



(The U.S. is in talks with North African countries about positioning drones at a base on their soil to ramp up surveillance of Islamic State in Libya in what would be the most significant expansion of the campaign against the extremist group in the region.)

BURUNDI :

### **Burundi: une cache d'armes découverte, des arrestations dans l'opposition**

Par RFI /13-07-2015

Après l'infiltration et des affrontements entre un groupe armé et l'armée il y a trois jours dans le nord du Burundi, dans la province de Kayanza cette fois, une trentaine de militants d'opposition ont été arrêtés suite à la découverte d'une importante cache d'armes sur une colline de la province de Muyinga, dans le nord-est du pays. Et l'administration l'assure : tout cela est arrivé par hasard.

Dimanche matin, un groupe d'Imbonerakure, des membres de la ligue des jeunes au pouvoir, a arrêté un taxi-moto qui transportait un gros sac recouvert de boutures de patates douces. Ils ouvrent alors ce sac et y découvrent, selon des sources sur place, dix kalachnikovs et 38 chargeurs. Le motard, lui, aurait réussi à fuir.

Ces jeunes militants du parti présidentiel en réfèrent alors à la police qui décide de perquisitionner cette colline dans la province de Muyinga, quelque 280 kilomètres au nord-est de la capitale Bujumbura. Vingt autres kalachnikovs sont alors découvertes, explique Aline Manirabarusha, la gouverneure de cette province. C'est du jamais-vu, un coup de filet extraordinaire, le plus important jamais opéré de mémoire de policier.

La police a alors procédé à l'arrestation de 31 personnes, toutes membres du FNL d'Agathon Rwaswa, le principal leader de l'opposition. « Ils étaient sur une liste découverte sur place d'un groupe de gens qui voulaient perturber la paix et la sécurité », justifie la gouverneure. Mais dans le camp d'Agathon Rwaswa, on dément. On parle d'un coup monté dans le but de détruire la principale force d'opposition.

La nervosité des autorités burundaises s'explique par le fait que des rumeurs persistantes font état depuis plusieurs jours d'une infiltration de groupes armés en provenance d'un pays voisin dans cette zone frontalière du Rwanda et de la Tanzanie.

RWANDA :

### The Kenya Rwanda Business Forum 2015

July 13, 2015/By ALY KHAN SATCHU/the-star.co.ke

I returned to Kigali over the week-end for the third time since 2011 and the first thing I noted is that the velocity of change is speeding up. My flight had a stop-over in Bujumbura Airport, which is retro and one of the buildings was of a wonderful pink. The contrast between the old world Bujumbura Airport and the 21st century Kigali Airport was really stark. So many parts of Africa are bursting at the seams in a "higgledy-piggeldy" expansion and Kigali with its clean streets and structure is such a contrast that it makes you suck in your breath. Kigali produces such a positive feeling, it is easy to forget where Rwanda came from in 1994.

Edwin Lefevre said that "the tape is your telescope." And if we look at the (Rwanda) tape, you will note an extraordinary narrative has unfolded. The narrative is of a country that has empowered its women, has reduced the percentage of people living below the poverty line from 59 per cent to 45 per cent between 2001 and 2011, life expectancy, literacy, primary school enrollment and spending on health care have all gained.

A.T. Kearney named Rwanda the most attractive African market for retailers in its first ever African Retail Development Index. Foreign Policy Magazine ranks Rwanda eighth best in the World for Investors.

On July 5, the World Bank tweeted that Rwanda was the top performer in a measure of share prosperity in sub Saharan Africa. Essentially, this means "trickledown".

A common refrain is that "You cannot eat GDP."

Well what the World Bank is saying is that Rwanda is spreading the prosperity the most in all of Africa

Now this parabolic rally (off a low base) would not have happened without first class leadership. President Kagame's Rwanda can be compared to Sheikh Mohamed's Dubai except Dubai did not go through a genocide. In 1994, Dubai had one main road and just one high rise building. Outstanding leadership is not concerned about the starting point because it knows where its going.

I was visiting Kigali this time with the Kenya National Chamber of Commerce and Industry (which has some 21st century leadership of its own under chairman Kiprono Kittony). We were participating in the first Kenya-Rwanda Business Forum held under the theme 'Expanding business opportunities beyond Borders.' The forum was held in collaboration with the Private Sector Federation of Rwanda and with the full support of the Rwanda government with President Kagame as the chief guest.

President Kagame said many things:

“East Africa is more visible and relevant to the global economy than ever before. East Africa is rightly seen as a new frontier. We must be ready to seize the new opportunities that are coming our way,”

“Every global company started off as a local one; without exception. The business people in this room have a natural advantage and you have the right risk perceptions. There is no excuse”.

“In the drive to integrate our region and create wealth, businesses can make another kind of smart investment, that is, supporting African initiatives working to instill in young people, a more pan-African perspective, an attitude of closer collaboration within the continent, and pride in African heritage.”

Kenya is the third largest investor in Rwanda after Mauritius and South Africa. KCB, Equity and I & M have invested in financial services. Serena Hotels, Nakumatt and Fusion Capital are all there.

President Kagame challenged the forum to create a critical mass of believers.

