

Militarization of Africa: AFRICOM to Deploy “Rapid Reaction” Strike Force in Spain directed against West Africa

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Global Research, April 23, 2013

[Silent Crow News](#)

Region: [Europe](#), [sub-Saharan Africa](#)

In early April, The United States and the Spanish government agreed to station AFRICOM's “Rapid Reaction” strike force to Moron de la Frontera air base for one year. It involves 500 marines and 8 aircraft that will be used to respond to countries located in Northwest Africa.

According to the Associated Press on April 19th, “*The U.S. Embassy in Madrid said Friday that “following the tragedy in the Libyan city of Benghazi,” where four U.S. citizens were killed, the U.S. recognized the need for a force able to respond quickly to crises in northwest Africa.*” The area of focus is in the Maghreb region in Algeria, Morocco, Tunisia, Libya and Mauritania.

All located in close proximity to Northern Mali. AFRICOM is also planning to respond to the current situation in Mali where a civil war between secular Tuareg rebels and Arab militants erupted as reported by the Associated Press on April 21st, that “*An official in northern Mali says clashes have broken out near Timbuktu between secular Tuareg rebels and Arab militants.*” After the announcement of Spain's decision to host US troops, violence resumed in this volatile area. “*The violence underscores the tensions that remain in northern Mali three months after a French-led military operation largely ousted radical Islamic fighters from the area.*”

The sidelining of the al-Qaida-linked fighters has allowed for the Tuareg rebels from the National Movement for the Liberation of Azawad to regain a presence in the area” the report said. This comes as Mali's interim president President Dioncounda Traore also announced to his supporters this past Friday that Mali “will be ready to hold democratic elections by July as promised” according to an Associated Press report titled ‘President: Mali will be ready for July vote’ it also stated the following: Security also remains a key concern ahead of elections, especially in the northern cities of Gao, Kidal and Timbuktu, where remnants of the terror groups have staged suicide bombings in the months since they were ousted from power by the French-led military operation that began in January.

The meeting in Mali's capital also is aimed at how to best secure these cities ahead of July. France has said it intends to have only about 1,000 soldiers in the country by yearend from a deployment peak of about 4,000. About 6,000 troops from African countries are presently in Mali serving as part of a force known as MISMA, though Chad says it is pulling its 2,000 soldiers.

It is most likely that AFRICOM will want to fill the vacuum if Chadian forces were to pull its

troops. The US will then send its “Rapid Reaction” forces if Islamic fighters were to disrupt elections with new attacks. AFRICOM can use the developing situation in Northern Mali to stage an invasion just in time for July’s elections.

Spanish citizens will protest their government’s actions. The Spaniards are already suffering through a dire economic situation through new austerity measures imposed by the European Union. There are some Spaniards in favor of the US base claiming it brings jobs and it increases economic activity to small businesses in the area. Under Spanish Dictator Francisco Franco, Spain and the United States signed several agreements to house US military forces in Rota and Moron de la Frontera to help local economies.

More importantly, it was also to support Franco’s regime. Franco, along with Adolf Hitler and Benito Mussolini was supported by American corporations, owned and operated by Charles Lindbergh, John Rockefeller, Andrew Mellon who was a banker and Secretary of Treasury, Allen Dulles (later head of the CIA) and Prescott Bush (father of George H. Bush, grandfather of and George W. Bush Jr). Major corporations such DuPont, General Motors, Standard Oil, Ford, ITT, National City Bank, and General Electric operated throughout most of Europe. The Spanish Civil War was the start of World War II. Franco was also militarily and financial supported by Hitler and Mussolini while General Motors, Ford, DuPont, and Standard Oil were supplying materials to all of the fascist powers (Germany, Italy and Spain) of Europe.

Spaniards have protested against US bases in Madrid throughout the years. For instance, back in mid-1980, more than 50,000 Spaniards marched to Madrid to demand the government to shut down all US bases in its territory and to pull out of NATO. Spaniards have also protested against the invasion of Iraq and Afghanistan in recent years. Will Spaniards protest against US intervention in Northwest Africa? Along with protests against austerity measures and many other issues they face in both the short and long term, it is most likely.

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