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The Post-colonial Imperial Agenda: America and France Join Hands in the Destabilization of the African Continent

By Abayomi Azikiwe

December 17, 2013

On December 16 a section of the South Sudanese army backed by politicians angry with the policies of President Silva Kiir, attempted to seize power from the ruling Sudan People's Liberation Movement (SPLM) government in Juba. The Republic of South Sudan is the newest nation recognized by the United Nations and the African Union (AU) which gained its independence after three decades of civil war between the south and north of the central African state in July 2011.

Prior to the partition of Sudan, the country represented the largest geographic nation-state in Africa. Sudan was emerging as a significant oil-producing state with some 500,000 barrels-per-day being extracted for export and internal usage.

It was the U.S. and the state of Israel that pushed strongly for the South of the country to breakaway and from its own state. Since the partition in 2011, South Sudan has failed to consolidate as a viable nation-state.

In the North the Republic of Sudan has suffered economic difficulties with the decline in oil production, national revenue and the recent protests surrounding the elimination of fuel subsidies resulting in the sharp rise in petroleum costs and the prices of other essential goods. Opposition parties and coalitions, some of which are supported by the West, attempted to utilize the unrest over economic issues to push for regime-change in Khartoum.

With its large oil resources, events in the Republic of South Sudan gained the immediate attention of media outlets throughout the world. Juba's close alliance with the U.S. and Israel makes it an important outpost for the intervention by imperialism and Zionism in the affairs of its northern neighbor, the Republic of Sudan, which supports the Palestinian national movement and maintains close relations with the Islamic Republic of Iran.

In specific reference to events in South Sudan, according to the Financial Times based in London, "President Salva Kiir later appeared on national television in full military uniform to say the army had foiled a coup attempt by a 'group of soldiers allied' with the former vice-president, Riek Machar. The armed forces are pursuing them. I promise you today that justice will prevail". (December 16)

Nonetheless, the Financial Times went on to speculate that perhaps these reports delivered by President Kiir are not wholly representative of the actual developments inside the country. The newspaper reported that

"observers said Mr Kiir might have launched a pre-emptive purge against his opponents. Mr. Machar has in the past said he would contest the presidency in 2015, arguing South Sudan was descending into a dictatorship under Mr. Kiir. Although the country's oilfields are far from Juba, the capital, the fighting threatens to spill over into other areas and could hit oil production just as the energy market is battling with major disruption in Libya. Estimated at about 200,000 barrels a day, oil is South Sudan's main source of revenue."

Egypt, Tunisia and Libya: Instability Continues

Developments further to the north also illustrate that the political events in a particular African state are closely related to its economic role in the world economic system. In Tunisia and Egypt where rebellions erupted in late 2010 and early 2011 against western-backed dictatorial regimes, have still not resulted in genuine popular forces taking control of the state and the economy.

In Tunisia, a moderate Islamic government dominated by the Ennahda Party has virtually collapsed amid mass discontent, protests, labor unrest and ongoing rebellions. Two leftist politicians, Chokri Belaïd and Mohammed Brahmi, were assassinated between February and July resulting in general strikes and violent protests.

Although negotiations between Ennahda and opposition parties created the conditions for the appointment of a new prime minister, former industry minister Mehdi Jomha, it remains to be seen whether this will bring the political stability necessary for economic growth. The selection of Jomha was done through negotiations between 21 different parties and coalitions.

However, the left Popular Front which both Belaid and Brahmi belonged, expressed its skepticism over whether the new government could stabilize the situation inside the North African country. An Associated Press article reported that “the Popular Front — whose two members were killed — quickly cast doubt on the ability of Jomaa to carry out any such tasks, saying Jomaa’s government will lack consensus. Party spokesman Hamma Hammami pointed to Jomaa’s slim margin in Saturday’s (December 14) vote. Jomaa garnered but nine of the 21 potential votes. Seven parties abstained, two voted for the runner-up and three were absent.” (December 14)

This same report goes on to quote the Popular Front leader saying that “those in the governing coalition headed by Ennahda ‘were looking for a voice that allows them to stay in power,’” Hammami stressed, referring to Jomaa’s former portfolio as industry minister.