Let me leave you with one final thought. I do not think anyone would have proposed that the Sheikh Mohamed hand over after (a hypothetical) two terms.

"Come on look at his performance" the crowd would have shouted.

That's the point with President Kagame.

RDC CONGO :

UGANDA :

**Uganda Opposition Leader Presses for Political Reform**

James Butty/[voanews.com/July 13, 2015](http://voanews.com/July%2013%202015)

Uganda's main opposition leader and past presidential candidate said anyone who believes in democracy must work for reform aimed at a free and fair electoral process.

Kizza Besigye of the Forum for Democratic Change contested three consecutive presidential elections, in 2001, 2006, and 2011. Besigye said all three were marked by voting irregularities. He has announced his candidacy to contest the 2016 election.

Last Thursday, police arrested him, along with former Prime Minister Amama Mbabazi who is seeking the ruling party's nomination, on what they called "preventive" measures.

Besigye said he plans to resume his campaign Tuesday in spite of the threat of being re-arrested. He said the police have no power under the Public Order Management Act, an old colonial law, to stop political parties from holding meetings.

“My arrest is a clear, undoubted part of persecution of political opponents by [President Yoweri] Museveni and his regime. It is done in complete violation of our laws; it is an act of impunity on the part of regime police, and this is part of the reason we are struggling to have a new system of political management in our country. The struggle in Uganda is not just an electoral contest, it is a liberation struggle,” he said.

Besigye said the law the police used to justify his arrest, and that of Mbabazi, is antiquated and does not apply to today’s political parties.

“That law, on which they based such action, is a law that was enacted in 1957 by the British colonial government. And it’s a law, therefore, that was meant to service the colonial regime and that is the dilemma that we have. We are supposed to be an independent nation, but being run by colonial institutions and colonial systems,” he said.

He said because the three presidential elections he contested were characterized by irregularities, it should be the mission of every Ugandan to demand reforms ahead of next year’s vote.

“And so, in the upcoming elections, we have made it clear that there has to be reforms to the political system that can engender a free and fair election, even it means that the election is not held the time when it is supposed to be held. We are going to be fighting tooth and nail to make sure there are reforms ahead of next year,” Besigye said.

Besigye was arrested last Thursday along with former Ugandan Prime Minister Amama Mbabazi who is seeking the nomination of the ruling National Resistance Movement of Uganda.

Mbabazi, who is seeking the nomination of the ruling National Resistance Movement (NRM), told VOA he has been holding discussions with members of the opposition because he doesn’t consider himself an enemy of anyone, and likewise, the opposition should not see him as an enemy.

“We are Ugandans who espouse maybe different ideas about how to run country. It only means that we have different approaches. And this should not really stop us from cooperating with each other,” Mbabazi said.

Besigye said the first task that all democratic forces in Uganda should be working on is to make sure that there is free and fair election. As that process goes on, he said, there are discussions on having a common candidate of the democratic forces once a decision has been made to participate in the election.

“Mr. Mbabazi is not yet a signatory of the protocol that established that mechanism, but he has declared support for it. If he certainly appends to that process and becomes part and parcel of that process, then, quite obviously he will be in the pool through which a common candidate can emerge,” Besigye said

SOUTH AFRICA :

**Mittal Asks for South Africa Government's Assistance to Counter Losses**

By PTI/newindianexpress.com/13th July 2015

JOHANNESBURG: With his company's operations in South Africa running into losses, Steel

magnate Lakshmi Mittal has sought South African government's intervention to counter cheap Chinese imports and asked for an imposition of a 10 per cent import duty on steel, according to a media report.

The weekly Sunday Times reported that Mittal was in the country last month to brief the government, including President Jacob Zuma, on a possible rescue assistance, failing which his company ArcelorMittal South Africa may be forced to reconsider its options in the country.

ArcelorMittal South Africa was formed in 2004 after Mittal came to the rescue of the ailing state steel producer Iscor to turn it around. It was eventually sold to him.

The South African government had done this in the hope that steel prices in the country would come down but the current crisis sparked largely by cheap metal exported by China is threatening plant closures by ArcelorMittal South Africa in at least two South African towns where the entire economy is dependent on the steel industry.

The biggest plant is at Vanderbijlpark, employing 4,500 people and accounting for almost half of the company's sales, is also the biggest contributor to ArcelorMittal South Africa's losses.

"Rome is burning, every single day the industry loses millions and it's really, really concerning," Paul O'Flaherty, ArcelorMittal South Africa chief executive officer told the weekly.

According to the report, Mittal wants the government to impose a 10 per cent import duty on steel, without which his firm would have to close down plants and cut jobs.

South African trade and industry Minister Rob Davies told the weekly that a decision around an import tariff and a pricing model would be made in coming weeks.

ArcelorMittal South Africa's biggest competitor Evraz Highveld is already struggling in a business rescue process, while Markus Hamman, chief executive officer at another major company Scaw Metals, said South Africa had become an obvious dumping ground for cheap steel and had been flooded with imports from China.

ArcelorMittal South Africa has also failed so far to find a black economic empowerment partner after initial plans did not materialise in 2010.

Having made no profit for the past five years, ArcelorMittal South Africa has lost two thirds of its value from the Rand 35 billion company that it was then.

