of Higher Education:

Funding from national security agencies threatens the openness of scholarly inquiry and publication, the physical safety of scholars and students overseas, and cooperation between African and U.S. scholars.

(June 2, 1993)

ACAS calls on scholars and students of Africa to:

- reject funding from the NSEP program for all scholarship on Africa,
- call on one's university administrators to reject NSEP student and institutional funding,
- publicize NSEP's links to military and intelligence agencies, and
- work to secure additional funding from non-military/intelligence agencies for students of African studies, particularly those traditionally excluded from overseas study programs.

What ACAS Stands For

Founded in 1977, ACAS is a group of scholars and students of Africa dedicated to:

- formulating alternative analyses of Africa and U.S. government policy,
- developing communication and action networks between the peoples and scholars of Africa and the United States,
- and mobilizing support in the United States on critical, current issues related to Africa.

Members of ACAS receive the ACAS *Bulletin*, *Action Alerts*, and publications such as this *Issue Briefing Paper*.

To support ACAS and receive these materials become a member. Dues are based on annual income:

<u>Annual Dues:</u>	Annual Income to \$10,000 - \$10	\$10,000 to \$20,000 - \$20	\$20,000 to \$40,000 - \$30
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Send your name, address, affiliation, area(s) of interest, and a check to "ACAS" to:

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