

Pentagon Drone Attacks Escalate in Somalia While AMISOM Plans Withdrawal

by *Abayomi Azikiwe*, originally published on [Pan African News Wire](#), Jan 31, 2018

Trump administration creates conditions for further displacement and hunger

Somalia is facing yet another major crisis as the United States steps up its drone attack and combat operations in this Horn of Africa state.

Drone attacks are promoted by the Defense Department and the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) as an effective means of targeting so-called "terrorists" without threatening the lives of innocent people and American soldiers. This of course is not always the situation on the ground.

The impact of drones on civilian populations has proven to be devastating. In most cases those killed, injured and dislocated are not the targeted individuals or groups. Civilians including women, children and the elderly tend to be the primary victims.

Nonetheless, news reports related to the worsening security situation around Mogadishu asserts that the aerial drone strikes are taking a toll on Al-Shabaab, the Islamist organization which is said to be the major impediment to the stabilization of the country. Al-Shabaab grew out of the interference of Washington in the internal affairs of Somalia after elements within the Union of Islamic Courts were recruited into the transitional federal regime nine years ago.

An alliance of contiguous and regional states under the rubric

of the African Union Mission to Somalia (AMISOM) was deployed to Somalia eleven years ago. At its height, AMISOM had 22,000 troops in Somalia along with several thousand para-military police units all backed, trained, funded and coordinated by the U.S., the European Union (EU) and their allies.

AMISOM has repeatedly said that Al-Shabaab is no longer a serious security threat in the capital of Mogadishu. However, periodic attacks are still occurring attributed to Al-Shabaab. A twin bomb attack during late 2017 was the most deadly since the deployment of AMISOM resulting in over 500 deaths, although it remains unclear whether Al-Shabaab was behind the operation.

Emphasis in recent weeks has been placed on praising the purported effectiveness of the drone bombings particularly coming from the AU special envoy to the country. Yet other issues which are surfacing are not being addressed along with the prospects of a withdrawal of AMISOM forces from the theater of battle.

AU representative Francisco Madeira said of the present situation that: "These drone attacks, in particular, are wiping out the Al-Shabaab in large numbers. And it is a good thing to put an end to terrorism in this way."

Well the problems of "terrorism" in Somalia and throughout other geo-political regions such as Iraq, Syria, Afghanistan, Yemen and Niger, has not been resolved to the satisfaction of imperialism through drone strikes. The spreading of destruction and displacement does not represent any long term solution for the Pentagon and NATO-allied forces or the majority of the people who live in these areas.

Fostering this dangerous illusion, Madeira went on to say: "The establishment of a comprehensive and effective Somali national army could take longer than expected." In making such a statement it implies that the U.S. policy of escalating the

bombing is the only viable response to the current political and security impasse.

In fact the western media has frequently lost track of the historical trajectory of events in Somalia over the last twelve years. It was in 2006 that the Union of Islamic Courts which was developing some semblance of stability in Somalia came under attack by U.S. proxies leading to the military intervention of Ethiopia and the eventual concoction and deployment of AMISOM.

Such a false scenario was published by the French Press Agency (AFP) on January 27 when the agency said:

“Deployed in 2007 to support the very fragile central Somali government, the AMISOM is expected to leave the country by the end of 2020, after transferring all its security prerogatives to the Somali army. But Francisco Madeira did not rule out an extension of the mission’s mandate.”

The question is what “fragile central government” was in existence in 2007? There had not been the pretense of an effective state authority in Somalia since 1991 when the government of former military leader and President Mohamed Siad Barre collapsed amid internecine conflict sweeping the entire country.

Displacement Fostered by U.S.-backed Government in Mogadishu

Another report published by the Guardian newspaper based in London portrays a more realistic picture of the actual developments in Somalia. The drone attacks, the utilization of Special Forces from the Pentagon and the constant misrepresentation of events inside the country are causing great harm to the Somalian people.

According to the publication: “

Dozens of civilians have been killed and wounded in Somalia as U.S.-led airstrikes against Islamist militants increase to unprecedented levels, a Guardian investigation has found, raising fears that Washington's actions could bolster support for extremists. The escalation in strikes is part of the Trump administration's broader foreign policy strategy in Africa and the Middle East. There have been 34 U.S. airstrikes in Somalia in the last six months – at least twice the total for the whole of 2016. Regional allies active in the campaign against Islamic extremists in the east African country have conducted many missions too. These appear to be the most lethal for civilians.”(Jan. 23 article by Jason Burke)

The impact of the increased militarization by the administration of President Donald Trump is being compounded by the forced removals of Internally Displaced Persons (IDP) camps in the capital. Some 34,000 people have been cleared out of an IDP settlement in Mogadishu after the shelter was ordered torn down by the Washington-backed Somalia National Army (SNA).

