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BURUNDI :

RWANDA :

Rapprochement militaire RDC, Rwanda, Burundi et Ouganda : Une alliance qui effraie
17.10.2019/mediacongo.net

Pour venir à bout de différents groupes armés qui écumant sa partie Est, la RDC a décidé de se rapprocher des armées de l'Ouganda, du Rwanda et du Burundi. Fini le discours de l'invasion. C'est le plus officiellement du monde que les armées de ces trois pays vont traverser prochainement les frontières de la RDC pour prêter main forte aux Forces armées de la RDC. Kinshasa ferait-il fausse route ? Compte tenu du passé mouvementé de ce coin de la République, l'initiative fait peur. Le scepticisme gagne du terrain.

Au commencement de la déstabilisation de la partie Est était l'afflux massif des réfugiés rwandais fuyant le génocide et tout ce qui s'en est suivi en 1994.

Cette année-là, des civils et militaires, évoluant autrefois sous l'armée de feu le président Habyarimana, ont traversé la frontière de la RDC. Certains réfugiés rwandais, hantés par le spectre de la vengeance envers le nouveau pouvoir en place à Kigali se sont regroupés en forces de défense,

sous la dénomination de FDLR (Forces démocratiques pour la libération du Rwanda).

Vu de Kigali, la réorganisation des réfugiés rwandais en bandes armées de l'autre côté de la frontière était vue d'un mauvais œil. En 1996, une coalition militaire présentée sous forme de l'Alliance des forces démocratiques de libération (AFDL) est créée avec la bénédiction du Rwanda, de l'Ouganda et du Burundi. Moins d'une année plus tard, soit en mai 1997, les troupes de l'AFDL réalisent leur entrée triomphale à Kinshasa. Fin de règne de Mobutu.

Depuis cette traversée massive des réfugiés, la partie Est de la RDC est plongée dans une spirale infernale où l'insécurité rime avec une paix fragile. Le grand soutien dont les troupes de l'AFDL ont bénéficié de la coalition formée entre le Rwanda, l'Ouganda et le Burundi n'a pas non plus résolu le problème. 25 ans après l'arrivée de premiers réfugiés rwandais, la paix et la stabilité sont désormais une denrée rare dans l'Est de la RDC. Ventre mou du pays, cette partie de la RDC a vu naître plusieurs groupes et milices armées, alimentant davantage le spectre de l'insécurité. Depuis 1996, plusieurs rébellions se sont multipliées dans l'Est, sans compter des groupes, dits d'autodéfense, qui forment un vrai cocktail Molotov. Il ne faut pas non plus oublier les rebelles rwandais des FDLR qui restent toujours actifs dans les coins isolés de l'Est.

La recette qui dérange

Au pouvoir depuis janvier 2019, le chef de l'Etat Félix Tshisekedi veut remettre de l'ordre à l'Est, cette partie névralgique de la RDC. Il est arrivé à la conclusion selon laquelle l'instabilité et la paix fragile dans l'Est de la RDC est un frein à tout effort de développement. De ce point de vue, le président de la RDC part du postulat selon lequel la paix dans la partie Est de la RDC passe avant la mise en place d'une stratégie nationale de développement.

Dans sa détermination à ramener la paix dans l'Est, le président de la République entend impliquer toute la sous-région, notamment les pays tels que le Rwanda, l'Ouganda et le Burundi, victimes collatérales de la paix fragile dans l'Est de la RDC. Mais, dans l'opinion, la stratégie choisie par le chef de l'Etat passe difficilement, compte tenu du passé troublé qu'a connu la RDC par le fait de la forte mainmise du Rwanda, de l'Ouganda et du Burundi dans la situation d'instabilité permanente de l'Est. Qu'est-ce qui peut bien motiver le chef de l'Etat à se retourner vers le Rwanda, l'Ouganda et le Burundi pour pacifier l'Est de la RDC ?

En tout cas, 25 ans depuis la vague des réfugiés venus essentiellement du Rwanda, la RDC n'a jamais oublié tout le mal qu'il continue encore à subir du fait juste de son hospitalité. Le peuple congolais n'est pas non plus prêt à oublier les millions de ses compatriotes tués de manière souvent atroce depuis le déclenchement de la guerre, dite de libération menée par les troupes de l'AFDL, avec le soutien logistique du Rwanda, de l'Ouganda et du Burundi.

