The US Strengthens its Military Foothold in Africa

Today, Africa has become a hot topic, nearing the top of this list not only in the United States, but in many European countries as well.

On the one hand, the recently heightened interest in this issue is due to the protests that have engulfed not only the United States, but also many European countries. The movement is demanding an end to racial crimes primarily against people from African countries, who have continuously been subjected to various forms of harassment since the colonial era. This is evidenced by numerous examples of racial abuse in the United States, Britain, and a number of European countries. This was also stated by the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, Michelle Bachelet, who stressed that the murder of African-American George Floyd became a symbol of systemic racism.

On the other hand, the continent of Africa continues to attract the attention of the United States and many other capitalist countries as a huge source of natural wealth and human resources. This is why attempts to manipulate the African region by external means, creating consistent ongoing Western-controlled chaos and numerous armed conflict.

Today, 1.2 billion people live on the continent of Africa, and the population will almost double in the next two decades. For this reason, Africa, where 30% of the world's natural resources are concentrated, will remain an important source of human resources and natural wealth for the entire planet. Ergo, the continent continues to attract the attention of the United States and many other countries alike.

In the era of decolonization that took place in Africa with Moscow's active participation, the USSR held a firm position in Africa since the middle of last century. Through its efforts, the economy of many African countries was reorganized, a significant number of industrial enterprises were built, as well as scientific and technical national personnel were trained. This allowed a number of African countries to develop economically, scientifically and technologically, and change the social structure of the continent's population. Later China also joined this work.

However, due to the collapse of the Soviet Union and a systematic weakening of Moscow's policy on the African continent at the end of the last century, the United States began to take advantage of the situation unfolding there, quickly mobilizing the most extensive network of military and political presence in Africa. Their investments in the region have significantly exceeded those of China and Russia. Through all this, along with a massive military presence, Washington has moved to flaunt its ambitions on the continent. To this point, one of the key tasks of current US foreign policy and military strategies in Africa was to actively oppose Moscow and Beijing. In 2018, John Bolton, who was at that time the US President's national security adviser, actively covered up this aggressive US policy in Africa with propaganda rhetoric: “the predatory practices pursued by China and Russia stunt economic growth in Africa; threaten the financial independence of African nations, inhibit opportunities for U.S. investment, interfere with U.S. military operations and pose a significant threat to U.S. national security interests.” At the same time, both Bolton and the other representatives of the current political elite in Washington blatantly avoided mentioning to the African and world community the fact that numerous factories, various enterprises, hydroelectric power plants, and educational institutions built by the USSR and China in the past century in African States are now successfully working in the interests of these African States. Washington is not too keen on advertising the unpopular for the United States fact that in November 2019 at the famed Russia-Africa Summit in Sochi, Russia wrote off African countries' debts worth over $20 billion, something the United States has never done, instead exploiting the continent to enrich America.
According to US military documents posted on VICE News, about a hundred ongoing military operations are going down in Africa at this very moment. The increase of US military presence on the continent is simply unprecedented: Africa hosts the second largest number of American special forces stationed there after the Middle East. The arrival of Donald Trump has freed the hands of the US military in Africa, lifting some of the restrictions established during the Obama administration, which allowed the military to increase air strikes and expand their freedom in conducting special operations. Today, the United States is the only country in the world that has had an Africa Command (AFRICOM) in its armed forces since 2008, with about 7,200 personnel. The Intercept, based on data obtained under the US Freedom of Information Act, counted 34 US Special Operations Forces bases on the continent in 2018. As noted in an interview with Vice News, former Special Operations Africa Command Brigadier General Donald Bolduc, there are more American Special Operations Forces in Africa than in any other competency area, including the Middle East.

Most US citizens first learned that their government was conducting special operations in Africa as late as 2017, when US military personnel was injured in an ambush by DAESH militants (editor's note – a terrorist organization banned in the Russian Federation) near the village of Tongo Tongo in Niger. To clearly demonstrate the scope of the US military's actions in Africa, Yahoo News employees compiled a list of 36 such special operations over a short recent period, although the authors do not claim that the list is comprehensive.

Against the backdrop of a significant decline in the influence of the United States in the world, including in Africa, due to Washington's failed policies and, conversely, the growing authority of Russia and China in African and international affairs, the United States has increased its activity in expanding its military presence on the African continent. So, AFRICOM has already said that in the near future the US may send an additional brigade of military personnel to Tunisia supposedly “because of Russia”, which is allegedly interfering in the affairs of the region. To justify such steps and propagate its agenda in the region, AFRICOM previously stated that Moscow sent 14 Soviet Su-24 and MiG-29 aircraft to Libya from the Syrian air base in Khmeimim to support so-called "Russian mercenaries" who are allegedly fighting on the side of Marshal Khalifa Haftar’s Libyan national army. However, this fake information was not confirmed. The Russian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, State Duma, and even the Western military monitoring site called itamilradar.com denied Russia’s involvement in the transfer of this shipment of Soviet military aircraft to Libya, as well as the alleged presence of “thousands of Russian mercenaries” there.

At the same time, while AFRICOM, with the support of Washington-controlled media, is spreading a fake story about the presence of a private military company PMC Wagner in North Africa, real PMCs from the United States have appeared in Tunisia, which the American and Western press are blatantly silent about. According to reports from the Tunisie Telegraph, the American PMC Engility has been sent to the country, and more than one person has already been injured by its fighters. In 1990-2000, this PMC conducted secret operations in a number of the world's most hot spots, including in Afghanistan, Kuwait, Bosnia, later in Georgia, then in Yemen, the Philippines and Colombia.

What does PMC Engility need in Tunisia now? - We cannot forget that this structure earns money from the war and it is sent to foreign countries not to put an end to the current clashes, but in order to unleash a full-scale conflict. So we can undoubtedly expect extended deterioration of the situation in Tunisia due to the activities of this PMC Engility, perhaps even with the involvement of local terrorist groups through it to justify their presence in Tunisia. It is also possible that, following the example of actions in Iraq and Syria, American PMCs received a US state order not only to wage war, but also to control the natural resources and key infrastructure of Tunisia that Washington needs, as well as to forming special zones within the country, which in the future could serve as a springboard for Washington to spread its own influence in the region.

Although the US is trying to justify strengthening its multi-disciplinary military presence by increasing the number of terrorist groups in Africa, it is possible that the US is thus implementing a strategy for the gradual colonization of Africa in the long term.

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