

Africa Briefs

Lavrov on African Peace Initiative Against War in Ukraine

Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov was asked to comment, at a May 18 joint press conference with visiting Ugandan Foreign Minister Jeje Odongo, about the peace initiative by six African nations announced by South African President Cyril Ramaphosa earlier this week, and the statements in response by U.S. officials that the initiative would be welcome only if it adhered to President Zelensky's peace plan (which demands Russia's unconditional surrender).

On the U.S. response, Lavrov replied: "I think the U.S. is not ready for any constructive action on a settlement in Ukraine, either now or in the foreseeable future. The U.S. has been creating this situation for many years in the context of its strategic policy of countering the objective formation of a multipolar world, preserving its hegemony, and subordinating everyone to its will. It is using Ukraine as an obedient tool while pursuing this policy."

As for the African initiative—which *EIR* reported in its May 18 *Daily Alert*—Lavrov noted that Russian President Vladimir Putin is always ready to talk with partners sincerely interested in a stable situation in the world, "without similar provocations and attacks on international law and human rights."

Agenda and dates for the proposed meeting between representatives of the six African nations and President Putin are under discussion. A meeting in June or July is possible.

South African Foreign Minister Pandor: BRICS Works for 'Common Good'

South African Minister of International Relations Naledi Pandor, a champion of the Global South, praised the work of the BRICS "alliance" for the "common good" in a May 15 address to a forum for government officials. It followed her condemnation of the "marginalization of the poor," in a May 10 speech on the budget. In her budget vote speech, Pandor spoke on behalf of the downtrodden: "[T]he most powerful economies are in a fractious trade conflict that threatens the smaller economies," an apparent reference to the British-U.S.-EU sanctions. "The poor and marginalized are facing the greatest threat in that their plight is forgotten while the mighty fight."

In her May 15 speech to the forum, "Strengthening Partnerships for a Fairer and More Equitable Global System," Pandor emphasized, "The growing interest in the alliance shows that many countries are looking for a multipolar forum that is modern, inclusive, and focused on the common good."

South African trade with the other BRICS nations grew from \$25 billion in 2017 to \$36 billion in 2021, a growth of 44%.

The fifteenth BRICS Summit will be convened in Durban, South Africa, on August 22-24, under the BRICS chairmanship of South African President Cyril Ramaphosa, who said he will use his position to advance African interests.

U.S. Accuses South Africa of Arming Russia, Its Currency Then Crashes

In an unprecedented televised press conference May 11, U.S. Ambassador

to South Africa Reuben Brigety accused the government, a BRICS member, of having shipped munitions to Russia, contrary to its official neutrality with respect to the Ukraine war. Within hours, the rand fell sharply against the dollar and pound to nearly its lowest point ever. It appeared that the "markets" wished to add a punctuation mark to Brigety's charge.

It was not news that from Dec. 6-8, 2022, a Russian cargo ship, *Lady R*, was docked at the Simon's Town Naval Base, Cape Town. But Ambassador Brigety claimed that the U.S. government knew with certainty that munitions were loaded onto *Lady R*, and referred to convincing evidence that he had seen, but wouldn't disclose.

Ramaphosa subsequently announced that an inquiry into the allegations had begun prior to Brigety's public statements, and reported that U.S. intelligence agencies had been tasked to provide any information in their possession on the alleged shipment.

A statement issued later by Ramaphosa's office called Brigety's remarks "disappointing." Foreign Minister Naledi Pandor summoned Brigety to her office to deliver an official *dé-marche* protesting his undiplomatic and arrogant behavior. Brigety apologized "unreservedly" for having "crossed the line" by going public, but did not retract his accusation.

Zimbabwe Kicks Over Carbon Credits Game, Will Others Follow?

A Bloomberg article on May 18, "Global Carbon Market in Turmoil After Zimbabwe Grabs Offset Money," reported on the "shock announcement" that "Zimbabwe will take half of all revenues generated from carbon off-

sets projects developed on its territory,” adding that this “is a harbinger of an uncertain future in the carbon trade.” Zimbabwe is the world’s 12th largest creator of offsets, according to Bloomberg New Energy Outlook.

