
Africa Briefs

South Africa to U.S.: ‘Do They Understand That We Are Sovereign?’

South Africa’s Minister of International Relations, Dr. Naledi Pandor, hosted a symposium Aug. 1 in Pretoria on “South Africa’s National Interest Framework Document and Its Advancement in a Global Environment.” The document is new. This event came prominently, just a week in advance of U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken’s visit to South Africa, Aug. 7-9.

The South African Broadcasting Corporation (SABC) [interviewed](#) Minister Pandor after the Aug. 1 symposium. SABC asked her: “With the Russia-Ukraine war, we’ve seen the U.S. Congress, they have this bill that they are crafting, to punish countries that work with the Russian Federation. We are part of BRICS, so inevitably we do work with the Russians in so many spheres. How concerned are you ... about these developments?” [The bill, “Countering Malign Russian Activities in Africa Act” (H.R. 7311)—which probably originated in the U.S. State Department—was covered in *EIR*’s Africa Briefs in the June 17 issue.]

Minister Pandor: “We’re expecting Secretary Blinken to visit South Africa this week, and it’s one of the issues that we’d want to raise, because we don’t quite understand how a country and a House of Representatives that publicly states its commitment to democracy and respect for the sovereignty of nations, and their equal standing within the United Nations family, how such a

set of public representatives could conceive of a piece of legislation such as this bill. So we would want to understand what is its intent, how does America see it being implemented should it be passed by Senate, which I hope it won’t. What is the intention, and how does America view our standing as Africa, because it is an Africa-directed bill? Do they understand that we are sovereign as African nations, and that we have the right to determine our own position on all international matters?”

Minister Pandor Tells Secretary Blinken: ‘We’ll Do Things Our Way’

South African Minister of International Relations Naledi Pandor told reporters Aug. 8, with Secretary of State Tony Blinken sitting next to her, that she objected to “patronizing bullying” coming from the West: “Because when we believe in freedom—as I’m saying, it’s freedom for everybody—you can’t say because Africa is doing this, you will then be punished by the United States.... One thing I definitely dislike is being told ‘either you choose this or else.’ When a minister speaks to me like that ... I definitely will not be bullied in that way, nor would I expect any other African country worth its salt to agree to be [so] treated.”

Blinken’s three-nation, Aug. 7-12 trip to Africa was widely billed as aimed at countering Russian and Chinese influence in the area. After South Africa, he went to Rwanda and the Democratic Republic of Congo. In South Africa, his visit marked the first

U.S.-South Africa Strategic Dialogue in nearly eight years, and in various ways his time in Pretoria and Johannesburg was spent playing “Mr. Nice Guy.” But this did not score points for him there.

Pandor, in addition to her refusal to join geopolitical blocs, forcefully made three strong points in the joint press conference given by her with Blinken, after their Aug. 8 meeting.

On China and Africa: “Countries are free to establish relationships with different countries. African countries that wish to relate to China, let them do so, whatever the particular form of relationships would be. We can’t be made party to conflict between China and the United States of America, and I may say, it does cause instability for all of us, because it affects the global economic system. We really hope that the United States and China will arrive at a point of rapprochement, where all of us can look to economic development and growth for all our countries, because that’s extremely important for all of us. These are two great powers, the two biggest economies in the world. They’ve got to find a way of working together to allow us to grow.”

On Blinken’s push for “democracy”—one of the four U.S. priorities in the administration’s “Sub-Saharan Africa Strategy”—Pandor recommended: “If your tactic is to approach African countries and say, ‘Listen, you must be democratic either and use our model, it works,’ I think it’s bound to lead to some failure. All countries and peoples deserve the right to exercise their civil and political rights, but how that should be approached is the issue,” she said. She noted that “there has been

a lot of external interference in Africa [which] has fueled conflict in many African countries, has fueled instability and supported opposition groups against liberation fighters and so on,” much of that stemming from foreign interest in “Africa’s rich mineral wealth.”

