

[U.S. Command Fights Terrorists On African Soil : NPR](http://www.npr.org/2012/03/09/148278069/u-s-command-fights-terrorists-on-african-soil)

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- U.S. Command Fights Terrorists On African Soil
- March 9, 2012

The recent spectacular rescue of an American aid worker from Somali pirates put a spotlight on the U.S. military's newest regional command, Africom. The Africa Command was created in 2007. Morning Edition's Renee Montagne talks to General Carter Ham about U.S. military involvement in Africa and fighting terrorist groups on African soil.

- STEVE INSKEEP, HOST:

It's MORNING EDITION from NPR News. I'm Steve Inskeep.

Back in January, Navy Seals rescued an American aid worker who was held for months by Somali pirates. That moment shone a spotlight on the U.S. military's newest regional command - Africom, the U.S. Africa Command, which was created in 2007. One of its biggest concerns is dealing with terrorist groups such as al-Qaida and its regional affiliates. Renee spoke with the head of Africom, General Carter Ham.

RENEE MONTAGNE, HOST:

Good morning.

GENERAL CARTER HAM: Good morning, Renee. Thank you.

MONTAGNE: One of the biggest terrorist attacks in the '90s was in Africa, a very deadly coordinated assault on two American embassies. Are you still concerned with the threat to American interests on the continent or do you see Africa as a potential staging ground for terrorist attacks in the U.S.?

HAM: It is both, Renee. We're charged with insuring the security of Americans and American interests from threats that might emanate from the continent of Africa. We have seen, certainly, the two embassy attacks, but also kidnappings of American citizens, other indications that they are expressing the intent to export their attacks.

- MONTAGNE: Well, the U.S. does have a small base in Djibouti, which is east Africa. Describe that base for us.

HAM: The geographic location of Djibouti places it right at the horn of Africa, so at the intersection of the Gulf of Aden and the Red Sea, directly across the Gulf of Aden from Yemen. It's a major shipping line for commerce. And it also is a great platform from which we can extend our reach into other parts of east Africa.

MONTAGNE: Where else on the continent would you see American forces and what would they be doing?

HAM: In most of the rest of the continent of Africa, our presence is very small and specifically tailored to the mission sets that are required. For example, many listeners, I think, will recall a few months ago when President Obama announced the deployment of about a hundred special forces advisors to help the militaries of Uganda, Central African Republic, Democratic Republic of Congo and the Republic of South Sudan to counter the threat posed by a violent organization known as the Lord's Resistance Army.

- MONTAGNE: Let's talk for a moment about the Lord's Resistance Army and that particular mission in Uganda alongside soldiers there. What American interest is served by getting American forces involved in a fight that does seem to be basically local?

HAM: Well, first, our personnel are there in an advise and assist role, not in a role to conduct operations to counter the Lord's Resistance Army. That's the responsibility, and rightfully so, of the four African nations which are involved.

It's a fair question to say why should the U.S. care about this. The Lord's Resistance Army, though very small, is a very vicious organization. It's pretty horrific what they do.

But from a larger standpoint, they have caused the displacement of many tens of thousands of people. They've disrupted economies. They've disrupted good governance. They undermine regional stability. And that's why we're concerned.

- MONTAGNE: Which gets us to the Arab Spring. Libya, for instance, did not have a military to military relationship with the U.S. before the Arab spring, but it now does. And Africom was the first to send missiles into Libya in that time before NATO got involved. How much effect has the Arab Spring had on your mission?
- HAM: It's had a very significant effect. The conduct of military operations in Libya did afford now the opportunity to establish a military to military relationship with Libya, which did not previously exist. And we found the Libyans very understanding of the need to establish security across the country and also to contribute to regional stability. And we're seeking to establish what I would call a normal military to military relationship with Libya.

We see much the same thing, though less violently, in Tunisia. In fact, Tunisia's probably a little ahead of Libya and are moving on a very positive trend, and we're in contact with the Tunisians and have a very good relationship with their minister of defense to find ways in which we can cooperate on mutual concerns in the security arena.

MONTAGNE: General, thanks very much for speaking with us.

HAM: OK, Renee. Thank you very much.

MONTAGNE: General Carter Ham is the head of the U.S. Africa Command, speaking to us from the Pentagon.

[Asia Times Online :: THE ROVING EYE : The US power grab in Africa](http://www.atimes.com/atimes/Global_Economy/MJ21Dj03.html)

http://www.atimes.com/atimes/Global_Economy/MJ21Dj03.html

- Oct 21, 2011
- **THE ROVING EYE**
- **The US power grab in Africa**
By Pepe Escobar
- Beware of strangers bearing gifts. Post-modern Amazon and United States Secretary of State Hillary Clinton finally landed in Tripoli - on a military jet - to lavish praise on the dodgy Transitional National Council (TNC), those opportunists/defectors/Islamists formerly known as "North Atlantic Treaty Organization rebels".

Clinton was greeted on Tuesday "on the soil of free Libya" (her words) by what the New York Times quaintly described as an "irregular militia" (translation: a heavily armed gang that is already raising hell against other heavily armed gangs), before meeting TNC chairman Mustafa Abdel-NATO (formerly known as Jalil).

- The bulk of the US gifts - US\$40 million - on top of the \$135

million already disbursed since February (most of it military "aid") is for a missile scramble conducted by "contractors" (ie mercenaries) trying to track the tsunami of mobile anti-aircraft rockets that by now are already conveniently ensconced in secret Islamist warehouses.

Clinton told students at the University of Tripoli, "We are on your side." She could not possibly connect the dots and note that the *shabab* (young people) who started demonstrating against Muammar Gaddafi in February have absolutely nothing to do with the TNC's opportunists/defectors/Islamists who hijacked the protests. But she did have time to unveil another US foreign policy "secret" - that the US wants Gaddafi "dead or alive", George W Bush-style (or as the beneficiary of targeted assassination, Barack Obama-style).

- The new Fallujah
In her exhausting six-and-a-half hours on "free Libya" soil, Clinton couldn't possibly find the time to hitch a helicopter ride to Sirte and see for herself how NATO is exercising R2P ("responsibility to protect" civilians).
- A few hundred soldiers and no less than 80,000 civilians have been bombed for weeks

by NATO and the former "rebels". Only 20,000 civilians have managed to escape. There's no food left. Water and electricity have been cut off. Hospitals are idle. The city - under siege - is in ruins. Sirte *imams* have issued a *fatwa* (decree) allowing survivors to eat cats and dogs.

- What Gaddafi never did to Benghazi - and there's no evidence he might have - the TNC is doing to Sirte, Gaddafi's home town. Just like the murderous US offensive in Fallujah in the Iraqi Sunni triangle in late 2004, Sirte is being destroyed in order to "save it". Sirte, the new Fallujah, is brought to you by NATO rebels. R2P, RIP.
- It gets much nastier. Libya is just one angle of a multi-vector US strategy in Africa. Wacko presidential candidate Michelle Bachmann, during Tuesday's Republican debate in Las Vegas, may have inadvertently nailed it. Displaying her geographical acumen as she referred to Obama's new US intervention in Uganda, Bachmann said, "He put us in Libya. Now he's putting us in Africa." True, Libya is not in Africa anymore; as the counter-revolutionary House of Saud would want it, Libya has been relocated to Arabia (ideally as a restored monarchy).

As for Obama "putting us in Africa" (see [Obama, King of Africa](#) Asia Times Online, October 18, 2011), those 100 special forces in Uganda billed as "advisers" should be seen as a liquid modernity remix of Vietnam in the early 1960s; that also started with a bunch of "advisers" - and the rest is history.

- Murderous mystic crackpot Joseph Kony's Lord's Resistance Army (LRA) is now a rag-tag bunch of no more than 400 warriors (they used to be over 2,000). They are on the run - and not even based in Uganda, but in South Sudan (now a Western protectorate), the Central African Republic and the long border with the Democratic Republic of Congo.

