



[« Amitié indéfectible », coopération « d'égal à égal ». En tournée en terre africaine, Li Keqiang le Premier ministre chinois a annoncé, hier, une rallonge de plus de 12 milliards de dollars de l'aide que son pays accorde à l'Afrique. Cette enveloppe devrait se décomposer en une nouvelle ligne de crédits bancaires (10 milliards) qui vient s'ajouter aux 20 milliards octroyés par Xi Jinping le président lors de sa tournée au printemps 2013.]

BURUNDI :

Burundi : l'ONU contribuera à l'organisation des élections de 2015

Par : Laura/French.china.org.cn/ le 06-05-2014

Le Représentant Spécial du Secrétaire Général des Nations Unies au Burundi, Parfait Onanga Anyanga, a réaffirmé lundi que les Nations Unies restent disposées à aider le Burundi dans la bonne organisation des élections de 2015.

"J'ai renouvelé à Monsieur le premier vice-président de la République l'entière responsabilité des Nations Unies pour nous assurer de la bonne organisation matérielle, technique et même politique des futures élections", a déclaré Parfait Onanga Anyanga après une audience que lui a accordée le premier vice-président burundais Prosper Bazombanza.

Autour du 20 mai, il va se tenir d'autres assises pour poursuivre le dialogue politique de manière à s'assurer que le climat politique sera propice pour ces importantes échéances, a-t-il dit.

Parfait Onanga Anyanga a affirmé que dans les rapports officiels, les Nations Unies se sont

régulièrement prononcées avec satisfaction de la situation sécuritaire au Burundi.

"Nous l'avons toujours dit et nous le redisons que cela a été essentiellement le fruit des choix faits par les Burundais eux-mêmes de réformer leur système de sécurité (..). Il ne faut pas que les acquis que le pays a obtenus au prix de tant d'efforts avec l'appui de ses partenaires internationaux soient menacés", a souligné le Représentant Spécial du Secrétaire Général des Nations Unies au Burundi.

Il a encouragé les autorités burundaises à poursuivre leurs efforts en vue de s'assurer qu'à l'approche des échéances électorales importantes de 2015, le pays soit le plus sécurisé possible.

RWANDA :

RDC CONGO :

RDC : acquittements des militaires dans le procès des viols de Minova

lundi 5 mai 2014/ L'Agence France-Presse

La justice militaire congolaise a acquitté lundi la quasi-totalité des soldats accusés des viols massifs commis en novembre 2012 à Minova, dans l'Est de la République démocratique du Congo.

Dans ce procès très suivi par la société civile congolaise et la communauté internationale, la cour militaire du Nord-Kivu n'a prononcé que trois condamnations pour viol, selon un journaliste de l'AFP ayant assisté à la lecture du verdict.

Un lieutenant colonel des FARDC (armée gouvernementale) a ainsi été condamné à perpétuité pour viol, un sous-officier à la perpétuité également pour viol et meurtre, et un caporal à dix ans d'emprisonnement pour viol.

Vingt-deux autres sous-officiers ou soldats ont été acquittés des accusations de viols portées contre eux, mais condamnés à des peines de 10 ans ou 20 ans de prison pour "violation des consignes, pillages et dissipation de munitions".

Treize officiers poursuivis pour manquement à leurs devoirs ont été acquittés, et la cour a indiqué ne pas être en mesure de juger un autre accusé.

Au total, 39 membres de l'armée congolaise étaient poursuivis dans ce procès qui s'était ouvert en novembre à Goma, la capitale du Nord-Kivu.

Les faits jugés remontent à la fin du mois de novembre 2012 après la prise de Goma par les rebelles du Mouvement du 23 Mars (M23), finalement vaincus au début de novembre 2013 par les forces régulières.

Les soldats du 391e bataillon de commandos, formés par les Etats-Unis à Kisangani (nord-est de la RDC), ont été accusés, dans leur fuite, d'avoir commis des atrocités à Minova et ses alentours, dans

la province du Sud-Kivu.

Un rapport de la Mission de l'ONU pour la stabilisation de la RDC (Monusco) consacré à ces événements a dénombré "135 cas de violence sexuelle, ainsi que d'autres violations graves des droits de l'homme, dont des meurtres et des pillages massifs [...] perpétrés par des militaires" du 20 au 30 novembre 2012.

Avocat du collectif des victimes, Me Jean-Claude Zozo a dit à l'AFP qu'il était "navré" par cette décision de la justice. "Pour la cour, il n'y a pas eu de viols à Minova", a-t-il déploré.

UGANDA :

Uganda: Museveni in London for business forum

Posted by: APA/date : May 6, 2014

President Yoweri Museveni left for the United Kingdom on Monday to attend the UK-Uganda business forum due to hold in London on Tuesday. Museveni is leading over 40 senior business leaders and a ministerial team to update prospective investors on Uganda's economic outlook and opportunities available for investment including in the booming natural resources sector, housing and construction, tourism, health, transport, education and various other infrastructure.

The forum organized by the government of Uganda and the Commonwealth Business Council will offer an opportunity for investors to exploit the EAC market of over 150 million people and over 1 billion people in Africa.

The United Kingdom is the largest cumulative investor in Uganda.

The business leaders will meet with investors and also hold interactions with the ministerial team that includes senior members of the Ugandan government.

SOUTH AFRICA :

In South Africa, A.N.C. Is Counting on the Past

By NORIMITSU ONISHI/nytimes.com/MAY 5, 2014

ALEXANDRA, South Africa — In this poor black township on the outskirts of Johannesburg, the campaign posters exhorting voters to return the African National Congress to power in Wednesday's election reached deep into the party's glorious past.

"Do it for Madiba," said one poster, referring to Nelson Mandela, South Africa's first black president, by his clan name.

"Do it for Chris Hani," another poster declared, referring to the firebrand A.N.C. leader assassinated in 1993.

The posters, put up by the South African Communist Party, the A.N.C.'s partner in government since the end of white rule in 1994, avoided mentioning the country's current president, Jacob Zuma, who is beset by scandal. But the misdirection was not fooling Nomakwezi Buya.

"They are just abusing the names of Mandela and Chris Hani because they are dead people," said Ms. Buya, 59, who is a former A.N.C. loyalist who says she will vote for a breakaway party this time. "They are not keeping their legacy alive."

Five months after the death of Mr. Mandela, the party is counting on its dead heroes to keep its current, sullied leadership in power. It is likely to work: The A.N.C. is poised to win overwhelmingly in this nation's fifth democratic election, granting a second term to Mr. Zuma, 72, whose popularity was further eroded by a recent report detailing the misuse of \$23 million in public funds to upgrade his private home.

But a projected decline in support is expected to chip away at what has effectively been a one-party state since the end of apartheid 20 years ago. By how much remains the key question.

In recent months, young men have looted shops, burned tires and hurled rocks in townships surrounding Johannesburg and Pretoria, in what are called "service delivery protests" aimed at the A.N.C.

Dissident veterans of the party are urging voters to spoil their ballots in a "Vote No" campaign. The Economic Freedom Fighters, a new party that is led by the former leader of the A.N.C.'s youth wing and is calling for the nationalization of mines and banks without compensation, is attracting the young and angry. Traditional A.N.C. allies like the National Union of Metalworkers of South Africa, the nation's biggest trade union, have also broken away.

Their message — that the party that freed South Africa is now led by a corrupt class that has failed to raise the standard of living of the average black South African — resonates here in this traditional A.N.C. stronghold.

Still, the absence of a clear alternative for the black majority, as well as older black voters' enduring loyalty to the figures who liberated them, has given the A.N.C. an insurmountable lead in the polls.

"The people that go to vote are our grannies, our parents, because they came with the A.N.C. from far," said Tshidiso Nonyane, 25, who voted for the party in the past but has not registered for this election. "The A.N.C. is going to win because of those people. If there was another party that would truly bring jobs, better housing and stuff like that, that would be better."

A college graduate with a degree in marketing, he is now working at a McDonald's.

"The youth is not voting because there's no point in voting," he said. "Even on that day, we won't even be watching the news to check who is winning or what because we know the A.N.C. is going to win. So the A.N.C. is only winning for the wrong reasons."

Nevertheless, this election, the most competitive in South Africa's post-apartheid history, offers some hints of the forces that could loosen the A.N.C.'s grip on power in the years ahead. The Democratic Alliance, the main opposition party traditionally associated with white South Africans, has attracted middle-class blacks and begun widely campaigning in black townships like Alexandra

with the message of “Together for jobs.”

“For the first time, the A.N.C. is not taking electoral victory for granted,” said Steven Friedman, a political analyst at the University of Johannesburg. “Even if the competition is being hyped up, the A.N.C. is taking it seriously, and that is politically significant.”

As an example, Mr. Friedman said, the party had directed its lawmakers to pass only legislation popular among voters in the run-up to the election — the first time it had bothered to do so.

Here in Alexandra, Ms. Buya was planning to vote for the Congress of the People, a party started by dissident A.N.C. members in 2008. Asked why, she waved her arms inside her small shack where she lives with her two daughters and two grandchildren under a thin roof made of corrugated metal.

“We still live here after 20 years,” she said.

The government gives her grandchildren a total of \$105 a month in grants, enough for the family to survive. But Ms. Buya focused on the public housing that she and other dwellers of Alexandra’s poorer corners have yet to receive.

The Workers and Socialist Party, started last year by onetime A.N.C. allies, has been making inroads here among the young with its message of nationalizing the economy. One of its leaders, Mzonke Mayekiso, 44, who was imprisoned for smuggling arms into Alexandra for the A.N.C. in the early 1990s, said the decision to splinter from the A.N.C. had been wrenching.