And, Pandor spoke eloquently against the war in Ukraine and Israel’s “apartheid” for Palestinians, and compared the two, as an example of the double-standard often used by those who say they are defending the principles of the UN charter: “Just as much as the people of Ukraine deserve their territory and freedom, the people of Palestine deserve their territory and freedom. And we should be equally concerned at what is happening to the people of Palestine as we are with what is happening to the people of Ukraine.”

EU Officials Refuse To Answer Charge of ‘Bullying’ Africa

The South African Broadcasting Corporation’s (SABC) correspondent in Brussels, Rosie Birchard, did not skip a beat, in pursuing the reaction in Europe to the tough talk by South African Minister for International Cooperation Naledi Pandor to Secretary of State Blinken Aug. 8, against “patronizing bullying” by “some of our European partners.” Birchard asked (unnamed) political figures in Brussels the same day for their reaction to Minister Pandor’s comments. But all Birchard was getting was “no comment,” according to SABC.

The SABC report also mentions that the EU leadership is very upset that Africa is not following the NATO narrative on the war, and that the EU is thinking of tying African aid to confor-

mity with the EU’s lies.

The background to this is a leaked, internal EU report that shows concern about “losing Africa” and calls for greater sympathy for African concerns and an end to “lecturing” Africans, on the one hand, and possibly tying African aid to Africa’s willingness to play along with Europe’s narrative about the Ukraine war, on the other.

Devex, in a July 22 news [exclusive](#), says the report was overseen by Birgitte Markussen, a Dane, head of the European Union delegation to the African Union (AU), with input from the heads of mission from EU countries in Addis Ababa. It was circulated to diplomats in Brussels the week ending July 22.

London the Apparent Source of Buhari Impeachment Scheme

At an executive plenary session of the Nigerian Senate July 27 on the topic of “insecurity” (terrorism), three Senators of the opposition People’s Democratic Party (PDP) [attempted](#) to initiate impeachment proceedings against President Muhammadu Buhari with the vague demand that the President “improve” the insecurity situation “within the next six weeks” or face impeachment. Led by Minority Leader Philip Aduda (PDP), the attempt to introduce the documents was denied on procedural grounds by Senate President Ahmad Lawan (a member of Buhari’s All Progressives Party). After the rebuff, the partisans of impeachment staged a headline-making walkout from the meeting.

What was first written off by the administration as a “publicity-grabbing stunt” has mushroomed into a political brush fire to remove Buhari as president, and is now “bipartisan,” as Sena-

tor Elisha Abbo of the All Progressives’ Congress (APC) has [joined](#) the renegades from the opposition PDP.

Since nothing specific *inside Nigeria* has dramatically changed regarding the terror threat, the source of this seemingly inexplicable move—a mere six months before an election in which the President cannot run again—must be sought elsewhere, specifically in London. The likely trigger for London’s attack is Nigeria’s continued determination to assert sovereignty over its petroleum resources, to which is now added Europe’s growing desperation to access African natural gas sources as a substitute for lost Russian supplies.

In mid-July, a one-day meeting convened in Abuja saw the cream of western “diplomacy”—representatives from the G7, IMF, World Bank and UN, the UK and U.S.—descend on Africa and face off against two countries, Nigeria and Egypt. Egypt is the prospective host of COP27 in November. What happened in the meeting was not made public, but Nigerian Vice President Yemi Osinbajo’s [comments](#), which stressed that Africa has a right to develop, likely characterize a Nigerian attitude in the meeting that was sufficiently hard-nosed to cause London to react with the impeachment gambit.

London is taking drastic action against a key African country that has shown itself able to withstand an incredible amount of outside interference.

A week later, a [headline](#) in the London *Guardian* made much of the plight of two sexually-confused climate activists who were suddenly afraid of being “scared straight” while traveling to authoritarian Egypt, clearly setting the grounds for relocating the conference.

An advance presidential security convoy came under armed attack in Nigeria’s northwestern Katsina State on July 5.