

From Ivory Coast to Libya And Beyond: The Conquest of Africa

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On April 5 the chairman of the African Union, Equatorial Guinea's President Teodoro Obiang Nguema, condemned French military operations in fellow West African nation Ivory Coast and the North Atlantic Treaty Organization's war against Libya, stating: "Africa does not need any external influence. Africa must manage its own affairs."

Though hardly a model of a democratic ruler, having come to power in a coup d'état in 1979 and governed his nation uninterrupted since, Obiang Nguema is the current head of the 53-nation African Union and his comments stand on their own regardless of their source.

In reference to the mounting violence between the Western-backed Alassane Ouattara's self-styled Republican Forces army and "Invisible Commandos" on one side and incumbent President Laurent Gbagbo's military and security forces on the other in Ivory Coast, the AU chairman said that it should not "imply a war, an intervention of a foreign army."

He spoke after French attack helicopters struck Ivorian military bases in the commercial capital of Abidjan and destroyed over ten armored vehicles, four anti-aircraft weapons and the broadcasting station of the state-run Radiodiffusion-Télévision ivoirienne as well as firing on the presidential building and residence. French troops took over the nation's main airport earlier in the week. (In 2004 French warplanes destroyed the Gbagbo government's modest air force on the ground, an action heartily endorsed by the U.S.)

President Obiang Nguema also spoke about what is now the almost three-week-long war waged by the U.S. and its NATO allies against Libya: "I believe that the problems in Libya should be resolved in an internal fashion and not through an intervention that could appear to resemble a humanitarian intervention. We have already seen this in Iraq."

He added: "Each foreigner is susceptible to proposing erroneous solutions. African problems cannot be resolved with a European, American or Asian view."

On the same day Russia called for an emergency meeting of the United Nations Security Council on Ivory Coast and Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov warned that recently reinforced French troops and cohorts from the United Nations Operation in Côte d'Ivoire (ONUCI) operate under a mandate that demands strict neutrality and impartiality.

The following day Lavrov expressed concerns about the U.S. and other NATO members arming anti-government insurgents in Libya, stating that such a measure "would constitute interference in the civil war."

Comparable statements have been voiced around the world, from the Bolivarian Alliance for

the Peoples of Our America (ALBA) in Latin America and the Caribbean denouncing the Libyan war to the leader of the world's 1.3 billion Catholics, Pope Benedict XVI, referring to the violence in Ivory Coast and Libya as a defeat for humanity and issuing "a renewed and heartfelt appeal to all parties to the [conflict] to initiate a process of peacemaking and dialogue, and to avoid further bloodshed."

American and other Western leaders, however, only desire an end to the violence in both African countries after the belligerents they support, with arms and air and missile attacks, have scored a decisive victory over their opponents.

On the same day that the chairman of the African Union and the Russian foreign minister articulated the concerns cited above, President Barack Obama demanded that "former President Gbagbo must stand down immediately, and direct those who are fighting on his behalf to lay down their arms," while applauding the actions of French troops and military helicopters in the capital.

Obama and his secretary of state Hillary Clinton have repeatedly delivered ultimatums to Libyan leader Muammar Gaddafi to abdicate - backed up by bombs and cruise missiles - with Clinton responding to the latter's recent letter to Obama calling for an end to NATO attacks on his country by stating: "Mr Gaddafi knows what he must do....There needs to be a decision made about his departure from power [and] his departure from Libya."

The recently appointed commander of U.S. Africa Command, General Carter Ham, told the House Armed Services Committee on April 5: "This is a historic time for us in Africa Command. We completed a complex, short-notice, operational mission in Libya and have now transferred that mission to NATO."

Since AFRICOM handed over command of the war against Libya to NATO on March 31 over 1,200 air missions have been flown over the country, including several hundred bombings and missile strikes.

Two of only five African nations that have not entered into individual and regional partnerships with the Pentagon through AFRICOM are the targets of violent uprisings aimed at toppling their governments and installing client regimes subservient to the U.S. and its NATO allies. Eritrea, Zimbabwe and a truncated Sudan will be left. And will be next.

As Alassane Ouattara, former unelected prime minister under the late president for life Félix Houphouët-Boigny and Washington, D.C.-based Deputy Managing Director of the International Monetary Fund, is poised to take control of Ivory Coast with the assistance of the French military, his country is being prepared to join its Gulf of Guinea neighbors in the U.S.- and NATO-supported West African Standby Force and be incorporated into AFRICOM operations in one of the world's most oil-rich and thus strategic regions.

The USS Robert G. Bradley guided missile frigate began a nine-nation Africa Partnership Station West mission on February 1 with a port visit to the capital of Togo, two countries removed from Ivory Coast's eastern border on the Gulf of Guinea. The Africa Partnership Station is an initiative of U.S. Naval Forces Europe-Africa and works in conjunction with AFRICOM.

After Togo, the U.S. warship's itinerary has included and will include visits to Cape Verde, Senegal, Gabon, Sao Tome and Principe, Sierra Leone, Cameroon, Angola and Nigeria.