Décryptage

Curieusement, c'est auprès de ces mêmes bourreaux que s'est tourné le chef de l'Etat pour panser les plaies qu'ils ont créées il y a plus de 20 ans. A l'instar de Jean-Claude Katende, l'opinion se pose bien des questions. « Par cette coalition, le gouvernement congolais voudrait-il nous dire que les FARDC et la Monusco sont incapables de mettre fin aux activités des groupes armés actifs à l'Est du Congo ? Si oui, pourquoi gardons-nous encore la Monusco ? Est-ce que le gouvernement congolais a tenu compte du passé de ces troupes rwandaises, burundaises et ougandaises en République démocratique du Congo ? Pourquoi le gouvernement congolais n'a-t-il pas sollicité les troupes angolaises ou tchadiennes ? Est-ce que le gouvernement congolais a tenu compte de l'opinion des Congolais, particulièrement ceux de l'Est, sur le retour des troupes des pays voisins qui ont causé des morts et pillé les ressources naturelles de la RD Congo pendant plusieurs années ?

Est-ce que l'Assemblée nationale et le Sénat sont-ils informés de l'accord sur la mise en place de la coalition avec les Etats voisins dont les armées viendront aider le Congo à mettre fin aux groupes armés ? » Difficile à répondre.

Tout compte fait, cette décision de faire appel aux troupes rwandaises, ougandaises et burundaises pour un retour rapide de la paix dans l'Est, ferait douter, mieux, ferait peur. Le président de l'Asadho justifie cette peur de la plus belle des manières. Il écrit à ce propos que « le retour des troupes, en République démocratique du Congo, des pays qui ont toujours l'ambition d'avoir la mainmise sur les ressources naturelles de notre pays n'est pas une bonne chose ». Kinshasa ferait mieux de reconsidérer sa position. Avant qu'il ne soit trop tard.
Le Potentiel / MCP, via mediacongo.net

RDC CONGO :

UGANDA :

Uganda Media Houses Say Regulator Stifling Space

October 17, 2019/voanews.com

KAMPALA, UGANDA - Media houses in Uganda say they are being forced to exclude some sections of the public from making appearances. The claims follow a report by the state regulator, the Uganda Communications Commission, saying some radio and television stations violated the minimum broadcasting standards.

Last week, 13 media houses in Uganda found themselves being investigated by the Uganda Communications Commission.

The UCC said the investigation was sparked by complaints from some security agencies that certain radio and television stations were broadcasting content that violated government standards.

The stations had given live coverage of events surrounding the arrest of musician-turned-politician Bobi Wine, in April and May of this year.

UCC spokesman Ibrahim Bbosa says the media houses need to show why they should not have their licenses revoked.

"There was a fear that some youth were ganging up to attack some key installations of government. There was an allegation that the content was sensationalized. It was extremist in nature. Interviews carried were not factual," he said. "There were interviews that were not guided, you know, somebody is calling for blood. They felt that there was a lack of professionalism."

The commission said in a new 52-page report that some reporters from Uganda's top television stations — Nation Television Uganda and Nile Broadcasting Services — were taking sides in political debates. It said live coverage of events must be delayed.

Eron Kizza, a lawyer who sought an injunction against the state regulator for demanding that journalists be suspended, says the UCC is seeking to micromanage media houses in Uganda.

"It's an intrusion into the editorial independence of the media houses. It has a chilling and stifling effect on media freedom," said Kizza. "The media houses know when to delay and if necessary when to delay any live airing and it should be left to them to decide when. You see that the regulator is using its regulatory weight to oppress the media houses who want to include opposition voices in their menu."

Radio stations were not left out. The UCC is demanding that Pearl FM radio suspend a political talk show, The Inside Story, saying the show could alarm the public and become a platform for fueling political incitement and violence.

Station general manager Nalunkuma Hawa maintains that the show does not violate the minimum broadcasting standards.

"I can't agree with that, stopping our program, because we do have a lot into that program, Inside story. It's a factual program; it contains news, current affairs, documentaries. We have those advertisers we've got; they need that program to be on air. So UCC coming up and stopping this program, it will be a problem to us," said Hawa.

In a letter Monday, Human Rights Watch warned that the government was targeting political opposition activities and violating basic freedoms of expression and assembly.

SOUTH AFRICA :

South Africa Debates Bill for National Health Care

October 18, 2019/learningenglish.voanews.com

This month, members of South Africa's parliament will debate something on many people's minds: health care. They will decide the future of the National Health Insurance bill.

