

# African unity: community of principle, or new colonialism?

by Linda de Hoyos

Against the backdrop of the multi-state negotiations seeking to end the war in the Democratic Republic of Congo, two widely different approaches were put forward for how to achieve unity and cooperation on the African continent, one during the 35th annual heads-of-state summit of the Organization of African Unity (OAU) in Algiers July 12-14, and one coming from Kampala, Uganda.

The first came from South African President Thabo Mbeki, whose speech to the OAU summit July 13 called upon African leaders to fight the marginalization of the African continent in the global economy by committing themselves to carrying out the 1991 Abuja Treaty. That treaty set goals for the modernization of Africa's national economies, the raising of living standards; higher rates of economic growth and development, a "cumulative process of integration of the African economy, and a beneficial integration of the African economy into the global economy."

President Mbeki had motivated this proposal by citing the increasing impoverishment of the continent under globalization, resulting in a vastly widening disparity between those living in the highest income bracket and those living in the lowest. Mbeki noted that the one-fifth of the world's people living in the highest-income countries had 86% of the world aggregate Gross Domestic Product, whereas the bottom one-fifth had only 1%. Most of those in the bottom one-fifth live in Africa.

## Into the future . . .

To carry out this task of the growth of African national economies and their regional integration, Mbeki proposed a "mobilization" of the continent's intelligentsia, and the use of the African Economic Community and the African Development Bank to launch projects, especially for infrastructure construction. He also called upon African countries to address issues such as Africa's foreign debt, negotiations with the World Trade Organization, "technology transfers, restructuring and reorientation of the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund, and the volumes and use of overseas development assistance."

Mbeki's speech was a call for African leaders to take concerted and cooperative *action* for the growth and defense

of their economies. "Such is the degree of comfort among the haves," he concluded, "even in our own societies, that their ears are closed to the correct warnings we give repeatedly, that the worsening relative and absolute poverty of the many can never serve as assurance that the prosperity of the few is guaranteed for all time. We must again become our own liberators. Thus we will turn the century that will soon be upon us into an African century, and realize the objective of an African Renaissance."

The implications of President Mbeki's proposals are the forging of unity among African nations—a vision of the leaders of independence from colonialism—through a community of principle based on cooperation for development of national and regional economies. It also implies concerted efforts by African leaders to bring an end to the wars engulfing a huge tract of Africa's land, from the Horn of Africa through the Democratic Republic of Congo, to Angola. This is the way, Mbeki seems to propose, that African leaders can truly take matters into their own hands.

## . . . or back to British rule?

On July 10, from Kampala, Uganda, a completely different set of proposals was put forward. The semi-government newspaper *New Vision* published a signed commentary by one Joshua Muyemba, which directly challenged the OAU's charter to uphold the territorial integrity of the African states. Against this principle of African unity, Muyemba proposed that the former colonial powers hold a conference modeled on the 1898 Berlin Conference, to redraw Africa's borders, and then to act to enforce those redivisions. Beginning with the proposition that "formal colonization was a blessing in disguise," the author declared that colonialism's "partition of Africa into some 40 territories has remained a permanent albatross around the continent's neck. It may be said that rather than being partitioned, Africa's 100 nationalities were summarily amalgamated into some 40 territories which have now become synthetic states." The author demanded action: "Unless something drastic is done, it is very difficult to see how these African states can settle down in peace and prosperity. All the contemporary conflicts, wars, economic backwardness, and even corruption in Africa," the author asserted,

“can be traced back to the continent’s faulty amalgamation and balkanization. Whether it is the anarchy in Somalia, the carnage in Angola, the chaos in the Congo, the conflict in Sudan, the quarrels between Nigeria and Cameroon, or the altercation between Ethiopia and Eritrea, *the bottom line is always the colonial boundary.*”

