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## Winter 2012 issue

### FEATURED STORIES

## Blueprint for revolution

by Jason Winders, MES'10

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George Ayittey does not mince words. So when his latest manuscript landed on his publisher's desk a few months ago, the book's title shouldn't have surprised anyone: *How to Topple a Brutal Dictator*.

"I had so much trouble convincing my publisher on the title," he laughs. "He was so spooked. He said, 'No, no, no we cannot go with this title. It is too provocative. We don't want to do a how-to book on

revolution."

The publisher countered with his own: *The March of Freedom: Fighting Dictators in Africa and Around the World*. But those words rang hollow to Ayittey, MA'70 (Economics).

"I don't like the word 'fight.' You can fight someone without winning. I don't want to 'fight' these dictators; I want to defeat them, topple them," he says from his Virginia home. "And what is this 'around the world'? Everyone knows where these sons-of-bitches are."

You see, for George Ayittey, the only good dictator is a dead dictator.

As president of the Washington, D.C.-based [Free Africa Foundation](#), which he founded in 1993, Ayittey has dedicated his life to the argument that Africa is poor because she is not free. Through a half dozen books and countless appearances in front of audiences and political bodies across the globe, he has brought his message – often unpopular – about how to save Africa.

"This is a story which has to be told by an African. It cannot be told by a Canadian or an American. It has to be told by an African because we have experienced this, we have seen these dictators and how they operate," he says. "(After colonialism), independence was in name only. All we did was trade one set of masters for another and the oppression and exploitation of the African people continued unabated."

His most recent book, published in November, continues telling that story. In the eventually titled, *Defeating Dictators: Fighting Tyranny in Africa and Around the World*, Ayittey argues financial and other aid to Africa, while virtuous, is done in vain unless the continent sheds itself of violent dictatorships. Offered on the book's pages is what


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