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Africa

The looters' ball in Africa

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This was US President Joe Biden's first and last trip to Africa, just a few weeks before the end of his mandate. His visit to Angola at the beginning of December was not insignificant, as the country is the centrepiece of a major investment for the USA and the European Union (EU): the Lobito Corridor. The Lobito Corridor project, from Zambia to Angola, is part of a heightened inter-imperialist competition for control of Africa's critical resources.

Circulation of goods

This involves the construction of a railway linking Zambia to the Angolan port of Lobito via the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC). With its route serving the main mining towns, it would become a major transit route for the main minerals needed by the energy transition industry. These include copper from Zambia, cobalt, tungsten and coltan for the DRC.

The USA and the European Union have financed this project to the tune of 4 billion and 6 billion dollars respectively. It involves the renovation of more than a thousand kilometres of rail track and the construction of a new 800-km section to link up with Zambia, the purchase of locomotives and wagons, as well as road infrastructure, storage areas and, for Angola, a number of primary refining units. This also involves harmonising customs and trade policies between the three countries. The stated aim is to reduce transport times from 45 days to 45 hours.

Inter-imperialist competition

The Lobito Corridor is also seen as a tool to challenge China's supremacy on the continent. China ships most of its minerals to the Indian Ocean via the Tazara (Tanzania Zambia Railway), built in 1975 by the Chinese.

Although the USA and the EU are touting the Lobito Corridor as an environmental project, there are serious doubts because it is part of an extractive economy that relegates African countries to the role of mere mining reserves. What's more, the concession to operate this line was won by the Swiss multinational Trafigura, which in 2006 had no qualms about dumping tonnes of chemical waste into the Abidjan lagoon, poisoning tens of thousands of people.

While the Angolan side is fully prepared, this is far from being the case for the DRC, which is facing a security crisis linked in part to the Rwandan aggression. Angola is trying to find a lasting peace solution between the two countries. The opening up of these critical resources to the Atlantic Ocean reflects the West's desire to free itself from the hegemony built up by China over the processing of minerals.

At the beginning of the 20th century, the Belgian and Portuguese colonisers built this corridor to export African resources to Europe. One hundred years later, the objective remains the same, meaning that the rich countries' relationship of economic domination over Africa has hardly changed.

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Translated by *International Viewpoint* from [l'Anticapitaliste](#).

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