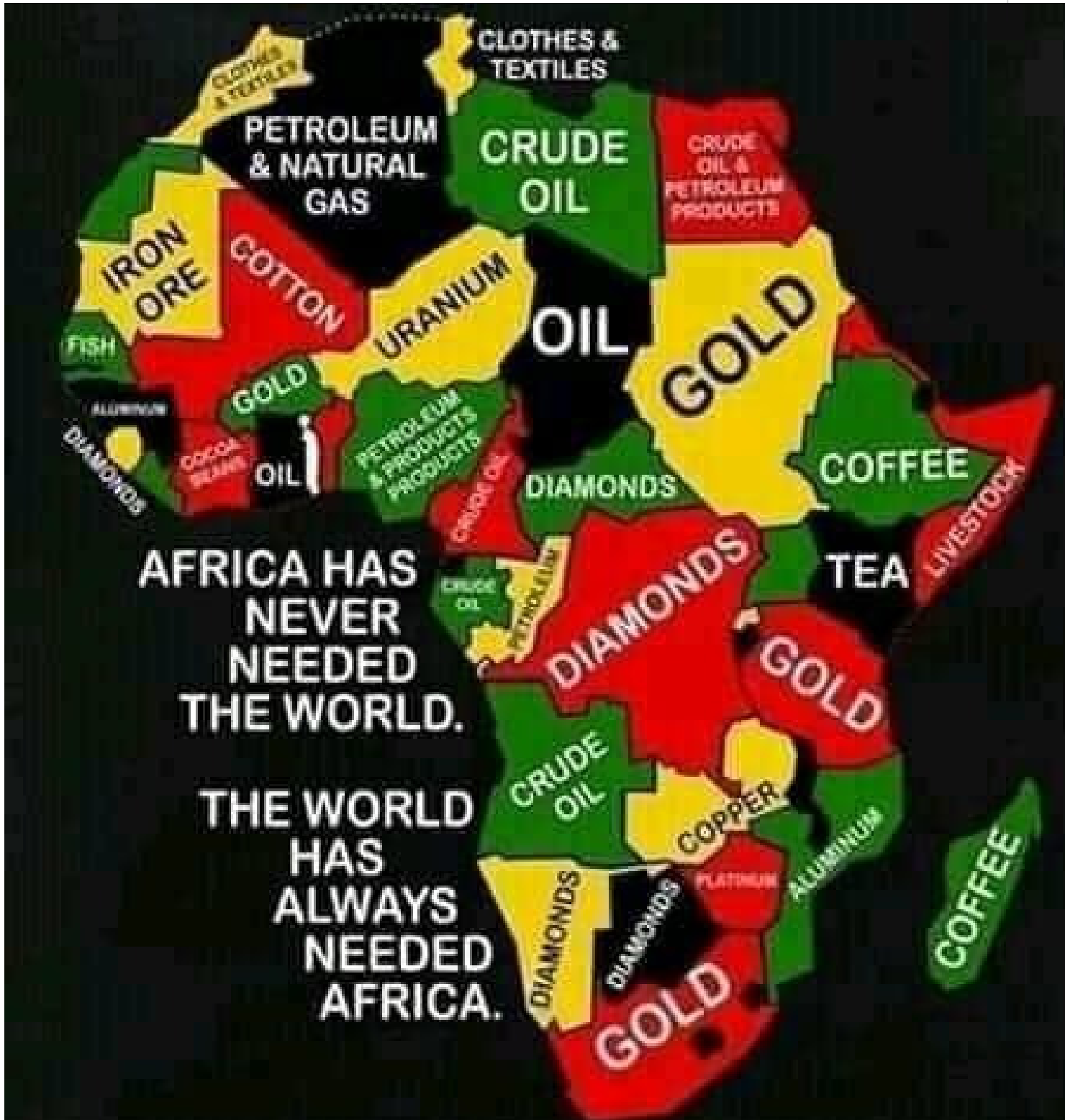


*Observers say Washington is
expanding military foothold in
Africa*



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Cape Town, October 17 (RHC)-- From once having no strategic military interest in the continent, within just over a decade, the U.S. now has some 30 military bases scattered across Africa.

The Pentagon's African Command or AFRICOM project describes itself as designed to promote regional security, stability and prosperity, while assisting to strengthen security forces of allied nations. But it also admits AFRICOM will work to advance US national interests on the continent.

Some analysts are pointing to a spike in coup attempts in East and West Africa, areas that have the largest concentration of U.S. bases. At least seven coups over the past 13 years have reportedly involved troops trained under AFRICOM.

A growing rivalry with China is cited as another reason for the West's military project aimed at dominating the African continent and exploiting resource-rich nations there. Back in 2013 when AFRICOM was first established, only two African countries showed willingness to host American bases. But now, even South Africa, which once led a campaign against American intervention on the continent, has hosted drills with the U.S. military.

The USS Hershel Williams is the first warship permanently assigned to AFRICOM. It's also the second time it's docking in Cape Town in less than a year. The expansion of AFRICOM indicates the strategic military ties and influence the United States wishes to establish with South Africa.

In that case, observers say the future looks dim for Africa. As history indicates, the US has brought instability and conflict to any region it has established a military foothold.

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