

Imperialism Remains Existential Military and Economic Threat to Africa

Meeting of ECOWAS in Abuja highlights the ongoing split with the AES while AFRICOM maintains plans to protect United States interests

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A gathering of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) in Abuja, Federal Republic of Nigeria, on December 15 failed to resolve the political differences between the regional body and three of its members: Mali, Burkina Faso and Niger.

These three states were targeted for sanctions by ECOWAS after the military seizure of power beginning in 2020 in Mali and following in Burkina Faso in 2022 and Niger on July 26, 2023.

The leadership of these three countries met on September 16, 2023 at the border where Mali, Burkina Faso and Niger came together known as Liptako-Gourma. The Liptako-Gourma Charter created the Alliance of Sahel States (AES).

ECOWAS, the 15-member states grouping, founded in 1975, embodies within its constitution the rejection of governments which came to power through military coups. Nonetheless, some of the so-called “democratic” administrations within ECOWAS states have engineered their own constitutional reforms to extend their tenures within office. Others have maintained close economic, political and military ties with the imperialist countries such as the United States, France, Britain and their NATO allies.

Nigeria, for example, under **President Bola Tinubu**, led the call for a military intervention into neighboring Niger after the coming to power of the Committee for the Safeguard of Our Homeland (CNSP) in July 2023. Despite this threat from Tinubu who is also chair of ECOWAS, people throughout the West Africa region refused to go along with his proposal which has been advanced at the aegis of the U.S. and France. Objections to a Pentagon-led ECOWAS invasion into Niger even failed to win support among the Nigerian Senate which is dominated by the All-Progressives Congress (APC), the party of the president.

At the ECOWAS meeting on December 15, the leaders approved the exit of the AES from the parent regional body. The notice filed with ECOWAS after the signing of the Liptako-Gourma agreement provided a year-long exit process.

In light of the AES departure, the Sahel leaders said that their decision was irrevocable while affirming the ability of citizens from ECOWAS states to visit and conduct business within their countries. AES members held a separate gathering on the same day in Niamey, the capital of Niger.

NIGER AES CONFERENCE

ALLIANCE SUPPORTERS GATHER



Consequently, the official departure of the AES will be in January 2025. However, ECOWAS provided an extension of six months into July if the AES members decide to reverse their withdrawal. Within ECOWAS, the regional organization provides for a modicum of free trade and other benefits for member-states. These details remain murky considering the largely unprecedented events since the withdrawal of Mauritania in 2000 and its reentry in 2017.

In a report on the ECOWAS Summit published by Al Jazeera [it notes](#):

“On Saturday (Dec. 14), the three nations stated that their territories would remain visa-free for all ECOWAS citizens post-exit. This move has alleviated concerns that their departure could threaten free trade and movement for the 400 million people living across the region. Among those who attended the summit was Senegal’s President Bassirou Diomaye Faye, who has served as a mediator between the 15-member bloc and the three countries set to leave. The Senegalese president, who was appointed to lead negotiations in July, said he was ‘making progress’ in talks with the three countries and added that there was no reason for them not to maintain relations amid ongoing security concerns in the region, where al-Qaeda and ISIL (ISIS) have gained ground.”

The AES countries have been plagued by rebel insurgencies which have dislocated, injured and killed thousands within their respective boundaries. Since 2020, Mali and later Burkina Faso and Niger, have broken military and economic agreements with the former colonial power of France.

At present the AES governments have moved closer to the Russian Federation in regard to military assistance. French troops have been forced to leave all three AES countries. In Niger, the U.S. was asked to remove its 1,000 troops and its drone operations inside the country.

The political posture of the AES administrations has prompted the severing of diplomatic ties between Ukraine and Mali. The U.S.-NATO-backed Ukrainian government is extending its proxy war against Moscow to countries in West Africa which have strengthened its ties with Russia.

Silent Warriors Conference Held in Tunisia

Meanwhile the U.S. Africa Command (AFRICOM) is continuing its mission through attempts to reassert military presence in various regions of the continent. Since its formation in February 2008, AFRICOM has enhanced its operations within the AU member-states.

The first large-scale operational project of AFRICOM was the destruction of the North African state of Libya during February-October 2011, then the most prosperous on the continent. Anywhere between 50,000-100,000 people were killed with two million more displaced.

