



Psy-Ops, Black-Ops & Terror-Ops; Can we diagnose the sickness in Somalia if the disease is blindness?

By Liban Farah
December 28, 2017

قُلْ هُوَ الْقَادِرُ عَلَىٰ أَنْ يَبْعَثَ عَلَيْكُمْ عَذَابًا مِّن فَوْقِكُمْ أَوْ مِن تَحْتِ أَرْجُلِكُمْ أَوْ يَلْبَسَكُمْ شِيعًا وَيُذِيقَ بَعْضَكُم بَأْسَ بَعْضٍ ۗ أَنْظُرْ كَيْفَ نُصَرِّفُ الْآيَاتِ لَعَلَّهُمْ يَفْقَهُونَ

In the American folktale, [Brer Rabbit and the Tar Baby](#), the architect of the plot is Brer Fox who's hiding in the bushes laying low and grinning 'an evil grin,' who's also at the same time intentionally obscured central character by his very omission from the title. After all, it's Brer Fox who 'decided to capture and kill Brer Rabbit,' who made the tar baby and chose the exact location for his clever trap; and of course, it's Brer Fox who collected the tar, mixed it with the turpentine and sculpted into a little baby figure. Brer Rabbit fails to reflect on any of that as his mind was too distracted by the self-inflicted escalating situation as the quandary unfolds at an ever increasing spiral of full-on mad struggle. The more Brer Rabbit tries to violently lash out with angry kicks at Tar Baby, the more entangled and blinded by his rage Brer Rabbit becomes – all the while as 'Brer Fox danced with glee behind the bushes' barely containing his laughter at the madness he successfully orchestrated.

I felt compelled to dedicate the opening lines of above paragraph to a folktale originally passed down from generations of slaves which is to date very strongly associated with American slavery, for multitude of reasons that are uniquely applicable to the situation in Somalia. It's up to others to deconstruct and find their own interpretations, but if we exploit the metaphor implied by the Tar Baby "problem" – a role sometimes played by tribal politics, other times by Arab states like the UAE, but most dutifully fulfilled by Al-Shabaab which is best described as an illegitimate demi creature birthed by whatever process that continues to sustain it – we can immediately see that we're as foolish as Brer Rabbit. This piece is merely a humble attempt to draw the public attention to certain fundamental happenings obfuscated from the general psyche as to be rendered frivolous sideshow.

Security

Feel free to imagine term is [‘insecurity’](#) every time you read the phrase “security” in connection with Somalia, but it’s strongly recommended to entertain the thought that these words are interchangeable. Simply because all the gains, benefits and profits are derived from the insecurity in Somalia, not security. In fact, there’s a negative correlation between increasing “security” expenditure in Somalia and deteriorating overall



insecurity in the country. Despite [spending annually an estimated \\$1.5 billion](#) on “peacekeeping, counterinsurgency and support to the Somali security sector” (ignoring associated costs for international maritime anti-piracy measures), Somalia is kept by its so-called international partners in suspended state of insecurity equilibrium. It’s a matter of fact that the \$30+ billion spent directly and indirectly on security & stabilisation as the stated objectives has been an utter failure from the point of view of Somalis. Yet somehow, somewhere, billions have exchanged hands which made many nations, organisations and individuals very rich. In order to best understand this by retrieving exact figures to forensically expose some of the main beneficiaries, it’s necessary to solely focus on the funds recipient nations, and to be of comparative value, we also need to isolate a single source; Chosen here is the US economic aid recipients for reasons that’ll become evident later.

Doing so reveals that [between the years 2007-2017](#) the United States alone gave Ethiopia \$7.9b (\$7,920,642,165); Kenya \$7.3b (\$7,322,233,305); and Uganda \$5b (\$5,020,678,907) as economic aid (excluding security assistance, military equipment and debt relief). This firmly places them in the top 10 recipients of US economic aid out of total 183 global recipient countries, and they happen to be AMISOM troops contributing countries. One might question the possibility that these states may’ve had received such economic aid anyway irrespective of having troops in Somalia. Well, no. Before Ethiopia troops invaded Somalia, average annual US economic aid was around \$259m (\$259,236,536) but this amount jumped to \$720m (\$720,058,379) annually after its invasion which corresponds to a 64% increase! In contrast, Somalia received just over \$1b (\$1,074,331,696) US economic aid over the same period of 2007-2017.

The situation is now as such, that US security aid in Somalia officially outstrips US economic aid (fig.1), nevertheless, 97% of the security aid in 2017 and 98% in 2016 was earmarked for “Peacekeeping Operations” (aka AMISOM). That equates to 93% share of US security spending in Somalia in the last 11 years.