The bill's sponsors say their aim is to provide health care to all South Africans. Under the proposal, most health care would be free. It would pay for surgery, doctor visits, medicines and hospital stays.

Right now, only 15 percent of South Africans have health care insurance from private companies. The other 85 percent receive care from a struggling public health care system. That information comes from the government of South Africa.

Supporters of the bill say it will bring justice and equality to the health care system in this deeply unequal country. But critics say the proposal is simply too costly and its goals unclear. They also note the government's inability to stop corruption and mismanagement in other projects.

Bandile Masuku is a doctor. He recently was appointed to head the health care office in Gauteng, the South African province with the largest population.

Masuku says the National Health Insurance (NHI) bill is a moral necessity.

He said, "In a country like South Africa, with a culture of democracy, that has to look after the people, ... the universal coverage is one way that we're going to do it."

Johann Serfontein works in the health division of the Free Market Foundation. He describes the proposal as unrealistic. He said, "We've been at it for 10 years. We don't have enough clarity on how

we want to do things now."

But for patients like 25-year-old Kanyisa Ntombini, anything is better than the current system. She has had many surgeries in public hospitals for her conditions, which include blindness. She says the public hospitals need all the help they can get.

She said, "As a country, we will never be able to improve because we have this huge number of people who are unproductive and will forever be sick." She added that South Africa needs the NHI so rural and township hospitals can get more financing to improve people's health.

Ntombini said she is very willing to put money into the system to "ensure that everybody has quality health care."

She said, "I think quality health care is like food, like shelter. It's something that everybody deserves to have."

If parliament passes the bill, the new health care system would be in place by 2026.

I'm Jonathan Evans.

TANZANIA :

Tanzania continues to dodge WHO recommendations on Ebola
18 October 2019/devex.com

NAIROBI — The Tanzanian government has yet to conduct a second test of its suspected Ebola cases, as recommended by the World Health Organization, Dr. Michel Yao, incident manager for WHO in DRC, confirmed during a press conference in Nairobi on Friday.

"Our advice is to double-check in a second laboratory, so it's unfortunate that this could not happen."

— Dr. Michel Yao, incident manager DRC, WHO

On Sept. 21, WHO issued a statement accusing the Tanzanian government of withholding clinical information on suspected Ebola cases — an unusual move for WHO, according to health experts. The statement outlined unofficial reports of suspected Ebola cases in the country and the government's repeated refusal to provide information that WHO requested.

The government told WHO that all of the tests of suspected Ebola cases it conducted were negative, but failed to provide WHO with detailed information from these negative test results, despite several requests. WHO recommends that even if a country conducts its own tests, and the test results are negative, if a country has never had a case of Ebola it should cross-test these suspected cases by a "reference" laboratory. WHO recommends this for the first 50 suspected negative samples of Ebola.

But to date, Tanzania has refused to confirm these suspected Ebola cases are negative in a second laboratory, Yao said.

"Our advice is to double-check in a second laboratory, so it's unfortunate that this could not happen," Yao said, helping to "close the debate."

Following the reports of suspected Ebola cases in the country, WHO deployed a team in Tanzania that provided training in areas such as case management and community based- surveillance, he said. The U.S. government also updated it's travel advisory to include "probable" cases of Ebola.

Despite the Tanzanian government declining to confirm the tests, it has taken other steps in efforts to prepare for Ebola cases in the country, he said. For example, it has moved forward in terms of filing paperwork that would allow the experimental Ebola vaccine and therapeutics to be imported.

"I would say that most of the preparedness activities that we are doing are now done jointly with the [government], with a clear buy-in, and even partners are mobilizing in the country to provide further support," he said.

There have also not been any further suspected cases of Ebola reported in the country, he said.

"It's difficult to hide Ebola cases," he said.

KENYA :

Kenya, la nouvelle route de la drogue
18/10/2019/france24.com

Mombasa, le plus grand port d'Afrique de l'Est, est devenu la capitale d'une nouvelle route de la drogue. Héroïne venue d'Asie et cocaïne venue d'Amérique latine transitent désormais par le Kenya, avant de partir vers l'Europe. Reportage des équipes de France 24.

C'est une scène de plus en plus fréquente en Afrique de l'Est, en particulier au Kenya : à quelques kilomètres des côtes, un bateau venu du Pakistan est rejoint par un bateau de pêche. À bord, une cargaison d'héroïne raffinée au Pakistan après que le pavot a été récolté en Afghanistan va transiter d'une embarcation à l'autre.