“I grew up in the A.N.C., I went to jail for my activities in the A.N.C., and I decided to leave my history with the A.N.C. to start a new chapter,” he said.

Under the A.N.C., the lives of tens of millions of black South Africans have improved with access to better education and health care, electricity and water, and even free housing. But there is growing frustration that the improvements appear to have stalled for average black South Africans, and that inequality is growing in an increasingly corrupt society that rewards those with ties to political power.

Mr. Nonyane, the McDonald’s worker, and a jobless friend, Lesego Masike, 26, had both won scholarships to college. They had graduated with degrees but could only get jobs at the local mall paying about \$200 a month. The few classmates who had gone on to good jobs invariably had political connections, they said.

They were milling outside Mr. Masike’s modest government-issued house, where he has lived since 2003 with his mother and sister. The family did not have the means to “extend” their house with an extra room or two, a common practice here.

A couple of blocks away, a house that had been extended to two floors towered over its neighbors. The house belonged to a “tenderpreneur,” a politically connected businessman who wins government tenders, or contracts, for construction projects, neighbors said.

Mr. Masike voted twice for the A.N.C. but had not registered this time. He avoided talking politics with his family, adding, “If I tell my granny that the A.N.C. is corrupt, she gets very angry.”

Late in the afternoon, his mother, Martha Maseko, 49, came home from her job at a supermarket.

“After 27 years, I’m earning less than 10,000” rand, or \$950, a month, she said.

She was more fortunate, she said, than Alexandra’s shack-dwellers, some of whom still rely on toilets that empty into buckets. But she was frustrated and was planning to vote for a party other than the A.N.C. for the first time. “The A.N.C. is failing us because they’re eating our money,” she said in her living room.

Her mother, Ruth Maseko, 73, sat listening, adding softly, “I’ll decide next Wednesday.”

Oscar Pistorius 'torn apart' after shooting girlfriend

AFP/May 6, 2014

PRETORIA: Oscar Pistorius's murder trial resumed on Monday with a neighbour and friend giving a heart-wrenching account of finding the "broken" athlete coming down the stairs, holding his dead girlfriend in his arms.

After a two-week break in the trial, the defence called Johan Stander, the first man to arrive at the crime scene after the Paralympic gold medallist shot his girlfriend Reeva Steenkamp on Valentine's Day last year.

"Oom (Afrikaans for uncle) Johan, please, please, please come to my house, I shot Reeva," Stander says Pistorius told him over the phone.

When he arrived at Pistorius's upmarket Pretoria home, Stander described seeing the athlete carrying Steenkamp, a 29-year-old model and law graduate, down the stairs.

"He was screaming, he was crying, he was praying," said Stander, a man with grey hair and glasses who spoke in a hoarse voice.

"The expression on his face, an expression of sorrow, an expression of pain, he's crying, he's praying," said Stander. "It was as if he was torn apart."

Standar, who said he considered himself a friend of the 27-year-old Pistorius, said the night was not something he would want to experience again.

Pistorius was "broken, desperate, pleading," said Stander. "How he begged God to keep her alive."

"I saw the truth that morning, I saw it and I feel it," he said.

Defence on the attack

Pistorius's lawyers will spend at least the next two weeks trying to firm up the athlete's account of the killing and counter the state's claim he shot his girlfriend after an argument.

Under days of ferocious cross-examination last month, Pistorius appeared to change his defence, casting doubt on his credibility.

The runner initially told the court that he shot Steenkamp through a locked toilet door, thinking she was an intruder coming to attack him in the dead of night.

But buckling under pressure, the Paralympian, who soared to international fame as the first double-amputee to run against able-bodied athletes at the 2012 London Olympics, changed his testimony to say he fired the four shots accidentally.

State prosecutor Gerrie Nel has accused the athlete of "tailoring" his evidence, calling his account of the killing "a lie".

Beginning his cross-examination of Stander, Nel asked him if Pistorius ever said to him that he had fired accidentally.

"He never said I accidentally shot her," said Nel. "He said... thought she was an intruder."

Defence lawyer Barry Roux later called Stander's daughter Carice Viljoen, who said she heard a man calling for help in the dead of the night, apparently supporting the defence version of events that it wasn't Steenkamp screaming, but Pistorius.

"I could hear a man shouting, meaning there must be terrible trouble...," she said.

Pistorius, nicknamed the "Blade Runner," faces up to 25 years in prison if he is found guilty of premeditated murder.

He fired four bullets through a lavatory door, killing Steenkamp who was in the cubicle inside the athlete's house in an upmarket housing complex in the capital Pretoria.

Prosecutors have argued that the Valentine's Day shooting came after a row between the couple who had been dating for around three months.

The trial was adjourned until Tuesday after Roux said he had no more witnesses to call on Monday.

Proceedings will also break on Wednesday, which has been declared a public holiday for South Africa's general election, before resuming on Thursday.

Among the witnesses expected to give evidence this week is a psychologist who will speak to the athlete's physical vulnerability, after details emerged in court of his obsession with guns.

At times, the world famous sprinter has wept and retched in court, in a trial that is being broadcast live on television.

His emotional outbursts, including loud wailing and sobbing on several occasions, have forced presiding Judge Thokozile Masipa to halt the proceedings several times to allow Pistorius to compose himself.

Julius Malema: The firebrand shaking up South Africa's old guard

Monday 05 May 2014/independent.co.uk

"This is a revolution. It is not a bed of roses – it is a struggle between the future and the past," booms the voicemail recording when you phone the private mobile number of Julius Malema, whose militant entry into the South African electoral fray has evoked fury from the ruling African

National Congress and elicited trepidation among businesses, international investors and most of the once-dominant white community.

The rhetoric on his phone voicemail message continues: “We have refused to submit, but have chosen to fight for the economic freedom of our people.” He then bizarrely combines a phrase from a peace song by Joan Baez with a slogan from the Cuban or Mozambican revolution by concluding: “We shall overcome. Salute!”

With voters going to the polls tomorrow, Mr Malema, the self-styled “Commander-in-Chief” of the Economic Freedom Fighters (EFF), could soon be the leader of a party with between 20 and 40 seats in the country’s 400-member parliament, according to most analysts, as well as capture higher proportions of votes in the northern areas wracked by platinum miners’ strikes.

He raised the level of vitriol among the miners when he went to Rustenburg just after police shot dead 34 miners in a violent clash in 2012, while his chief adversary, President Jacob Zuma, stayed away. Coachloads of striking miners and their families were bussed in for last week’s EFF rallies.

Malema, highly improbably, insists he will win at least 51 per cent of the votes and will then stride into parliament still wearing his red tracksuit and red beret, will do away with state-delivered cars for ministers or for himself, will nationalise the mining industry, and will arrange for the state to confiscate (without compensation) most of the white-owned farms so they can be redistributed.

Though he has saluted Zimbabwe’s land-grabbing President Robert Mugabe before, he says whites need not fear as there will be no Zimbabwe-style land invasions. It will all be done according to the law – that is, the law his party forces through parliament. He told *The Independent* that whites should actually welcome the move as “most whites do not own farms, so they too can get some land”.

He has other policies that he is sure will win him votes from a cross-section of South Africans. He has paid for huge billboards on several of South Africa’s motorways, promising to “physically remove” the tollbooths and roadside cameras that have just begun demanding fees from drivers on many of the country’s high-quality network of expensive-to-maintain highways. Repeating that promise in his party’s television and radio advertisements led to their being banned by the state-run national broadcaster as incitements to violence.

That ruling served as a platform for a march last week on the national television buildings – which in turn provided a surge in pre-election publicity. There, from a makeshift platform around his campaign bus, he launched into a barrage of threats and taunts at the ANC establishment – of which Malema was a part until his expulsion in 2011.

Election analysts say he has achieved phenomenal media penetration, despite being derided in ANC propaganda as a “young upstart”. Radical and militant he may be, but he is not even pretending to be one of the poor he champions. After a rally last week, his militants flanked his white Mercedes with its darkened windows as their Commander-in-Chief headed home to his luxury villa in Pretoria, followed by a car full of red-bereted ladies. Coach after coach whisked the loyalists away. One told me: “Julius will get us the farms and the wealth from those whites.” As I headed for my car he pursued me to state: “I mean to say, from those greedy whites. Not all whites are greedy.”

Refusing in advance an unimaginable offer from the ANC to join it as a union coalition partner, Malema is not obliged to implement these policies. Merely stating them and then winning some

parliamentary seats is likely, though, to weaken the rand and add to local jitters. Calling his movement “radical and militant”, Malema is tapping in to a rich vein of militancy that once was encouraged by his erstwhile party, the ANC. Even as state-provided housing for the poor and widespread electrification has raised living standards for many of the underprivileged, the rich-poor gap has widened over the 20 years the ANC has been in power, and unemployment has increased to nearly 40 per cent.

Besides his own lifestyle, Malema faces serious challenges. The tax authorities say he owes them 16m rand (£900,000); he has been in court for hate speech; and he faces embezzlement charges – all of which he said were politically motivated. He once said no-one could destroy him as, like a cat, he has nine lives. He has also been inspired by and supported by another radical populist, Winnie Mandela.

Despite her kidnapping conviction and her misuse of party funds, she remains on the ANC national executive, and has not asked voters to back Malema. But she need not make her support overt. When she attended a huge ANC rally in Soweto on Saturday, its 95,000 crowd dwarfing what Malema’s EFF could draw in Witbank or Pretoria last week, she wore black – maintaining she was still in mourning for her divorced husband, Nelson, but perhaps carrying a different message.