So why Uganda? Enter London-based Heritage Oil, and its chairman Tony Buckingham, a former - you guessed it - "contractor" (ie mercenary). Here's Heritage's *modus operandi*, described by Buckingham himself; they deploy "a first mover strategy of entering regions with vast hydrocarbon wealth where we have a strategic advantage".

Translation: wherever there's foreign invasion, civil war, total breakdown of social order, there are big bucks to be made. Thus Heritage's presence in Iraq, Libya and Uganda.

- Profiting from post-war fog, Heritage signed juicy deals in Iraqi Kurdistan behind the back of the central government in Baghdad. In Libya, Heritage bought a 51% stake in a local company called Sahara Oil Services; this means it's now directly involved in operating oil and gas licenses. Pressed about it, TNC honchos have tried to change the conversation, alleging that nothing is approved yet.

What's certain is that Heritage barged into Libya via a former SAS commando, John Holmes, founder of Erinys, one of the top mercenary outfits in Iraq apart from Xe Services, former Blackwater. Holmes cunningly shipped the right bottles of Johnnie Walker Blue Label to Benghazi for the right TNC crooks, seducing them with Heritage's mercenary know-how of enforcing "oil field security".

- **Got contractor, will travel**

Obama's Uganda surge is also a classic Pipelineistan gambit. The possibly "billions of barrels" of oil reserves discovered recently in sub-Saharan Africa are located in the sensitive cross-border of Uganda, South Sudan, the Central African Republic and the Democratic Republic of Congo.

Believe it or not, Heritage was the top oil company in Uganda up to 2009, drilling on Lake Albert - between Uganda and the Democratic Republic of Congo - and playing one country against another. Then they sold their license to Tullow Oil, essentially a spin-off, also owned by Buckingham, bagging \$1.5 billion in the process and crucially not paying 30% of profits to Washington's bastard, the government of Ugandan President Yoweri Museveni.

- Enter Libya's state oil company, Tamoil, which was part of a joint venture with the Ugandans to build a crucial oil pipeline to Kenya; Uganda is landlocked, and badly needs the pipeline when oil exports start next year. The NATO war on Libya paralyzed the Pipelineistan gambit. Now everything is open for business again. Tamoil may be out of the picture - but so may be other players.

Trying to sort out the mess, the parliament in Uganda - slightly before Obama's

announcement - decided to freeze all oil contracts, hitting France's Total and the China National Offshore Oil Corporation, but especially Tullow oil.

But now, with Obama's special forces "advising" not only Uganda but also the neighbors, and linking up with Heritage - which is essentially a huge oil/mercenary outfit - it's not hard to fathom where Uganda's oil contracts will eventually land.

- **The Amazon rules**

Unified Protector, Odyssey Dawn and all other metaphors Homeric or otherwise for the Africom/NATO 40,000-plus bombing of Libya have yielded the desired result; the destruction of the Libyan state (and much of the country's infrastructure, to the delight of disaster capitalism vultures). It also delivered the lethal unintended consequence of those anti-aircraft missiles appropriated by Islamists - a supremely convincing reason for the "war on terror" in northern Africa to become eternal.

Washington couldn't care less about R2P; as the Libyan Clinton hop shows, the only thing that matters is the excuse to "securitize" Libya's arsenal - the perfect cover story for US contractors and Anglo-French intel ops to take over Libyan military bases.

- The iron rule is that "free" Libya should be under the control of the "liberators". Tell that to the "irregular militias", not to mention the Abdelhakim Belhaj gang and his al-Qaeda assets now in military control of Tripoli.

It's useful to remember that last Friday, the same day the US State Department announced it was sending "contractors" to Libya, was the day Obama announced his Uganda surge. And only two days later, Kenya invaded Somalia - once again under the R2P excuse of protecting civilians from Somali jihadis and pirates.

The US adventure in Somalia looks increasingly like a mix of Sophocles and the Marx Brothers. First there was the Ethiopian invasion (it failed miserably). Then the thousands of Ugandan soldiers sent by Museveni to fight al-Shabaab (partially failed; after all the Washington-backed "government" barely controls a neighborhood in Mogadishu).

- Now the Kenyan invasion. A measure of the Central Intelligence Agency's brilliance is that operatives have been on the ground for months alongside bundles of mercenaries. Soon some counter-insurgency hotshot in Washington praying in the altar of new CIA head David Petraeus will conclude that the only solution is an army of MQ-9 Reapers to drone Somalia to death.

The big picture remains the Pentagon's Africom spreading its militarized tentacles against the lure of Chinese soft power in Africa, which goes something like this: in exchange for oil and minerals, we build anything you want, and we don't try to sell you "democracy for dummies".

The Bush administration woke up to this "threat" a bit too late - at Africom's birth in 2008. Under the Obama administration, the mood is total panic. For Petraeus, the only thing that matters is "the long war" on steroids - from boots on the ground to armies of drones; and who are the Pentagon, the White House and the State Department to disagree?

- Italian geographer and political scientist Manlio Dinucci is one of the few to point out how neo-colonialism 2.0 works; one just needs to look at the map. In Central Africa, the objective is US military supremacy - on air and in intel - over Uganda, South Sudan, the Central African Republic and the Democratic Republic of Congo.

In Libya, the objective is to occupy an absolutely strategic crossroads between the Mediterranean, northern Africa and the Middle East, with the added (nostalgic?) benefit of the West - as in Paris, London and Washington - finally getting to hold military bases as when King Idris was in power (1951 to 1969). As a whole, control must be established over northern Africa, central Africa, eastern Africa and - more problematically - the Horn of Africa.

The trillion-dollar question ahead is how China - which plots strategic moves years in advance - is going to react. As for Amazon Clinton, she must be beaming. In Iraq, Washington meticulously destroyed a whole country over two long decades just to end up with nothing - not even a substantial oil contract. Clinton at least got a private army - the "advisers" who will be stationed in the bigger-than-the-Vatican US Embassy in Baghdad.

And considering that Obama's new African "advisers" will be paid by the State Department, now Clinton's also got her own African private army. After November 2012, Clinton might well consider a move into the contractor business. In the sacred name of R2P, naturally.

[Hell No, We Won't Go To War Against Africa! | Black Agenda Report](http://www.blackagenda.com/content/hell-no-we-won%E2%80%99t-go-war-against-africa)

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• Hell No, We Won't Go To War Against Africa!

Wed, 01/11/2012 - 02:21 — Mark P. Fancher

• by Mark P. Fancher

Elders and other influencers discouraged Black youth from becoming fodder for the Iraq war, but what of the looming U.S. imperial wars in Africa? The U.S. Africa Command propagates the lie that it only "advises" friendly forces on the continent, but "at the same time establishes bases in the Central African Republic and South Sudan" as part of a purported mission to hunt a guerilla force in the region. U.S. ground wars in Africa may be upon us before there is a chance "to throw up an anti-recruitment barrier around the community." The education process must begin now, and become permanent.

• Hell No, We Won't Go To War Against Africa!

by Mark P. Fancher

- *"AFRICOM was integrally involved in the imperialist take-over of Libya, and now U.S. troops are trudging through Uganda."*

In 2005, U.S. Army brass panicked after reviewing the results of a specially commissioned study that showed a 41 percent drop in recruitment of people of African descent over a five year period. "It's alarming," said a general in charge of Army recruitment. He went on to attribute the de facto boycott to the war in Iraq and the views of teachers, preachers, coaches and other "influencers" in the black community who were urging young people not to sign on to what was ultimately acknowledged by many to be a pointless, senseless invasion and occupation of a sovereign country.

- At the time, Harlem Congressman Charles Rangel was quoted as saying: "I have not found a black person in support of this war in my district." Little wonder. Parents and grandparents still had painful memories of veterans of the U.S. debacle in Vietnam who returned broken physically, mentally and spiritually. The war-resisting spirit of these elders was revived by the then most recent imperialist escapade, and they made clear to their children and grandchildren that they had better "just say 'no'" to military recruiters when they came calling.

