

Rising Russian and Chinese Presence in Africa

Evening Conference

18 November 2021

17:00 – 18:30

Stanislav SECRIERU – European Union Institute for Security Studies

Padraig CARMODY – Trinity College Dublin

Dear Madam, Sir,

We are pleased to invite you to an **evening conference**, organised on **Thursday 18 November 2021** by the **Centre for Security and Defence Studies** of the Royal Higher Institute for Defence.

From Mali to Libya, the Central African Republic or Mozambique, Russia's military presence is growing on the African continent, under the watchful and worried eye of Western countries in general and Europe in particular. Let's just have a look at the latest event: the delivery of Russian helicopters and weapons to Mali, shortly after the announcement by French president Emmanuel Macron on 10 June 2021 that the French presence in Mali would be "profoundly transformed", notably by withdrawing part of the troops from Operation Barkhane. While the Chinese presence is older, it has deepened and diversified over the past twenty years, ranging from the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) trade framework to the financing or implementation of infrastructure projects in Madagascar, Kenya or Ethiopia, not to mention the extractive sectors and the supply of raw materials (ores and hydrocarbons). However, Russian and Chinese activism are not limited to economic and commercial interests; both countries clearly show their desire to present themselves as alternatives to Western countries and are multiplying diplomatic initiatives, including via "vaccine diplomacy", to establish their influence and reassert their power on the continent.

Thus, through the support of 'new' actors such as Russia and China, African states have the opportunity to (re)assert their national policy and/or reshape it. But what are the real motivations of Moscow and Beijing in sub-Saharan Africa? To what extent does Russia's recent activism differ from previous diplomatic thrusts in the region? Can coherent strategies be discerned on both the Chinese and Russian sides? Finally, how are sub-Saharan African countries receiving Russian and Chinese initiatives, and what do these initiatives imply for the European Union?

In order to assess these new political and security dynamics in the region and their implications for Europe, we will have the pleasure of welcoming Mr Stanislav Secrieru, analyst at the European Union Institute for Security Studies (EUISS) and specialist in Russian foreign and security policy in the post-Soviet period, as well as Mr Padraig Carmody, Professor at Trinity College Dublin, where he lectures on the political economy of globalisation in Africa.

This conference will take place in English on **Thursday 18 November 2021 at 17.00 hours in the conference room at campus Renaissance** (entrance: **rue Hobbema 8/Hobbemastraat 8, 1000 Brussels**) and **will be broadcasted online through the platform Skype**. A simultaneous interpretation in Dutch and French will be provided in the conference room. We thank you in advance for registering via the following link: www.defence-institute.be. **Registration, subject to availability, is compulsory and must be received by Monday 15 November 2021 at the latest**. You will then receive a registration confirmation and a link to connect to the conference.

(Signed)

Filip BORREMANS, MSc Eng

Air Force Colonel GS

Director-general

Royal Higher Institute for Defence

Programme:

16.00 – 17.00: Registration

17.00 – 18.30: Conference and Q & A

18.30 – 19.30: Reception