When leader of the ANC’s Youth League, Malema warned that if Mrs Mandela were convicted of fraud and embezzlement, his cadres would burn down the prison to get her out. In return, when Malema faced hate speech charges, she sat with him in court.

“He is my product,” she claimed at the time. “His rebellious attitude is part of the process of growing up. He will make a great leader one day.”

Most of her party, and almost all white people in South Africa, hope not

Eleven children suffer diarrhoea and vomiting on flight from South Africa
theguardian.com/Monday 5 May 2014

The children, who were all members of the Only Kids Aloud choir, were taken to hospital after landing at Heathrow

Eleven members of a children's choir were taken to hospital suffering from diarrhoea and vomiting after arriving back in Britain from South Africa.

Medical staff checked 60 members of the Only Kids Aloud choir from Wales after they arrived at Heathrow airport from Cape Town via Dubai. Eleven were taken to Hillingdon hospital in west London but were later discharged.

The children's choir, with members aged between nine and 13 from across Wales, had performed at sell-out concerts in Cape Town. They sang with Welsh opera star Bryn Terfel on Friday and Saturday night.

Bet Davies, of the Wales Millennium Centre in Cardiff, which formed the choir, said the group was now on its way back to Wales.

She said: "Some were sick on take-off, some on landing and some during the turbulence, so because

of the rules in the airline industry – we were travelling with Emirates – they say if more than three children are sick on the same flight you need to have paramedics in to check on the children.

"We were also anxious that they were checked out before travelling back to Wales as we have a duty of care towards them."

She added: "The medics say it could have been somebody with a bit of a bug before they travelled or it could be a combination of what I describe as nausea, tiredness and not drinking enough."

"We have been in Cape Town, we flew out on Tuesday, we have been on a very intense programme – they performed Friday night to Saturday night to sell-out audiences in Cape Town Opera.

"There were an audience of 1,700 people on the gala night on Saturday and they had a standing ovation. They went to Robben Island on Saturday where they were shown around by a former political prisoner. They have had a life-changing experience. They were on a high.

"They have been rehearsing intensely over the past few days and they have not had that much sleep."

A spokeswoman for London ambulance service said: "We were called at 0741 to reports of a number of children taken unwell on a flight to Heathrow. We sent a number of resources to the scene including four ambulance crews, our hazardous area response team and a paramedic on a bicycle.

"Our medics checked over 60 children aged between 10 and 14 years old and we took 11 to Hillingdon hospital suffering from diarrhoea and vomiting."

TANZANIA :

EU appeals to Tanzania to create conducive environment for investments

May 06,2014/Xinhua

DAR ES SALAAM, May 5 (Xinhua) -- The European Union on Monday asked Tanzania to relax procedures in setting up business in the east African country, saying cumbersome procedures attracted corruption and was a disappointment to investors.

The EU head of delegation to Tanzania, Filberto Sebrigondi, said the EU has been convincing investors to do business in Tanzania but they were facing various challenges, including corruption.

"Tanzania should simplify the investment procedures and reduce the red tape to attract more investors," the EU envoy said when speaking at the beginning of celebrations marking the EU Week in the commercial capital Dar es Salaam.

He said Tanzania was growing in terms of business with various investment potentials available in the country but investors were not finding the country conducive for investments.

Dianna Melrose, the British High Commissioner to Tanzania, said bureaucracy was a stumbling

block for investors intending to do business in Tanzania.

"It's very disappointing because bureaucracy is very rampant here to the extent that it creates corruption environment," said the British envoy.

Melrose called on Tanzanian authorities to work hard in cutting the red tape for the betterment of the country.

She said that this should go hand in hand with reducing taxes and other charges, so that to attract more businessmen to come and invest in the country.

Tanzania took the lead in attracting Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) in the East African region. The 2012 World Investment Report shows that Tanzania attracted record breaking 1.1 billion U.S. dollars in 2012.

According to the report, between June 2011 and June 2012, Tanzania overtook Kenya, the region's biggest economy, indicating the high confidence among foreign investors in Tanzania.

KENYA :

Kenya Defends Security Efforts After Weekend Bombings

Reuters/May 05, 2014

NAIROBI — Kenya's government defended the efforts of its security services on Monday despite deadly weekend bombings, seven months after the Westgate shopping mall attack, and said it has foiled many other plots.

Blasts in Nairobi and Mombasa killed seven people this weekend, but for months many Kenyans have voiced growing anger that militants - believed to be linked to Somalia's al-Qaida-aligned al-Shabab group or their sympathizers - have continued to stage sporadic attacks with apparent ease.

"We have disrupted a lot of schemes of the terrorists in our country," Deputy President William Ruto told journalists in response to questions about public frustration over insecurity.

"The many that we manage to disrupt sometimes are lost when one happens in the country, because that is what people notice."

There were no immediate claims of responsibility for the weekend attacks, but Somalia's al-Shabab said it carried out the Westgate raid in Nairobi in September in which gunmen killed at least 67 people.

Al-Shabab has said that that attack and others it has claimed in Kenya were to demand Kenyan troops withdraw from neighboring Somalia.

Ruto repeated that his government would not to pull its soldiers out of Somalia, saying that would let al-Shabab regroup and create a bigger threat to Kenya.

"We will not relent and we will not withdraw from Somalia," Ruto said, noting that Kenya would not succumb to "blackmail".

"We are on top of this situation," he said of the security response. "What you see are desperate kicks of a dying horse."

Security worries are hurting Kenya's tourism industry.

Hotels on the popular coast north and south of Mombasa have seen a drop in bookings since Westgate and because of other attacks.

The U.S. Embassy in Nairobi told its citizens after Saturday's attacks on Mombasa to avoid any travel to the port city "for the time being".

Western diplomats have privately said Kenyan security forces - which receive aid and training from the United States, Britain and Israel among others - could do more to secure the nation and said rivalries between agencies hampered intelligence work.

In his comments at the news conference, Ruto said different arms of the security services were operating together: "All our security agencies have been working coherently and indivisibly."

In the aftermath of Westgate, many Kenyans complained there were no high-level resignations despite failings in handling the four-day siege, including looting of the mall by soldiers.

Responding to a question about whether top officials would take responsibility after the weekend attacks, Ruto said: "We don't want to participate in a game of musical chairs."

He called on all citizens to stay vigilant and help spot suspicious individuals or packages. He said steps would be taken to protect travellers on public transport and urged the judiciary to act, after saying some suspected militants were released on bail and then carried out or plotted attacks.

Kenya: KDF Will Not Withdraw From Somalia, Ruto

By Lydia Matata/allafrica.com/5 May 2014

Deputy President William Ruto has rejected calls for the government to withdraw the Kenya Defence Forces from Somalia following terror attacks in Nairobi and Mombasa over the weekend.

Speaking during a press briefing on the security situation in the country, the DP said Kenya will not be "cowed" stating that KDF will not be withdrawn until Somalia has "a strong government free from terror."

Ruto termed a withdrawal of Kenyan troops from the region as an "act of cowardice" which would amount to "running away from terrorists who kill us and feed on blood."

He added that withdrawing the troops would create a safe haven for the al Shabaab to recruit terrorists to attack Kenya. Ruto said that KDF has managed to dismantle al Shabaab terror networks and weaken its bases in Somalia.

He said that the al Shabaab terror group knows that it has been defeated saying that the recent

attacks are the "kicks of a dying horse". Ruto said the al Shabaab is aiming for "soft targets" because of major disruptions of its schemes both in Somalia and Kenya.

The DP further said that the fight against terror is collective stating that all arms of government must play its part while citizens have a "patriotic obligation" to be vigilant and report any suspicious object or individual to the authorities.

He singled out the Judiciary in his address saying that several terror suspects who have been granted bail by the courts have absconded and escaped to Somalia to mount terror attack on the country.

Ruto named Fouad Manswab, co-accused of Jermaine Grant who is currently on trial for planning a series of terror attacks at the Coast. He said Manswab fled to Somalia where he has been plotting terror attacks. He also mentioned terror suspects Suleiman Mohamed Said and Jamal Mohamed Awadh who are reported to have died in the bomb attack on a bus in Mombasa on Saturday.

The DP however said that the government is "on top of things", he revealed that the National Intelligence has foiled several terror plots and cells within the country. He admitted that there have been a few incidences that have "slipped through" the government's networks but said that those will be brought under control.

The DP also vowed to match the government's tough words on terror with action. He said the government is aware of a network of sympathisers and collaborators in the country stating that they are being investigated and will be brought to book regardless of their social standing.

Ruto further said that the national government is working with county governments, the Ministry of Transports and the Sacco's running public service vehicles to ensure that passengers are checked before boarding buses following the attacks on passenger vehicles in Mombasa and Nairobi. He also said that stages will be gazetted so that passengers only board matatus from designated stages which will be equipped with security facilities to ensure safety of passengers.

He further confirmed that 82 Kenyans were injured in the attacks on two buses in Nairobi while three people were killed in the explosions. He said several of those injured in the blast have since been discharged while 29 are still admitted to various hospitals in Nairobi. Ruto assured the patients and their families that the hospital bills will be paid for by the Kenya Red Cross from funds left over for victims of last year's Westgate attack.

Uhuru calls for increased Kenya-Nigeria trade

Written by KAZUNGU CHAI /capitalfm.co.ke/ May 6, 2014

ABUJA, Nigeria, May 6 President Uhuru Kenyatta has urged Nigerian business organisations to intensify consultations with their Kenyan counterparts to double the volume of trade between the two countries within the shortest time possible.

He encouraged the two countries' business communities to present to their respective Governments the challenges that may be hindering the smooth flow of investment and business so that they could be addressed.

