

African Leaders Intervene Into the Ukraine Conflict

by Daniel Platt

June 23—Under the old paradigm, the presumed “uni-polar world” of the Anglo-American “Rules-Based Order,” the nations of the Global South were expected to be seen, but not heard. As this old order disintegrates, the formerly colonial nations are increasingly emboldened to assert their interests and provide leadership in the face of the obvious, dangerous incompetence of those who have been calling the shots up until now. Over the past weeks, African leaders have intervened into one of the most volatile conflicts, the war in Ukraine, adding their voices to the growing chorus that calls for a negotiated peace. This culminated in important meetings of a delegation of African leaders with the presidents of Ukraine and Russia, during June 16–17.

The African leaders involved are conscious that the strategic significance of their mission extends beyond its immediate intent of adding their weight to the efforts to restore peace in Europe, as crucial as that is. Upon his return, South African President Cyril Ramaphosa told the South African people that the trip was “historic,” in that it marked “the first time African leaders have embarked on a peace mission beyond the shores of the continent.” As Brazilian President Inácio Lula da Silva said in celebrating Africa Day on May 25: Africa—one of the fast-

est growing regions in the world, full of dynamism—is no longer the same as it was when he, Lula, finished his second term 13 years ago. And so, neither is the world.

The powers of the West had best realize that today’s world is proving that Henry Kissinger’s infamous dictum—that “history has never been produced in the South. The axis of history starts in Moscow, goes to Bonn, crosses over to Washington, and then goes to Tokyo. What happens in the South is of no importance”—is simply the words of an arrogant fool.

Africa’s Peace Mission Takes Shape

During a visit to Côte d’Ivoire on June 13, Denis Sassou Nguesso, President of the Republic of the Congo, said Africa must take action to bring peace between Russia and Ukraine:

“We are all suffering the effects of these wars directly on our peoples. Inflation is rising everywhere, and we believe that Africa cannot remain silent or indifferent in the face of such a tragedy.”

His remarks followed a May 15 statement by South African President Cyril Ramaphosa, that Russian and Ukrainian authorities had agreed to receive an Afri-



kremlin.ru

Leaders of seven African countries, the African Peace Mission, met June 16-17 with the presidents of Ukraine and Russia to present their 10-point peace proposal to end the war in Ukraine (see box). Here they are meeting June 17 with Vladimir Putin, President of the Russian Federation, in the Constantine Palace in St. Petersburg.

can delegation to seek ways to peacefully settle the conflict. He spoke on behalf of six African states—Egypt, Zambia, the Republic of the Congo, Senegal, and Uganda, as well as South Africa. The Union of the Comoros, currently chairing the African Union, joined later. President Ramaphosa said he was ready to lead the mission.

In response to a Parliamentary question in South Africa on March 17, before the six states had formally decided on their peace effort, President Ramaphosa



kremlin.ru

Cyril Ramaphosa, President of the Republic of South Africa and leader of the African Peace Mission, with Vladimir Putin, President of the Russian Federation, in St. Petersburg, June 17, 2023.

said that the increase in fuel and food costs in Africa as a result of the war—in addition to the suffering of the Ukrainian and Russian peoples and others around the world—had prompted their peace initiative. He added:

“We should also work to revitalize the Non-Aligned Movement, to ensure that those countries that are not part of the hegemonic contests between the big powers can work together to build peace across the globe.”

On June 6, South Africa hosted a meeting of the six Presidents to discuss how to proceed with their peace

proposal. On June 10 Ramaphosa briefed Chinese President Xi Jinping on their thinking.

The African Peace Mission met with Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky on June 16, and on the following day with Russian President Vladimir Putin. President Ramaphosa presented a 10-point peace proposal to both leaders (see box).

