



The Quagmire of US Militarism in Africa

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Abstract

In the period of the so-called War on Terror, US militarism in Africa has intensified to include the weaponisation of finance, the weaponisation of trade, psychological warfare, information warfare and the deployment of private military contractors in the so-called 'security sector reform'. In the face of African resistance, the deployment of the US Africa Command (AFRICOM) has unleashed disaster after disaster, from the catastrophic failures in Libya to the sequences of failure in the Sahel region. The death of four US service personnel in Niger in 2017 along with the killing of non-white soldiers in Africa by white supremacists in the US military have similarly exposed the deficiencies and racism inherent in the US security establishment. In the context of US military involvement in the Middle East, currency wars and capital flight from Africa, the US travel ban on Muslims exposed the contradictions of African allies and sharpened their clear alliance with the empire despite the overt racism of Making America Great Again. The quagmire of US militarism is now exposing the current manifestations of white supremacy. In addition to contextualising and accounting for these developments across the continent, this article argues that progressive scholars cannot be bystanders in the struggles against militarised global apartheid. Africans must grasp the lessons of global racism to re-ignite the progressive pan-African traditions that were able to roll back apartheid in its crude form.

Key Words: militarism, global apartheid, quagmire, de-dollarisation, spectrum, resistance

Résumé

Dans la soi-disant guerre contre le terrorisme, le militarisme américain en Afrique s'est intensifié pour inclure l'arsenalisation des finances et du commerce, la guerre psychologique, la guerre de l'information et le déploiement d'entrepreneurs militaires privés dans la soi-disant « réforme du

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secteur de la sécurité ». Face à la résistance africaine, le déploiement de l'US Africa Command (AFRICOM) a déclenché catastrophe après catastrophe, des échecs désastreux en Libye à ceux de la région du Sahel. La mort de quatre militaires américains au Niger en 2017 ainsi que le meurtre en Afrique de soldats non blancs par des suprémacistes blancs de l'armée américaine ont également révélé les carences et le racisme inhérents à l'establishment américain de la sécurité. Dans le contexte de l'engagement militaire américain au Moyen-Orient, des guerres de devises et la fuite de capitaux en provenance d'Afrique, l'interdiction de voyager imposée aux musulmans par les États-Unis a révélé les contradictions des alliés africains et mis à nu leur alliance avec l'empire malgré le racisme manifeste de Making America Great Again (Rendre sa grandeur à l'Amérique). Le boubier du militarisme américain expose aujourd'hui les manifestations actuelles de la suprématie blanche. En plus de contextualiser et de rendre compte de ces développements à travers le continent, cet article soutient que les universitaires progressistes ne peuvent être des spectateurs dans les luttes contre l'apartheid militarisé mondial. Les Africains doivent appréhender les leçons du racisme mondial et raviver les traditions panafricaines progressistes qui avaient réussi à faire reculer l'apartheid dans sa forme la plus brutale.

Mots-clés : militarisme, apartheid mondial, boubier, dé-dollarisation, spectre, résistance

Introduction

When Donald Trump was elected the 45th President of the United States in 2016, his elevation as the Commander in Chief of the US armed forces brought white nationalism, sexism and xenophobia to the centre of international decision making. These trends were further bolstered by the electoral victory of Boris Johnson and the enactment of Brexit in the UK, the election of Jair Bolsonaro in Brazil, and the energisation of white nationalists in France, Germany, the Netherlands, Poland, Hungary, Austria, Australia and New Zealand, who want to reclaim the past glories of racism and imperial domination.

The US military – as the pivot of the reproduction of US imperialism – has been caught in the midst of this resurgence of white supremacist ideas in the context of the maintenance of racial capitalism. Faced with the anti-globalisation movement at the turn of the century, US strategic leaders had launched wars in Afghanistan, Iraq, Syria, Libya, and Iran, and destabilised societies opposing capitalism such as Cuba and Venezuela. These endless wars rolled into an on-going combination of stalemate and quagmire – a word referring to an awkward, complex or hazardous situation (taken

from the English word denoting a soft boggy area of land that gives way underfoot) – and the reasons for global militarism morphed from fighting ‘terror’ to preparing for great power competition. It was in Africa where the quagmire of US militarism was rapidly exposed as white nationalist forces came up against sustained opposition to neoliberal imperial apartheid, Islamophobia, climate denialism and chauvinism. African allies of US capitalism found themselves on the defensive with the racial hierarchy of the Trump administration castigating African societies as ‘shithole countries’. When former National Security Advisor John Bolton rolled out the Trump Africa policy in 2017 he had determined that the continent was ‘a cesspit of poverty, disease, terrorism and corruption’ (Pilling 2018). This castigation was reinforced by placing a ‘travel ban’ on a number of African countries.

These contradictions facing allies of the US in Africa were compounded by the global anti-racist and anti-fascist forces that were building new networks for reparations, peace, social justice and the repair of the natural environment. In the particular cases of the Black Lives Matter movement in the US and the broader reparations for slavery movement, these movements were strengthened by the activism and calls for health care for all. The push to link anti-racist struggles internationally reached the US armed forces to the point where the US announced in December 2018 a formal retreat of its planned deployment of forces for the US Africa Command (Cooper et al. 2019). At the same time, sections of the US foreign policy establishment determined to focus on rewriting the narrative on national engagement with Africa, focusing primarily on control of the electromagnetic spectrum of African states – i.e. the manipulation and exploitation of electromagnetic frequencies such as telecommunications, wave technology and infrared. Ghana and Kenya are two countries that are caught in this new web of the Pentagon’s deployment of new command cells for electromagnetic spectrum operations (Munoz 2020). The 2018 military agreement between Ghana and the US, for example, whereby the US military will have free access to Ghana’s radio spectrum, has exposed the direction of the so-called ‘light footprint’ for the US military in Africa.

The Pentagon is seeking to refine capabilities in electronic warfare where it failed in its promotion of the 3Ds – ‘development, diplomacy and defense’ – for a more prosperous and secure Africa. The Trump administration had rolled out its strategy of ‘Prosper Africa’ to clarify their relationship with ‘responsible regional stakeholders’, meaning collaboration with the servile allies of US militarism in Africa. These African allies of empire were, however, caught in the middle of challenges to US hegemony as the multiple wars against the peoples of Iran exacerbated and sharpened

broader opposition to US military power. This includes the killing of Islamic Revolutionary Guard General Qassim Suleimani, Iraqi commander of the Popular Mobilization Forces (PMF) unit Abu Mahdi al-Mohandes, and eight others at Baghdad airport at the beginning of 2020. This assassination of Suleimani was indeed a unilateral act of war in violation of international law, but it was a logical step in a long-standing US strategy and not just a personality quirk of Donald Trump's impulsive action (Hudson 2020; see also Bergman and Mazzetti 2019). In the analysis of Michael Hudson, who had earlier written on 'Finance as Warfare', 'the assassination was intended to escalate America's presence in Iraq to keep control of the region's oil reserves, and to back Saudi Arabia's Wahabi troops (Isis, Al Qaeda in Iraq, Al Nusra and other divisions of what are actually America's foreign legion) to support U.S. control of Near Eastern oil as a buttress of the US dollar' (Hudson 2020). African peoples of all regions were drawn into this battle between Iran and the US and no declarations on changing the objectives of the US military in Africa could mitigate the increasing weaponisation of everything by the US political establishment (Brooks 2016; Wright 2017). This weaponisation is failing as the logic of militarism comes up against global resistance in the context of the systemic fragility in the global economy (Rasmus 2016). This fragility has become even more pronounced in the appearance of the COVID 19 pandemic and the accompanying economic depression. Within a month of the pandemic economists such as Nouriel Roubini, Jayati Ghosh and the IMF were predicting a worse downturn than the Great Depression giving ten reasons why this downturn will be unprecedented. (Roubini 2020)

African historians have documented how in the last great depression, Western Europe transferred some of the costs on to the backs and shoulders of Africans. (Rodney 1976) That experience occurred in another era before the struggles for independence and the fight against apartheid. Deep divisions within the ranks of the US military have also brought to the fore the Achilles heel of a leadership that is seeking to expand the spread of US military bases, full spectrum warfare, military clients, surrogate armies and imperial social science during the demise of the unipolar world. It is the militarism in Africa that undergirded this world and its quicksand that will be the focus here.

Militarism has been defined as 'the pervasiveness in society of symbols, values and discourses validating military power, and preparation for war' (Hutchful and Bathily 1998). Usually North American scholars point to Third World societies with authoritarian leaders as examples of militaristic societies. These manifestations of militarism represent one brand, but the militarism of the imperial state is even more formidable than the powers of Third World dictators. Since 1945 the US has exceeded pre WWII Germany

with its militaristic focus (Crawford 2019). Karl Liebknecht, the German revolutionary, had recognised the long history of warfare in all modes of production but understood the specific relationship between ‘warfare and capitalism’ (Kaldor 1982; see also Gelot and Sandor 2019). The impact of German militarism and the interconnections between warfare, eugenics and fascism is still being studied to grasp the ways in which capitalist competition and greed fuelled war, imperial expansion and genocide. With the rise of white nationalism and neo-fascism, Besteman (2019) has determined that this form of militarism is an expression of ‘militarized global apartheid’. Just as the intellectuals of the global pan-African struggles inspired the world to oppose apartheid, so the current Black Lives Matter movement is inspiring another generation to resist this global apartheid (Ransby 2018; Kelley 2016).

