

Senegal, Chad and Ivory Coast Have Ordered French Troops to Leave. Francophone Africa Taken Over by the U.S. ?

Are these three countries following the pattern of the Alliance of Sahel States (AES)?

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Outstanding analysis by Abayomi Azikiwe (see article below)

Introductory Note: Will Francophone Africa be Taken Over by the U.S. ?

It should be understood that the withdrawal of French troops from Francophone Africa constitutes a “green light” to the United States which currently has a significant military presence in francophone Africa under the banner of “counter-terrorism”.

The withdrawal of France not only points to the “dollarization” of francophone of Africa, it also suggests that eventually, French will in several francophone countries be abandoned as a national language.

Although the circumstances are entirely different to what is currently unfolding, we recall how [Rwanda which was a francophone country was transformed into an English speaking U.S. Colony in Central Africa](#).

This is what I wrote in 2000 (25 Years ago) following two UNDP missions to Rwanda in 1996-97:

From a distinctly Franco-Belgian colonial setting, the Rwandan capital Kigali has become -under the expatriate Tutsi led RPF government- distinctly Anglo-American. English has become the dominant language in government and the private sector. Many private businesses owned by Hutus were taken over in 1994 by returning Tutsi expatriates. The latter had been exiled in Anglophone Africa, the US and Britain.

The Rwandan Patriotic Army (RPA) functions in English and Kinyarwanda, the University previously linked to France and Belgium functions in English.

*While English had become an official language alongside French and Kinyarwanda, **French political and cultural influence will eventually be erased. Washington has become the new colonial master of a francophone country.***



Several other francophone countries in Sub-Saharan Africa have entered into military cooperation agreements with the US. These countries are slated by Washington to follow suit on the pattern set in Rwanda. Meanwhile in francophone West Africa, the US dollar is rapidly displacing the CFA Franc — which is linked in a currency board arrangement to the French Treasury. (Michel Chossudovsky, August 2000)

The UNDP report by Senator Pierre Galland and Prof Michel Chossudovsky was submitted to the UNDP and the Government of Rwanda in French. Rwanda's **Vice President Paul Kagame** demanded a translation of the Reporting English. Kagame has been president of Rwanda (2000-) for the last 25 years, acting on behalf of the U.S.

[The official UNDP report in French](#)

What prevails today (confirmed by [the US Embassy in Kigali](#)) is the following:

There are two official languages of instruction throughout the Rwandan educational system: **Kinyarwanda** in primary school (P1-P3) and **English from P4 through University. French and Swahili are taught as an elective or a supplemental subject in public primary and secondary schools.**

Francophone Africa. Beware of U.S. Imperialism

It is important that people in francophone Africa realize that **the withdrawal of France constitutes the basis of US neo-colonial dominance.**

Michel Chossudovsky, Global Research, January 9, 2025

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By

Abayomi Azikiwe

Three other governments in West Africa have announced that they are requesting the

departure of troops from France, the former colonial power.

Senegal during 2024 underwent a mass upheaval and a groundbreaking national election, which brought to power the youngest elected head-of-state on the continent.

The country won its freedom in 1960 during the so-called “Year of Africa” where 16 colonies became independent. Just three years later, the Organization of African Unity (OAU) was formed in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia with 33 member-states. In 2002, the OAU transitioned into the African Union (AU) which today has 55 member-states all of whom are independent with the exception of the Western Sahara.

Nonetheless, in most of the former French colonies military forces deployed by Paris remained under the guise of a partnership with the imperialists. With the exceptions of Algeria and Guinea, most of the other states had French military forces based inside their countries.

When threats to the stability of the governments of former French colonies occurred, the Foreign Legions would immediately intervene on the side which benefited their imperialist interests. Also, economic operations such as the uranium resources in Niger were controlled by private transnational firms based in France.

Other states have substantial hydrocarbon resources such as Chad and Gabon. Just recently, Senegal and Mauritania have begun to exploit its oil resources.

Senegal along with Chad, who have been staunch allies of France and the U.S., recently registered their protests against statements made by **President Emmanuel Macron** on the changing character of relations. The current leadership in France has failed to recognize that there is a new level of political consciousness sweeping the continent.

In a report published by Radio France International (RFI) [it points out that](#):

“Macron said during his discourse that the announced withdrawal of French military bases had been negotiated between the African countries involved and France. He claimed it was purely out of convenience and politeness that France allowed these African nations to make the announcement first. The remarks were made at the annual conference of ambassadors held this year on 6 and 7 January in Paris. However, Senegalese Prime Minister Ousmane Sonko criticized Macron’s remarks as ‘completely inaccurate,’ while Chadian Foreign Minister Abderaman Koulamallah described them as disdainful.”

Political Transformation in Senegal

In Senegal the **former President Macky Sall** was contemplating running for a third term when demonstrations erupted. During 2024, the African Patriots for Work, Ethics and Fraternity (PASTEF) mobilized tirelessly to have **Secretary General Ousmane Sonko** cleared of criminal charges in order to participate in the national elections.

PASTEF is a left-wing Pan-Africanist party which has challenged Senegal’s historic relations with France. Although Sonko was never fully cleared to run for president by the electoral commission, his close comrade, Bassirou Diomaye Faye, ran for the top post and won with 54% of the electorate.

Sonko was then appointed as Prime Minister of Senegal. Since the ascendancy of the new government there has been much anticipation on the part of the people of the country and throughout the West Africa region.

