

Obama's Widening War In Somalia

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Led by the Central Intelligence Agency(CIA) the U.S. is stepping up its war in Somalia, The Nation magazine reports.

"The CIA presence in (the capital) Mogadishu is part of Washington's intensifying counter-terrorism focus on Somalia, which includes targeted strikes by US Special Operations forces, drone attacks and expanded surveillance operations," writes Jeremy Scahill, the magazine's national security correspondent.

According to well-connected Somali sources, the CIA is reluctant to deal directly with Somali political leaders, who are regarded by U.S. officials as corrupt and untrustworthy. Instead, Scahill says, the U.S. has Somali intelligence agents on its payroll. Even the nation's president, Sharif Sheikh Ahmed is not fully briefed on war plans.

The CIA operates from a sprawling walled compound in a corner of Mogadishu's Aden Adde International Airport defended by guard towers manned by Somali government guards. What's more, the CIA also runs a secret underground prison in the basement of Somalia's National Security Agency headquarters, where conditions are reminiscent of the infamous Guantanamo Bay facility President Obama vowed to shut down.

The airport site was completed just four months ago and symbolizes the new face of the expanding war the Obama regime is waging against Al Shabab, and other Islamic militant groups in Somalia having close ties to Al Qaeda.

Typical of U.S. strongarm tactics, suspects from Kenya and elsewhere have been illegally rendered and flown to Mogadishu. Former prisoners, Scahill writes, "described the (filthy, small) cells as (infested with bedbugs), windowless and the air thick, moist and disgusting. Prisoners...are not allowed outside (and) many have developed rashes..." The prison dates back at least to the regime of military dictator Siad Barre, who ruled from 1969 to 1991, and was even then referred to as "The Hole."

One prisoner snatched in Kenya and rendered to Somalia said, "I have been here for one year, seven months. I have been interrogated so many times...by Somali men and white men. Every day new faces show up (but) they have nothing on me. I have never seen a lawyer...here there is no court or tribunal." The white men are believed to be U.S. and French intelligence agents.

Human Rights Watch and Reprieve have documented that Kenyan security forces "facilitated scores of renditions for the U.S. and other governments, including 85 people rendered to Somalia in 2007 alone," Scahill writes.

Saleh Ali Saleh Nabhan, a leader of Al Qaeda in East Africa and Kenyan citizen, was slain in the first known targeted killing operation in Somalia authorized by President Obama, The Nation article said, several months after a man thought to be one of Nabhan's aides was rendered to Mogadishu.

In an interview with the magazine in Mogadishu, Abdulkadir Moallin Noor, the minister of state for the presidency, confirmed that US agents "are working without intelligence" and "giving them training." He called for more U.S. counter-terrorism efforts lest "the terrorists will take over the country."

During his confirmation hearings to become head of the U.S. Special Operations Command, Vice Admiral William McRaven said the U.S. is "looking very hard" at Somalia and that it would have to "increase its use of drones as well as on-the-ground intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance operations." U.S. actions appear to circumvent the president, who is not fully kept in the loop, the magazine reported.

A week after a June 23rd drone strike against alleged Shabab members near Kismayo, 300 miles from the capital, John Brennan, Mr. Obama's top counter-terrorism adviser, said, "From the territory it controls in Somalia, Al Shabab continues to call for strikes against the United States. We cannot and we will not let down our guard. We will continue to pummel Al Qaeda and its ilk."

Author Scahill reports the Pentagon is increasing its support for, and arming of, the counter-terrorism operations of non-Somali African military forces. A new defense spending bill would authorize more than \$75 million in U.S. aid aimed at fighting the Shabab and Al Qaeda in Somalia. The package would "dramatically" increase US arming and financing of AMISOM's (African Union) forces, particularly from Uganda and Burundi, as well as the armies of Djibouti, Kenya and Ethiopia.

The AMISOM forces, however, "are not conducting their mission with anything resembling surgical precision," Scahill writes. Instead, in recent months they "have waged a merciless campaign of indiscriminate shelling of Shabab areas, some of which are heavily populated by civilians."

According to a senior Somali intelligence official who works directly with U.S. agents, the CIA-led program in Mogadishu has yielded few tangible gains. Neither the U.S. nor Somali forces "have been able to conduct a single successful targeted mission in the Shabab's areas in the capital," Scahill reports.

Francis Boyle, distinguished authority on international law at the University of Illinois, Champaign, says the US. is "just using Shabab as an excuse to steal Somalia's gas. Just before President Bush Senior's Gulf War I, Somalia was already carved up among four or so U.S. oil companies. Then Bush Sr. invaded under the pretext of feeding poor starving Somalis...(but) the Somalis fought back and expelled us... So now we are just trying to get back in there. Notice they are escalating the propaganda again about poor starving Black People in Somalia, as if we ever cared diddly-squat about them. All we care about is stealing their oil. Shabab and famine are just covers and pretexts."

The expanding war in Somalia, largely unreported in America, marks the sixth country in the Middle East—after Afghanistan, Iraq, Pakistan, Libya, and Yemen—in which the regime of Nobel Peace Prize-winner Obama is engaged. One wonders how many additional countries

does Mr. Obama, (the former secret CIA payroller,) have to invade to win another Peace Prize?

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