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## Sahel, the imperial counteroffensive



**Sources:** Rebellion [Image: Uranium mines in Niger. Credit: Le Monde]

*Given the critical position in which France remained in the Sahel, and with it the Western powers with interests in that region after the successive coups d'état that occurred from 2020 in Burkina Faso, Guinea Conakry, Mali and Niger, the situation demanded a rapid response, not only to avoid the consolidation of these movements of revolutionary characteristics, but also to prevent the spread of similar processes in other nations of the continent.*

Assimilated blow and overcome the bewilderment, it is difficult to understand, given how permeated these governments were by French intelligence and politics, such a failure to detect the will of the young officers who rose up in four different countries for the same reasons.

France already has a long experience in To intervene in the former colonies, and in order not to fail, in 1958, it activated, a sophisticated system -created by Jacques Foccart, (1913-

1997) advisor to several presidents French on African issues - which is known as *domaine réservé* (reserved domain) with which he controlled the economic and military policies of what is known until today pejoratively, with the name of the *Françafrique*.

Foccart, under the protection of the president, Chales De Gaulle, also created in 1960 the *Gaullist Service d'Action Civique* or SAC (Action Group) Civic), a paramilitary structure that initially operated during the war of Algerian liberation and later extended its actions to the rest of Africa France, where he was responsible for multiple assassinations of leaders and militants of liberation movements and active promoter and organizer of countless coups d'état.

Presidents participated in this plan of domination, And formally it worked outside the French Parliament's radars. The system facilitated the conditions for establishing A system of corruption that penetrated all government structures in the governments of the former colonies, in addition to enabling more than one Hundreds of military interventions in the former colonies, only between 1960 and 1990.

The methods of the *domaine réservé*, with some Variations, throughout its history have continued to work and these days They are very active, as can simply be confirmed in any medium of communication.

In these last weeks, almost in unison, in the four Various conflicts broke out in Sahelian nations: in Burkina Faso sudden demonstrations against the government of President Ibrahim Traore, Time that occurred the arrest of a group of soldiers who conspired in A counterrevolutionary attempt, in addition to a strange episode bordering with two Ivorian gendarmes. In Guinea, two years after its establishment the Government of the *National Committee for Reconciliation and Development* (NCRD), presided over by Colonel Mamady Doumbouya after overthrowing Alpha Condé in September 2021, a collective of political parties under the name of *Forces Vivas de Guinea* (FVG), in the country's capital, Conakry, produced a series of demonstrations where repression left at least four dead. In Mali the *Jama'at Nasr al-Islam wal Muslimin* (Support Group for Islam and Muslims), the affiliate in the region of *al-Qaeda*, increased its actions in the North central of the country, with enough firepower to maintain from two weeks ago a siege to the city of Timbuktu, of almost 60,000 thousand inhabitants. The actions of terrorists Add the rupture of several *Tuareg* groups with the Junta The government of Bamako, two factors that have put the government on the ropes of Colonel Assimi Goitia.

In the case of Niger, the last of the countries incorporated into The anti-French Sahelian league, the announcement of Paris was known, after two months of resistance, the

withdrawal of its ambassador in Niamey, Sylvain Itté, and that The withdrawal of the 1,500 troops maintained by Niger will begin, a discard of the failed *Operation Barkhane* driven out of Mali more than a year ago. The current situation opens up an unprecedented panorama in relations between France and France. Niger, where the former metropolis maintains significant investments in mining vital for Europeans.

The United States also at first "threatened" with withdraw its troops, about 1,000 that it maintains in three bases, if the Government of *the National Council for the Safeguarding of the Fatherland*, chaired by the General Abdourrahmane Tchiani, does not reinstate President Mohamed Bazoum overthrown on July 26, although the visit of Victoria Nulan, undersecretary of interim state, to Niamey, would have managed to extend the permanence.

At this time of very high turbulence that is experienced in the Sahel and other areas such as Ethiopia, Libya, Democratic Republic of Congo, Somalia and Sudan, among other scenarios of Less volatility, the first official visit of the none other than *Secretary of U.S. Defense*, Lloyd J. Austin III.

On his tour, which took him from the Horn of Africa (Djibouti, Somalia and Kenya) to Angola, the *Pentagon* chief made it clear that his main objective is to counter the continent the Russian presence as a major supplier of armaments and Military training to the armies of the region and obviously intends replace them with American production.

In addition Austin III, without Ambages, got into the internal politics of the continent defining, without naming them, the military juntas of the Sahelian alliance as "autocrats to be sold out" (Russia) cheap weapons the same ones that deprive the hungry of grain of grain. everybody." Rounding off his sentence, he described the new governments. as those who "annul the will of the people and put their own ambitions first" to the rule of law and security, killing democracy."

### **An advanced in development**

With regard to Burkina Faso, beyond the continuous attack of the fundamentalist *khatibas* that since 2017 have only increased – despite the presence of the French military of *Operation Sabre*, expelled also after the arrival of the revolutionaries - it does not cease to be suggestive episode of September 19 in the village of Kwame Yar (Burkina Faso), where two Ivorian gendarmes were detected and arrested. the Buna squadron, in the north-east of Côte d'Ivoire, which, according to Abidjan, They had crossed the border "without realizing it" while chasing miners. Illegal. An apparently

frequent incident in that area, where the demarcation between the two countries is diffuse.

The Ivorian gendarmes, whose After being arrested, they were transferred to the capital of Burkina, Ouagadougou, where they are being investigated. A similar episode had already occurred in Last March with four Ivorian police officers in the same area, although in That opportunity was immediately released.

It is not possible to ignore that beyond this incident, almost Since the coup in Niger, Ouagadougou has become a major Niamey's ally, while the Ivorian country has been one of the great promoters, together with Nigeria, to carry out a military operation to restore to former Nigerien President Mohamed Bazoum, what the Community has sought *Economic of West African States* (ECOWAS), an organization articulated in the shadows by France and the United States.

Regarding the detention of four army officers Burkinabe last Wednesday 27, in a statement read on television State junta reported that "a proven coup attempt was thwarted on 26 September 2023 by the intelligence and security services of Burkina Faso". While there were no further details, it is known that they have already been Individualized two other people who are fugitives and follows investigating to get to the core of the plot when precisely the 30th of September marks one year since the coup. Already in December of last year it had been registered a similar event without major consequences.

In Mali the situation is concentrated, beyond the terrorist operations, in the recent withdrawal of the *Strategic Framework Permanent* (CSP), a coalition of groups of the *Tuareg* movements with the regular troops of Bamako, which served as a containment to the *Wahhabis* and now with the argument of claiming the autonomy of Azawad, the mythical *Tuareg* homeland, in mid-September began to operate against different bases of the *Malian Armed Forces* (FAMa). On the 18th they would have wrested from the army the camp of the city of Léré, and the day earlier the same group attacked the FAMa headquarters in Niafunké, near the city of Timbuktu, harassed by *mujahideens of the Support for Islam and Muslims*. (See: Mali, the toolbox French)

Meanwhile, the Nigerien army continues to deepen its process, which beyond the expulsion of the ambassador and the troops, has decreed a substantial increase in the prices of the exploitation of its uranium and others minerals, perhaps the most sensitive point in France to have launched The counteroffensive with which he will try, at the price of large quotas of blood, will not lose their privileges in the Sahel. Macron's change of heart about the withdrawal of the ambassador and his troops, would have been precipitated by

Nuland's trip, who could have negotiated with General Tchiani the permanence of his Troops in exchange for the departure of the French, another example of the ominous subordination of Paris to Washington.

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