

US Military Programs to Strengthen Military Capacities of African Armies

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Since the end of the Cold War, stability of Africa has become the main concern of US security policy. This is reflected in the US military intervention in many areas, especially the Great Lakes region and in its efforts to build a regional security system in Africa that is based on enhancing the African military capacity, and to involve the African communities in the operations aiming to maintain security and fight against terrorism. Such "security system" or the security belt, which enshrines security dependency of Africa on the US and the West, has serious implications on both the security and stability in the region on many levels.

Motives of the American Policies

1. Economic and Security Dimensions

No doubt that interest remains the main motivator of the various roles that countries are trying to undertake outside their territorial boundaries. This is exactly what the US security strategy in Africa reflects since its endeavors mainly aim to secure its various interests in the region, which are:

2. Reducing the dependence on Middle East energy

This goal is achieved by making Africa an alternative source of energy to that of the Middle East, in the light of the increasing US demand for energy and the growing threats it faces in the Middle East, compared to the underground wealth of Africa, which has become a target for many external forces. Besides the US seeks a leading role at the global level by maintaining its economic superiority as well as its power zones.

In less than ten years, the percentage of oil imported by the United States from Africa is estimated at 25 %. Nowadays, the percentage has settled to reach 18% exceeding that of the Middle East, which is estimated at 17%. Africa, in general, represents 30% of the Global reserves of minerals, of which 89 % is Platinum 81% is Chrome, 61% is Magnesium, 60% is Cobalt, 40 % is Gold, 30% is Bauxite, 24% is Titanium, and 9% is copper. In this respect,

studies indicate that Africa will compensate for the Middle East energy by providing 5.9% of oil reserves and 8 % of gas reserves.

Because of this importance, the Caspian Sea region and Africa were included as the most important strategic alternatives in the US energy policy, which was adopted in the form of a law in 2005 to lift the dependence on the Middle East which suffers from the lack of stability and to meet the US growing demand for energy. Therefore, the American interest in Africa has increased as an important source of energy and as a center to monitor the situation in the Suez Canal and the Red Sea.

The trend towards Africa will avoid the US economy the consequences of the Middle East unrest, just as what happened in 2004, when a war was launched in the region causing the oil production of Nigeria to exceed that of Iraq, not to mention that Angola produced half of this amount. Also, during the oil crisis that took place in 1974-1975, Nigeria was the biggest provider of oil to America. In this respect, the American Congress pointed out that Africa has always been the regular provider of crude oil. Moreover, the oil of sub-Saharan Africa represents 10 % of the American imports, which strongly motivates the US authorities; especially the US Agency for Energy, to improve the means of

access to this wealth by linking the region with a security belt under its military supervision and thus keep away existing and potential hazards. Some thinkers see that losing confidence in energy markets has led to the militarization of energy security which is highlighted by the different US military programs that are set for Africa, in particular, since the end of the Cold War. These include the strengthening of military and combat capabilities of the African armies and the establishment of AF-RICOM, which confirms that the US presence in Africa is not temporary. This, also, emphasizes the US attempt to face the influence of other powers, particularly in the Sahel and Sahara .For example, China will be the first importer of oil starting from 2014-2015, thus it will work on strengthening its presence in the oil-rich areas, especially Africa, which will affect the share of America .The figures and studies on US energy needs emphasize the importance of Africa and give reason to the US military centralization.

3. The militarization of energy security and the fight against terrorism

America's exploitation of the huge oil stockpiles in Africa is threatened by the spread of terrorism and crime in the Sahel and the Horn of Africa, which is expected to extend to many African countries rich in oil

or near the sea routes through which the world energy flows. Thus, America is forced to have a permanent military presence in Africa in order to secure energy supply routes through a regional security system, in which African armies play a prominent role under the cover of fighting terrorism and maintaining security. The events of September 11 uncovered the new geostrategic importance of Africa in the US energy policy, under the pressure that Africa has turned into a safe haven for the hiding and the financing of terrorist organizations. This is in addition to the explosion of the US embassies in Nairobi and Dar es Salaam in 1998 that indicated the presence of al-Qaida in several African countries, besides its correlation with Islamic extremist groups in the Horn of Africa.

