

Tony Blair Intends Mali Intervention To Trigger a Generation of War

by Lawrence K. Freeman

Feb. 11—In a Feb. 3 BBC interview, Tony Blair, the despised representative of the British imperial faction, boldly presented Britain's long-term policy for North Africa. The former prime minister left no doubt that he intends to use the ongoing crisis in Mali to ignite a multi-decades-long military campaign—a new “Thirty Years War”—under the guise of fighting international terrorism.

When Blair was asked about Mali, how long “are we in there for?” he responded, “We are certainly talking about a generation.” Blair went on to compare the battle against “militant Islam” to “the fight the West had over a long period of time with revolutionary communism.” Blair admitted that the terrorists will return after Western military forces leave, and that, as insurgents are pushed out of one country, they will move to another, creating a battlefield across what he described as the “northern parts of sub-Saharan Africa.” What Blair conveniently did not discuss was Britain's special relationship with Saudi Arabia in the spread of the Salafist and Wahhabite movements behind al-Qaeda and other jihadi extremists.

At the Munich Security Conference (Feb. 1-3), NATO Secretary General Anders Fogh Rasmussen echoed Blair's intent of permanent war and destruction, when he declared that NATO has the right to deploy its forces anywhere around the world, “wherever and whenever, the Allies judge their security interest are at stake,” adding, “When I look at our world, I see an arc of crisis from the Sahel to Central Asia”

Thus it's clear for all to see—those with the courage to face the truth—that the toppling and murder of Libyan President Muammar Qaddafi was a decisive factor in the military takeover of northern Mali, which has led to the expansion of war throughout the region.

While elements of the French institutions, including the military, have their own independent reasons for intervening into Mali, if they fail to take into account Blair's publicly stated intentions for North Africa, they could be dragged into an extended no-win military campaign. Their blind-spot would be failing to recog-

nize that the British royal family's zeal for population reduction (i.e., genocide) in Africa, guides Great Britain's operational strategy.

Asymmetric Warfare Will Grind Up Africa

Now that France has announced its intention to begin the withdrawal of its 4,000 troops in March to avoid further casualties, the new, more dangerous phase of the war begins. Insurgency and counter-insurgency will dominate the terrain, as ethnic-religious and “skin-color” passions are exacerbated, making countries ungovernable. As a result, Africans—not Europeans or Americans—will die in increasing numbers.

Already, we have seen the deployment of suicide bombers, inevitably to be followed by improvised explosive devices (IEDs). Showing how tenuous the nature of France's military achievements may turn out to be, in the northern Mali city of Gao, insurgents have counter-attacked French and Malian troops, preceded by two suicide blasts. While the French initially seemed to have driven the rebels out of this city of 86,000, two weeks earlier, the reality is that it has proved more difficult than it initially appeared. While the jihadist insurgents were driven out of key cities in northern Mali, disappearing into the desert, they will no doubt soon return to launch protracted guerrilla warfare.

No firm date has been given for France's pullout of its main forces, since it is as much a political decision as it is a military one. If there is no improvement of the economic, social, and military situation, London and Washington can be expected to intervene in the war, with their special forces and aerial assaults. It is clear that the Status of Forces agreement between the U.S. and Niger, along with the U.S. search for additional locations to construct drone bases in other African countries, portends more aggressive use of drone warfare.¹

1. Since this article was written, President Obama has ordered the deployment of 100 troops to operate a drone base in Niger.

African troops are to be delegated the far tougher task of rooting out the jihadists at some point in the future. West African and neighboring nations, plus Malian soldiers, are hoping to create a force of over 8,000 troops. However, more than a month after the French initiated their campaign, only a small percentage of African soldiers are engaged in combat, with the exception of almost 2,000 Chadian troops. Otherwise, the majority of African troops are ill-equipped and poorly trained for warfare of this type, and will be heavily dependent on air-power support. Presently they are not capable of effectively responding to the new phase of asymmetric warfare, which will result in African soldiers and civilians alike being ground up in Blair's generational long war.

Algeria is the last bastion against the jihadists extremists in the region, and represents, potentially, the best-equipped and strongest force opposing them.

The insurgents are moving north to hide in the Adrar des Ifoghas mountain range on the border between Mali and Algeria, considered one of the harshest regions in Africa—comparable to the Tora Bora mountains of Afghanistan for al-Qaeda—where the battlefield is strewn with sophisticated weapons taken from Libya after Qa-

ddafi's execution. One can see where North Africa is heading in the lawless/ungovernable conditions of Libya today, brought about by President Obama's successful implementation of Blair's regime-change policy, in alliance with the same al-Qaeda forces that the West is fighting in Mali.

Grow Food, Not Dope

The underlying cause of the crisis in Mali, and the spread of the jihadist extremists in the region, has never been recognized, and therefore, never been addressed. The failure of the U.S. counter-terrorism program, which has spent over \$1 billion since 2005, is but one glaring example of the absence of a long-term strategic approach, which should be based on creating a better future for the African people. Mali's instability is mirrored across the continent, with many nations on the verge of a crisis that could have far worse consequences than what we are witnessing in Mali today.

The dominant causal factor behind weak governments in Africa, is the lack of physical-economic development. The measure of progress is not the amount of natural resources exploited, nor quick profits that can be made, nor the number of elections held; but rather,

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the improved ability of a nation to increase the productive powers of its citizens to produce increasing real wealth that will raise the standard of living of the present society, and create the conditions for qualitative improvements for future generations to enjoy.

The failure to provide credit for investment in vitally needed infrastructure to accomplish these ends, is the greatest crime and act of stupidity by the West. The lack of such pro-growth policies is condemning Africans to death, and creating fertile soil for the growth of insurgency.

Instead, North and West Africa have been turned into a haven for drug transshipments to Europe, and for all types of criminal activity.

According to the UN Office on Drugs and Crime report in 2009, “60 tons, mostly cocaine, pass through the desert every year,” providing a source of income for jihadists and governments alike. One informed speaker at the African Center for Strategic Studies in Washington recently reported that cocaine labs are appearing in North Africa, which indicates drug *production*, not only transshipment. Russia’s Novosti agency reports that in Mali, a new recruit to the insurgents can make \$900 per month, compared to the \$1,100 per year for an average Malian.

Colin Freeman of the London *Daily Telegraph* writes that cocaine “is flown to Guinea Bissau then moved thousands of miles across the Sahara to Algeria, Morocco and Libya,” and that the U.S. Drug Enforcement Administration “proved a direct link between terrorist organizations and international trafficking.” He also reports that the city of Gao, where there is heavy fighting, “has long been one of the main drug transit points.”

Given these conditions, qualified experts understand that there are no military means to effectively deal with the crisis in the Sahel-Sahara region, where 10-15 million people, according to UN reports, are suffering from food shortages.

Over a decade ago, when I was organizing U.S. farmers, I coined the slogan “Grow food, not dope,” which is applicable in Africa today. For without a paradigm-shift for peace and economic growth, away from economic collapse and war, Africa is headed for disaster.

But, the real issue does not lie in Africa, but in ourselves: Are we able to impose, in the United States and in Europe, a new economic system, in which the development of Africa will be one of the common aims of humanity?

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