

# US Secretary of State Clinton's Africa tour raises tensions with China

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On July 30 US Secretary of State Hillary Clinton began a nearly two-week tour of Africa. During the course of the tour, which began July 30, Clinton will visit Senegal, South Sudan, Uganda, Kenya, Malawi, South Africa and finally Ghana.

Clinton is accompanied by a delegation of US business executives from various sectors of private industry: aviation, engineering, transport, power, logistics, retail, information technology and high technology sectors.

From the beginning of her tour, in Senegal, Clinton stoked tensions with China. During a speech before an audience at Cheikh Anta Diop University, Clinton praised Macky Sall, Senegal's president. Sall's installation as president in March came amid US- and French-backed protests against his predecessor, Abdoulaye Wade.

Clinton then took aim at China and its economic influence on the continent. The content of Clinton's remarks, while not specifically naming China, left little ambiguity about whom her remarks were targeting.

Clinton advised the audience to seek partnerships with the United States, which "will stand up for democracy and universal human rights, even when it might be easier or more profitable to look the other way". She added, "Not every partner makes that choice, but we do and we will."

She said that the United States was committed to "a model of sustainable partnership that adds value, rather than extracts it" from Africa. This remark was widely viewed as aimed at Chinese oil mining and oil interests that are rapidly spreading their operations on the continent.

The hypocrisy of such a statement is truly staggering. The United States and its European allies have a long record—extending well over a century back to the

division of Africa between the European colonial powers in the nineteenth century—of looting the African continent. Its natural resources were extracted, wars of repression launched against its people, and the continent was left impoverished by the European imperialists as well as Washington.

Now, as the United States is trying to block the development of Chinese trade ties with Africa, it is deploying "special forces" troops and drone aircraft in much of the continent, as a symbol of US military might to terrorize anyone who might cross Washington's path.

Clinton's remarks prompted a retort from the Stalinist bureaucracy in Beijing via its state-run news agency, Xinhua, accusing Clinton of taking cheap shots and blocking Chinese commercial interests in Africa.

Xinhua wrote: "Whether Clinton was ignorant of the facts on the ground or chose to disregard them, her implication that China has been extracting Africa's wealth for itself is utterly wide of the truth. Her remarks betrayed an attempt to drive a wedge between China and Africa for the US' selfish gain."

Underlying Clinton's latest salvo is China's continuing economic advancement on the African continent. Trade volume between China and Africa rose to \$166 billion in 2011, and China has replaced the US since 2007 as Africa's most important trade partner. Beijing has also recently announced a \$20 billion credit line to Africa.

Clinton's next stop in Juba, South Sudan coincided with the expiration of a deadline set by the UN Security Council last May for South Sudan and Sudan to secure an oil fee agreement. At the time, the conflict with North Sudan over the oil-rich Kordofan region had culminated in South Sudan shutting off the oil flow between the countries. Sudan is one of China's major

oil suppliers.

The conflict nearly brought the two nations to all-out war last April, underscoring the unresolved differences of the two countries, despite the wide celebration in the global media of a new era of reconciliation with South Sudan's independence last July.

Clinton encouraged South Sudanese President Salva Kiir Mayardit to make peace with Sudan, stating at a press briefing: "This is a delicate moment. It is a difficult period. We need to get those resources flowing again."

South Sudan is backed by millions of dollars from Washington and its partners in Europe, and Washington is eager to see the results of its investment. There is concern among the US political establishment regarding the recent skirmishes in the Kordofan and Blue Nile regions, not out of regard for humanitarianism, but for the disruption of the flow of oil.

At subsequent stops along Clinton's itinerary in Uganda, Kenya, Malawi and South Africa, Washington sought to fight to re-establish US economic dominance.

In Uganda, Clinton praised the government of Yoweri Museveni for its continued military support in Somalia, to which Uganda has contributed the greater numbers of military forces deployed to prop up the US puppet regime in Mogadishu. Clinton also visited a military base where Ugandan and US military officials showed her the US-made drone aircraft currently deployed in the US offensive against the people of Somalia.

At her stop in Kenya, Clinton vowed US support for joint US-Africa trade expansion, joined by the Eastern African countries of Kenya, Tanzania, Rwanda, Burundi and Uganda.

The joint project includes investment in a South Sudan-Ethiopia-Kenya railway and a pipeline for oil transportation from South Sudan and traversing through to an oil refinery in the Kenyan coastal city of Mombasa.

In Malawi's capital city of Lilongwe, Clinton lauded the government of Joyce Banda for its institution of economic reforms as dictated by Western banks, and admonished her to "stay the course" of economic reform in order to attract foreign investment.

In South Africa Clinton discussed Washington's promise to invest \$2 billion in renewable energy

projects with companies doing business with US companies. Companies that could benefit the most from such investments include General Electric Co. and Siemens AG. The South African government promised to provide foreign companies unfettered access to South African markets.

There were also discussions of contracts for Boeing Co. to provide aircraft to South African Airways.

On August 10, Secretary Clinton will wind up her African tour with a visit to Ghana.



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