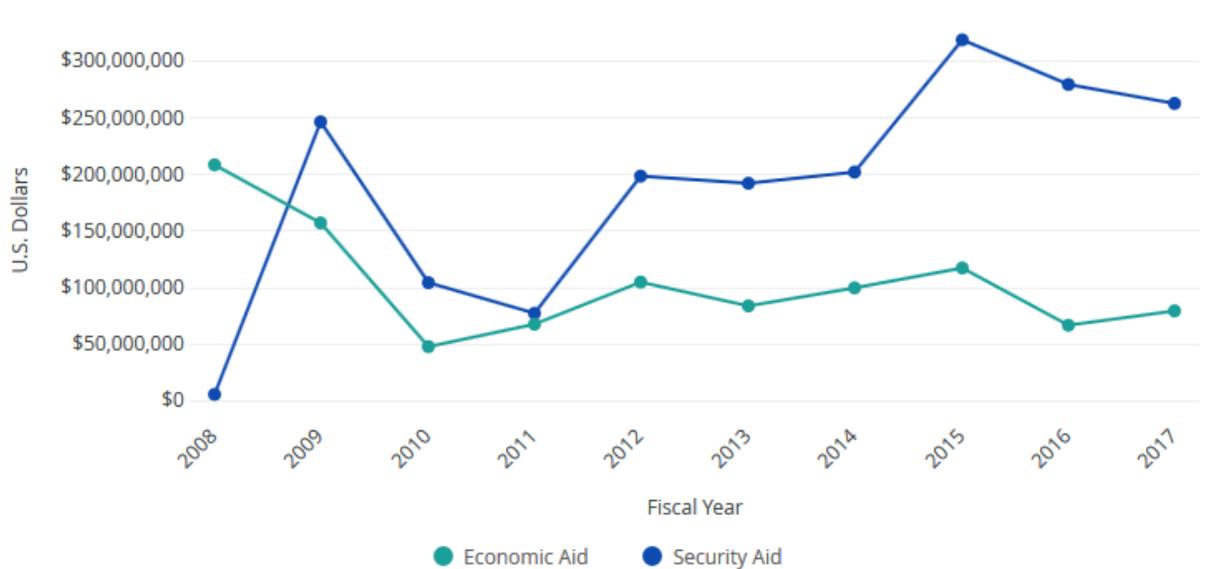


fig.1

Most reasonable Somalis accept the detrimental role of Ethiopia and Kenya are having on the security in Somalia. Credit goes to those Somali intellectuals who tirelessly addressed that subject over the years to educate the public. Unfortunately the role of other IGAD members with army presence in Somalia like Djibouti and Uganda are less scrutinised; and I hope sincerely our intellectuals will address this too. A brief glance at Uganda will suffice for now to serve as a general illustration. Lest we forget first, Uganda was incapable of defeating the Lord’s Resistance Army (LRA) for many decades despite receiving all the assistance from the US. That’s because the Uganda is happy to [continue with the cat and mouse game](#) infinitely.

In a blatantly suspicious circumstances, LRA rebels leader Joseph Kony’s [communications chief surrendered to the Ugandan forces](#) in March 2017 shortly after the U.S. announces it was pulling out, presumably in the hope of persuading the Americans and when it failed Uganda declared [mission accomplished](#) the following month. Uganda has singlehandedly, with so many fingerprints, plunged it’s region to the depths of civil wars and chaos, from [Rwanda](#) and [Congo](#), to [South Sudan](#) and [Central African Republic](#). These are the same people the President of Somalia Mohamed Abdullahi “Farmaajo” [lobbying the US](#) on behalf to pay for 5,000 mercenary grade Ugandan soldiers because apparently operating under AMISOM rules with its total immunity in Somalia is [hindering the elimination of militants](#). Get that? Me neither.

