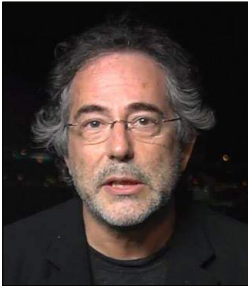


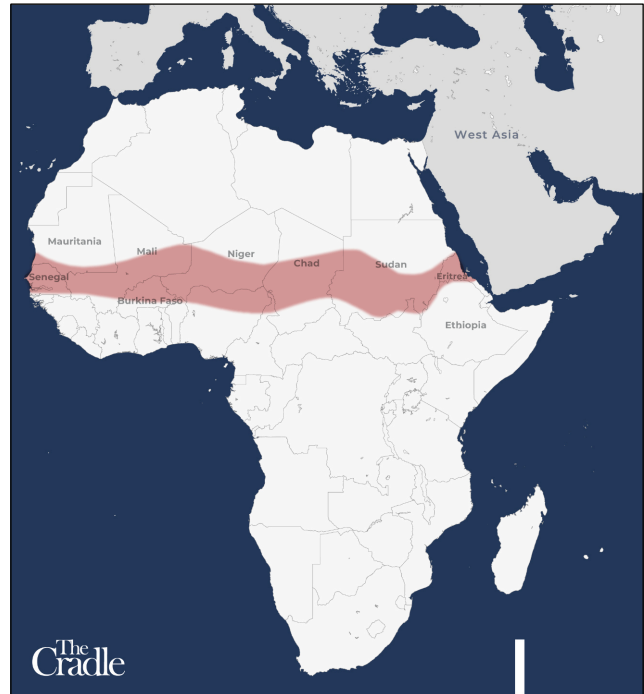
Africa on the rise: The Sahel's 'Axis of Resistance'

by Pepe Escobar,* columnist at "The Cradle"



Pepe Escobar.
(Photo ma)

The African Sahel is revolting against western neocolonialism – ejecting foreign troops and bases, devising alternative currencies, and challenging the old multinationals. Multipolarity, after all, cannot flower without resistance paving its path.



African Sahel states

The emergence of *Axes of Resistance*¹ in various geographies is an inextricable byproduct of the long and winding process leading us toward a multipolar world. These two things – resistance to the Hegemon and the emergence of multipolarity – are absolutely complementary.

The Axis of Resistance in West Asia – across Arab and Muslim states – now finds as its soul sister the Axis of Resistance spanning the Sahel in Africa, west to east, from Senegal, Mali, Burkina Faso, and Niger to Chad, Sudan, and Eritrea.

Unlike Niger, where the change in power against neocolonialism was associated with a military coup, in Senegal, the power change comes straight from the polls.

Senegal plunged itself into a new era with the landslide victory of *Bassirou Diomaye Faye*, 44, in nationwide elections on 24 March. A former tax inspector who had just spent a fortnight stint in jail, Faye emerged with the profile of an underdog pan-African leader to turn the 'most stable democracy in Africa,' under French puppet incumbent *Macky Sall*, upside down.

The incoming Senegalese president now joins Ibrahim Traore, 36, in Burkina Faso, Aby Ahmed, 46, in Ethiopia, Andry Rajoelina, 48, in Madagascar, as well as future superstar Julius Malema, 44, in South Africa as part of the new, young pan-

African generation focused on sovereignty. In his election manifesto, Faye pledged to reclaim Senegal's sovereignty no less than *eighteen* times.

Geoeconomics is key to these shifts. As Senegal becomes a substantial oil and gas producer, Faye will aim to renegotiate mining and energy contracts, including the largest ones with British Petroleum (BP) and UK gold mine operator, Endeavor Mining.

Crucially, he plans to ditch the exploitative CFA franc – the French-controlled currency system used in 14 African states – even setting up a new currency as part of reshaping relations with neo-colonial power France, Senegal's top trading partner. Faye, echoing Comrade Xi Jinping, wants a "win-win" partnership.

Enter the Alliance of the Sahel States

Faye has not yet been clear on whether he intends to kick the French military out of Senegal. Were that to happen, the blow to Paris would be unprecedented, as embattled *Petit Roi* Emmanuel Macron and the French establishment consider Senegal the key player when it comes to blockading landlocked Niger, Mali, and Burkina

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Faso, which have already left Paris in the (Sahel) dust.

The three latter states, which have just formed an Alliance of the Sahel States (*Alliance des Etats du Sahel*, AES, in the original French), are not only a major Paris nightmare after serial humiliations but also a big American headache – epitomized in the spectacular breakdown of military cooperation between Washington and Nigerien capital Niamey.

The culprit, according to the US Deep State, is, of course, Russian President Vladimir Putin.

Obviously, no one in the US Beltway has been paying due attention to the Russia–Africa diplomatic flurry since last year, involving all key players from the Sahel to the new African BRICS members Egypt and Ethiopia.

In sharp contrast to its prior regard of Niger as a staunch ally in the Sahel, Washington is now forced to present a calendar date to get its troops out of Niger – after a military cooperation deal was annulled. The Pentagon cannot be involved in military training in Nigerien territory anymore.

There are two key bases – in Agadez and Niamey – which the Pentagon spent over \$150 million to build. Niamey was finished only in 2019 and is managed by the US military's African Command, AFRICOM.

Operational objectives are, predictably, shrouded in mystery. The Niamey base is essentially an intel center, processing data collected by MQ-9 Reaper drones. The US Air Force also uses the Dirkou Aerodrome as a base for operations in the Sahel.