Three NATO Governments Sabotage the Mission

While President Ramaphosa’s travel to Ukraine was unimpeded, a second plane carrying most of his security team and journalists was harassed by three NATO member governments to strip his security, attempt to humiliate the mission, and push its participants into partisanship. Their plane was denied access to Italian airspace for hours, forcing it to circle over the Mediterranean. In Warsaw, Poland, the 120 passengers were not allowed to deplane unless they surrendered their arms, which they refused to do, and remained on the plane for 26 hours in difficult circumstances. A woman with diplomatic status from the South African embassy in Warsaw sought to visit the plane, but was first submitted to the outrage of a strip search. Later, the plane sought to catch up with President Ramaphosa via NATO member Hungary, but was denied access to its airspace. Ramaphosa had to

The Ten-Point African Peace Proposal

The ten-point proposal has not been formally released. *EIR* has gleaned the following summary from media accounts. A video is [available](#) in which President Ramaphosa explains Points 5–10.

1. It is necessary for the mediator and representatives of Ukraine and Russia to listen carefully to each other.

2. The war must be settled through negotiations and diplomatic means.

3. There must be a de-escalation of conflict on both sides.

4. The sovereignty of countries in terms of the UN Charter and internationally recognized principles should be recognized.

5. There must be a guarantee of security for all sides.

6. There should be an opening up of movement for grain and fertilizers in the Black Sea.

7. There must be humanitarian support for victims of war.

8. There must be a release of POWs on both sides, as well as returning children who have been displaced.

9. There must be reconstruction of the destruction caused by the war.

10. It is necessary to build better relations between Ukraine and African countries, and dialogue through the Africa Peace Mission.

travel on to Kiev without this, the major portion of his security detail.

Zelensky told the delegation the only possible peace plan was his own. Zelensky's plan includes a return to the borders of 2014, including Crimea, and a war crimes tribunal for the Russians. Adding an additional element of the grotesque, Zelensky recoiled from physical contact with Comoros President Azali Assoumani, Chairman of the African Union, during a public photo opportunity.

Spin doctors in the Western media were fully deployed for the occasion. They reported with great fanfare that while in the Ukrainian capital, the African leaders were told to take shelter from supposed incoming "Russian missiles." However, Ramaphosa's spokesman later said they didn't hear any explosions or see anything out of the ordinary. The *Kyiv Post* quoted Ukrainian political analyst Anatoliy Oktyziuk: "They will not be able to offer us anything in terms of conflict resolution.... They cannot play the role of mediators. They have little political weight; they do not influence anything." Reuters reported that Zelensky said after the meeting that he saw no point in their going to Russia: "This is their decision, how logical it is, I don't really understand."

Putin's Surprise Revelation

Proceeding to St. Petersburg, the delegation was received June 17 by President Putin and Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov, among others. President Putin reminded the African delegation that the war in Ukraine had raged for eight years before Russia entered the fray, and recalled his attempt to make peace in March 2022.

In a dramatic development, Putin showed the delegation "The Treaty on Permanent Neutrality and Guarantees of Security of Ukraine" negotiated in Istanbul in March-April of 2022 between Russia and Ukraine—not previously seen—initialed by both sides at that time. The treaty provided Ukraine with guarantees, and accompanying addenda dealt with the disposition of armed forces and other specifics, Putin told them.



GCSIS

"We should also work to revitalize the Non-Aligned Movement, to ensure that those countries that are not part of the hegemonic contests between the big powers can work together to build peace across the globe."
—President Cyril Ramaphosa, in a response to a question in Parliament in South Africa, March 17, 2023.

"Everything is written down: up to weaponry units and armed forces personnel. This is the document, and it was initialed by the Kiev delegation. It bears the signature."

Putin asserted that the Russian removal of military forces around Kiev, characterized as a humiliating defeat by Western media, was done in fulfillment of that Istanbul agreement. However, Ukraine scuttled the agreement after then British Prime Minister Boris Johnson made one of his several visits to Kiev.

Regarding a number of points in the African proposal, Putin told the African leaders that Russia had expressed its willingness to negotiate on

these same points, but had been rebuffed by the Ukrainian side. He told the visiting delegation that "We welcome the balanced approach of African friends to the Ukraine crisis." Following the talks, he said, "There are certain themes in the ideas outlined during the talks ... which could be implemented."