Analysts have been pessimistic about the company's future.

Wayne McCurrie of Momentum Asset Management considered the domestic steel market too small to compete with the likes of China.

"It's not big enough to justify a big steel mill and the volumes required to produce steel at a competitive unit cost that would make the South African company competitive. While Arcelor Mittal SA is one of the most efficient steel operations, it is hamstrung," McCurrie was quoted as saying.

"It sits with global competitors that are far more efficient because they can produce products for cheaper when it comes to unit costs per kilo," he said.

TANZANIA :

KENYA :

### Kenya welcomes foreign investors ahead of tour

By Geoffrey Mosoku/standardmedia.co.ke/Monday, July 13th 2015

Foreign billionaires have started trooping to the country ahead of US President Barack Obama's three-day tour.

The investors, who are already in Nairobi to attend an international conference, have expressed interest in investing in green energy, one of the fastest growing energy sub-sectors in Africa. State House Sunday announced Kenya was expecting a host of government and business leaders from across the world. By end of this week, Italian Prime Minister Matteo Renzi will make his maiden visit to the country. Although this visit is not related to the Obama tour, State House says it is vital as it underlines just how sharply Kenya has drawn the world's interest. In the same period, Kenya will welcome the proprietors of the Independent and the Evening Standard – two broadly respected United Kingdom dailies. "These visits show that not only is the wider world's interest undimmed, but also that we are attracting interest from new friends, and in new sectors," State House Spokesman Manoah Esipisu said.

Sir Richard Branson (founder, Virgin Group), Jacqueline Novogratz (founder, Acumen), Chris Anderson (curator, TED Conference) Dipender Saluja (Capricorn Investments), Steve Jurvetson (Draper Fisher Jurvetson), Jean Oelwang (CEO, Virgin Unite), Zia Khan of the Rockefeller Foundation and Strive Masiyiwa, founder and chair of Econet Wireless, are among those who have arrived.

Mr Manoah said the investors chose Kenya because the Government is ready to listen to their ideas and to help implement them. The visits come in the wake of last month's cordial and productive discussions between the President, and France Foreign Trade Minister Matthias Fekl. This was preceded by US Secretary of State John Kerry's visit and consultation with the President, as well as a number of visits by senior foreign government officials in 2014. "It's fair to say there is a pattern of deep and continuing engagement between Kenya and the outside world, which has gathered pace in recent months. This, indeed, is the keenest focus on Kenya that we have seen for quite some time. It puts paid to the talk in some quarters that Kenya's relationships with the outside world are in need of repair, and it silences those who doubted the Jubilee government's management of this country's foreign affairs," Manoah said. He announced that President Uhuru Kenyatta will travel to Addis Ababa this morning to attend the World Health Organisation (WHO) forum on Global Financing Facility for Every Woman and Every Child.

### Masiyiwa targets Kenya

July 13, 2015/newsday.co.zw

ZIMBABWEAN-born telecommunications guru, Strive Masiyiwa, has partnered some international business executives to set up a multi-million-dollar green energy project in Kenya.

BY Staff Reporter

Masiyiwa, founder and chairman of Econet Wireless is regarded as one of the richest business moguls in southern Africa with business interests in Zimbabwe, Botswana, South Africa and Swaziland.

On Saturday, Masiyiwa held talks with Kenyan President Uhuru Kenyatta for investment deals along with other leading business executives targeting East Africa's green environment sector.

According to Kenyatta's Facebook page, Masiyiwa joined other businesspeople that included Richard Branson — founder of Virgin Group, which has more than 400 companies, Jacqueline Novogratz (founder and CEO, Acumen—a non-governmental organisation aimed at empowering poor societies, Chris Anderson (curator, TED Conference) Dipender Saluja (Capricorn Investments), Steve Jurvetson (Draper Fisher Jurvetson), Jean Oelwang (CEO, Virgin Unite), Bob Collymore (Safaricom) and Zia Khan of the Rockefeller Foundation where they explored ways to utilise Kenya's green energy.

“They proposed renewables project would benefit the 50% Kenyans who are yet to access electricity,” read Kenyatta's post.

“Investors in this initiative have chosen Kenya because the government is ready to listen to ideas and help implement them. The project would cover Kenya and Rwanda, before being rolled out to other parts of the African continent. Both countries will serve as models.”

#### Kenya's year in focus as Italian PM lands in town

Date: July 13, 2015/mediamaxnetwork.co.ke

The government yesterday said the visits by top world leaders in the country is a clear indication of the strong relations Kenya is enjoying with its partners even as it made it clear that plans to host US President Barack Obama during the Global Entrepreneurship Summit (GES) are in top gear.

State House spokesperson Manoa Esipisu said the engagement between Kenya and other countries silences those who doubted the Jubilee's government management of the country's foreign affairs policy as well as puts to rest claim that Kenya's relationship with foreign nations is in need of repair.

“It puts pad to the talk in some quarters that Kenya's relationship with the outside world are in need of repair, and it silences those who doubted the Jubilee Government's management of this country's foreign affairs,” said Esipisu. He said this week Kenya will be welcoming Italian Prime Minister Matteo Renzi as well as two proprietors of United Kingdom dailies—Independent and Evening Standard.