Depuis quelques années, une nouvelle route de la drogue a été ouverte par les trafiquants internationaux. Et pour cause : la côte kenyane est longue et très peu surveillée. Il est donc facile d'introduire de la drogue dans le pays.

Une fois livrée au Kenya, l'héroïne, et parfois aussi la cocaïne, est apportée à Mombasa, deuxième ville du pays et plus grand port de la région. Sur place, les possibilités sont multiples : la marchandise peut prendre directement un avion pour l'Europe ou Dubaï, être reroutée vers Nairobi, la capitale, pour être expédiée de façon plus discrète à l'étranger, ou encore partir vers l'Afrique du Sud ou l'Afrique de l'Ouest afin d'emprunter une route encore plus opaque.

Un problème de santé publique

Les reporters de France 24 ont rencontré des mules, comme David, qui ingèrent régulièrement de la drogue pour la transporter en toute discrétion et éviter les contrôles de sécurité. Un travail dangereux mais extrêmement lucratif : David peut gagner jusqu'à 10 000 euros à chaque fois qu'il convoie de la drogue à l'étranger.

Ce marché, estimé au Kenya à plus de 100 millions d'euros par an, est en constante augmentation. Avec des conséquences aussi sur la santé des Kényans : autrefois absentes du pays, les drogues

dures – héroïne en tête – sont désormais faciles à trouver, à des coûts minimes : moins de deux euros la dose.

À Mombasa, capitale du trafic, 3,5 % de la population aurait déjà essayé l'héroïne, et on y estime entre 2 500 et 5 000 le nombre des usagers fréquents. Ce qui devient un problème de santé publique grandissant, car outre les effets ravageurs des drogues, nombre d'usagers contractent le sida ou l'hépatite C par manque de précautions.

ANGOLA :

Angola : la BAD apporte 1 million \$ au programme de nutrition infantile dans la province de Bié
18 octobre 2019/Agence Ecofin

(Agence Ecofin) - En Angola, le programme de sécurité alimentaire et nutritionnelle infantile mis en œuvre dans la province de Bié vient de recevoir un appui financier de 1 million \$ de la part de la Banque africaine de développement (BAD).

D'après l'institution financière panafricaine, cette enveloppe provient d'un Fonds d'aide spécial devant être mis à la disposition du gouvernement angolais.

Elle permettra notamment de fournir une alimentation d'appoint aux ménages vulnérables avec des enfants âgés entre 6 mois et 4 ans, répartis dans les municipalités de Cuito et Nharea.

Le soutien de la BAD intervient alors que la province de Bié a été durement frappée par une sécheresse ayant causé une sévère malnutrition.

La zone affiche désormais le taux de prévalence de malnutrition chronique le plus élevé du pays avec 51 % contre une moyenne nationale atteignant 38 %.

Pour rappel, l'Angola fait partie des pays de la Communauté de développement d'Afrique australe (SADC) affichant des besoins d'importation en céréales les plus élevés en 2019/2020.

AU/AFRICA :

UN/AFRICA :

US/AFRICA :

Africa Lion / Maroc – L'US Army Africa envisage de grandes manœuvres militaires en Afrique en 2020

18 octobre 2019/article19.ma

Un grand événement en perspective. À partir du Maroc, l'armée américaine envisage de faire des manœuvres « African Lion », prévues fin mars et début avril 2020, le plus important exercice

militaire sur le continent africain.

Selon le site américain « Army Times », cette année ce ne seront plus les forces de la marine américaine, en Europe et en Afrique, qui seront en charge de ces manœuvres, mais l'armée américaine pour l'Afrique (US Army Africa).

« L'année dernière était une année de transition. C'est la première année que nous sommes véritablement à la tête » de ces manœuvres, a déclaré le général major Roger Cloutier, commandant de l'armée américaine pour l'Afrique, dans un entretien avec Army Times.

« Pour être tout à fait honnête, la portée des exercices a été réduite au fil des années », a ajouté Cloutier, soulignant qu'il envisage non seulement de développer la capacité des partenaires, mais aussi de mieux préparer les forces américaines qui y participent.

Selon Army Times, à la fin de l'African Lion 2019, Cloutier et son staff ont rencontré des acteurs clés et ont commencé à développer un concept d'opérations différent qui placera l'exercice dans une perspective beaucoup plus multidimensionnelle.

