

As War Lingers in Mali, Western Powers Target its Natural Resources

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France's intervention in the West African nation of Mali under Operation Serval drove Islamic groups associated with Al-Qaeda out of Northern Mali in February 2013. When the Tuareg rebellion occurred in early 2012, it was against the Malian government led by the National Movement for the Liberation of Azawad (MNLA) for the independence of Northern Mali also known as Azawad. There were also Islamic groups such as the Ansar Dine and Al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM) who originally helped the MNLA. Eventually both Islamist groups turned on the MNLA forcing them out and creating a Sharia based Northern Mali. The government of Mali requested foreign assistance to re-take the north and France answered the call. France restored Mali's government back to power.

France's military incursion with Western support was described as a "humanitarian intervention" which resulted in a race for Mali's natural resources. That was the plan after all. New drilling contracts have just been established after Mali's civil war was contained by the French military with the backing of the United Kingdom and the United States Africa Command (AFRICOM). The collaboration of Western powers just opened up Mali for business. A new press release by Legend Gold of Vancouver, BC Canada states the intention of gold mine drilling in several regions of Mali. The press release titled '*Legend Gold Announces Signing of Drilling Contracts for Exploration in Mali*' stated exactly what areas of Mali will be extracted for gold by the new drilling contracts:

VANCOUVER, BRITISH COLUMBIA--(Marketwired - Jan. 6, 2014) - Legend Gold Corp. (the "Company" or "Legend Gold") (TSX VENTURE:LGN) is pleased to announce the commencement of drilling for the season. Legend Gold has contracted for a minimum of 5,000 m of reverse circulation (RC) drilling and 10,000 m of air core (AC) drilling for the Diba and Lankafila projects in western Mali and the Mougina project in southern Mali.

In western Mali, Legend Gold plans to explore for extensions to the Diba-Badiazila resource which contains 234,000 oz at 1.67 g/t gold of indicated and 26,700 oz of inferred mineralization at 1.9 g/t at 0.8 g/t gold cutoff (AMEC's NI 43-101 compliant Technical Report, August 2013). There remain a number of gaps in the AMEC resource which can be in-filled by a number of shallow RC holes to bring the oxide resource from the indicated and inferred categories to measured and indicated. The oxide resource evaluated to date extends to about 50 m below the surface. A minimum of 3,000 m of RC drilling will be used to infill gaps in the existing resource as well as testing the immediate on-strike extensions of the Diba deposit. Analysis of previous results derived from drilling completed by Etruscan Resources in 2009 suggests that additional resources remain to be discovered on-strike from the known mineralization, along a 2 km long soil auger geochemistry anomaly to the northwest. Several lines of RC and core

holes drilled by Etruscan Resources about 1.5 km to the NNW of Diba yielded multiple mineralized intervals which warrant follow up drilling.

Preliminary results of a ground gravity survey on the Lankalfa project area suggest that areas that have been drilled previously warrant additional exploration. New and upgraded targets revealed by the final interpretation of the gravity survey will also be included in the 2,000 m of RC drilling planned for Lankafla.

In southern Mali, exploration by Legend Gold on the Mougina exploration license, some twenty kilometers north of the Syama mine, has mapped a series of ancient artisanal workings which are coincident with soil auger gold anomalies. The ancient workings appear to be on splay off the same fault system that controls mineralization at the Syama mine. At least 5,000 m of AC drilling are planned to test the soil auger gold anomalies and artisanal workings.

The drill program is expected to commence in early February 2014.

Douglas Perkins, President and Chief Executive Officer of Legend Gold stated, "The data review and project ranking that took place over the past three months is now complete and the technical team has chosen their priorities for the current drilling season. Given the current state of the exploration business, Legend Gold was able to obtain some very competitive quotes for meters. We look forward to announcing the results as soon as they are available."

On December 18th, 2013 the International Monetary Fund (IMF) announced that it would financially assist Mali in a press release '*IMF Executive Board Approves New Extended Credit Facility Arrangement for Mali and US\$9.2 Million Disbursement*' regarding Mali's economic potential with help from external financial resources. The institution which is based in Washington DC announced what the new arrangements will provide to the war torn country:

The Executive Board of the International Monetary Fund (IMF) today approved a new arrangement under the Extended Credit Facility (ECF) for Mali for an amount equivalent to SDR 30 million (about US\$ 46.2 million or 32 percent of quota). The approval enables the immediate disbursement of an amount equivalent to SDR 6 million (about US\$9.2 million).

The authorities' program is designed to reduce balance-of-payments vulnerabilities and lay foundations for stronger, more inclusive growth. Reform efforts are focused on tax policy and revenue administration, public financial management and improving the business environment.

