

South Africa, Russia, China and the Shifting World Situation

United States imperialism escalates its aggressive foreign policy in a deliberate campaign to contain and undermine the influence of the Beijing and Moscow

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Global Research, March 23, 2023

Region: [Asia](#), [Russia and FSU](#), [sub-Saharan Africa](#)

Theme: [History](#)

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National Assembly Speaker of the Republic of South Africa, Nosiviwe Mapisa-Nqakula, said publicly in a recent statement before the supreme legislative body in Cape Town that the African National Congress (ANC) led government would continue to support the people of the Russian Federation.

This proclamation came amid a highly-publicized visit by People's Republic of China President Xi Jinping to Moscow where the strategic partnership between the two countries was further solidified.

The administration of President Joe Biden along with the entire ruling class of the United States are quite concerned about the three-day visit of President Xi to Russia where he held extensive discussions with his counterpart Vladimir Putin. Both China and Russia are principal adversaries of the U.S., the European Union and the entire North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) alliance.



Russians welcome Xi Jinping (Source: Abayomi Azikiwe)

At present a protracted conflict is underway in Ukraine where the U.S. has prompted and continued a proxy war against Moscow and its allies in the region. Since February 24, 2022, the Biden administration has sent emissaries across the globe in an effort to build support for the NATO position in Eastern Europe.

Nonetheless, among many states and peoples within the Global South, there has been a lack of enthusiasm for the U.S. stance in the war. In many cases in Africa, Latin America, Asia and some European states, there is considerable solidarity with the Russian aims and objectives in what Moscow describes as a “special military operation.” For those who have followed and studied the geostrategic situation in Ukraine, the entire process of staging a coup in February 2014 with the ultimate desire to incorporate even more states into NATO can only be viewed by Russia as well as the anti-imperialist, socialist and non-aligned states with suspicion and trepidation.

In regard to the comments from the South African National Assembly Speaker Mapisa-Nqakula, the [Eyewitness News website said that](#):

“She was delivering the closing remarks at the second Russia-Africa parliamentary conference in Moscow over the weekend (March 18-19). The gathering was also addressed by Russian president Vladimir Putin, who has pledged ongoing support to African nations in the fields of nuclear energy, training, and education. Mapisa-Nqakula has appealed to Russia to help Africa obtain a permanent seat on the United Nations Security Council. ‘If that does not happen, we will continue to have the kinds of conflicts we are seeing on our continent,’ she added. She said that South Africa would continue to look to Russia for support in the quest for economic and political prosperity. ‘We will continue to lean on you, and you can rest assured that, as a country and as a people of South Africa, we will continue to support the people of Russia,’ she said. Mapisa-Nqakula also offered for South Africa to host peace talks between Russia and Ukraine while attending the inter-parliamentary union in Bahrain. She said that sanctions

imposed by the Western world on African nations as a result of conflict on the continent, was a human rights violation.”

South African President Cyril Ramaphosa has repeatedly urged the resolution of the Ukraine crisis through internationally-mediated negotiations. The desperate posture of the Biden administration and its Democratic and Republican colleagues in both branches of Congress has resulted in the drafting of legislation which would punish AU member-states that maintain cordial diplomatic and economic relations with Russia.

Ramaphosa in a state visit to the U.S. during late 2022, urged the abolition of the draft bill which is described as curtailing Russia’s malign influence in Africa. The AU member-states as a whole have rejected the rationale behind such proposed legislation.

Joint Naval Exercises Draw the Ire of Washington

In late February, the military forces of the Republic of South Africa, Russian Federation and People’s Republic of China held joint naval exercises in the Indian Ocean. The decision by these three states represented a repudiation of the foreign policy orientation of Washington towards all three countries.

Despite the diplomatic maneuvers of the Biden administration, Africa’s most industrialized state has engaged in these naval exercises with the two governments which represent the major impediments to Washington’s military and diplomatic status. Consequently, there is a sequential trajectory related to the denunciation of the anti-Russia in Africa bill of the U.S. Congress, the call for an end to the war in Ukraine and the burgeoning relations between Moscow, Pretoria and Beijing.