« Par exemple, au cours de l'exercice à venir, nous allons faire partie d'une alliance de forces opérationnelle du bataillon de la 173ème brigade aéroportée en Italie », a expliqué Cloutier, relevant que « cela leur permettra d'exercer leurs capacités de déploiement rapide et d'assaut en parachute ».

African Lion est envisagé comme étant un exercice complexe portant sur de nombreux domaines qui implique les alliés de l'OTAN et se déroule dans quatre pays: la Tunisie, le Maroc, le Sénégal et l'Espagne.

En plus des opérations aéroportées, le nouvel exercice African Lion comporte notamment une planification logistique et stratégique, des tirs d'armes navales, et implique des forces d'opérations spéciales et même des bombardiers, selon le commandant de Army Africa.

« Ce sera un exercice complexe qui permettra aux militaires de se préparer au mieux », a affirmé Cloutier avant d'ajouter : « nous allons monter une logistique très complexe et opérer dans trois pays différents ».

Au cours de l'année écoulée, Army Africa a encore « fait le gros du travail, mais nous nous sommes laissés embarquer dans une sorte de programme et de méthodologie du Corps des marines », a-t-il précisé.

Les exercices de cette année verront la participation de forces « deux à trois fois plus importante qu'en 2019. Mon intention est que ce soit le plus grand exercice qui se déroule sur le continent africain ».

Des troupes sénégalaises, marocaines, tunisiennes, espagnoles, françaises, canadiennes, britanniques et américaines ont participé à African Lion 2019, en tout 2.500 militaires.

Article19.ma

CANADA/AFRICA :

AUSTRALIA/AFRICA :

EU/AFRICA :

Russian Theater: How to Respond to Moscow's Return to the African Stage

Friday, October 18, 2019/lawfareblog.com

Russia is preparing to launch its first Russia-Africa Summit in Sochi on Oct. 24. President Vladimir Putin and the summit co-host, Egyptian leader and African Union Chairman Abdel Fattah el-Sisi, invited all of the African heads of state along with the leaders of major subregional associations and organizations. Russia almost certainly will advertise the summit as an emblem of its triumphant return to center stage in Africa. Indeed, Russian Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs and Special Envoy for Middle Eastern and African Countries Mikhail Bogdanov already has proclaimed that the "Russia-Africa Summit is of crowning significance following a series of events dedicated to developing our relations." Despite the federation's grandiose rhetoric about renewed influence in Africa, the United States should fight the temptation to elevate Russia's standing in Africa. It should focus on countering Moscow's expansion and closing down its malign activities in Africa, instead of wasting time and energy framing Russia's return as part of "great power competition."

The Russia-Africa Summit is the latest in a series of maneuvers by the Kremlin to present an image of a resurgent Russia in Africa. Senior Russian leaders, including President Putin, Prime Minister Dmitry Medvedev, and Duma Chairman Vyacheslav Volodin, have recently increased their security, commercial and diplomatic engagement with African counterparts to advance the Kremlin's agenda. While Moscow is focused primarily on other regions, it regards Africa as an attractive venue to evade international sanctions imposed by Western nations and deepen ties with old and new partners while scoring points at the expense of the United States.

Part of Russia's engagement in Africa is military in nature. The Russian military and Russian private military contractors linked to the Kremlin have expanded their global military footprint in Africa, seeking basing rights in a half dozen countries and inking military cooperation agreements with 27 African governments, according to an analysis by the Institute for the Study of War. U.S. officials estimate that around 400 Russian mercenaries operate in the Central African Republic (CAR) and Moscow recently delivered military equipment to support counterinsurgency operations in northern Mozambique. Russia is the largest arms exporter to Africa, accounting for 39 percent of arms transfers to the region in 2017.

Russia also has deepened its economic ties with the continent, especially since Western sanctions imposed on Russia in 2014 spurred a scramble for permissive markets and partners. In recent years, Moscow almost tripled its trade with Africa, from \$6.6 billion in 2010 to \$18.9 billion in 2018. In addition to selling weapons and military equipment, Russia is investing in oil, gas and nuclear power across the continent. Moscow is also interested in African extractives, including diamonds in CAR, bauxite in Guinea and platinum in Zimbabwe.