This paper starts out by providing the broader context and consequences of the quagmire of US militarism, then analyses how US military planning conforms to the objectives of stabilising both racial capitalism and the full spectrum dominance of militarised global apartheid.¹ The weaponisation of finance and the assassination of the Iranian military leader are introduced to sharpen the centrality of African peoples and resources in the growing opposition to the military management of the international system. For many intellectuals, where the US military management of the international system was unclear, the more than US \$6 trillion that has been pumped into the US economy in the past three months is a clear manifestation of how the US is simply printing money to maintain military and financial hegemony. Michael Hudson explained the “US CORONAVIRUS ‘BAILOUT’ SCAM IS \$6 TRILLION GIVEAWAY TO WALL ST,” noting, “the US government and the Treasury, through the backing of military force, force countries around the world to buy US bonds, Treasury bonds, and how there’s basically just a con scheme where countries pay for their own US military occupation through buying US Treasury bonds.” (Hudson 2020b; Martens and Martens 2020)

In the context of the US printing trillions of dollars, many central banks are now seeking to hoard gold. The hoarding of gold internationally has placed greater importance on African sources of gold, especially new gold fields in the Sahel. (International Crisis Group 2020) For example, the surge in artisanal gold mining in the Sahel and the criminalisation of artisanal miners have brought to the fore how states such as the United Arab Emirates (UAE) are embedded in the plunder of African resources while financing extremists (Lewis, McNeill and Shabalala 2019). Similarly, the role of the US and France in West Africa is examined in the context of the duplicitous ‘War on Terror’ and the efforts to link African resources to the Euro in the competition between the Euro and

the US dollar. Countries such as Saudi Arabia and the UAE are hoarding gold and strengthening networks to illegally export gold from Africa. These states, along with the US, are therefore terrified of peace and reconstruction in Africa. With the creation of the Instrument in Support of Trade Exchanges (INSTEX) in the midst of trade and currency wars, the European Union and Russia in particular have emerged as key players seeking to weaken US hegemony. The conclusion seeks to harness the anti-racist memories of the global solidarity spawned in the anti-apartheid struggles to fertilise the movements for peace and reconstruction in Africa in the twenty-first century.

Context and Consequences of US Militarism in Africa

When four US military personnel were killed in Tongo Tongo, southwest Niger, as a result of 'enemy fire' on 4 October 2017, it was revealed to the world that the US had deployed over 800 military personnel 'as part of a joint US and Nigerien train, advise and assist mission' to conduct reconnaissance with Nigerien counterparts, several of whom were also killed and injured (CRS 2017:1). For many members of the US Congress, the incident exposed their ignorance as to the objectives of the US military in Africa.

The recriminations and lack of transparency by the US military and security establishment on what the US was doing in Niger was further compounded by the disrespect of the widow of the African American soldier, Sgt La David T. Johnson, whose body had been left behind to rot when the US soldiers had fled the scene of the ambush. Florida Congresswoman Rep Frederica Wilson (D-FL) accompanied Johnson's widow, Myeshia Johnson, during the services for her husband and reported that President Trump insultingly informed Myeshia that 'he knew what he signed up for' when he enlisted in the military, adding that this was 'insensitive' and that he 'should not have said that' (Daily Beast 2017; Alcindor and Hirschfeld Davis 2017).

Seven months later the Pentagon published a report stating that the killing of the four soldiers was due to 'individual, organisational and institutional failures and deficiencies.' The Congressional Research Service (CRS) published a study, 'Niger: frequently asked questions about the October 2017 attack on US soldier', which avoided the burning question of the strategies that necessitated US military presence in Niger. These strategies have in turn facilitated the quagmire of US militarism in Africa (and indeed elsewhere) – a quagmire that is rooted in the exhaustion of the vaunted ideas of white supremacy, the racism that stifles technological innovation among African descendants in the US, the decline of the military management of the international system and the reality that the rest of the world will not continue to subsidise the massive military expenditures of the US.

From the outset of the establishment of the genocidal thinking and actions of the US state, the military has been central to the reproduction of state power. The global struggles against racism, apartheid and imperialism had placed the peoples of Africa in an objective confrontation with white supremacy and the projection of military power in Africa and among African peoples. One of the tasks of the ideological institutions has been to mask the objectives of the ruling elements of the US and to erase the historical memory of the alliance between the US establishment and the apartheid regime. African Americans have been caught inside the US and have been exposed on a daily basis to the scourge of police brutality and racist violence, while simultaneously being called on to serve the interests of US foreign policy. Cedric Robinson's (1983) work on racial capitalism has developed the analytical framework for understanding how the apartheid state structured relations of race, class and accumulation. According to Professor Robin D.G. Kelly, who elaborated on the idea of racial capitalism:

In the South African context, it made sense to add the adjective "racial" to capitalism, not to distinguish it from other kinds of capitalisms but rather to pose a political question: whether dismantling apartheid without overthrowing capitalism would leave in place structures that reproduce racial inequality and the super exploitation of non-white workers. (Black Ink 2020)

It was inside the global anti-racist struggles where the concept of racial capitalism had emerged to signal that capitalism developed and operates within a racialised and gendered order. Earlier scholars such as Archie Mafeje (1992), Bernard Magubane (1979) and Walter Rodney (1972) have written on the interplay between race, class and empire. The post-apartheid era new scholarship by Ed Baptist's (2014) *The Half has Never Been Told: Slavery and the Making of American Capitalism* and Ibram Kendi's (2016) *Stamped from the Beginning: The Definitive History of Racist Ideas in America* brought to the fore the role of racism in the formulation of US policies and the accumulation of capital. This kind of understanding of the nature of US society is very different from the body of scholarship that has been emerging in *Why Europe Intervenes in Africa* (Gegout 2017) and *Foreign Intervention in Africa after the Cold War* (Schmidt 2018). US think tanks and policy centres such as the America Enterprise Institute, Brookings Institute, the Center for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS), the Council on Foreign Relations (CFR), the Rand Corporation and the Congressional Research Service (CRS) continue to downplay the role of failures of the US since 2001 as well as the place of global apartheid in the arena of US politics and society. The revolving door between universities, think tanks, intelligence organisations, military planners and mainstream political operatives render

these policy makers unable to grasp the racialised political culture that produced the 'America First' mantra of the Trump administration.

The Congressional Research Office record of the events in Niger and Mali became talking points for academic contractors of the military and temporarily turned media attention away from the demand for the full Pentagon report on the Tongo Tongo ambush. The summary of the Pentagon report, which was released to the public in May 2018, cited multiple failures of the military with recommendations to 'improve mission planning and approval procedures, re-evaluate equipment and weapons requirements, and review training that U.S. commandos conduct with partner forces' (Baldor 2018). The key formulation that reflected the quagmire in this context was the repetition of the word 'failure' – a word that had also been used to describe the half billion-dollar expenditure of the US military on counter terrorism in Mali, the Pan Sahel Initiative and the Trans-Sahara Counter Terrorism Partnership (TSCTP).

The US troops had been deployed in West Africa by AFRICOM – the United States Africa Command – when the US had been waxing lyrical about maritime and energy security in the Gulf of Guinea, violent extremists and combating HIV/AIDS with PEPFAR (the President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief. What was significant about PEPFAR was that a plan to support the US pharmaceutical industries was run through the Pentagon). The reasons for the AFRICOM deployment had thus been muddled by the imprecise definitions of US military objectives in Africa. Nonetheless the emergence of the Trump administration in 2017 had given clarity to the objective of great power competition in Africa side by side with militarised borders for the interdiction of would-be immigrants (Sieff 2015).

Building a very large base at Agadez had been justified to the US Congress on the grounds of fighting terror in the Sahel region of Africa. Niger is a major terminus in the global trafficking of African labour to Western Europe through Libya and an important space for the US and Europe to monitor and surveil would-be immigrants ensnared in the world of both illegal mining and human trafficking. However, it was understood by sections of the Nigerien military that one of the reasons for the US presence in the northern part of Niger, close to Algeria, was to manage the political transition process in Algeria.² In December 2019, the US government announced that it would be vacating Nigerien Air Base 201 in Agadez, which had just become operational in November at a cost of US\$ 110 million (Cornell 2019). Reports on the planned disengagement of the US from Africa noted that US assistance to French forces – numbering some 4,500 troops – in Mali, Niger and Burkina Faso might also be rescinded.

US militarism in Africa for the past two decades had been justified on the basis of fighting terror and countering violent extremists, but the declarations of the Pentagon after the killing of the Special Forces in Niger revealed the duplicitous nature of US military engagement with Africa. There is currently a body of scholarship that seeks to portray a 'massive' US military presence in Africa with forward operating bases (FOB), cooperative security locations (CSL) and contingency locations (CL), which conveys the impression that with under 6,000 troops deployed, the US can control African spaces and over one billion Africans (Turse 2018; Gelot and Sandor 2019).³ Every agreement including programmes such as the traditional International Military Education and Training (IMET) is represented to demonstrate the image of a massive US military presence across the continent. There is no distinction between the US military role in a country such as Tanzania and a country that has been integrated into Western strategic interests, such as Kenya, in this mapping of US military facilities in Africa.

After the killings in Niger, the efforts at a cover up within the Pentagon brought out recriminations to the point where two years after the killings, the Defense Secretary could not release to the public the full report on the details of the encounter. The US soldiers had been killed a few dozen kilometres from the border with Mali, while the justification for building the Agadez base had been to fight violent extremists in the north of Niger. By the end of 2017, the White House's National Security Strategy proclaimed that the US had almost totally crushed the major threat of terror and must turn its focus on a new threat: the return of the 'great power competition' that defined earlier geopolitical eras, this time against Russia and China.

