

Africa Joins the World in Denouncing Superpowers' Drive to Nuclear War

by David Cherry

Oct. 3—In warning of the escalating threat of a nuclear world war, Dr. Kwame Amuah, the Ghana-born son-in-law of Nelson Mandela, has broken the near silence in Africa on this existential threat. His Sept. 27 [opinion column](#), titled “Nuclear War: Africa’s Vulnerability and Need for Collective Action,” was published by *Independent Online (IOL, South Africa)*. South Africa is Dr. Amuah’s adopted homeland, where he is the chairman of a large, international business group that builds infrastructure across Africa.

He writes,

Regrettably, at the 79th UN General Assembly, African leaders, especially President Ramaphosa, failed to highlight this grave and existential danger to the continent. South Africa should have used its founding membership of BRICS to sound alarm at the prospect of nuclear Armageddon. Africa and its citizens are literally sitting ducks in case of nuclear warfare.

The African press has been almost entirely silent about the threat to Africa, and all humanity, of a possible thermonuclear war between great powers. This silence may stem from the misconception that such a war would not affect Africa.

But Dr. Amuah’s article found resonance beyond the pages of *IOL*, seemingly uniting on this all-important issue, some otherwise opposing outlooks, at least in South Africa. *IOL* often reports on the progress of BRICS and is part of the major press group, Independent Media. A major South African platform of the anti-BRICS establishment, *MSN*, reprinted Dr. Amuah’s

article. An establishment publication whose owner is implicated in the ongoing effort to force Independent Media to shut down—*TimesLive*—also reprinted it. One or two minor platforms did likewise. *SA Breaking News* posted a link to it on X the same day.

Africa Is Not Immune

Dr. Amuah blames Russia and the United States for the current danger; he wrote:

The conflict in Ukraine has raised concerns about nuclear escalation, with Russia’s President Vladimir Putin warning that NATO supplying Ukraine with long-range missiles would cross a “red line,” potentially triggering nuclear retaliation.... Putin recently addressed Russia’s Security Council, outlining changes to the country’s nuclear doctrine. He stated that any conventional attack on Russia, supported by a nuclear

power, would be regarded as a joint assault on the Russian Federation.

Despite being a nuclear-free zone, Africa is not immune to the devastating effects of nuclear war.... Hundreds of detonations within minutes would cause millions of deaths and injuries, radiation, heat, and blast effects would destroy entire cities, and global climatic changes would lead to nuclear winter.

He proposes a road map to address Africa’s vulnerability to nuclear war, which includes promoting—

African leadership in global nuclear disarmament.



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Dr. Kwame Amuah, son-in-law of Nelson Mandela, warns of Africa’s vulnerability to nuclear war.

ment efforts. African citizens, policymakers, and civil society organizations must recognize the urgent need for collective action against nuclear threats.

Dr. Kwame Amuah is the Chairman of the Sisulu Foundation for Social Justice.

Minister Sisulu Sounded Alarm in 2018

The most important precursor of Dr. Amuah's article was the prescient, May 15, 2018 warning delivered by the then Minister of International Relations, Lindiwe Sisulu, in a [speech to Parliament](#). According to *News24*, Ms. Sisulu at that time—

warned about the possibility of nuclear confrontation between the world's major powers. She said the growing tensions between the U.S. and China, NATO and Russia, and around Iran, the escalating war in Syria, and the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction could all lead to a nuclear confrontation between major powers. "These tensions threaten the very existence of humanity as we know it."

She condemned the "re-emergence of rabid unilateralism," referring especially to the withdrawal of the United States from the Iran nuclear deal.

Ms. Sisulu said that South Africa's foreign policy had to be formulated against this background, and "must be based on human rights, peace, equality, freedom from oppression and racism and freedom from poverty," according to the *News24* account. Israeli violence against Palestinians was discussed and condemned by all parties to the subsequent debate.

