

African Peace Initiative Seeks to End War in Eastern Europe

Seven governments deployed leaders and officials visiting Ukraine and Russia

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African Union (AU) member-states have refused to remain silent on the crisis between the Russian Federation and Ukraine since the beginning of the special military operation in late February 2022.

As founding members of the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) during the early 1960s, progressive African states such as the Republic of Ghana and the United Arab Republic (Egypt) sought to halt what appeared at the time to be the inevitability of another world war which could result in a nuclear weapons conflagration.

Ghana under President Kwame Nkrumah waged an international campaign to halt the testing by France of nuclear weapons in Algeria during the armed struggle being waged by the National Liberation Front (FLN). In later years, 1965-66, Nkrumah embarked upon an effort to halt the United States bombing of North Vietnam and to end the occupation of Southeast Asia. (See [this](#))

Ghana as a state during this period was very active in the world peace movement along with its advocacy for and material assistance to liberation movements waging struggles against colonial hegemony. According [to one source](#):

“Nor were African voices absent in international efforts to initiate state-level moves towards disarmament. In parallel with its commitments to the Non-Aligned Movement, the government of Ghana sponsored a series of anti-nuclear conferences in the early 1960s, culminating in the 1962 Accra Assembly on ‘The World Without the Bomb’. After the conference a small organization was established in Ghana headed by a government official, Frank Boaten, to continue its efforts at disarmament. Alongside these official

initiatives, small nuclear disarmament campaigns were set up by activists in countries including Sierra Leone and South Africa.”

Consequently, it is not surprising that the African Peace Initiative delegation headed by Republic of South African President Cyril Ramaphosa has been calling for a diplomatic resolution to the war and the lifting of sanctions against the Russian Federation. The war and sanctions imposed by the U.S. and other North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) states and their allies has disrupted the supply of agricultural products and inputs to several African states.

These problems are aggravated by the financial impact of the western sanctions which have severely restricted the mechanism for financial payments involving global trade. At the same time, the U.S. Congress has advanced a bill which would further interfere with the capacity of AU member-states to conduct trade with the Russian Federation. See [this](#).

Prior to the visit of the African leaders to Ukraine and Russia, a bipartisan group of Congressional members in the House and Senate sent a letter to President Joe Biden asking that the Republic of South Africa be punished economically for its alleged support to the Russian Federation in the war. The U.S. ambassador to South Africa has accused the African National Congress (ANC) government of providing arms to Moscow, a charge denied by President Ramaphosa.

Delegation Travels to Ukraine and then St. Petersburg

The Eastern European state of Poland has been the major rear base for NATO in their war against Russia in Ukraine. Many of the Ukrainian troops which are armed and trained by the Pentagon and NATO, are housed in Poland. See [this](#).

On June 15 when President Ramaphosa and his delegation arrived in Poland, they were held up by the government at the airport under the guise that the South African security detail was not authorized to carry arms. Such an assertion could easily be viewed as a threat to the protection detail which accompanies a head-of-state.

[Telesur described](#) the situation as follows:

“Polish authorities prevented the South African delegation from getting off the plane on the grounds that the president’s security personnel did not have the proper permits to bring weapons into the country. According to Pieter du Toit, a journalist on the plane, the Polish authorities finally allowed the delegation to leave the plane after more than 24 hours on the tarmac in Warsaw. The delegation, consisting of more than 100 security personnel and some 20 journalists, arrived early Thursday (June 15) morning at the Polish airport. Major General Wally Rhooode, Ramaphosa’s security chief, denounced the Polish government’s act as racism and sabotage against the president’s security, preventing him from entering Kiev with proper security protection. Presidential spokesman Vincent Magwenya has said that the South African president’s security ‘has not been compromised.’ Ramaphosa has arrived at the Nemishaeve train station in Ukraine, the country’s presidency said.... The European Union has said that it will not support the African peace plan in Ukraine if it involves freezing the conflict.”

These actions, which violate the most rudimentary decorum of international diplomacy, were a clear indication that Washington and its NATO allies do not want peace at this stage

of the war in Eastern Europe. Ukraine President Volodymyr Zelensky stated during the visit of the African Peace Initiative that his government was not interested in talks to end the war.