It is precisely because of the now well-established willingness of Africans in America to draw the line against participation in imperialist wars of folly that the military has been acutely aware of the high risk of its attempts in recent years to establish a military presence in Africa. If young brothers and sisters refused to fight in Iraq, then any effort to persuade them to take up arms against Africa would present an extraordinary challenge that could fatally backfire if it were in any way mishandled.

- *"Even comforting smiles cannot hide the obvious fact that there have been U.S. boots on the ground in Africa."*

The military's trepidation is evident from the fact that since its inception, U.S. Africa Command (AFRICOM) has devoted substantial time and resources to developing and publishing messages that assure and reassure the African World that, notwithstanding the undeniable fact that AFRICOM is a military entity, it is in Africa only to render humanitarian assistance, and to provide advice to Africa's armies about how they – and not U.S. troops – might most effectively engage in combat. Unfortunately for the military's public relations strategists, even comforting smiles cannot hide the obvious fact that there have been U.S. boots on the ground in Africa. AFRICOM was integrally involved in the imperialist take-over of Libya, and now U.S. troops are trudging through Uganda because President Obama took AFRICOM's advice and sent them there purportedly to help in the hunt for the leadership of the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA), a group accused of terrorism.

- It has not escaped notice that this sudden U.S. interest in the LRA (which has been active for more than two decades) came on the heels of China's negotiations with the Ugandan government for a major role in the development of an infrastructure to produce a vast amount of oil that was discovered in Uganda only a few years ago. Naturally there was immediate speculation that the supposed hunt for terrorists was actually a pretext for countering Chinese influence and securing access to a new oil supply. In response to skeptics' questions about the true U.S. objectives in Uganda, Assistant Secretary of State Johnnie Carson dismissed all "conspiracy theories," and insisted that the U.S. mission is: "focused on the LRA and the LRA only." Apparently Carson expects us to simply take the word of an administration that on the one hand declares unequivocally on its AFRICOM website that it will not establish military bases in Africa, but at the same time establishes bases in the Central African Republic and South Sudan as part of the purported LRA mission.

"Young Africans in America are very much a part of the Pentagon's recruitment calculations."

- While we might hope that our young men and women will once again readily see through the lies about Uganda in the same way that they saw the truth about Iraq, clarity on a mass level this time around is not assured. The wall-to-wall media coverage of "shock and awe" explosions that decimated Iraq made it easy for Africans in the U.S. to decide that they wanted no part of that war. However, the recent introduction of U.S. troops into Africa has been very quiet. The risk is that before there is widespread awareness of military involvement in the Ugandan region, the U.S. presence will have expanded to a point where recruitment efforts will intensify, and the black "influencers" who kept young people out of the Iraq war will not have had an opportunity to throw up an anti-recruitment barrier around the community before large numbers of young Africans are sweet-talked into enlisting.

As the U.S. Empire continues to crumble, we will see more desperate attempts to preserve its domination of the planet's natural resources through the use of force, and we can be certain that young Africans in America are very much a part of the Pentagon's recruitment calculations. While our activist impulses may scream for the immediate establishment of a "movement" to counter potential recruiting raids of our community, sober reflection might suggest instead that this is the time to move beyond an ad hoc approach. "Endless war" may mean that we must now institutionalize endless community education about the motives, objectives and methods of military programs that are in service to imperialism. We will know we have succeeded when, without prompting, every African youth will boldly declare: "Hell no, I won't go."

Mark P. Fancher is a lawyer and the author of the book, "I Ain't Got Tired Yet." He can be reached at mfancher@comcast.net.

[AFRICOM chief: U.S. wants to help Libyan forces - Army News | News from Afghanistan & Iraq - Army Times](http://www.armytimes.com/news/2011/12/gannett-libya-africom-chief-carter-ham-us-wants-help-forces-120711/?utm_source=twitterfeed&utm_medium=twitter)

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• **AFRICOM chief: U.S. wants to help Libyan forces**

By Jim Michaels - USA Today

Posted : Wednesday Dec 7, 2011 20:31:55 EST

- The United States is in discussions with Libya over ways to help rebuild the country's military, which the U.S. military considers essential to unify the country and bring rival militias under national control.

"We're looking for ways in which we can be helpful," said Army Gen. Carter Ham, commander of U.S. Africa Command. "They have to find some way to form a national army."

- In an interview in Washington, Ham said the discussions had not reached the level of agreeing to specific cooperation. If the countries do establish a relationship, it would not be the scale of U.S. efforts to rebuild the militaries of Iraq and Afghanistan.

"We'd like, for example, to begin having Libyan officers come to U.S. staff colleges," he said, adding that the United States could also sell Libya equipment and offer training.

Estimates of the size of the Libyan army under dictator Moammar Gadhafi ranged from 50,000 to 130,000 troops. He used it to crack down on political rivals and sometimes to assist other dictators in the region, such as Uganda's Idi Amin.

Libya's military mostly disintegrated over the course of the revolt that began with protests in February. Some units defected to the rebel side, some fought alongside foreign mercenaries and indiscriminately bombed cities, and others broke under pressure from rebel forces and NATO airstrikes.

- Libya had an impressive arsenal for a small country, according to a report of the Center for Strategic and International Studies, with more than 4,000 tanks and other armored vehicles and 400 combat aircraft. Even so, combat-readiness on the equipment was "exceptionally low" and even its best combat units suffered from severe training and leadership problems, political favoritism and erratic training, the report said.

The new Libyan government is interested in maritime security, because of its long coastline, Ham said. That is also an area of defense in which the U.S. military can assist, he said.

Ham said Libya's new leaders recognize the new military must be "inclusive" and not exclude professional officers from Gadhafi's military as long as they did not participate in atrocities. In Iraq, efforts to exclude from the military even midlevel officials in Saddam Hussein's ruling Baath Party deepened divisions.

- Michael Rubin, a former adviser to the Coalition Provisional Authority in Baghdad, said military training would be a good way to prevent the militias roaming the country from disrupting the country. A well-run and professional army and navy automatically gains legitimacy at the expense of militias, casting the latter as gangs rather than protective forces, he said.

Rubin said U.S. involvement would also create personal relationships with Libyan officers that would provide intelligence benefits and help prevent militant infiltration of the Libyan military by helping it institute background checks. The U.S. military has learned from its experience in Iraq and Afghanistan, where militias competed with national forces for the hearts of young fighters, that "the sooner we start the easier it will be," Rubin said.

The Pentagon has also expressed concern about weapons and ammunition that may fall into the hands of rogue elements inside or outside the country. Gadhafi is believed to have stocked 20,000 portable surface-to-air missiles.

Ham said that some of the mercenaries who fought for Gadhafi might have brought

weapons with them when they fled the country. There is “no hard evidence of that but my instinct tells me that’s a pretty likely outcome,” Ham said.

[Africa Lies Naked to Euro-American Military Offensive | Black Agenda Report](http://blackagendareport.com/content/africa-lies-naked-euro-american-military-offensive)

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• Africa Lies Naked to Euro-American Military Offensive

Wed, 11/30/2011

- by **BAR executive editor Glen Ford**

As the U.S. and its NATO allies move southward to further consolidate their grip on Africa, following the seizure of Libya and its vast oil fields, most of the continent’s leadership seems to welcome re-absorption into empire. “Africa is the most vulnerable region in America’s warpath, a continent ripe for the plucking due to the multitudinous entanglements of Africa’s political and military classes with imperialism.” AFRICOM is already in the cat-bird seat, placed there by Africans, themselves.

• Africa Lies Naked to Euro-American Military Offensive

by **BAR executive editor Glen Ford**

- *“The United States and its allies, principally the French, are positioned to ‘take’ much of the continent with the collaboration of most of its governments.”*

The United States and its allies are engaged in an Asian and African offensive, a multi-pronged assault thinly camouflaged as humanitarian intervention that, in some regions, looks like a blitzkrieg. This frenzied aggression, still in its first year, saw NATO transformed into an expeditionary force to crush the unoffending Gaddafi regime in Libya and is now poised to topple the secular order in Syria. Although drawing on longstanding schemes for overt and covert regime change in selected countries, and fully consistent with global capital’s historic imperative to bludgeon the planet into one malleable market subordinate to Washington, London and Paris, the current offensive had a particular genesis in time: the nightmare vision of an Arab awakening.

