

Does Africa Need Russia? The First Ever Russia-Africa Summit

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The roughly three dozen African heads of state who will travel to Sochi later this week to attend the first-ever Russia-Africa Summit realize that the comprehensive expansion of relations with the Eurasian Great Power gives them a competitive edge in the New Cold War and can help them thwart the many plots associated with the modern-day “Scramble for Africa”.

The first-ever [Russia-Africa Summit](#) will take place in Sochi this week from 23-24 October and usher in an entirely new era of relations between the Eurasian Great Power and world’s least-developed continent from which Moscow largely withdrew following the end of the Old Cold War. There’s a lot of nostalgia and heavy symbolism associated with this event, but both Russia and Africa have markedly changed over the past quarter-century, so it isn’t so much a reunion between close friends as it is a meeting between distant ones after growing apart for so long. If anything, this is actually an advantage because it means that Russia has none of the “historical baggage” that its international peers such as the US and France do who have been directly involved in some of the more controversial developments that took place there since 1991 such as the Congo Wars and the so-called “Global War on Terror”. Russia’s “rediscovery” of Africa couldn’t have come at a better time either since the landmass is rapidly becoming a theater of international competition in the [New Cold War](#) given its enormous resource wealth, promising economic potential, and geostrategic location, hence why it’s possible to speak about a modern-day “Scramble for Africa” involving players such as the aforementioned three, China, the EU, India, Japan, and even the UAE.

On the surface, it sounds unreal that Russia is even able to compete given the military and economic strength of all the others increasingly involved in Africa at this moment, but the fact of the matter is that Moscow [invaluably fills the much-needed niche](#) of providing its partners there with “Democratic Security”, or in other words, the cost-effective and low-commitment capabilities needed to thwart Color Revolutions and resolve Unconventional Wars (collectively referred to as [Hybrid War](#)). To simplify, Russia’s “political technologists” have reportedly devised bespoke solutions for confronting incipient and ongoing Color Revolutions, just like its private military contractors (PMCs) have supposedly done the same when it comes to ending insurgencies, the latter of which has been powerfully on display in the Central African Republic (CAR) since the beginning of 2018 and was described at length in the author’s piece last summer concerning the latest “[UN Update On Russia’s Military Mission In The Central African Republic](#)”. Basically, Russian military advisors, arms

shipments, and PMC trainers succeeded in stopping a civil war that was bordering on genocide despite the rest of the world having lost hope that this could happen.

The other African states looked in awe at what Russia achieved and wanted to learn more about how its “Democratic Security” services could be put to use for stabilize their countries as well in exchange for profitable extraction contracts that function as the gateway for Moscow to maximize its influence in each of its partners through forthcoming political deals afterwards. Before most observers realized it, Russia has pioneered an “African Transversal” through Sudan, CAR, and the Congo Republic that the author raised awareness about in his piece about how [“Russia’s Military Deal With The Congo Republic Completes Its African Transversal”](#). Against the backdrop of the [almost ten-year-long “African Spring” that most of the world has been ignoring](#), Russia’s “Democratic Security” services become more important than ever since no other actor is capable of providing them, especially seeing as how the other two most likely contenders — the US and France — aren’t trusted to do so whatsoever after squandering their “goodwill” there over the decades by actually being the ones largely responsible for most of Africa’s destabilization since independence.

The coordinated and comprehensive expansion of African countries’ relations with Russia also places Moscow in the driver’s seat for leading a new Non-Aligned Movement (Neo-NAM) there which could give states a third credible option between the West and China. Although the author first spoke about the possibly multipolar-modified revival of this Old Cold War-era structure in his March 2018 Sputnik Radio broadcast about how [“Russia’s S-400s Are The Key To A Neo-NAM”](#), it’s since been more formally proposed by two experts at Russia’s top think tank, the Valdai Club. Oleg Barabanov wrote about it in his May 2019 piece about [“China’s Rise To Global Leadership: Prospects And Challenges For Russia”](#), as did Alexey Kupriyanov and Alexander Korolov in their report about [“The Eurasian Chord And The Oceanic Ring: Russia And India As The Third Force In A New World Order”](#) which proposes that those two jointly lead this movement. However it ends up playing out in practice, it’s now undeniable that the Neo-NAM is on Russia’s policy-making agenda, and this couldn’t but help serve the interests of African states who are desperate for a “neutral” partner in the New Cold War.

As such, it’s to be expected that the Russia-Africa Summit will result in the signing of many significant economics deals (possibly even involving the creation of logistics facilities in some geostrategic countries), some unreported military ones, and the announcement that this gathering will become a yearly (or at least every 2-5-year) event. The African states crave the credible “Democratic Security” solutions that only Russia can provide for ensuring their continued stability, and they certainly don’t mind trading profitable extraction contracts in exchange for it since selling resources has always been something that most of them have done anyhow except they haven’t hitherto received anything other than financial benefits for the elite from it. Now, however, all of society can eventually (key word) benefit if Russia scales the expansion of its influence in those countries afterwards to positively influence their political and economic models (with the intent of making them more resistant to Color Revolution plots) concurrent with bolstering their security capabilities (against Unconventional War threats), all while elevating their status as (for now) informal members of the Neo-NAM.

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