

African Unity and the New Cold War

Imperialism extends its destabilization efforts against China and Russia across the continent

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This year's 60th anniversary commemorations of the founding of the Organization of African Unity (OAU) on May 25, 1963 are occurring at an important inflection point in international relations.

Africa and its people were essential in the rise of western colonialism and imperialism due to the highly profitable character of the Atlantic Slave Trade over a period extending from the 15th to the 19th century.

In the beginning decades of the 21st century, the United States, the United Kingdom and the European Union (EU) are seriously threatened by the growing economic and political influence of the People's Republic of China and the Russian Federation. The constant propaganda and psychological warfare campaigns directed against the inhabitants of the industrial capitalist states of Europe and North America are aimed at demonizing these two states.

The hostility towards Russia and China in the 20th century had its origins in the imperialist attempts to stifle national liberation and socialist revolutions in Asia, Eastern Europe and the other geopolitical regions throughout the globe. Historically, Russia nor China were involved in the Atlantic Slave Trade and the establishment of colonies in the Western Hemisphere.

As socialist states governed by communist parties, both the former Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR) and China were obligated to support politically and materially the national liberation movements which gained momentum after the conclusion of World War II and the beginning of the initial Cold War.

Many activists and intellectuals in the U.S. were negatively impacted by the Cold War. Leading figures in the antiracist, civil rights and antiwar movements were targeted by the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI), the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) and Congress.

People such as W.E.B. Du Bois, Shirley Graham Du Bois, Claudia Jones, William Alphaeus Hunton, and many others were called before the legislative committees investigating communist influence and subjected to economic isolation, the seizure of their passports, deportation and the imposition of prison sentences.

Although Russia is no longer socialist, the state has differences with the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) governments which have brought the current Washington-led proxy war in Ukraine into existence. The war is being fought over the refusal of Moscow to submit to the further expansion of NATO in Eastern Europe. The Ukraine war actually began in February 2014, when the U.S. State Department under former President Barack Obama engineered the overthrow of the democratically-elected government of President Viktor Yanukovich.

In the aftermath of the coup, the people of the Russian-speaking regions of eastern Ukraine were subjected to draconian ethnically biased laws along with violent attacks and a military assault on the Donbass. Diplomatic efforts to end the war between 2014 and 2016 were sabotaged at the aegis of the State Department.

China, Africa and the Russian Special Military Operation in Ukraine

Since the beginning of the special military operation by Russia in Ukraine, the U.S. has pressured all governments around the world to side with its position in the war. United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) resolutions sponsored by the administration of President Joe Biden have passed with broad margins. However, nearly half of the abstentions in the UNGA votes to condemn Russian policy towards Ukraine were registered by African states.

Moreover, within the emerging geopolitical regions, as exemplified by the Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa (BRICS) summit, these governments representing billions around the world have refused to condemn the Putin administration in Moscow. The AU along with the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) have followed this same foreign policy trajectory. A delegation of six African heads-of-state are preparing to engage in a peace mission to Ukraine and Russia in an attempt to facilitate a diplomatic solution to the crisis which, if escalated, could result in a broader conventional and possible nuclear conflagration.

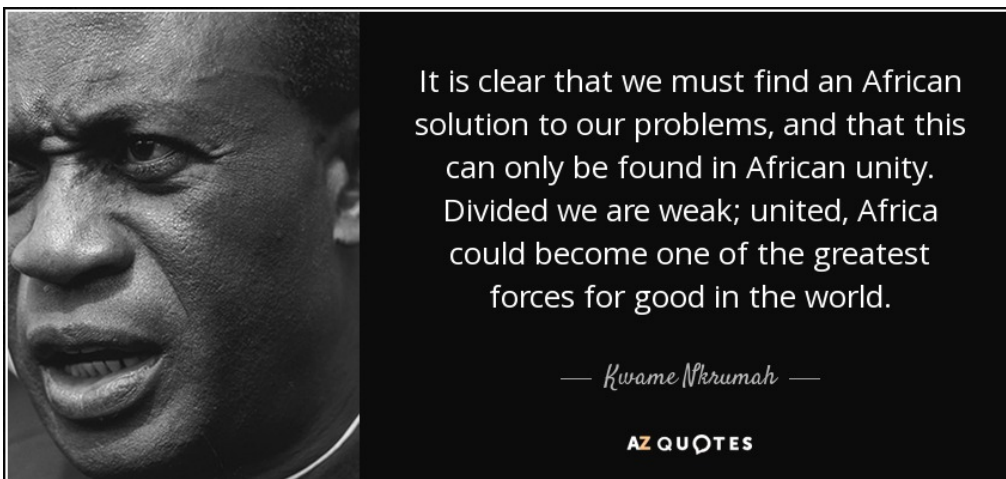
The rising levels of imperialist aggression emanating from the U.S. and NATO, has prompted the Chinese government to put forward its own proposals for not only ending the Ukraine war, this security framework, published by Beijing in 2022, has international dimensions encompassing the entire Eurasian geostrategic regions. Of course, it would be in the interest of China to end the Ukraine war diplomatically since Beijing has been subjected to constant provocations by successive U.S. administrations regarding the violation of the "One China" policy through the arming of Taiwan secessionists.

