

AFRICOM Go Home

Declaration in Celebration of the Fiftieth Anniversary of African Liberation Day

AFRICOM Out of Germany - NOW! AFRICOM Out of Africa - NOW!

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"We, the Heads of African States and Governments assembled in the City of Addis Ababa, Ethiopia; Convinced that it is the inalienable right of all people to control their own destiny; Conscious of the fact that freedom, equality, justice and dignity are essential objectives for the achievement of the legitimate aspirations of the African peoples; Conscious of our responsibility to harness the natural and human resources of our continent for the total advancement of our peoples in spheres of human endeavor..."

What is the real legacy of the charter that Modibo Keita and Sylvanos Olympio drafted on May 25th 1963 and reinforced with the power of 33 newly minted/ independent countries backing it? Arguably, in the end that particular document, which ushered in the Organization of African Unity (OAU) did not succeed in creating African unity. Some fifty years later, although the African Union has replaced the Organization of African Unity, Africa is still struggling to realize her full potential and exercise her right to self-determination. Meanwhile, the continent remains mired in disadvantage perpetuated by an international labor sector held captive within an imperialistic system resolutely opposed to Pan-Africanism. Indeed, a recent French Defense report calls Pan-Africanism a threat to Western interests.

Today, as we commemorate the past fifty years we are determined, as citizens, either of Germany or Africa, or internationalists to turn the page on colonization once and for all. Beginning in the nineteenth century and well into the twentieth unbridled colonialism was pervasive throughout the continent. In 1885, it made common criminal cause with capitalism against the Congolese people when the Berlin Conference designated the Congo the world's first "Free Trade Zone" and unleashed a process of colonial intervention that would eventually carve up the entire continent.

In 2013, from its base in Stuttgart, AFRICOM, the U.S. Africa Command, is plotting to stretch out its tentacles across Africa, taking advantage of an extraordinary conjuncture of geopolitical, economic, and geostrategic disputes that are undermining the continent. Even in Germany, which has known so much war, many people who call Germany home are opposed to violence and stand in solidarity with our anti-militaristic initiatives. The German Constitution prescribes at Article 26 that all preparation for war or aggression carried out on its soil risks disturbing the peace between people. With Article 25, international law becomes German law and has primacy over all other laws. Since

2002, Germany has had a Code which makes the crimes of international public law part of German law. The nature of these crimes thus gives German jurisdictions / German courts universal jurisdiction to hear cases involving allegations of crimes of international public law regardless of the nationality of the authors or the place of the crime. As women and men we all hope for peace, sovereignty and solidarity.

In line with its aggressive and expansionist policy towards Africa, AFRICOM, launched by the George W. Bush administration, claims to be protecting the national security of the United States by boosting the capacity of African states to defend themselves against transnational threats. They claim that doing so will also create an environment that encourages harmonious development.[3] AFRICOM is also actively seeking to establish a base on the African continent and move from Stuttgart, Germany, where it has been garrisoned since 2008. The U.S. Marine Forces Africa (MARFORAF), which coordinated military strikes and maneuvers across the African continent, was also housed there.

So far, for most African countries, an AFRICOM based in Africa does not appear to be particularly enticing. However, a very select few seem to have yielded to temptation. Dressed up as a “fait accompli” to deny Africans any semblance of choice, AFRICOM’s strategy includes indoctrination, managing dissent and gradually spreading its influence across the continent by exploiting tensions wherever they exist. By keeping abreast of other NATO initiatives as well as those unilateral interventions undertaken by certain of its member countries such as France, AFRICOM continues to serve the exclusive interests of dominant countries and their local comprador elites. A base on the African continent is a guarantee of long-term access to Africa’s raw materials and locations of strategic importance. In addition, AFRICOM will not only circumvent the voracious appetites of the emergent BRIC (Brazil, Russia, India, China) powers but also block Africa’s own progress towards unity.