All three states are members of the Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa (BRICS) Summit which holds regular meetings. The concept behind BRICS is to build economic links between these countries, among others, outside the influence and control of Washington and Wall Street. There are proposals for the expansion of BRICS to encompass the entire AU region along with countries within Latin America.

One observer of the rapidly changing dynamics of international diplomacy and economics was quoted in an article published by the Robert H. Smith School of Business at the University of Maryland. Finance Prof. Lemma W. Senbet of the University of Buffalo, State University of New York, noted that the declining influence of the U.S. as it relates to the blatant disregard for its foreign policy interests must be taken into consideration by the State Department and the Pentagon. Smith cites BRICS as one forum which can enhance the capacity of the Global South to loosen its dependence upon the former colonial and present neo-colonial centers of dominance.

This opinion piece published by [newswise.com](https://www.newswise.com) emphasized:

“Senbet says that [this] relationship (BRICS) is in the background of the naval exercises. He indicates it’s not just about South Africa’s relations with Russia, but with China and India as well. ‘China is the largest trading partner in Africa. Tourism is also a big deal in South Africa.’ China is a huge tourism market for the country, as is India. And this is in addition to China’s trade and investment. ‘So, the extent to which they (South Africa) could suffer economic consequences is mitigated by their participation in this economic partnership.’ The western response to the invasion of Ukraine is mainly about

protecting the international order, according to Senbet. But he says, ‘there are many countries, especially in the Global South, that think the order doesn’t work for them.’ South Africa is not the only African country to take a neutral stance in the Russia-Ukraine war. Several others have. ‘The U.S. and EU need to pay more attention to the rest of the globe, who are the lower-income, lower-developed economies that actually feel left out of the order. The order has to be inclusive.’”

Consequently, Washington will inevitably depend more on its military prowess to advance an imperialistic political and economic agenda around the globe. This creates a dangerous international scenario for billions of people to contemplate. As the financing of the Ukraine war continues under the Biden administration, several analysts of the war see a strong possibility for a broader engagement by NATO forces.

As the Ukrainian troops suffer greater casualties and setbacks on the battlefield, provocative military actions will escalate. The recent downing of a Pentagon predator drone over the Black Sea has frustrated the White House which falsely claims that these surveillance weapons are operating in “international airspace”.

Any attempt to widen the Ukraine war would prove disastrous for the majority of working and oppressed peoples living in various geopolitical regions including inside of Western Europe and North America. Within the U.S., the economy has suffered tremendous shocks during the month of March where several high-profile bank collapses have compounded the impact of ongoing layoffs of hundreds of thousands of workers employed in the technological and service sectors of the economy. These developments have precipitated a crisis of confidence in the capitalist and imperialist systems.

As Russia and China have written off tens of millions of dollars in loans to African states during 2022-2023, the U.S.-based International Monetary Fund (IMF) is imposing draconian conditionalities on several countries on the continent including, Egypt, Ghana and Zambia. These African states are severely impacted by the rising interest rates imposed by the Federal Reserve of the U.S. and other central banks in the capitalist states.

Moreover, the imperialist proxy war against Russia and the rising tensions between Washington and Beijing, are hampering the free flow of agricultural products and other commodities from Russia and Ukraine to the African continent as well as other geopolitical regions. Rather than address the need for a peaceful settlement of the Ukraine conflict, Washington and Wall Street are leading the world into a possible nuclear confrontation along with a worldwide economic depression.

What is needed at this juncture is a broad-based antiwar and anti-imperialist movement in the Western industrialized states which could place political pressure on their governments to end the war in Ukraine and redirect the trillions in military expenditures to social spending and the rebuilding of infrastructure in a way which benefits the working class and oppressed throughout the globe.

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Featured image: South Africa, Russia and Chinese flags during joint naval exercises (Source: Abayomi Azikiwe)

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