It is the focus on Russia and China that is embedded in the Africa policy of Donald Trump. After two years, the Trump administration had unveiled its Africa policy through the voice of then-National Security Advisor John Bolton. The *Wall Street Journal* reported that 'Mr. Trump is angling to strengthen ties with like-minded African allies and isolate uncooperative leaders who work with America's biggest adversaries... "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 US military operations and pose a significant threat to U.S. national security interests"' (Nissenbaum 2018). The 'Prosper Africa' plan is now part of a broader policy change to shift US focus from counter-terrorism efforts to a fight for global supremacy with Russia and China. Prosper Africa signalled a retreat from the deployment of Special Forces in Africa that had failed, reinforcing the recursive anatomy of

US military failures (Ullman 2017). This hit or miss militarism in relation to Africa arises in the face of the constellation of the anti-austerity resistance in Africa and the anti-racist struggles in the US. US military failures were especially significant in the information operations of the Pentagon in Africa. The Black Lives Matter movement had exposed the ‘humanitarian’ agenda that had been rolled out to legitimate the US Africa Command. The symbolism of Colin Kaepernick kneeling instead of standing at American football games and his banishment from the National Football League (NFL) had not gone down well in the military. The fact that Kaepernick was being denied a leadership role in the NFL resonated with black officers of the US military who understood that in spite of the fact that soldiers of colour comprise over 43 per cent of the US armed forces, but soldiers of colour comprised 4.8 percent of the 41 senior commanders. (Cooper 2020).

Stung by the anger within Black America over the treatment of Sgt David Johnson, US Army Africa commander Major General Roger Cloutier in a statement to the media in February 2020 noted that, “The US depends especially on French and various African partner forces in West Africa in field operations, but the US strategy has changed from trying to degrade, or reduce the effectiveness, of those extremist groups in the Sahel to trying to keep them from growing their membership and spreading into new areas, AFRICOM told the Pentagon inspector general in the quarter ending Dec. 31.” (France 24, 2020) What was especially significant in this report was the exclusion of southern Africa or the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) in the counter-terror strategy.

As ominous as the killing of the four US service persons in Niger was the killing of staff Sgt Logan Melgar – a soldier of colour who was found dead of strangulation on 4 June 2017, in housing he shared with three other Special Operations forces personnel in Bamako, Mali. By November 2018, the Military Times news outlet reported that ‘Two Navy SEALs and two Marine Raiders will face murder charges in the June 2017 death of an Army Special Forces staff sergeant in Mali. The four personnel face UCMJ [Uniform Code of Military Justice] charges that include felony murder, involuntary manslaughter, conspiracy, obstruction of justice, hazing and burglary in the strangulation death of Army Staff Sgt Logan Melgar, according to a release from Navy Region Mid-Atlantic public affairs’ (South 2018).

The fact that Sgt Logan Melgar was killed by other soldiers of the elite Special Forces brought to the public domain the large presence of neo-Nazis within the US armed forces. For nearly thirty years, the myth had been propagated that the US military was one of the most ethnically diverse and integrated institutions in the nation that long promoted racial equality.

Images of General Colin Powell (former Chairperson of the Joint Chief of Staff) and General William 'Kip' Ward (first head of AFRICOM) had been used to advance this multi-racial military myth. However, new studies are emerging that highlight how the military has become a recruiting ground for neo-Nazis and white nationalists (Phillips 2019; see also Shane 2019). There are now numerous examples of the explosion of white nationalism in the US military and the emergence of organisations such as the Atomwaffen Division, a violent white supremacist group. So emboldened have these white nationalists become that at the annual army navy football game in 2019, many posing with President Trump flashed the white supremacist hand signal that is now used to build solidarity among white racists in the military (Steib 2019).

On Memorial weekend 2020, the leading newspaper of the United States, the *New York Times* came out with two lengthy articles about racism in the US military. The first was an editorial on Sunday May 24 entitled, "Why Does the U.S. Military Celebrate White Supremacy? It is time to rename bases for American heroes – not racist traitors." (NYT May 24, 2020) The second on May 25 was entitled, "African-Americans Are Highly Visible in the Military, but Almost Invisible at the Top, Seventy-five years after integration, the military's upper echelons remain the domain of white men.' Taken together, these two articles represented a stunning acknowledgment of the extent of racism within the ranks of the US military establishment.

The military establishment did not take this accusation of racism sitting down. One day later Defense Department officials eviscerated the piece and said that it was in especially bad taste to run it over the Memorial Day holiday.

"On a solemn day for remembering those that have given their lives for our country fighting against tyranny and subjugation, the NYT has more than a million possible stories of the ultimate sacrifice by American patriots that they could tell. But they don't," Pentagon spokesman Jonathan Hoffman tweeted late Sunday. "Instead they chose to attack the US military – the most diverse meritocracy in the country and the most powerful force for good in world history. We have many stories of valor still waiting to be told this Memorial Day weekend." (Washington Times (2020).

From their response, the military was not disputing the fact that the US military celebrated white supremacists, what angered the leadership was that the articles were carried on the Memorial Day weekend.

The recalibration of the US Africa Command after the deaths of Sgts David Johnson and Logan Melgar is exposing the ambivalent tactics of the US in Africa where the US is torn between presenting itself as mobilising Africans to confront Russia and China while deploying forces to criminalise international flows of migration. These tensions are accentuated by

the reality that inside the US and black communities, many ex-military personnel serve on police forces that are associated with the wanton killing of black youths. Henry Giroux captured the linkages between militarised global apartheid at home and abroad when he wrote after the killing of Michael Brown in 2014 (see also Alexander 2010):

The police have been turned into soldiers who view the neighborhoods in which they operate as war zones. Outfitted with full riot gear, submachine guns, grenade launchers, assault rifles, night vision equipment, armoured vehicles, body armor, and other lethal weapons imported from the battlefields of Iraq and Iran, their mission is to assume battle-ready behavior...Is it any wonder that violence rather than painstaking neighborhood police work and community outreach and engagement becomes the norm for dealing with alleged "criminals", especially at a time when more and more behaviors are being criminalized?...What we are witnessing in this brutal killing and mobilization of state violence is symptomatic of the neoliberal racist punishing state emerging all over the world, with its encroaching machinery of social death. The neoliberal killing machine is on the march globally. The spectacle of neoliberal misery is too great to deny any more and the only mode of control left by the corporate-controlled societies is violence, but a violence that is waged against the new precariat, such as immigrant children, protesting youth, the unemployed, and black youth...[N]eoliberal states can no longer justify and legitimate their exercise of ruthless power and its effects under casino capitalism. (Giroux 2014:10–11)

It was in the period of the COVID 19 pandemic, economic depression and the heightened consciousness about system racism when the police in Minnesota killed George Floyd precipitating one of the most intense uprisings in the history of the United States. The demonstrations spearheaded by the BLM movement registered itself as the largest movement in the history of the United States. (Buchanan et al 2020) These insurrections in every part of the USA deepened the quagmire of US militarism to the point where the top brass of the military refused the deployment of military personnel in the streets against peaceful protesters. The vaunted War on Terror returned to the USA with special recruited elements from Homeland Security deployed in cities.

The Quagmire

The US military seeks to project itself as a racially inclusive organisation while the overt racism and chauvinism of the leadership ensured opposition to the US military in Africa and deep divisions within the ranks to the point where the government could not call out the troops on the streets. The soft underbelly of US racism and militarism shattered in Africa where the US

military resorted to relying on Special Forces and drone warfare. My use of the term quagmire – an awkward, complex or hazardous situation – is not new in relation to the US military: it was used very early in the war against the Vietnamese peoples by The New York Times reporter David Halberstam (2007), who wrote *The Making of a Quagmire: America and Vietnam during the Kennedy Era*.

America's military quagmire deepened in Afghanistan, where the US has been fighting an endless war since 2001. Studies and reports now called 'the Afghanistan papers' have detailed how the military and political establishment lied about the war against the people of Afghanistan. In these papers former military officers stated, 'We were devoid of a fundamental understanding of Afghanistan – we didn't know what we were doing. What are we trying to do here? We didn't have the foggiest notion of what we were undertaking' (Whitlock 2019).

The *Costs of War Project* at Brown University has estimated that the US has spent over a trillion dollars on the war in Afghanistan. 'Since 2001, the Defense Department, State Department and US Agency for International Development have spent or appropriated between \$934 billion and \$978 billion. Those figures do not include money spent by other agencies such as the CIA and the Department of Veterans Affairs, which is responsible for medical care for wounded veterans' (Whitlock 2019). What came out of these reports was the extent to which the information warfare that was being waged in Afghanistan was also being waged against the US populations. "Every data point was altered to present the best picture possible... Surveys, for instance, were totally unreliable but reinforced that everything we were doing was right and we became a self-licking ice cream cone" (Army colonel Bob Crowley, quoted in Whitlock 2019).

The four main takeaways from the quagmire in Afghanistan were: (1) year after year, US officials failed to tell the public the truth about the war in Afghanistan; (2) US and allied officials admitted the mission had no clear strategy and poorly defined objectives; (3) many years into the war, the US still did not understand Afghanistan; and (4) the US wasted vast sums of money trying to remake Afghanistan and bred corruption in the process (Whitlock 2019). Other commentaries similarly lamented the more than a trillion dollars had been spent to maintain a lie. In this regard, corruption and lying marks the twin character of the US military. Another internal Pentagon study on the US military intervention in Iraq since 2003 used the same language of failures, corruption and lies to characterise US military activities. A 1,300-page, two-volume history, complete with more than 1,000 declassified documents, concluded that Iran was the only winner in this US intervention in Iraq (Rayburn and Sobchak 2019a, 2019b).

Indeed, it was in the wars against Iran that the deployment of new tools exposed the new military strategies of the US. The current war against Iran is being fought on multiple fronts involving information warfare, economic warfare, cyber warfare (for example, the Stuxnet computer worm), psychological warfare and skirmishes in Syria and Yemen (with spillovers in the Horn of Africa) (Sanger 2018).

The weaknesses of the US military are particularly manifest in radio spectrum management. Across [the Horn of/north/north-east] Africa and the Middle East, the US has heavily invested in electromagnetic spectrum as a separate domain of warfare with the emplacement of resources in Djibouti and Kenya. However, the lack of coherence in its military strategy has brought the Europeans, especially the Germans, to reconsider their deep alliance with the US. This reconsideration has implications for Africa.