Since, as Muyemba accurately stated, the “African neo-colonies are not really independent, the world powers have the responsibility to save human lives and put an end to human misery.” He demanded that the “world powers . . . convene another world conference which would comprehensively review the boundaries of the African territories and alter them to produce more viable and national units that have a chance of evolving into independent nation-states. *“Some African countries such as the Congo, the Sudan, Angola, and Somalia definitely need to be reconstituted right away. Others which merit it, may be left intact.”*

On the first level, Muyemba’s demands appear to be propaganda boosting the military operations of Ugandan President Yoweri Museveni, who has deployed the Ugandan Popular Defense Forces (UPDF) into three of the four countries cited: Sudan, Congo, and Angola. The aim of these military cross-border operations—which began with the 1990 Ugandan invasion of Rwanda, according to Museveni—is the unification of Africa.

In stark contrast to Mbeki’s call for unity built on economic development and cooperation, Museveni’s method has been war. As *EIR* exposed in its June 1997 *Special Report*, “Never Again! London’s Genocide against Africans,” the 1994 Pan-African Congress held in Kampala, Uganda, heard the plan put forward by Arthur Gakwindi, then Ugandan ambassador to the OAU, for the redivision of Africa into six mega-countries: Sahara Republic, Senegambria (West Africa), Central Africa, Erithomia (sections of the Horn of Africa), Mozambica (southern Africa), and the Swahili Republic. The plan cuts across the borders of nearly every African country; although Uganda itself remains intact inside the Swahili Republic.

The UPDF, together with its spin-off, the Rwandan Patriotic Army, has made definite progress since 1994 on the formation of the “Swahili Republic.” The new entity is to contain Uganda, Rwanda, Burundi, Kenya, Tanzania, southern Sudan, most of Angola, and the Democratic Republic of Congo. While the East African Community of Tanzania, Uganda, and Kenya is being put together using diplomatic methods, wars have brought Rwanda and Burundi into the Ugandan orbit. In regards to Sudan, Uganda continues to support the military operations of John Garang and the British-backed Sudanese People’s Liberation Army against the government. Its troops have established a Ugandan military and civil base in the Congo city of Kisangani. Ugandan military equipment and advisers are also present in Angola in support of Jonas Savimbi’s UNITA, which is posing the “gravest threat since independence” to the MPLA government in Luanda.

The human toll for this effort in re-drawing borders is *millions* of lives lost: 2 million in Sudan, 2 million in Rwanda, 500,000 in Burundi, 500,000 Congolese at least, hundreds of thousands of Ugandans, and hundreds of thousands in Angola. The death counts include not only those who lost their lives in the mass carnage, but also lives lost because of conditions created by the wars: massive displacement, inability to cultivate crops resulting in starvation, and rampant disease, where wars have destroyed all health care delivery systems. As of this writing, for instance, in the city of Malange, Angola, now under siege by UNITA, UNICEF estimates that ten children in the city are dying daily of starvation.

### **The British ‘Grand Design’**

As could be suspected given its destructiveness to Africans, the “Kampala plan” did not originate in any African capital, such as Kampala, in the 1990s, but in the blueprints of the colonial powers themselves—specifically in the 1940s, with British “Field Marshal the Viscount Montgomery of Alamein” in his “Memorandum—Tour of Africa Nov/Dec 1947.” As *EIR* reported in September 1998, the memorandum’s basic point is that the Western industrialized countries, definitely including Great Britain, require the full use of Africa’s vast mineral and agricultural resources and potentials. British policy toward Africa has “two primary essentials”:

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“to develop the resources” and “to effect such a grouping of British (or Commonwealth) Africa as will break down the many existing barriers.”

This “breaking down” is what Montgomery calls his “Grand Design.” “The present system of more or less watertight compartments [the African nation-states of today] is highly wasteful, is illogical, and can do no good to mankind in general or to Britain in particular.” Out of the “hodge-podge” of entities created by the Berlin Conference, Montgomery proposed the carving out of the “Central African Federation,” “West African Federation,” and “East African Federation.”

