

US Imperialism in Africa

From Cairo to Cape Town the African masses struggle for justice and self-determination

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During late 2012, the Obama administration announced that it would be dispatching additional military personnel to the African continent. The deployment of regular troops and Special Forces are purportedly tasked with fighting a growing threat from Islamists under the guise of a growing “al-Qaeda threat.”

Yet the placing of more troops in Africa by the Pentagon follows a pattern of escalating U.S. militarism on the continent. The previous year, 2011, saw the first full-blown project of the U.S. Africa Command (AFRICOM) in the support for a counter-revolutionary insurgency and massive bombing campaign against the North African state of Libya.

In Libya, 2012 was a year of further political repression, economic deprivation and social chaos. Persecutions of Black Libyans and supporters of the former Jamahiriya under the leadership of Col. Muammar Gaddafi continued.

Counter-revolutionaries in the east of the oil-rich state, where the rebellion of 2011 saw its origins, advocated the partitioning of the country due to the vast resource wealth in that region. There was widespread rejection of the sham national elections by people in both the east and the south of the country.

In Benghazi, people burned ballot papers and objected to the proposed political dispensation which disproportionately allocated more nominal power to the U.S.-backed politicians based in the west around the capital of Tripoli. Even among the elites in the capital, there were clashes among rival militias and threats against the politicians by the armed rebels who refused to be disarmed and “integrated” into a “national army.”

The situation in Libya was further exposed on September 11 when a U.S. compound and annex was destroyed by over 100 armed combatants. The attacks led to the deaths of Ambassador Christopher Stevens and three other personnel, which were later identified as Navy Seals and Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) operatives.

A subsequent attempted cover-up of the September 11 incident in Libya resulted in a major scandal in Washington centering around the failure of the Obama administration to secure the compound after repeated warnings that U.S. interests in the Benghazi area were under threat. Susan Rice, Washington’s representative at the United Nations, was forced to take the fall for the Benghazi disaster despite the fact that Stevens post was ostensibly under the control of Secretary of State Hillary Clinton.

What was even more revealing was the claim by the New York Times later that the attacks in Benghazi against U.S. interests were the biggest blow to the CIA in over three decades. Obviously Stevens' role in Libya was one of a CIA official who was responsible for the coordination of the counter-revolution.

Despite the scandal involving Rice's false claims on national television indicating that the deaths of Stevens and the others resulted from a demonstration against the vile "Innocence of Muslims" film that was circulating on the internet, the deaths of the U.S. personnel in Benghazi did not jeopardize the Obama presidency. Even though the Republicans attempted to utilize the scandal to undermine the Obama campaign, the fact of the matter is that they too were as adamant against the previous Libyan government under Gaddafi as the Democrats.

Obama's core constituency including African Americans, Latinos, trade unions and others saw the alternative Romney bid for the presidency as a threat to their well-being although objectively the people of the U.S. have grown poorer and more economically distressed over the last four years. The U.S. bi-polar political system provides no real alternatives to working people and the oppressed.

The Obama administration has in actuality increased imperialist military intervention in Africa as well as other parts of the world. Over the last four years there has been no positive initiatives related to the peace and security of the continent and the world under the present regime in Washington.

Theoretical Perspectives on Imperialism in Africa

Obama's Africa policy is a continuation of imperialist efforts to dominate and exploit the people. From slavery to colonialism and neo-colonialism, the U.S. has been on the wrong side of history against the interests of the African workers, farmers and youth.

Kwame Nkrumah, the president of the First Republic of Ghana, and the leading theoretical and organizational figure within the post-World War II Pan-African Movement, wrote in 1968 that "Every state emerging from colonialism has to face, sooner or later, the threat to its independence of an alliance between local, reactionary elements and imperialist and neo-colonialist interests. The problem is serious, but not insurmountable, once its true nature is assessed and adequate steps are taken in time to prevent it from becoming deep-rooted." (Dark Days in Ghana, pp. 157-8)

Nkrumah continues noting that "We must be constantly vigilant. Imperialist intelligence organizations are hard at work in Africa, manipulating political pressures internally and externally within developing, independent states. Evidence of their activities may be seen hitherto virtually outside our political experience, but in recent years a painful reminder that we are not yet masters in our own house."