Inhumanitarian

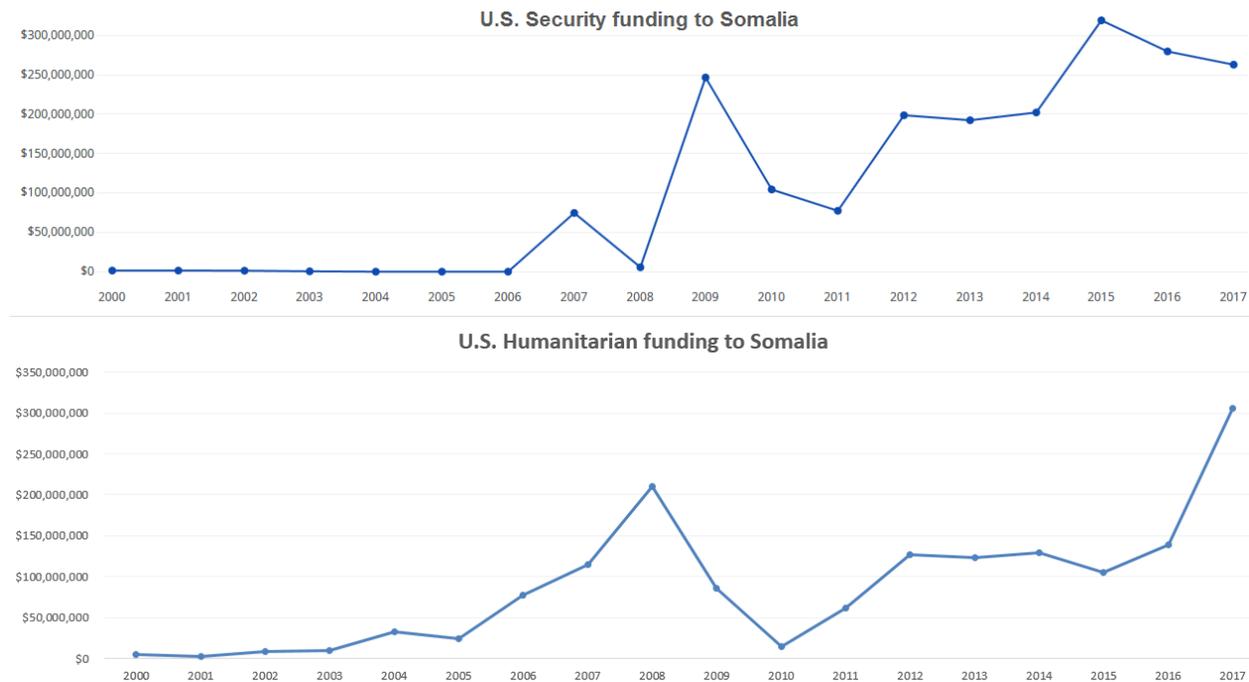


fig.2

‘Inhumanitarian’ may or may not be a word but it’s what came to mind when I compared the overlay graphs above (fig.2) in the way US humanitarian funding closely resembles its security funding to AMISOM (93%). Humanitarian “concerns” are merely a proxy for the security agenda. For this to be true, one would expect the humanitarian priorities to take a backseat with observable evidence as consequences on the ground. This, again, is an undeniable fact as increased US aerial bombardments is causing atrocities and mass displacement in Somalia’s bread basket region already on the verge of starvation. [Hear this heart-wrenching account](#) of 85-year old elderly who fled Lower Shabele after he lost his family, including 5 children and their mother, who’s now barely managing to survive in one of Mogadishu’s internally displaced camps.

It’s worth clarifying that it’s not solely US share of humanitarian assistance that’s somehow correlated with the increasing military presence. The scale in global context using data from the [Financial Tracking Service for humanitarian aid flows](#) shows a similar pattern, reminding us that it’s also partially driven by UN appeals – that appeals became more once Somalia became focus for security attention, we’re led to believe, is a fortunate happenstance. Thus overall picture remains the same for total humanitarian funding in relation to US security expenditure to Somalia (fig.3).