“ It is fair to say there is a pattern of deep and continuing engagement between Kenya and the outside world which has gathered pace in the recent months,” he said. Esipisu said already, a number of Americans and other investors are already in the country and have expressed desire to invest in green energy.

The spokesman, who was giving a status update on the preparation ahead of Obama's Visit, said they are expecting a host of leaders in government and business from across the world to grace the summit later this month.

ANGOLA :

AU/AFRICA :

UN/AFRICA :

### **Koroma arrives home from UN to more bad news of mismanagement**

Sierra Leone Telegraph/12 July 2015

President Koroma's home coming from what government officials say was a successful Ebola conference in America, was this weekend marred by news of fresh outbreaks of Ebola in Kambia and Freetown.

The president was also greeted by a handful of the newly arrived buses, broken down in the capital Freetown – each costing \$120,000, supplied by the Chinese, at a total cost of \$12 million.

The one hundred buses were taking part in a street parade on Saturday, drawing thousands of people on to the streets, in contravention of the government's own Ebola restrictions, which had denied Christians and Muslims from celebrating their religious festivities.

But then, this is Koroma's Sierra Leone – supported by a Chinese government that prohibits Muslims from fasting during Ramadan and going to work.

International donors at last week's UN conference have pledged about \$3 billion to help Sierra Leone, Liberia and Guinea recover from the economic and social effects of the Ebola crisis, which has wiped off hundreds of millions of dollars from their export earnings.

It is not clear whether the \$3 billion pledged last week, is part of the \$10 billion pledged last year at the height of the crisis, by various countries.

Serious concerns were raised by the representatives of the donor countries who attended the UN Post Ebola conference, about the inability of both Guinea and Sierra Leone in bringing the Ebola crisis to an end.

As president Koroma arrived back in Freetown on Saturday, he was greeted with the news of 7 new confirmed cases of Ebola – in just one single day, 5 of which were found in the capital Freetown, and 2 reported in the northern district of Kambia, where the virus is said to have become firmly entrenched.

Two weeks ago, the government said that it was going to step up the restrictions, so as to get the number of new cases down to zero by the end of this month.

But health specialists say that Saturday's public celebration and parading of the government's newly arrived 100 buses in the capital Freetown, which brought thousands on to the streets, can only add to the risks of transmission of the virus.



It seems the government has failed to learn lessons from the last twelve months, nor is it prepared to stop playing politics with the lives of its citizens.

On Saturday there were reports from Freetown of some of the newly arrived buses broken down and abandoned on street corners, after developing engine failures. But the transport authority are frantically denying these embarrassing reports.

Speaking at the UN Post Ebola conference, president Koroma said: “That Ebola is still in a few areas means we are not Ebola free; it means the Mano River Union is not Ebola free; it means the world is not Ebola free.

“The battle now is to get the few cases down to zero, and getting our countries and the whole world to stay at zero. This is the most difficult battle of all.

“It involves building the resilience to stay at zero; it involves rebuilding our health sectors, caring for the survivors, and supporting the orphans and the widows brought unto that very vulnerable position by the virus.”

But these are not new words coming from the president who at the beginning of the crisis, solemnly promised to get rid of the virus in three months.

More than twelve months on, Ebola is still in Sierra Leone, as the government fails to uphold the Ebola restrictions. There are several reports of those in power and connected to the ruling party, continuing to break the burial restrictions and orders banning social events.

As was evident last Saturday, not even the minister of transport could resist not breaking the Ebola restrictions, after calling out thousands of ruling party supporters to the streets to celebrate the home-coming of the imported government buses.

Reminding himself and the international community of the need to remain steadfast in the fight against the virus that is yet to be won by his government, Koroma told the UN conference: “But we also know that humanity sometimes displays short attention spans and may want to move on to other issues, because the threat from Ebola seems over. No, no and no.

“We are here because we believe that with your dedication to making the world Ebola free, the funding and other resources to do this are within reach; and you will support our region and countries secure and deploy those resources in optimal, transparent and accountable ways.”

Many would argue that president Koroma is holding the international community hostage to fortune.

With the government woefully failing on issues of accountability, transparency and the fight against corruption, few donors will take lessons from the president, who has spent \$12 million on importing 100 buses, without following the country’s procurement regulations.

In an attempt to shore up confidence, whilst holding the international community equally responsible for eradicating the virus from West Africa, the president said: “We have learned many lessons from the outbreak. The lessons inform our national and regional recovery plans.

“We are committed to making the plans work, because making them work has the urgency of a life and death situation for over twenty million people in our countries; it is a matter of life and death

for the billions more that our globalized world has put within arm's reach of these twenty million people. This is a battle for all of us.”

In his statement to the conference, UN Chief Ban Ki-Moon said: “I think we can overcome this one, and I think we are now overcoming it. But we have to go until the end; until we see the last patient cured and there will be no further cases.”

Ban Ki-Moon also reminded the international donors of the challenges facing the three countries worst affected by the Ebola crisis. He said: “Our shared goal is to build back stronger, safer and more resilient capacities for prevention and response.

“That means access to health services everywhere – not just in capitals. It means health services equipped to not only respond to extraordinary outbreaks like Ebola, but to address malaria, cholera and other common ailments.