Later this same author stresses that "Government officials, police and army officers, party leaders, newspaper editors and others have been bribed and black-mailed. Local bourgeois reactionaries, dishonest intellectuals and retrogressive chiefs are being used to subvert progressive governments. The tragedy is, that some African Heads of State are themselves actually aiding and abetting imperialists and neo-colonialists."

This is even more true in 2012 than it was in 1968. The subversion of the popular political

will of the workers and rural proletariat of Africa serves as a major impediment to the organization of the masses for a genuine struggle against foreign domination and military intervention.

In most of the countries throughout the continent where the U.S. has strategic interests there are military campaigns designed to continue Washington's influence. From Egypt, Tunisia, Sudan, the Central African Republic, Mali, Somalia, South Africa, Zimbabwe, Nigeria and others, the financiers of Wall Street and the arms producers and generals in the service of the Pentagon are poised for greater interference in the internal affairs of these states. Obama's announcement about the deployment of U.S. forces to 35 states is linked to the crisis within the world capitalist system, where unemployment, national debt and escalating poverty has increased to unprecedented levels within the imperialists states since World War II.

Some Concrete Examples of Imperialist Policy and Mass Resistance

Egypt and the struggle for revolutionary democracy in North Africa and the Middle East has reached a critical stage with the holding of a referendum on the draft constitution put in place by the ruling Freedom and Justice Party (FJP) and its Islamist allies in the Constituent Assembly and the administration of President Mohamed Morsi. Although the referendum won by a 64-36 percent margin, overall participation within the electorate was less than one-third of those qualified to vote.

Leading up to the referendum on December 15 and 22, there were mass demonstrations by opposition parties and coalitions throughout the country of 83 million people. Several people were killed in the protests with a National Salvation Front being formed to demand the withdrawal of the presidential decree of November 22 and the rushed constitutional process.

The Muslim Brotherhood and allied organizations are facing a serious political crisis. They have sought to address the problems of neo-colonialism, stemming from decades of U.S. influence militarily, politically and economically, by a continuation of an alliance with the White House and the Pentagon.

This path on the part of the Egyptian government that came to power after a national election in June, will not benefit the workers and farmers of the country. The Morsi administration is seeking a \$US4.8 billion loan from the International Monetary Fund (IMF), an institution that has caused massive suffering on the African continent for decades.

In addition, Egypt's positions on the war in Syria, which is another regime-change effort on the part of imperialism, and its less than firm stance in defense of the Palestinians in both Gaza and the West Bank, is a reflection of ongoing U.S. dominance over its foreign policy. Promises of investments from Qatar, the European Union along with the proposed IMF loan will consolidate a neo-colonial framework even under the FJP government.

This same process is also taking place in neighboring Tunisia which is the cradle of the uprisings which were initiated two years ago. In Tunisia, the rights of women, youth and workers must be addressed in order for the struggle for national development and genuine independence to proceed.

It is not enough to overthrow the longtime puppets of U.S. and French imperialism, although this is monumental in its significance. The real struggle is to establish an economic and

foreign policy independence as the only road towards national liberation and social justice for the majority of people within the society. The process taking place in Egypt and Tunisia is instructive for viewing developments in other parts of the African continent and the Middle East.

Sudan after being partitioned in the vote of 2011 in the South of the country, these developments have weakened both separate states. This split has also caused greater consternation and internal conflict in both the Republic of Sudan and the Republic of South Sudan.

In the fighting around the Heglig oil fields earlier in the year, the country was exposed to the threat of the collapse of its economies. Demonstrations surfaced in Khartoum fueled by opposition parties demanding regime-change aimed at toppling the National Congress Party (NCP) government of President Omar Hassan al-Bashir.