INSTEX and the Weaponisation of Everything

The Trump administration is continuing the use of the Treasury along with the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank as the frontline institutions to ensure that the rest of the world subsidise US militarism. The current administration is dominated by the faction of US policy circles that is totally aligned with Israel, Saudi Arabia and the UAE in the war against Iran. When the Trump administration announced that it was pulling out of the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) agreement on Iran's nuclear program, re-imposing sanctions, then-National Security Advisor John Bolton remarked that the push was to ensure that Iranian oil exports would be reduced to zero.⁴ European states vowed to resist the sanctions by establishing a special purpose vehicle so that they can continue to do business with Iranian companies.⁵ In January 2019, three countries of the EU – Germany, France and Britain – established the Instrument in Support of Trade Exchanges (INSTEX). The system, which has started slowly, is based on the Euro, the second most-used currency in international trade. For the first year, INSTEX provided cover so that countries as far and wide as South Korea, Japan, India, Russia and China along with EU members could trade with Iran in goods not covered by new US sanctions, such as consumer products and medicine. Under the sanctions regime of the US Treasury, these sanctions bar dollar transactions with Iranian banks, even on deals for unsanctioned goods. By the end of 2019, six other European states – Belgium, Denmark, Netherlands, Norway, Finland and Sweden – joined this special purpose vehicle. Between 2018–19, the US government granted eight waivers so that some of her allies such as Korea, Turkey and Japan could continue purchasing Iranian oil, but

the US tightened its sanctions and intensified its war against Iran, unleashing what it termed 'maximum pressure' on Iran. One element of this pressure was intense engagement with Saudi Arabia and the UAE.

The Congressional Research Service report on the US-Iran conflict noted the following:

On May 24, 2019, the Trump Administration notified Congress of immediate foreign military sales and proposed export licenses for direct commercial sales of defense articles – training, equipment, and weapons – with a possible value of more than \$8 billion, including sales of precision guided munitions (PGMs) to Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates (UAE). In making the 22 emergency sale notifications, Secretary of State Pompeo invoked emergency authority codified in the Arms Export Control Act (AECA), and cited the need “to deter further Iranian adventurism in the Gulf and throughout the Middle East”. (CRS 2020:2)

The intensification was manifest in the expansion of the war against Iran with the killing of General Qassim Suleimani in early 2020. The military actions of the USA impelled the Iranians to deepen relations with states such as China, Venezuela and the EU. It was reported in the media in July 2020 that Iran and China drafted a sweeping economic and security partnership paving the way for up to US\$400b of Chinese investments in banking, telecommunications, ports, railways and dozens of other sectors of the Iranian economy. This connection in the context of the Belt and Road Initiative of China undermined the efforts of the USA to isolate the Iranian government. This partnership between Iran and China strengthened the alliance that is growing for the payment system in which INSTEX is inserted.

The German, Chinese, Iranian initiatives laid the foundations for new international alliances with implications for Africa.

Africans Societies and the War against Iran

It was in eastern Africa and in the Indian Ocean region where US militarism was most intense in relation to its global projection of force. All of the states and societies of eastern Africa were in one way or another caught up in this global tug-of-war as the war in Yemen and struggles in the surrounding region brought new military interventions by Saudi Arabia, the UAE, Qatar and Turkey. These states had backed different sides of wars in Somalia. From the period of the Obama administration, the US government had outsourced its relationship to Africa to the governments of Israel, Saudi Arabia, France and the UAE. While conventional work of the US AFRICOM had focused on the 'vast network of bases in Africa' (Turse 2018), the US Treasury had been

far more concerned with ensuring that African states remained in the US dollar orbit, despite the social costs to Africa. In this orbit billions of dollars were siphoned out of Africa in the illicit capital flows that were facilitated by the Bretton Woods Institutions. The Trump administration added another concern with its 2017 ‘travel ban’ –, commonly referred to as the ‘Muslim ban’ – affecting citizens from Iran, Iraq, Libya, Syria, Yemen, Somalia, Sudan, Venezuela and North Korea. In 2020 the US added four other African countries – Nigeria, Sudan, Tanzania and Eritrea – to this ban.

The peoples of Somalia have been caught up in this Islamophobia with an endless war that has now blossomed into a lucrative business enterprise for the African partners of the US military in Africa. A report by the International Crisis Group (2018) noted that ‘Competition between the United Arab Emirates (UAE), on the one hand, and Qatar and, by extension, Turkey on the other has aggravated longstanding intra-Somali disputes: between factions in the capital; between Mogadishu and the regions; and between it and the self-declared Republic of Somaliland’. The energetic activities of the Emir of Abu Dhabi have fomented instability and destabilisation from Libya to Somalia and from Chad to Djibouti (Worth 2020). The leadership of the Emirates along with Saudi Arabia and Israel has filled the breach in the face of the quagmire of US militarism in Africa. In order to harness African support for the multiple wars against Iran, the leader of the UAE played a key role in the brokering of peace between Eritrea and Ethiopia (Fick and Cornwell 2018).

Yemen, Djibouti and the Red Sea

In December 2018 *The Guardian* newspaper reported that former National Security Advisor John Bolton claimed that ‘Djibouti had also fallen into overwhelming debt to China, which had established a military base, close to the US base Camp Lemonnier, and recalled an incident in which laser beams coming from the Chinese base had targeted US pilots, inflicting eye injuries on two of them. He added that Djibouti may soon also hand over the Doraleh container port on the Red Sea to Beijing, which would tilt the balance of power on the Horn of Africa in China’s favour’ (Borger 2018).

In terms of those who focus on geo-strategic locations, Djibouti is considered a strategic position on the Red Sea, less than 30km away from Yemen. Older scholars will remember when Aden was the most important base for the British navy east of Suez. Djibouti has replaced Aden and every major power has since sought to have a presence in Djibouti and in Africa. The US boasted its largest military facility at Camp Lemonnier. France (the

former colonial power), Japan, China and the US have all established a naval presence in Djibouti. It is, however, the Chinese who have established the most robust commercial, transportation and naval presence in Djibouti. The Chinese facility in Djibouti has been constructed in the context of a developing financial and commercial relationship between China, Djibouti and Ethiopia, as demonstrated by the construction of the Ethiopia-Djibouti Railway, the Ethiopia-Djibouti Water Pipeline and, most significantly, Chinese investment in the development of the Doraleh Multipurpose Port, phase one of which opened in May 2017. The Chinese naval presence in Djibouti involved a strategic investment in Africa and continues to be a major part of its Belt and Road Initiative. The experience of the building of the massive Doraleh Multipurpose Port by China in Djibouti is seen by the US government as one of the opening salvos of great power competition and probably one of the clearest expressions of the fragility of the economic wherewithal of the US in Africa.

In 2001, the Government of Djibouti had leased Camp Lemonnier to the US, which became a US naval expeditionary base. For nearly twenty years, the US had built up the camp as its principal military facility in Africa in order to monitor and control the Arabian Peninsula and eastern Africa. After the launch of the failed war against the people of Afghanistan, the US launched Operation Enduring Freedom-Horn of Africa (OEF-HOA) in October 2002 as a military mission to counter both militant Islamism and piracy. The Combined Joint Task Force-Horn of Africa (CJTF-HOA) was established at the same time as OEF-HOA to carry out the operations aims. The official CJTF-HOA area of responsibility comprises Djibouti, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Kenya, the Seychelles, Somalia and Sudan. Outside this area, the CJTF-HOA has also conducted operations in the Comoros, Liberia, Mauritius, Rwanda, Tanzania and Uganda. The military contractor KBR provides full spectrum base operations supported services at Camp Lemonier. Camp Lemonnier also became the only permanent US military base in Africa, although numerous semi-permanent facilities exist. Although this base is a major staging area for drone warfare and information warfare, through the 2010s the camp became prison-like for its US troops because they dared not travel into the city without heavy military escort (Vandiver 2014).

We know from the SIPRI papers that the US expended more than a billion dollars since 2001 to upgrade Camp Lemonier to be its prime staging area in Africa:

In January 2007, as part of the plan to establish Camp Lemonnier as a permanent facility, it was announced that the base would be expanded from 97 acres (39 hectares) to nearly 500 acres (202 hectares). In 2012, the US

Department of Defense initiated a \$14 billion plan to develop the base. The administration of US President Barack Obama also entered into a 30 year lease for Camp Lemonnier in 2014, at an annual cost of \$63 million. In October 2018, as part of the long-term development of the base, the US military announced contracts worth \$240 million to expand base facilities and provide infrastructure to support the US Air Force's largest cargo jets. (Melvin 2019)

Successive Defense Secretaries have travelled to Djibouti to warn against the expanded relations with China. The Dubai-based DP World in 2004 had been granted a 25-year concession to run the Doraleh Container Terminal, but caught in the midst of the Iran/US squabbles, the government of Djibouti cancelled the contract to DP World to operate the Doraleh Container Terminal. During the 2010s, China intensified its relationship with Ethiopia and Djibouti, building a rail line between Djibouti and Addis Ababa and expanding new port facilities. Despite warnings from the US military, Djibouti went ahead with the infrastructure planning. It was in the midst of this tussle between Djibouti and the US that the leaders of Israel and the UAE were deployed to suborn Ethiopia away from China and firmly into the orbit of the Israel/US/Saudi/UAE alliance.

High-level visits by the Prime Minister of Israel to eastern Africa and the diplomatic manoeuvres of the UAE were part of this broader US strategy against China. In the particular case of the rapprochement between Eritrea and Ethiopia, the Emirates had spent billions of dollars to similarly suborn the Eritrean leadership while building their own military facility in the Somaliland and Puntland regions in Somalia and in the port city of Assab, Eritrea. The US Africa policy is to deepen the involvement of Africa in the anti-Iran wars by focusing on China. John Bolton (2018) had been explicit in his remarks when he stated that, 'The predatory practices pursued by China and Russia stunt economic growth in Africa; threaten the financial independence of African nations; inhibit opportunities for US investment; interfere with US military operations; and pose a significant threat to US national security interests'.