The prospect of an Arab Spring at the dawn of 2011 sparked a general hysteria in imperial capitals. Suddenly, they stared in the face of geopolitical death at the hands of the Arab “street.” Washington understands full well that the emergence of Arab governments that reflect the will of the people would soon result, as Noam Chomsky is [fond of saying](#), in the U.S. being “thrown out” of the region – the final toll of the bell, not just for the oil-hungry West, but for international capital’s annexes in the autocratic cesspools of the Persian Gulf.

“The prospect of an Arab Spring at the dawn of 2011 sparked a general hysteria in imperial capitals.”

- With centuries of Euro-American domination flashing before their eyes, Washington, London and Paris quickly configured NATO to unleash Shock and Awe on the victim of choice in North Africa: Muammar Gaddafi. The momentum of that show of force has led an expanding cast of imperial actors to the gates of Damascus. But Africa is the most vulnerable region in America’s warpath, a continent ripe for the plucking due to the multitudinous entanglements of Africa’s political and military classes with imperialism. The awful truth is, the United States and its allies, principally the French, are positioned to “take” much of the continent with the collaboration of

most of its governments and, especially, its soldiers.

AFRICOM, established in 2008 by the Bush administration and now fully the creature of President Obama's "humanitarian" interventionist doctrine, claims military responsibility for the entire continent except Egypt. The U.S. military command has assembled a dizzying array of alliances with regional organizations and blocs of countries that, together, encompass all but a few nations on the continent – leaving those holdouts with crosshairs on their backs. As the U.S. bullies its way southward in the wake of the seizure of Libya, its path has been smoothed by the Africans, themselves.

The long U.S. war against Somalia, dramatically intensified with American backing for the Ethiopian invasion in late 2006, is now sanctioned by IGAD, the International Authority on Development in East Africa, comprised of Ethiopia; the puppet government in Somalia's capital, Mogadishu; Kenya; Uganda; the de facto French and U.S. military protectorate, Djibouti; and, nominally, Sudan.

- *"As the U.S. bullies its way southward in the wake of the seizure of Libya, its path has been smoothed by the Africans, themselves."*

This year's French-led, but nominally United Nations operation to oust the regime of Laurent Gbagbo, in Ivory Coast, was vouchsafed by ECOWAS, the 16-member Economic Community of West African States, including Benin Burkina Faso, Cape Verde, Ivory Coast, Gambia, Ghana, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Liberia, Mali, Nigeria, Senegal, Sierra Leone, and Togo.

AFRICOM stages a huge, annual military exercise called African Endeavor, which trains African militaries to use "standard communications practices." African armies are taught U.S. command-and-control procedures, on American-made equipment, that is serviced by American advisors. In 2009, the militaries of 25 African nations took part in the exercise. This year, 40 nations joined Operation African Endeavor, accounting for the vast bulk of the continent's men under arms.

- More insidiously, through AFRICOM's "soldier-to-soldier" doctrine, U.S. and African military peers are encouraged to forge one-on-one relationship up and down the levels of command: general-to-general, colonel-to-colonel, major-to-major, and even captain-to-captain. AFRICOM hopes these peer partnerships will forge personal relationships with African armed forces over the long haul, regardless of whatever regime is in power.

In the Sahel, AFRICOM maintains close relationships with virtually every nation along the vast band of land south of the Sahara desert that stretches from the Indian Ocean to the Atlantic, all under the heading of "anti-terrorism." These include Mauritania, Mali, Chad, and Niger, plus Nigeria and Senegal. To the north, AFRICOM has similar ties to the Maghreb countries: Morocco, Algeria, Tunisia and, until this year, Gaddafi's Libya.

- *"This year, 40 nations joined Operation African Endeavor, accounting for the vast bulk of the continent's men under arms."*

AFRICOM is often the real power behind nominally African missions. AMISOM, officially the African Union's so-called peace keeping force in Somalia, is in fact comprised of troops from Uganda and Burundi, U.S. client states that act as mercenaries for Washington, and paid for mainly by the Americans. They are soon to be joined by 500 soldiers from Djibouti. For years, AMISOM was all that saved the puppet regime in Mogadishu from instant annihilation in its tiny enclaves at the hands of the Shabab resistance. Today, the reinforced "African Union" fighters are on the offensive, along with Kenyan and Ethiopian invaders, aimed at smashing the Shabab in a pincer movement. U.S. drones based in Ethiopia and Djibouti bring death from overhead. Thus, a force nominally fielded by the African Union is an active belligerent in a U.S. engineered war that has set the Horn of Africa ablaze – a conflict also sanctioned by IGAD, the regional cooperative body.

It is only a matter of time before Eritrea, an adversary of Ethiopia and one of the few African nations outside the AFRICOM orbit, is attacked – doubtless by nominally African forces backed by the U.S. and French. Certainly, the thoroughly compromised African Union will be in no position to object.

- No sooner than the last loyalist stronghold fell in Libya, President Obama extended his “humanitarian” interventionist reach deep into central Africa, sending 100 Special Forces troops to Uganda for later assignment to the Democratic Republic of Congo, the new nation of South Sudan, and the Central African Republic, the French neocolonial outpost where the Americans sent Haitian President Jean Bertrand Aristide after kidnapping him in 2004. Supposedly, the American Green Berets will hunt for the 2,000 or so fighters of the Lord’s Liberation Army – a force the Ugandans themselves could snuff out if they were not busy acting as America’s mercenaries elsewhere on the continent. (Washington’s other loyal hit man in the region, Rwanda, was cited by a United Nations report as bearing responsibility for some the millions slaughtered in Congo.)

“A force nominally fielded by the African Union is an active belligerent in a U.S. engineered war that has set the Horn of Africa ablaze.”

- NATO’s aggression in Libya was made inevitable when Nigeria, South Africa and Gabon dishonored themselves at the United Nations Security Council by voting in favor of the bogus “No Fly Zone.” The momentum of the Euro-American offensive flows southward, and will soon set much of the continent afire. The Horn of Africa is already a charnel house of flame and famine, engineered by the Americans but fully joined by Africans and their regional institutions. In the west, ECOWAS legitimizes imperial policies, while in the Sahel, Africans scramble to identify targets for the Americans. Each year, most of the continent’s militaries gather round the Americans to learn how to command and control their own troops, thus making their armies useless to resist the real enemy: the U.S. and NATO.

Betrayed by a political/military class eager to integrate itself into the imperial system on any terms, Africa lies naked to the Euro-Americans.

It will be up to the slums and the bush to reverse this catastrophe. If the Americans and Europeans are to be resisted, Africans will have to fight their own governments, first.

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[Asia Times Online :: That rocky road to Damascus](http://www.atimes.com/atimes/Middle_East/MK24Ak01.html)

http://www.atimes.com/atimes/Middle_East/MK24Ak01.html

- Nov 24, 2011
- **THE ROVING EYE**

That rocky road to Damascus

By Pepe Escobar

- Yet key lateral moves by the West are already on. Diplomats in Brussels confirmed to Asia Times Online that the former Libyan “rebels” - now trying to come up with a credible government - have already given the go-ahead for NATO to build a sprawling military base in Cyrenaica.

NATO has no final say in such matters. This is decided by the boss - the Pentagon - interested in emboldening Africom in coordination with NATO. As many as 20,000 boots are expected to be deployed on the ground in Libya - at least 12,000 of them Europeans. They will be responsible for Libya’s “internal security”, but also be on alert for possible, further military campaigns targeted at - who else - Syria and Iran.