South Sudan has experienced the aggravated plight of neo-colonial African states. Complaints of massive corruption coupled with internecine warfare among various regions and nationalities has hampered any economic benefit from its newly independent status.

Peace talks between the two states could gain results if it were not for the interference of the U.S. and the state of Israel. The Israel Air Force (IAF) bombed a munitions factory in the capital of Khartoum in late October while Sudan and the Islamic Republic of Iran were conducting joint naval manueveres around the eastern port.

The State Department's role in the Sudans is to maintain and inflame the divisions inside the country due to the oil-wealth and the role of the People's Republic of China and Iran. Both states collectively must resist these pressures and form a national unity pact that cannot be penetrated and undermined by the imperialists led by the ruling class in the U.S.

In defiance of Washington and Tel Aviv, the Republic of Sudan has escalated its solidarity efforts with the Palestinian people and the Iranians. The defeat of the Israeli Defense Forces (IDF) in their latest onslaught against the people of Gaza militarily-and diplomatically with the attempt to deny greater recognition of the Palesinians in the United Nations General Assembly-proved that the policies of the U.S. and Israel are more vulnerable than ever.

The Republic of South Sudan's alliance with the state of Israel proved problematic when South Sudanese fell victim to the racist domestic policies of Tel Aviv. Sudanese and other Africans were openly attacked in the streets of the occupationist state where a new prison to house Africans is being constructed amid official statements by Zionist politicians which call for the forced removal of Africans alongside a similar program for the Palestinians.

Military coups struck both Mali and Guinea-Bissau during March and April. These military coups were a reflection of the class struggle in Africa where with the interference of the imperialists, the post-colonial African state is incapable of maintaining the economic viability or national security of its territory and people.

Mali had been heavily infiltrated by the Pentagon through AFRICOM's joint military operations with Bamako. In Guinea-Bissau, the ruling African Party for the Independence of Guinea and Cape Verde PAIGC) was overthrown by elements within the military which sought to maintain its corrupt actions in league with the capitalist ruling class.

Despite the call by the masses in both countries for an end to military rule, the lower-

ranking soldiers continue to hold power. A proposed intervention in Mali by the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) and the African Union (AU) will be coordinated and financed by the Pentagon and the French military, but will not solve the problems of divisions and militarism in West Africa.

At some point African states must break with the western military alliances and form their own independent military forces that can take on continental problems in the best interests of the masses within these various countries. There is a threat of more military coups in Africa with the burgeoning economic crisis and the escalating intervention of the Pentagon, the IDF, France, Britain and other NATO forces.

Developments in the Horn of Africa illustrate clearly the dangers of militarism and intelligence penetration. Somalia has been a battleground for the U.S. and its allies for over two decades. The invasion of December 1992 began a process of attempted domination of the region both inland and offshore.

The intervention of Washington and its allies in the region has worsened the humanitarian crises of the people. Massive dislocation, disease and death are the by-products of U.S. imperialism.

With 17,000 surrogate troops occupying Somalia under the rubric of the African Union Mission to Somalia (AMISOM) in conjunction with Ethiopian soldiers and the Kenya Defense Forces, the U.S. is in a position to strengthen the presence of the CIA and the Defense Intelligence Agency (DIA). Drones have become a regular weapon within the Somalia theater and these drones are being deployed throughout East Africa, the Arabian Peninsula as well as the Indian Ocean.

Despite the heavy U.S.-led war against the people of Somalia, the country has yet to be subdued. The Al-Shabab resistance fighters are regrouping and launching renewed attacks in the south and central regions of the country.

Oil is a key factor in the struggle for Somalia. New findings of both oil and natural gas inland and offshore throughout East Africa underlines the intensification of Pentagon and CIA presence in this region of the world.

These findings provide new avenues of exploitation for the transnational corporations and the banks. The U.S. has troops deployed in Uganda, the Central African Republic, South Sudan and the eastern Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC).