According to the US administration, terrorism extended to cover all Africa and changed from small groups on the national level supported by financing networks in the Sahel and Europe into wider networks that not only exist in North Africa but also in Europe. The Algerian terrorist groups retreated to the north-eastern region where they communicated with immigrant networks, groups of North Africa in Europe, the black market and the jihadist movements in the Sahel. They, also, set strategic fronts in

Mauritania, Mali and AL-Qaeda in Iraq. Then, these networks expanded by making links with all smuggling networks in Mali, Niger and Chad. This wide spread of terrorism and armed groups, has led to the spread of terrorist threats in many areas in Africa, the Middle East and South Mediterranean that threaten the oil and economic interests of America as well as the Western countries. This was the reason behind the US security and military presence in Africa as it is clear in West Africa, the Horn of Africa and its military base in Djibouti.

4. Facing the dangers of the demographic growth in Africa

The US future security concerns extend to the risk of demographic growth, which will lead to a profound change in the economic and political balance within the continent and between the African countries and their partners, salient of which is America. By 2050, Africa's population will double to become 1937 million (21%) instead of 906 million (14%) in 2000. Concomitantly, Europe's population will fall to 472 million (5.2 %) instead of 488 million (7.5%). As for the United States, in the light of the high rate of immigration, its population will rise from 297 to 409 taking into consideration that the 2/3 of the population in Africa is under the age of 25.

Mechanisms and Implications of US Military programs to Strengthen African military Capacities

The organizing process of US security and military presence in Africa takes place by putting some of the bases first as a prelude to what might be called a regional security system that will extend geographically according to the US interests and the threats it faces. This military presence is mainly based on relying on pivotal states such as Algeria, South Africa, Nigeria and Angola where the African armies play a pivotal role on behalf of the US army represented in facing the threats against American interests. This US strategy is stronger than military bases as it avoids America the financial, political and military consequences of a direct military intervention, especially after the experience of Somalia and Liberia in which the United States failed to face such internal conflicts.

US Initiatives for the Training of African Armies:

1. African Crisis Response Initiative (ACRI):

This initiative was announced in 1996, as part of US efforts to involve African armies in the new US security system to defend its interests. This initiative includes the formation of military units that can show rapid intervention in the field of security and humanitarian aid with an

annual budget estimated at \$ 20 million. Since 1997, the program facilitated the training of the troops of Benin, Cote d'Ivoire, Ghana, Malawi, Mali, Uganda, Senegal, Kenya, and Ethiopia by special American trainers aiming to strengthen the capacities of African countries in responding to humanitarian crisis and in contributing to the rapid spread of peacekeeping operations under the United Nations and the African Union in addition to regional organizations. A total number of 9000 soldiers have been trained. This number is estimated to rise to 10,000 or 12,000 soldiers. In this respect, the US State Department provided the necessary light equipment, including generators, carriers, mine-sweepers, night vision devices, and specially the communication devices. However, the program had some points of weaknesses, salient of which are:

-The training and equipment provided did not meet the needs of the national armies, because of the big difference between the countries involved in this project.

-The lack of combat capabilities, as the program focused on the operations aiming to maintain security rather than providing enough combat training or enough logistic support. Certainly, this did not suit the African situation in which peacekeeping forces suffer. Ac-

cordingly, the United States proposed Africa Contingency Operations Training and Assistance (ACOTA) program in 2002.

2. Operational Training Aid Program:

In addition to peacekeeping and humanitarian aid, this program includes offensive drills for infantry units as well as small units. It, also, prepares troops to cope with "hostile" environment. In this respect, African Union troops are provided with unified equipment (assault rifles, machine guns, mortars, ...etc. in order to maintain security.

This program aimed to form well trained Africans, who will later be in charge of the transfer and the dissemination of competencies in their national armies, in addition to the decision making concerning the involvement of African regional organizations in the project in order to legitimize the operations aiming to maintain security in Africa. These organizations include the Economic Community Of West African States (CEDEAO) and the Southern African Development Community (SADC). The program was expanded to cover 13 African countries, namely: South Africa, Gabon, Ghana, Kenya, Malawi, Senegal, Zambia, Mali, Mozambique, Nigeria, Benin, Botswana, and Ethiopia . Thus, the program included the most two important allies of Amer-

ica in sub-Saharan Africa, these are: Nigeria and South Africa .At the beginning of 2006, about 17,000 soldiers benefited from this program in terms of composition, mine sweepers and hygienic equipment. Also, countries that have benefited from this program participated in many of the operations that aim to maintain security.