[Did Wikileaks just reveal the US blueprint for Libya? | The Electronic Intifada](http://electronicintifada.net/blog/ali-abunimah/did-wikileaks-just-reveal-us-blueprint-libya)

<http://electronicintifada.net/blog/ali-abunimah/did-wikileaks-just-reveal-us-blueprint-libya>

[tehran times : 'U.S. provoking China and Russia in Mediterranean'](http://www.tehrantimes.com/index_View.asp?code=239577)

http://www.tehrantimes.com/index_View.asp?code=239577

- Thursday, April 28, 2011
- **'U.S. provoking China and Russia in Mediterranean'**
Tehran Times International Desk
- TEHRAN -- The United States is at the risk of a war with China and Russia as its main objective behind engineering the Libyan war and Syrian unrest is to remove the two major powers from the Mediterranean, a senior former U.S. official has warned.
- "Washington is all for invading Libya and is putting more and more pressure to intervene in Syria because we want to... clear China and Russia out of the Mediterranean," Dr. Paul Craig Roberts, who served as an Assistant Secretary of the Treasury in the Reagan Administration, said during an interview with Press TV on Tuesday.

On the one hand, China has massive energy investments in eastern Libya and is relying on Libya, and on the other hand, Russia has a large naval base in Syria and it gives it a presence in the Mediterranean, he added.

- "Those two countries are just in the way of American hegemony in the Mediterranean and certainly the Americans do not want a powerful Russian fleet stationed there and they certainly don't want China drawing energy resources," the former editor of the Wall Street Journal stated.

"Once Russia and China come to the conclusion that the Americans simply cannot be dealt with in any rational way and are determined to somehow subdue them and do them damage, all kinds of escalations can result. This is the real danger and we're risking a major war," Roberts cautioned.

- Following are the excerpts of the interview :

Q: There is talk about Washington being advised to arm the revolutionaries in Libya. Do you think this is a good idea?

A: They are already arming them. That is what's unique about the Libyan revolt. It's not a peaceful revolt; it's not taking place in the capital; it's an armed revolt from the eastern part of the country. And we know that the CIA is involved on the ground and so they are already armed.

- Q: How do you compare this military intervention to the one in Bahrain?

A: We don't want to overthrow the government in Bahrain or in Saudi Arabia, where both governments are using violence against protesters, because they're our puppets and we have a large naval base in Bahrain.

We want to overthrow Gaddafi and Assad in Syria because we want to clear China and Russia out of the Mediterranean. China has massive energy investments in eastern Libya and is relying on Libya along with Angola and Nigeria for energy needs. This is an American effort to deny resources to China just as Washington and London denied resources to the Japanese in the 1930s.

- The interest in the Syria protests, which WikiLeaks shows the Americans are behind -- we are interested in that because the Russians have a large naval base in Syria and it gives them a presence in the Mediterranean. So you see that Washington is all for invading Libya and is putting more and more pressure to intervene in Syria because we want to get rid of the Russians and the Chinese.

We don't have anything to say about the Saudis -- how they treat protesters -- or anything to say about the violence used against protesters in Bahrain.

- Q: Are you saying the ultimate goal in attacking Libya is... the oil factor?

A: It's not just the oil, it's the fact of China's penetration of Africa and China lining up oil supplies for its energy needs. You may be aware that the International Monetary Fund (IMF) has released a report that says that the 'Age of America' is over and that the American economy will be bypassed by China in five years and then the U.S. will become the second largest economy rather than first. So one of the things Washington is trying to do is to block, to use its superior military and strategic capabilities at this time to block China's acquisition of resources in order to make the development of the Chinese economy slow down.

- This is a major reason why the CIA has been active in eastern Libya and it's the reason protests broke out in the east not in the capital like in the other Arab countries and it's the reasons it's armed.
- Q: Do you think Libya's diplomatic isolation was the main reason for this military intervention?

A: I don't think it was the main reason. The main reason I think was to evict China from Libya, which is what is happening. The Chinese had 30,000 people there and they've had to evacuate 29,000 of them.

It's also payback to Gaddafi for refusing to join the U.S. Africa Command (Africom). It became operative in 2008 and was the American response to China's penetration of Africa; we created a military response to that and Gaddafi refused to participate -- he said it was an act of imperialism trying to purchase an entire continent.

- And I think the third reason is that Gaddafi in Libya controls an important part of the Mediterranean coast, as does Syria.

So I think those two countries are just in the way of American hegemony in the Mediterranean and certainly the Americans don't want a powerful Russian fleet stationed there and they certainly don't want China drawing energy resources.

Washington was caught off-guard by the outbreaks of protests in Tunisia and Egypt, but quickly learned that they could use and hide behind Arab protests to evict Russia and China without a direct confrontation. They wouldn't want that, so they've engineered these protests.

- We know for a fact that the CIA has been stirring up discord in eastern Libya for some time, this is a known fact. And the release of WikiLeaks cables shows that the Americans are involved in stirring up unrest in Syria.

We didn't stir up unrest in Egypt or Bahrain or Tunisia or Saudi Arabia. We probably are responsible for the unrest in Yemen because we were using drones and strikes against various tribal elements.

So, that is the big difference that the Syrian and Libya affairs have American hands in them, organizing the demonstrations, providing money and so forth. There are always discontented people that can be bought and promises given.

- Q: Drones are now being used in Libya. From where do these drones operate?

A: I don't know -- could be from American naval vessels. I believe the last report about the drones did come from a Navy officer.

I'd like to add something to this conversation. Probably the biggest risk and the one that's being ignored is China's attitude. The Chinese companies are losing hundreds of millions (dollars) from this intervention. They have 50 massive investments there all going down the drain and this is clearly perceived by China as an act against them. They don't have any illusions; they don't read the New York Times or Washington Post and believe all of that crap. So what they see is a move of the Americans against China.

- Q: Are you suggesting that the Americans want to take out China and replace these investments with American companies?

A: Or anybody, that's right. And I think the Russians are beginning to perceive that the whole Syrian thing is a move against them and their base there.

So what we're really doing is antagonizing two large countries: China, which has an economy that is probably better than the U.S. because their people have jobs; and the Russians have an unlimited nuclear arsenal -- and so we're starting to press very strong countries in a very reckless way. We're behaving in a very reckless and dangerous way.

Once you start this, and Russia and China come to the conclusion that the Americans simply cannot be dealt with in any rational way and are determined to somehow subdue them and do them damage, all kinds of escalations can result. This is the real danger and we're risking a major war.

- Q: What about the role of Italy in Libya?

A: This is another unique thing with this Libyan intervention. What is NATO doing fighting a war in Africa? NATO was formed to guard against the potential of a Soviet invasion of Western Europe. The Soviet Union has been gone for twenty years. Steered by the U.S. and the Pentagon, it has been turned into an auxiliary force, and we now have NATO involved in an aggressive war in Africa. This is a war of aggression, a war of attack.

So this is an extraordinary development. Why is this happening? We didn't use NATO in Egypt and Tunisia and will certainly not use it in Saudi Arabia or Bahrain so we see something highly unusual -- NATO at war in Africa. This needs an explanation.

[Gen.: U.S. troops not ideal, but may be considered in Libya - CBS News](http://www.cbsnews.com/stories/2011/04/07/501364/main20051760.shtml)

<http://www.cbsnews.com/stories/2011/04/07/501364/main20051760.shtml>

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Gen.: U.S. troops not ideal, but may be considered in Libya

- (CBS/AP)

WASHINGTON - The United States may consider sending troops into Libya with a possible international ground force that could aid the rebels, according to the general who led the military mission until NATO took over.

Army Gen. Carter Ham also told lawmakers Thursday that added American participation would not be ideal, and ground troops could erode the international coalition and make it more difficult to get Arab support for operations in Libya.

Ham said the operation was largely stalemated now and was more likely to remain that way since America has transferred control to NATO.

- He said NATO has done an effective job in an increasingly complex combat situation. But he noted that, in a new tactic, Muammar Qaddafi's forces are making airstrikes more difficult by staging military forces and vehicles near civilian areas such as schools and mosques.

The use of an international ground force is a possible plan to bolster rebels fighting forces loyal to the Libyan leader, Ham said at a Senate Armed Services Committee hearing.

Asked if the U.S. would provide troops, Ham said, "I suspect there might be some consideration of that. My personal view at this point would be that that's probably not the ideal circumstance, again for the regional reaction that having American boots on the ground would entail."

