

PIDA: A Tony Blair, Deadly Pretense

by Hussein Askary and
Marcia Merry Baker

Sept. 10—At the Africa sessions of the World Water Week in Stockholm in August, a particular document was in circulation—“Program for Infrastructure Development in Africa” (PIDA), which is, by pedigree and intent, only a pretense for economic advancement. In practice, it is a rationalization for looting lives and resources across the continent.

PIDA is a continuation of the NEPAD initiative (New Partnership for Africa’s Development), cooked up in the test-tubes of the British Foreign office/U.K. Department for International Development, at the time of the Tony Blair government (1997-2007). NEPAD was launched in 2001, in order to “talk the talk” of aid and growth, while blocking essential nation-serving infrastructure, and instead imposing neo-colonialist schemes of public-private partnerships between globalist mega-corporations and targetted African peoples and areas, for cheap, neo-British Empire financial gains and control. In 2004, Blair set up the Commission for Africa; and in 2007, the Africa Progress Panel. After he left office, he formed the Africa Governance Initiative, to intervene on the continent, against forces for real development.

The new 20-page PIDA document, sub-titled, “Interconnecting, Integrating and Transforming a Continent,” was produced with funding from, among other

sources, the U.K. Department for International Development, and the NEPAD Infrastructure Project Preparation Facility Special Fund. The principal author-agencies include the NEPAD Planning and Coordinating Agency, the African Union Commission, the Economic Commission for Africa, and the African Union Commission.

NEPAD “partnerships” to date have included such neo-plantation arrangements as mega-companies exporting baby vegetables from Kenya to Europe by air-freight; or fruit from West Africa to the United States. For example, PepsiCo has a deal in Ethiopia, to obtain chick peas for humus, including making and donating a small amount for charity, to look good. Cargill, Nestles, and other famous names are all entrenched. The minerals-exporting deals in Africa are infamous.

What the PIDA updated report emphasizes, is that these companies need more electricity, better ports, improved roads, etc. for their operations. Therefore, more infrastructure must be built—including by PPPs—public-private partnerships, on a region-by-region basis—for what the companies want to do. This is all couched, of course, in terms of “making Africa competitive” in world trade, and lessening poverty for Africans.

The PIDA report dissimulates that, “Public-private partnerships (PPPs) are no longer a novel concept, and motivated governments can make PPPs a successful, sustainable and visible part of regional infrastructure development.”

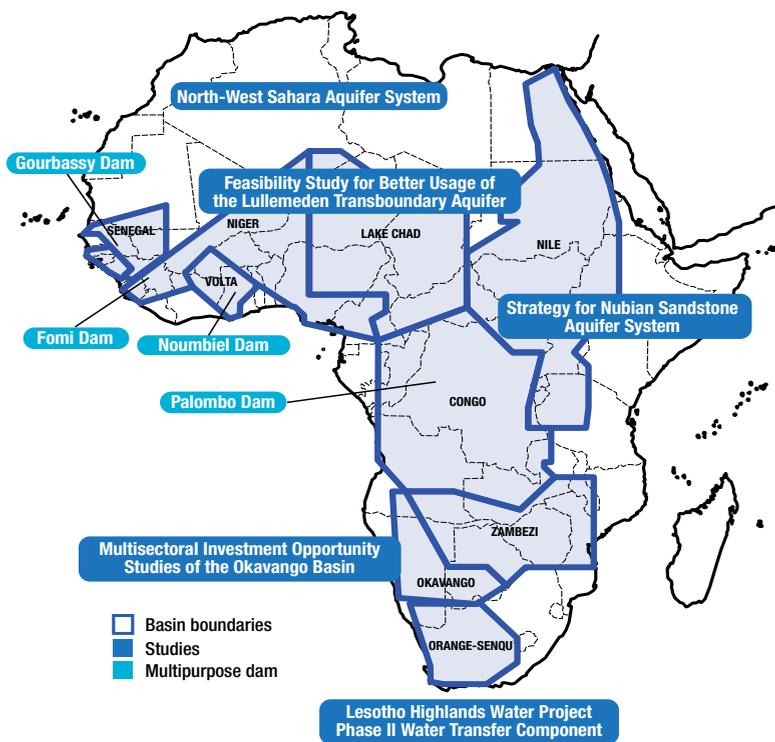
Pretense of Water Improvements

The gist of the PIDA report is to present a few projects proposed and underway in four areas—energy, transportation, water and communications—and call this a “programme.” For each of these areas, a continental map is given, and a chart, which lists individual projects—their status, cost, nation, and region.

Look at water in specific. **Figure 1** reproduces the report’s map titled, “PIDA’s Transboundary Water Impact.” It names the major river basins, as indicated; identifies four dam projects, three aquifer study-projects, and two other study-programs, in the Okavango Basin, and Lesotho Highlands. In a chart, the nine map features shown are listed, with estimated cost. This, then, is called a water “programme.”

In reality, this is no program at all. True, there are merits for the individual projects shown, e.g., the Gourbassy Dam to regulate the Senegal River, or for devis-

FIGURE 1
PIDA's Transboundary Water Impact



Source: ArcWorld, UN Cartographic Section, DCW, Palestinian Environmental Quality Authority

ing the best use of the Nubian Aquifer, but these particulars don't add up to "transforming a continent." They aren't supposed to. They are a ruse.

What is truly required instead, is the top-down "Big Project" approach. A portion of the vast Congo River Basin flow, can be diverted northward to replenish the Chad Basin. Proposed in the 1970s, this is called the "TransAqua" project. In addition, some of the eastern Basin flow can be diverted northward in a parallel to the Nile River, proposed as the the "Africa Pass" project, by Egyptian engineer Aiman Rsheed in 2012.¹

In coastal Sudan, Egypt, and North Africa, nuclear-powered desalination can provide the scale of freshwater needed for centuries ahead. This was envisioned in

1. See Hussein Askary, "Africa Pass: Afro-Mediterranean Revolutionary Project," *EIR*, June 8, 2012.

the 1950s Atoms for Peace program, but was obstructed by London.

This "Big Project" approach was shown to be dramatically successful in the Tennessee Valley Authority, the Colorado River Basin, and Columbia River Basin development in North America under Franklin Delano Roosevelt. It is the only realistic perspective. An integral part of it is the science-driver aspect—for example, the training, and R&D impact of advanced nuclear power, and large-scale desalting of seawater.

But the PIDA report perspective, apart from its piecemeal programmatic nothingness, and its British-Empire legacy, is most glaringly ludicrous, because its premises are based on fantasy, namely that the world monetary and trade context is stable, which it is not. The worldwide monetary system crash is now dramatically manifest in the Eurozone

breakdown, hyperinflating commodities and crashing markets, world food shortages, and the revelations of criminal activities of all kinds by the big-name banking houses—drug-money laundering, Libor-rigging, fraudulent collateralization, etc. The "markets" are both fraudulent and blowing out.

The urgent mobilization is now in motion to sweep away this debacle, by reinstating the Glass-Steagall principle of separating sound banking from speculation, and making way for nation-serving credit and projects.

Yet the PIDA Foreward opens with the sophisticated statement that its "continental initiative, based on regional projects and programmes, will help address the infrastructure deficit that severely hampers Africa's competitiveness in the world markets." Once again, an imperialist fraud.