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Mali a new front



Sources: Rebellion

The serious situation of insecurity in the Sahel since 2012 is widely known. It began with a claim by the Tuareg nation in claim to Azawad, their ancestral territory. France responded by calling it jihadism, on the one hand, while on the other it allowed true fundamentalists to drown out the Tuareg rebellion.

Since then, those *mujahideen* have continued to expand and overflow into neighbouring countries such as Niger, Burkina Faso and even distant Chad. This exposes the failure of the French army's *Operation Barkhane*, which almost ten years after starting it with more

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than 5,000 men, the collaboration of the 15,000 troops of the *United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali* (MINUSMA), the United States and troops from Burkina Faso, Chad, Mali, Mauritania and Niger the well-known *Five Sahel Group* (G5S), he has not been able to defeat.

So for France it is peremptory to disguise its defeat and escape from this torrid situation by trying to avoid the same humiliation that Washington has just experienced in Afghanistan or evokes to the French electorate, which next April will elect a new Government, the bitter memory of Indochina and Algeria.

For now, the safe conduct that President Emmanuel Macron has found for his escape from the Sahel is the "non-compliance" of the military junta that governs Mali, which in less than a year gave two coups d'état (August 2020 and May 2021).

So already France, disguisedly, is complying with the decrease in patrols of the *Barkhane* while for the coming months the reduction between 2,000 and 3,000 thousand troops of this operation is expected.

It is striking that so much annoyance with the *Armed Forces of Mali* (FAMa), not with the Chadian army, which repeats a very similar situation where a military junta governs that after the death of President Idris Déby, when the country had all the constitutional levers to resolve that situation, closed the Congress and dismissed its president, who was to take charge of the Government.

For France the difference between its two former colonies is that the military junta of Bamako is a "somewhat" reluctant to the mandates of the *Elisha*, while the military of N'Djamena are totally columned with the old metropolis and see in the son of the dead president, General Mahamat Idriss Déby Itno, a phenomenal continuation of the "friendly" policies with Paris, that during his 30 years in power he cultivated Idris Déby, so no one has complained about the dynastic succession in Chad.

The French threat to abandon Mali to its fate was denounced by its Prime Minister, Choguel Maïga, at the *United Nations General Assembly* in New York, on Saturday, September 25, noting during his speech that: "France abandoned (Mali) in mid-flight" he

specified it as: "fait accompli" and regretting "lack of consultation" and the "unilateral" decision by Macron.

The French response was soon heard from Florence Parly, in charge of the *Ministry of the Armies*, who defined as "unacceptable" and "indecent" the statements of Premier Maïga, which he described, almost poetically, as: "wipe the feet in blood of French soldiers", which for much worse on Friday had killed in combat the number 52 of the French soldiers of *Operation Barkhane*. A bargain if you take into account the thousands of Africans who have died after the French intervention of 2012, not to mention the millions of deaths that European colonialism has caused on the continent since the beginning of the nineteenth century, allowing, just to name an example, that *King* Leopold II of Belgium murdered 20 million Congolese, ignoring the "detail" of the slave trade that had begun in 1441 and led an unknown number of souls, which were no less than 30 million, to the darkest of hells.

Although Parly's real annoyance is not based on the denunciation of Mali or the death of the 52 professional soldiers, but on Bamako's approach to Moscow since August last year, when it was known who were the young colonels who were at the head of the coup against the corrupt estates, both of the Government, as well as the army.

After the coup, versions of the links that some of these colonels had with Russia began to fly in a not very concrete way, since they had done different courses of improvement in that nation. Among the military men targeted were two of the top leaders, Colonels Assimi Goïta, the current president of the transition, and Sadio Camara, who had visited Moscow shortly before the August 2020 coup. To these rumors was added that during the popular celebrations that filled the streets of Bamako, after the overthrow of President Ibrahim Boubacar Keïta, flags of the Russian Federation and banners that did not remember France with much affection appeared (See: Mali: Too bad to be true).

Afinidades conducentes

La comunidad internacional (el Occidente preponderante) está observando con mucho detalle la cada vez más concreta presencia de Rusia en África, acusándola de violación de los derechos humanos en Sudán del Sur, la República Democrática del Congo (RDC),

Libia, la República Centroafricana (RCA) y todavía no, pero falta poco para que ingrese a esa lista Mali, por lo que *Naciones Unidas* está llamando a Moscú a que acepte una investigación que sin duda hará a Rusia responsable de todas las acusaciones.

Tras la próxima retirada francesa de su excolonia, sus autoridades no han demorado en buscar la colaboración del grupo de asesores rusos del conocido y conmocionante *Grupo Wagner*, que ya tiene presencia en media docena de países del continente, lo que genera profundo malestar al *Departamento de Estado* norteamericano, que ha llamado al Gobierno malí a avanzar con la transición acordada después del golpe del año pasado, hacia un “gobierno democrático plenamente elegido”. Cómo para corroborar ese malestar viajó a Bamako el comandante de US AFRICOM, las fuerzas estadounidenses para África, el general Stephen Townsend, que se reunió con el presidente Goita y el ministro de Defensa, el coronel Camara.

Hoy tanto los intereses de Francia como los de Estados Unidos en Mali no es luchar contra las *khatibas* del *Dáesh* o *al-Qaeda*, sino impedir el avance de la diplomacia rusa, que encuentra en el *Grupo Wagner* las capacidades necesarias para crear una cabecera de playa. Mucho más cuando se conoció a principios de septiembre el acuerdo, prácticamente cerrado entre la compañía de asesores rusos, con Bamako para contratar a unos 1.000 hombres, con el fin de entrenar a sus tropas y dar seguridad a los altos funcionarios del Gobierno, en prevención de que la retirada de los efectivos franceses y norteamericanos “facilitaría” a los terroristas su aproximación a Bamako.

With this bold move the Malite colonels are giving to test, no less than the United States, their much-talked about medicine on the war on terrorism, which they use to get to a country to take it and stay as long as the terrorists are not defeated, that is, never. Taking as an example the war in Syria, which has only been able to begin to end the fundamentalist groups when President Vladimir Putin decided, in 2013, to go on the offensive in aid of his ally Syrian President Bashar al-Assad, making the US presence practically unsustainable.

If the arrival of Russian contractors in Mali materializes, that country will become a new front of the renewed Cold War.

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