Before the first democratic election in 1994, Ms. Sisulu had served in the liberation army, the original uMkhonto weSizwe (Spear of the Nation), sometimes in intelligence roles. After 1994, she served at different times as Minister of Intelligence and Minister of Defence, among other cabinet posts. In 2019, she was moved

from minister of international relations to a lesser cabinet post, and in 2021, demoted to minister of tourism. In 2023 she was sacked from the cabinet and is also no longer in Parliament, but remains a member of the ANC. She has since said she plans to devote herself to world politics and now has many engagements worldwide.

MK Party Sees Threat to All Humanity

Dr. Amuah's article bursting into the press was followed by a similar, parallel statement issued Sept. 29 by the uMkhonto weSizwe Party (MKP), a new, rapidly growing political party led by former South African President Jacob Zuma. The [statement](#) is titled, "uMkhonto weSizwe Party's Stance on NATO's Provocation in the Russia-Ukraine Conflict."

After noting that changes in Russia's nuclear doctrine—announced by President Vladimir Putin Sept. 25—mark a further escalation in the NATO-Russia conflict, the MKP press release stated:

Putin's revised nuclear doctrine signals that any conventional attack on Russia, when backed by nuclear-armed states like the U.S. and NATO, could trigger a nuclear response. This doctrine change directly challenges the West's continued support for Ukraine, with advanced weaponry now capable of striking deep

into Russian territory. President Putin has made it clear that such actions are viewed as an existential threat to Russia's sovereignty, justifying potential nuclear retaliation. This shift intensifies the risk of nuclear war, which could have devastating global consequences.

As Pan-Africanists and as a non-aligned progressive party and peace advocates, the MK Party, under the leadership of President Jacob Zuma, condemns these dangerous provocations by NATO and the West. President Zuma has consistently opposed the militarization of global conflicts, stating, "Africa must reject war and choose diplomacy. The risk of nuclear conflict



Lindiwe Sisulu Facebook page

Lindiwe Sisulu, former South African defence minister and minister of international relations, presciently warned of nuclear war in 2018.

threatens all humanity, and it is driven by the reckless actions of the West in fueling this war.”

The MK Party recommends:

1. Advocate for Peace: The MK Party will continue to push for an immediate ceasefire and peace negotiations led by neutral actors. Africa must not take sides in this global conflict but rather push for diplomatic solutions;

2. Oppose NATO’s Involvement: As a BRICS member, South Africa must firmly oppose NATO’s interference in Ukraine, which has only escalated the war. This reckless behavior increases the risk of a broader global conflict, which could pull Africa into a geopolitical struggle that does not serve our interests.

Two further recommendations are titled, “Support for Russia’s Sovereignty” and “Call for Global Disarmament.”

On Sept. 30, *IOL* reported, “Zuma urged all progressive forces in South Africa to speak out, not just the MK Party. ‘Today MK is ... a party looking to the future in the international arena,’ ” it quoted Zuma.

Dr. Amuah’s article and the MKP statement will reverberate throughout Africa, promoting common action among African governments, even though unanimity may not be achieved.

Earlier Steps of Escalation Toward Peace

South Africa has already led the way for African nations to take their rightful place in shaping the world order, through two actions in 2023. It organized the African Peace Initiative to Ukraine and Russia, and brought a case of genocide against Israel in the International Court of Justice.

The African Peace Initiative of June 15-17, 2023, was chaired by South African President Cyril Ramaphosa. Representatives of seven governments formed a delegation that visited Ukraine and Russia, with a plan to end the war—These were the presidents of South

Africa, Senegal, Zambia and the Comoros (Comoros was then the African Union chair), the prime minister of Egypt, and representatives of the leaders of Congo-Brazzaville and Uganda. They met Volodymyr Zelensky in Kyiv, and Vladimir Putin in St. Petersburg.

The 10-point plan which the African delegation presented called for an end to the war through diplomacy, de-escalation of hostilities, extension of security guarantees to the parties, ensuring the safety of grain and fertilizer exports from Ukraine and Russia to third countries (important for Africa and beyond), the post-war reconstruction of Ukraine, and further cooperation between the two parties and African countries.