A staunch colonialist, Montgomery wrote that such tightly administered federations are required to control the African people. “There will be many people in the U.K who will oppose such a plan on the grounds that the African will suffer in the process; there is no reason whatever why he should suffer; and in any case he is a complete savage and is quite incapable of developing the country himself. In the development of Africa we must adventure courageously, as did Cecil Rhodes.”

The Kampala Plan is nothing but the Montgomery Plan, brought to Africa by way of Julius Nyerere’s Dar-es-Salaam University and the Frantz Fanon cult of violence that was taught there in the 1960s and 1970s to “freedom fighters” such as Yoweri Museveni. The aim of the Kampala-Montgomery Plan is to break down the “existing barriers”—the nation-states—whose governments might stand in the way of the robbery of Africa’s vast resources in gold, diamonds, and strategic minerals, under conditions of global financial collapse. This is the policy being carried out by the British and allied financial oligarchy, first through the governments of Britain, France, and complicit channels in the United States, and then through Kampala and allied marcherlord forces, by means of propaganda, logistical, and financial support.

## Washington is next

There are indications that at the negotiations for a peace settlement to end the war in the Congo, Uganda and Rwanda put forward the notion of partitioning the Congo, with Rwanda and Uganda. Uganda and Rwanda have both established full administrations over the one-third of the Congolese territory they occupy, and are already siphoning out gold, diamonds, timber, and anything not nailed down toward points east. At the same time, British Commonwealth companies such as Barrick Gold, Banro Resources, and others are lining up behind the marcher-lords, ready to replace such low-life smuggling with up-scale “resource development,” where the profits are 100% repatriated—just as in the colonial days.

Up to now, the United States has officially rejected any idea of partitioning, stating that Congo’s territorial integrity must be respected. However, hearings on “Central Africans’

Wars,” held June 8 by the Africa Subcommittee of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, shows that pressure is mounting for the Clinton administration to come officially on board the Montgomery-Kampala plan. Africa Subcommittee chairman Sen. Bill Frist (R-Tenn.) opened the hearing with a call for his colleagues in the Senate to examine “the erosion of African states and the role of the colonial borders which define them. These borders may not support a viable political entity, and may be of limited value in defining our own policy toward Africa.”

The hearings further heard testimony from Marina Ottaway, senior associate and co-director of the Carnegie Endowment for Peace “Democracy and Rule of Law Project.” In describing the “tangle of conflicts” involving the Congo, Ottaway made no reference to Uganda and Rwanda’s looting of the Congo, but instead came to their defense to state: “The increasingly frequent violations of the OAU principles by African countries is not simply the result of aggressive policies by rogue regimes flouting international law and the charter of the Organization of African Unity.”

The problem is the “vacuum of power,” she asserted, which is caused by the “poor performance of most African states since independence, which has reduced many to the condition of failed states.” The role of the International Monetary Fund’s conditionalities policies in producing such failed states is not criticized, but upheld as an inviolate and permanent requirement African nations must meet at any cost.

Ottaway concluded by implicitly calling for the United States to accept and support the wars that are being launched to re-draw the continent’s borders. For U.S. policy, “it is not simply a question of helping existing states to strengthen their institutions or revive their economies, or to convince governments to respect the rules of the Organization of African Unity. Many of the states that emerged from the colonial period have ceased to exist in practice, and the rules of the OAU cannot apply to states that are no longer there. The problem is to create functioning states, either by re-dividing territory or by creating new institutional arrangements such as decentralized federations or even confederations.”

This will only be achieved by more wars, she admitted—“a continuation of domestic and interstate fighting, and probably the breakup of some countries, before stability is reached. There is no realistic alternative.”

If the Clinton administration accepts Ottaway’s advice, it can be expected to increase its multifaceted support for the new colonialism’s warlords. A “realistic alternative” to such a war-policy would be to support the efforts of President Mbeki and others for reviving the African economies and institutions—a policy however that will take the Clinton administration straight to the urgent necessity to take action for a new monetary system that will permit, rather than prohibit, development.