

Bush's Rampage in Somalia

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While George Bush was breezing through photo-ops at the G-8 summit in Japan, his Ethiopian proxy-army in Somalia was grinding out more carnage on the streets of Mogadishu. More than 40 civilians have been killed in the last 48 hours.

On Sunday, Osman Ali Ahmed, the head of the UN Development Program in Somalia, was shot gangland style as he left a mosque after prayers. He died before reaching the hospital with wounds to the head and chest. Ali Ahmed is just the latest of the peace-keepers who have been killed in the ongoing battle between Bush's Ethiopian occupiers and the Somali guerrillas.

US foreign policy in Somalia has resulted in disaster. Millions of Somalis have been forced to flee their homes and relocate to tent cities in the south to escape the fighting. The latest surge in violence has been the worst in a decade and the security situation continues to deteriorate despite the arrival of 2,600 troops from the African Union and a tentative truce that was signed in June between some of the warring factions.

The western media has stubbornly refused to report on the rising death-toll in Somalia, choosing instead to focus all of their attention on America's "villain du jour," Robert Mugabe. Mugabe appears to be next on the neocon's list for regime change. (Paul Wolfowitz even composed a postmortem for Zimbabwe's president in a recent Wall Street Journal editorial, "How to Put the Heat on Mugabe")

In 2006, the United States supported an alliance of Somali warlords known as the Transitional Federal Government (TFG) who established a base of operations in the western city of Baidoa. With the help of the US-backed Ethiopian army, western mercenaries, US Navy warships, and AC-130 gunships, the TFG was able capture Mogadishu and force the Islamic Courts Union (ICU) and their allies to retreat to the south. But, much like Iraq and Afghanistan, the resistance has coalesced into a tenacious guerrilla army which has returned to the capital and resumed the fight making it impossible for their Ethiopian adversaries to govern.

As the struggle continues, the humanitarian situation has gone from bad to worse. At least 2.6 million Somalis are now facing famine due to acute food shortages spurred by a prolonged drought, violence and high inflation. UN monitors have warned that the figure could hit exceed 3.5 million by the end of 2008. The UN Security Council has helped facilitate the violence by failing to condemn US support for Ethiopia's invasion and by promising to send peacekeepers to mop up after fighting ends. They've shown no interest in stopping the bloodshed or threatening sanctions against the aggressors. The UNSC has become little more than an accomplice in Bush's rampages.

In an interview with Amy Goodman on Democracy Now, Salim Lone, a columnist for the Daily Nation in Kenya and a former spokesperson for the UN mission in Iraq explains the UN's role in providing the "go ahead" for the US invasion:

The lawlessness of this particular war is astounding; the most lawless war of our generation. You know, all aggressive wars are illegal. But in this particular one, there have been violations of the UN Charter and gross violations of international human rights. But, in addition, there have been very concrete violations by the United States of two Security Council resolutions. The first one was the arms embargo imposed on Somalia, which the United States has been routinely flaunting for many years now. But then the US decided that that resolution was no longer useful, and they pushed through an appalling resolution in December, which basically gave the green light to Ethiopia to invade. They pushed through a resolution which said that the situation in Somalia was a threat to international peace and security, at a time when every independent report indicated, and Chatham House's report on Wednesday also indicated, that the Islamic Courts Union had brought a high level of peace and stability that Somalia had not enjoyed in sixteen years. So here was the UN Security Council going along with the American demand to pass a blatantly falsified UN resolution. And that resolution actually was a violation [of the] UN Charter. You know, the UN Charter is like the American Constitution and the Security Council is not allowed to pass laws or rules that violate the Charter. And yet, who is going to correct them?

The Bush administration has predictably invoked the "terrorist" hobgoblin to justify its involvement in Somalia, but no one is buying it. The ICU is not an Al Qaida affiliate or a terrorist organization despite the absurd claims of the State Department. It is true that the ICU was trying to enforce Sharia Law, but a much milder form of Sharia than America's ally, Saudi Arabia.

The ICU was the first government in over a decade to restore security and order to Somalia and — generally speaking — the people were supportive of the new regime. Political analyst James Petras summed it up like this:

The ICU was a relatively honest administration, which ended warlord corruption and extortion. Personal safety and property were protected, ending arbitrary seizures and kidnappings by warlords and their armed thugs. The ICU is a broad multi-tendency movement that includes moderates and radical Islamists, civilian politicians and armed fighters, liberals and populists, electoralists and authoritarians. Most important, the Courts succeeded in unifying the country and creating some semblance of nationhood, overcoming clan fragmentation.

The real motives behind the invasion were oil and geopolitics. According to most estimates 30 percent of America's oil will come from Africa in the next ten years. Bush's new warlord friends in the Transitional Federal Government (TFG) have already indicated that they are ready to pass a new oil law that will encourage foreign oil companies to return to Somalia. The same oil giants that are now lining up in Iraq will soon be making their way to Somalia as well.

The Horn of Africa is also critical for its deep-water ports and its strategic location for future military bases. It's all part of the Grand Schema for reconfiguring the region to accommodate America's hegemonic ambitions.

Humanitarian Catastrophe: “The Ethiopian invasion has destroyed all the life-sustaining systems”

Heavy fighting and artillery fire have reduced large parts of Mogadishu to rubble. More than 700,000 people have been forced to leave the capital with nothing more than what they can carry on their backs. Entire districts have been evacuated and turned into ghost towns. The main hospital has been bombed and is no longer taking patients. Ethiopian snipers are perched atop rooftops across the city. Over 3.5 million people are now huddled in the south in tent cities without sufficient food, clean water or medical supplies. It is the greatest humanitarian crisis in Africa today; a man-made Hell entirely conjured up in Washington.

Just weeks ago, Amnesty International reported that it had heard many accounts that Ethiopian troops were “slaughtering (Somalis) like goats.” In one case, “a young child’s throat was slit by Ethiopian soldiers in front of the child’s mother.”

In another Democracy Now interview, Abdi Samatar, professor of Global Studies at the University of Minnesota, had this to say:

The Ethiopian invasion, which was sanctioned by the US government, has destroyed virtually all the life-sustaining economic systems which the population have built without the government for the last fifteen years. And the militia that are supposed to protect the population have been looting shops. For instance, the Bakara market, which is the largest market in Mogadishu, has been looted repeatedly by the militias of the so-called Transitional Federal Government of Somalia, supported by Ethiopian troops. And the new prime minister of Somalia, Mr. Hassan Nur Hussein, has himself announced in the BBC that it was his militias that — who have looted this place. So what you have is a population that’s hit from both sides — on one side, by the militias of the so-called Transitional Federal Government, which is recognized by the United States, and on the other side, by the Ethiopian invaders who seem to be bent on ensuring that they break the will of the people to resist as free people in their own country.... What you have is really terror in the worst sense of the word, a million people have been displaced that the Ethiopians have been denying humanitarian aid, and the United States which seems to just watch and let it happen.

It’s like there’s has been a calculated decision made somewhere in the world, maybe in Washington, maybe in Addis Ababa, maybe in Mogadishu itself, to starve these people until they submit themselves to the whims of the American military and the Ethiopians, who are acting on their behalf.

Amnesty International has called for an investigation of the United States role in Somalia.

Regrettably, neither the United Nations nor the establishment media are at all interested in Bush’s war crimes in Africa. All they care about is Mugabe.

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