“Investing in Guinea, Sierra Leone and Liberia will yield global dividends in preventing local outbreaks from becoming national emergencies and regional pandemics.

“That is why today is about more than speeches and pledges – it is a chance to forge a partnership for a better future – a future that is full of opportunity and free of Ebola.”

“Your continued generosity will help the affected countries carry out their plans for recovery over the next two years,” the UN Chief told donors.

And as the conference drew to a close, international donors once again made generous pledges totalling over \$3 billion. But there are questions as to whether this is a new pledge, or part of last year's \$10 billion pledged by several countries.

In the meantime, president Koroma has to tell the people of Sierra Leone why his government continues to flout procurement regulations with such impunity; and why he hasn't taken legal action against all those responsible for misappropriating the \$14 million Ebola funds.

He also needs to account for the \$12 million spent on the importation of 100 Chinese buses without going out to public tender, at a time when the government was also saying that it was short of cash to pay doctors, nurses, and Ebola burial teams.

Last week, the transport minister was on radio announcing that the \$12 million used for purchasing the 100 buses is a loan, and not monies that came from the consolidated funds as promised by the finance minister in his budget statement to parliament last year.

But the government has all along been telling the people of Sierra Leone that the buses were bought with cash from the consolidated funds.

Can the Koroma government be trusted?

**UN, EU welcome peace plan signed by some Libyan factions**  
(AFP)/Date: 2015-07-12

The United Nations and European states on Sunday welcomed a UN peace deal initialled by some Libyan factions but not by the opposition as a step towards restoring stability there.

Plunged into chaos since the 2011 overthrow of dictator Moamer Kadhafi, Libya has two parliaments and governments vying for power, as a slew of armed groups battle for control of its oil wealth.

The elected parliament which initialled Saturday's agreement in Morocco, along with some members of political parties and civil society and local officials, is based in the eastern city of Tobruk.

The rival General National Congress (GNC) is based in Tripoli and was set up by a militia alliance, including Islamists, known as Fajr Libya, after it seized the capital last August.

The two sides have been locked in months of thorny negotiations brokered by UN envoy Bernardino Leon who has struggled to clinch a deal on a national unity government and hold fresh polls.

The GNC boycotted Saturday's ceremony in the Moroccan resort of Skhirat, saying Leon's draft deal was not "satisfactory" and calling for "modifications".

Nevertheless, UN Secretary General Ban Ki-moon was "encouraged" by the initialling of the accord, a UN statement said.

"He looks forward to the speedy conclusion of the full agreement and its implementation," a spokesman for the UN chief said.

"This act is a clear demonstration of political will and courage and brings the country one step closer to resolving the current institutional and security crisis."

An 'important step'

Ban urged "all Libyans" to move the transition process forward by forming a national unity government.

The UN Security Council has urged Libyan factions to sign on to Leon's proposals in a bid to stem rising violence and the spread of radical organisations such as the Islamic State group.

The jihadists have taken advantage of Libya's divisions to establish itself in the country, close to Europe's shores.

Italy and the European Union also welcomed the agreement as a step toward restoring peace.

Italian Prime Minister Matteo Renzi tweeted that it was an "important step in efforts to stabilise the region and re-establish peace in this great country".

Renzi said a solution to the conflict in Libya was "central" to battling "terrorism and (illegal) immigration".

Italy has repeatedly said an accord would help stem the flow of migration to Europe from Africa via Libya -- where people smugglers have stepped up their lucrative business.

The International Organization for Migration said Friday that some 150,000 migrants have crossed the Mediterranean to Europe so far this year, with nearly all landing in Italy.

EU foreign policy chief Federica Mogherini welcomed Saturday's deal as "an important step towards restoring peace and stability in Libya" and urged the GNC to initial it as well.

The Tobruk government, recognised internationally, has welcomed what it called a "huge breakthrough", urging all Libyan parties to overcome their differences and finalise the deal.

'Door remains open'

"What happened in Morocco is positive," said political activist Othman al-Sassi, stressing that Libya needs a national unity government.

"The Congress was not present but other parties to the Libyan conflict initialled the political agreement and that is a breakthrough," said Sassi, himself a former GNC member.

Leon told Saturday's ceremony in Morocco the door to further negotiations would remain open, expressing confidence that the GNC will return to the talks.

"This is one but a very important step on the road to peace... a peace, which all Libyans have been long seeking to achieve," he said.

"The door remains open for those who chose not to be here today... I am confident that in the weeks ahead we will try to clarify the issues that remain contentious," he added.

The deal initialled on Saturday was the fourth draft Leon had proposed.

It consists of six points aimed at "laying the foundation for a modern, democratic state based on the principle of inclusion, the rule of law, separation of powers and respect for human rights", Leon said.

Among the sticking points is a call for "respecting the judiciary", a possible reference to a Supreme Court decision invalidating the Tobruk parliament which was elected in June 2014.

US/AFRICA :

### **U.S. Wants Drones in North Africa to Combat Islamic State in Libya**

By Adam Entous and Gordon Lubold/wsj.com/July 12, 2015

Washington seeking permission to use a base in a neighboring country

WASHINGTON—The U.S. is in talks with North African countries about positioning drones at a base on their soil to ramp up surveillance of Islamic State in Libya in what would be the most significant expansion of the campaign against the extremist group in the region.