"Our countries are actively pursuing growth in employment for our young people. I am certain that business and private sector leaders will progressively complement Government efforts aimed at

enhancing competitiveness to enable our various goods and services compete favourably in the export markets,” the President said.

President Kenyatta spoke when he officially closed a one-day business forum hosted by President Goodluck Jonathan at State House, Abuja. The forum brought together leading Kenyan and Nigerian businesspeople to explore ways of deepening their cooperation.

The occasion saw the signing and launching of the Kenya-Nigeria Trade and Investment Council which will be co-chaired by Equity Bank’s James Mwangi on the Kenyan side and Aliko Dangote of the Dangote Group on the Nigerian side. The council has the responsibility of boosting trade between the two countries.

Noting the unfulfilled trade potential between Kenya and Nigeria, the President underscored his Government’s desire to enhance trade and investment flows between the two countries.

“One main aim of my visit here, therefore, is to further build and strengthen the foundation that we have put in place for robust economic and commercial relations between the people of Kenya and the people of Nigeria,” the President said.

He added: “That is why I am pleased to engage with you, who are key players in commerce and business, and even more importantly, to listen to your proposals and suggestions on how our Governments can support you to do more and better business.”

As the two countries address challenges associated with the high costs of production, the President called on the private sector and business associations to help in containing undesirable business engagements especially those involving contra-band goods and banned products.

President Kenyatta said the Kenya Government is putting in place measures to control and contain the challenges that contra-band and unauthorised products have on the competitiveness of genuine products, the security of investments and creation of employment opportunities.

He welcomed proposals on improving the current level of support to the private sector, saying the Kenya Government is ready to facilitate trade enquiries, product promotion fairs and investment forums.

The President said the Government of Kenya places the private sector at the centre of its economic and social development programmes and has built regulatory capacity through statutory bodies with sufficient legal powers to enforce fair trading and pricing practices in the economy.

“Through these bodies, the Government has successfully offloaded its majority shareholding in state commercial companies through the Nairobi Securities Exchange, improving corporate governance practices as vital business decision-making and management instruments are guided by economic imperatives,” the President informed the businesspeople.

He observed that the Jubilee Government’s strong monetary and fiscal policy framework has made the private sector in Kenya one of the most vibrant and fast growing entity.

“This strong foundation is the signpost that we are presenting here today as our bedrock in support of stronger commercial and trade ties between our two countries,” the President said.

Addressing the forum, President Jonathan emphasized that the Nigerian and Kenyan Governments are committed to creating a conducive environment for the private sector to thrive for the mutual benefit of the people of the two countries.

The Nigerian President said the forum presented an effective opportunity for the businesspeople of the two countries to interact, network and build business relationships.

“Kenya and Nigeria have established friendly and cordial bilateral ties.

We are determined to see our business communities also cooperating for the benefit of our two countries,” President Jonathan said.

He said the business forum was a precursor to the World Economic Forum on Africa which Nigeria is hosting for the first time.

During the occasion, the Kenya National Chamber of Commerce and Industry, Kiprono Kittony and Sani Dangote presented reports on the progress the two countries’ businesspeople have made towards increasing interaction. Dangote, the vice-president of the Dangote Group, said improved business relations between the two countries have seen closer cooperation in tourism, finance, agri-business and movies industries.

“As a result of the increased business interactions between Kenya and Nigeria, Kenya Airways -Kenya’s national carrier -will from June 30 start direct flights to Abuja,” Dangote said.

Kenya’s Co-chair of the Joint Trade and Investment Council, Mwangi of Equity Bank, said a number of Kenyan companies have already ventured into Nigeria following the joint business initiative. He added that the number of Nigerian tourists to Kenya has also increased.

SOMALIA: Kenya opposition want KDF to withdraw from Somalia mission

May 5, 2014/RBC Radio

Nairobi (RBC) The Orange Democratic Movement, the biggest opposition party in Kenya called on Monday the Kenyan Defense Forces [KDF] to withdraw from the African Union Mission in Somalia [AMISOM] following the deadly attacks that rocked several Kenyan towns, local media reported.

The opposition group since Kenya government launched its war on terror and sent its troops to intervene Somalia, the number of casualties of the Kenyan civilians risen up and the bomb attacks in the big cities including Nairobi and Mombasa became countless.

The ODM acting leader Anyang Nyong’o told reporters that it was the duty of the current Kenyan Government to set up a road map for a secure Kenya and a stable Somalia.

“Troops must withdrawal from Somalia” he added.

He questioned what sense would the Kenyans have while their troops are operating in Somalia and the big Kenyan cities are bombed and that civilians are killed and wounded inside Kenya.

The hard comments from ODM leader came after deadly explosions targeted Mombasa and Nairobi

killing more than 10 civilians among them children.

According to Kenyan media, such comments were even emerging from the ordinary Kenyans who see intervening Somalia by Kenya was a big fault that Kenya should take its price now.

ANGOLA :

AU/AFRICA :

Sacrificing Africa for Climate Change

By Caleb S. Rossiter/online.wsj.com/May 4, 2014

Western policies seem more interested in carbon-dioxide levels than in life expectancy.

Every year environmental groups celebrate a night when institutions in developed countries (including my own university) turn off their lights as a protest against fossil fuels. They say their goal is to get America and Europe to look from space like Africa: dark, because of minimal energy use.

But that is the opposite of what's desired by Africans I know. They want Africa at night to look like the developed world, with lights in every little village and with healthy people, living longer lives, sitting by those lights. Real years added to real lives should trump the minimal impact that African carbon emissions could have on a theoretical catastrophe.

I've spent my life on the foreign-policy left. I opposed the Vietnam War, U.S. intervention in Central America in the 1980s and our invasion of Iraq. I have headed a group trying to block U.S. arms and training for "friendly" dictators, and I have written books about how U.S. policy in the developing world is neocolonial.

But I oppose my allies' well-meaning campaign for "climate justice." More than 230 organizations, including Africa Action and Oxfam, want industrialized countries to pay "reparations" to African governments for droughts, rising sea levels and other alleged results of what Ugandan strongman Yoweri Museveni calls "climate aggression." And I oppose the campaign even more for trying to deny to Africans the reliable electricity—and thus the economic development and extended years of life—that fossil fuels can bring.

The left wants to stop industrialization—even if the hypothesis of catastrophic, man-made global warming is false. John Feffer, my colleague at the Institute for Policy Studies, wrote in the Dec. 8, 2009, Huffington Post that "even if the mercury weren't rising" we should bring "the developing world into the postindustrial age in a sustainable manner." He sees the "climate crisis [as] precisely the giant lever with which we can, following Archimedes, move the world in a greener, more equitable direction."

I started to suspect that the climate-change data were dubious a decade ago while teaching statistics.

Computer models used by the U.N. Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change to determine the cause of the six-tenths of one degree Fahrenheit rise in global temperature from 1980 to 2000 could not statistically separate fossil-fueled and natural trends.

Then, as now, the computer models simply built in the assumption that fossil fuels are the culprit when temperatures rise, even though a similar warming took place from 1900 to 1940, before fossil fuels could have caused it. The IPCC also claims that the warming, whatever its cause, has slightly increased the length of droughts, the frequency of floods, the intensity of storms, and the rising of sea levels, projecting that these impacts will accelerate disastrously. Yet even the IPCC acknowledges that the average global temperature today remains unchanged since 2000, and did not rise one degree as the models predicted.

But it is as an Africanist, rather than a statistician, that I object most strongly to "climate justice." Where is the justice for Africans when universities divest from energy companies and thus weaken their ability to explore for resources in Africa? Where is the justice when the U.S. discourages World Bank funding for electricity-generation projects in Africa that involve fossil fuels, and when the European Union places a "global warming" tax on cargo flights importing perishable African goods? Even if the wildest claims about the current impact of fossil fuels on the environment and the models predicting the future impact all prove true and accurate, Africa should be exempted from global restraints as it seeks to modernize.

With 15% of the world's people, Africa produces less than 5% of carbon-dioxide emissions. With 4% of global population, America produces 25% of these emissions. In other words, each American accounts for 20 times the emissions of each African. We are not rationing our electricity. Why should Africa, which needs electricity for the sort of income-producing enterprises and infrastructure that help improve life expectancy? The average in Africa is 59 years—in America it's 79. Increased access to electricity was crucial in China's growth, which raised life expectancy to 75 today from 59 in 1968.

According to the World Bank, 24% of Africans have access to electricity and the typical business loses power for 56 days each year. Faced with unreliable power, businesses turn to diesel generators, which are three times as expensive as the electricity grid. Diesel also produces black soot, a respiratory health hazard. By comparison, bringing more-reliable electricity to more Africans would power the cleaning of water in villages, where much of the population still lives, and replace wood and dung fires as the source of heat and lighting in shacks and huts, removing major sources of disease and death. In the cities, reliable electricity would encourage businesses to invest and reinvest rather than send their profits abroad.

Mindful of the benefits, the Obama administration's Power Africa proposal and the World Bank are trying to double African access to electricity. But they have been hamstrung by the opposition of their political base to fossil fuels—even though off-grid and renewable power from the sun, tides and wind is still too unreliable, too hard to transmit, and way too expensive for Africa to build and maintain as its primary source of power.

In 2010 the left tried to block a World Bank loan for a new coal-fired plant in South Africa. Fortunately, the loan was approved (with the U.S. abstaining). The drive to provide electricity for the poor has been perhaps the greatest achievement of South Africa's post-apartheid governments.

Standing on the mountainside at night in Cape Town, overlooking the "Coloured" township of Mitchell's Plain and the African township of Khayelitsha, you can now see a twinkling blanket of

bulbs. How terrible to think that so many people in the West would rather block such success stories in the name of unproved science.

