

Washington's Intrusion in the Republic of Sudan, "Seeks to Maintain Hegemony in Region"

State Department envoys, surrogate states seek to halt the mass demonstrations demanding immediate democratic transition

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Two United States envoys from the State Department visited the Republic of Sudan on January 19 in their continuing campaign to neutralize the mass democratic movement which is demanding the exit of the western-backed military forces now ruling the oil-rich country.

Molly Phee, the U.S. Assistant Secretary of State for African Affairs along with David Satterfield, Special Envoy for the Horn of Africa, sought to pressure the Forces for Freedom and Change (FFC) and its affiliates to adopt a Washington-influenced mediation strategy facilitated by the United Nations offices of the Secretary General Antonio Guterres.

Yet the resistance committees operating on a grassroots level in several major cities throughout the north-central African state have been steadfast by insisting that any UN-brokered process in Sudan must lead to the establishment of a civilian government. Unrest has persisted in other areas of the country particularly in the eastern region surrounding Port Sudan, an important resource for maintaining the country's trade with other African states and geo-political regions.

On January 18 and 19, thousands took to the streets in the capital of Khartoum and barricaded key areas of the city and its environs. It was reported that seven people were killed in clashes with the security forces. The Sudanese Communist Party condemned the repression leveled against the popular movement while calling for a broad coalition to overthrow the military regime. (See [this](#))

Image on the right: Former PM Abdalla Hamdok



Another coup which displaced former Prime Minister Abdalla Hamdok on October 25, 2021 and then subsequently reinstalled him on November 21, could not conceal the role of the repressive military apparatus prompting the resignation of the interim civilian leader in early January. Hamdok has largely remained silent while hundreds of thousands of people have continued to demonstrate on a daily basis.

Over 70 people have been killed by the security forces since October 25 while youth, journalists, rank-and-file workers and other professionals, including healthcare employees, are facing constant harassment by the agents of the military regime. Inflationary spirals and consumer shortages are continuing despite the infusion of funds from the United Arab Emirates (UAE), Saudi Arabia and other sources. Since the beginning of the uprising in December 2018, there has been no sustainable resolution to the conflict between the military and the mass democratic movement led by the FFC, where the Sudanese Professional Association (SPA) plays an important role in setting the political tone and character of the struggle.

U.S. Seeks to Maintain Hegemony in the Region

The purpose of the U.S. interventions is to maintain the Sudanese government and political tendencies within the influence of the western states. Under the previous tenure of President Donald Trump, the military and transitional regime where Hamdok served, were pressured into accepting several policy initiatives from Washington. These included the pledges to pay hundreds of millions of U.S. dollars to the survivors of three bombing attacks carried out in East Africa and the Gulf of Aden between 1998-2000. During this time period, there was a completely different government in power in Sudan which in April 2019 was overthrown by the military in response to mass demonstrations in the streets.

Image below: In this frame taken from video, the head of the military, Gen. Abdel-Fattah Burhan, announced in a televised address, that he was dissolving the country's ruling Sovereign Council, as well as the government led by Prime Minister Abdalla Hamdok, in Khartoum, Sudan, Monday, Oct. 25, 2021. Burhan said the military will run the country until elections in 2023. His announcement came hours after his forces arrested the acting prime minister and other senior government officials. (Sudan TV via AP)



The second significant policy shift imposed by the Trump administration in 2020, was the agreement that the Transitional Sovereign Council would on its own “normalize” relations with the State of Israel. This decision championed by Trump as an outcome of the Abraham Accord, was specifically designed to undermine solidarity with the Palestinian national liberation movement. However, this decision by the previous Sovereign Council where Hamdok shared his position alongside military strongman Gen. Abdel-Fattah al-Burhan, was forbidden by law due to the Israeli Boycott Act adopted by the Sudanese parliament in 1958.