Finally, Russia has courted new friends and allies from Africa to insulate itself from Western condemnation of its actions and to restore its image as a global power. In 2014, Russia persuaded more than half of African governments to oppose or abstain on a U.N. General Assembly resolution condemning the annexation of Crimea. It has signed deals with regional bodies, such as the Southern African Development Community, and Volodin recently courted African parliamentarians because "African countries play a prominent role in international affairs." President Putin will

undoubtedly seek to reinforce this message at the Russia-Africa Summit.

Most African leaders have welcomed Russia's renewed interest in part because it aligns with several African political, security and economic objectives. Russia's overtures in Africa also enable African governments to play the United States and Russia off each other: If Washington presses too hard on democracy and human rights, African nations can threaten to move closer to Moscow (and Beijing). In some cases, African leaders have used Russian backing to give legitimacy to cynical political maneuvering. In Guinea, for example, President Alpha Conde is testing the waters for a third term in office, a move not permitted under the current constitution. The Russian ambassador enthusiastically backed Conde's bid, saying, "Constitutions aren't dogma, the Bible, or the Koran. Constitutions adapt to reality, it's not realities that adapt to constitutions." The ambassador's support of Conde was seemingly rewarded a few months later with an appointment to lead the lucrative Guinean operations of Rusal, a large aluminum company run by Kremlin-connected oligarch Oleg Deripaska. In CAR, government officials have defended their close ties to Russia, arguing that "we presented our problem and Russia offered to help us." CAR President Faustin-Archange Touadera has appointed a Russian national as his national security adviser.

When African countries have reduced or cooled ties with Russia, it has been because Moscow's coddling of corrupt leaders backfired when those heads of state fell from power. South African President Cyril Ramaphosa scuppered a deal to buy a nuclear power plant from Russia in part because it was financially dubious and negotiated by Ramaphosa's corrupt predecessor. Sudan's new leadership probably will keep Russia at a distance, following revelations from the London-based Dossier Center, run by exiled Russian businessman Mikhail Khodorkovsky, that deposed dictator Omar al-Bashir hired Russian specialists to smear anti-government protesters.

Russia's return, even while at times ham-fisted and amateurish, does pose a threat to U.S. interests. Moscow's engagement enables autocrats, fosters corruption and sows societal discontent, especially in already-fragile African countries. Moreover, the Kremlin's activities are designed in part to weaken U.S. leadership in the region. Leaked files from the Dossier Center indicate that Moscow's goal is to "strong-arm" the United States and former colonial powers like the United Kingdom and France out of the region. Russia seeks to exploit the perceived U.S. retreat from Africa, presenting itself as a more reliable security partner to countries where the U.S. military is reducing its footprint. Russia has also used its own diplomatic wins with African countries to undermine successful U.S. engagement in the continent. In 2017, President Putin welcomed al-Bashir to Moscow just weeks after President Trump lifted some sanctions on Sudan. Similarly, Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov met with his Angolan counterpart, Manuel Augusto, in August following Augusto's successful trip to Washington, D.C. Russian state media reported that in Lavrov's meeting with Augusto, the pair discussed shared goals of "forming a fair world order, commitment to the primacy of international law and the principle of non-interference in the domestic affairs of sovereign states."

In responding to these Russian threats, the United States must resist dramatics. U.S. rhetoric that Russia is a "great power" and near-peer competitor to the United States and China in Africa is not only inaccurate, but it actually advances Moscow's goals. The Kremlin benefits when U.S. officials and international media frame its presence in Africa as a restoration of its status as a global superpower. It serves Moscow's interest to be perceived as active and influential everywhere in Africa. Moreover, the U.S. government should be wary of hawkish pressure from observers and some national security professionals to redirect resources toward African countries for the sole purpose of countering Moscow's influence. Not only would it be an overreaction, but it also risks signaling to other African governments that flirting with Russia will garner more attention from the United States. African elites, while publicly rejecting the "great power competition" framework, recognize that geopolitical rivalry increases their country's strategic importance and they expect to

profit—either as a government or personally—from the surge in U.S. engagement.

There is a smarter response to Russian expansion. It requires understated and proactive diplomatic efforts to preserve U.S. interests, including peace, prosperity and responsible governance in the region. It is imperative to shut down Russia's current rising tide of influence in Africa, especially where the Kremlin seeks to weaken ties between the United States and its partners. Below are five recommendations to curb Russian influence in Africa.

