

Where do calls to intervene in Somalia come from?

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There have been new calls for United Nations intervention in the East African country of Somalia. In a statement issued on behalf of the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD), a regional organization, Kenyan President Mwai Kibaki said, "The prevailing security situation in Somalia is worrying and greatly threatens regional peace and stability."

mission in downtown Mogadishu, 1993. " src="http://www.workers.org/2008/world/somalia_0626.jpg" border=0

U.S. troops on 'search and seizure' mission in downtown Mogadishu, 1993.

IGAD wants the United Nations to take complete control of the 2,600-member African Union peacekeeping force already operating in Somalia. This call for U.N. intervention was made at an IGAD summit held in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, on June 15.

In addition to the existing AU force in Somalia, other nations from the international community would be requested to supply troops and equipment to ostensibly restore order and implement a June 9 peace agreement signed among various political organizations in Somalia.

Somalia has not had an internationally recognized government since 1991, when the Western-backed regime of Mohammed Siad Barre collapsed. A U.S.-led military intervention, under the auspices of the United Nations, occurred between 1992 and 1994. In December 2006, the Bush administration encouraged and backed an Ethiopian invasion and occupation of Somalia that has been met with growing resistance among the population.

The recently signed peace agreement has not won the support of leading resistance movements inside the country. An Alliance for the Re-liberation of Somalia has agreed to halt attacks within one month on the condition that Ethiopian troops withdraw from Somalia within four months. However, the Al-Shabaab Islamist movement reiterated on June 13 that its fighters would not adhere to the agreement.

The Western-backed government of President Kibaki in neighboring Kenya has taken the lead in the current thrust for international intervention in Somalia. At the June 15 IGAD conference, Kibaki blasted the member countries of the regional organization, which includes all countries in the area with the exception of Eritrea, for not doing enough to stabilize the situation in Somalia.

President Kibaki condemned the resistance forces in Somalia for embracing violence in

order to overthrow the U.S.-imposed Transitional Federal Government and for scaring away the AU peacekeeping mission.

“As a region, we cannot accept those who use violence, pirates and kidnap syndicates to continue killing and kidnapping people. ... In particular, it is critical that the United Nations Security Council urgently consider transforming the African Union Mission to Somalia (AMISOM) into a United Nations Peacekeeping Mission,” Kibaki continued.

Kibaki also stated that he “appreciated the pledges made by African countries to deploy troops to AMISOM, and in light of the prevailing security challenges in Somalia, I am urging Benin, Ghana and Nigeria to deploy their troops without further delay.”

Fighting rages in Mogadishu and other areas

Despite claims by the Western media that the recently signed peace agreement on June 9 will improve the security situation in Somalia, fighting has escalated in the capital of Mogadishu and in other areas of this nation located in the Horn of Africa. According to reports published by Shabelle.net on June 15, armed Islamic Court combatants launched mortar attacks against Ethiopian troops at the Heila Barise military camp, resulting in an hour-long battle.

“They are fighting with rocket-propelled grenades and heavy machine guns,” said resident Hassan Nor, who was afraid to leave his home because of gunfire in the area. “There is now intense fighting going on around Heila Barise in north Mogadishu.”

According to Shabelle.net, “It was not immediately clear if there were any casualties in the earlier mortar strikes on the Ethiopian troop’s army base, where more than a dozen explosions could be heard.”

The resistance fighters have vowed to attack any foreign troops and the interim government, since their forces were routed by the Ethiopian military in an invasion coordinated by the United States and Britain in December 2006. Since then, U.S. forces have carried out several aerial bombardments of Somali territory under the guise of attacking al-Qaeda bases.

Meanwhile, in the central part of the country at Beledweyne, Ethiopian troops have withdrawn their forces from the area after repeated attacks by the guerrilla forces opposed to the occupation. Residents told Shabelle.net that the Ethiopian soldiers had been driven out of the area. The occupation forces used civilian vehicles to avoid detection as they retreated.

In Kismayu, located 328 miles (528 km) southwest of the capital, Mogadishu, attacks were carried out June 14 against a military base in the area. One soldier was reported killed before the armed combatants escaped the vicinity surrounding the camp.

French firm Secopex signs deal to patrol coast

A French military services firm, Secopex, has signed a contract with the U.S.-backed Somalia Transitional Federal Government (TFG) to purportedly boost security off the country’s coast. This is being done to control reported acts of piracy taking place in the region.