Upon returning home, President Ramaphosa elaborated in his June 19 weekly "Dear Fellow South African" newsletter:

This initiative has been historic in that it is the first time African leaders have embarked on a peace mission beyond the shores of the continent. Although the delegation comprised countries that have taken diverse positions on the various UN resolutions on the conflict, the countries represented have all taken a non-aligned stance on this issue. This has lent credibility to the mission and engendered trust from both sides.

As South Africa, we continue to maintain our position that this conflict should be settled through negotiation and by diplomatic means, in line with founding principles of the Non-Aligned Movement, and that it is in the collective interest of everyone that it come to an end soon....

Just as we as African leaders visited Ukraine and Russia to explain the impact the conflict is having on our citizens, we also believe we can

contribute to international efforts to bring about the conditions for a lasting peace.

Both President Zelensky and Putin agreed to further engagements following this initial visit.

As engagements with both parties and African leaders continue, it is our hope that as the process moves forward, a foundation can be set for de-escalation of the conflict and negotiation, the two crucial preconditions for a lasting peace.

Black Sea Grain Transshipment Controversy

Earlier in the same newsletter, President Ramaphosa reported that the delegation had raised the need for a stable supply of grain shipments via the Black Sea:

Both Russia and Ukraine are major suppliers of grains and producers of fertilizer destined for African markets. According to the African Development Bank, the conflict has “triggered a shortage of about 30 million tonnes of grains on the African continent, along with a sharp increase in cost.” As a result of this conflict, African countries are negatively affected by the rising costs of food and energy.

During the meeting, Putin responded, saying that a resolution of the dispute over the transit of grain through the Black Sea would have little impact on Africa, because only 3% of that grain is going to the poorest countries. There are conflicting claims as to the actual effect of the Black Sea Grain Initiative, instituted almost a year ago. According to [statistics](#) provided by the United Nations Black Sea Grain Initiative Joint Coordination Centre, the top five recipients of Ukrainian grain are China, Spain, Türkiye, Italy, and the Netherlands. Some European nations have actually complained about Ukraine dumping grain on their markets; in April 2023, Poland and Hungary banned imports of Ukrainian grain, which they said was undercutting domestic prices and harming farmers.

However, the UN also maintains that the Initiative is important for the poorer nations. The complexities of accounting make it difficult to assess. According to PassBlue, a private organization that monitors the UN, “Only 6% has gone to the least developed countries. But which country qualifies as developed or developing depends on the World Bank’s definition, where the United Arab Emirates and China are considered developing nations, just like Kenya and Sri Lanka.” Reuters



Presidency of Brazil/Ricardo Stuckert

“My anguish is that with so many children going hungry in the world, instead of dealing with how to solve inequalities, we are dealing with war. It is urgent that Russia and Ukraine find a common path to peace.” —Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva, President of Brazil. In Rome to meet with Italy’s Prime Minister and President, and the Pope, he is shown here with Pope Francis, June 21.

puts the figure lower, at “around 3%.”

The Initiative was renewed last month, for a two-month extension only. The position of the Russian government is that for the Initiative to be continued, certain obstacles to Russia’s own grain exports must be removed. It is asking that the Russian Agricultural Bank (Rosselkhozbank) be reconnected to the SWIFT payments system, that access to insurance and port facilities be restored, that access to supplies and spare parts for agricultural machinery be restored, and that the Togliatti-Odessa ammonia pipeline, necessary for fertilizer production, be rebuilt. The pipeline was blown up by Ukrainian forces. Ukraine, of course, claims that Russia blew up its own pipeline.

Growing Consensus in the Global South

Western media, so far, have imposed an almost total blackout in its coverage of the mission of the fact that President Putin chose the visit by the African leaders to show publicly the peace agreement which could have ended the conflict shortly after it began. Instead, their coverage worked hard to sell their lie that the mission of the African leaders had “failed.”