The IMF imposes debts on nations and forces its governments to cut back on social services such as education and medical care in order to pay back the debt. An article written by Arthur MacEwan which was published on Third World Network titled '*Economic debacle in Argentina: The IMF strikes again*' describes how IMF policies affected Argentina's economy:

During 2001 the Argentine recession grew rapidly deeper. Although the IMF pumped in additional funds, it provided these funds on the condition that the Argentine government would entirely eliminate its budget deficit. With the economy in a nose-dive and tax revenues plummeting, the only way to balance the budget was to drastically cut government spending. Yet, in doing so, the government was both eviscerating social

programmes and reducing overall demand. In mid-December, the government announced that it would cut the salaries of public employees by 20% and reduce pension payments. At the same time, as the worsening crisis raised fears that the peso would be devalued, the government moved to prevent people from trading their pesos for dollars; it promulgated a regulation limiting bank withdrawals. These steps were the final straws, and in the week before Christmas, all hell broke loose.

According to www.allafrica.com an online African news source admits an increase in foreign investments and believes that Mali will experience growth “*Mali is expected to benefit from relatively stable external conditions in the near term. The region’s prospects are favorable. Sub-Saharan Africa is set to enjoy continued robust growth driven by strong investment in infrastructure and productive capacity, and by rising inflows of foreign direct investment and other financing opportunities*” which is further from the truth. RT News reported on June 10th, 2013 what does foreign investment in the gold industry mean for Malian citizens and especially for those who work in the gold mines:

War-worn Mali has tripled its gold exports over the last decade, though the rising profits are being funneled outside what is one of the world’s poorest countries: Foreign corporations appear to be taking over one of Mali’s few thriving industries. Mali, Africa’s third-largest gold producer, has just announced it expects to double annual gold output over the next five years to 100 tons.

Malian officials claim the gold-abundant south has been untouched by the military conflict between government troops and Tuareg insurgents in the north, which prompted an intervention by France in January. The promise of gold has lured investors into one of Mali’s most profitable industries.

However, residents have decried the news, as they feel they will benefit little from the country’s newfound riches. Thousands are employed as ‘traditional miners’ in the town of Yanfolila in southern Mali, the epicenter of the country’s gold rush. Traditional mining is a near-medieval process in which Malian workers dig holes approximately the size of their own bodies using only primitive picks – their gold mines. Without a proper geological survey, workers are essentially hoping to get lucky. The narrow shafts go as deep down as 60 meters, the equivalent of a 15- to 20-story building

French intervention in Mali had nothing to do with the welfare of the Malian people. It was about the natural resources it has including gold, uranium and oil. With gold demand increasing among nations throughout the world, it is no surprise that the Western powers would intervene in any internal conflict in a resource rich country in the African continent. The French government has interests in Mali. That interest is in natural resources as Katrin Sold of the German Council on Foreign Relations stated in 2013 “*In the long term, France has interests in securing resources in the Sahel – particularly oil and uranium, which the French energy company Areva has been extracting for decades in neighboring Niger*”. Mali has abundant natural resources. The civil war intensified through a western backed military coup with Captain Amadou Haya Sanogo who was trained by the United States lead a coup against democratically-elected government of Amadou Toumani Touré after the Tuareg Rebellion in Northern Mali. Western Institutions and corporations wasted no time in acquiring natural resources during Mali’s crises. Divide and conquer and then accumulate the resources was the was the Western government’s intentions. During a speech by French President Francois Hollande on February 2nd, 2013 after France intervened in Mali, hypocrisy took hold when he said:

France stands alongside you, not to serve any particular interest – we have none –, to protect this or that faction, or in favour of this or that Malian party... No, we stand alongside you for the sake of the whole of Mali and for West Africa. We're fighting here to ensure Mali lives in peace and democracy. And you've presented the best image today, through your warmth and fervour, after your pain throughout those months when fanaticism held sway in northern Mali.

We're fighting as brothers – Malians, French, Africans – because I haven't forgotten that when France herself was attacked, when she was seeking support and allies, when her territorial integrity was threatened, who came along? It was Africa; it was Mali. Thank you, thank you, Mali. Today we're repaying our debt to you

Mali is the country that has to repay its debts to the IMF and its western powers through its natural resources, not France. A loan from the IMF is guaranteed to create more debt for the Malian people. As Western powers such as the United States, United Kingdom, Canada and France continue to intervene in third world countries for their own interests, it seems like Mali is under their control for the long term pushing China out as a potential business partner with the Malian government. France and AFRICOM are expanding its intervention policies throughout Africa because it is about the resources, besides; the West has been intervening in Africa for the past 500 +years that only resulted in more wars and extreme poverty for the African people.

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