In contrast, the delegation was greeted enthusiastically by the Russian government at the 26th St. Petersburg International Economic Forum. The African delegation met with President Vladimir Putin and other high-ranking officials of the Russian Federation.

A ten-point program advanced by the AU delegation was listened to attentively by the Russian leadership. President Putin said that he was open to holding discussions with Ukraine over the current crisis between the two states.

In an article on the discussions, [Tass news agencies reported](#) that:

“The African peace initiative ideally could lead to dialogue and potentially a de-escalation, says Natalia Piskunova, associate professor at Moscow State University’s Department of World Politics. ‘The call for abandoning the armed conflict suggested by the African group also reflects the long-standing universal approach to settling conflicts under UN auspices,’ she says. So far, the African peace initiative appears to be the most well-thought-through and balanced as compared to those plans previously proposed, the expert thinks.... Since the Ukrainian crisis is a logical development of worsening relations between Russia and the West, beginning back in 2011, however, any peace plan, even the most thought-out, is doomed to fail, says Dmitry Ofitserov-Belsky, a researcher at the Russian Academy of Sciences’ Primakov Institute of World Economy and International Relations (IMEMO RAS). The fighting will end only when Western countries, and the U.S. in particular, are disabused of the idea that their political goals can be attained by further stoking the conflict.”

After the meetings with the Russian officials, the African leaders traveled back to their respective states. President Ramaphosa held a press briefing prior to leaving from St. Petersburg noting that the war must end.

NATO-backed “Counteroffensive” and Electoral Politics

At present, Ukraine with its re-trained and restaffed military personnel numbering 40-50 thousand troops, have declared the beginning of a counter-offensive against the Russian armed forces. Most of the media accounts in the West have acknowledged some of the losses suffered by the Ukrainian forces. The corporate and government-controlled news agencies, despite their biases, have admitted on numerous occasions that military equipment provided by the NATO countries is being destroyed by Russia.

Russian media reports on the counteroffensive indicate that it has been a complete failure so far in the present period. This message of a well-fortified Russian military apparatus based in the federated areas of eastern and southern Ukraine which has repelled several attempts by the NATO-trained forces to break through their defense lines, does not bode well for the Biden administration.

Tass, in a headline story on the Pentagon’s response to the lack of success in the Ukraine counteroffensive, [quotes from](#) a Defense Department spokesperson who said:

“The Ukrainian counter-offensive will be tough for the Kiev government’s forces and will entail casualties among their ranks, Deputy Pentagon Press Secretary Sabrina Singh has

said. 'Our assessments have been pretty clear from the beginning. I think you know, we know as you continue to see the fights that have continued to move to the east, it's become more of a <...> battle,' she told reporters at a briefing on Tuesday (June 20). 'We know this is going to be a hard fight. We know this is going to take time. And we are confident that the Ukrainians have what they need. We have accounted for losses. We know there are going to be losses on the battlefield. That's the unfortunate part of this war,' the spokesperson continued. In her words, the United States has provided Ukraine with the systems and the capabilities that its troops need. 'We know this is going to be a tough fight. Of course, the Russians are going to adapt as they would have from the beginning of the war,' Singh said.

The foreign policy imperatives of the Biden White House are centered on the weakening of the Russian Federation and the People's Republic of China, its principal strategic competitors. Secretary of State Antony Blinken's visit to Beijing during June 18-19 only highlighted the blunders of U.S. imperialism. Russia, China, Iran and the AU are working closer together in efforts to build a world system independent of the West. Chinese foreign ministry officials pointed out the relations between Beijing and Washington are at their lowest point in history.

This deterioration of relations with China has its counterpart in regard to the Russian Federation.

As Biden's approval ratings have dropped even further with more than 50% of registered voters holding a negative view of his presidency, the prospect for regaining the White House is brought seriously into question. The handling of the economy by the administration is a major cause for concern among a majority of the electorate. See [this](#).

Moreover, overall support for the U.S. funding and engineering of the proxy war against Russia in Ukraine has declined significantly. Consequently, the White House in its Pentagon statement on June 20, appears to be preparing the people of the U.S. for the possibility of more defeats in Ukraine. The only real alternative is for the reemergence of a peace movement in the U.S. which demands the withdrawal of all funding for the proxy war and the resumption of negotiations to end the fighting. See [this](#).

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