

Africa in Review: Imperialist Foreign Policy Breeds Military Conflict and Disunity

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From Libya to the Horn of Africa, Washington and its neo-colonial apparatus stifles Pan-African development

On December 24, an Afriqiyah Airways A320 flight took off from the southern Libyan city of Sebha heading for the coastal capital of Tripoli. However, the plane was diverted to Malta where 109 passengers on board were allowed to disembark without being injured.

A group claiming to be in solidarity with the imperialist-ousted Al-Fatah Revolution of September 1, 1969, headed by Col. Muammar Gaddafi, said they were seeking asylum in Malta in response to the chaos prevalent across the once most prosperous state in Africa. A man stepped out of the aircraft and waved a green flag of the Jamahiriya, the political system in Libya which brought development and internationalist Pan-Africanism to the country and continent for over 40 years.

Nearly six years ago in February 2011, a counter-revolution was launched against the Libyan government under the guise of a fight for “freedom and democracy”. The so-called “Arab Spring” which had begun in neighboring Tunisia in December 2010 with a mass rebellion, general strike and the eventual seizure of power by the military and security forces in January 2011, was later replicated during February 2011 in Egypt.

Unfortunately, in Egypt as well, the military and police took charge of the transitional process effectively nullifying any sustainable revolutionary potential. The western corporate media and their governmental sponsored counterparts framed the counter-revolution in Libya as part of the “Arab Spring.” Nonetheless, it was quite clear to genuine anti-imperialists that this constituted a program of renewed neo-colonialism in North Africa which was willing to ignore the March 8 peace proposals put forward by the regional African Union (AU) designed to halt a planned bombing campaign led by the U.S. which started on March 19.

Obviously the two hijackers who requested asylum in Malta were making a profound political statement. They were saying that it was the imperialist system of Washington, London, Paris and Brussels along with their allies in Ankara and Riyadh who were responsible for the destruction of Libya.

Today Libya is wracked by internecine conflict where the Pentagon has bombed the country again during 2016 under the pretext of fighting Islamic State (IS or ISIS) strongholds in Sirte and other coastal areas of the oil-rich nation. However, it was Washington under the administration of outgoing President Barack Obama with his then Secretary of State Hillary

Clinton which was hell-bent on destroying Libya and creating the conditions for the emergence of the Islamic State in Iraq, Syria and now North Africa. The Obama Doctrine in Africa and West Asia has been an unmitigated disaster for the peoples of both regions, leaving the U.S. in the same imperialist posture towards the world as an aggressor which has killed, injured and displaced tens of millions in pursuit of its neo-colonialist aims.

The Horn of Africa: Somalia, Ethiopia and Djibouti as Forward Bases of Imperialist Intrigue

Although the previous administration of President George W. Bush created the U.S. Africa Command (AFRICOM) in early 2008, the military operation has been continued and expanded under Obama. Somalia is an excellent example of the failed Africa policy over the last eight years.

With the deployment of up to 22,000 troops from various neo-colonial dominated African states such as Uganda, Ethiopia, Kenya, Burundi and Djibouti, stability and prosperity has still not returned to Somalia. The African Union Mission to Somalia (AMISOM) in early 2016 lost 20 percent of its support from one of its major financiers, the European Union (EU). Consequently, the future of the operation is not clear leaving yet another imperialist project in flux.

Not only has AMISOM been occupying Somalia, the Pentagon and the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) maintains a strong presence in the country along with neighboring states including Ethiopia and Djibouti. In neighboring Djibouti, at Camp Lemonnier, thousands of Pentagon and French troops are stationed at a military base. Their presence facilitates not only Washington and Paris operations in Africa but also throughout the Arabian Peninsula and the Persian Gulf.

A war against the people of Yemen which has killed over 11,000 people and displaced several million is hidden from the view of the U.S. public as is the occupation of Somalia and other Horn of Africa states. Off the coast of Somalia in the Gulf of Aden, the Pentagon and other naval forces are patrolling saying they are guarding against “piracy” which has not been a problem for several years. These military campaigns are designed to provide fuel to the military-industrial-complex, a multi-trillion dollar business that is subsidized by the tax dollars of working class and oppressed people in the U.S.

As long as the American public can be convinced that their principle enemy is “Islamic terrorism” or “Communism” through the existence of ISIS, the People’s Republic of China, the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea, Cuba, etc., and not the billionaires of Wall Street and the Pentagon chiefs of Washington who order weapons like consumer goods, the political status-quo will be maintained. The incoming administration of President-elect Donald Trump has appointed leading military hawks, oil magnates, fast food low-wage slave drivers, conspiracy theorists and white supremacists to his government ensuring that the situation will only worsen.

In Ethiopia, where a socialist-oriented government was overthrown over a quarter-of-a-century ago in 1991, and replaced by the Tigray People’s Liberation Front (TPLF) government of the Ethiopian People’s Revolutionary Democratic Front (EPRDF), unrest has erupted inside the federal system of governance. Leaders within the Oromo and Amhara nationalities have rebelled saying their interests are being ignored by the government of Prime Minister Hailemariam Desalegn.