Libyan revolutionary leader and Pan-Africanist statesman, **Col. Muammar Gaddafi**, who had led the country for 42 years and built the nation into an economic and political powerhouse, was brutally assassinated in the invasion and occupation. The U.S. government under **then President Barack Obama** and **Secretary of State Hillary Clinton** engineered the AFRICOM counter-revolution in Libya which resulted in further destabilization throughout West and North Africa.

Between December 9-13, the so-called “Secret Warriors” conference was held in the North African state of Tunisia. The event was coordinated by AFRICOM and two of its internal structures.

A report published by the Defense Visual Information Distribution Service (DVIDS) [said of the event that](#):

“Special Operations Command Africa and the Tunisian Ministry of Defense co-hosted more than 250 attendees from 40 nations during the weeklong Silent Warrior 2024 symposium, Dec. 9-13, 2024. This year’s iteration was the first time that the symposium was hosted on the African continent in Silent Warrior’s history. A multi-day symposium with broad participation from African and international partners, Silent Warrior aims to enhance operational effectiveness and mission success through cooperation and coordination across African Special Operations Forces. Speakers included the Tunisian Land Forces commander, senior leaders from U.S. Africa Command and the U.S. Ambassador to the Republic of Tunisia.”

Although several countries in the Sahel have expelled the U.S. and France from their territories, other states are continuing to work with the Pentagon and its allies. The principal issue involving Pentagon and French Foreign Legions interventions in the Sahel was that their purported “partnerships” with African states had in actuality not improved security. In reality the terrorist threats worsened leaving civilians and state actors even more vulnerable than ever.

The persistent attacks by the rebels proved incapable of securing the permanent placement of Pentagon and NATO troops in the Sahel region of West Africa. These terrorist campaigns directed against governments and civilian communities have provided a rationale for the continuing stationing of AFRICOM and French troops on the continent.

Ironically, in Tunisia where the popular uprisings began in late 2010 against the neo-colonial rule of imperialism through the leadership of **Ben Ali**, was the scene of the first African convening of the Silent Warriors grouping. Egypt, which exploded after the departure of Ben Ali, has not realized the attainment of a just society devoid of Pentagon and State Department influence.

Libya and later Syria in West Asia, were subjected to reverse “Arab Springs” where the outcome of the purported “revolution” was colored by the objective reinforcement and expansion of imperialism and Zionism. In Syria it has taken 13 years to accomplish what was done in Libya within eight months.

Imperialism Must be Defeated to Transform Africa

As more governments, political parties, trade unions, youth and mass organizations take a revolutionary stance on the removal of imperialist military forces in Africa, the Pentagon and NATO will seek other means to reimpose their forces over the people. Obviously, the resources which are available in Africa, like in West Asia, underline the determination of the western capitalist states to maintain and extend their control over the extractive and financial industries operating in the AU member-states.

Dr. Kwame Nkrumah, the founding prime minister, president of modern-day Ghana and Africa published a pioneering study in October 1965 entitled “Neo-colonialism: The Last Stage of Imperialism”. The book categorized the U.S. as the most serious threat to the development of Africa and the entire world.

One section of the book which prompted a diplomatic rebuke from the U.S. Assistant Secretary of State for African Affairs under then President Lyndon B. Johnson, **G. Menning Williams**, former Governor of Michigan, [emphasized](#):

“On achieving independence, almost every new state of Africa has developed plans for industrialization and rounded economic growth in order to improve productive capacity and thereby raise the standard of living of its people. But while Africa remains divided, progress is bound to be painfully slow. Economic development is dependent not only on the availability of natural resources and the size and population of a country, but on economic size, which takes into account both population and income per capita. In many African States the population and per capita products are extremely small, giving an economic unit no longer than a medium-sized firm in a western capitalist country, or a single State enterprise in a European socialist economy.”

Such an observation calling for the unity of Africa and any other neo-colonial territory to take control of its national resources would be a serious threat to imperialism. Whether in Syria, Palestine, Lebanon, Iraq, Yemen, Iran, Egypt, Tunisia, etc., the aims of imperialism are the same: to fortify and further solidify the control over the valuable and strategic resources on the planet.

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