Mr. Rossiter directs the American Exceptionalism Media Project. He is an adjunct professor at American University and an associate fellow at the Institute for Policy Studies.

Boko Haram 'to sell' abducted schoolgirls

06 May 2014/aljazeera.com

Armed group claims responsibility for kidnapping 276 girls in Nigeria and threatens to "sell them in the marketplace".

The Nigerian armed group Boko Haram has claimed responsibility for the abduction of 276 schoolgirls during a raid in the village of Chibok in northeast Nigeria last month, the AFP news agency reported, citing a video it had obtained.

"I abducted your girls," the group's leader Abubakar Shekau said on Monday in the 57-minute video obtained by the agency, referring to the hundreds of students kidnapped from their school in Chibok, Borno state, on April 14.

"By Allah, I will sell them in the marketplace," he said in the video that starts with fighters lofting automatic rifles and shooting in the air as they chant "Allahu akbar!" or "God is great".

Boko Haram allegedly stormed the all-girl secondary school, then packed the teenagers, who had been taking exams, onto trucks and disappeared into a remote area along the border with Cameroon.

Boko Haram, now seen as the main security threat to Africa's leading energy producer, is growing bolder and extending its reach.

The apparent lack of capability of the military to prevent the Chibok attack or rescue the abducted girls after three weeks has triggered anger and protests in the northeast and in the capital Abuja.

Protest leader arrested

In a separate development, a leader of a protest march in support of the schoolgirls has said that Nigeria's First Lady ordered her and another protest leader to be arrested, expressing doubts that there had been any kidnapping and accused them of belonging to the group blamed for the abductions.

Saratu Angus Ndirpaya said state security service agents drove her and protest leader Naomi Mutah Nyadar to a police station on Monday after an all-night meeting at the presidential villa in Abuja, the capital.

She said police immediately released her but that Nyadar remained in detention.

A national police spokesman referred a journalist to the spokeswoman for police in Abuja. Reached on the phone, the spokeswoman said she was driving and could not immediately respond, the Associated Press news agency reported.

Other reports said three women had been arrested on Sunday night.

'Abductions fabricated'

Ndirpaya said First Lady Patience Jonathan accused them of fabricating the abductions.

"She [Jonathan] told so many lies, that we just wanted the government of Nigeria to have a bad name, that we did not want to support her husband's rule," she said in a telephone interview with AP.

Ndirpaya said other women at the meeting cheered and chanted "yes, yes," when the First Lady accused them of belonging to Boko Haram.

"They said we are Boko Haram, and that Mrs Nyadar is a member of Boko Haram."

She said Nyadar and herself do not have daughters among those abducted, but were supporting the mothers of the kidnapped daughters.

Fifty-three of the girls managed to escape from the fighters, who want to introduce Islamic law in the country, but 223 were still being held, state police said last Friday.

The mass abduction and failure to rescue the girls, now in a fourth week of captivity, is a source of deep embarrassment to the Nigerian government, which is accused of insensitivity to the girls' plight and not doing enough to rescue them.

In a televised "media chat" on Sunday night, President Goodluck Jonathan promised his administration was doing everything possible and called for international help to find the girls.

On Friday, he created a presidential committee to go to Borno state to work with the community on a strategy for the release of the girls.

China, AU to comprehensively deepen co-op

2014-05-06/(Xinhua)

ADDIS ABABA - China and Africa agreed to continue to make infrastructure development a priority area in their cooperation and enhance collaboration in areas such as transportation, communications, water conservancy, electricity and energy.

The two sides hailed the achievements made in building a new type of China-Africa strategic partnership, and agreed that China-Africa cooperation is constructive and exemplary, according to a joint statement issued after Chinese Premier Li Keqiang paid a visit to the African Union headquarters in the Ethiopian capital.

China-Africa cooperation "has played an important role in promoting the development of both sides and also the peace, stability and development of the region and the world as a whole," the joint statement said.

Since strengthening solidarity and cooperation among the developing countries is conducive to forging more stable, balanced and democratic international relations, both sides recognized the need

to strengthen coordination and collaboration on international issues in order to uphold the common interests of developing countries and build a more just and equitable international order and system.

China will continue to give its firm support to the AU in advancing the African integration process and upholding Africa's peace and security, while the AU will continue to give its understanding and support for China on issues concerning the latter's major and core interests, and play an active role in promoting China-Africa cooperation in all fields, said the statement.

Recognizing that peace and development in Africa is essential to prosperity and stability in the world, China and the AU called on the international community to respect the right of Africa to independently choose its development paths, support Africa's effort in addressing the problems in the region independently and help African countries improve their capacity for self-development.

Both sides reaffirmed the openness and inclusiveness of China-Africa cooperation. China welcomes the diversification of Africa's cooperative partners, urges the international community to increase input into Africa, and is willing to carry out cooperation with a third party in Africa on the basis of Africa's need, consent and participation, the statement said.

China and the AU also highlighted the importance of infrastructure to Africa's economic and social development and integration process, and pledged to give full play to the role of the joint working group on transnational and transregional infrastructure cooperation and facilitate the implementation of their action plan.

China appreciated the positive role played by the Commission of the AU as the new member of the Forum on China-Africa Cooperation (FOCAC), and the two sides reaffirmed their commitment to strengthening dialogue and cooperation under the FOCAC framework, the statement said.

To improve the work in planning and implementing China-AU cooperation, the two sides agreed to enrich and enhance the China-AU strategic dialogue. Both will work on creating conditions for mutual establishment of permanent missions.

The Chinese premier is on a four-nation Africa tour to Ethiopia, Nigeria, Angola and Kenya, the first time for him to visit Africa since taking office in 2013.

Egypt's el-Sissi: Brotherhood will not return

By LEE KEATH and SARAH EL DEEEB/The Associated Press/Tuesday, 05.06.14

CAIRO -- Abdel-Fattah el-Sissi, the former military chief who removed Egypt's Islamist president and who is now poised to win the post in elections this month, says the Muslim Brotherhood will never return as an organization, accusing it of using militant groups as cover to destabilize the country.

El-Sissi spoke in the first TV interview of his campaign, aired late on Monday, vowing that restoring stability and bringing development are his priorities. The comments were a seemingly unequivocal rejection of any political reconciliation with the Brotherhood, which was Egypt's most powerful political force until el-Sissi removed President Mohammed Morsi, a member of the group, last summer.

Since ousting Morsi, el-Sissi has been riding an overwhelming media frenzy lauding him as Egypt's

savior, and his status as the country's strongest figure all but guarantees him a victory in the May 26-27 election. El-Sissi's only opponent in the race is leftist politician Hamdeen Sabahi, the third-place finisher in the 2012 election won by Morsi.

El-Sissi's comments were a stark signal of his intention to ensure the elimination of the 86-year-old Brotherhood as both a political and ideological force in the country. He is building on an unprecedented popular resentment of the group, after its rise to power in the last three years.

Asked whether the Brotherhood will no longer exist under his presidency, el-Sissi replied, "Yes. Just like that."

"It's not me that finished it, the Egyptians have. The problem is not with me," he said.

The Brotherhood and its Islamist allies won every election following the 2011 ouster of autocrat Hosni Mubarak, dominating the parliament and capturing the presidency under Morsi. The Brotherhood's electoral strength was largely rooted in a widespread grassroots organization it had built up for decades despite being banned under Mubarak.

But after a year in office, millions joined protests demanding Morsi's removal, accusing his Brotherhood of monopolizing power and seeking to change the country's identity along the lines of Brotherhood ideology — prompting el-Sissi's ouster of Morsi.

Since then, there's been no sign of reconciliation between the sides. The Brotherhood and its allies have denounced Morsi's removal as a military coup that has wrecked democracy, rejecting the new government and persisting in a campaign of street protests.

Security forces have waged a ferocious crackdown on Morsi supporters, clashing with protesters. Hundreds have been killed and more than 16,000 members of the Brotherhood and other Islamists have been arrested. The Brotherhood's leader, Mohammed Badie, has been sentenced to death — though the sentence can be appealed — and he and Morsi and other senior Brotherhood figures face a string of trials. The government has branded the Brotherhood a terrorist organization. Under the weight of the crackdown, the pro-Morsi protests have waned.

At the same time, Islamic militant groups have stepped up bombings and shootings against police and the military in retaliation for Morsi's removal.

In the joint interview with two private Egyptian TV stations CBC and ONTV, el-Sissi directly accused the Brotherhood of being behind the campaign of bombings and shootings. He said the movement "created" Islamic militant groups to use as "covers to fight from behind ... to keep the movement away from any accusations." He said a senior Brotherhood leader had warned him that if he removed Morsi, extremist fighters from Afghanistan and elsewhere would come to Egypt to fight.

The Brotherhood denies any connection to militants.

He said the Brotherhood's ideology was based on "arrogance in religion" — and the presence of that strain of thought had destabilized Egyptian society for decades.

"The thought structure of these groups says that we are not true Muslims, and they believed conflict was inevitable because they consider us non-believers," he said. "It will not work for there to be

such thinking again."

He appealed to the public to support the police and the armed forces in their fight against terrorism. He vowed to respond to demands by the police to boost their capabilities to fight violence and said the armed forces are poised to help the police in such a task.

The 59-year-old el-Sissi retired from the military in March with the rank of field marshal to launch his candidacy. The one-hour interview was his first direct address to the public since he declared his intention to run and after the start of the official campaigning on May 2.

His election campaign is likely to largely be made up of TV and media interviews and private meetings, with few street appearances, mainly because of security concerns. In the interview, he said two assassination plots against him have already been uncovered, without giving details.

