
Africa Briefs

S. Africa Proposes a Better Ukraine Resolution at UN, Does Not Blame Russia

At the March 24 (second) meeting of the UN General Assembly on the Ukraine crisis, South Africa put forward a resolution that took no side, “Humanitarian Situation Emanating Out of the Conflict in Ukraine.” Fifty countries voted to bring the South African draft to a vote and 36 abstained. But with 67 votes opposed, it was not voted on.

South African Ambassador Mathu Joyini then [said](#), “Unfortunately, instead of placing the humanitarian crisis and our response at the center of our [UN] deliberations, the political divisions in the Assembly suggest that perhaps, in the minds of some delegations, the humanitarian response is secondary to geopolitical objectives. While we should not ignore the context that gave rise to this crisis ... that should not divert our focus from what we ought to be immediately doing,” namely, working as a global community to end the war. She said, many wars in recent decades have violated the UN Charter and international law. In the devastating war in Iraq, for example, 2.4 million died. She subtly indicated that the South African resolution was far from being simply about the false blaming of Russia (without naming it), but was “underscoring the point that *many countries and their peoples suffer the consequences of wars that are not of their own doing*. They have had no role to play in starting or ending those wars. In fact, we must make the point that in most cases, *the vast majority of countries in this*

Assembly have never invaded or colonized other countries yet has suffered their consequences. There are [a] few powerful countries that have been party to most of these conflicts, often in the form of proxy wars in other countries or regions. Africa has experienced its fair share of these proxy wars and their destructive outcomes.” [Emphasis added.]

The original resolution—which passed—was titled, “Humanitarian *Consequences of the Aggression* Against Ukraine,” and identified Russia as the aggressor, thus making it solely responsible for the “consequences.”

China’s New African Horn Envoy Tours Region, Plans Peace Conference

China’s newly appointed Ambassador to the Horn of Africa, Xue Bing, undertook a tour of the region, March 12-22, visiting Ethiopia, Djibouti, Somalia, Eritrea, Kenya, Uganda and South Sudan. He found that Eastern Africa is hungry for an alternative to the geopolitical “war on terror”-driven policy emanating from London and Washington.

“They said China should do more,” Xue said, speaking to the press at the Chinese Embassy in Nairobi on March 19, “and China has the ability to do more in this area [which] has long suffered the external relations from Western countries. Some of the countries are just fed up with the foreign interventions and preachings from the Western countries.”

Xue pointed to the economic suffering in the region as a cause of tension and violence. “I think if you enjoy security, development and good governance,

I think we will get rid of terrorism,” Xue said, as reported by Nairobi’s *Capital News*. “The Horn of Africa region is home to countries that have traditional relations with China ... The potential for development is huge,” he said.

Xue [announced](#) that China intends to hold a Peace Conference in the region sometime in the next several months, and that Kenya and Ethiopia have agreed to host it.

‘COVID Is Over’ Euphoria Likely To Spread New Outbreaks: WHO

The World Health Organization (WHO) issued a warning that the world has not seen the last of the COVID-19 virus. Driven by anxiety to “get back to normal,” even entire countries have been relaxing restrictions, partly in the false hope that that alone will trigger economic growth.

“Lifting of the use of masks, lifting of physical distancing, lifting of restrictions limiting people’s movement, this provides the virus an opportunity to spread,” WHO’s Dr. Maria Van Kerkhove warned. She said that there are “huge amounts of misinformation” causing confusion. “The misinformation that Omicron is mild, misinformation that the pandemic is over, misinformation that this is the last variant that we will have to deal with,” can all lead to a new wave of cases, she warned.

COVID-19 Vaccines Haven’t Reached the ‘Petri Dish’ of the Poorest Countries

At the end of March, 2.8 billion people worldwide were still [waiting](#)

for their first dose of COVID-19 vaccine. According to the UNDP, the most vulnerable countries are in Sub-Saharan Africa, including Burundi, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, and Chad—three countries where less than one percent of the population has been fully vaccinated.