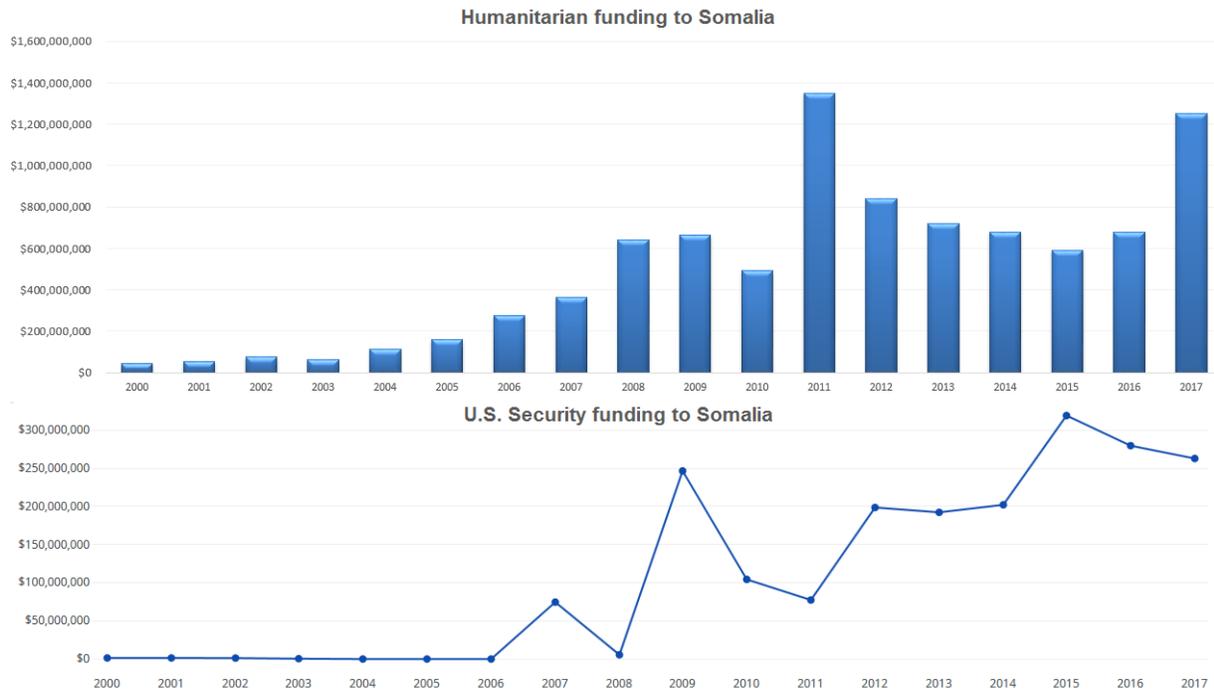


fig.3

Enemy

US exceptionalism in Somalia reflect a [cynical attitude that al-Shabaab is its enemy](#) which entitles them to do and behave as they please at the expense of everything else. Even the six African AMISOM troops contributing countries assert in their official justifications that “[Somalia posed a direct security risk](#)” even though facts prove otherwise. From the UK, EU and the UN, almost everyone seems to sing from the same hymn sheet when it comes to labelling Somalia’s domestic strives a global threat. Not enough is done by Somalis to question this very premise because it’s not just a language or an empty rhetoric, it’s contributing to the instability of the country and taking away ability for Somalis to control their destiny. It’s at the same time what’s enabling the US conduct drone strikes at will with minimum care and declare its victims "[enemy combatants](#)" with supreme impunity.

For purposes of logic consistency and for the sake of honesty in our rational discourse, we accept that the United States is the most dominant force in Somalia, both its influence on security agenda as well as its use of force since [practically resuming command](#) of operations that has manifested in more boots on the ground and increased frequency of aerial bombardments with loosened rules of engagement. More worrying will be the impact CIA director Mike Pompeo, who thinks he’s engaged in a [holy war with the Muslim world](#), might have on Trump’s ideological demagoguery; believing “a never-ending struggle” through a clash of civilizations to bring about the rapture.

So we have to ask in all earnest: Is this stabilising or destabilising?

Even though an [extensively researched report recently published by the UNDP](#) has convincingly showed that extremist groups in Africa like al-Shabaab are merely a symptom of underlying structural conditions, the driving forces behind the “security and stabilisation” agenda in Somalia are hell-bent on avoiding or dismissing any evidence-based strategies in favour of messianic dogmatism. Moreover, [US diplomats are denied playing any role](#) and US-Somalia relations have become fully militarised. While the US has been conducting various kinds of operations [across 33 African nations over the course of 2017](#), it is Somalia that is bearing the brunt of its destructive effects even if the pyromania of the “[one-man flamethrower](#)” commander-in-chief hasn’t yet engulfed Somalia in maximum capacity inferno.

For avoidance of doubt, it’s important to explicitly state that al-Shabaab is no-one’s enemy except Somalis. Putting it more precise, all Somali major religious scholars agree that the extremism of al-Shabaab is primarily danger to Islamic creed and principles, and consequentially such faulty belief systems is automatically dangerous to Muslims in general and Somalis in particular. The logical necessity by extension here is quite simple; to fight al-Shabaab is to defend Islam itself against al-Shabaab. And therein lies the contradictory irreconcilable situation in Somalia where self-confessed Islamophobes pushing for the clash of civilisations are [the influential policymakers in the US](#). It has to be Somalis, and Somalis alone, managing their affairs which means something has to give. There’s a name for people who can’t do that.