- President Barack Obama has said repeatedly there will be no U.S. troops on the ground in Libya, although there are reports of small CIA teams in the country. Secretary of Defense Robert Gates told lawmakers last week that there would be no American ground troops in Libya "as long as I am in this job."

Ham disclosed that the United States is providing some strike aircraft to the NATO

operation that do not need to go through the special approval process recently established. The powerful side-firing AC-130 gunship is available to NATO commanders, he said.

Other strike aircraft, including fighters and the A-10 Thunderbolt, which can provide close air support for ground forces, must be requested through U.S. European Command and approved by top U.S. leaders, including Defense Secretary Robert Gates. Ham said that process is quick, and other defense officials have said it can take about a day for the U.S. to approve the request and move the aircraft in from bases in Europe.

Ham said recent bad weather and threats from Qaddafi's mobile surface-to-air missile systems hampered efforts to use aircraft like the AC-130 and the A-10 to provide close air support for friendly ground forces. He says those conditions contributed to the stalemate.

Since the U.S. handed off the strike mission to NATO, U.S. planes account for only 15 percent of NATO planes now doing those air attacks, Ham said.

- Meanwhile, rebel fighters claimed NATO airstrikes blasted their forces Thursday in another apparent mistake that sharply escalated anger about coordination with the military alliance in efforts to cripple Libyan forces. At least two rebels were killed and more than a dozen injured, a doctor said.

The attack - near the front lines outside the eastern oil port of Brega - would be the [second accidental NATO strike against rebel forces in less than a week](#) and brought cries of outrage from fighters struggling against Muammar Qaddafi's larger and more experienced military.

"Down, down with NATO," shouted one fighter as dozens of rebel vehicles raced eastward from the front toward the rebel-held city of Ajbadiya.

[allAfrica.com: Libya: U.S. Military and Africom - Between the Rocks and the Crusaders](#)

<http://allafrica.com/stories/printable/201104020071.html>

- Fahamu (Oxford)

Libya: U.S. Military and Africom - Between the Rocks and the Crusaders

Horace Campbell

31 March 2011

- analysis

The Western bombardment of Gaddafi's forces in Libya has become an opportunistic public relations ploy for the US Africa Command and a new inroad for US military stronghold on the continent,' writes Horace Campbell.

- The Western bombardment of Gaddafi's forces in Libya has become an opportunistic public relations ploy for the US Africa Command and a new inroad for US military stronghold on the continent. This involvement of Africom in the bombardment is now serving to expose the contradictions and deceit that have surrounded the formation of this combatant command, which has been presented by US policy makers as a front for military humanitarian assistance to Africa in coordination with the US Department of State and the US Agency for International Development (USAID). Attempts by the USA to re-militarise its engagement with Africa is extremely dangerous, given the fact that the US does not have any positive or credible tradition of genuine assistance to freedom fighters and liberation movements in Africa.
- The US was complicit in the planning of the murder of Patrice Lumumba of the Congo, after which they propped up the monstrous dictator Mobutu Sese Seko who raped and pillaged the country and established a recursive process of war, rape, plunder, corruption, and brutality which the Congo still suffers from till today. Jonas Savimbi was sponsored by the US to cause destabilization and terror in Angola.

The US gave military, material and moral support to the apartheid regime in South Africa while anti-apartheid freedom fighters, including Nelson Mandela, were designated as terrorists (it was only in 2008 that the US Congress passed a bill to remove Mandela's name from the terrorist watch list). The US has yet to tell the truth about how Charles Taylor escaped from its prison custody to go destabilize Liberia. Young people who are recruited for the US military and deployed to Africom may not know much about the notorious history of US military involvement in Africa. The military top brass take advantage of this ignorance among the young folks.

- Just as the US military carried out psychological warfare against US senators, one of the tasks of Africom is to rain down psychological warfare on Africans. Inbuilt in this subtle psychological warfare is the concept of the hierarchy of human beings and the superiority of the capitalist mode of production and ideas of Christian fundamentalism. It is on this front that we find a section of the US military known as the 'Crusaders.'
- WHO ARE THE CRUSADERS?

In a recent article in Foreign Policy, veteran US investigative journalist Seymour Hersh was reported to have revealed that there is a faction of the US military known as Crusaders. Hersh asserted that these Crusaders are bent on intensifying a war against Islam, and see themselves as protectors of Christianity.

According to this report, Hersh maintained that these neoconservative elements dominate the top echelons of the US military, including figures such as former commander of US forces in Afghanistan Gen. Stanley McChrystal and Vice Admiral William McRaven. These crusaders have held American foreign policy hostage. Hersh said, 'What I'm really talking about is how eight or nine neoconservative, radicals if you will, overthrew the American government. Took it over.'

Harpers magazine carried a lengthy report in May 2009 that placed General David Petraeus at the heart of the Crusaders. The magazine carried a very detailed article on the role of the Crusaders in the military, entitled, 'Evangelical Proselytization Still Rampant in U.S. Military.' In this article we are alerted to the numerous fronts of the Crusaders. The information in the magazine reported on a book published in 2005 by

Lieutenant Colonel William McCoy, titled 'Under Orders: A Spiritual Handbook for Military Personnel'.

- The handbook describes an 'anti-Christian bias' in the US, and sought to counter it by making the case for the 'necessity of Christianity for a properly functioning military.' McCoy's book was endorsed by General David Petraeus, who said: 'Under Orders should be in every rucksack for those moments when soldiers need spiritual energy.'

Not only do these crusaders have control over the US military, they are also linked with a faction of the Catholic Church called 'Opus Dei,' an arch conservative order that has links with international banking, finance, militarism, and intelligence formations. Besides Opus Dei, one finds the fundamentalist evangelicals in the US, who are linked to the forces of Islamophobia and corporate elements.

One crucial figure in this world of neoconservative militarist was Dick Cheney, former US vice president and chairperson of Halliburton. It is worth noting that it was from Dick Cheney and Donald Rumsfeld that the idea of United States Africa Command originated.

- Dick Cheney and Donald Rumsfeld epitomize the crusaders. They interface with the world of militarist, corporate capital, private military contractors, and dictators. Many of these Crusaders are overt white supremacists. The careers of Dick Cheney and Donald Rumsfeld and their corporate allies spawn a world-wide web of conservative militarists, politicians, intellectuals and capitalists. These crusaders do not only disdain other cultures and religions, they have little or no regards for people of color.

Rumsfeld and Cheney would not have been happy to read Colin Powell when he wrote in his book that during a visit to Bunce Island in Sierra Leone he mentioned in a speech that: 'As you know, I am an American, I am the son of Jamaicans who emigrated from the island to the United States. But today, I am something more. I am an African too. I feel my roots here in this continent' (Colin Powell, My American Journey, page 534). There are many from the rank and file of the crusaders who believe that President Obama is not fit to be the leader of the United States, and their philosophy trickles down the hierarchy of the military, intensifying the divisions within the differing branches of US military

- In 2010, one Lt. Col. Terry Lakin, a winner of medal of honor in the US military refused to take military command for deployment on grounds that he could not take orders from President Obama whom he considers unfit to be president and commander-in-chief. This belief is shared among many Republicans and conservative section of the US society, who are also present in the military and most epitomised by the crusaders. They claim that Obama was not born in the US, and thus was not supposed to be elected president.

Recent polls show that 51 per cent of Republicans firmly believe Obama was not born in the US, and 21 per cent say they are unsure if he was actually born here (<http://washingtonindependent.com/105581/poll-51-percent-of-republicans-think-obama-was-not-born-in-u-s>). Thus, over 70 per cent of Republican constituency do not believe Obama is American and therefore don't believe they should follow his orders.

- The air force training academy in Colorado has received press reports about one faction of the neocon in the air force who have manifested the most racist, sexist, and patriarchal attitude in the US armed forces (see 'Christian Fundamentalist Bigotry Reigns at US Air Force Academy'). Those are the forces who have been most gung-ho about war because they simply drop bombs from the sky.