To understand the significance of Zimbabwe’s move, consider that the entire “carbon market” is a scam on top of a sham. Not only is it built on the lie that CO₂ emissions cause global warming; it is a “market” in reverse—in which investments are made to *not* produce something. The idea is that Western polluters (productive coal plants, airlines, shippers, steel plants) would be allowed to continue to produce carbon by buying “offsetting” investments—“carbon credits” for carbon-consuming items—especially forests and other greenery. In banker Mark Carney’s perverted logic, it’s a “win-win”—for bankers: The creation of a brand new market for speculation (just how much is an undeveloped chunk of land worth?) and a fresh cash flow into the bankrupt monetary system, just in time to prevent oblivion.

Carney’s scheme was revised at COP26, says Bloomberg: carbon-offset-producing countries were given the option to sell their offsets or use them domestically, with the expectation that they would never choose the latter. “There’s now risk that other countries might follow suit,” writes Bloomberg, “creating new uncertainties for businesses that develop and sell offsets, corporations that purchase offsets as a way to counterbalance their greenhouse gas pollution and the cohort of traders who invest in this emerging asset class.”

Bloomberg cites the Kariba Forest project in northern Zimbabwe, being developed by South Pole, “the world’s leading seller of offsets,” which lists the World Economic Forum and the USAID among its numerous partners. Covering a large area along the border with Zambia, Kariba Forest is “one of the world’s first large-scale deforestation avoidance climate action proj-

ects,” according to a blog on South Pole’s website.

“A spokesperson for South Pole said it is reviewing Zimbabwe’s announcement and ‘assessing the implications’ for the Kariba project,” writes Bloomberg. From the sound of it, so will the entire green investment community.

China Refutes the ‘Debt Trap’ Lie About Its Projects in Africa

China’s *Global Times* April 19 takes on the “debt trap” meme with a new urgency, for the first time directly turning the tables against the London-created slander, this time directly blaming it on the U.S. The article, “Dollar Hegemony Is the True Cause of Africa’s Debt Problems, Not China,” by author Shi Qing, notes the recent aggressive diplomacy of the U.S., in which diplomats have made five trips to Africa so far this year, each time making the debt issue a center of discussion. “While the U.S. is pointing its finger to African debt issue,” Shi writes, “its own domestic economy is on the verge of trouble,” pointing to the whipsawing of QE and interest rate hikes which have caused “multiple” banks to collapse, “as well as subsequent negative chain reaction around the world.”

“The U.S.’ irresponsible monetary policy is the root of African debt problems. Relying on dollar hegemony, the U.S. has implemented three rounds of quantitative easing, cut interest rates to near zero, and flooded Africa and emerging markets with low-interest dollars,” writes Shi, resulting in African countries having to face liquidity shortages, broken funding chains, currency depreciation, skyrocketing debt repayment costs denominated in dollars, a surge in sovereign debt, and exacerbated debt problems.”

“The loans that the U.S. gives to Africa are mainly used in non-production areas,” he continues, noting, “The essence of the debt problem is a development problem. China is the country that has made the most contributions to Africa’s development.” Since 2000, he says, Chinese companies have built and upgraded in Africa more than 10,000 km of railways, nearly 100,000 km of highways, about 1,000 bridges, nearly 100 ports, and a large number of hospitals and schools, creating more than 4.5 million jobs for Africa.

Uganda and Russia To Step Up Economic Cooperation

Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov, after meeting with his Ugandan counterpart Jeje Odongo, on May 18, said they discussed increased “mutually beneficial cooperation in almost all possible areas.” Promising sectors under discussion included energy, geological exploration, minerals extraction, research, education, telecommunication, cyber security, agriculture, and pharmaceuticals.

In February 2023 Anna Popova, head of Russia’s Federal Service for the Oversight of Consumer Protection and Welfare (Rospotrebnadzor), had visited Uganda and discussed with President Yoweri Museveni the possibility of setting up a laboratory in Uganda for diseases such as Ebola, Congo hemorrhagic fever, and anthrax, as Popova’s agency has done in Burundi. A joint action plan is reportedly being prepared for approval during the July 2023 Russia-Africa Forum in St. Petersburg.