First, the U.S. government should act before the Russians. It is not hard to predict where Russia will try to expand its influence. Alexis Arieff, an Africa policy analyst at the U.S. Congressional Research Service, likened it to a Venn diagram: “Does the country have useful mineral resources, is the country ripe for challenging the influence of key western actors, is the country a market for Russian arms? Those seem to be key circles that when they overlap may lead to greater Russian interest.” To be sure, there are other factors. Russia courts countries with geopolitical clout like Nigeria and Ethiopia, states like Madagascar experiencing political strife, and governments like Mozambique and countries in the Sahel facing security threats. The United States should focus on these countries to preempt or at least minimize opportunities for Russian engagement.

Second, the United States should work rhetorically to isolate, not elevate Russia's profile in Africa. There is no strategic value in overselling Russia's role in Africa. Moscow remains a bit player in the region, despite its recent surge in activities. American politicians and commentators should not describe it as having a starring role in the continent. Russian trade and investment, as well as security partnerships, pales in comparison to that of the United States. Last December, France demonstrated how to use clever public messaging to effectively undercut talk of Russia's power in the region. France drafted a U.N. Security Council resolution to extend the mandate of the U.N. peacekeeping mission in CAR, but it made no direct reference to Russia's efforts there. Paris's move aggravated Moscow, spurring its ambassador to object that the French-penned resolution did not acknowledge the role of Russian military trainers in the war-torn country. Russia and China decided to abstain on the vote.

Third, the U.S. government should practice positive engagement with African countries. It is more effective to increase U.S. engagement and investments in the region without publicly linking it to “great power competition” with Russia. This approach has the advantage of increasing diplomatic ties with African governments while undercutting the Kremlin's image as a revanchist power and limiting opportunities for African countries to exploit the rivalry between Washington and Moscow. The United States used this approach periodically during the Cold War. In Sudan, for instance, the United States supported an International Bank for Reconstruction and Development loan for an irrigation scheme to prevent the USSR from strengthening its ties with Sudan's military government. Internally, U.S. government officials regarded the loan in part as a measure to prevent Soviet expansion, but the project was described externally as an initiative to promote development. A retired U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) officer in an oral history interview indicated that the loan succeeded, becoming a cornerstone of the U.S. relationship with Sudan. The project was immensely popular in Sudan, and the USAID official said that when Sudanese learned he was assigned to work on the project, he was treated like royalty.

Fourth, the United States should aggressively enforce U.S. and U.N. sanctions. It should leverage existing laws to deter African governments from working with sanctioned individuals and Russia's defense and intelligence sector. Joseph Siegle, who leads the Africa Center for Strategic Studies's research programs, says the United States could apply provisions of the 2017 Countering America's Adversaries Through Sanctions Act to curb Russian activities in Africa. He also recommends treating Russian private military contractors as organized criminal syndicates. This would enable the U.S. government to apply protocols authorized by the U.N. Convention against Transnational

Organized Crime and a 2017 U.S. Presidential Executive Order to deter cooperation between Russian private military groups and African governments.

Fifth, the U.S. government should challenge Russian propaganda efforts on the continent. The Kremlin has a variety of ongoing information and influence campaigns in Africa. Moscow is investing in soft power by increasing the number of African students invited to attend Russian universities and promoting the Russkiy Mir (Russian World) Foundation, which promotes the study of the Russian language. It is also using Russia Today and pro-Russia social media, as well as African nongovernmental organizations and radio stations, to underwrite its efforts. The United States could use its own platforms to increase awareness of Russia's destabilizing activities, as well as adopt a proactive information campaign—as it did during the Cold War—to counter Russian activities.

The Russians want the Russia-Africa Summit to provide a stage to show the international community Russia's influence across the continent. They will use the summit as an opportunity to present Africa as another region where President Putin has expanded his influence at the expense of the United States. Moscow will roll out the red carpet for its African counterparts, sign new commercial and security deals, and preside over diplomatic talks between African governments. The United States, however, should ignore the theatrics. The U.S. playbook for responding to the Russian threat is clear: strengthen ties with African leaders and civil society, expose Russia's subversive activities, and block new openings for Moscow to gain sway in the region.

CHINA/AFRICA :

Chinese state councilor meets S. African minister of int'l relations, cooperation

Source: Xinhua/2019-10-19

DURBAN, Oct. 18 (Xinhua) -- Chinese State Councilor and Foreign Minister Wang Yi and South African International Relations and Cooperation Minister Naledi Pandor held talks in Durban on Friday.