In 2005, the program's budget rose to \$ 29 million after it had been \$ 15 million. While in 2007, it mounted to \$48 million. It's worth mentioning that in this program America relied on a great African powers to implement its policy. This includes South Africa, Ethiopia, Kenya, and Nigeria. A great African power like South Africa would let the project become a private security partnership. Therefore, Washington intends to offer "ACOTA" program as a support for a comprehensive future program known as the Global Peace Operation Initiative (GPOI), Which aims to form a force of 75,000 individual that is able to intervene throughout the world in the framework of operations aiming to maintain security in accordance with Chapter VI and VII of the United Nations. In 2012, the number of African countries involved in this project reached 25 countries, which reflects the US military expansion in Africa in order to include the largest number of African countries in this system.

3. Trans-Sahara Partnership:

In 2002, this program was proposed under the name the Pan Sahel Initiative (PSI), to help each of Mali, Chad, Niger and Mauritania in the fight against terrorism in the Sahel region, which is considered a buffer zone between the Maghreb and black Africa on one hand and a linking zone between the oil producing countries in North Africa and the Gulf of Guinea. The project, also, includes forming armies and encouraging the cooperation between the countries of the Maghreb and those of the Sahel in the fight against terrorism. The capital of Pan Sahel project was estimated at \$ 6 million in the first year, to rise in the second year to about \$ 7.75 million.

Although the project includes only Mauritania from the Maghreb region, however, it was considered a key step to the expansion towards the Maghreb region. This is what has actually happened through The Trans-Saharan Counterterrorism Initiative (TSCTI). In 2005, this initiative came within the framework of the expansion and the completion of Pan Sahel initiative. By this initiative, the United States was able to include a large number of the countries of the Sahel as well as the Maghreb Arab. So, this new initiative succeeded to include each of Algeria, Tunisia, Morocco, (Libya was

invited but declined), Burkina Faso, Chad, Senegal, Niger and Nigeria. This is in addition to the four member states of the Pan Sahel Initiative.

This initiative is based on two overlapping approaches in the fight against terrorism. First, the civil approach adopted by the United States Agency for Development, which is concerned with education and the government, which is concerned with all the terms of airport security; in addition to the Ministry of Finance which is concerned with the use of national treasuries .Second, the military approach that is related to the so-called Operation Enduring Freedom (OEF) under the management of The United States Africa Command or AFRICOM. It aims to combat terrorism relying on two sides: one side is directed to improve the local forces by sharing intelligence. Within this framework, US special forces were sent to Mauritania during the month of January 2012 to train the Mauritanian army. The other side includes the strengthening of military cooperation between the US and African countries through regular annual maneuvers in participation with some of the NATO countries such as France and Spain, which had been launched since 2005 in the Sahel region. The budget allocated to this initiative is about \$ 100 million per year.

4. The US Africa Command

"AFRICOM":

In 2007, a private US military command was established in Africa "AFRICOM". Since 2008 Africa has become under a unified American military command, with the exception of Egypt which remained under the Central Command. Such command is managed from Stuttgart, Germany, after the African countries had rejected its establishment on their territories; especially Algeria and Morocco. It's worth mentioning that before the establishment of this command, the United States dealt with African countries through three regional command centers, which are:

- ¶ The United States Central Command (CENTCOM), which was responsible for Egypt, the Horn of Africa and Kenya .
- ¶ The United States Pacific Command (PACOM), which is responsible for the Indian Ocean countries such as Madagascar and the Comoro Islands .
- The United States European Command (EUCOM), which most of the African countries are under its command.
- ¶ In this respect, it is important to highlight the fact that Egypt is still under the Central Command as it is near the Middle East region and Israel, in particular, The geostrategic reading of these

programs reveals security and political backgrounds that have serious impact on the future of the state in Africa, where all the programs focus on establishing military bases in Africa aiming to strengthen armies in Africa, and prepare them to intervene directly in case of any crises that might threaten US interests in the region. The most dangerous thing included within these programs and security alliances is relating the African Security with the Western security, especially with regard to the threats and the focus on military approaches to solve the economic, social and political problems afflicting the continent. In this respect, it is important to highlight the different objectives of both parties. On one hand, the African countries are keen on strengthening the state, reducing the negative effects of globalization, integrating into the global economy and adopting development projects with the help of the great Powers. On the other hand, America seeking after securing the African problems and making military allies so as to protect the sources of energy and raw materials as well as to make a security fence for such interests.

It is noticeable that this security system focuses on:

- The development of African capacities to maintain security in the form of the preparation of a



quick mobilization of African military units.