Unconstitutional

Let’s be upfront about this: United States is committing international crimes by bringing its drone warfare to Somalia. It’s a war of aggression contrary to established international law and state sovereignty. Somalia never attacked the US and therefore it has neither a case for self-defence nor congressional approval domestically, and it has no United Nations Security Council authorisation internationally. Yet, these crimes are aided and abetted by consecutive supposed leaders of Somalia in [openly endorsing](#), encouraging or even attempting to take credits in cringeworthy theatrics. The new defence minister declared “[we need more drone strikes](#)” less than two weeks ago. This begs the question of whether the president, or his office, can relinquish Somalia’s sovereignty. To help me answer this question, I’ve consulted Mohammed Mealin Seid, a Constitutional and Administrative Law Lawyer, and his emphatic answer as follows:

‘Paragraph 3 of the first article of Somali’s constitution enunciates that “the sovereignty and unity of the Federal Republic of Somalia is inviolable”. That sovereignty “extends over all the territory of the Federal Republic of Somalia ...” according to article 7(1) of the constitution. Sovereignty of state denotes its ultimate power, authority over the people and the territory and in the maintenance of order. Whenever another state, body or group interferes, no matter how small it is, any of these areas then sovereignty is violated. Accordingly, the USA drone attacks in Somalia and Ethiopia’s repeated invasions without the UN mandate clearly infringes the sovereignty.

Freakishly, many times, such infringements take place in agreement (explicitly or implicitly) or even in collaboration with the federal government officers, especially with the president.

‘Article 1(2) of the Somali constitution prohibits “for a person or a section of the public to claim the sovereignty of the Federal Republic of Somalia, or to use it for their personal interest”. Moreover, article 87(1)(c) of the constitution obliges the president to guard and promote the founding principles of the constitution of which sovereignty comes first. No exception is made to this, the implication being by failing to promote the sovereignty of Somalia, let alone to collaborate with those infringing it, the president commits gross violation of the constitution which is optimizable as an act of treason according to article 184 of the penal code of Somalia. It is also a valid trigger of an impeachment.’

This answer creates a lot of implications and even more other questions such as why the parliament has failed to fulfil its obligations. Personally, I would ask: What’s the point?

Shadow 4.5

Another reality enabling the treasonous state of affairs in Somalia is the fact almost no one is willing to confront the silent coup d’état in country’s executive and legislative levers of power. A good example is the shadow 4.5 for which its apparent counterpart is the clan-based 4.5 power sharing system serves as cover. Yes, the formula is applied to tribal representation in the cabinet superficially and that’s all. But the selection process and the interest they serve, in the tangible sense, belongs to different kind of 4.5 power sharing system. So we have a cabinet full of individuals who’re either alleged to be on the payroll of private military contractors, or to be known assets of US intelligence agencies, or men who previously acted as British intelligence informers and a good number of ex-UNSOM employees; never mind Ethiopian moles – just a matter of a coin toss as is the case with the deputy prime minister and Ethiopian ambassador in Mogadishu.

Therefore current 4.5 system isn’t in reality representative of Somali clans like Hawiye, Darood, etc. but the United Kingdom; UNSOM; United States; Ethiopia; or any other shadowy version of a mirrored power sharing ratio, which may or may not be intentional, but with the net effect all the same. Emergence of de facto shadow 4.5 dimensional politics can be easily gauged if one pays close attention to the functioning of various ministers and their departments. The proof is in the pudding when you see [UNSOM involved in unmandated activities simultaneously with ambassadors violating diplomatic mission protocols](#) and [ministers unnaturally attaching themselves to that same programme](#) undeterred by the fact of being outside the remit of their responsibilities to curry favours for shady associates.

Hope

The opening verse of this article, quoted from Al-An'am (6:65) may appear damning in first instance, but I chose it to signify hope. It was [narrated on the authority of Jabir](#) that the Prophet (ﷺ) said “أَعُوذُ بِوَجْهِكَ” after {قُلْ هُوَ الْقَادِرُ عَلَىٰ أَنْ يَبْعَثَ عَلَيْكُمْ عَذَابًا مِّنْ فَوْقِكُمْ} was revealed and repeated again “أَعُوذُ بِوَجْهِكَ” after the part {أَوْ مِنْ تَحْتِ أَرْجُلِكُمْ} but when {أَوْ يَلْبَسَكُمْ شِيْعًا وَيُدْخِقَ بَعْضَكُمْ بَأْسَ بَعْضٍ} was revealed, he said: “هَذَا أَيْسَرُ” meaning this is easier. And it will be definitely easier to overcome our infighting, extremism and tribalism in which I include quisling fifth columnists, but first we have to “take back control” again for another window of opportunity to reconcile among ourselves.

We can't have external players globalising our problems for their own ends at the expense of our future. I know that what's needed is nothing short of liberation movement. Basically starting all over again to herald anew postcolonial vision and mission for Somalia. Don't ask me how or what because I'm as clueless as everyone else.

Liban Farah

Email: Liban.farah@barkinka.com