In Egypt a military seizure of power on July 3 has brought hundreds of thousands into the streets in demonstrations against the coup demanding the reinstatement of ousted President Mohamed Morsi, who remains in detention. Many of the political forces that supported the coup in July have now fallen victim to the new regime headed by an appointed president and prime minister.

A 50-member constitutional committee has drafted revisions to the governing document which is slated to be voted on in a national referendum in mid-January. Nonetheless, a new law banning unapproved demonstrations and repressive actions against student protests at numerous campuses across the country indicates that a broader alliance in opposition to the military-backed regime may be evolving.

In Libya nearly three years after a counter-revolutionary war of regime-change was waged against the former government of Col. Muammar Gaddafi, the political situation remains volatile and the national economy is on the verge of collapse. The oil-rich state is faced with factionalism and continued military intervention by the Pentagon and NATO.

The U.S.-backed regime of Prime Minister Ali Zeidan has invited the Pentagon and other NATO states to train 7,000 Libyans for an ostensible new national army. Yet various forces inside the country oppose the ongoing prominent role of Washington and other western imperialist states in the affairs of the nation.

Consequently the uprising in Egypt and Tunisia and the imperialist bombing of Libya has still left the region unstable. All three states must build a coalition that can reverse the economic decline through breaking the dependence on the West and crafting their own independent domestic and foreign policy.

Somalia and Kenya: Pentagon Role Highlighted in Recent Crises

The Westgate Shopping Mall incident during September 21-24 in Nairobi, Kenya stemmed directly from the U.S.-NATO role in neighboring Somalia. The African Union Mission to Somalia (AMISOM) is largely funded and supported militarily by Washington and the European Union (EU).

Al-Shabaab, the Islamic resistance movement to the occupation of the Horn of Africa state, continues to fight the AMISOM forces as well as the military commandos sent into the country in missions for France and the U.S. In early October Pentagon Special Forces attempted to attack an Al-Shabaab command center in Baraawe on the southern coast of the country but were repelled by guerrilla fighters.

France had attempted a similar mission in January resulting in the capture and killing of soldiers that sought to rescue an intelligence officer held by Al-Shabaab. Several French troops were killed in the operation and the intelligence operative was soon executed.

France has also intervened twice with occupations supported by the U.S. in Africa during 2013. In Mali, France invaded in January with Pentagon assistance and later in the year in the Central African Republic, supported as well by Washington.

When the Westgate Mall was seized by Al-Shabaab guerrillas in Nairobi, the Israeli Defense Forces (IDF) and the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) engaged in military operations alongside the Kenyan Defense Forces (KDF). Although Kenyans voted in contravention to U.S. and British wishes in the national elections in March selecting Uhuru Kenyatta as president, the East African state still remains well within the political and economic orbit of western imperialism and its allies.

Southern Africa: The Struggle Continues in Zimbabwe and South Africa

The national harmonized elections in Zimbabwe on July 31 upset the western states when longtime President Robert Mugabe and his ruling ZANU-PF party swept the executive and legislative polls. Despite the monitoring of the elections by the AU, the regional Southern African Development Community (SADC) and other bodies, the U.S. and Britain have maintained their draconian sanctions against the country.

In South Africa workers and their trade unions have continued their labor struggles demanding higher wages and better working conditions. The mines, auto factories and other sectors of the national economy remain a source of class struggle and political debate.

The passing of former President Nelson Mandela has illustrated the history of struggle in South Africa. A return to the revolutionary legacy of Mandela and the ANC will be necessary to move the struggle to the next level of achieving genuine economic liberation and solidarity throughout the region and the continent.

These challenges facing Southern Africa and other regions of the continent will intensify as the world economic crisis deepens and the level of consciousness surrounding the role of the U.S. and other imperialist states in the continuing underdevelopment of Africa is heightened. What is clear is that capitalist relations of production cannot liberate the continent from the legacies of slavery, colonialism and neo-colonialism. Only the overthrow of the exploitation of labor and the construction of socialism can provide Africa with the possibilities of a fresh start aimed at building societies based upon equality, self-determination and sovereignty.