The establishment of such a base would help eliminate what counterterrorism officials described as one of the last and most pressing intelligence "blind spots" facing U.S. and Western spy agencies. Washington and its allies are seeking to contain the expansion of Islamic State beyond Iraq and Syria, where a U.S.-led military campaign against the group is already under way.

"Right now, what we are trying to do is address some real intelligence challenges," a senior

administration official said. A base in North Africa close to Islamic State strongholds in Libya would help the U.S. “fill gaps in our understanding of what’s going on” there, the official added.

The quest for a base represents an acknowledgment that the extremist group has managed to enlarge its area of influence even while under U.S. and allied bombardment in Iraq and Syria.

Islamic State has claimed a number of attacks in North Africa recently, including the killing of dozens of foreign tourists at a Tunisian beach resort last month. The attacker may have trained in Libya with a militant group sympathetic to Islamic State.

Drone flights from the base would provide the U.S. military and spy agencies with real time intelligence on Islamic State activities in Libya.

U.S. officials acknowledged having too little intelligence on those activities today because existing bases are too far away to allow for more persistent surveillance. The long distances that drones now have to travel limit how much time they can spend observing militants in Libya before flying back to refuel and undergo maintenance.

So far, none of the North African countries that could offer access to a base have agreed to do so, according to senior U.S. officials. Governments in the region see Islamic State as a threat but are worried that the group will target them more squarely if they agree to host the American military.

Officials said any proposed location would almost certainly be a pre-existing base under the sovereign control of the host government, which would in turn give the U.S. permission to position drones there along with a limited number of U.S. military personnel.

Administration officials declined to name the countries that could host U.S. drones in the region, citing political sensitivities in the region and concerns the information could prompt reprisals. Tunisia and Egypt both share borders with Libya and have long-standing intelligence and military ties with the U.S. Algeria has kept the U.S. at arms length, citing sovereignty issues. Morocco has close ties to Washington but its distance from Libya could make bases there of limited use.

The White House on Friday named Tunisia a major non-NATO ally, a status that opens the door to limited additional military cooperation with the U.S. But administration officials said the designation wasn’t connected to U.S. efforts to secure a drone base in North Africa.

The Obama administration also recently lifted restrictions on the transfer of military equipment to Egypt, including F-16s. As in Tunisia’s case, officials said the decision wasn’t related to U.S. efforts to secure access to a regional base for drone flights into Libya.

Libya has been plunged into chaos since the U.S. and its European allies intervened militarily in 2011 to help oust longtime dictator Moammar Gadhafi. Warring militias and rival governments have splintered the country, creating fertile ground for extremists to flourish. In 2012, Islamist militants attacked the U.S. consulate in the eastern Libyan city of Benghazi, killing U.S. Ambassador Christopher Stevens and three other Americans.

While surveillance flights would be the primary mission for the new effort at first, drones launched from the proposed base also could be used in future airstrikes against Islamic State targets in Libya, and the base could serve as a launchpad for missions by Special Operations Forces against militants there, U.S. military officials said.

So far, the U.S. hasn’t taken any military action against Islamic State militants in Libya. A recent

U.S. strike there targeted a militant leader long aligned with al Qaeda.

Administration officials said they would be prepared to launch strikes against Islamic State militants in Libya if U.S. spy agencies learned that the group was plotting attacks against U.S. interests. But the officials said the White House didn't envisage a concerted, Iraq-style bombing campaign for Libya, saying any strikes likely would take place sporadically to head off any suspected attacks.

Administration officials said the White House's primary focus for now was trying to help create a unified Libyan government that Washington then would work with to combat the Islamic State threat within its borders.

Islamic State, also known as ISIS and ISIL, is based in Iraq and Syria, but U.S. intelligence agencies say the militant group is growing faster in Libya than anywhere else in the region.

Islamic State, al Qaeda affiliates and other Islamist groups have been using strongholds in Libya as safe havens, enabling militants to train both North African and foreign fighters there and to plot attacks that pose a particular threat to European states just across the Mediterranean.

In contrast to extremist groups in other countries in the region, which have pledged allegiance to Islamic State, some militants in Libya have long-standing links to the group's predecessor organization, al Qaeda in Iraq. But the Libyan branch still operates largely autonomously from the Islamic State core in Syria and Iraq, U.S. officials said.

The U.S. uses Naval Air Station Sigonella, in Sicily, Italy, for some drone flights over Libya. But surveillance operations from the base are routinely canceled because of frequent cloud cover over the Mediterranean and other weather-related hurdles.

The U.S. military also has access to bases in Niger, both in Agadez in the central region of the country, and outside of the capital of Niamey, which it mainly uses to track al Qaeda-linked militants in Mali. But officials say those bases are too far from Libya to be useful for operations there.

Ensuring that American intelligence assets have ready access to the skies over Libya is all the more critical now, given the security challenges the country poses, said retired Gen. Carter Ham, the commander of U.S. Africa Command until 2013.

