Module Number: AF01

Module Name: From Colony to Independence

Date: June 27, 2007

**Introduction:** For centuries, African peoples and empires had been involved in trade and diplomatic relations with those in Europe. The Portuguese were the first Europeans to establish a physical presence in Africa, in the 1480s, but through the 1870s European outposts were restricted to ports along the African coasts by African military, trade and diplomatic strength. In the second half of the nineteenth century, however, the balance of power began to shift in Europe's favor, and gradually various European nations laid claim to imperial territories on the African Continent.

The most profound changes occurred between 1880- 1895. In 1884- 85, the Berlin Conference was called to establish the ground rules amongst Europeans for laying claim to territory on the African continent. No African sovereigns or representatives were invited to attend. As the maps display, there was a sudden explosion of European imperial claims on the continent after the conference of Berlin.

The boundaries drawn by Europeans in the late 19th century remain, to a large extent, the boundaries of Africa's independent nations today. When the Organization of African Unity (OAU) first convened in May of 1961, it was decided to leave the current national boarders as they were in order to avoid unnecessary turmoil. Most of the continents 53 sovereign nations gained their independence in the 1960s, while others struggles through the 1970s, the 1980s and even into the 1990s before gaining national independence. The Western Sahara is a region that as late as 2007 had not yet received international recognition as an independent, self-governing, nation-state.

**Section 1**

**Title: Territories Claimed by Europeans on the Eve of the 1884-85 Berlin Conference**

**Frame 1: use maps 01-05 from inventory**

**Caption: 1884-1885**

**Text:** The majority of the African continent remained under African rule through the mid-1880s. African military, trade and diplomatic power kept European trade and other interests confined largely to coastal towns. The non-shaded area on the map does not represent uninhabited areas, but area inhabited by Africans where there is no European influence.

**Title: Africa, as Divided Amongst European Imperial Powers, 1895**

**Frame 2: use maps # 08 and 02A from inventory**

**Caption: 1885-1895**

**Text box**: The borders of the African nations, as they exist today, were largely drawn by Europeans in the late-19th century. These boundaries were based on European claims to imperial control over territory rather than indigenous notions of territorial, linguistic, or political integrity.

\*pop-up bubble: Leopold II, King of Belgium, was named sovereign of the Congo Free State in the Berlin Treaty of 1885. Leopold II turned Congo Free State over to Belgium in 1908.

**Title: Africa Under Colonial Rule, 1924**

**Frame 3: maps 10-14**

**Caption: 1895- 1945**

**Text box**: Due to Germany's loss in WWII, the German territories (Togoland, Cameroon, Rwanda-Urundi, Tanganyika, and South West Africa) were declared League of Nations Protectorates and awarded to various European colonial powers. Ethiopia was the only African territory to retain its sovereignty during the colonial era

**Title: National Independence**

**Frame 4: maps 15 and 16**

**Caption: 1945-2000**

**Text box**: This map shows the current border of African nations with the different colors representing the decade in which the nations gained their independence. With only a few exceptions, the boundaries drawn by Europeans in the 19th century have remained largely intact.

\*pop-up bubble on Western Sahara: In 1975, the International Court of Justice declared the right of the people of Western Sahara to self-determination. Just before Spain was to end their colonial administration in Western Sahara in 1976, the nation was partitioned between Morocco and Mauritania. By 1987, with the help of United States military support, Morocco had exculsive control of Western Sahara. Morocco still occupies the nation today while many of the indigenous peoples of the area are exiled in refugee camps in Algeria.

\*pop-up bubble on Liberia: Although the Republic of Liberia declared its independence on July 26th 1847, this independence was not from any political entity but from a sort of "protectorate" status. The American Colonization Society, a "philanthropic" organization closely associated with the United States government, was formally responsible for affairs in Liberia before official independence. Even after independence, Liberia was governed by an African-American elite (or the descendants thereof) who retained close ties with the United States.

\*pop-up bubble on Ethiopia: Ethiopia remained independent for the years of 1935- 41 when occupied by Mussolini's troops from Italy.

\*scroll-over on Each Country: Displaying name and date of independence