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## US troops have secretly been deployed to Somalia since 2007

By Thomas Gaist

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Some 120 American soldiers are on the ground inside Somalia, a deployment that has been ongoing since 2007 but was never publicly announced, US officials admitted this week in statements to Reuters news agency.

The Pentagon had publicized a small deployment of advisers to Somalia in October of 2013, but the presence of the larger force—there since 2007—was still being kept secret. In January 2014, US Africa Command (AFRICOM) admitted the presence of US troops in the country but claimed the number was lower than five. BBC international correspondent Mark Doyle wrote in an article this week that he personally saw heavily armed and “clearly operational” US troops during a recent visit to Somalia.

Reuters made the US presence public, not as the result of investigative journalism or a leak from someone critical of the secret, illegal US military deployment, but in the wake of a speech by a US government official, Wendy Sherman, under secretary of state for political affairs. She publicly declared that a “small contingent of US military personnel” including special operations forces had been present in parts of Somalia for several years. The news agency then contacted other US officials to get the actual number of troops involved.

The episode sheds light on the role of the American media. None of the television networks have reported the direct involvement of US forces in Somalia. Newspapers like the *New York Times* and the *Washington Post* have repeatedly sent correspondents to Somalia over the past seven years without ever reporting the presence of a significant force of US military personnel. The *Post* actually published an extensive profile of US military operations in Africa, largely involving Special Forces, that made no mention of the Somalia force.

The deployment of a significant number of “trainers” and “advisers,” that is, of Special Forces soldiers, for years on end and without any form of public disclosure, raises ominous questions. What other secret deployments has Washington ordered during the past decade? How many new secret wars will the president and his top appointees decide to launch during the next year?

Bourgeois democracy in the US is being supplanted by an emerging totalitarianism based on unlimited executive power. Deployments are made in secret and revealed to the public years after the fact. The executive branch claims for itself and exercises the right to deploy military and intelligence forces anywhere on the planet, admitting no check on this authority.

Statements make clear that Washington is preparing to deepen its military engagement in Somalia, using the pretext of combating the “terrorist” group al Shabaab, a militia that developed out of the youth wing of the Islamic Courts Union (ICU) and commands an estimated 4,000-7,000 fighters. In October, US Special Forces mounted a raid against the al Shabaab stronghold city of Barawe.

Speaking to Reuters, the US officials said the American military is preparing for increased engagement with the Somali National Army (SNA), which has already benefited from at least \$170 million in US military aid. “What you’ll see with this upcoming fiscal year is the beginning of engagement with the SNA proper,” according to an unnamed US defense official. US forces are already involved in training and equipping armies from Uganda and Burundi affiliated with AMISOM, the African Union’s military mission in Somalia.

US imperialism is determined to politically dominate Somalia, a strategically crucial country in the Horn of Africa, as part of its drive to return the entire continent to a state of naked colonial submission before the Western powers. Somalia sits adjacent to some of the most critical sea-lanes on the planet, with huge quantities of oil sailing past everyday.

The US has established a new Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) base in the capital, Mogadishu, according to reports. The US has also announced it will appoint an ambassador to Somalia for the first time since 1993, though for security reasons he will not reside inside Somali borders.

Forces from the European Union (EU) are also currently present in Somalia and involved in training local armies.

While the imperialist powers blame al Shabaab for the catastrophic situation in Somalia, the US and its regional allies have reduced the country to rubble over a protracted period of interventions. Al Shabaab’s parent organization, the ICU, came to power amidst the social chaos

that developed after the 1991 US withdrawal of its support for the Siad Barre regime, which it had backed since the 1970s.

In 1993, the US deployed 30,000 troops to Somalia on the pretext of delivering food assistance, killing hundreds of Somalis before withdrawing after the disastrous Battle of Mogadishu. Then, in 2006, the US backed an Ethiopian-led invasion of the country, producing a war between the Transitional Federal Government (TFG) and the ICU that killed at least 16,700 civilians and displaced 1.9 million more.