Information on the degree of conservatism at this Air force academy came to light when the Los Angeles Times reported that A Jewish father of two Air Force Academy cadets

sued the Air Force, saying that senior officers and cadets illegally imposed Christianity on others at the school.

- The Air Force Academy is located in one of the most conservative areas of Colorado (Colorado Springs). In the same town where the Air Force Academy is located there is the headquarters of dozens of conservative fundamentalist Christian groups, including Focus on the Family (the best-financed right-wing fundamentalist pressure group), as well as the International Bible Society and the New Life Church. These religious organizations provide the moral support for the racists and sexist ideas of the academy.

For some time, there have been open disagreements within the military between these Crusaders and another section of the military called the Rocks.

- WHO ARE THE ROCKS?

Originally, the 'Rocks' were formed by senior officers in the military who are non-whites. Colin Powell first wrote of the existence of the Rocks in the US military in his book, 'My American Journey'. Although the narrative on equal opportunity in the US military has been part of the public discourse in the US, these officers faced discrimination and felt left out of the white old boy networks in the military. This reality has been so blatant that even the army journal, Parameter, carried articles such as 'Why Black Officers Still Fail' [pdf].

This article, like some others, mentions the white old boy network as one cause of the marginalization of black army officers. Once this stamp of failure was placed on these officers, prior to the formation of the Rocks, they sought solidarity with each other; they chafed as they saw their counterparts rising to the highest ranks and going through the revolving door of the military industrial complex and private military contractors.

- General Joe Ballard of the Army Corps of Engineers was one Rock of the US military who found out the real workings of the old boy networks of the crusaders. Joe Ballard had attempted to break up the stranglehold of the old boy network that privileged Halliburton, but found out that these conservative networks were very strong. Neither General Ballard nor Bunny Greenhouse understood the real powers of the crusaders until Ms. Greenhouse attempted to expose the improper and blatant corruption in the no bid contracts for Halliburton. For this exposure she was humiliated and a signal was sent to Ballard and Greenhouse about the power of the Crusaders.

Although the Rocks started out among the ranks of officers of color, by the time Bush, Cheney, and Rumsfeld intensified the politicization of the military, decent officers who were not crusaders identified with one philosophy of the Rocks: that the military should not be used for the interest of private capital. Many of the rank and file who learnt of the treatment of ex servicemen after their tour of duty became Rocks, so that today the army at the base is dominated by the Rocks.

- During the war against the people of Iraq, the difference between the Rocks and the Crusaders came out clearly. There were press reports stating: 'The Anger Of The Generals Unprecedented In Modern Times'. Newspapers liberally published the names of retired Generals such as Major General Paul D. Eaton, General Anthony C. Zinni, Lieutenant General Gregory Newbold, Major General John Batiste, Major General John Riggs and Major General Charles H. Swannack Jr. These generals were not afraid to have their names in print as being opposed to Donald Rumsfeld.

Some of these generals such as General Newbold were opposed to Rumsfeld and the operations in Iraq. One press report from the New York Times said that, 'Lt. Gen. Gregory Newbold of the Marine Corps, who retired in late 2002, has said he regarded the American invasion of Iraq unnecessary. He issued his call for replacing Mr. Rumsfeld

in an essay in the current edition of Time magazine. General Newbold said he regretted not opposing the invasion of Iraq more vigorously.' Colin Powell lost credibility when he fell prey to the make-believe intelligence cooked up by the Crusaders for the invasion of Iraq. But since realizing his blunder, Powell has become even more outspoken against the crusaders.

- Many of the generals opposed to the crusader philosophy were forced into early retirement. and because of the difference in philosophy they were not able to join the gravy train of sitting on the boards of the top military suppliers or enter the revolving door between the private military contractors and the consulting firms in the military industrial complex. From books by Bob Woodward we have the profile of the more energetic sectors of the Crusaders such as the present chairperson of the Board of the Institute for the Study of War.

These crusaders have the platforms of the Murdoch news outlets such as the Wall Street Journal and the Fox News. They seek respectability through think tanks such as the American Enterprise Institute and the Heritage Foundation. Behind these public policy institutes are the top conservative foundations such as the Lynde and Harry Bradley Foundation, the Carthage Foundation, the Earhart Foundation, the Charles G. Koch, David H. Koch and Claude R. Lambe charitable foundations, the Phillip M. McKenna Foundation, the JM Foundation, the John M. Olin Foundation, the Henry Salvatori Foundation, the Sarah Scaife Foundation, and the Smith Richardson Foundation. From among these sponsors and supporters, the billionaire Koch Brothers stand out as a formidable financial backbone of crusade activism.

- THE CRUSADERS AND THE OBAMA ADMINISTRATION

From the news on the Koch Brothers, we see the militaristic language of the crusaders inside and outside the military. From the New Yorker magazine we were treated to a very detailed analysis by Jane Mayer, 'Covert Operations: The Billionaire Brothers Who Are At War with Obama'.

One other glimpse of the attitude of the Crusaders inside the military towards the Obama administration can be found in the discourse relating to Obama's plan for Afghanistan. In the book, 'Obama's Wars' Bob Woodward bares facts of the disrespect exhibited from a section of the military (crusaders) to Obama. What is most revealing is fact that the Secretary of Defense could not take a firm position against the disrespect. The other revelation was the alliance of Hillary Clinton with a section of the military that refuses to be serious about options for withdrawal from Afghanistan. Ultimately however, as president and commander-in-chief, Obama failed to give the leadership that was needed at a time when American citizens have said that they are tired of war.

- More than 70 per cent of US population was opposed to further involvement in Afghanistan. After his failure to rein in the Crusaders who were packed in the upper reaches of the military bureaucracy by Dick Cheney, Robert Gates belatedly placed some distance between himself and the crusaders. Initially, Gates opposed the idea of a no-fly zone over Libya. In a speech at West Point, he had said, 'But in my opinion, any future defense secretary who advises the president to again send a big American land army into Asia or into the Middle East or Africa should 'have his head examined,' as General [Douglas] MacArthur so delicately put it.'

Here, Robert Gates was attempting to put some distance between himself and the crusaders by telling the West Point audience that the US should not lead 'a big American land army' into Asia or into the Middle East or Africa. However, once the section of the National Security Council that wanted war won out in the NSC, Gates was silent as the Crusaders began to place General Carter Ham before the television cameras to claim that the Libyan operation was being carried forth by the US Africa Command. These public relations spinners expected the world to believe that the US Africom with 1500 personnel could lead a mission in Libya.

- In the Bush years, the Crusaders conceptualized the US as being in a permanent war, using the phrase, 'global war on terror' (GWOT), to justify their link to particular factions of Wall Street and the manipulation of national security for political and capital ends. It is not clear to what extent the philosophy of the Rocks prevailed over that of the Crusaders to influence the Obama administration's decision to retreat from using the term GWOT. Instead the administration has resorted to the term, 'overseas contingency operation' (OCO). What is clear is that in the face of resistance from emerging powers, the Crusaders have regrouped to build up their assets in Africa.

This regrouping includes a heightened propaganda war with CNN acting as an active accomplice when it reported that, 'Al Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM) - has taken advantage of unrest in Libya to seize SAMs from military stockpiles in rebel-held areas.' This news was supposed to bring back the images of armed terrorists with sophisticated weapons in North Africa. For a short while when the book, 'Dark Sahara', by Jeremy Keenan exposed the fabrication of terrorism in North Africa, the Crusaders temporarily retreated.

- When the Free Officers Movement from Algeria (MAOL) corroborated some of the information that had been outlined in the book by Keenan, the Crusaders toned down the language on Al Qaeda in the Maghreb and instead focused on Al Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula. However, with the sweep of revolution across Yemen and the downgrading of the importance of the bogey of terrorism in Yemen, the forward planners inside the Pentagon decided to go all out to rehabilitate Africom in the service of the Crusaders.
- US AFRICOM AND THE CRUSADERS

The U.S. Africa Command (AFRICOM) was established by the U.S. Department of Defense in February 2007 as the United States fifth regional operations base and a separate command 'to oversee military operations on the African continent.' We want to reiterate the fact that Africom was a brainchild of Crusaders such as Rumsfeld, Bush, and Cheney. Rumsfeld pushed through the concept before he left the Bush administration in December 2006. Bush announced the formation of Africom in February 2007.

