
Africa Briefs

Lavrov's Memorable Briefing to African Diplomats in Addis Ababa

Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov culminated his four-nation African tour on July 27 in Addis Ababa with a broad-ranging [briefing](#) at the Russian embassy for the permanent representatives of the member countries of the 55-nation African Union and the accredited diplomatic corps in Ethiopia.

Just hours later, U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken's press [briefing](#) in Washington reflected his incomprehension of the current dynamics in the world, and the place of Russia and Africa in it. He may believe his own lies.

Lavrov's trip began July 24 with a meeting in Cairo with Egyptian President Abdel Fattah El-Sisi and a briefing there to the representatives of the 22-nation Arab League, 10 of which are in Africa.

In these sessions, Lavrov provided a detailed history of what led up to the Ukraine special operation, and a strategic report on the world situation.

As he did in briefings in the other nations he visited—Egypt, Uganda and the Republic of Congo—Lavrov cut through Western lies that Russia had caused the global food and fertilizer shortage, explaining the role that sanctions played, but also hitting the “reckless policy of the Western countries on the so-called Green Transition, and all this has brought the price of fertilizers high, which of course affected the price of food.” Problems in the world food market actually started at the begin-

ning of the COVID-19 pandemic, he noted.

Lavrov also reviewed the history of the 2014 Maidan coup in detail, the years-long assault by Kiev Nazis on the populations of the Donbas, and the “red lines” that Russia had established, indicating its interests that it would defend.

Lavrov made clear that a new paradigm is emerging to replace the old “rules-based order”—an order in which there is “no single criterion, no single principle except one. If I want something, you have to obey. If you don't obey you will be punished.” He expressed certainty that the overwhelming majority of the world's countries don't want to live “as if the colonial times came back.” They prefer to be independent, to rely on their own tradition, their history, and their old friends. They don't wish to betray their old friends. That is clear, he said, in the fact that except for two or three countries, “no one else in Africa, Asia or Latin America joined the illegal American and European sanctions” against Russia.

Most normal countries, Lavrov said, want to choose their own development model, based on the will of their people. “Nobody wants to have enemies.”

Contrast this to NATO, he said, which—as it just did at its Madrid meeting—“appoints enemies, they appoint the order in which they handle these enemies. Now Russia is the first, China is earmarked as the existential challenge for the long term.” Now the West is trying to figure out how to confiscate Russian money, but “if they become irritated by somebody else tomorrow or the day after, they might do

the same.” There is no rationality in the way the West operates, Lavrov emphasized.

In that context, Lavrov suggested that reliance on the dollar “is not very promising,” and it's not by accident that more and more countries are shifting to alternative currencies, “and this process will be gaining momentum.” Russia isn't proposing a revolution against the dollar and the U.S., but the U.S. has tossed out all principles of the free market, fair competition, sanctity of private property, presumption of innocence. They are now punishing Russia, and any other country that “irritates” them will be punished in the same way.

Rising Attacks on SOE Minister Gordhan a New Factor in South Africa

South Africa's Minister of Public Enterprises, Pravin Gordhan, is coming under increasing attack from citizens concerned about the disastrous state of the state-owned enterprises (SOEs), including the freight rail network Transnet, Eskom, and others.

• Gordhan was to speak at the School of Governance of the University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg, July 7, but he was shouted down by an organized body of students who “called for the resignation of both Gordhan and Eskom CEO André de Ruyter. They also wanted Eskom to be put under Mineral Resources and Energy Minister Gwede Mantashe and for government to move away from partnerships with the private sector,” [according](#) to *News24*.

In recent years, Gordhan has been

closely aligned with London and New York international finance and their local allies and representatives, and organized the CEOs' Forum to cement his relationship. He is sometimes accused of letting the public enterprises go to pieces so that privatization can be justified.

- A week later on July 14, the African People's Convention (APC) called for the ouster of Gordhan, Eskom CEO de Ruyter, and the Eskom board as it [marched](#) through the streets of Mbombela (Mpumalanga) to the Eskom Distribution Division, where it handed over a memorandum addressed to Eskom, Gordhan, and President Ramaphosa.