"The presence of ISIL and other extremist groups in Libya, particularly in eastern Libya, is of significant concern to the U.S.," said Gen. Ham, now a senior adviser for the consulting firm SBD Advisors in Washington. "Not only has ISIL already conducted deadly attacks in Libya and Tunisia, eastern Libya remains a significant transit point for foreign fighters seeking to join ISIL in Syria and Iraq."

Officials said the effort was being closely coordinated with key allies in Europe, including Britain and France. But the proposed base would be used principally by unarmed U.S. drones.

Officials from those countries said they are concerned about Libya and that they are working with the U.S. to address the Islamic State threat.

Asked about the talks, White House National Security Council spokesman Alistair Baskey said: "We are cooperating closely with nations in North Africa, the Sahel (a sub-Saharan region), and Europe, which share our concerns about threats emanating from Libya. This includes gaining

greater intelligence about the groups operating there.”

A senior administration official said the discussions were ongoing and exploratory until an agreement is reached with a state in the region to host U.S. drones. It could then take months to get U.S. surveillance operations up and running at the base.

African countries have long been reluctant to host American military personnel on their soil, complicating efforts by the U.S. military’s Africa Command, known as Africom, to establish permanent footholds on the continent to collect intelligence and project U.S. power in the vast area.

Africom itself was headquartered in Germany in part because countries in the region were so sensitive.

U.S. officials said any North African base used by the Americans would employ a limited number of American military or civilian personnel on a rotating basis, minimizing the need for a large American presence.

Demand within the Pentagon for surveillance flights has been growing across the globe, and Africom hasn’t been the priority, according to current and former military officials.

More drones are assigned to the U.S. Central Command’s areas of responsibility, which stretches from Syria to Pakistan and covers war zones in Iraq and Afghanistan.

But officials said Africom’s share of the Pentagon’s global fleet of drones could increase in the coming years, in recognition of the region’s growing importance to ISIS and other Islamist groups. In recent years, Africom had typically gotten less than 10% of the total number of drone sorties the U.S. military flies around the world, officials said.

“To date, U.S. national priorities have resulted in U.S. Africom receiving only a small percentage of the [intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance] assets required,” said Gen. Ham. “But, as the threat of [Islamic State] in Libya and elsewhere in Africa increases, a good case can be made that U.S. Africom’s allocation of critical ISR capabilities ought similarly be increased.”

CANADA/AFRICA :

AUSTRALIA/AFRICA :

EU/AFRICA :

CHINA/AFRICA :

INDIA/AFRICA :

**Gigaba asks India to allow South Africans e-visa access**

2015-07-13/traveller24.news24.com

Cape Town - South Africa is considering a visa valid for 3 years for Indians to bolster traffic to the country, the department of Home Affairs has confirmed.

Indians currently get tourist visas with a validity of 30 days.

Department of Home Affairs Minister Malugi Gigaba has met his Indian counterpart Rajnath Singh to discuss the initiative and is seeking to have South Africa be included in India's list of countries that can avail of e-visa facilities.

eTurbo News reports India opened up e-visa facilitation to 43 countries in 2014. The report states in May this year, 15 659 foreign tourists arrived on the e-visa to India compared to 1 833 last year

Currently South Africa allows a business visa with 10-year validity for Indians, with Gigaba proposing this be reciprocated for South African corporates coming to India.

The roll-out plan of these visa changes are expected to take place over the next year.

The report states India is the 15th biggest contributor of tourism inflows to South Africa, one position ahead of China. According to the South Africa tourism board, Indian tourist arrivals to the country doubled between 2009 and 2013 to 133 000. However, Indian tourists in February to South Africa totalled 4 989, down 26% on year.

South Africa's new visa rules, including the need for an unabridged birth certificate for all minors travelling to South Africa are believed to be part of the reason for the slow down.

Demand from China has also dropped by almost a quarter in 2014 as less than 83 000 Chinese tourists visited South Africa in 2014 when compared to 109 000 visitors in 2013. China has become the largest outbound tourism market in the world with 109 million outbound tourists in 2014.

Gigaba admitted the country expects new visa rules for children to dent tourism in the first year of application but does not foresee any long-term damage to this vital sector.

"We don't think we should be so ambitious as not to expect a drop," Gigaba has said. He did not provide numbers, but said the initial dip was not significant.

"Every country balances its voracious desire for tourists with the desire to secure the country. That is what we are trying to do - to balance the economic and the security imperative," said Gigaba.

The minister said Air China was considering suspending flights to South Africa because of the visa requirements.

Pretoria was working with the Chinese to resolve the issue but Gigaba said his department "is not going to back down".



Kenya is making it easier for UK citizens to visit through e-visas, why not SA?

The Democratic Alliance has since launched a petition, calling for the support of e-visas to be introduced to South Africa.

On the Change.org petition, the party states, "There has been a 7% decrease in tourist arrivals since the introduction of strict new visa regulations in South Africa, which will inevitably have enormous consequences for the tourism sector in South Africa.

"There is a real risk that we could lose jobs if these draconian travel regulations are not changed. The financial cost of introducing biometric data capturing on arrival will be much lower than the economic cost of scaring off tourists, trade and investment," said DA minister James Vos.