Now things get really exciting, because the presence of a de facto CIA drone base in Dirkou, manned by a handful of operatives, is not even acknowledged. This dark base allows intel collection everywhere in Central Africa, from west to north. Call it another classic example of former CIA director Mike Pompeo's "We Lie, We Cheat, We Steal."

There are roughly 1,000 US troops in Niger who may soon face ejection. The Americans are trying everything to stem the bleeding. Only this month, US Undersecretary of State for Africa Molly Phee visited Niger twice. Losing bases in Niger will translate into Washington following Paris in losing control of the Sahel – as Niger gets closer to Russia and Iran.

These bases are not essential to exercise surveillance over the Bab al-Mandeb; it's all about



Mali, Niger and Burkina Faso founded the "Alliance of Sahel States". (Picture ma)

the Sahel, with drones operating on their limit and violating every sovereign air space in sight.

Incidentally, a hefty delegation from Niamey visited Moscow in January. Then, last week, Putin discussed security cooperation in phone calls with Mali's interim President, *Assimi Goita*, and Niger's military junta President *Abdourahmane Tchiani* before talking to the Republic of Congo's President *Denis Nguesso*.

Ivory Coast: The Empire turn-around?

Pro-west puppet regimes are dwindling fast all across the African continent. The Alliance of the Sahel States – Mali, Burkina Faso, and Niger – may be the vanguard of an African Axis of Resistance, but there's more, in the form of South Africa, Ethiopia, and Egypt as full BRICS members – not to mention serious candidates for the next wave of BRICS+, such as Algeria and Nigeria.

Russia, diplomatically, and China, commercially, plus the full weight of the Russia–China strategic partnership, are clearly focused on the long game – counting on Africa as a whole as a key multipolar player. Additional evidence was provided once again during the *multipolar conference last month in Moscow*,² where charismatic pan-African leader Kemi Seba from Benin was one of the superstars.

Pan-Eurasian diplomatic circles even allow themselves to joke about the recent hissy fits by *Le Petit Roi* in Paris. The utter humiliation of France in the Sahel is likely one of the drivers of Macron's chest-thumping threats to send French troops to Ukraine – who would be turned into steak tartare by the Russians in record time – and his eagerness to support Armenia's current Russophobic stunts.

Historically, the fact remains, that Africans considered the former USSR much more pliable and even supportive when it came to siphoning natural resources; that goodwill has now also been transferred to China.

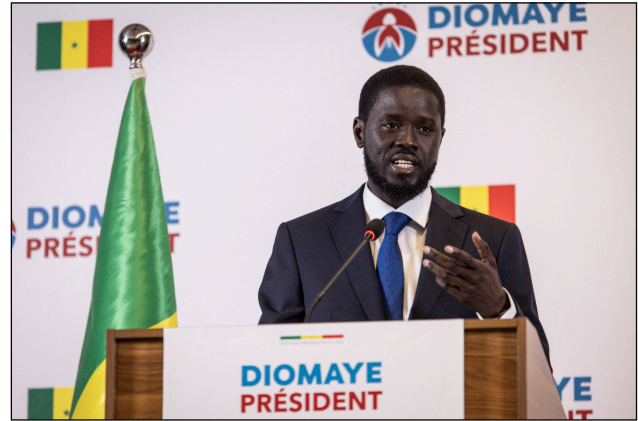
As a regional integration platform, the Alliance of the Sahel States has everything it takes to become a game-changer. Senegal under *Bassirou Diomaye Faye* may eventually join, but Guinea already offers the geographical capacity to provide the alliance with credible maritime access. That will lead to the progressive extinction of the western-controlled, Nigeria-based *Economic Community of West African States* (ECOWAS).

Yet, never dismiss the Hegemon's mighty tentacles. The Pentagon master plan does not entail abandoning Africa to a multipolar Russia–China–Iran sphere of influence. Yet no one across the Sahel's Axis of Resistance buys the US 'terror threat' card anymore. There was virtually zero terror in Africa until 2011, when NATO turned Libya into a wasteland, then put boots on the ground and erected military bases across the continent.

So far, the Alliance of the Sahel States is winning the sovereignty-first information war, hands-down. But there's no question the Empire will strike back. After all, the whole game is tied to the Beltway's supreme paranoia of Russia taking over the Sahel and Central Africa.

Enter the Ivory Coast, now that Senegal may be about to start flirting with the Alliance of the Sahel States.

Ivory Coast is more strategic to Washington than, for instance, Chad because Ivorian territory



*Bassirou Diomaye Faye, President of Senegal.
(Picture AFP/John Wessels)*

is very close to the Sahel alliance. Still, Chad has already recalibrated its foreign policy, which is no longer Western-controlled and comes with a new emphasis on getting closer to Moscow.

What lies ahead for Empire? Perhaps US 'anti-terror' drones shared with Paris at the French base in the Ivory Coast to keep the Sahel alliance in check. Call it the humiliated Gallic rooster embracing the Hegemon in West Africa without receiving even the crumbs of a stale croissant.

Source: <https://thecradle.co/articles/the-sahels-axis-of-resistance>, 1 April 2024

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¹ <https://thecradle.co/articles/axis-of-resistance-from-donbass-to-gaza>

² <https://strategic-culture.su/news/2024/02/29/the-global-south-converges-to-multipolar-moscow/>