The DRC is rich with mineral resources much of which is not being exploited to the benefit of the national government based in Kinshasa. A recent insurgency by M23 is financed and coordinated by Rwanda, a surrogate of Washington and Wall Street in East Africa. Inside the DRC and the East and Central Africa region, millions have been killed over the last fifteen years in wars engineered by the Pentagon, the State Department and the CIA.

Nigeria, the largest importer of African oil into the U.S., is being systematically destabilized resulting from imperialist dependence and manipulation. Nigeria has opened negotiations with the People's Republic of China related to cooperation in the petroleum industry.

Yet the U.S. and Britain are determined to keep Nigeria within its sphere of influence. Joint so-called "counter-terrorism" operations are leading to deeper penetrations by U.S. intelligence over the Nigerian state apparatus and military. Nonetheless, in 2012, Nigerian

workers rose up in strikes and mass demonstrations against the cancellation of fuel subsidies and other economic issues. These struggles must be politicized and directed towards winning greater economic independence from the U.S. and Europe.

Southern Africa is still a focal point in the anti-capitalist and anti-imperialist struggle. In South Africa the world was shocked and horrified with the killing of 34 workers in a massacre by police at Marikana on August 16. The wildcat and protected strikes that spread throughout the country, which has Africa's largest economy, is rooted in the world economic crisis.

The ruling African National Congress (ANC) came to power in 1994 on the wave of unprecedented mass actions that mobilized and organized millions of African workers, youth and farmers. However, the current economic crisis impacting the country can only be ameliorated with the seizure of industry and agricultural resources inside the country.

As the economic crisis of capitalism worsens, the ANC government will come under greater pressure to grant further concessions to the imperialists. There have already been large-scale downsizing in the gold sector—and platinum, which the country has the world's largest supply—will also follow suit although with more difficulty for the mining bosses.

The National Democratic Revolution has no choice but to move towards socialism and the power of the working class in South Africa is poised to do so. The lessons of Zimbabwe since 2000 will be instructive to the people of South Africa in their quest for genuine economic and political independence.

In Zimbabwe, the ruling Zimbabwe African National Union-Patriotic Front party (ZANU-PF) has nationalized millions of acres of land and turned it over to African farmers. At present the party is seeking to “indigenize” mining ownership and production.

Zimbabwe has been vilified and attacked by the imperialist states. Sanctions imposed by the U.S. and Britain remain in force even under the African American President Barack Obama. Nonetheless, the country and party is gaining strength amid these ongoing destabilization efforts.

Prospects for Progress in 2013

In order for Africa to develop their must be a break with imperialism. The growing alliance with the People's Republic of China illustrates that Africa is looking for alternative economic and political alliances away from the western states.

Nkrumah points out that “In Africa, the resistance of the masses to imperialist aggression grows daily. African freedom and unity have become their watchwords. In that alone lies their fulfillment. The higher the level of a people's political awareness the greater is their understanding of their historical mission. Africa is ripe for armed revolution.” (Dark Days in Ghana, p. 158)

The same text goes on emphasizing that “This great upsurge of the African peoples can only be effective if it is organized, and if it is armed. The time has past for half-measures and piecemeal solutions. No compromise is possible while reactionary and counter-revolutionary elements exist in Africa, and while imperialists and neo-colonialists are able to make use of them for their own ends.”

Today in 2013, the imperialists are more desperate than at any point during the post-World War II period. This crisis has its origins within the western capitalist states under the leadership of the U.S.

Consequently, U.S. interests must be challenged throughout Africa in order for economic and political liberation to be realized. Once the ruling class interests have been subdued, the continent can move towards rebuilding from the centuries of slavery, colonialism and neo-colonialism.

As Nkrumah proclaimed that "If for a while the imperialists appear to be gaining ground, we must not be discouraged. For time is on our side. The permanency of the masses is the deciding factor, and no power on earth can prevent its ultimate decisive effect on the revolutionary struggle." (Dark Days in Ghana, p. 159)

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