The continuation of U.S. dominance is essential to imperialist foreign policy imperatives in the Horn of Africa and its environs. Even according to the Washington Post, which has served as staunch defender of the Obama administration in recent years, said in an article that: "It is difficult to overstate the importance of Ethiopia to Africa's stability. It has the continent's second-largest population — nearly 100 million people — one of its fastest growing economies and a powerful military that helps stabilize a string of troubled countries around it. The United States — and many other countries — have invested extensively in aid programs to help the Ethiopian government wrest the country out of poverty and bring it to middle-income status. If it succeeds — and becomes a democracy as well — it could be a model for developing nations everywhere. Ethiopia has witnessed double-digit growth in the past decade. But this rapid economic expansion has resulted in strains, especially when new factories and commercial farms are being built on land taken from farmers. The central Oromo region, which has historically felt marginalized — despite having the largest segment of the population and some of the richest farmland — has been particularly hard hit." (Dec. 24)

One of the cornerstones of the Ethiopian Revolution of 1974-1991 was its land reform program which took control of huge sections of the country from monarchical rule and administration after the fall of His Imperial Majesty (H.I.M.) Haile Selassie I during the first months of the uprising. Yet today, at the aegis of imperialism, the land is being turned over to multi-national corporations for the establishment of profit-making enterprises that provide miniscule benefits for the masses of workers and farmers in Ethiopia.

This same Washington Post article goes on to say: "Protests erupted there in November 2015 over the land grabs, corruption in the local government and lack of services such as running water, electricity and roads. The demonstrations later spread to the northern Amhara region, which has grievances of its own with a government that residents maintain is dominated by the Tigrayan minority group. It has been the worst unrest in Ethiopia since Tigrayan-led rebels overthrew the Marxist government in 1991. Amnesty International estimates at least 800 people have died in the suppression of protests over the past year. People have also increasingly singled out Tigrayans for their woes, accusing them of getting the best jobs and dominating the economy. There have been cases of attacks on Tigrayans in the north of the country, and there are fears the unrest could take on a more ethnic dimension. After dozens were killed during a botched attempt to disperse a crowd at an Oromo religious festival in October, mobs attacked factories and commercial farms across the country and the government declared a state of emergency. Violence has since dropped off, and the government has said it is addressing grievances and has already made significant progress, especially in the Oromo region."

A government-imposed state of emergency was lifted in December along with the release of 10,000 people who were arrested during the unrest. Nonetheless, the Washington and Wall Street establishment are nervous about the future political situation in the region.

Also in South Sudan, another project of the Obama administration which pushed for the partitioning of the country which took place in 2011, the two main factions of the Sudan People's Liberation Movement/Army (SPLM/A) have been split over the last three years. Former Vice-President Reik Machar has reportedly fled the country where he is perceived as a threat to the government of President Salva Kiir.

The United Nations, which already has 12,500 troops and other personnel forming a parallel government in the country, is insisting on the deployment of yet another 4,000 soldiers. This

has caused a strain in relations between the government in Juba and its U.S. sponsors. A recent Obama administration sponsored UN Security Council resolution designed to impose an arms embargo against President Kiir and his ministers failed due to the abstention of eight members. Seven voted in favor of the resolution falling short of the nine needed for it to pass.

Sudan before the partition was emerging as an oil-producing state independent of western controlled oil petroleum conglomerates. The People's Republic of China had substantial oil concessions in the country. Today, both the North and the South are suffering from their dependence on imperialism. The government in Khartoum is now following the lead of Riyadh having joined the Saudi Arabian and Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) proxy war against Iran by participating in the bombing and ground campaign designed to destroy the Ansurallah (Houthis) and their growing influence inside the poorest and least developed state in the region.

The Imperialist War Against Africa Continues

After eight years of the Obama administration it is quite clear to any objective analyst that the conditions for the peoples of Africa and West Asia are far worse than at any time in the post-World War II period. The UN Refugee Agency says that the number of displaced persons in the world today is the highest ever recorded in human history, some 65 million.

These developments have not happened spontaneously. They are part of a failed but calculated policy of maintaining world dominance.

In the recent unrest in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), opposition groups staged violent demonstrations aimed at forcing the resignation of President Joseph Kabila. Despite the fact that over 20,000 UN troops are stationed in the vast mineral-rich Central African state, it was the leadership of the Catholic Church which intervened to negotiate an agreement to end the violence. President Kabila will remain in office for at least another year until elections can be organized. A Government of National Unity has been created with Prime Minister Samy Badibanga as its leader.

The DRC has been a source of instability since its national independence from Belgium in June 1960. Its first elected Prime Minister Patrice Lumumba was labelled a Communist by the-then U.S. administration of Dwight D. Eisenhower and subsequently overthrown, abducted, tortured and executed at the aegis of the CIA in January 1961.

An interview with the DRC ambassador to the Republic of Zimbabwe, Dr. Mawampanga Mwana Nanga, which was published by the Herald newspaper on December 24, he emphasized that: "First of all, you have to keep in mind that there are those who talk so loudly about democracy. When it suits them, they push democracy, when it doesn't suit them, they obstruct democracy. There are dark forces that want to recolonize this continent."

This discussion went on to say: "The protests are happening because of the so called dark forces who don't want Africa to be at peace. Those who pull the strings in the background. They did everything to derail the negotiations and they are die hard extremists like Mr. Etienne Tshisekedi who did not want to come to the dialogue."

Therefore, as long as Africa is divided the imperialists will be in a position to dictate the

terms of political developments on the continent. What is needed is a total break with the western program of neo-colonial dependency.

The upcoming year 2017 will prove critical in the future of Africa in light of the uncharted waters of the Trump administration, the instability in the United Kingdom and the EU stemming from the gradual dissolution of the Common Market, and the collapse of the war of instability and genocide in Syria. Africa must develop its own political and economic course or remain in perpetual impoverishment and tutelage.

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