

# “Black Skin, White Masks”: Lt. General Michael Langley to become the first Black commander of AFRICOM

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*Lt. General Michael Langley is poised to become the first Black commander of AFRICOM—a neocolonial force whose main purpose is to enable Western corporate pillage of Africa.*

*We have seen Blacks assist in the subjugation of their own people before and it is not something to cheer about.*

In his 1952 book *Black Skin, White Masks*, Algerian psychiatrist Frantz Fanon warned about the emergence of post-colonial African leaders who would do the bidding of the former colonial powers.

Were he still alive, Fanon would not be surprised at how the last remaining imperial power is poised to appoint a Black man—Michael Langley, a 37-year army man who served overseas in Afghanistan, Somalia and Okinawa—to head its Africa military command (AFRICOM).

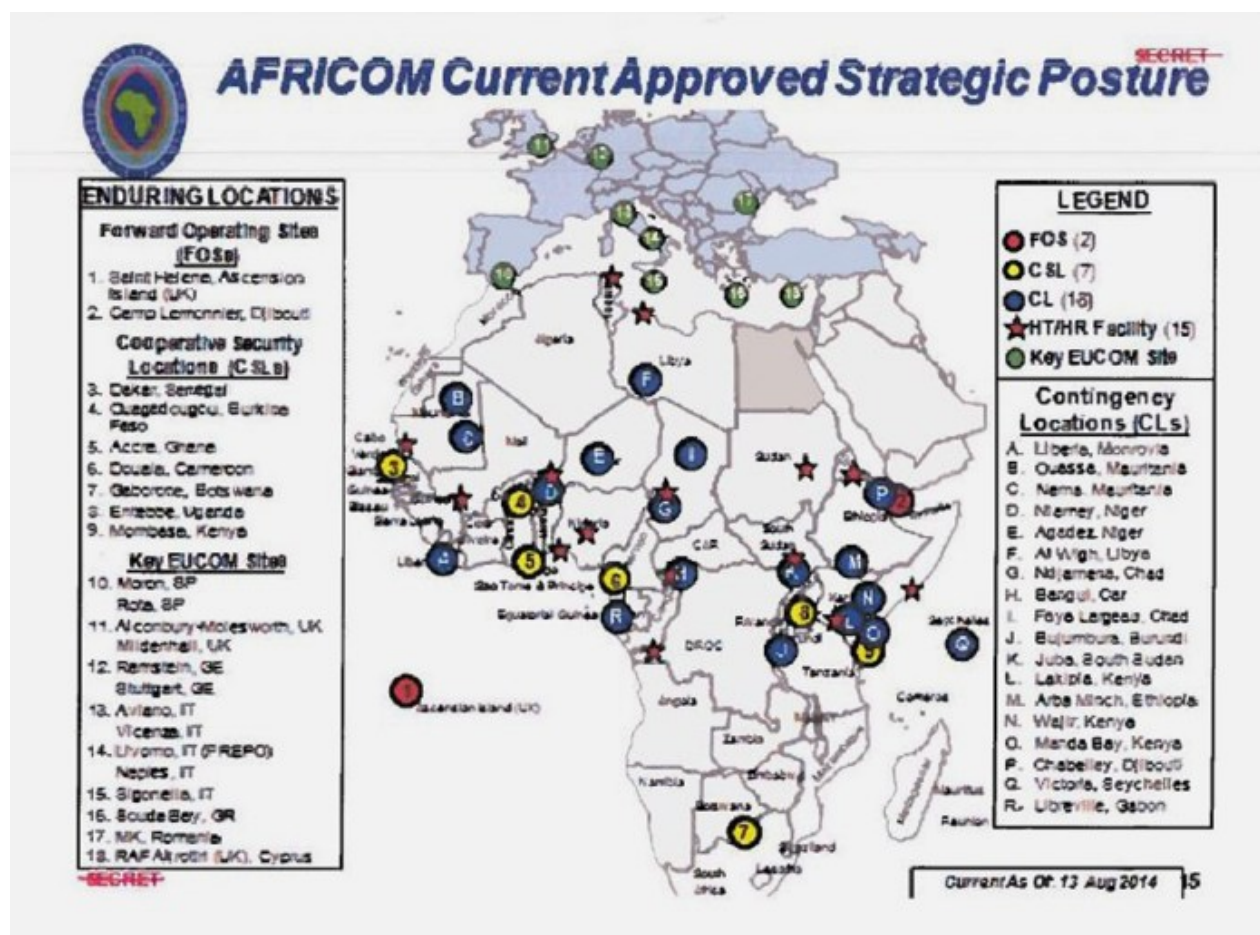
It was the first Black U.S. President, Barack Obama, who [expanded the number of AFRICOM military bases in Africa from three to 84](#), contributing to the effective recolonization of Africa.

AFRICOM today sustains ties to 53 African nations and provides a cover for an [estimated 9,000 U.S. troops in Africa](#).

AFRICOM founder Vice Admiral Robert Moeller admitted that one of AFRICOM’s guiding principles was [“protecting the free flow of natural resources from Africa to the global market.”](#)

In April, AFRICOM announced that it would [open an office in copper-rich Zambia](#) as part of its ongoing expansion.

Zambia's former representative to the African Union (AU), Emmanuel Mwamba, considered AFRICOM's expansion a betrayal of previous Zambian leaders' efforts to remain non-aligned.



A map of U.S. military bases—forward operating sites, cooperative security locations, and contingency locations—across the African continent from declassified Fiscal Year 2015 U.S. Africa Command planning documents. [Source: [theintercept.com](http://theintercept.com)]



Source: [smithsonianmag.com](http://smithsonianmag.com)

The AU and Southern African Development Community (SADC) for years had tried to resist the establishment of U.S. and other foreign military bases in Africa, and to develop their [own standby military forces and security architecture](#) designed to prevent a return to the era of colonialism.

## A Historic Appointment?

*The New York Times* gushed about Langley's potential appointment—he has been recommended by Defense Secretary Lloyd Austin to become the next AFRICOM commander—calling it “historic.”<sup>[1]</sup>

But historic for whom?

The U.S. military to be sure has an abysmal record of promoting African-Americans: The Marine Corps has never had anyone other than a white man in its senior leadership and four-star posts, and only 30 Blacks have ever obtained the rank of General.<sup>[2]</sup>

Retired Lieutenant General Ronald L. Bailey, the first Black man to command the First Marine Division, was quoted in *The New York Times* as saying that the promotion of Langley, whom he has known since he was a First Lieutenant, “is bigger than Langley. This is for our nation. It’s been a glass ceiling for years, and now Black Marines will see that this is possible.”<sup>[3]</sup>

The fact that a glass ceiling has been broken, however, does not erase the fact that Langley is now in a position to hasten the exploitation of Black people throughout Africa.

And he can do so more effectively than a white by helping to give the illusion that U.S. policy is designed to help Africans.

In his 2020 book *Understanding the War Industry* (Atlanta: Clarity, 2020), Christian Sorensen emphasizes how the U.S. war industry has [sustained a progressive veneer through more minority appointments and by emphasizing the diversity of its workforce](#).

Langley's likely appointment is but the latest example. It is of little solace to Africans who suffer the humiliation of having their countries occupied by a white foreign power.

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## Notes

1. Eric Schmitt and Helene Cooper, "A Historic Endorsement for U.S. Commander in Africa," *The New York Times*, May 21, 2022, A19.
2. *Idem*.
3. *Idem*.

Featured image: Lt. General Michael Langley [Source: [nytimes.com](https://www.nytimes.com)]

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