Under the former administration of President Donald Trump and his successor, President Joe Biden, they have identified China as the main strategic competitor of the U.S. China has the second largest economy in the world and is poised within the next decade to overtake the U.S. in regard to its gross domestic product. The rapidity with which the Chinese economy has grown cannot be properly assessed without considering military policy which has refrained from long term destabilization and occupation of other territories. Much of its surplus garnered from the industrial, extraction and service sectors is reinvested into the infrastructure of the country.

These factors of increasing Chinese economic and political influence cannot be adequately measured by only examining the annual GDP. The character of foreign investments and engagements in Africa and South America prioritize national and continental unity through partnerships which build transport systems, healthcare facilities, ports, conference centers, stadiums and international trade.

The presence of the U.S. Africa Command (AFRICOM), French paratroopers and other NATO military personnel in Africa and Latin America represents a profound threat to the peace and security in these geopolitical regions. China has deployed military personnel in a limited capacity as peacekeepers in the Darfur region of Sudan at the aegis of the United Nations Security Council as well as in Djibouti in the Horn of Africa due to agreement with the government. Camp Lemonnier houses thousands of Pentagon and French troops which have and will continue to utilize this African territory as a launching base for aggressive maneuvers and attacks on areas within continental and West Asian states.

All of these developments involving the NATO countries clearly violate the concept of positive non-alignment. Africa is being utilized in the imperialist quest to maintain global hegemony encompassing the geostrategic areas of the continent, the Asia-Pacific, Latin America and the Caribbean. International relations should reflect the interests and needs of the majority of people within a society. Consequently, there is no plausible argument for the continued presence of Pentagon and other NATO troops in the AU member-states.



Dr. Kwame Nkrumah, the first leader of independent Ghana and the founder of modern Africa, a leading figure in the African liberation movement, the struggle for Pan-Africanism and world socialism which emerged during the post World War II period, at the onset of the OAU's founding in May 1963, issued his historical and social scientific appeal for the integration and unification of Africa based upon an ideological foundation of anti-imperialism and socialism. The book entitled, "Africa Must Unite" devotes an entire chapter to "Africa in World Affairs."

In this chapter Nkrumah emphasizes:

"When we in Africa denounce imperialism and the recent off-shoot, neo-colonialism, we do it not only because we believe that Africa belongs to the Africans and should be governed by them, but also in the interest of world peace which is so essential to our development and freedom. By abolishing imperialism in all its forms, the world will be rid of many of the present areas of conflict. It is in the same interest of world peace that we also advocate unity. A united Africa would be able to make a greater contribution

towards the peace and progress of mankind (humanity). For one thing, it would resolve the problems of those arbitrary frontiers erected by the colonial powers, and so eliminate irredentist dissensions. There would be no foreign military bases on Africa soil. With a united foreign policy and a common defense plan, there would be no need for them. In the concourse of African union, no African country would be left in a position of solitary weakness in which it could be bullied into allowing them. Any kind of military pacts or alliances with outside powers would be unnecessary. Our united strength would be sufficient to deter any would-be aggressor, since an attack on any African country would be regarded as an attack on the Union.” (pp. 202-3)

As we look back over the last six decades, it is obvious that these objectives as outlined by Nkrumah in 1963 have not been achieved. However, the perceptions of the anti-imperialist leaders of the post WWII era remain valid in the present historical conjuncture.

African Disunity and Underdevelopment Strengthens Imperialism

Two of the most extreme examples within the African world where the machinations of imperialism have disrupted the development of the processes of independence and nation-building are unfolding in Sudan and Haiti. Both geostrategic centers for imperialist exploitation and militarization have manifested the crisis in different ways.

In Sudan, the involvement of the State Department in the transitional talks has not only furthered the institutionalized dominance of the military structures within Sudanese society Washington’s foreign policy aggravated the tensions between the army and the militia. As the previous Trump and present administrations of Biden have attempted to impose their views of what type of political system should govern Sudan, a nation of 47 million people, well-endowed with oil, diamonds and the strategic port on the Red Sea, this state has fallen deeper into crisis.