Deepening Instability and Counter-revolution in East Africa

It is in Kenya, East Africa, where the quagmire of US militarism has nurtured an alliance with a class of Africans who had been involved in the Global War on Terror as a business. (Campbell 2020) From the period of the anti-colonial and anti-racist struggles, the British and the US military planners had earmarked Kenya as a base for Western military and naval

planning. Chester Crocker, the former Assistant Secretary of State for Africa in the Reagan Administration, conducted his doctoral research entitled *The Transfer of Power in Africa: A Comparative Study of the British and French System of Order* and outlined the role delegated for the Kenyan military in keeping order for empire in eastern Africa. Ryan Schaffer, in his article on the continuities in the role of the Kenyan military and intelligence services, has documented how in spite of changes in names, the mandate of serving Western interests from the colonial era to the present era remained consistent in Kenya (Schaffer 2019).

The research work of the collaborative role of the Kenyan leadership from the time of the Congo crisis of the 1960s to the anti-apartheid struggles has been adequately documented to bear repetition here (Attwood 1967). From the subversion of genuine self-determination to the alliance with French, Saudi and Israeli intelligence in the Safari Club, Kenyan politicians and military leaders were ensnared in militarised global apartheid. What is of special importance in relation to the quagmire are the ways in which the ruling elements of Kenya collaborated with the US intelligence services to prolong the suffering of the peoples of Somalia (Khamisi 2018). Research on the role of Kenya in US militarism in East Africa has brought to the fore the primary role assigned to Kenya in assassinations, cyberwarfare, electronic warfare, rendition and surveillance projects of the US (Usiskin 2019). In the analysis of Catherine Besteman (2019:28), ‘Somalia is but one example of the effect of policies in the global north that incarcerate and traumatize people in the global south in the name of security and profit in the global north’.

The historical evidence now reveals that the US bureaucracy was deadly afraid that the Islamic Courts Union (ICU) could have brought stability to Somalia. In 2006, Dr Jendayi Frazer, then the Assistant Secretary of State for African Affairs, in her meeting with Rear Admiral Richard W. Hunt (Commander of the Combined Joint Task Force, Horn of Africa), had stated that ‘the best-case scenario posits that the ICU and TFG [Transitional Federal Government] would go into dialogue, and as a result, moderates would emerge thus leading to stability in the country and the rebuilding of the state’; whereas, the worst-case scenario would ‘result from a total control by the ICU over Somalia’ (Model 2014). In keeping with the view that a worst-case scenario would be the ICU bringing stability to Somalia, the US intelligence services orchestrated the financing of the Alliance for the Restoration of Peace and Counter-Terrorism (ARPTC) to ensure that Somalia was destabilised (Mazzetti, Gettleman and Schmitt 2016). Elements from the ARPTC evolved into the movement that is now called al-Shabaab.

That the US military needed Somalia to be destabilised and be a propaganda tool for the global war on terror has now been documented by many sources, bringing to the fore how organisations such as Bell Pottinger were central to the projection of the information that Kenya was a hotbed of terror (Al-Bulushi 2019). It was from Kenya where testing of the Information Operations (IO) of Operation Objective Voice (OOV) were rolled out. Significantly this milieu of OOV provided the context for a robust psychographic operation by Cambridge Analytica. The cognitive hacking of millions of Kenyans to undermine democratic participation is now being reported internationally (Madowo 2018).

Kenya as a base for surveillance, cognitive hacking, rendition and disinformation is now being reinforced with the role of Kenya as a theatre to strengthen electromagnetic superiority to assure military advantage across all domains. In January 2020, three US military personnel were killed at Manda Bay and in the aftermath it was revealed that they were specialists in co-ordinating drone warfare. The electronic requirements for drone warfare capabilities, which were being refined in the context of the Somalia Operations by the Kenya Defence Forces, has integrated the Kenyan military and the US with the Saudi and Emirati intelligence services. At the time of the reformulation of the US military policies when the US had rolled out the Africa Growth and Opportunity Act (AGOA) in 2000, Kenya had been chosen as a base for the unleashing of a new trade relationship with Africa. Twenty years after AGOA, the Trump administration chose Kenya as the launch pad for concluding bilateral deals with African countries.

For more than a decade the hearings at Capitol Hill had noted that AGOA was a failure (Helfenbein 2015), but in the specific case of Kenya, it was a good cover for the operations of the US military in eastern Africa. Numerous publications have revealed the commercial, educational, military and political axis between Kenya, the US and countries of the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC). Information on the business ventures of the Kenyan barons in charcoal and sugar remains in the library of the United Nations from the periodic Reports of the Secretary General of the United Nations to the Security Council on African Union Mission to Somalia (AMISOM) because Somalia had become so important in the international framing of the global War on Terror. It was estimated that the business of fighting terror was worth over US\$ 400 million per year for the Kenyan security and political establishment (Allisson 2015).

Security Sector Reform and the Quagmire in East Africa

With the Kenyan army trapped in garrison mode in Somalia, Kenya is now ensnared in the US's global apartheid. This garrison mode is part of a wider East African effort to support the international military activities in Somalia under the banner of the African Union Mission to Somalia (AMISOM). AMISOM has been deployed in Somalia since 2008 and the lack of moral authority behind AMISOM can be seen from the two principal countries that have supplied troops – Burundi and Uganda. Both countries have been exposed for the massive violation of basic rights for citizens, thus it is a testament to the kind of alliances that the US could count on in Africa that they had to turn to leaders with clear record of human rights violations.

The other major method of deepening the alliance with the discredited leaders of many African countries is through a programme called Security Sector Reform (SSR). In theory, SSR involves bringing security agencies under civilian control and aligning their operations to international best practices. In practice, it has meant the jockeying of US and European countries to line up African states to purchase outdated ordinance from their military industries. According to the textbook definitions, 'SSR also means transforming the underlying values, norms, and politics that guide the operations of security agencies. The tenets of SSR include establishing effective governance, oversight, and accountability within the security sector and improving and promoting the sustainable delivery of security and justice, with a view toward peace and respect for the rule of law' (Gitari 2019). Kenya is a classic case of the deterioration of security relations with civilians since 2002. Governance, oversight and accountability have been precisely those aspects of democratic control that have been missing in countries such as Burundi, Kenya, Rwanda and Uganda – four countries that have been involved with SSR and the array of private military contractors that has grown during the War on Terror. In her book *American Covert War in East Africa*, Clara Usiskin (2019) has documented how surveillance technologies, specifically those allowing unauthorised access to devices, have contributed to increased surveillance and unlawful detentions. Hacking tools such as FinFisher and Remote Control System have also been used by East African governments, apparently in an attempt to monitor and silence opposition forces. Private military contractors who have been central to privatised intelligence gathering now dominate the relations between the US and number of African states. Kenya has also accepted the digitalised forms of surveillance that has been promoted by the US military apparatus (Nyabola 2020).

Popular Opposition and the US Military Contractors

One of the essential questions that confronts African leaders who are allied with the US military establishment is the following: can the demands of an informed and increasingly radicalised and disaffected movement of citizens – many of whom are young, impatient and networked with the Black Lives Matter movement internationally – be managed and controlled by a political class that has shown itself blind to the needs of the majority of the people? The popular uprisings all over Africa in the late 2010s, especially in Algeria, Mali and Sudan, have demonstrated the protracted nature of the opposition to oppression. The Sudanese transition in particular has registered itself as a major failure of the US manipulation of the Global War on Terror. It is in the face of these forms of opposition that the US State Department had rolled out a new ‘democracy promotion initiative under the rubric of Office of Transition Initiatives ‘(OTI). Future research will reveal the role of the OTI in Kenya after the massive post-election violence in Kenya in 2008. Select private contractors such as AECOM, Casals and Associates, Chemonics International, Creative Associates International, DAI, International Relief and Development, International Resources Group/Engility, Management Systems International, and RTI International were at the top of the contracting work for the SWIFT (Support Which Implements Fast Transitions) awards of the State Department (Lawson 2009). This future research will be able to compare the ‘transition’ work of OTI in Cuba (Bigwood 2014) and that of a US contractor such as Dyncorp in Liberia (McFate 2008).

The Travel Ban and Militarised Global Apartheid

That Tanzania was placed on the US travel ban in early 2020 was one indication of the ways in which digitalised discrimination is now interwoven with US militarism and information warfare. While Kenya acted as a base for information warfare and cognitive manipulation, the government was also speeding up the process of establishing a biometric ID system. Tanzania had not completed its national identification process by the end of 2019, whereas Kenya was working overtime to meet US standards, regardless of whether the process excluded millions of Kenyans. Even *The New York Times* had to wade in to critique this Kenyan ID system in its digital discrimination of hundreds of thousands of its own citizens (Dahir 2020).

The slowness of countries such as Nigeria and Tanzania to speed up the integration and inter-operability of their surveillance techniques has rendered these two countries open to pressure that is manifest in their inclusion on the travel ban. The Trump administration claimed that the ban was a national

security measure and that the added countries failed to meet US security and information-sharing standards. One indication of how subjective this ban has been could be seen from the way in which Sudan was included in 2017 but after massive lobbying by the UAE was subsequently removed. Following the uprisings in Sudan in 2019, however, the country was once again included in the ban. Commentaries from the mainstream media pointed out that the ban on Nigerian citizens represented racism at its worst and was a clear manifestation of global apartheid. Those who have linked racism and racist immigration practices defined militarised global apartheid as follows:

Militarized global apartheid is a loosely integrated effort by countries in the global north to protect themselves against the mobility of people from the global south. The new apartheid apparatus takes the form of militarized border technologies and personnel, interdictions at sea, biometric tracking of the mobile, detention centers, holding facilities, and the criminalization of mobility. It extends deeply into many places from which people are attempting to leave and pushes them back, it tracks them to interrupt their mobility, stops them at certain borders for detention and deportation, pushes them into the most dangerous traveling routes, and creates new forms of criminality. (Besteman 2019:26)

In the name of security the US government was now criminalising more than a quarter of the population of Africa. As noted by the British Newspaper the Guardian, Feb 16, 2020, ‘Trump started out by scapegoating Muslims in 2017. Now, it’s not just the Muslim ban. It has turned into an African ban’ (Levin 2020).