-The reliance on the multilateral approach in favor of a sub-regional scheme rather than a national scheme to boost cooperation and coordination between the African countries and its military forces.

-A broader regional trend that is not confined to West Africa or sub-Saharan Africa, where American interests are, but extends all over Africa as a result of the widespread the future threats against the US interests.

Results and implications of US military programs on the future of stability in Africa

Actually, the US military presence in Africa under the cover of maintaining security and combating terrorism, is just an American strategy to protect its oil and trade interests as well as to maintain its global sovereignty just as said by the British researcher "Jeremy Keenan", who accused Washington of fabricating such threat in order to control Africa and access to oil resource . Although some of the African regimes agreed with the American perception with regard to fighting terrorism and armed groups, but the integration of these countries in the US security system, will have serious consequences on the security and stability of these countries in the

future.

A- The increase of military expenditures at the expense of economic development

Focusing on security dangers and relating everything taking place in Africa to terrorism forces Africa to giving due attention to the reinforcement and enhancement of security and military institutions, which brings us back to the beginning of the independence of African countries when they were all engaged in the arms race to face border conflicts. This, in return, led to fragile states, debt, political and economic instability and various forms of violence, which are most probably the reason behind the terrorism and instability in the region today .The same scenario is repeated under various pretexts, where African countries have entered an arms race to upgrade their armies to face the modern warfare and to cooperate with the great powers. Unfortunately, this will overburden the African Treasury just as confirmed by the numbers.

During the period between 2002-2011, Africa has recorded the highest rate in military expenditure worldwide, which was estimated at 64.9 %.. As for North African countries, Algeria and Morocco are considered the most spending countries, where the expenditures of Algeria increased from \$ 3 billion in 2002 to

\$ 8.2 million in 2011. This increase is attributed to the fight against terrorism in addition to the rising dangers and threats along its border with Libya after the fall of the Gaddafi regime on one hand and in the African Sahel region on the other hand. As for Morocco, its military expenditures rose to 45.5% in 2002. But in 2011, this percentage was less than 1%.

The same for Sub-Saharan Africa, whose military expenditures rose by 44% since 2002. While South Africa, Angola and Nigeria are considered the highest countries in military expenditure, where the expenditures of South Africa rose from \$4 billion in 2002 to \$4.8 billion with a growth rate estimated at 20% during the ten years. Because of the restructuring of salaries and the purchase of modern equipment. As for Angola, which occupies the second place in the region in terms of military expenditure, mounted from 1.4% in 2002 to reach \$ 3.3 billion in 2011 with a growth rate 7%. Similarly, Nigeria showed a rise in its military expenditures since 2002 with a growth rate estimated at 22% because of the fight against terrorism and Boko Haram movement. According to Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI) report, Nigeria has allocated a special financial envelope only to combat terrorism with a budget esti-

mated at 232 and 137 million dollars during the period from 2010 to 2011 representing a percentage of about 12% and 6% of the Nigerian military expenditures. This highlights the huge budgets allocated to defense and security rather than economic development. During 1990 the wars in Africa cost \$30 billion, that is equivalent to \$18 billion per year.

B- Enforcing the US military presence in Africa

The militarization of energy security and the war against terrorism led to the intensification of the US military presence in Africa in the form of military bases, intelligence centers and military experts. This is embodied in the American military bases in each of Djibouti, Ethiopia and Kenya. Also, America is seeking a base for AFRICOM in Algeria, Nigeria or South Africa. This is in addition to the US military presence in Morocco since 1983 through the air base "Ben Greer" within 60 km from Marrakech. Until AFRICOM is transferred to the African territories, it shall remain monitoring Africa from Stuttgart, Germany, through the establishment of many agencies such as both of these existing in Italy, namely one in Vansen and the other in Naples, which are used to carry out Naval Operations directed towards the continent. Not to mention the American military experts who supervise the training of

the armies of African countries and intelligence cooperation .We, also, cannot ignore the French and European military presence as well, which make out of Africa with all its geographical divisions (Western, Northern and Central), the scene of the activity of Western military forces.

The American military presence also depends on creating a military elite that would show loyalty in the

future. This is achieved by focusing on the preparation and formation of officers. In my opinion, this is the greatest threat in such military programs, especially if we look at the nature of the military establishment and the role of African armies .This will lead the military establishment to turn into one of the tools employed by the United States to protect its interests at the expense of human rights and stability of state.