



OTAN mondiale : une menace pour la Paix

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Global NATO: a Threat to Peace

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L'OTAN en Afrique / NATO in Africa

Alain ROUY, Le Mouvement de la Paix (France)

Until now, NATO has paid little attention to Africa, although the Western powers that are members of NATO have a strong presence on the African continent, in particular France, a former colonial power, and the United States, which since 2007 has established a unified US Army Command for Africa, USAFRICOM, located in Stuttgart, Germany. There are at least 34 US military sites in Africa: 14 main bases and 20 outpost camps, the main base being Camp Lemonnier in Djibouti with more than 5000 men.

France has permanent and temporary bases in Africa, with 5,100 French troops currently engaged in operations in Mali and neighbouring countries, and another 3,000 troops stationed in Africa.

NATO has only been involved in Africa as such since 2005, initially in the context of anti-terrorist operations, as Africa is perceived as a hotbed of terrorism, maritime piracy and drug trafficking and as a source of irregular migration that destabilises Western powers, particularly in Europe.

To these threats to the security of member states, the document *NATO 2030 - United for a New Era* adds the systemic challenge posed by China and Russia, both in terms of security and economics. In this *NATO 2030* report, Africa is referred to as part of the broader "South", which includes the Mediterranean area and the entire African continent. Already, the NATO Warsaw Summit in 2016 stressed the need for a "strengthened approach" to the South due to the growing presence of Russia and China, and for enhanced political and practical cooperation with the African Union. The *NATO 2030* report takes up these orientations with the following recommendations:

- Enhance military response capability by strengthening NATO's southern hub at Allied Joint Force Command Naples
- Develop collaboration with the African Union; the report also suggests establishing regular consultations among Allies on Africa, a topic absent from the traditional agenda.

NATO interventions in Africa and cooperation with the African Union since 2005

- In 2005: NATO's first intervention in operational support to the African Union in the field of strategic transport in the framework of the AU mission in Darfur (Sudan)
- In 2007 in Somalia: provision of strategic lift in support of the African Union's AMISOM mission
- In 2007, NATO organised a major deployment and manoeuvre exercise in Cape Verde
- In 2008, at the "request" of the UN, NATO contributed to the fight against maritime piracy in the Gulf of Aden and led Operation *Ocean Shield*.
- Several agreements have been signed between NATO and the African Union, each time marking a deepening of cooperation:
 - in 2006, a cooperation agreement for the training of officers of the armies of African countries considered as allies without being members of NATO ("NATO Training Cooperation Initiative")

- in 2014, a NATO-AU cooperation agreement, followed in 2015 by the opening of a NATO liaison office at the African Union headquarters in Addis Ababa (Ethiopia)
- in 2019, a new cooperation agreement to strengthen the political and practical partnership between NATO and the AU.

NATO's intervention in Libya in 2011

This intervention was carried out without the consent of the African Union and on the basis of a contested interpretation of UN Security Council Resolution 1973 of 17 March 2011, allowing "to take all measures deemed necessary to protect the civilian population". The military operations of massive bombing of Libyan military installations started on 19 March, led mainly by France, the United Kingdom and the United States. From 31 March they were conducted by NATO (Operation *Unified Protector*), under Canadian command, until the end of October 2011.

The delivery of arms to the rebel areas was in violation of UN Resolution 1970 of 26 February 2011 establishing an arms embargo on Libya. NATO has gone far beyond the scope of Resolutions 1970 and 1973, which were designed to protect civilians. By overthrowing the regime of Gaddafi, who was killed on 20 October 2011, and by arming the rebels, NATO has only added war to war, provoked a chaos that continues in Libya to this day and destabilised the entire region with the proliferation of Islamist terrorist groups in Mali, Niger, Nigeria and Burkina Faso.

Africa in NATO's sights

With the 2019 agreements signed with the African Union, NATO wanted to give itself a more positive image by emphasising the political cooperation programmes (also in *NATO 2030*) concerning women, peace and security. However, a different language is used in the report written in April 2019 for the NATO Parliamentary Assembly by Julio Miranda Calha of Portugal, entitled *Security and Stability in Africa: Challenges and Priorities for NATO*. The report calls for NATO countries to play a greater role in Africa and stresses the need to occupy the field, otherwise Russia and China will do so.

The report reflects the geopolitical aims of NATO for Africa, as discussed at the current 2021 Summit. The globalised NATO is called upon to deal with Africa and to deploy its militaristic strategy there. The infrastructure exists for a reinforced NATO presence on the African continent thanks to the already strong presence of the US military. There are at least 6,000 US troops in Africa (including 800 in West Africa in support of the French army) and in 2021, for example, the US Army is organising military manoeuvres: the naval exercise *Phoenix Express* from 17 to 28 May in Tunisia with the participation of 11 countries, and the air-land exercise *Authorize 2021* in May-June in Ouarzazate, Morocco, with the participation of French army helicopters. In the latter case, these manoeuvres appear to support Morocco against the Polisario Front and are a source of military tension with Algeria and diplomatic tension with Spain.

In Africa as elsewhere, US and NATO activism is a threat to peace.

The foreseeable redeployment of NATO to Africa makes it urgent to expand our anti-NATO network in Africa and for our peace organisations to link up with all peace forces active on African soil.