Angola and Nigeria are Africa's largest oil exporters. Gabon's sizeable oil exports are divided between Russia, the U.S., China and former colonial master France. In 2005 American oil giants ChevronTexaco and ExxonMobil entered into an exploration and production agreement with Sao Tome and Principe.

The U.S. frigate is part of Africa Partnership Station 2011, operating off the coasts of West, Southern and East Africa with five U.S. ships and three from European NATO nations.

While visiting Cameroon late last month, USS Robert G. Bradley led the Obangame Express exercise with vessels from France, Spain, Belgium, Cameroon, Gabon and Nigeria.

From March 3-19 the U.S. Marine Corps conducted a joint Africa Partnership Station exercise with the Ghana Armed Forces at the Jungle Warfare School in the Gulf of Guinea nation.

In February USS Stephen W. Groves, an Oliver Hazard Perry-class guided missile warship like USS Robert G. Bradley, participated in a joint exercise off South Africa with that country's submarine SAS Charlotte Maxeke in training that U.S. Africa Command described as "part of the U.S. Navy's initiative to strengthen military partnership nations throughout the continent of Africa."

The ship next visited Tanzania, where it trained military personnel from Djibouti, Kenya, Mauritius, Mozambique and the host country in the first of several phases of the Africa Partnership Station East mission that has now taken it to Mauritius and will later bring it to Kenya and Seychelles and after that to Cape Verde and Senegal in West Africa.

Since the Africa Partnership Station initiative was launched in 2007, U.S. warships assigned to it have visited almost every African coastal and island nation except for those bordering the Mediterranean Sea. The exceptions have been Ivory Coast, Sudan and Eritrea as well as Libya in the north.

In February AFRICOM conducted the 19-day Operation Flintlock 2011 special forces exercise in Senegal with the participation of NATO allies France, Germany, Spain, Canada and the Netherlands and Sahel nations Burkina Faso, Chad, Mali, Mauritania, Nigeria and Senegal. (Last year's Flintlock included the above African states and Algeria and Tunisia.) Burkina Faso borders northeastern Ivory Coast.

The AFRICOM website wrote this of the exercise:

"Conducted by Special Operations Command Africa, Flintlock is a joint multinational exercise to improve information sharing at the operational and tactical levels across the Saharan region while fostering increased collaboration and coordination. It's focused on military interoperability and capacity-building for U.S., North American and European Partner Nations, and select units in Northern and Western Africa."

Note how African participants are listed after those of the U.S. and its European and Canadian NATO allies.

Late this January the main planning conference for Africa Endeavor 2011 was held in Mali. Modeled after U.S. European Command's Combined Endeavor, the largest military communications and information systems exercise in the world, this year's annual Africa Endeavor multinational exercise will be held in June in the same country.

According to AFRICOM, January's planning conference "brought together more than 180 participants from 41 African, European and North American nations and observers from [the] Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS), the Eastern African Standby Force and NATO to plan interoperability testing of communications and information systems of participating nations," with the "largest number of participating countries to date in the Africa Endeavor series" in the words of Brigadier General Roberts Ferrell, head of AFRICOM's Command, Control, Communications and Computers Systems Directorate.

Last year's Africa Endeavor included, in addition to U.S. and other NATO nations' military personnel, participants from Algeria, Benin, Botswana, Burkina Faso, Burundi, Cameroon, Cape Verde, Chad, the Republic of Congo (Brazzaville), Djibouti, Egypt, Ethiopia, Gabon, Ghana, Gambia, Kenya, Lesotho, Liberia, Malawi, Mali, Mauritania, Mauritius, Mozambique, Namibia, Nigeria, Rwanda, Sao Tome and Principe, Senegal, Sierra Leone, Seychelles, Southern Sudan (a year before its independence referendum), Swaziland, Tanzania, Togo, Uganda and Zambia.

Note the absence of Ivory Coast, Libya, Sudan, Eritrea and Zimbabwe.

Only 30 months after becoming an independent command, AFRICOM has consolidated military-to-military relations with 50 African nations, including non-African Union member Morocco and the world's newest state, South Sudan. Changes in government in Ivory Coast and Libya would add two more countries to that column.

And as AFRICOM handed command of the current war against Libya to NATO on March 31, so, if recent comments by African Union Commissioner for Peace and Security Ramtane Lamamra are to be given credence, AFRICOM is preparing to share its 50 new African assets with NATO. [1]

Just as the 1884-1885 Berlin Conference divided the African continent into spheres of influence between the major European powers and the U.S., with Ivory Coast belonging to France and Libya later taken by Italy, so now the U.S. and all the major former European colonial masters, who are now fellow NATO member states - France, Britain, Portugal, Spain, Belgium, Germany, Italy and Turkey - are again planning to establish dominance over what has become the world's second most populous continent.

1. Africa: Global NATO Seeks To Recruit 50 New Military Partners

Stop NATO, February 20, 2011

<http://rickrozoff.wordpress.com/2011/02/20/africa-global-nato-seeks-to-recruit-50-new-military-partners/>

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