But widespread undernourishment in these three and other countries, when combined with the lack of vaccines, keeps the population highly vulnerable to COVID and its capacity to mutate—not to mention a host of other diseases. According to the World Food Program [March 11](#), “More than 70% of the South Sudanese population *will struggle to survive* the peak of the lean season this year as the country grapples with *unprecedented levels of food insecurity*...” Less than 3% of South Sudanese have been vaccinated. The next world-ripping COVID variant, therefore, if it doesn’t come from a laboratory, may come from Burundi or Congo, or South Sudan.

Nigerian Terrorists Try To Sever Kaduna’s Road, Rail, and Air Links with Capital

Two hundred terrorists in north-western Nigeria attacked the Kaduna International Airport and its radio navigation equipment on March 26. Although repulsed by the military, an airport security officer was killed.

On March 28, a train on the popular Abuja-Kaduna SGR was hit with an IED planted on the track, derailing the train, killing eight passengers, and wounding dozens. On March 31, as fearful travelers avoided the train and took to the roads, an attempt was made to block the Abuja-Kaduna highway.

Presidential advisor Femi Adesina, who had previously downplayed the terror threat, said “The rail revolution in the country has been hailed for its safety, comfort, luxury. Now the evil

people have come to show that they hate safety, comfort, luxury. They abhor any form of progress or development.”

The attacks, engineered around actual grievances, are one element of the secessionist movements designed to split Nigeria into three or more parts.

South Africa Will Not Exit Coal, and Will Go Slow in Scaling It Back

In response to a question in Parliament on March 31, South African Deputy President David Mabuza [clarified](#) government policy with respect to coal-fired power generation. He stated, “Currently, there are no plans for the discontinuation of the use of coal, as 99% of South Africa’s electricity supply is derived from coal and 30 percent of liquid fuels are derived from the same commodity. Coal remains one of our largest natural endowments that will continue to form part of our energy mix in terms of the IRP 2019.”

Mabuza explained that 9 of the country’s 17 coal-fired plants will be shut down by 2035, of which four will close by 2025. The government claims that all of them have become “uneconomical, unpredictable and costly to run.”

EIR estimates that the national total of coal-fired generation, without any shutdowns, would be roughly 49,000 MW, if the construction of the new Kusile plant and repair of the damaged Medupi plant are completed. The first four shutdowns of smaller plants, by 2025, will entail a loss of “only” 5600 MW. However, if all nine are shut down, the combined loss will amount to at least 28,500 MW, or more than half of the 49,000 MW.

There is no discussion of building additional coal-fired plants. So-called renewables are to be greatly expanded. The proposed new nuclear build is to provide only 2500 MW. (The existing

nuclear power plant at Koeberg produces 1900 MW.)

South African Steelmaker Says Input Prices Are Skyrocketing

ArcelorMittal South Africa [warned](#) in March that prices of key inputs are shooting up. It wrote, “The international raw material basket (iron ore, metallurgical coal, scrap) has increased by about 58%” in six months, and “Metallurgical coal [for] which South African steel production has to rely largely on imports, had risen by about 300%.”

Zimbabwe Industrial Summit Reflects National Iron and Steel Momentum

Zimbabwe’s iron and steel industry is being reborn. A Metal Casting and Engineering Summit [took place](#) in Harare on March 17, under the sponsorship of the Zimbabwe Institute of Foundries and the Harare Institute of Technology. At the summit, it was noted that Zimbabwe is importing steel to the tune of US \$1 billion per year, when it could be making the steel.

The event built upon the momentum of Zimbabwe’s partnership with Chinese companies, such as Chinese nickel and steel producer Tsingshan Holding Group and its subsidiary, Dinson Iron and Steel, which completed two high-carbon ferrochrome furnaces in Mashonaland West province in April 2021. It finished the construction of a 150,000 metric ton (mt) coke battery (of multiple coking ovens) in the same month, and began to build another coke battery of the same capacity just weeks later. By November, an additional coke battery was begun with a capacity of more than 300,000 mt. The former Zimbabwe Iron and Steel Company had fully collapsed by 2010.