Over a three week period from late December 2017 through mid-January 2018, some 3,000 shelters were destroyed. Such actions take on an added dimension of exacerbating the already dire humanitarian situation in Somalia. The U.S.-backed war has crippled the capacity of the people to address the horrendous food deficits caused in part by drought. The near-famine conditions will not be adequately resolved without the realization of peace. Enhanced militarization portends much for the future of the Somalian people who have endured four decades of war and occupation dating back to the late 1970s.

The Guardian notes in their report:

“The sudden increase in the use of air power in Somalia by the U.S. comes after the relaxation of guidelines intended to

prevent civilian casualties and a decision by the Trump administration to give local military commanders greater authority in ordering attacks... A Kenyan military spokesperson referred the Guardian to AMISOM when asked about Kenya's operations in Somalia. Francisco Madeira, the head of AMISOM, said the force had 'not been responsible for any airstrikes' in ... Somalia in 2017. A U.S. military spokesperson said its forces complied 'with the law of armed conflict' and took 'all feasible precautions ... to minimize civilian casualties and other collateral damage'."

Another Large-scale Occupation May Be an Option

Perhaps the Trump administration is setting the stage for another failed large-scale military occupation which proved disastrous during 1992-1994. If the AMISOM project is being exhausted, the only other option is a U.S.-led intervention of greater magnitude.

There has been the reported death of a U.S. combatant last year in a mission which the administration says is strictly advisory. With Somalia being an oil-rich nation located in the strategic area close to vast energy resources throughout the East African coast and West Asia, the imperialists are not prepared to withdraw under a situation absent of a complete military defeat.

At any rate, the quagmire in Somalia cannot be settled without a regional political solution to the war between Al-Shabaab and the western-backed federal government in Mogadishu. The AU should focus its attention on a lasting solution rather than relying on the Trump administration which is only continuing the imperialist military options initiated by President George W. Bush, Jr. in 2006-2007 and its escalation under Barack Obama during his two terms from 2009-2016.

Abayomi Azikiwe is Editor of [Pan African News Wire](#).

We are Killing Terrorists and Attack We Will

*Those who slaughter innocent people will find no glory in this life or the next. They are nothing but thugs and criminals and predators, and that's right losers.
~President Donald Trump*

We are Killing Terrorists and Attack We Will, Trump's Most Vicious Racist Rants

by Brian Terrell, Originally Published in "[The Sower](#)", Dec. 17, 2017

On Monday, August 21, President Donald Trump delivered a prime-time speech almost shocking in its ordinariness. It was such an address as either of his immediate predecessors, George W. Bush or Barack Obama, could easily have given over the previous decade and a half. While hinting at nebulous new strategies and ill-defined new metrics to measure success, President Trump announced that the sixteen year old war in Afghanistan will go on pretty much as it has. And the establishment breathed a sigh of relief.

Reviews were glowing. While acknowledging how low the bar had been set, on August 25, the Washington journal, The Hill, opined that even the most hardened members of the anti-Trump camp must admit that Monday's speech communicated a remarkable amount of humility and self-awareness, particularly for this president. The timing of the president's crowd pleasing speech

was duly noted: Unfortunately, his very presidential announcement of the Afghanistan decision was bookended by Charlottesville and the president's rally in Phoenix on Tuesday night.

Ten days before, in Charlottesville, Virginia, torch bearing white supremacists had marched in a "Unite the Right" rally to protest the planned removal of a statue of the Confederate General Robert E. Lee. Replete with flags of both the Confederacy and the Nazi Third Reich and traditional fascist chants of blood and soil, the rally met with resistance from anti-racist activists, one of whom was murdered and others injured when one of the united right used his car as a weapon of terror, driving it into the crowd. There was outrage when Trump responded by condemning the violence on all sides and declaring that there are very fine people on both sides of the issue.