A second part of the interview, likely to go into more details about his economic program, is to be aired on Tuesday.

El-Sissi's candidacy has also raised concerns among some secular activists over a return of the autocracy that reigned in Egypt under Mubarak, who was also a veteran of the military. A number of prominent secular activists have been arrested in recent months, several of them under a draconian new law banning all protests without a police permit.

El-Sissi defended the protest law, saying it was needed to prevent further instability and insisting that police will give permits to those who seek to hold peaceful demonstrations.

"We are talking about a country going to waste. People must realize this and support us. Whoever imagines otherwise, only wants to sabotage Egypt and this won't be allowed," he said, losing his temper for the first time during the interview.

"This chaos will bring it down, because of this irresponsible protesting," he said.

El-Sissi spent a part of the interview discussing his family, explaining that he met his wife as a teenager and promised her marriage when he was admitted to military college. He spoke fondly of her as a major supporter of his decision to run for president. She told him he had no choice, he said, telling him, "We of course love you, but this nation will be lost."

He revealed that his two of his sons work in the government, one as a member of the General Intelligence and another in the powerful Administrative Oversight agency, a government monitoring organization. A third son applied to the foreign service and was twice rejected, he said. He also has a daughter.

U.S. trained el-Sissi said the military will not play a role in politics under his presidency and promised to consult with political factions. Asked if he will accept criticism, he responded with a smile, "I will put up with it" — but then said he won't accept "offenses."

In one Cairo neighborhood, Sayeda Zeinab, el-Sissi supporters organized showings of the interview at local coffeehouses, where dozens gathered to watch. During advertising breaks, they sang and clapped to pro-military anthems.

"After God, I worship him," 65-year-old Alia el-Sayed Saad said, raising two pictures of el-Sissi.

"We are not ignorant, we can differentiate between the wicked and the honest."

Turnout at the café shows was not high, however — and nearby coffeshops with TVs showing a soccer game were packed with larger crowds.

AP correspondents Mariam Rizk and Maggie Michael contributed to this report.

Nigeria: les 200 lycéennes enlevées pourraient être mariées de force

le 05 mai 2014/lci.tf1.fr

Les lycéennes enlevées mi-avril dans le nord-est du Nigeria seront traitées en "esclaves", "vendues" et "mariées" de force, a déclaré le chef du groupe islamiste Boko Haram dans une vidéo obtenue lundi par l'AFP. Selon plusieurs sources, les jeunes filles auraient déjà été emmenées hors du pays.

L'AFP a réussi à obtenir une vidéo du chef du groupe islamiste Boko Haram dans laquelle il exprime ses intentions sur les lycéennes enlevées mi-avril dans le nord-est du Nigeria. Ses déclarations font froid dans le dos. "J'ai enlevé les filles. Je vais les vendre sur le marché, au nom d'Allah", a déclaré Abubakar Shekau, évoquant les 223 adolescentes portés disparues, alors que des informations circulent sur leur possible transfert au Tchad et au Cameroun voisins, où elles auraient été vendues pour 12 dollars chacune.

Shekau, qui dit garder "des gens comme esclaves", déclare avoir enlevé les lycéennes parce que "l'éducation occidentale doit cesser" et que les filles "doivent quitter (l'école) et "être mariées". Dans cette nouvelle vidéo, Shekau est habillé en treillis militaire et se tient debout devant un véhicule de transport blindé et deux pick-up sur lesquels sont installées des mitrailleuses. Six hommes armés se tiennent des deux côtés de Shekau, le visage dissimulé. L'image est floue, mais on aperçoit assez clairement le visage du chef islamiste, qui s'exprime en haoussa, en arabe et en anglais, quand la caméra zoome sur son visage.

Attaque la plus choquante

Pendant les 14 premières minutes, Shekau critique la démocratie, l'éducation occidentale, et les ceux qui ne croient pas en l'Islam. Boko Haram, dont le nom signifie "l'éducation occidentale est un péché" en langue haoussa, revendique la création d'un Etat islamique dans le nord du Nigeria. Le groupe extrémiste a déjà fait plusieurs milliers de morts depuis le début de son insurrection en 2009, au cours d'attaques visant des écoles, des églises, des mosquées et des symboles de l'Etat et des forces de l'ordre. Mais cet enlèvement de masse, visant particulièrement des filles, n'a pas de précédent. Il constitue l'attaque la plus choquante depuis l'existence de ce mouvement qui a déjà fait 1.500 morts depuis le début de l'année.

Des centaines de personnes ont manifesté à Abuja et Lagos pour demander la libération des lycéennes. "Ce n'est qu'un début. Tant que les jeunes filles ne seront pas libérées, nous continuerons à manifester. Nous nous mobiliserons de plus en plus", a déclaré Charlotte Obidairo, responsable de l'ONG "Youth Empowerment and Development Nigeria". Dimanche, une organisatrice d'une manifestation réclamant également la remise en liberté des jeunes filles avait été interpellée à Abuja.

Pour les observateurs américains, de nombreuses adolescentes auraient déjà quitté le pays. "Beaucoup d'entre elles ont probablement été déplacées hors du pays, vers

des pays voisins", a expliqué la porte-parole de la diplomatie américaine, Marie Harf. Le président nigérian Goodluck Jonathan, qui a commenté cette attaque pour la première fois dimanche, a donné l'ordre de "tout faire" pour garantir la libération des lycéennes, avait dit espérer l'aide des Etats-Unis pour résoudre les graves problèmes sécuritaires de son pays.

UN/AFRICA :

UN health chiefs say the world must act on polio

Kate Kelland/heraldscotland.com/Tuesday 6 May 2014

The spread of polio is an international public health emergency that threatens to infect other countries with the crippling disease, according to the World Health Organisation.

The health agency described the ongoing polio outbreaks in Asia, Africa and the Middle East as an "extraordinary" situation requiring a co-ordinated international response.

Polio usually strikes children under five and is usually spread via infected water. There is no specific treatment or cure, but several vaccines exist.

Experts are particularly concerned that the virus continues to pop up in countries previously free of the disease, such as Syria, Somalia and Iraq, where civil war or unrest complicates efforts to contain the virus.

Some critics say the rapid spread of polio could unravel the nearly three-decade effort to eradicate it.

WHO began an emergency meeting with experts on Monday on how to halt the spread of the crippling polio virus across international borders in Asia, Africa and the Middle East. Polio passes easily from person to person and can spread rapidly among children, especially in unsanitary conditions.

"Wild polio virus continues to spread internationally from both endemic and re-infected countries," the United Nations health agency said, adding that the meeting in Geneva would last several days.

Health experts from North America, Europe, Asia, Africa and the Middle East will be asked "to advise on whether the current developments on the spread of polio virus constitute a public health emergency of international concern", it said.

Polio re-emerged in Syria in 2013 for the first time in 14 years.

US/AFRICA :

US Assisting Nigeria in Search for Abducted Schoolgirls

Victor Beattie/voanews.com/May 06, 2014

WASHINGTON — The White House Monday confirmed the United States is helping Nigeria in the effort to find and free nearly 300 schoolgirls abducted April 14 from a school in northeastern Borno State. On the same day the Islamist militant group Boko Haram claimed responsibility for the mass abduction, a U.S. spokesperson suggested many of the girls may have already been moved out of the country.

White House spokesman Jay Carney Monday denounced the kidnappings “as an outrage and terrible tragedy.”

"The president has been briefed several times, and his national security team continues to monitor the situation there closely. The State Department has been in regular touch with the Nigerian government about what we might do to help support its efforts to find and free these young women," said Carney.

Carney said U.S. counterterrorism assistance includes information-sharing, improving Nigeria's forensics and investigative capacity, protecting civilians and ensuring human rights are respected, strengthening Nigeria's criminal justice system and supporting efforts to bring to account those responsible.

"We're also pursuing efforts to help the Nigerian military improve its professional military education, to bolster its counter-IED (improvised explosive device) capacity and carry out responsible CT (counterterrorism) operations," said Carney.

He said the United States, which designated Boko Haram a foreign terrorist organization last year, supports programs and initiatives providing positive alternatives to communities most at risk of radicalization and recruitment.

During a news briefing Monday, State Department spokeswoman Marie Harf underscored the importance of these U.S. efforts.

“Obviously, these are all things that will be helpful as they try to find these girls who, as we have many indications, many of them have likely been moved out of the country to neighboring countries at this point,” said Harf. “We’d obviously encourage the government of Nigeria to work with their neighbors to see if there’s ways they can work together.”

Harf said she did not anticipate any use of U.S. military assets in the search and safe return of the abductees.

In a video message released Monday to news agencies, the head of Boko Haram, Abubaker Shekau, described the girls as “slaves” and threatened “to sell them in the marketplace.”

The abductions prompted U.S. Senator Amy Klobuchar, who as a prosecutor dealt with issues related to human trafficking, to take to the Senate floor and say there are reports the girls, some as young as 15, are being sold into forced marriages with militants for as little as \$12.

"Let's call this what it is, one of the most brazen and shocking signal incidents of human trafficking we've seen in recent memory. As Secretary of State John Kerry said this weekend, it's not just an act of terrorism, it's a massive human trafficking moment and it is grotesque. This heinous crime demands that we take action immediate to help bring these girls home to their families and bring

their kidnappers to justice," said Klobuchar.

Klobuchar said the Boko Haram Islamist militant group, whose name means 'western education is sinful,' has destroyed more than 200 Nigerian schools and killed dozens of students. She said the girls were trying to improve their lives by getting a good education.