The contradictions between the goals and the stated strategic objectives of successive US governments brought to the fore the tensions and contradictions between the goals of planners and the limitations of the military management of the international system. The travel ban on Africans reinforced the understanding of the racism of the international system when both Europeans and the US were using immigration issues to justify their racism. For example, Libya in North Africa became a focal point of militarism, immigrant control and racism following its destruction instigated by the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO).

US Militarism – Failure and Retreat in North Africa

In 2007, the Bush administration had rolled out the brand new combatant command, AFRICOM. The hype of the positive developmental goals of AFRICOM was shattered by the US participation in the war to destroy Libya in 2011. This author has detailed the role of the banks and financial houses such as Goldman Sachs in the destruction of Libya in the book *Global*

NATO and the Catastrophic Failure in Libya: Lessons For Africa in the Forging of African Unity (Campbell 2013). In August 2003, the Association of African Central Bank Governors announced plans to create a single African market – an area without internal frontiers in which the free movement of goods, persons, services and capital is ensured – and also establish a common central bank that would manage a single African currency by 2021. At the AU summit in 2007 in Ghana the President of Libya had committed to mobilize the massive reserves of his country to underwrite the launch of the common African currency.

France and Britain had led the way to oppose the Libyan effort to mobilise its reserves to underwrite the common currency for Africa. French President Nicolas Sarkozy was the most explicit when he maintained that the intervention in Libya had been undertaken to save the Euro.

In the months after the NATO invasion, the USA had loudly launched plans for security sector reform in Libya to be carried out alongside the ‘transition’ to democracy. The planning of the US government received a setback less than one year later when the US ambassador to Libya was killed at an intelligence facility in Benghazi in September 2012.

Despite seeking to plan for security sector reform and ‘transition’ in Libya, the realities of the ambitions of France and the EU to dominate Africa as part of the arc of European security brought deadly competition between different members of the Gulf Cooperation Council and the EU with disastrous consequences for Africa. Briefly, the so-called Libyan National Army (LNA), led by General Hiftar, was supported by the UAE, Saudi Arabia, Egypt, France, Russia and elements from the Sudanese military (before the removal of the Bashir regime in April 2019). The other side of this war led by the interim Libyan Government of National Accord (GNA) – recognised by the United Nations and the African Union (AU) – was supported militarily by Qatar, Turkey, Italy and the US. During the Obama administration, the US Treasury supported the GNA because the gold reserves of Libya were held in the vaults in Tripoli. The LNA and its government had printed its own currency in 2014 but the US Treasury refused to recognise it; Haftar thereafter went on an all-out push to capture Tripoli. In April 2019, his forces announced that they were on the verge of capturing Libya but this boast had not materialised one year later. However, the Trump administration gave tacit support to the Hiftar side of the destruction after the UAE and Saudi Arabia beseeched them to support Hiftar. In December 2019, Turkey deepened the contending alliances by joining Qatar in providing military support to the GNA. The government of Turkey then signed a massive gas deal with the GNA government.

With the debacle in Libya and the isolation of the US, the German government began to seek an augmented global role by calling a Berlin Conference in January 2020 to bring all sides of the destruction to the table. At this time of writing the so-called ceasefire and negotiations are on-going, but the re-emergence of Germany and the EU largely stemmed from the failure of the duplicitous policies of France in West Africa that deepened militarisation of the region. The energetic intervention of Germany and the sidelining of France came from the exhaustion of options for the French in West Africa.

The US and its Comeuppance in Mali

At the height of the folly of the invasion of Iraq, the Bush administration had launched a massive propaganda campaign to intensify military operations in Mali and West Africa. Academic planners came up with the 'banana theory of terrorism' that pointed to an arc of terror from Afghanistan through Iraq to the Sahel region of Africa (Keenan 2007). By the time the racists in the Special Forces of the US military killed Green Beret Staff Sgt Logan Melgar in 2017 in Mali, the US government had long been embedded in a corrupt and contradictory counter-terror operation. The broad outlines of the corruption involved in the more than US\$ 700 million spent on the Trans-Saharan Counter Terrorism Partnership (TSCTP) was elaborated on in Jeremy Keenan's (2013) book *The Dying Sahara: US Imperialism and the War on Terror*. The US had entered into a trans-Saharan quicksand of human and arms trafficking with the support of intelligence and military officials from Algeria and France. This alliance had been justified in the name of countering the threats of violent extremists. With over half a billion dollars expended in support of a 'regional security approach' that spanned the 3Ds – diplomacy, defense and development – this programme covered ten countries in the Sahel and Maghreb: Algeria, Burkina Faso, Chad, Mauritania, Mali, Morocco, Niger, Nigeria, Senegal and Tunisia. The sequences of the failures of the US intervention were accentuated after the Libyan debacle when France decided to profit from the largesse that had been invested in counter-terror operations.

Mali was the epicentre of the TSCTP with military officers from all across the region from Morocco to Nigeria jumping on the gravy train. US officials heralded the 'Malian military as an exemplary partner' while sections of the US counter-terror operations were implicated in prostitution and drugs. The press reports of 'sex, drugs, and dead soldiers' in Mali were only the tip of the out-of-control counter-terror operations in Africa (Turse 2015).

Malian society was further corrupted by the trafficking, militarisation and influx of refugees from the Libyan debacle. The collapse of the Malian military, including units trained by US Special Forces, was followed by a coup led by an American-trained officer, Captain Amadou Sanogo. After the coup, French intrigue provided the enabling environment for soldiers from the Libyan army from among the Tuareg to enter northern Mali.

France and the Sequences of the Quagmire

Jeremy Keegan (2007) has identified two sequences of operational failures by US counter-terror operations in the Sahara. A third sequence unfolded after the Libyan intervention by NATO in 2011, when Tuareg fighters who had been recruited by the Gaddafi regime were deployed in the region by France. Later France turned to the same Security Council of the United Nations to seek assistance to fight the Tuareg. France intensified its manipulation of the fight against terror in 2013 and 2014 when elements supported by France in Mali formed distinct groups that were later deemed terrorist organisations. The French intervention, codenamed Operation Serval, was highly supported by the US and the UK and given the imprimatur of the UN Security Council.

The idea that al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM) was on the verge of taking over Mali and West Africa had been promoted by France to justify military intervention under the banner of Operation Serval. France had dispatched approximately 4,000 troops to repel Jihadists who had taken over northern Mali. After these Jihadists seized a number of towns and desecrated important cultural centres, international opinion was sufficiently outraged to mute criticisms of the French intervention. Progressive African opinion was divided over this invasion of Mali as France promoted the idea through a massive propaganda and disinformation campaign that it was 'invited' by the government of Mali. Furthermore, select pictures of Malian citizens celebrating the routing of the Jihadists from towns that had been seized since 12 January 2013 gave legitimacy to the idea that Africans welcomed the French military intervention. After this 'successful' intervention, Western media outlets were replete with stories that it was the alliance between France and her allies along with the US that protected – and could continue to protect – this region of Africa (from Mauritania to Sudan) from being overrun by terrorists. The leadership of Chad, ever beholden to France, joined in this operation.

On January 11, 2013, France had launched operation "Serval" with 1,700 soldiers, planes and helicopters to stop the progression of 'jihadist' columns which controlled northern Mali. This was the period when the citizens

of Bamako were supposed to have come out to cheer for the French forces of 'peacekeeping.' A year and a half later, on August 1, 2014, this "Serval" mission was replaced by Operation "Barkhane" and extended to the entire Sahelo-Saharan strip, an area as large as Europe. Five countries are concerned: Mali, Mauritania, Niger, Burkina Faso and Chad. To be able to financially support this deployment, France used its position on the P5 of the Security Council to lobby for the deployment of UN troops. The United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali (MINUSMA), was deployed from July 1, 2013, following the International Support Mission in Mali (Misma) formed by the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS/CEDEAO).

Even before the UN setting up MINUSMA, France had lobbied the EU to send troops to Mali so that the European Training Mission of the Malian Army (EUTM Mali), was launched in February 2013, bringing together 620 soldiers from 28 European countries, with a training mission for Malian soldiers, without participating in the fighting.

The mission, named United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali (MINUSMA), grew to be the third-largest UN peacekeeping mission reaching 12,644 military and 1,734 police personnel, 454 staff officers and 39 experts deployed from more than 50 UN partner nations. Its annual budget was more than US\$ 1 billion. The French military personnel are supported within the context of MINUSMA. The US military supported this French foray in five ways: (1) intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance (ISR) activities; (2) support for French counter-terrorism operations; (3) support for MINUSMA; (4) development assistance; and (5) aerial refuelling.