Afghan Peace Volunteers work for peace at their Border Free School in Kabul

In the next days, thousands marched in cities nationwide and the denunciations of racism and white supremacy resounded from many surprising quarters. Trump's tolerance of the use and celebration of overt symbols and slogans associated with hatred, slavery, anti-Semitism and genocide offended all but his most fanatical base. Members of his own party, many who had stood by Trump through other scandals, took steps to distance themselves from his statements, if not from Trump himself.

Five of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, representing the Navy, Marines, Army, Air Force and National Guard, came extraordinarily close to rebuking their commander in chief. While they did not address Trump by name, they posted messages on social media condemning neo-Nazis and hatred, citing the events at Charlottesville.

"@USNavy for ever stands against intolerance and hatred."

"No place for racial hatred or extremism in @USMC."

"The Army does not tolerate racism, extremism or hatred in its ranks."

"We're always stronger together-it's who we are as #Airmen."

"I stand with my fellow Joint Chiefs in condemning racism, extremism & hatred. Our diversity is our strength #NationalGuard."

In his prime time address on the war, Trump called for the national unity that he had seemed in the days before and after to disdain- *"Loyalty to our nation demands loyalty to one another."* Saying that *"the young men and women we send to fight our wars abroad deserve to return to a country that is*

not at war with itself at home," Trump seemed even to shame his detractors for letting down those he calls the "special class of heroes whose selflessness, courage, and resolve is unmatched in human history." *"Let us make a simple promise to the men and women we ask to fight in our name: that when they return home from battle, they will find a country that has renewed the sacred bonds of love and loyalty that unite us together as one."*

The healing balm that should bring Americans together, Trump said to general applause, will be a continuing commitment to a seventeen year old war. When that war began in October of 2001, Vice-President Richard Cheney suggested that the US would eventually take it to forty to fifty other nations, an expanding war that he predicted "may never end" but would "become a permanent part of the way we live." Like Cheney before him, Trump urges Americans to set aside the issues that divide us and unite behind an endless war of aggression against a people who never met us any harm.

It should be self evident that the war against Afghanistan and the broader war on terror, like every war that the US has engaged in since the end of World War II, is as much a war about race and white supremacy as was the Civil War. The fact that the war on terror was presided over for eight years by our first African American president (who in his last year in office dropped 26,171 bombs exclusively over populations of people of color) does not alter the fact that it is a racist war. If the war on terror does not divide our nation's people as severely as did our war against the people of Southeast Asia fifty years ago, it is only because fewer Americans are paying attention to it.

In 1967, Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. noted *"Now, it should be incandescently clear that no one who has any concern for the integrity and life of America today can ignore the present war."* He said that for those working against racism in the US, silence on the war against Vietnam was nothing less than

betrayal. Many questioned whether peace and civil rights mix and if by trying, King was hurting the cause of his people. "Indeed," he said of these critics, "*their questions suggest that they do not know the world in which they live.*" About that same time, Eldridge Cleaver said "*The black man's (sic) interest lies in seeing a free and independent Vietnam, a strong Vietnam which is not the puppet of international white supremacy. If the nations of Asia, Latin America and Africa are strong and free, the black man in America will be safe and secure and free to live in dignity and self respect.*"

Last year, the Movement for Black Lives excited great controversy publishing its platform that draws these connections in the present context:

"...we know that patriarchy, exploitative capitalism, militarism, and white supremacy know no borders. We stand in solidarity with our international family against the ravages of global capitalism and anti-Black racism, human-made climate change, war, and exploitation. We also stand with descendants of African people all over the world in an ongoing call and struggle for reparations for the historic and continuing harms of colonialism and slavery. We also recognize and honor the rights and struggle of our Indigenous family for land and self-determination."

The violence that we see in American streets is a direct and inevitable result of the violence of our country's wars. Since the war on terror began, police departments from large cities to rural counties have been plied by the Defense Department with an array of offensive weaponry from tanks to assault rifles, accompanied with training in counterinsurgency. Police department hiring preferences favor veterans who often bring with them skills honed in night raids of Iraqi and Afghanistan and the Afghan homes. Full scale Special Weapons and Assault Tactics (SWAT) teams then terrorize American families, disproportionately in communities of color and most often to

serve simple warrants and summonses for nonviolent offenses.

