

## **Somalia: A strong central government is the only way out of pirates and Islamic extremist!**

Call it patriotism, evil solution or opportunist; the Somali pirates and Islamic extremists have managed to bring back the forgotten land of Somalia into media. Journalists around the world including their children seem to be obsessed and interested to know more about and interview the pirates and their hostages. A recent article by the BBC journalist Mary Harper caught my attention “Mummy Can I Phone the Pirates?”[http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/programmes/from\\_our\\_own\\_correspondent/7754622.stm](http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/programmes/from_our_own_correspondent/7754622.stm)

I wandered for moment and then searched the internet “Somali Pirates” surprisingly enough; the number of news and blogs regarding the Somali Pirates is substantial. Bothered by the obsession, I asked my self, why the international community is so concerned about the Red Sea passage and not to the existence of the Somali notation? Isn't the Somali coast and water part of the Somali territory any more? After all, Somalia has been without central government for the past seventeen years. The Western nations have allowed systematically the remaining independent Somali land to be conquered by Ethiopia. The first occupation of Somali lands was facilitated at the end of 18 century. Major H. G. C. Swayne, R. E. in his book of Seventeen Trips to Somaliland and A Visit to Abyssinia explained how the western colonizers at that time skewed the equilibrium of power by allowing Abyssinian to have large share of arms while banning the Somalis to have a single gun to defend themselves.

*“After the fall of Harar the important arms –question, on which I cannot lay too great a stress, was always present. Modern weapons had for some years being pouring into Abyssinia from sources other than British, while for Somalia, the people of our Hinterland, we had, by a wise general rule of African Policy, to say nothing of treaties, been unable to allow a single musket through our ports. But the Somalis do not go into the larger issues, and they said “you have taken our coast; either protect us against the Abyssinians or let us import arms with which we can protect ourselves” Major H. G. C. Swayne, R. E, seventeen Trips to Somaliland. Page: VI.*

Hunger, rape, mass killing by Ethiopian occupiers and beheading and stone to death by Islamic extremist is daily news from Somalia. I guess the pirate's news is more appealing than the usual hunger and tragedy that has become synonymous with Somalia.

I am not by any means implying that the western nations are entirely to blame for Somalia's failure. I personally think, Somali warlords and the Somalis who have been supporting clan based warfare are responsible for the despair of Somalia as well. However, Somali war lords who are well known to have blood in their hands are freely traveling around the world and are invited to Kenya, Ethiopia and other nations to dine

and discuss Somali issues. The majority of these warlords also get financial support from various embassies in Addis Ababa and Nairobi. The same countries including the United States have been pumping capital and machineguns into Somalia fueling the conflict to continue. The U.S. government has also ignored political experts and Somalis' plea not to allow the invasion of Somalia by its historical enemy, Ethiopia. Therefore, it is somehow obscured to me and difficult to grasp the whole commotion about the Somali Pirates. What was expected from a failed state?

What are more surprising in this episode are the measures discussed to bring an end to the Pirates activity. A recent blog indicated that the private security firm BlackWater will be hired to fight the Somali pirates, <http://blog.wired.com/defense/2008/10/blackwater-well.html>. The British is also leading the first anti-pirates EU's naval operation to Somalia, <http://www.guardian.co.uk/world/2008/dec/08/somalia-pirates-gulf-of-aden>. U.S. Secretary of State have also met with high level United Nations officials to muster internationally backed relatively small U.N mission to Somalia to help stem piracy and prevent the resurgence of Islamic extremist. (Washington Post, Dec, 14, Page: A26) Even after the unsuccessful attempt to dismantle the Al-Shabab resistance and create weak regional Somali governments, Ethiopian officials are running around using the pirates as new ammunition to sustain the fear monger strategy of terrorism card to continue their own ill ambition of destroying Somalia and the Somali people.

Ethiopia has around four million Somali inhabitants in the Somali Region (Ogaden). The Ogaden National Liberation Front and the Western Somali Liberation Movements are fighting Ethiopian troops in the Somali region. Hence Ethiopia's war cry in opposition to its own rebels and against the Somali people who are fighting the occupation should not be taken as war against terrorism. In fact, many experts have indicated that Ethiopians' presence in Somalia has actually increased the presence of Islamic extremists in Somalia. The extremists are stronger than ever and determined to regain the capital city and force out Ethiopian occupiers. Therefore, it is the time the international community should recognize that the Ethiopian geo-political interest in the horn of Africa is not always in accordance with the international community's interest. A good example is the mounting activity of Somali Pirates in the red sea and the rejuvenation of Islamic extremist in all parts of Somalia.

A weak Somali government that is pro-Ethiopia has proved its inability to ensure the security of its capital city let alone the vast Somali waters and land. The EU's naval command or any other mercenaries group that is hired to combat the pirates will not result in peaceful passage; it is just another recipe for more bloodshed and carnage. Therefore, having witnessed the unsuccessful proposed peace plans led by neighboring states of Somalia that has concluded but further mayhem; the last resort and the only solution is to support and promote a united Somali government that will bring an end to Somalia's chaos and secure its territory. A strong central Somali

government worked out by all Somalis is the only way out of pirates and extremist elements.

Abdirazaq Garane,

abdirazaqgarane@yahoo.co.uk