#### Indian Air chief on South Africa visit

Jayanta Gupta, TNN/timesofindia.indiatimes.com/Jul 13, 2015

KOLKATA: Air Chief Marshal Arup Raha, Chairman Chiefs of Staff Committee and Chief of the Air Staff has left for South Africa on a four-day visit. The Indian Air Force (IAF) chief is visiting South Africa on the invitation of Lt Gen F Z Msimang, chief of South African Air Force.

"During his visit, Air Chief Marshal Raha will hold talks with South Africa's top military leadership and discuss a wide range of bilateral issues to enhance defence co-operation between the two nations. At Johannesburg, the IAF chief will meet Ruchi Ghanashyam, high commissioner of India to South Africa. Air Chief Marshal Raha is also scheduled to visit Armscor, the Armament Corporation of South Africa. He will also be taken around airbases such as the 'Fighter Centre of Excellence' at Makhado and the South African Flight Test facilities at Overberg," a senior IAF official said.

In recent years, there have been close and frequent contacts at political and military levels between the two countries which are members of the tri-lateral initiative IBSA (India, Brazil and South Africa). Air Chief Marshal Raha's visit to South Africa will further boost bilateral relations between the two air forces and provide impetus to the 'Make in India' initiative, the officer added.

BRAZIL/AFRICA :

#### 'Brics' summit underlines China's dominance

Mon, Jul 13, 2015/irishtimes.com

However, five-country group insists it is not trying to challenge IMF or World Bank

As Europe focused on Greece's travails, leaders of the so-called Brics nations launched ambitious financial projects that could, in time, come to offer alternatives to the US-dominated International Monetary Fund and World Bank.

Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa agreed last week to contribute \$10 billion (€9 billion) each to the New Development Bank, which should start lending in 2016 and could double its starting capital over the next few years.

Russian president Vladimir Putin, hosting the summit in the city of Ufa some 1,200km east of Moscow, said the bank would “help finance joint, large-scale projects in transport and energy infrastructure, industrial development”.

#### Currency reserves

The Brics – which account for about 40 per cent of the world’s population and one-fifth of its economic output – are also creating a \$100 billion (€90 billion) pool of currency reserves to stabilise members’ finances in the event of severe liquidity shortage or other crisis.

Mr Putin’s top foreign policy adviser, Yuri Ushakov, said the Brics’ plans “do not constitute an attempt to oppose” the IMF or World Bank.

“These institutions are, rather, new instruments for addressing our shared objectives...and for promoting mutual trade and investment. We see the creation of these new institutions as our contribution to making the international financial architecture more stable and resistant,” he told Russian state media outlet RT.

For Mr Putin, however, the Brics gathering was a high-profile opportunity to show the world that Russia’s exclusion from the G8 over its interference in Ukraine, and the imposition of EU and US sanctions, had not made it an international pariah.

The development of alternatives to the IMF and World Bank also chimes with Mr Putin’s calls, repeated over many years, for the creation of a “multi-polar” world to counter perceived US financial, diplomatic and military hegemony.

In reducing its dependence on western-led organisations, however, Russia and its fellow Brics could find themselves facilitating China’s rise to global dominance.

#### Emerging markets

India, Russia and Brazil will each contribute \$18 billion (€16 billion) to the Brics’ reserve fund, South Africa \$5 billion (€4.5 billion) and China \$41 billion (€37 billion) – underlining Beijing’s role as clear first among equals in this club of the world’s largest emerging markets.

The significance of the Brics group rests largely on China’s huge financial clout and rapidly expanding global reach. The other members of the club have little choice but to make the best of Beijing’s relentless push into their regional “spheres of influence”.

China loaned \$22 billion (€19.7 billion) to Latin America in 2014, more than the World Bank and the Inter-American Development Bank combined; and amid a huge surge in Chinese investment in Africa, trade between the world’s most populous state and its poorest continent surpassed \$200 billion (€180 billion) last year.

#### Infrastructure

Beijing has also launched two landmark “Silk Route” projects, backed with the promise of funding for major infrastructure development: an overland route from China across Central Asia and Russia to Europe; and a largely maritime route from China through India to the Middle East and east Africa.

“While Russia has been pushing for the creation of the Brics as a counterbalance to the G7, the real danger is that they are encouraging the creation of a vessel to extend China’s global power, just as the G7 facilitates this for the US,” Chris Weafer, senior partner at the Macro Advisory consultancy,

told the Moscow Times. Moscow is particularly wary of Chinese influence in ex-Soviet central Asia, but seems to have accepted its inevitability, and perhaps considers it preferable to the growing US presence of a decade ago. China's appetite for raw materials is also vital for Russia as the EU seeks to reduce reliance on the country's oil and gas.

#### Spotlight

Mr Putin also used the spotlight afforded by the Brics summit to show Ukraine's Nato allies that an alternative security bloc was gaining strength.

The day after the Brics gathering ended in Ufa, the city hosted leaders from member states of the Shanghai Co-operation Organisation, a loose security group led by China and Russia that includes four ex-Soviet states in central Asia. India and Pakistan, both nuclear powers, announced that they would join the bloc.

"President Putin's efforts will enhance the political and economic scope of the Eurasian belt," said Pakistani prime minister Nawaz Sharif.

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