Uganda’s aggressive efforts to develop its oil and gas industry, and nuclear energy, were also a topic for Lavrov and Odongo, including “a project to set up a nuclear technology center in Uganda, including for nuclear medicine,” which could prove important for East Africa and Africa as a whole.

Science & Technology Briefs

Oceans of Water on the Moons of Uranus?

NASA [reported](#) May 4 on a [study](#) published in the Dec. 14, 2022 *Journal of Geophysical Research*, indicating Uranus' moons may have water oceans between their cores and icy crusts.

According to NASA, based on re-analysis of data collected by NASA's Voyager 2 spacecraft, and new computer modeling:

"[The] study is the first to detail the evolution of the interior makeup and structure of all 5 large moons: Ariel, Umbriel, Titania, Oberon, and Miranda. The work suggests 4 ... hold oceans that could be dozens of miles deep."

Voyager 2's fly-by of Uranus in January 1986 passed about 50,600 miles above its clouds. It transmitted voluminous data—thousands of images of the planet and its moons and rings.

The study's lead author, Julie Castillo-Rogez, of NASA's Jet Propulsion Laboratory near Pasadena, California, writes:

"When it comes to small bodies—dwarf planets and moons—planetary scientists previously have found evidence of oceans in several unlikely places, including the dwarf planets Ceres and Pluto, and Saturn's moon Mimas.... So there are mechanisms at play that we don't fully understand. This paper investigates what those could be and how they are relevant to the many bodies in the solar system that could be rich in water but have limited internal heat."

Again, NASA:

"By investigating the composition of the oceans, scientists can learn about materials that might be found on the

moons' icy surfaces as well, depending on whether substances underneath were pushed up from below by geological activity. There is evidence from telescopes that at least one of the moons, Ariel, has material that flowed onto its surface, perhaps from icy volcanoes, relatively recently. Miranda, the innermost and fifth largest moon, also hosts surface features that appear to be of recent origin, suggesting it may have held enough heat to maintain an ocean at some point. Recent thermal modeling found that Miranda is unlikely to have hosted water for long: It loses heat too quickly and is probably frozen now."

"Digging into what lies beneath and on the surfaces of these moons will help scientists and engineers choose the best science instruments to survey them. For instance, determining that ammonia and chlorides may be present means that spectrometers, which detect compounds by their reflected light, would need to use a wavelength range that covers both kinds of compounds."

As the National Academies' 2023 Planetary Science and Astrobiology Decadal Survey has prioritized exploring Uranus, NASA is beginning to plan such a mission.

More Solar and Geomagnetic Storms Ahead?

Solar storms are powerful releases of energy by the Sun caused by stresses or breaks in the Sun's magnetic field lines. This energy can take the form of coronal mass ejections (CME), or solar flares or other forms of radiation, resulting in geomagnetic storms when the solar wind from those solar storms intersects Earth's magnetic field.

On March 24, one such [solar storm](#) caught many space weather forecasters by surprise. While the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration's (NOAA) National Space Weather Service originally announced a "geomagnetic storm watch" with possible moderate (G2) storm conditions, it quickly upgraded its warning to G4. This storm produced spectacular auroras, some as far south as New Mexico.

Space.com [explained](#): on March 28:

"NOAA ranks geomagnetic storms on a scale running from G1, which could cause an increase in auroral activity around the poles and minor fluctuations in power supplies, up to G5, which includes extreme cases like the Carrington Event—a colossal solar storm that occurred September 1859, which disrupted telegraph services all over the world and triggered auroras so bright and powerful that they were visible as far south as the Bahamas."

The Sun goes through an approximate 11-year cycle of increasing and then decreasing numbers of sunspots and associated solar storm activity. The current cycle, expected to peak in 2025, was initially forecast to be "mild" and similar to the previous cycle. But it is already exceeding expectations in the number and ferocity of solar storms.

Super High-Speed Maglev in Vacuum: Dream Being Realized

Forty years before Elon Musk's Hyperloop concept, in 1972, Richard M. Salter, an American scientist with a Ph.D. in nuclear physics, then employed by the RAND Corporation, put