

War on Piracy May Escalate on Somali Main Land

U.S. Military Intervention May be Needed to Protect Trade Security

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- http://global-security.suite101.com/article.cfm/piracy_vs_trade_security

Piracy is a reoccurring theme that is affecting international trade security and Somalia has become a breeding ground for it due to two decades of destructive civil war.

With the recent media buzz on the piracy that is occurring in the Gulf of Aden and the Indian Ocean, American policy makers are once again considering the possibility of enhancing the United States military and diplomatic roles in the war torn region of Somalia, a country that is located in the Horn of Africa. However, in this instance it might not require a humanitarian mandate sponsored by the United Nations in order to get the United States involved. Their renewed interest in the stability of Somalia appears to be purely economical by protecting its trade routes from outside aggression. In this case it would mean protecting their trade routes from modern day pirates who are headquartered in the lawless sections of Somalia.

Somalia was one of the third world pawns that the super powers used during the Cold War and ever since it ended in the early 1990s, the country has seen more than it's fair share of civil war and political division amongst its parties, clans and religious groups. Their decimated infrastructures and lack of foreign investment has made it nearly impossible for Somalia's Transitional Federal Government to function as an effective centralized authority that is responsible for the well being of its citizens. As a result, their inability to provide basic needs also includes the lack of a fully functioning law enforcement entity.

Now, with the recent success by U.S. Navy seals to rescue cargo ship captain, Richard Phillips from a five-day standoff with Somali pirates, policy makers in Washington and in the international community are raising the issue of security in that region. On Wednesday, 15 April 2009, Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton said during a press conference that the Obama administration would try to seize pirate financial assets and property while working with shippers to improve their defenses.

However, NBC News reported that "The measures outlined by Clinton which include an exploratory effort to track and freeze pirate assets held outside traditional financial systems are largely stopgap moves while the administration officials weigh more comprehensive diplomatic and military action." They will be sending an envoy to a conference in Brussels on 23 April that will be focusing on Piracy where they can also meet with Somali government officials and regional leaders to discuss the issue.

Since the U.S. is taking a renewed interest in the Somali situation with a potential for enhancing security in the region, the Obama administration is going to have learn from

the mistakes made in 1993. During that time American troops who were used to defend a local warlord and a United Nations Humanitarian Mission in Mogadishu were withdrawn when public opinion disapproved of U.S. intervention after soldiers were getting killed and dragged on the streets.

However, with shipping trade routes constantly being threatened by hostile pirates and a world deep in global recession governments seem to be willing to dispatch their Navies in that region of the world. The big question is how effective diplomacy and military intervention would be if the international community sent an occupation force to hunt down the Pirates while strengthening the resolve of the fragile Somali government. Would that alone cause another civil war in Somalia or would it bring peace, stability and growth in the nation for the first time in more than two decades of fighting and destruction?