

The Trump Administration's Africa Policy

National Security Advisor Bolton's Presentation to Heritage Foundation.
Nothing new in the notions of upholding United States interests

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Region: [sub-Saharan Africa](#), [USA](#)

Theme: [History](#), [Intelligence](#)

On December 13 National Security Advisor John Bolton made a presentation at the Heritage Foundation to unveil the foreign policy of the administration of President Donald Trump towards the African continent. (See [this](#))

Bolton emphasized that the administration's posture towards Africa would be based upon the interests of the United States above and beyond all else. He suggested that there would be no aid without accountability.

Interestingly enough this does not represent an alternative path to what has existed for decades under successive administrations. Even under Democratic Party leadership, U.S. economic and military interests have remained paramount in crafting relations with various African governments. (See [this](#))

Much of the aid given to African states is designed to advance the profitability of multinational corporations based in the U.S. along with facilitating a deeper penetration by the Pentagon across the region. The U.S. Africa Command (AFRICOM), founded under the Republican President George W. Bush in 2008, was strengthened and enhanced by President Barack Obama. (See [this](#))



Libya leader Col. Muammar Gaddafi and South African counterpart Nelson Mandela during the early 1990s.

It was the Obama administration which led the massive bombing campaign against the North African state of Libya, at the time the most prosperous nation on the continent. Today after the destruction of the country in 2011, Libya, despite its wealth in oil, natural gas and geo-strategic location on the Mediterranean, is mired in poverty becoming a source of instability across North and West Africa as well as being a hub for human trafficking and modern-day enslavement.

Trump has heightened the bombing of Somalia under the guise of “the war on terrorism”. The current administration has never given an adequate explanation of the deaths of four Green Berets killed in combat in the uranium-rich West African nation of Niger in 2017. (See [this](#))

Fundamental Imperialist Policies Remain Intact Under Democrats and Republicans

Although Trump has been condemned for his statements referring to African Union (AU) member-states in the most vulgar and derogatory terms, similar comments and sentiments have been expressed historically albeit utilizing more sophisticated language. Africa has never been viewed by the White House as an equal partner with the U.S. and Western Europe.

The rhetorical support given during various periods since the 1950s in regard to Washington’s purported support for self-determination and national independence was done with the aim of protecting the economic interests of transnational corporations. When there was a threat of genuine sovereignty and sustainable unity, these states were targeted for destabilization and regime change.

In February 1966, the First Republic of Ghana under President Kwame Nkrumah was overthrown by disgruntled lower-ranking military officers and police forces. Even though many western-oriented Ghanaians thought they had carried out the coup in response to what was perceived as opposition to the policies of the ruling Convention People’s Party (CPP), it was sensed by progressive elements that the putsch was engineered by Washington.

Democratic President Lyndon B. Johnson, who was head-of-state in 1966, has often been portrayed as the most liberal leader of the U.S. Taking over after the assassination of his predecessor, President John F. Kennedy, who was ambushed in a motorcade in broad daylight in downtown Dallas, Texas, the home state of Johnson, on November 22, 1963, LBJ escalated the genocidal war against the Vietnamese people in 1964-65 and invaded the Dominican Republic in 1965 to prevent a leftist government from taking power.

Some twelve years later after the death of Johnson and the exposure of U.S. crimes against humanity stemming from the revelations beginning with the break-in at the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) offices in Pennsylvania which exposed the Counter-intelligence Program (COINTELPRO) in 1971, soon to be followed by the documented excesses of the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) through projects such as Operation Chaos along with the investigations triggered by the Watergate burglary carried out by operatives of the administration of Johnson’s successor, President Richard M. Nixon, a New York Times article by Seymour M. Hersh revealed the actual role of Washington in the removal of Nkrumah. The New York Times, known as the newspaper of record, has never been a supporter of anti-capitalist and anti-imperialist governments on the continent and around the world.

Nonetheless, the Hersh article stated clearly on May 9, 1978 that:

“The Central Intelligence Agency advised and supported a group of dissident army officers who overthrew the regime of President Kwame Nkrumah of Ghana in February 1966, first-hand intelligence sources said yesterday. The agency’s role in the coup d’état was carried out without prior approval from the high-level interagency group in Washington that monitors C.I.A. clandestine activities, these sources said. That group, known in 1966 as the 303 Committee, had specifically rejected a previous C.I.A. request seeking authority to plot against Mr. Nkrumah, who had angered the United States by maintaining close ties to the Soviet Union and China. There was no immediate comment from the C.I.A.” (See [this](#))

Yet subsequent declassification of State Department documents refute this notion of plausible deniability proving that the plans to destabilize Ghana had been in the works for many years utilizing the American embassy. Nkrumah was out of Ghana en route to China and Vietnam when the coup took place. The Pan-Africanist leader and principal ideologist of the African Revolution during the post-World War II era resettled in Guinea-Conakry until 1971 when he then travelled to Romania for medical treatment where he died on April 27, 1972. (See [this](#))



Kwame Nkrumah and Patrice Lumumba

Revolutionary movements throughout the continent were systematically opposed by imperialism from the 1960s until the present. In Angola from 1975 until 1989, Washington sought to undermine the ruling Popular Movement for the Liberation of Angola (MPLA) prompting the intervention of Cuban internationalist forces in defense of the independent state. The defeat of the racist-apartheid South African Defense Forces (SADF) in southern Angola in 1988 led to the liberation of Namibia (1990) and South Africa (1994) eliminating white-minority control in the sub-continent.

Role of Antiwar Movements in the West

The human rights and peace movements in the U.S. and Western Europe must consistently oppose the militaristic and exploitative policies towards Africa right alongside similar efforts in Latin America and Asia. There must be the building of people-to-people programs which

link the problems of poverty and underdevelopment in the U.S., Europe and around the world.

A considerable amount of the anti-Trump posturing by the Democratic Party and its allies has proven to be quite superficial. California Congresswoman Nancy Pelosi, the reinstated Speaker of the House of Representatives, was recently halted by the Trump administration from utilizing military aircraft to travel to Afghanistan and Brussels. The purpose of the trip was to reassure the Belgium-based North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) that the Democratic Party wishes to maintain this imperialist entity for future operations against Russia, China and the peoples of the globe. The Pentagon and NATO have been occupying Afghanistan for over 17 years where thousands of western troops have died, notwithstanding hundreds of thousands if not millions of Afghans and Pakistanis. (See [this](#))

This same Democratic Party, despite its liberal sophistry, opposes any notions of a withdrawal by Pentagon troops from Syria and Iraq, nor the halting of support by Washington of the State of Israel. Pelosi has not spoken one word against the destabilization of Venezuela where the Trump administration has recognized the imperialist-backed opposition leader in an effort to overthrow the Bolivarian Republic led by President Nicolas Maduro of the United Socialist Party (PSUV). (See [this](#))

Democrats are not calling for the dismantlement of AFRICOM and its military bases, airstrips and intelligence stations in Africa. There appears to be no legislation from the Democratic-dominated Congress to reform trade policies which perpetuate underdevelopment and dependency between Africa and the western imperialist states.

Any political program designed to support AU member-states should take these factors into consideration. Until there is a fundamental transformation of the U.S. political and economic system, foreign policy towards Africa will remain imperialistic.

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