An interview with the new **Foreign Minister Yassine Fall** was broadcast over Al Jazeera television in late December 2024. In a description of the interview, [the Qatar-based news agency emphasized](#):

“Yassine Fall discusses Senegal’s vision for economic independence and diplomacy. Senegal, long considered one of Africa’s most stable nations, is entering a transformative era under President Bassirou Diomaye Faye. His ambitious 25-year development plan prioritizes economic sovereignty, sustainable resource management, and local expertise. At the forefront is Yassine Fall, Senegal’s foreign minister, an experienced economist and diplomat with a distinguished UN background. Fall faces the critical task of redefining Senegal’s global alliances, including the closure of French military bases, while maintaining key relationships. In this interview, she discusses the challenges and opportunities of implementing the president’s vision, from reshaping diplomacy to fostering national self-determination.”

In light of events in the countries of Mali, Burkina Faso and Mali, many speculated that Senegal would follow a similar path even though the Faye-Sonko administration came to power through mass action and electoral politics as opposed to the armed seizure of power. The Alliance of Sahel States (AES) has appealed to the Pan-Africanist and anti-imperialist sentiments now rises among African youth on the continent and among many others across the world.

The AES has broken military and some economic links with France as well as the U.S. Although Senegal has announced the planned removal of foreign military bases, will the government continue its cooperation with the U.S. Africa Command? Founded in 2007-2008, AFRICOM has worked alongside various military structures purportedly to strengthen the security apparatuses of these states.

However, the security situation in the Sahel region has worsened despite the presence and training provided by France and the U.S. The AES governments have formed alliances with the Russian Federation to gain the necessary assistance to improve the capacity of the military to defeat rebel groupings.

It was revealed during 2024 that the U.S.-backed Ukrainian government had been training and arming the so-called Jihadist in Mali. This follows the same framework of Washington and NATO-backed insurgents which fought to overthrow the governments in Libya and later Syria.

If the leftward trend continues in Senegal, the government of Faye and Sonko can expect imperialist-engineered efforts to destabilize and remove their administration. Therefore, the mobilization and organization of the masses will have to continue to maintain an advanced level of political consciousness needed to struggle against imperialism.

Ivory Coast and Chad: What Will be the Implications of a French Military Withdrawal

President Alassane Ouattara of the West African state of Ivory Coast announced in late

December 2024 that French troops had been asked to leave the country. This was a shocking order for Paris since it was French paratroopers which installed the current government in April 2011.

[According to a report published by Al Jazeera](#) about the announcement from Ouattara:

“Ouattara’s announcement on Tuesday was unexpected. The president is seen by many as one of the African leaders most close to France. In a country in which anger against France is growing, that perception has bred deep resentment of the government. In August, French President Emmanuel Macron feted Ouattara in a private dinner at the Elysee.... [I]n the last five years, military-led governments in the Sahel region have pushed back at the perceived weakness of the French army. Despite the presence of thousands of French soldiers, armed group activity continued to turn the area into a hotspot of violence as groups like Jama’at Nusrat al-Islam wal-Muslimin (JNIM) wage war on security forces and officials across Mali, Burkina Faso, and Niger. Increasingly, armed groups have made incursions into the coastal Ivory Coast, Ghana, and Benin.”

Earlier in the West-Central African state of Chad, which has been another close ally of France and the U.S. for decades, the leadership called upon the troops from Paris to leave the oil-rich state. Chad’s present leader, **Mahamat Deby Itno**, asked French troops to leave during late 2024 marking the last military base departure of the former colonizer in the Sahel region.

Chad as well has sought security assistance from Russia as it has been subjected to terrorist attacks by jihadist forces linked with the Boko Haram grouping which originated in neighboring northern Nigeria. Chad’s abandonment of the French-led Group of Five for the Sahel (G5) sealed its fate as the only country remaining, Mauritania, could not sustain the militarist neo-colonial presence in the region. Niger, Mali, Burkina Faso, Chad and Mauritania had been mobilized by Paris to represent its interest in the Sahel.



A supporter holds a t-shirt reading “France Must Go” as supporters of Niger’s National Council of Safeguard of the Homeland (CNSP) protest outside the Niger and French airbase in Niamey on September 2, 2023 to demand the departure of the French army from Niger. (Photo by - / AFP) (AFP)

In December, legislative elections were held in what is said to be an attempt to transition from military to civilian rule. Transitional leader **Mahamat Deby Itno** took over from his father, **Idriss Deby Itno**, who had ruled Chad for decades. Several leading opposition parties boycotted the elections saying the voting was not organized in a fair manner.

However, the major threat to Chad came on January 8 when two dozen armed men attacked the Presidential headquarters in an apparent coup attempt. The timing of this direct and blatant attack on the state is interesting due to the mounting criticism against France and the U.S. in the region.

[France 24 news agency said](#) of the situation in the capital of N’Djamena in Chad:

“A security source said the attackers were members of the Boko Haram jihadist group, which Chadian forces are fighting in the western Lake Chad region that borders Cameroon, Nigeria and Niger. Landlocked Chad is under military rule and faces regular attacks by Boko Haram. It recently ended a military accord with former colonial power France and has been accused of interfering in the conflict ravaging neighboring Sudan. Several security sources said that an armed commando unit opened fire inside the presidency on Wednesday evening around 7:45 pm (1845 GMT), before being overpowered by the presidential guard.”

These developments should be a cause for concern throughout the West and Central African regions. **The largest French and U.S. military presence in Africa exists in the Horn of Africa state of Djibouti where Camp Lemonnier is located. The base houses an estimated 5,500 troops deployed by Washington and Paris.**

Gabon, an oil-producing state in West-Central Africa, also witnessed a military coup in late August 2023 which deposed a political dynasty as represented by President Ali Bongo whose family had been in power for over five decades. However, in Gabon, French troops have not been asked to leave since the new dispensation.

These events portend much for the political situations unfolding in the mid-third decade of the 21st century. One thing is clear: the imperialists will continue to devise methods to maintain their dominance over Africa.

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