Wang said, both China and South Africa are major developing countries and emerging economies with important influence. With the smooth development of bilateral relations, pragmatic cooperation between the two countries is at the forefront of China-Africa cooperation, and it is becoming a model for South-South cooperation.

He said China always views the bilateral relations from a strategic and long-term perspective and regards South Africa as a trusted strategic partner and true friend. China is willing to work with South Africa to implement the consensus of the heads of state of the two countries and elevate the bilateral ties to a new level.

Wang said, the two sides should prepare the agenda of important exchanges and cooperation in the next stage, deepen the exchange of experience on governance, and continue understanding and supporting each other on issues concerning their core interests and major concerns.

Wang said, China is willing to promote the dovetailing of the Belt and Road Initiative and the eight major initiatives proposed at the 2018 Beijing Summit of the Forum on China-Africa Cooperation (FOCAC) with South Africa's national development planning, and upgrade practical cooperation between the two sides in fields including industrial capacity, industrial parks, agriculture, science and technology, and marine economy, so as to contribute to South Africa's re-industrialization.

He said China is also willing to work with South Africa and other African countries to promote the implementation of the outcome of the FOCAC Beijing Summit, and build a closer community with a shared future between China and African countries.

Wang said, China and South Africa should strengthen strategic communication and cooperation in international and regional affairs, work together to safeguard multilateralism and democratization of international relations, oppose unilateralism and protectionism, and jointly safeguard the common interests of developing countries.

Pandor thanked China for its valuable support to the economic development of South Africa and other African countries.

Pandor said, the comprehensive strategic partnership between South Africa and China has a profound foundation and is dynamic. South Africa welcomes China's increasing investment in South Africa, and is willing to learn from China's development experience.

South Africa looks forward to further deepening practical cooperation between the two countries to the benefit of the two peoples, said Pandor.

She said the Belt and Road Initiative presents great opportunities for the development of South Africa and Africa as a whole. South Africa will continue to firmly support the initiative and actively participate in it.

South Africa and China take the same stance on important international and regional issues, said Pandor, adding South Africa is willing to strengthen communication and coordination with China in multilateral affairs, deepen cooperation among the BRICS countries, defend multilateralism, and safeguard an open and inclusive global trading system.

The two sides also had an in-depth exchange of views on current international and regional issues, and common challenges, strengthening their strategic coordination.

INDIA/AFRICA :

BRAZIL/AFRICA :

Brazil to have stand at Food Africa expo in Egypt

17/10/2019/anba.com.br

The Arab Chamber and Embassy of Brazil in Cairo will organize a pavilion and companies may subscribe to participate. This is one of the Africa's largest food trade show and runs from December 9 to 11.

São Paulo – The Arab Brazilian Chamber of Commerce will participate as an exhibitor in Food Africa 2019 in Cairo, Egypt. The expo is one of Africa's largest food and agribusiness trade show and will run from December 9 to 11. The stand is the result of a partnership with Embassy of Brazil in Cairo. The Chamber's member companies may participate.

This is the first time that the Arab Chamber will have a stand in the show. Member companies interested in exhibiting may register by contacting the Chamber's Commercial Department calling the number +55 (11) 3145-3200 or sending an email to comercial@ccab.org.br. The companies will have an individual space, an interpreter, the Chamber staff's support, publicity material at the show, and other advantages.

Last year, Food Africa received over 13,000 visitors. "In 2018, the Chamber visited the show and we saw how important it is to Egypt, which is the third largest importer of products from Brazil, especially foodstuffs. Moreover, we also considered the show as a way for products to break into the entire Africa," said Arab Chamber secretary-general Tamer Mansour, adding that the initiative develops the partnership between the institution and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs through the embassy.

Egypt has a free trade agreement with Mercosur. Moreover, last September, Brazil broke into the Arab country's dairy market thanks to an animal health certification allowing the country to export milk and dairy products to the Egyptian market.

The top products imported by the ten North African Arab countries are wheat, corn, sugar, dairies, and soybeans. In 2018, African Arab market food and beverage imports grossed USD 34.55 billion, the Arab Chamber Market Intelligence Department reported.

Food exports from Brazil to North Africa reached USD 3.08 billion in 2018. Last ten years saw a 500% increase. Egypt, Algeria and Morocco purchased 85% of that. Brazil sells mainly sugar, corn, beef, poultry and soy.

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