And just before the election in 2008, this new command was inaugurated. As we have highlighted, in the past, this command is stationed in Stuttgart, Germany, because of the stiff opposition against it in Africa. Even the allies of the US in Africa understand the strength of African public opinion against Africom. Thus leaders such as Yoweri Museveni of Uganda in public oppose the US Africa Command but embark on joint military exercises with the US military under the banner of Africom. Museveni is a good example of an African politician who has been taken in by the rhetoric of the Crusaders. Sections of his family are in active relationships with the most conservative Christian fundamentalists in the USA.

- In the face of the public opposition from African thinkers and opinion makers, the forward planners for the Crusaders moved to spend money among struggling academics to promote an ideological onslaught to legitimize the US Africa Command. Beside this intense work among social scientists, the forward planners among the Crusaders decided to employ the services of propaganda firms to fan the flames of Islamophobia in Africa. Africom has embarked on a massive public relations campaign to sell itself as a force for humanitarianism and development in Africa. Hence, for the past two years, almost all aspects of the US foreign policy in Africa have been subordinated to the Pentagon. Essentially, with the force of only 1,500, Africom serves to hand out contracts to private military contractors. Space will not allow to give details of this business of mercenary forces vis-à-vis US military.
- But the activities of Blackwater - now called Xe - are well known and extensively documented in the book by Jeremy Scahill. It is from this book and others that we have learnt of the mindset behind the top brass of Blackwater (Xe). What is unclear is why the leaders of the Emirates would provide a home for the top honcho of Blackwater

after there were calls for legal action against the company after the shootings of 17 Iraqi civilians in Nisour Square, Baghdad. Hundreds of private military contractors with reputation similar to that of Xe are now licensed to train African armies under the rubrics of Africom. These licenses are granted through the State Department so that the US Africa Command gets the contract for training African armies and then there is subcontracting to firms such as Dyncorp, one of the most energetic of the military contractors in Africa. This private army is now owned by a subsidiary of Cerberus. It is Dyncorp that is training the new Liberian army and Liberia is the only African country whose president has said that Africom could locate its military base in that territory.

- The other top military contracting firms are Kellogg Brown Root Inc. (subsidiary of Halliburton), operating in Kenya, Djibouti, Ethiopia; Pacific Architects and Engineers Government Services (until recently a subsidiary of Lockheed Martin), operating in Liberia; Protection Strategies Inc., also involved in Liberia; and Military Professional Resources Inc, MPRI which has contracts in Benin Republic, Ethiopia, Ghana,, Kenya, Mali, Malawi, Nigeria, Rwanda and Senegal.
- Others are CSC (Computer Scientists Corporation) and Science Applications International Corporation (SAIC). There are also British private military contractors such as Aegis, but the British could not be relied upon to carry forward the ideology of the crusaders. From time to time there is cooperation and competition between the British and US Crusaders in their efforts to control oil resources in societies such as Equatorial Guinea.
- Equatorial Guinea is reputed to be the worst dictatorship in the world and MPRI was able to secure the Maritime Security Enhancement Program that provide nationwide coastal surveillance across Equatorial Guinea. On January 25, 2007, senior members of MPRI, met President Obiang and briefed him on the first three months of a five-year program for training of military and presidential security units (see 'Private US Firm Trains Equatorial Guinea Army Units', Agence France-Presse, January 30, 2007.)

The use of private capitalist armies by the US military crusaders in the Middle East has peaked in Iraq and Afghanistan, hence the consolidation of their market frontier in Africa. The article 'Why Contractor Fatalities Matter,' in the military journal, (Parameters, Autumn 2008), as of there were more contractor personnel employed by the US military than there were military personnel on the ground in that country. According to the article:

- 'Today, the heavily outsourced US military cannot effectively function or sustain itself without an enormous contractor presence. Particularly in Iraq, the US government employ - directly and through subcontracts - more contractors than military. Most experts agree that there are at least 190,000, and as many as 196,000, contractor personnel in Iraq, compared to fewer than 170,000 military personnel (79).'

The replication of this neoliberal militarism by using Africom as a front for private armies comes with the fabrication of terrorism and all forms of destabilizing machinations that would increase the market demand for private armies in Africa in order to satisfy the profit motives of the supplies from the West. This is a threat to the transformation of the continent.

The revolutions in Tunisia and Egypt shocked the Crusaders and they calculated on how to make a move to gain the support from the US society and consolidate Africom. The debate over saving civilians in Libya provided the best opportunity, and Barack Obama opened the door to strengthening the crusaders - the very forces who do not believe that Obama was born in the USA.

- DISBANDING AFRICOM

When Barack Obama appointed General Eric Ken Shinseki as Secretary of Veteran Affairs, some sections of the Rocks had anticipated that Obama would do some housecleaning in the Pentagon to weed out the Crusaders and to remove their licenses

for their contractors through the State Department. The Crusaders went on the offensive over the plans for expanding US forces in Afghanistan and Dick Cheney became the public spokesperson for them outside the official military and those among the private military contractors.

Some observers have claimed that, from time to time Obama called in Colin Powell to rally the Rocks to counter the claims of Dick Cheney but Obama recoiled from a frontal assault on the Crusaders. The Crusader who understood that Colin Powell had no credibility because they had manipulated him before the court of world opinion to give false witness before the United Nations harnessed all of their resources against Barack Obama. In the midst of the depression when the workers of Wisconsin demonstrated that the organized workers could isolate the Tea Party, the ideas of white supremacy were needed anew. This is where one must understand the present foray of the United States in Libya.

- Dictators throughout Africa and the Middle East were shaken by the Tunisian and Egyptian revolutions. Barack Obama dithered on the question of the future relationship with the Crusaders when he should have taken a clear position on the question of a US military intervention in Libya. As the debate raged between the Rocks and the Crusaders inside the military bureaucracy, Robert Gates decided to abandon the Crusaders and gave Obama an opening by saying that any President who placed troops in Africa needed to have his head examined.

While Obama dithered, France and Britain energetically pushed so that British Petroleum and ELF could be in the drivers seat in North Africa in order to play the counter-revolutionary role against the rising tide of revolution. The Crusaders did not want to be left out and were temporarily sidelined until Susan Rice, Samantha Powers and Hilary Clinton began to make the vigorous claim for US military intervention. These advisors of Barack Obama presented strong militaristic arguments and never considered serious alternatives to the military intervention. The Crusaders waited for the moment to bring back their public push for Africom. And they seized it.

- We are now informed by the US media that while the decision to support UN resolution 1973 was being debated, Barack Obama signed an executive order to place covert operatives in Libya returning to the strategy of creeping war that precipitated the Iraq fiasco.

The press organization, Reuters, reported that President Barack Obama has signed a secret order authorizing covert U.S. government support for rebel forces seeking to oust Libyan leader Muammar Gaddafi. Obama signed the order, known as a presidential 'finding,' within the last two or three weeks, according to four U.S. government sources familiar with the matter. Such findings are a principal form of presidential directive used to authorize secret operations by the Central Intelligence Agency.

One piece of evidence of the struggle between the Crusaders and the Rocks came from the Al Jazeera report that the information on the executive order was leaked from inside the Pentagon. Those inside the Pentagon with the memory of the history of the no fly zone over Iraq understand the implications of regime change and creeping war.

Barack Obama was elected President of the United States and Commander in Chief of the armed forces. It is within his power to disband the US Africa command because this command was created by presidential decree. It can be disbanded by a presidential decree.

Obama has the choice to either withdraw from the militarization of Africa or be torn

apart by the US military relations with Africa. Obama will either lead or be swept aside in this era of depression, war and revolution. Obama must prove to the citizens that Seymour Hersh is wrong that the Crusaders took over the US government.