The African mission, however, will pursue its next

phase, consulting with the Russian side at the Russia-Africa summit July 26–29 in St. Petersburg. Nor are they alone in their effort. Africa has joined a growing group of world leaders who are calling for a negotiated peace.

Schiller Institute founder Helga Zepp-LaRouche was [interviewed](#) on June 19 by the Russian news agency, TASS. During the interview, she said,

There are many proposals for a negotiated peace on the table, by China, by President Lula da Silva from Brazil, from Pope Francis, from several African leaders, as well as numerous appeals and open letters from citizens around the world. It is urgent that all of these initiatives join together and make it clear that the overwhelming, absolute majority of the world wants peace, and that the warmongers have lost already.... It is more urgent than ever to put a new international security architecture on the agenda, which takes care of the security interest of every single country on the planet.

On June 21, Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva was in Rome

to meet with the Pope, Italian Prime Minister Georgia Meloni, and President Sergio Mattarella. Lula discussed his peace initiative with all three. In an interview with *Corriere della Sera*, he said about his meeting with the Pope:

“I meet the Pope with a conflict in Europe that affects everyone. I sent a special envoy, Celso Amorim, to Moscow and Kiev. Both countries believe they can win militarily; I disagree. I think there are too few people talking about peace. My anguish is that with so many people going hungry in the world, with so many children without food, instead of dealing with how to solve inequalities we are dealing with war. It is urgent that Russia and Ukraine find a common path to peace.”

Finding a solution to this war will take time, President Lula stressed in his press conference before leaving Rome, but “some countries that are not in the war—Brazil, China, India, Indonesia, possibly Mexico and Argentina, other countries in Africa—have to create something. It is not easy. If it were easy we would have already solved it. It is difficult.” But, he insisted, “there will come a time when reason will prevail and then we will start to see peace negotiations begin.”

The New Silk Road Becomes the World Land-Bridge

The BRICS countries have a strategy to prevent war and economic catastrophe. It's time for the rest of the world to join!

This 374-page report is a road-map to the New World Economic Order that Lyndon and Helga LaRouche have championed for over 20 years.

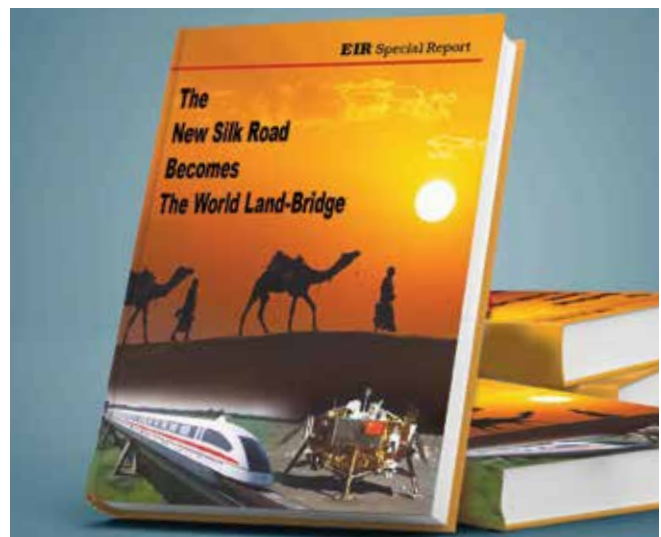
Includes:

Introduction by Helga Zepp-LaRouche, "The New Silk Road Leads to the Future of Mankind!"

The metrics of progress, with emphasis on the scientific principles required for survival of mankind: nuclear power and desalination; the fusion power economy; solving the water crisis.

The three keystone nations: China, the core nation of the New Silk Road; Russia's mission in North Central Eurasia and the Arctic; India prepares to take on its legacy of leadership.

Other regions: The potential contributions of Southwest, Central, and Southeast Asia, Australia, Europe, and Africa.



The report is available in PDF **\$35**
and in hard copy **\$50** (softcover) **\$75** (hardcover)
plus shipping and handling.

Order from <https://store.larouchepub.com>