The Minnesota Democrat said the world is finally paying attention, with the families of the girls reaching out through social media using the Twitter hashtag, "bring back our girls."

She called for a U.N. Security Council resolution condemning the abductions and seeks international assistance to gain the girls' release, provide U.S. intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance assets to Nigeria and work to strengthen the abilities of Nigeria and neighboring countries to counter Boko Haram, protect children and combat human trafficking.

US 'outrage' as calls grow to help rescue Nigeria schoolgirls

6 May 2014/bbc.com

The US says it considers the abduction of more than 200 Nigerian schoolgirls by Islamist militants "an outrage" and is offering help to try to rescue them.

White House spokesman Jay Carney said President Barack Obama was being briefed as his national security team was monitoring developments.

Earlier, a video emerged of the leader of the Boko Haram group saying the militants intended to sell the girls.

They were taken from a school in the northern state of Borno on 14 April.

Their whereabouts remain unknown and there is mounting anger and frustration in Nigeria at the failure of the government to find them.

"We view what has happened there as an outrage and a terrible tragedy," said Mr Carney in a White House briefing.

"The president has been briefed several times and his national security team continues to monitor the situation there closely. The state department has been in regular touch with the Nigerian government about what we might do to help support its efforts to find and free these young women."

He added that the US was offering counter-terrorism help to Nigerian investigators that involved "information-sharing" and improving Nigeria's "forensics and investigative capacity".

Six US senators have introduced a resolution supporting the Nigerian people and calling for the immediate return of the girls.

Senator Dick Durbin, one of the resolution's sponsors, called the kidnapping "an affront to the civilised world".

"We and our African allies should do everything to help the Nigerian government rescue innocent

girls and return them to their families," he said in a tweet.

In an emotional address to the US Senate, Democratic Senator Amy Klobuchar also called for action.

"We cannot close our eyes to the clear evidence of barbarity unfolding before us in Nigeria," she said.

"This is one of those times when our action or inaction will be felt not just by those schoolgirls being held captive and their families waiting in agony, but by victims and perpetrators of trafficking around the world. Now is the time to act."

'Instructions from God'

Boko Haram leader Abubakar Shekau sent a video - obtained by the AFP news agency - in which he said for the first time that his group had taken the girls.

Boko Haram, which means "Western education is forbidden", has attacked numerous educational institutions in northern Nigeria.

In the video, Abubakar Shekau said the girls should not have been in school in the first place, but rather should get married.

"God instructed me to sell them, they are his properties and I will carry out his instructions," he said.

Reports last week said that some of the girls had been forced to marry their abductors, who paid a nominal bride price of \$12 (£7).

Others are reported to have been taken across borders into Cameroon and Chad.

The girls were in their final year at the boarding school in Chibok, most of them aged 16 to 18.

In a TV broadcast on Sunday - his first public comment on the abductions - President Goodluck Jonathan said everything was being done to find the girls.

Africa's Emergence Poses Choice for US Ties

May 5, 2014/Associated Press/By LARA JAKES AP National Security Writer

LUANDA, Angola

Traveling from lush green hilltops to hot dusty roads and seaside ports, U.S. Secretary of State John Kerry asked African nations last week to make a choice: Choose democracy. Embrace economic stability. Reject violence, and move people into the modern world.

It was an optimistic offer, and the kind of Western attitudes the U.S. is used to espousing. But two conflict-wracked African nations said no, challenging the limits of American influence in a continent that is emerging as the next land of opportunity for foreign financial investors.

So far, the U.S. is lagging in the worldwide race to reap economic benefits in Africa, and President

Barack Obama is hosting a summit this August for leaders of more than 40 African nations to try to build stronger financial ties. The refusal this week by several leaders to heed Kerry's urgings now confronts the Obama administration with a choice of its own: Pursue economic opportunities with governments that do not respect rule of law or human rights, or take a backseat in global competition by shunning obstinate sub-Saharan countries.

"This is up to the will of the people, and the will of leaders," Kerry told about 100 diplomats and local activists gathered at an environmentally friendly tukul hut atop a hilltop in Addis Ababa, the Ethiopian capital. "We need to make certain that we grab the choice that seizes the future, and we need to refuse to be dragged back into the past."

He added, "I have absolutely no doubt that this could be an inflection point for the new Africa, a time and a place where Africans bend the arc of history toward reform, and not retribution; toward peace and prosperity, not revenge and resentment."

In what appears to be the biggest flop of his trip, Kerry announced a tentative agreement to restart stalled peace talks in South Sudan, where U.S. officials say six months of fighting between President Salva Kiir and former Vice President-turned-rebel leader Riek Machar have plunged the world's newest nation into a civil war.

But even before Kerry left Africa on Monday, Machar called the peace talks premature. And he derided the American diplomat's demand for a transitional government. Kerry continued to hold out hopes that the talks would happen as soon as this week, saying Machar "didn't close the door" on negotiations. Kiir, meanwhile, sent troops into two rebel strongholds in a violent offensive that the State Department quickly denounced as a violation of an earlier cease-fire agreement.

Kerry again raised the possibilities of imposing financial and travel sanctions against both leaders and their most violent commanders, as well as sending in U.N. troops to quell the fighting. But such threats have been bandied for weeks without any apparent impact. Leaders in neighboring countries are reluctant to take similar steps that would hurt their own economies or otherwise draw political opposition.

Kerry's visit last Friday to Juba, the South Sudan capital, "is coming at a crucial time and cannot serve as an empty gesture or a photo op," Raymond C. Offenheiser, president of human rights group Oxfam America, said in a statement. "This visit and subsequent follow through by the administration must demonstrate to all that the U.S. will not tolerate a prolonged conflict that neither side can win and in which civilians are the clear losers."

On another losing front, Kerry promised \$30 million in election assistance aid for the upcoming 2016 presidential vote in Congo, which has weathered at least 20 years of fighting between the government and a number of rebel groups. But as he pledged the money, Kerry urged President Joseph Kabila to step down at the end of his current term in office, as required under Congo's constitution.

The response by Kabila's government was almost comically unenthusiastic. Congo government spokesman Lambert Mende said the constitution would be respected, but also suggested it could be revised.

"Why all this noise just about Congo, when there are more than 15 countries that are going to organize elections in the next year?" Mende said.

Other leaders held Kerry's requests at arms' length throughout the trip, from ensuring press freedoms from Ethiopia's oppressive government to demanding that Ugandan security forces leave South Sudan or otherwise work under the auspices of the United Nations.

At the same time, the U.S. does not want to miss out on economic gains available in Africa, which has vast oil and gas resources and a middle class that is expected to double over the next decade. And it was impossible to ignore the number of construction cranes erecting new buildings around Addis Ababa, or the Chinese hotel next to Juba's airfield, or the presence of General Electric at Luanda's shipping port.

Compared to competitors across the world, the U.S. companies "have been slower to sort of pick up on the growth in Africa," said Elizabeth Littlefield, president and CEO of the U.S. Overseas Private Investment Corp.

But in the last several years, she said, American companies like IBM and GE have opened major offices across Africa. Legal and accounting firms also have flocked to the continent to help the expected flood of U.S. investors navigate various nations' business rules. And the U.S. Commerce Department is planning to open a commercial service office in Luanda.

OPIC financed \$1 billion in loans for U.S. investors last year, and since 2008 has increased by five-fold the number of businesses it works with.

Much of the test of Africa's future will come in elections in 37 nations over the next three years, and of course, whether warring and threat of famine continue to mire the continent.

Kerry said the U.S. is looking for more than simply an economic relationship with Africa, drawing an unspoken comparison to nations like China, which is sinking 5 percent of its foreign direct investment into the continent, compared with 1 percent by the U.S. But despite building roads and hotels in Africa, officials say China has done little to create long-term jobs or provide services like health care and education training for local workers.

"Africa has the resources; Africa has the capacity; Africa has the know-how," Kerry said in his speech in Addis Ababa. "The questions that Africa faces are similar to those confronting countries all over the world: Do we have the political will, the sense of common purpose to address our challenges? Are we prepared to make the hard choices that those challenges require?"

"The continent's course is ultimately up to you," Kerry said.(AP)

U.S., Djibouti reach agreement to keep counterterrorism base in Horn of Africa nation

By Zachary A. Goldfarb/washingtonpost.com/Tuesday, May 6

The United States has reached agreement with the government of Djibouti to preserve a key military base in the Horn of Africa that has been central to U.S. counterterrorism efforts in East Africa — and previously served as a key launching point for drone strikes throughout the region.

President Obama announced the agreement Monday at the White House during a meeting with Djibouti's president, Ismail Omar Guelleh. An administration official said the U.S. government would pay \$630 million over the next decade to Djibouti to lease the base, called Camp Lemonnier.

At \$63 million per year, the fee is almost double the \$38 million that the United States has been paying.

“Camp Lemonnier is extraordinarily important not only to our work throughout the Horn of Africa but throughout the region,” Obama said.

The military base, which houses 4,000 personnel, had been the launching site for key elements of the Obama administration’s counterterrorism strategy in East Africa and Yemen. U.S. military forces have spent years trying to counter the presence of al-Qaeda in Yemen and al-Shabab in Somalia.

Since its establishment in 2001, the base — which shares an airstrip with Djibouti’s commercial airport — was secretly transformed into one of the most active sites for launching drone strikes outside the Afghanistan-Pakistan region.

Last year, the military was forced to relocate drones after a series of crashes led to intense fears that civilians could be killed at the airport. The military now uses airstrips in more remote parts of the country for drone operations.

Obama and Guelleh also discussed economic development, health care and education.

Obama credited Djibouti with aiding the fight against terrorism in Somalia, where an alliance of African nations is working to counter the presence of al-Shabab.