No NATO country really needs to establish such a huge military base anywhere in Africa. Not only do these countries have other bases and facilities at their disposal, but they also benefit from bilateral or equivalent arrangements, which allow them to move freely around the continent. In addition, the armies of most African countries have become so compromised through their association with military contractors from the imperialist states or the private military and security companies that work in tandem with them, acting as their surrogates. Intentionally or not, such factors generally fuel terrorism, which sprouts predictably wherever underdevelopment has created a climate where it can thrive. Besides, the imperialists have worked tirelessly to stifle democratic developments/movements in North African either by undermining certain countries or encouraging their Middle Eastern partners to throw their weight behind backward regimes.

The African continent has been thoroughly decimated by over three decades of structural adjustment, which has downsized the state and resulted in technocrats running our governments. It has also created a fictitious sense of democracy, which has depoliticized our populations and left our countries victims of a particularly vicious virus of dependency. In military terms, Africa remains fragmented and vulnerable in the face of fundamental challenges, such as the foreign occupation of the Congo, the Ivory Coast, Libya and Mali. At the same time, the possibility of playing the instability card looms menacingly over the Sudan, Egypt, Nigeria, Tunisia and the Central African Republic as well as Algeria...

Here the UN is instrumentalized, paving the way for the intervention of NATO forces. The apparent unity of militarized African countries in these peacekeeping missions is a reflection of imperialism. For example, thirty-six countries on the continent sent their “next generation of leaders in the security sector” (ACSS) to receive training in Washington DC. Those high-ranking officers who did so were included under the umbrella of operational and military capacity building within AFRICOM’s

Theater Security Cooperation Programs (TSCP). The Africa Contingency Operations Training and Assistance (ACOTA) program rounds out these infantry training projects and has made inroads into the delivery of multilateral training to UN peacekeepers. Over the last decade, a growing number of African armies have participated in the annual FLINTLOCK antiterrorist maneuvers held in North and West Africa. Then there is the AFRICA ENDEAVOR, which bills itself as an opportunity to develop skills in the area of intelligence communication. CUTLASS EXPRESS refers to a series of maritime strategies designed to control the flow of all traffic around East Africa and the Indian Ocean.

Indeed, there must exist an unusual insecurity on the continent to pardon such aggressive impulses and maneuvers. There are also growing networks of terrorists and politicized outlaws who march to their own drum and threaten “world order” just as much as they do the African countries they attack. However, these are merely the ‘tip of the iceberg’. More often than not, the origins of such conflicts, which the powers that be make a show of stamping out, lie in poverty and underdevelopment. They are the fallout of failed policies or of the crime and illegal trafficking produced by persistent disputes as well as the impact of chaotic events associated with so-called “Juniors”. Some of these “Juniors” are in fact small multinational firms that jump into bed with rebels or terrorists in order to get their hands on raw materials. Where prior commitments have been made to external forces, they tend to emerge as the situation evolves to liberate contested zones and become integrated into an overall strategy of “total security”, which rationalizes militarization. Many of the regimes ruling African countries either collude in this type of thievery or are subdued by the smoke-screen liberalization, economic conditionalities and extractive resources syndrome.

The subordination and control of our national armies, or what remains of them, and the prospect of seeing the AFRICOM base move to Africa, like the recent deployment of French military forces or other interventions, act as a barrier to achieving true African integration. Africa is increasingly obliged to seek shelter beneath NATO’s umbrella. Indeed AFRICOM and NATO are so intertwined that it is hard to see where one ends and the other begins. For example, at the beginning of May, NATO’s Secretary General, Rasmussen, received the Atlantic Council’s “Distinguished Leadership Award” in Washington. Both NATO and AFRICOM have had a hand in carving up the continent, as they fine-tuned their policies, which spring from deep roots.

Some of the key elements of this fifty-year history include strategies that the imperialists used to checkmate Independence; coups that were mounted against progressive regimes; the failure of forces that tried to derail the struggle against apartheid; the vagaries of American foreign policy visited upon Somalia and the Sudan; negotiations with Al-Qaeda; the jihadist attacks that preceded the ones on September 11th and the so-called anti-terrorist policies that they provoked. In 2002, a pan-Sahelian anti-terrorist initiative was crafted in collaboration with four Sahelian countries/ Three years later, the Trans-Sahara Counter-Terrorist Initiative (TSCTI) was expanded to cover five more countries.