The Obama administration's determinations that any male 14 years or older found dead in a drone strike zone is a "combatant" unless explicit intelligence posthumously proves him innocent and that "the condition that an operational leader present an 'imminent' threat of violent attack against the United States does not require the United States to have clear evidence that *"a specific attack on US persons and interests will will take place in the immediate future"*, have poisoned the culture of policing at home. The consequence of these policies is the summary killings of innocent young men because of who they are and where they live, in American cities as well as in places far away. The racial profiling that results in the killings of unarmed black citizens by American police is the domestic expression of surveillance by drones of the *"patterns of behavior"* that trigger the *"signature strike"* executions of countless people of color in our wars abroad.

"A nation which continues year after year to spend more money on military defense than on programs of social uplift is approaching spiritual death," Dr. King noted in 1967. There is no serious discussion of racism in the United States today, or of providing health care and education and basic human services that does not address the ever expanding cost of the present war.

Some of the outrage over Trump's responses to the events in Charlottesville and for his shameless affinity for hate and misogyny in general from his campaign until today may well actually be for his violation of a tacit *"gentlemen's"* agreement not to say such things aloud. None the less, it is a sign of social progress that language and symbols celebrating hate raise so much public indignation. The discredited institutions of slavery and Nazism need to stay discredited and those who forget that are rightly and necessarily called out. There are, however, manifestations of

hatred and racism that continue to be tolerated and celebrated even in the most polite, progressive and politically correct venues and these need to be called out as well.

As grating and offensive as Trump's off-script train wreck persona is, it is when he is most *"very presidential,"* when he acts and speaks from the same teleprompter as those who preceded him, that he is at his most malicious and hateful. When he declares as he did on August 21 that *"we are killing terrorists"* and threatens *"attack we will"* and when he praises the civilian catastrophe that he called the *"liberation of Mosul in Iraq"* as a model for the future of the war in Afghanistan, Trump is on a racist rant. His speech on August 21 calling for more war is hate speech, pure and simple.

The generals of the Joint Chiefs of Staff who bravely spoke out against neo-Nazis, where are they now? Some of them apparently huddled with Trump to devise his hateful and racist assault on the Afghan people and all of them, along with Defense Secretary General Mattis (whose advice to the troops is *"You just hold the line until our country gets back to understanding and respecting each other and showing it."*) and White House Chief of Staff General Kelly are busily working to implement it. If generals Lee and Jackson of the 19th century who served under Confederate President Jefferson Davis in the cause of slavery and white supremacy deserve the censure of history and the scorn of every person of good will, so much more these generals who serve the hateful and vile agenda of Trump and his predecessors. To give Trump his due, one truth that he told in his celebrated speech is that those *"who slaughter innocent people will find no glory in this life or the next. They are nothing but thugs and criminals and predators, and that's right -losers."*

Those thousands of good people who took to the streets to denounce the celebration of racism and hate in its archaic and discredited forms need to seek the courage get back out and demand an end to racism and hate in its present, most virulent

form. Together we need to demand a US withdrawal from Afghanistan and reparations for all the nations that have suffered US aggression in the so-called war on terror.

War Crimes Indictment for Good Friday

WAR CRIMES INDICTMENT

[WAR_CRIMES_INDICTMENT_Good_Friday_2017.pdf](#)

Indictment read by Matt Ryan, recorded by Judy Bello:

http://upstatedroneaction.org/wp/wp-content/uploads/Audio/Good_Friday_Indictment-Matt_Ryan.mp3

To President Donald Trump, to Secretary of Defense Secretary James Mattis, to the full Military Chain of the Command, including Command Chief Michael Will, to all Service Members and civilian staff of Hancock Air Base, and to the local police and Sheriffs Department of the Town of Dewitt, NY:

Each one of you, when you became a public servant, serving in a government position or when you joined the United States Armed Forces or police, you publicly promised to uphold the United States Constitution. We take this opportunity to call your attention to Article VI of the US Constitution, which states:

“This Constitution, and the Laws of the United States which shall be made in Pursuance thereof; and all Treaties made, or which shall be made, under the Authority of the United States, shall be the supreme Law of the Land; and the Judges in every State shall be bound thereby, anything in the

Constitution or Laws of any State to the Contrary not with standing.

This clause is known as the Supremacy Clause because it provides that the Constitution and laws of the U.S., including treaties made under authority of the U.S. shall be supreme law of the land.

The Supremacy Clause provides part of the Supreme Law of the Land.

One Treaty duly ratified by the U.S. is the United Nations Charter. It was ratified by a vote of 89 to 2 in the U.S. Senate, and signed by the President in 1945. It remains in effect today. As such, it is part of supreme law of the land.

