



Colonel X. looks at geopolitics and global strategic issues

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Each quarter a senior French military officer, former member of the Special Forces, shares his perspective on global geopolitical issues. As would be expected, his name remains confidential.

When Russian military cooperation agreements resurface in Africa.

An arms embargo has been in place since 2013 for the Central African Republic (CAR) as a result of its violent and seemingly endless instability¹. A strong presence of peacekeepers is on the spot, and yet, in mid-December 2017, Russia obtained authorization from the UN to deliver military equipment. This is not trivial; French fiefdom², EU military presence with the EUTM RCA³, US interests, Chinese target, Russia⁴ enters the African continent by a central and sensitive state, with coveted wealth like uranium, oil, diamonds, and without caring for human rights.

Russia has the tools to do it: an armament industry that has proven its capacity in the Middle East, seasoned military advisers backed by renewed military cooperation agreements, an ability to practice hybrid warfare, a foreign minister Lavrov, who has fourteen years of experience alongside a President who wants to expand his influence abroad. The Cold War had allowed the USSR to settle in Algeria, Egypt, Ethiopia, Somalia, Mozambique, Namibia, Zimbabwe and Angola. Lavrov's African tour last March targeted some of these states by reactivating past agreements, especially in the field of weapons maintenance and especially their technological upgrading. The DRC is of course targeted for its potential, but Kenya and Uganda also for their interest in Russian nuclear technology. These turbulent countries do not frighten Russia. She knows the practices. It remains for her to get Sudan's or Somaliland's green light to set up a maritime base that will allow her to control a strategic supply route for Europe and match her international rivals.

¹ United Nations Resolutions 2127 (2013) and 2399 (2018), with reference to the arms embargo on the CAR.

² Since the accession to independence, under Barthélémy Boganda, in Dec.1958, seven French military interventions were made.

³ Military Training Mission for the implementation of the reform of the Central African defense sector. It follows the "European Military Advisory Mission" (EUMAM / 2015) at EUFOR RCA (2014). The French military operation "*Sangaris*" started in Dec. 2013 and ended in Dec. 2016.

⁴ Russia was among the 23 member-countries of the European Operation EUFOR Tchad-RCA (2008-09), to implement UN Resolution 1778.