

US Foreign Policy in Africa and the 2016 Elections

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Wars of regime-change and the domination of international finance capital will continue to strangle the continent

There has been no substantial discussion within the context of primary debates and capitalist party platforms related to Washington's foreign policy towards Africa.

Although people of African descent in the United States constitute the largest voting bloc among national minorities, issues related to them in both domestic and foreign policy is given almost no consideration.

There are references to the draconian legislation which accelerated the incarceration rates of African Americans under the former administration of President Bill Clinton nevertheless these factors constitute only a fraction of social elements within a broader political framework which clearly illustrates a concerted system of national oppression.



Not only is it outrageous that the Clinton administration endorsed new laws that intensified disparate treatment in the criminal justice system along racial lines, moreover both Bill and Hillary have been involved in foreign policy operations on behalf of the U.S. government and private capital, such as in Haiti and Libya, which proved disastrous for the people of these states.

Former Secretary of State Hillary Clinton was the public face of the Pentagon and NATO-led bombing campaign against Libya during 2011 resulting in tens of thousands of deaths, the dislocation of millions, impoverishing this North African state once the most prosperous on

the continent, therefore fostering instability and terrorism throughout the region.

Today Libya is in ruins while the United Nations attempts to install and prop-up a so-called "Government of National Accord" (GNA) which has no legitimacy even among the two rival factions installed by imperialism in the aftermath of the war of regime-change that brutally assassinated former leader Col. Muammar Gaddafi, the former chairperson of the African Union (AU). Oil revenues, which under Gaddafi were essential in providing Libya with resources to develop this former colony of Italy, are a source of conflict in the competition for control over the country.

The situation in Libya is a product of both Washington and Wall Street in their ongoing drive to dominate Africa and its resources. The all-out attacks leveled against various independent and anti-imperialist governments and movements throughout Africa and the Middle East is part and parcel of western objectives to extend their economic and political stranglehold over former subject nations and emerging states.

Imperialist Militarism Escalates in Africa

Over the last decade militarism has increased in Africa with the interventions in Somalia, Libya and other states. The U.S. Africa Command (AFRICOM) was established under the George W. Bush, Jr. administration and enhanced by the current President Barack Obama.

AFRICOM's role has fostered greater instability and dislocation within AU member-states. In Mali during 2012, a military coup was carried out by an official of the armed forces who was trained at various defense schools in the U.S.

The Horn of Africa nations of Somalia, Djibouti and Ethiopia serve as staging grounds for imperialist military operations on the continent and in the Middle East. Djibouti houses the largest known Pentagon base at Camp Lemonier where thousands of U.S. and French troops are stationed.

Drone stations and Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) field offices exist throughout the East Africa region where the Pentagon often carries out bombing raids against the al-Shabaab Islamist group in Somalia. There are flotillas of warships from NATO countries patrolling the waters in the Gulf of Aden one of the most lucrative trading routes in the world.

Across the continent in West Africa, the Pentagon often engages in naval maneuvers with regional states under the guise of fighting terrorism and piracy. Nonetheless, the country most affected by terrorism, the Federal Republic of Nigeria, Africa's largest populated nation and leading economy, has had difficulties in securing modern weapons and intelligence data from the Pentagon and the CIA in their fight against Boko Haram, an armed group which has killed thousands in the northeast of the country and displaced millions.

Congressional Black Caucus Remains Silent on African Affairs

This apparent listless attitude within the political arena has not always been there. During the 1970s and 1980s, the Congressional Black Caucus (CBC) took stands in support of national liberation movement struggles against colonialism and apartheid.

In 1987, the first Anti-Apartheid Act was passed by the U.S. Congress over the veto of Republican President Ronald Reagan. This bill was shepherded through the House by former Congressman Ron Dellums from the Bay Area in California.

However, in 2015 when Republican members of the House held a hearing to question Hillary Clinton on the deaths of four U.S. diplomatic personnel and CIA operatives in Benghazi, no defense of the people of Libya was made by the CBC. In fact Congressman Elijah Cummings of Maryland, who is a leading Democrat, defended Clinton from any criticism over her role in the deaths of these four intelligence officials operating under state department cover.

Consequently there is no political incentive for either Clinton or Vermont Senator Bernie Sanders to address the African situation. This is taking place despite the crisis of migration across the Mediterranean from Libya into Southern, Central and Eastern Europe impacting millions of Africans every year.

Africans who migrate to various regions of Europe are often subjected to national discrimination and racial violence. Many live in segregated housing complexes and are limited to menial work without adequate resources for education and economic opportunities.

On the continent itself there are various struggles being waged by working class organizations, women's associations, and youth groups around jobs, the non-payment of salaries, environmental degradation and gender equality. States such as Zimbabwe and South Africa have been targets for regime-change strategies by the Obama administration and other imperialist governments.

Economic Relations Between the U.S. and Africa

Objectively the actual volume of trade between the U.S. and Africa has declined significantly during the Obama administration.

A report published earlier this year by the International Center for Trade and Sustainable Development says that: "Total trade between the United States and countries supported under the African Growth and Opportunity Act (AGOA) showed another decrease in 2015, according to data published by the AGOA.info website. Combined trade, which came to US\$ 50b in 2015, only reached US\$ 36b last year. Trade between the United States and AGOA countries has now been declining for four years in a row."(February 22)

In addition, the international debt crisis is reemerging in Africa due to the fall in oil, natural gas, strategic minerals and other commodity prices. The U.S. under Obama has increased its extraction of oil and natural gas domestically therefore creating a crisis of overproduction impacting not only Africa but several energy-producing states such as Russia, Venezuela, Brazil, South Africa and Nigeria, among others.

Consequently, there is a role for anti-imperialists to play by raising these issues on a national level. The destruction of Libya and Somalia along with the military occupation of Djibouti and the Gulf of Aden has not translated into genuine economic growth and development.

Pentagon, State Department and CIA interventions in Africa has done more to destabilize the continent rather than create the condition for full independence and sovereignty. Continuing dependence upon the capitalist mode of production and social relations in an atmosphere of global dominance by imperialism can only be addressed through the re-emergence of movements for radical transformation and socialist construction.

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