The initiative was not highly successful in the conventional sense, because the governments of Ukraine and Russia were committed to winning on the battlefield. Yet the African governments also had a commitment—a moral commitment to lead the horse to water, even if it would not drink. It was also successful in driving the thought-processes of African governments toward future participation in shaping world affairs on the highest level, despite scorn, contempt, and worse from the Anglo-American hegemony.

The criticism of South Africa’s leadership of the initiative by Washington was memorable:

How can you pretend to be impartial, when you are friends of Russia?

The stupidity of the accusation was invisible to the accuser. South Africa’s then Minister of International Affairs Naledi Pandor answered,

Are you forgetting that we are also your friend?
Are we not obliged to speak the truth about the conflict as we see it to all of our friends?

The wrongdoing seemed to be Washington’s. Its Ambassador to Pretoria, Reuben Brigety, in an unprecedented nationally televised broadcast in South Africa on May 11, 2023—a month before the African Peace Initiative was due to begin—swore “on my life” that



UN/Violaine Martin
Dr. Naledi Pandor, former South African minister of international relations who took Israel’s government to the International Court of Justice.

South Africa was secretly shipping arms to Russia. He spoke with great authority. There had already been unpublicized discussions between the two governments about the accusation, but Washington chose to break with the discussions and go public to discredit South Africa's claim to impartiality, in order to destroy the peace initiative. It did cause an uproar, but it did not stop the initiative. And in the end, Washington could produce no evidence, and had to sit down and shut up.

There was more interference with the mission. When the mission and its security and journalist teams flew to Poland by way of Italy, it was harassed by both governments. The plane for the security team was initially refused entry into Italian airspace and was kept circling over the Mediterranean. In Poland, the authorities went to bureaucratic extremes. President Ramaphosa was separated from his security team. They strip-searched a woman with a diplomatic passport. Most of the passengers were not allowed to leave the plane for 24 hours.

South Africa, led by Minister Pandor and President Ramaphosa, also took unexpectedly courageous action in the world arena by taking the government of Israel to the International Court of Justice on Dec. 29, 2023, on a charge of genocide. South Africa has a special moral

and emotional commitment, because it, too, had experienced an oppressive government's terror controlling everyday life. Egypt, Libya, Namibia, and at least 11 countries beyond Africa have had the moral commitment and courage to support South Africa's case in different degrees.

Washington's view was that it was utterly outrageous (not to mention rude) for South Africa to interfere with the Israeli government's "Palestine Never Again" genocide of the Palestinian people. Minister Pandor has charged that Israel has been threatening her life and the lives of her family members.

Although Naledi Pandor is no longer in government, she has already become an icon of African independence who will not be forgotten. And she is not done yet.

Now it is time to build on these courageous steps taken in 2023, to join in the worldwide work of making the idea of nuclear destruction hateful and politically shameful in the eyes of all men and women of good will. Will South Africa rise to the challenge of Dr. Amuah, Lindiwe Sisulu, and former President Zuma? Will other African parties and governments rise to this challenge?

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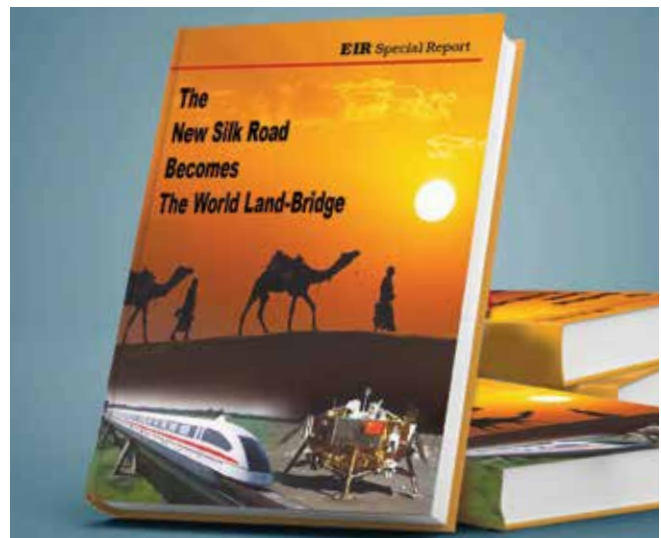
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