Later on EACTI (East Africa Counter-Terrorist Initiative) was extended into East Africa, bringing six more countries under its wing. In the same year (2005), NATO answered the African Union’s call for help in Darfur. Two years later, it fashioned the study that would become the matrix of the brigades of the African Standby Force (ASF) whose goal is allegedly to maintain continental peace. ASF is slated to become operational in 2015.

In continental terms, all those events add up to a violation of our right to self-determination. When they are ready to swing into action, NATO and AFRICOM need consult no higher authority than their current senior military liaison officer (SMLO) who is their point man in all affairs involving the African Union. We PanAfricanists have a duty to build an internationalism that will wake up our

elites as well as the masses of our people and make them aware that militarizing Africa will lead us down a path to nowhere. It will ignite, fuel, and attract conflict. Arguably, Africa's very sovereignty depends on dismantling all foreign bases. We should only put our faith in an all-African army, whose sole purpose should be to defend the territorial integrity of the continent and help us to maintain peace under the umbrella of an Africa Pax.

Our Pan-Africanism presumes a self-reliant continental integration whose goal is social progress. Our intentions are in direct opposition to the prevailing tendency of being co-opted again and having our armies transformed into auxiliary forces under foreign command. As proxy forces, some of these co-opted forces have generally been charged with extinguishing conflicts within the society that, more often than not, have also been engineered by the same "world order" to facilitate access to Africa's natural resources.

In defending the interests of our people we must depend on our own sense of unity and stop waiting for NATO or AFRICOM to do our job for us. That is the only way we can be assured of charting our own path and bringing about the integrated development of the African continent.

Together, let us support the civic and pan-African repoliticization of our youth.

AFRICOM go home, Africa for Africans at home and abroad.

No to foreign bases - US out of Germany! US out of Africa!

No to terrorist militarization and foreign bases on African soil! - Get out NOW! Out of Chagos! Out of Diego Garcia! Out of Libreville! Out of Sao-Tomé! Out of Ceuta! Out of Ndjamena! Out of Djibouti! Out of Tripoli!...

No to multinationals and their scramble for Africa's natural resources and farmland!

No to Rulers who sell out Africa to Imperialists!

Yes to democracy and the popular reform of the African Union!

Decolonize and unite - Africa is One!

Sisters and brothers, internationalist allies around the world, stand with us. Let us defend Africa!

GRILA - Group for Research and Initiative for the Liberation of Africa

We endorse the Declaration Go Home AFRICOM:

Third World Forum (Samir Amin ; Bernard Founou)

Fondation Frantz Fanon (Mireille Fanon- Mendes-France)

HANKILI SO AFRICA (Koulsy Lamko) ;

AfricAvenir International

Black Agenda Report (Glen Ford) ;

Arbeitskreis Panafrikanismus München (Dipama Hamado)

Revival of Panafricanism Forum (RPF) (Gnaka Lagoke) ;

INSTITUT TUNISIEN DES RELATIONS INTERNATIONALES (ITRI) (Ahmad Manai) ;

Yash Tandon, Former Executive Director of the South Center ;

Diasporic Music on Uhuru Radio ; Norman Otis Richmond

Network for Pan Afrikan Solidarity - Ajamu Nangwaya, University of Toronto ;

Emira Woods - IPS ;

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Notes:

[1] http://www.au.int/en/sites/default/files/OAU_Charter_1963.pdf

[2]
<http://www.defense.gouv.fr/base-de-medias/documents-telechargeables/das/documents-prospective-d-e-defense/horizons-strategiques-2012/horizons-strategiques-approches-regionales>

[3]
<http://www.africom.mil/Content/CustomPages/ResearchPage/pdfFiles/2013%20AFRICOM%20Posture%20Statment.pdf>

[4] Africa Pax: Une solution aux problèmes de gestion et de règlement des conflits?en Afrique, applicable en zone interlacustre, GRILA, Genève, 1995, <http://www.grila.org/publi.htm>

P.S.

* http://www.grila.org/africom_declaration_2013_english_body.htm