A statement issued by Pierre Marziali, CEO of the private security company, stated that the deal would “strengthen maritime business” off the coast of Somalia.

This deal has been estimated to be worth anywhere between 50 million to 100 million euros annually and is slated to be in effect for the next three years. The contract comes just two months after the seizure of a French luxury yacht by Somalis. During the ordeal, which resulted in a weeklong standoff, all 30 crewmembers were released without injury. Nonetheless, French Special Forces operating in the area attacked the Somalis, arresting six.

Marziali told the French Press Agency (AFP): “Our core business is primarily in the U.S. We will set up a unified coast guard, creating a comprehensive coast guard information system” as well as forming a special security detail to protect the U.S.-backed TFG president of Somalia, Abdullahi Yusuf Ahmed.

“These measures mean we can offer a concrete response to any armed attack,” Marziali said. “The economic facet of this contract is also important for Somalia, victim not just of pirates but also the victim of huge pillaging of its natural fish stocks off its coastline.”

Secopex claims that it is capable of mobilizing as many as 2,000 armed security personnel in 40 categories of specialization including skilled trades, divers, translators, pilots and nurses.

The firm was founded in 2003 and supplies private security forces and bodyguards, as well as security consulting and auditing. The division located in Carcassonne in southern France specializes in private military services to various countries.

What’s at stake for imperialism in Somalia?

The way in which the nation of Somalia is portrayed in the Western media makes it appear that the country is a humanitarian disaster in desperate need of U.S. or U.N. intervention. Yet the current crisis in security, food deficits and internal displacement largely results from the U.S.-backed and coordinated invasion and occupation that utilized the government of Ethiopia.

According to reports issued by various relief organizations operating in Somalia, the humanitarian situation has become the worst crisis on the African continent since the events of December 2006. Although the Union of Islamic Courts and other organizations have repeatedly stated that they are not affiliated with al-Qaeda, the U.S. continues to utilize these false claims to justify their ongoing involvement in the region.

The nation of Somalia is strategically located near the Indian Ocean, where the transport of minerals and oil makes it valuable to the multinational corporations that dominate the commerce of the region. In addition, Somalia itself contains a number of important minerals and other resources that Western interests seek to control.

For example, exploration for titanium and uranium has taken place in the country since the 1970s. Oil exploration concessions have also been held by various multinational firms including the British Burma Oil Company, Elf-Somalie, the former Federal Germany and Gulf Oil going back to the 1970s.

The country’s mineral resources also include atomic minerals with deposits at Alio Ghelle

and in the Bur region, with possible reserves of 250,000 metric tons containing 8,050 tons of thorium, 290 tons of uranium oxide, and 205 tons of yttrium. The total reserve could well exceed 1 million metric tons with additional deposits in the Ludugu area.

Bauxite deposits have also been discovered in Mana Daimir. Other mineral deposits include marble located north of Bur Acaba; sepiolite at El Bur in exploitable quantities; sulfur at Berber; and titanium in the Giubi River with reserves estimated at 10 million metric tons. There are also uranium deposits in the Wabo region.

Most importantly during this period, however, is the question of oil in the ongoing conflict in Somalia. An article published by the Canadian-based Center for Research on Globalization in 2001 stated: "According to documents obtained by The Times, nearly two-thirds of Somalia was allocated to the American oil giants Conoco, Amoco, Chevron and Phillips in the final years before Somalia's pro-U.S. President Mohamed Siad Barre was overthrown and the nation plunged into chaos in January 1991. Industry sources said the companies holding the rights to the most promising concessions are hoping that the Bush administration's decision to send U.S. troops to safeguard aid shipments to Somalia will also help protect their multimillion-dollar investments there."

Consequently, the principal motivation of U.S. imperialism and its allies is to secure the oil and other strategic mineral resources and waterways, in order to utilize the national wealth of Somalia to enrich the multinational corporations and their surrogates. By creating a humanitarian disaster, the U.S. administration can utilize this crisis to justify Western intervention.

Anti-war and anti-imperialist movements must focus on the necessity of the Somali people to determine their own future. The lessons of U.S. and U.N. intervention during the 1990s clearly indicate that such interference cannot benefit the Somali masses.

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