The Preamble of the U.N. Charter states that its purpose is to "save future generation from the scourge of war" and it further states, "all nations shall refrain from the use of force against another nation."

This Treaty applies both collectively and individually to all three branches of government, on all levels, U.S. federal, state and local governments, starting with the executive branch: the U.S. President and the executive staff; the judicial branch: all judges and staff members of the judiciary; the legislative branch: all members of the U.S. Armed Forces and all departments of Law Enforcement and all civilian staff, who have sworn to uphold the Constitution, which includes Article VI.

Under the U.N. Charter and long established international laws, anyone—civilian, military, government officials, or judge—who knowingly participates in or supports illegal use of force against another nation or its people is committing a war crime.

Today you must recognize that when you promised to uphold the

Constitution, you promised to obey Treaties and International Law – as part of the Supreme Law of the Land and furthermore, under the Uniform Code of Military Justice of the U.S., you are required to disobey any clearly unlawful order from a superior.

Based on all the above,

WE, THE PEOPLE, CHARGE THE UNITED STATES PRESIDENT, DONALD TRUMP AND THE FULL MILITARY CHAIN OF COMMAND

TO COMMAND CHIEF MICHAEL WILL, EVERY DRONE CREW, AND SERVICE MEMBERS AT HANCOCK AIR BASE, WITH CRIMES AGAINST PEACE & CRIMES AGAINST HUMANITY, WITH VIOLATIONS OF PART OF THE SUPREME LAW OF THE LAND, EXTRAJUDICIAL KILLINGS, VIOLATION OF DUE PROCESS, WARS OF AGGRESSION, VIOLATION OF NATIONAL SOVEREIGNTY, AND KILLING OF INNOCENT CIVILIANS.

We charge that the Air National Guard of the United States of America, headquartered at Hancock Field Air National Guard Base, home of the 174th Fighter Wing of the Air National Guard, under the command of the 174th Fighter Wing Commander, Command Chief Michael Will, is maintaining and deploying the MQ-9 Reaper robotic aircraft, called drones.

These drones are being used not only in combat situations for the purpose of assassinations but also for killings far removed from combat zones without military defense, to assassinate individuals and groups far removed from military action.

Extra judicial killings, such as those the U.S. carries out by drones are intentional, premeditated, and deliberate use of lethal force to commit murder in violation of U.S. and International Law.

It is a matter of public record that the US has used drones in Afghanistan and in Iraq for targeted killings to target

specific individuals which has nearly always resulted in the deaths of many others.

There is no legal basis for defining the scope of area where drones can or cannot be used; no legal criteria for deciding which people can be targeted for killing, no procedural safeguards to ensure the legality of the decision to kill and the accuracy of the assassinations.

In support of this indictment, we cite the United Nations Special Rapporteur on extrajudicial, summary or arbitrary executions, who has said that the use of drones creates “a highly problematic blurring and the law applicable to the use of inter-state force... The result has been the displacement of clear legal standards with a vaguely defined license to kill, and the creation of a major accountability vacuum... In terms of the legal framework, many of these practices violate straightforward applicable legal rules.”

See [United Nations General Assembly Human Rights Council Study on Targeted Killings](#), 28, May 2010.

The drone attacks either originating at Hancock or supported here are a deliberate illegal use of force against another nation, and as such are a felonious violation of Article VI of the US Constitution. By giving material support to the drone program, you as individuals are violating the Constitution, dishonoring your oath, and committing war crimes. We demand that you stop participating in any part of the operations of MQ-9 drones immediately, being accountable to the people of United States and Afghanistan.

As citizens of this nation, which maintains over 700 military bases around the globe, and the largest, most deadly military arsenal in the world we believe these words of Martin Luther King still hold true, “the greatest purveyor of violence in the world today is my own government”.

There is hope for a better world when WE, THE PEOPLE, hold our

government accountable to the laws and treaties that govern the use of lethal force and war. To the extent that we ignore our laws and constitution and allow for the unchecked use of lethal force by our government, allowing the government to kill who ever it wants, where ever it wants, how ever it wants with no accountability, we make the world less safe for children everywhere.

We appeal to all United States citizens, military and civilian, and to all public officials, to do as required by the Nuremburg Principles I-VII, and by Conscience, to refuse to participate in these crimes, to denounce them, and to resist them nonviolently.

Signed by: THE UPSTATE COALITION TO GROUND THE DRONES AND END THE WARS