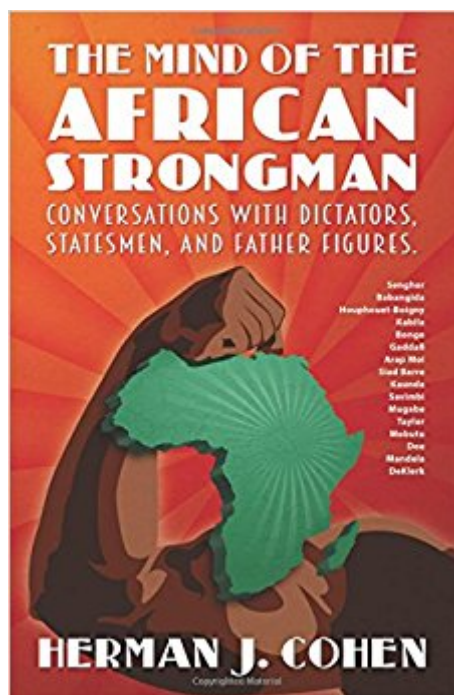




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# THE MIND OF THE AFRICAN STRONGMAN: Conversations With Dictators, Statesmen, And Father Figures



## Synopsis

With *The Mind of the African Strongman*, Herman J. Cohen, career ambassador and former Assistant Secretary of State, takes a look at what has helped and what has hindered economic development and democracy in Africa since the end of colonialism. Despite access to vast natural resources and decades of international development aid, why have so many African countries failed to keep the promises made to their people? With wit and a sharp analytical eye, Ambassador Cohen reflects on nearly four decades of work throughout the continent, sharing stories of his personal encounters with some of Africa's most legendary leaders. From Nelson Mandela to Muammar Gaddafi, Cohen gives readers a never-before-seen look at the men who defined modern Africa, as well as a behind-the-scenes account of dealing with U.S. Presidents, Secretaries of State, and other key leaders shaping U.S. foreign policy toward Africa in the post-colonial / Cold War era. Ambassador Cohen's historical analysis shows how today's African leaders can fulfill the continent's economic and democratic potential.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

"[Cohen] has written a fascinating and clear-eyed book...a great read - I did so in a single sitting because I could not put it down. Africa watchers will delight in Cohen's subtle pen portraits of Africa's big men. Through him, the reader feels he or she actually participates in conversations with personalities as variable as Congo's Mobutu or Nigeria's Babangida."- John Campbell, Ralph Bunche Senior Fellow for Africa Policy Studies, and former U.S. Ambassador to Nigeria"For half a

century, Hank Cohen has probed Africa's most intimate secrets as a diplomat and foreign policy analyst. From the Congo to the Comoros, he has seen it all. Now, with an incisive book rich in insight and vivid color, he emerges as a master storyteller. To understand African leadership, past and present, you need this book." - Mort Rosenblum, author of *Squandering Eden: Africa at the Edge*, and former editor of the *International Herald Tribune*"There are few who match Hank Cohen in terms of the length and breadth of his experience in and engagement with Africa, both within government and, subsequently, in the private sector. Even those who find themselves at disagreement with one or another of the author's conclusions will nevertheless find the stories of his dealings with some of the most famous (and infamous) African leaders of the period fascinating and the insights of these historical figures which he recounts an invaluable resource." - J. Peter Pham, Director, Atlantic Council Africa Center"Cohen's cogently argued analysis of Africa's first generation of post-colonial leaders will provide both experienced Africa hands and new readers useful insights into the major transitions underway in Africa and the continually evolving US role there." - John Hirsch, Senior Advisor, International Peace Institute, and former U.S. Ambassador to Sierra Leone"That individuals often do make a difference is the thesis of *The Mind of the African Strongman*. Based upon his unrivaled experience as an American diplomat in Africa, Hank Cohen's collection of conversations with Africa's Big Men is invaluable to anyone interested in that continent and its tumultuous modern history." - Edward Marks, Minister-Counselor (ret.), U.S. Foreign Service

As an ambassador, advisor to Presidents, and a 38-year veteran of the Foreign Service, Ambassador Herman J. Cohen has devoted his entire professional career to African and European affairs. Over the years, Cohen grew to know every first-generation African leader - from Mandela, to Mobutu, to Moammar Gaddafi. During his tenure as Assistant Secretary of State for African Affairs during the first Bush Administration, and through his role at the NSC in the Reagan White House, Cohen worked to bring about peaceful transitions of power in South Africa and Namibia, and helped to end civil wars in Angola, Ethiopia, and Mozambique.

The book goes straight to the point on how he dealt with African dictators

Great book with lots of truth. Some governments used to tell the history in a different ways for personal gain...

No other American, in or out of government, has had more experience than Ambassador Cohen in dealing with independent Africa's first generation of political leaders as they sought to enlist American political and economic support at home and in the international arena. The nitty-gritties of this first person account make it a prime source for historical researchers as well as a fascinating tale of Cohen's largely successful personal efforts to harmonize the varying and often self-contradictory interests of African political leaders and American administrations. In his private consulting business after retiring as Assistant Secretary of State for African Affairs, Cohen was able to call upon his reputation as an honest broker to continue promoting closer ties between Africa and America. Cohen leaves to the final chapter his opinions and questions about the future of Africa under the current generation of African leaders. Richard Matheron, retired US Ambassador

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