APC Deputy President Ernest Hlathi said, "Gordhan seems to be incapable of saving Eskom. Many public enterprises like South African Airways are dragged to the ground because of the incapability of ministers. South Africans are suffering because their small businesses are not generating money due to the unstable electricity supply. We say enough is enough," according to *Mpumalanga News*.

The APC is a small party that broke away from the Pan Africanist Congress of Azania (PAC).

- A major news publisher is also attacking Gordhan. On July 19, Iqbal Survé, chairman of Independent Media and of its parent, Sekunjalo Investment Holdings, published a [video](#) titled, "Ramaphosa, Gordhan want to silence us using the banks." On July 22, Survé published a second video titled, "Pravin Gordhan: The godfather of the mafia shadow state," a tutorial on Gordhan's career, in which he also targeted Gordhan's ally, Mondli Gungubele, currently Minister in the Presidency, whom Ramaphosa has charged with oversight of the State Security Agency. By July 24, Survé had felt obliged to take down this second video.

Survé holds the three responsible—as participants in a "shadow state"—for organizing the banks to

close his accounts, in an attempt to force Independent Media out of business after years of financial and regulatory harassment of the company. Independent Media publishes *Pretoria News*, *Cape Times*, *The Sunday Independent*, and several others, and *the Independent Online* (IOL). Gordhan, he says, finds his group incompatible with Gordhan's career as a political "king-maker," because it has consistently published inconvenient truths during Survé's nine years of ownership. Survé says (in the surviving first video) that he has it on good authority that Gordhan himself made telephone calls to some of the banks.

On the larger canvas, the removal of Survé from ownership of the group could profoundly alter the scope of the media in South Africa. Survé's group looks to the West and the East, but the other major media are oriented to the interests of the Anglo-American powers. Sekunjalo owns 55% of Independent Media, the state-owned Public Investment Corporation owns 25%, and two Chinese state-owned enterprises own 20%.

- On July 22, Minister of Energy and ANC Chairman Gwede Mantashe, while not attacking Gordhan himself, told the *Mail & Guardian* that, "Eskom chief executive André de Ruyter and the board may not have the skills needed to revive the ailing power utility." De Ruyter was brought in from Nampak, which manufactures packaging products. "There's a marked difference in speaking about Eskom's challenges with chief operating officer Jan Oberholzer, who is an engineer," the *Mail & Guardian* reports Mantashe as saying.

Ramaphosa's Energy Solution: Wind, Solar and Privatization

In his July 25 [address](#) to the nation on South Africa's energy crisis, Presi-

dent Ramaphosa said South Africa will increase wind and solar and will encourage independent power producers. He did not mention nuclear, but said there will be more natural gas. He claimed the coal-fired plants will get the attention his administration has denied them for years.

Black Business Council CEO Kganki Matabane said, in a *Newzroom Afrika* [interview](#) July 26, "We are disappointed," because solar and wind cannot replace 24/7 baseload from coal, nuclear, and gas. The council had also hoped that Ramaphosa would replace Eskom CEO de Ruyter and his board.

S. African Publisher Survé Proposes Patriotic Social Democratic Movement

In June, South African publisher and medical doctor Iqbal Survé called for the formation of a "social democratic movement" in South Africa, to be led by young people, to build a new leadership without attention to "isms," but committed to the well-being of all South Africans, giving priority to jobs and housing. The only membership requirement, he said in a July 4 [video](#), should be a willingness to put the country's interests before one's own. Survé points out that China enabled 800 million people to rise from poverty in 40 years, and says South Africa should set itself a goal of ensuring that none of its citizens is poor by 2050.

He has received the [endorsement](#) and support of Ambassador Harold E. Doley, Jr., the first U.S. Representative to the African Development Bank (AfDB), in the 1980s. Doley is the founder of the oldest African American investment banking firm, Doley Securities (New Orleans).