

Resolution on the Study of Africa After 9/11

Adopted April 28, 2005 by the ASA Board of Directors

1. Whereas we live in a period of increasing conflict and war affecting Americans, Africans and peoples worldwide,
2. Whereas the defense of democratic freedoms requires the free flow of information, free speech, and open debate,
3. Whereas recent U.S. government laws and executive policies, most notable the USA Patriot Act and Homeland Security Act, have operated to restrict basic civil liberties and freedom of expression, and more than 300 U.S. cities and counties and 3 states have passed resolutions opposing the USA Patriot Act,
4. Whereas these laws and policies interfere with academic freedom and contribute to a climate of intolerance on our campuses and in our communities,
5. Whereas there is increasing pressure to align the study of Africa with the narrow priorities of military and intelligence operations,
6. Whereas new security and visa policies based on religious and racial profiling are subverting the free exchange of knowledge with and visits by African scholars,

Therefore be it resolved that we, the Board of Directors of the African Studies Association, reaffirm our commitment to academic freedom and human rights, and call upon scholars as well as college and university administrations to safeguard free speech; and

We reaffirm the African Studies Association's long-standing policy of support for the open and transparent determination of research priorities and awards, and against research determined by the priorities of military and intelligence agencies. In particular, the Board rejects secret grants, fellowships and awards whose sources are not publicly acknowledged and which, in doing, compromise the integrity and threaten the safety of all American scholars conducting research abroad; and

We call for a visa policy free of racial and religious profiling.

We further resolve that the African Studies Association will provide time and meeting space for the discussion of issues of academic freedom, research ethics and human rights at the Annual Meeting of the Association; and

Establish an Ethics Committee as a standing committee of the Board of Directors that will report annually to the Board and membership of the Association on the state of such issues, and

Urge members of the Association and all coordinate organizations to report to the Board of Directors Ethics Committee regarding violations of academic freedom, research ethics, and human rights relating to African studies and to the conduct of research on the African continent.