Targeted Sanctions

France was not content with the incorporation of the UN and used its position in the Security Council to seek to displace the Nigerian-led Multinational Joint Task Force (MNJTF) fighting Boko Haram in the Lake Chad region. The head of the Lake Chad Basin Commission (LCBC) as well as other officers accused France of supporting Boko Haram and extending the crisis in the Lake Chad region. According to Professor Jibrin Ibrahim of the Centre for Development and Democracy in Nigeria (CDD):

France has become very unpopular in the Sahel because of widespread belief that it was pretending to fight the jihadists in public while supporting them in secret. People are saying that with its vast array of drones, planes and satellite cover, how are convoys of hundreds of terrorists able to drive over hundreds of kilometres and attack soldiers without any warning from the French. (Ibrahim 2019)

In seeking to replace the MNJTF of the LCBC, in 2014 France proposed to the UN the creation of the G5 Sahel force to fight terror in the Sahel, comprised of five states of West Africa: Burkina Faso, Chad, Mali, Mauritania and Niger. This G5 joint military force was endorsed by the African Union and recognised by the UN Security Council (resolution 2359) on 21 June 2017. In June 2017 when France went to the Security Council of the United Nations to pitch this G5, there was heated debate in the United Nations Security Council and the United States opposed France setting up this G5. The US had opposed it on the grounds that the G5 was a duplication of MINUSMA. Unable to get support for the G5 initiative from the UN Peacekeeping operations, France turned to Saudi Arabia who provided €100 million. Though the US opposed support via the UN Security Council, the US ultimately contributed US\$ 60 million to French efforts. By this time the German government had decided to deploy support for MINUSMA. In the aftermath of the killing of the four US military personnel in Niger in October 2017, the US relented and supported the French call for the UN peace keeping operations to bankroll the force.

In 2017, the US AFRICOM had declared five lines of the future of the US;

1. Neutralize al-Shabab
2. Degrade violent extremism in the Mahgreb
3. Contain and degrade Boko Haram
4. Interdict illicit activity in the Gulf of Guinea and Central Africa with willing and capable African partners
5. Build peacekeeping, humanitarian assistance and disaster response capacity of African partners

By 2018, the US military decided that the volatile nature of the West African deployment, dissension within the ranks between black and white soldiers and with the Germans becoming more emboldened to oppose the US over Iran, the Trump administration started to pull troops out of West Africa and began to focus on great power competition. The Trump administration trumpeted the slogan ‘Make America Great Again’ and former Trade Administrator Rosa Whitaker opined that the US should make itself great again in Africa:

If President Donald Trump is to “Make America Great Again” he cannot afford to ignore Africa. It is in this region of over one billion people – the world’s second-fastest growing continent – that the rise of China and the relative decline in U.S. power is more stark than in any other. China surpassed the United States as Africa’s largest trading partner in 2009. Since then Britain and France have also passed America by. (Whitaker 2017)

The arrival of the Trump administration brought a more white nationalist and racist administration that vowed to humble China and to bring Africa firmly under the control of the US dollar. However, the contradictions of racism and jingoism ensured that the resistance to the Trump administration in the US was joined with the global resistance against the oppressive conditions of accumulation.

Imperial Rivalries in Africa

It is well known that capitalist competition leads to war. In the present fragility of capital, Africa has become the battle ground for great power competition. For the Trump administration the policy of the US is to wean African states away from trade and economic collaboration with China and this was explicitly stated to the government of Kenya when Uhuru Kenyatta visited the White House to negotiate a new Trade Deal in February 2020. Notwithstanding the visibility of the US cultural products in Africa, the reality has been that the actual trade in commodities between Africa and the US has been very thin and declining in the past five years since the US became the number one producer of petroleum products. (USITC, 2020) The Russian government, suffering under sanctions from the US, has intensified its military activities in Africa and in 2019 called the Russia Africa summit to deepen and strengthen its ties with African states. Notwithstanding the fact that white racism has now blossomed in Russia, select African leaders ignore the white supremacists ideas that now emanate from Russia.

This new battle over Africa has been most intense in Europe where the German government has decided to take over the push for European interests in Africa. The bankruptcy of France in the Sahel and the unpopularity of France in West Africa energised the German government to be more aggressive in Africa. After the vote by the British electorate to support the Conservatives to leave the European Union, the need for continued EU/Africa relations became more urgent and it was after the Brexit vote that France made the agreement with Alassane Dramane Ouattara of Ivory Coast to leave the West African CFA franc, but retain the link of the West African currency to the Euro. The leadership of Germany has dropped its reticence to oppose the US in Africa and signalled this new boldness by calling the Berlin Conference on Libya in January 2020.

The German government has made two clear strategic moves in its confrontation with the US in Africa. The first is for the wider EU to slowly take over from the French in managing the former French satellites in Africa. The delinking of the CFA is designed to bring African currencies

and natural resources (especially gold) under the control of the Euro. The second is to move to a closer alliance with Russia, especially after Turkey made the deal with the GNA in Libya for the sharing of gas production in the Mediterranean. There are, however, four areas of contention between the Germans and the US.

The first is over energy and the gas pipeline, the Nord Stream 2, to Germany from Russia. The US opposes this deal and want the Europeans/Germans to purchase more expensive natural gas from the US.

The second is the trade war and promised sanctions by the Trump administration against the German automobile industry. After the loud and inconclusive trade war against China, which was partially resolved in 2019, the US government has accused German automakers of unfair competition.

The third is the technology battle between the US and China with Huawei. The US is behind in 5G technology and has threatened the world not to collaborate with the Chinese technology giant, arguing that Huawei will provide a backdoor for Chinese intelligence. Notwithstanding this warning, German car companies such as Audi have entered into advanced collaboration with the Chinese. For African states, the use of Chinese technology threatens the planned control of African spectrums for electronic and information warfare.

The fourth contention is with the establishment of INSTEX – the special purpose vehicle that has been established so that Iranian products can bypass US sanctions. For the moment, INSTEX is for medicine and oil but countries such as China and Russia will likely turn to INSTEX as the currency war intensifies.

These four issues are all linked to the cutthroat war between the Euro and the dollar. As of early 2020, 65 per cent of reserves are held in the dollar and only 20 per cent in the Euro. One hidden component of this currency war is that all sides are hoarding gold and the region of West Africa has become important because of the massive gold fields that are now being worked from West Africa through to the Sudan.

Alternatives to US Militarism in Africa

In the midst of the US military planning for great power competition, the peoples of Africa have not been complacent. Despite the sluggishness of the AU and its support for French initiatives, the AU had declared its intention of silencing guns by 2020. The intent did not literally mean that all guns would be silent by 2020, but that trade and commercial relations between African states would take precedence of military relations. In the process, a

number of African states ratified the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA)⁶ agreement. These governments were finally seeking to catch up with the traders and ordinary citizens of Africa who believed in Africa for the Africans and did not adhere to the borders that prevented trade and kinship relations. The very same traders were forcing the issue of a common currency and in a region such as East Africa there are now advanced plans for the return of the East African currency by 2024 (*Citizen Tanzania*, 29 Jan 2020). This prospect requires political will in so far as prior to 1977 there had been a common currency and a common monetary policy in East Africa and the integration of East Africa was more advanced than what exists in the EU at present.

US and European strategists are focused on how to stabilise accumulation in Nigeria in favour of US or European capitalism. Nigeria, like most African countries, has been integrated into the security sector reform of the UK and the US but the incoherence of the Nigerian capitalist class ensured that there was segmentation in their relationship with private military contractors and that no particular sector of the security apparatus has a monopoly over providing electronics or weapons to the security services of Nigeria.

Racism compounds the alliance between sections of the Nigerian capitalist class and the US security establishment. This contradiction strengthens the forces inside Nigeria that historically supported the anti-apartheid struggles and refused to be drawn in as an ally of white supremacy. Former Nigerian President Murtala Mohammed had provided crucial leadership in 1975 when Henry Kissinger was pressuring Nigeria to oppose the frontline states that supported the freedom fighters in Angola. This experience demonstrated that the Nigerian political leadership could take positions that would be in the interest of pan-African solidarity. According to the constitution of Nigeria, the foreign policy of the state is guided by five key concepts:

- a. promotion and protection of the national interest;
- b. promotion of African integration and support for African unity;
- c. promotion of international co-operation for the consolidation of universal peace and mutual respect among all nations and elimination of discrimination in all its manifestations;
- d. respect for international law and treaty obligations as well as the seeking of settlement of international disputes by negotiation, mediation, conciliation, arbitration and adjudication; and
- e. promotion of a just world economic order.

Despite these clear objectives, thus far since the era of Murtala Mohammed, the political leadership has worked against the promotion of African

integration and support for African unity. Nonetheless, this leadership cannot escape the unforeseen consequences of the US currency wars with China. The Nigerian state has earned the wrath of the US financial class because the rulers have decided to place 10 per cent of their currency reserves in the Chinese currency, the RMB. As one component of great power competition, the US remains very nervous about currency swap arrangements between African states and China (Prasad 2016). Popular opposition forces are calling for uprisings while former military officials are now calling for 'People-centred Security Sector Reform'.

The other cogent feature of the US/Africa military relationship can be found in the historical relations between the states of southern Africa and the US military. Throughout the years of the anti-apartheid struggles, Tanzania had taken the lead within the Organisation of African Unity (OAU) liberation committee to give coherence to the military, diplomatic and political alliance that had emerged in the region. The current disinformation campaign that is carried out from Kenya and supported by AFRICOM's social science research platform is more difficult in the states that had fought against apartheid. Notwithstanding the fact that the US had spent US\$ 1 billion after the defeat of apartheid to harness the energies of the youth to join 'conflict management' fronts (Hearn 2000), it had been difficult to convince the peoples of the region of southern Africa that the principal impetus for US engagement with apartheid was to fight communism in Africa.

Sustainable peace and a transformation of the militarised institutions that have been established in Africa since the colonial era requires a break with the old US security policies. This author has joined in the forces of peace that are working to build a new pan-African peace infrastructure for Africans and peace-loving peoples all over the world. Such an infrastructure project must break with the pre-occupation with strategic minerals and energy that is based on the extraction of petroleum resources. Peace and transformation in Africa is inseparable from a break with environmental destruction in Africa. Just as how there is now an understanding in the US that the society needs an economic recovery programme that is based on the green collar economy, there is also an understanding in Africa that African economic transformation must be built around the provision of food, clothing, shelter and health care for its citizens. This also involves the fight against militarised global apartheid.