“There’s a significant presence of soldiers from Djibouti who are participating in the multinational force that has been able to push back al-Shabab’s control over large portions of Somalia,” Obama said.

According to the terms of the base agreement, the United States and Djibouti can renew the lease for another 10 years at the same rate of \$63 million a year. They can then renew the lease for another 10 years at a renegotiated rate.

“The fact that we welcome the U.S. forces in our country show our support for international peace and for peace in our region as well,” Guelleh said. “We do that all for peace in the world and for peace in Africa.”

At the meeting, Obama also pledged to increase financial aid to Djibouti outside of the base agreement, including helping to expand skills training and foreign aid.

CANADA/AFRICA :

AUSTRALIA/AFRICA :

EU/AFRICA :

CHINA/AFRICA :

Pékin étend son aide à l'Afrique

Par Michel de Grandi/lesechos.fr/06/05

En tournée africaine, Li Keqiang promet 12 milliards de dollars supplémentaires.

« Amitié indéfectible », coopération « d'égal à égal ». En tournée en terre africaine, Li Keqiang le Premier ministre chinois a annoncé, hier, une rallonge de plus de 12 milliards de dollars de l'aide que son pays accorde à l'Afrique. Cette enveloppe devrait se décomposer en une nouvelle ligne de crédits bancaires (10 milliards) qui vient s'ajouter aux 20 milliards octroyés par Xi Jinping le président lors de sa tournée au printemps 2013. L'autre volet de l'enveloppe (2 milliards) doit être affecté au fond Chine-Afrique pour le développement portant ainsi son total à 5 milliards de dollars. Pékin a également mentionné, sans donner davantage de détails, l'octroi d'une aide de 50 millions de yuans (8 millions d'euros) pour « soutenir le Sud-Soudan », un Etat créé, en 2011, et qui est en proie, depuis décembre, à des massacres interethniques. Pékin a réalisé d'importants investissements dans ce pays qui le fournit en pétrole.

Pour sa première visite depuis sa nomination, Li Keqiang affiche de grandes ambitions commerciales. Pékin, qui est depuis 2009 le premier partenaire du continent noir, veut doubler ses échanges commerciaux à 400 milliards de dollars, d'ici à 2020. Ambitieux, l'objectif peut, toutefois, être atteint dans la mesure où la Chine est très demandeuse de matières premières, depuis le bois jusqu'au pétrole en passant par le gaz ou les minerais. Sans surprise, la tournée de Li Keqiang doit le conduire au Nigeria et en Angola, deux pays pétroliers.

Echanges doublés

Pour autant, la quête de ressources naturelles n'est pas le seul motif du déplacement chinois. Pékin, qui pratique l'aide au développement liée - le pays verse un montant qui est réservé à ses entreprises - espère bien vendre son savoir-faire ferroviaire. Il a ainsi évoqué la construction de lignes ferroviaires à grande vitesse pour relier les grandes capitales entre elles.

Depuis le siège de l'Union africaine à Addis-Abeba, capitale de l'Ethiopie, Li Keqiang a aussi voulu balayer les critiques formulées à l'encontre de son pays, accusé de piller les ressources africaines et indiqué qu'il « prendrait une part importante dans l'industrialisation de l'Afrique ». Un discours parfaitement reçu du côté africain, certain que les investissements manufacturiers chinois vont faire du continent une nouvelle usine du monde.

M. G., Les Echos

China premier on four-nation swing through Africa

6 May 2014/radioaustralia.net.au

China's Premier Li Keqiang has acknowledged there are "growing pains" in China's relations with

Africa as he embarks on a four nation visit.

Chinese companies have been accused of labour abuses and of exploiting Africa's resource wealth at the expense of local people.

Accompanied by his wife, Premier Li is stopping off in Ethiopia, Nigeria, Angola and Kenya during his first visit to Africa since taking office last year.

A large number of new deals are being signed.

Correspondent: Karon Snowdon

Speakers: Li Keqiang, China Premier; Hailemariam Desalegn, Ethiopia's Prime Minister, Associate Professor, Barry Sautman, Hong Kong University of Science and Technology; Peter Cai, China Editor of the online Business Spectator

SNOWDON: First stop Ethiopia where Premier Li said both sides have been adjusting to each other.

LI: We have always treated each other as equals, and we believe that Africa deserves a very important place and plays a very important role in today's international political landscape.

SNOWDON: The first day saw 16 agreements signed, including loans for roads and industrial zones, plus there's an 80 million dollar deal with Huawei for a broadband network.

Hailemariam Desalegn, is Ethiopia's Prime Minister.

DESALEGN: Our relationship is a strategic relationship and it is not only for one year or two years or some years only. It is growing from time to time, strengthening from day to day and we want to nurture and expand this relationship between our two countries.

SNOWDON: China is Africa's biggest trading partner.

Bilateral trade has soared to more than 200 billion dollars in recent years.

Officially there are several thousand Chinese companies operating on the continent.

Not all of them are large state owned corporations.

There are many small private operators but they all share the same motivation as any business.

SAUTMAN: The main impetus that Chinese companies have is to make money.

SNOWDON: Barry Sautman from the Hong Kong University of Science and Technology has studied labour conditions in Zambia.

He says wages paid by Chinese mining companies are generally about 25 per cent less than others.

But he says the negative view portrayed by western media of Chinese investment is largely false.

SAUTMAN: Certainly there are problems that are overstated. Western media often projects that

there are a huge number of Chinese who have migrated to Africa on a more or less permanent basis, but this is certainly not the case. And in terms of investment in natural resources, about 20 per cent of Chinese capital in Africa is in natural resources, so of course that means 80 per cent is not.

SNOWDON: Peter Cai, the China Editor of the online Business Spectator, says Chinese investment presents a mixed picture.

CAI: When we talk about why China is so interested in Africa I think the first is for strategic reasons, China sees Africa as a very important source of supply international support the international organisations such as the UN and World Trade Organisation. On the other hand it's very clear that China wants to have access to mineral resources.

SNOWDON: Well there's nothing wrong with that is there, because China needs the resources and Africa wants to sell them?

CAI: Yes the problem people think is whether this money would actually be channeled back into the country or whether it would line the pockets of the authoritarian governments in Africa.

SNOWDON: Barry Sautman says Canadian and Australian companies are bigger investors than China in Africa's mineral resources.

Chinese companies are at times prepared to go where others won't either for governance, human rights or safety reasons.

Two engineers kidnapped in Sudan have been released in recent days by an armed group opposed to the Sudanese central government.

SAUTMAN: There's really only one country in Africa where it could be said that China plays a really significant role in the oil industry and that's Sudan, and of course that's because Sudan was a subject of a boycott by western governments for many years, and indeed that boycott is still in effect.

SNOWDON: During his visit Premier Li has promised China will never act as a colonial power and called on Chinese companies to "shoulder responsibility" for local communities.

Peter Cai says that might be easier said than done, as competition and resentment at the very small level is a big issue.

CAI: There's a foundation in South Africa called the Brenthurst Foundation, they actually fund there's a huge number of traders, and private companies, small time business people, like 250-thousand of them in Africa. In a way they're creating a lot of problems for the Chinese government because they often set up a very small shop with cheap imported goods from China. And there's very little room for Beijing to intervene and tell them not to do certain things. And that is creating a fair bit of negative perception as well as resentment on the ground.

China to extend over \$12 billion in aid to Africa

Mon May 5, 2014/Reuters

BEIJING

(Reuters) - Chinese Premier Li Keqiang unveiled extra aid for Africa totaling at least \$12 billion on Monday, and offered to share advance technology with the continent to help with development of high-speed rail, state media reported.

Li pledged the additional funding in a speech at the Organisation of African Union headquarters in the Ethiopian capital, Addis Ababa.

China will increase credit lines to Africa by \$10 billion and will boost the China-Africa Development Fund by \$2 billion, bringing it to a total of \$5 billion, Li said, according to the official Xinhua news agency. He provided no details of the timeframe.

Li "depicted a dream that all African capitals are connected with high-speed rail, so as to boost pan-African communication and development," the report said. As China has advanced technologies in this area, Li said China was ready to work with Africa "to make this dream come true".

China will also offer \$100 million in aid for wildlife protection, Li added, for a part of the world where the Chinese appetite for ivory and rhino horns have driven some species to the brink of extinction.

It is Li's first visit to Africa since he became premier last year, and follows on from a trip to the continent by President Xi Jinping in March 2013, when he renewed an offer of \$20 billion in loans to Africa between 2013 and 2015.

Li said that the new \$10 billion credit line would be on top of the existing \$20 billion already offered, the China News Service reported.

Chinese officials said last week that Li's trip, which also takes in oil-rich Nigeria and Angola, would not simply be for energy deals and Beijing will be seeking to help boost African living standards.

Li said he hoped that some of the loans being offered would be used to support small and medium-sized companies in Africa, adding that economic development on the continent offered huge opportunities for both China and Africa.

"History and reality make clear to all: China's development gives opportunity to Africa; Africa develops, and China also benefits," he said.

Trips by Chinese leaders to Africa are often marked by big natural resource deals, triggering criticism from some quarters that China is only interested in the continent's mineral and energy wealth.

China has a relationship with Africa which pre-dates its current resource-hungry economic boom. In previous decades, China's Communist leaders supported national liberation movements and newly independent states across the continent.

Africans broadly see China as a healthy counterbalance to Western influence but, as ties mature, there are growing calls from policymakers and economists for more balanced trade relations.

(Reporting by Ben Blanchard; Editing by Simon Cameron-Moore)

INDIA/AFRICA :

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