According to a report published by the Associated Press:

“U.S. State Department spokesman Ned Price said earlier this week that Phee and Satterfield would reiterate Washington’s call for Sudanese security forces to ‘end violence and respect freedom of expression and peaceful assembly.’” Before arriving in Khartoum, the two attended a meeting of the Friends of Sudan group in Saudi Arabia to rally support for U.N. efforts to end Sudan’s deadlock. The group includes the United States, Britain and other international governments and world financial institutions.” (See [this](#))

Therefore, the itinerary of the Biden administration envoys reveals clearly the allies that Washington is using to curtail the demands of the Sudanese masses. Britain is the former colonial power in Sudan, while today, the U.S. is attempting to shape the transitional process in the country in order to maintain Sudan within the western camp, utilizing a prospective pliant administration to influence the broader regional dynamics in the Horn of Africa.

The role of Tel Aviv is important to the entire process of an imperialist-engineered political dispensation. Although officially there has been no exchange of diplomats between Khartoum and Tel Aviv, reports indicate that there is substantive collaboration with Israel in suppressing the mass democratic movement in Sudan.

This same above-mentioned Associated Press report notes:

“Also Wednesday (Jan. 19), an Israeli delegation met with top Sudanese military officials in Khartoum, according to a Sudanese military official and Israeli reports. The Sudanese official said the delegation, including officials from the Mossad spy agency, met with Gen. Abdel-Fattah Burhan, the coup leader and head of the ruling Sovereign Council, and other military officials. The official spoke on condition of anonymity because he was not authorized to talk to reporters. The Israeli public TV station Kan also reported the visit and said the plane carrying the Israeli delegation made a brief stop in Egypt’s Red Sea resort of Sharm el-Sheikh before heading to the Sudanese capital. Israel maintains close security ties with Egypt, the first Arab country to strike peace with Israel.

Sudan normalized ties with Israel in 2020 as part of a series of U.S.-brokered deals between Israel and four Arab countries. The agreement paved the way for the African country to reintegrate into the international community after two decades of isolation under al-Bashir.

Israel has been silent on the October coup and its aftermath, indicating it intends to maintain normalized ties with Sudan, which formerly was a top critic of Israel in the Arab world.”

These measures were adopted by the Sudanese transitional administration with the understanding that it would result in access to loans provided by international financial institutions and directly from the U.S. and other western capitalist states. Sudan was removed from a list of “state sponsors of terrorism” while being forced into the open arms of the West and the State of Israel.

Yet the purported advantages of “normalization” have not benefitted the Sudanese masses in their quest for a better life. Millions remain discontented and want change now. The FFC and other progressive organizations inside the country are mobilizing the people despite the increasing levels of repression including the interruptions of the internet and the censoring of the mass media.

Imperialism and the Strategic Position of Sudan

The country of Sudan prior to its partition in 2011, which created the Republic of South Sudan, was the largest geographic nation-state in Africa. Even today, more than a decade later, there are approximately 45 million people in Sudan.

Sudan is heavily endowed with natural resources including large deposits of petroleum, natural gas, gold, silver, chromite, manganese, gypsum, mica, zinc, iron, lead, uranium, copper, kaolin, cobalt, granite, nickel, tin, and aluminum. Its geographic location places the country firmly within northern, eastern, central and Horn of Africa regions.

There are seven other contiguous states which border Sudan: Egypt, South Sudan, Central African Republic, Chad, Eritrea, Ethiopia and Libya. All of these neighboring countries have important natural resources, agricultural commodities as well as waterways and ports.

Therefore, the political, economic and social status of Sudan is important as it relates to the impact of developments inside the country on other neighboring states. The current internal conflict in Ethiopia has further exposed the military regime in Sudan that has objectively sided with the rebel interests fighting the central government in Addis Ababa. A longtime border conflict between Ethiopia and Sudan has provided a rationale for a military build-up in the border areas. Egypt, a close ally of the U.S., has categorically opposed the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam (GERD), a hydro-electric energy generating project, the largest of its kind on the African continent. Egypt is concerned that GERD will redirect water from the Blue Nile having a negative impact on its access to the river.

The military forces which have ruled Sudan since April 2019 have demonstrated their willingness to follow the imperatives of U.S. foreign policy. Although it is not possible to foresee the political character of a future civilian government, Washington is concerned over the risk having to deal with an administration beholden to imperialist interests in the region and internationally.

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Featured image: Sudan mass movement attack by military forces, Jan. 17, 2022 (Source: Abayomi Azikiwe)

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