In the midst of World War I, Dubois had warned the peace movement of the relationship between racism, war and the plunder of African resources:

What, then, are we to do, who desire peace and the civilization of all men? Hitherto the peace movement has confined itself chiefly to figures about

the cost of war and platitudes on humanity. What do nations care about the cost of war, if by spending a few hundred millions in steel and gunpowder they can gain a thousand millions in diamonds and cocoa? How can love of humanity appeal as a motive to nations whose love of luxury is built on the inhuman exploitation of human beings, and who, especially in recent years, have been taught to regard these human beings as inhuman? I appealed to the last meeting of peace societies in St. Louis, saying, "Should you not discuss racial prejudice as a prime cause of war?" The secretary was sorry but was unwilling to introduce controversial matters! (Dubois n.d.:712)

The appeal of W.E.B Dubois to the peace movement in 1915 is just as urgent for the environmental justice and peace movement today and it is important to restate his basic claim:

We, then, who want peace, must remove the real causes of war. We have extended gradually our conception of democracy beyond our social class to all social classes in our nation; we have gone further and extended our democratic ideals not simply to all classes of our nation, but to those of other nations of our blood and lineage – to what we call "European" civilization. If we want real peace and lasting culture, however, we must go further. We must extend the democratic ideal to the yellow, brown, and black peoples. (Dubois n.d.:712)

After the struggles against apartheid, US foundations inundated Africa with programmes for governance, human rights and democracy, but the essence of these projects were to denude democracy of real content. In societies such as Kenya and Egypt, the US has worked tirelessly to support anti-democratic and militaristic elements. Humanitarian NGOs working under the banner of the Office of Transition Initiatives now serve the interests of US militarism.

The global peace movement is faced with two choices: deepening the quagmire or making a break with the logics of US military interventions and the European competition with the dollar. David Halberstam and *The New York Times* had identified the US quagmire in Vietnam as the drip-drip policies that pushed the US deeper and deeper into Vietnam until it was defeated. Arthur Schlesinger summed up the process of drip-drip decision-making in this way:

In retrospect, Vietnam is a triumph of the politics of inadvertence. We have achieved our present entanglement, not after due and deliberate consideration, but through a series of small decisions. It is not only idle, but unfair to seek out guilty men. Each step in the deepening of American commitment was reasonably regarded at the time as the last that would be necessary. Yet, in retrospect, each step led only to the next, until we find ourselves entrapped today in that nightmare of American strategists, a land war in Asia – a war which no president...desired or intended. (Schlesinger 1967:37)

This assessment of how the US became bogged down in Vietnam ignored the imperial role that the US had assigned itself in the context of maintaining the international capitalist system and the reality that the logic of the military management of the international system propelled the US into the quagmire of East Asia. Studies on the US quagmire also ignore the flourishing of the civil rights movement, the peace movement, the women's movement and the environmental justice movement in the wake of the war against the Vietnamese people. After all, it was Dr Martin Luther King Jr who, in his opposition to war and racism, called upon citizens to oppose war in order to escape spiritual death.

The salient lesson was that the US could only get out of the quagmire through the intense work of the peace movement and the black liberation movement. The peace movement was thus allied with the forces fighting for basic rights in the US and the anti-apartheid movement. This alliance between the peace movement and the black liberation movement was one of the highest points of the struggles for social justice and a new social system in the US. The current struggles by the environmental justice movements, affordable health care for all, the reparations movement and the peace movement provide another opportunity to rekindle the kind of grassroots alliance to oppose US militarism at home and abroad. The reparations movement is one front where the struggles can converge.

Conclusion: Reparations, Peace and Justice

It is on the question of reparative justice and the building of a strong union of the peoples of Africa where the progressive forces will begin to link the struggles for peace in Africa with the anti-racist forces of the Black Lives Matter movement. Through the Africa Command social science research projects and the new German financing of research in Africa, there has been a push to isolate African scholars from the global claims for reparations and peace. The coming to power of the Bolsonaro government in Brazil and the white supremacist ideas of Making America Great Again has placed more urgency in pan-African co-operation for peace. As a holding operation, the government of France has accepted that it committed crimes in the past and committed itself to returning all cultural artefacts to Africa. There was one caveat – these could not be returned because the African states do not have the infrastructure to maintain their own cultural heritage. The scourge of the COVID 19 pandemic and the visual images of hundreds of thousands of people dying because of the business model that placed profits before human health has galvanised the call for pan-African solidarity, indeed, global solidarity and cooperation.

The experience of the solidarity of Cuban doctors supporting health services in Africa, the Caribbean, Europe and elsewhere has exposed one window of international cooperation when the United States has sought to intensify sanctions against Cuba. The Caribbean islands have stood firm in opposing US sanctions and military threats against Venezuela and Cuba. The Caribbean Reparations Commission has approached the African Union to support Cuba and Venezuela, while advancing the educational work within the African descendant caucus of the UN African descendants' decade. Intellectual work on collective reparations and the pressures inside the US have brought about recognition of the centrality of African labour to the wealth of the US. This is now manifest in the 1619 project of *The New York Times*, which seeks to re-examine the legacy of slavery in the US. As one component of the intellectual energy behind the 1619 project, the editors of the NYT called on the US military to change the names of the US military installations that celebrate white supremacy. Thus far, sections of the old left who have diminished the role of racism in the evolution of capitalism have recoiled from linking reparative justice to peace and health.

However, the depth of the suffering and complete incompetence of the US political leadership has fully exposed the racist nature of the present ruling faction of US capitalism. The sustained pressures that brought about the 1619 initiative came from progressive intellectuals and these same energies have exposed the shibboleths of 'governance, democracy and human rights' with 'security sector reform' that supported the militarisation of Africa. It is the same kind of intellectual and political work that is needed to expose and oppose US militarism in Africa. This same energy by progressive journalists led to the clear editorial of the New York Times bemoaning, *Why Does the U.S. Military Celebrate White Supremacy? It is time to rename bases for American heroes – not racist traitors.*"

Racism in the US military led to racist US soldiers killing non-white soldiers in Mali and the US announcing a retreat from Africa. This military retreat is stillborn because the US is seeking to impose unequal trade agreements on the peoples of Africa, even while the results of the US AGOA has proven to be a failure. Despite this failure, the US government is seeking to mobilise Kenya into a special trading relation in order to break the possible momentum of the African Continental Free Trade area in a moment of capitalist depression. From South Africa where society fought against apartheid, the trade minister warned the US that materials such as ferrosilicon manganese (required for the production of steel) can only be procured from Georgia and South Africa.

The social movements for better quality of life in societies in Africa and the US have accumulated experiences since the fight against apartheid. Rebellions and uprisings have occurred from The Gambia to Burkina Faso and from Tunisia to Egypt. African women in particular are very clear that the direct violence of militarism feeds and reproduces structural gendered violence all over the African world. Hence, grassroots African women are at the forefront of the struggles against militarism. These women want peace, bodily integrity, universal and affordable health care, free movement and a common African currency. In 2018, the women of Algeria and Sudan have pointed the way. In Sudan, women took the leadership to fight against the government that was an ally of Saudi Arabia and ally of Israel. The Sudanese army under Bashir had been hired out to fight for Saudi Arabia and the UAE in Yemen. Alaa Salah, a 22-year-old activist and journalist, became an icon when she got on a motor car and called for people to fight for peace. Africans at home and abroad must inspire a new mind-set so that all of the differing social forces of the oppressed, agencies for peace and progressive academic institutions in the US can move to a new vision of relating to Africans as full human beings.

Notes

1. Scholars from varying ideological backgrounds such as Samir Amin (2004), Ali Mazrui (YEAR), Manning Marable (2009) and Lebohang Pheko (2015) have all written on global apartheid. See also Salih Booker and William Minter's (2001) definition: 'Global apartheid, stated briefly, is an international system of minority rule whose attributes include: differential access to basic human rights; wealth and power structured by race and place; structural racism, embedded in global economic processes, political institutions and cultural assumptions; and the international practice of double standards that assume inferior rights to be appropriate for certain "others," defined by location, origin, race or gender'.
2. Personal communication from the former Minister of Defense in Niger in N'guigmi, Diffa Region, May 2018.
3. In his 2015 article, Turse disclosed that there are dozens of US military installations in Africa, besides Camp Lemonnier in Djibouti. These numerous co-operative security locations (CSLs), forward operating locations (FOLs) and other outposts have been built by the US in Burkina Faso, Cameroon, the Central African Republic, Chad, Djibouti, Ethiopia, Gabon, Ghana, Kenya, Mali, Niger, Senegal, the Seychelles, Somalia, South Sudan and Uganda. According to the American journalist, the US military also had access to locations in Algeria, Botswana, Namibia, São Tomé and Príncipe, Sierra Leone, Tunisia, Zambia and other countries.
4. US sanctions were re-imposed in November 2018 on Iran's auto industry, as well as trade in gold and other metals. The sanctions also covered Iran's energy sector – the mainstay of its exports and government finances – along with shipping and insurance and central bank transactions.

5. A special purpose vehicle (SPV), also called a special purpose entity (SPE), is a subsidiary created by a parent company to isolate financial risk. Its legal status as a separate company makes its obligations secure even if the parent company goes bankrupt. Many US financial houses created these SPVs during the financial crisis in 2008. See Johnson and Kwak (2001) for an elaboration.
6. The AfCFTA, which was signed in 2018 and officially began on 30 May 2019, will remove tariffs on at least 90 per cent of the goods traded among member countries. This is expected to proliferate intra-African trade, which accounts roughly for 17 per cent of all the continent's exports. The UN Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA) has estimated that intra-African trade would likely increase by 52.3 per cent by 2020.

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