Atrocity Unlimited: US Seeks to Turn Somalia into Global Free-Fire Zone

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Not content with destroying the only vestige of stability that Somalia had known for almost two decades by arming, backing and participating in a brutal "regime change" invasion by Ethiopia, the Bush Administration now wants to turn the ravaged land into an international "free fire zone," a giant Fallujah where any powerful nation on earth can launch armed incursions on Somali soil, wreaking the usual "collateral damage" in the search for pirates — or for those arbitrarily designated as pirates.

The Bush Regime is drafting a UN Security Council resolution that will give "the international community" carte blanche to "hunt down" alleged pirates on land in Somalia, the Guardian reports:

> A draft resolution that would permit states fighting piracy to "take all necessary measures ashore in Somalia, including in its airspace" has been circulated to members of the UN Security Council. Prior consent for raids would be required from Somalia's weak and fractured government...

As we noted here recently, the "Somali government" is a rapidly collapsing coalition of CIA-paid warlords and Ethiopian collaborators which "controls" only a few city blocks of territory in the entire country. It is unfathomable that this near-fictitious entity would or could oppose a "request" by a world power to send armed forces into Somalia in a noble quest to clamp down on pirates. And what happens when these invading forces inevitably clash with the various other armed groups now waging a multi-sided, hydra-headed war in the country? Why, the invaders will have to take stern "force protection" measures, of course.

The story goes on to note that the locations of the "pirate lairs are well-known":

> Along Somalia's north-eastern coast, villages and towns such as Eyl, Haradheere and Hobyo provide sanctuary and logistical support for pirate gangs holding at least 14 ships.

And it is certainly not surprising that the Western backers of the Somali "government" know just where the pirates are: they provided mighty assistance in their rise, as we noted here a few weeks ago:

> For one thing, [the Times] notes something that is almost never mentioned in any story about Somalia, neither in the very rare stories about the conflict itself or the rather more numerous stories about piracy and its effects on

commercial shipping (an issue far more important that the lives of 10,000 innocent human beings, of course): the fact that the main backers and bankrollers of the pirate gangs "are linked to the Western-backed government."

The conservative UK paper then goes on to give an accurate account of how these pirate-backing factions came to power — facts that are almost universally ignored by the "liberal" American media . (Not to mention the "progressive blogosphere;" indeed, you can actually find more references to the Somalia war in the corporate press than among our internet "dissidents.") :

> Years of violence, neglect and misguided policies have left Somalia one of the most dangerous countries and a breeding ground for the pirates attacking one of the world's busiest shipping routes.
>
> Today the northeast area of the country, including Puntland, has been carved up by warlords who finance themselves by drug and gun running. This is also the heartland of the pirates, whose main backers are linked to the Western-backed government. Radical Islamists control much of the south, including the key port of Kismayo and the porous border area with Kenya, a staunch Western ally.
>
> This has realised a Western nightmare, which was supposed to have been destroyed by Ethiopia's American-backed invasion of Somalia two years ago in support of a puppet government created by the international community. That alliance spanned the spectrum from extreme radicals to moderate, devout Muslims. The latter were in charge.
>
> Everyone – except Pentagon planners, it seems – knew that Somalia had never proved fertile territory for Saudi-style radical Islam. However, indiscriminate bombing of civilian areas by Ethiopia, Somalia's historic enemy, with huge casualties, put an end to that. The Islamists were driven out, the moderates went into exile and the hardliners took control of the south with a popular powerbase beyond their wildest dreams.

A puppet government, installed by foreign invasion, riddled with crime and corruption, alienating and radicalizing the population: here we see the quintessential template of the "War on Terror," replicated faithfully in Iraq, Afghanistan, and Somalia — and soon, perhaps, in Pakistan.

And now the Bush Regime — going out in a *Götterdämmerung* of blood and fury aimed at the world (and at the American people) — wants to intensify the chaos in Somalia, laying it bare to more invasions, "precision strikes," death squad operations, renditions and other atrocities, this time coming from not just from Washington and its Terror War proxies but from all directions. This is the answer of the American militarist state to any problem, such as piracy or terrorism: the blunderbuss assault of massive military force by land, sea and air; vast destruction, social collapse — and immeasurable, unbounded human suffering.

This is the reality of much-praised "continuity" in "national security affairs" that Barack Obama's appointments have promised. This is what will be "continued."

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