Estimates suggests that since the fighting erupted on April 15 up to 1,000 people have been killed, over 5,000 injured with one million displaced—one-quarter of which have fled across the borders and overseas- in the fighting while its consequences have closed schools, many hospitals, airports, roads and borders to the seven neighboring states.

The AU has not been able to exert its rightful place as the custodians of the acquisition of peace and stability in the Republic of Sudan. In regard to Ethiopia and its conflict with the Tigray People’s Liberation Front during 2020-2022, the governments of South Africa and Kenya hosted negotiations which resulted in the accords between the central government and the northern province. U.S. support for the TPLF could not overcome the desire of the AU member-states to win the peace. “African solutions to African problems” became a slogan advanced by Ethiopian Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed and others.

Republic of South Sudan President Salva Kiir spoke out against the possibility of foreign intervention in response to the security crisis in Sudan. He had offered to facilitate negotiations between the Armed Forces headed by General Abdel Fattah al-Burhan and Rapid Support Forces leader, General Mohamed Hamdan Dagalo (Hemitti), in Juba. Yet it was the U.S. and Saudi Arabia which have mediated the discussions between the two belligerents continuing the process of imperialist intervention.

In reference to the situation in Haiti, the African nation in the Caribbean has always been subjected to U.S. and French intervention for centuries. The Haitian Revolution of the 1790s

to 1804 against France was never supported by the U.S. ruling class and government. Haiti has been the focal point of an economic blockade since its independence. There have been several direct military occupations of Haiti by the U.S. along with its allies in other imperialist states such as France and Canada.

The recent assassination of former President Jovenel Moïse has been linked to elements operating in the U.S. After the killing of Moïse, the Biden administration deployed a small contingent of Pentagon troops to Port-Au-Prince, supposedly to guard diplomats at the U.S. embassy. Washington-inspired efforts to send troops to Haiti were defeated at the United Nations Security Council due to the opposition by China and Russia.

[In an article published](#) by the Associated Press earlier in the year, it says of the assassination and the subsequent investigation conducted by U.S. officials:

“U.S. authorities have arrested four more people in the slaying of Haitian President Jovenel Moïse, including the owner of a Miami-area security company that hired ex-Colombian soldiers for the mission, prosecutors announced Tuesday (Feb. 15). The squad of former Colombian soldiers are among dozens of suspects who carried out the July 2021 attack that authorities say originally was envisioned to be a coup rather than an assassination. The plotters had hoped to reap lucrative contracts under a new administration once Moïse was out of the way, investigators allege.... Florida-based U.S. financier Walter Veintemilla, 54, of Weston, Fla., is accused of funding the operation. A fourth suspect, Frederick Joseph Bergmann Jr., 64, of Tampa, is accused of smuggling goods including 20 CTU-branded ballistic vests disguised as medical X-ray vests and school supplies.... A total of 11 suspects are now in U.S. custody, including key players like James Solages and Joseph Vincent, two Haitian Americans who were among the first arrested after Moïse was shot 12 times at his private home in July 2021. Other suspects include Christian Emmanuel Sanon, a pastor and failed businessman whose associates have suggested was duped by the plotters.... A day before the killing, Solages falsely told other suspects that it was a CIA operation and that the real mission was to kill the president. Shortly before Moïse was killed, Solages yelled that it was supposedly a DEA operation so that the president’s security detail would comply.”

Violence in the urban areas of Haiti has been unleashed against the people providing a rationale for imperialist intervention. In fact, President Ariel Henry, who was installed after the assassination of Moïse, has repeatedly called for the deployment of even more U.S. troops to address the security situation in the capital and other areas.

These are some of the challenges facing the AU along with the myriad of the political parties, mass organizations, unions, women and youth organizations in existence across the continent and other geopolitical regions where African people reside. We should reflect on the history of the AU within the broader context of the centuries-long struggles to achieve social emancipation and unity.

Note: These remarks were made by the author at the Pan-Afrikan Society Community Forum (PASCf) Afrikan Liberation Day webinar held on Sat. May 27, 2023. The event was hosted by PASCf organizers in Britain under the theme of “Acknowledging Our Shared Struggles and Celebrating Our Achievements.” The keynote address for this ALD program was delivered from the Calabash Literary Festival in Jamaica by Dr. Carolyn Cooper, a longtime professor at the University of the West Indies who examined the cultural work of Caribbean musicians which link the struggles on the continent with developments in the Diaspora. In addition,

Sister Akeba expounded on traditional storytelling emanating from the African and Caribbean cultures. You can reach the PASCf at the following link: [Home – pascf.org](https://pascf.org)

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