

# U.S. strike on Somalia latest in terror era

By Nicole C. Lee

Special to Sentinel-Voice

On a quiet Monday morning, when all the U.S. was focused on the run up to the primaries in Texas, Ohio, Rhode Island and Vermont, the Bush Administration, as part of the Global War on Terror, carried out air strikes in a small town in Southern Somalia.

Despite the fact that, as one U.S. military official maintains, the U.S. military "used precision missiles to strike a known terrorist target" on a possible fugitive from the al Qaeda terrorist network, reports from the local community leaders bear witness that three women and three children were killed, as well as 20 civilians injured.

This bombing of innocent civilians in Dhoolbeey, Somalia, is the latest in a disastrous two year campaign of U.S. intervention in Somalia which has further destabilized that country, the region, and resulted in the death and displacement of large numbers of the Somali population.

Somalia has been mired in civil war since 1988. In 1991, U.S. backed dictator Mohamed Siad Barre was overthrown by a coalition of opposing clans that united to form the United Somalia Congress. Shortly after the ousting of Barre, the United Somalia Congress fell apart and Somalia was plunged

into a civil war that has resulted the death of 400,000 people and displaced another 1.5 million.

U.S. formal engagement began in 1992, under the administration of George H. W. Bush, with the airlifting of 48,000 tons of food and medical supplies to remote areas in Somalia over a six month period.

By 1993, the Clinton Administration had shifted U.S. policy from delivering food supplies to nation-building. This nation-building policy was a failure that ended disastrously in the first Battle of Mogadishu where 19 U.S. soldiers were killed and another 79 were injured.

For the next 14 years, the U.S. government's engagement with Somalia shifted to quiet diplomacy and covert intelligence gathering until the beginning of George W. Bush's Global War on Terror (GWOT).

As part of the GWOT, the U.S. government quietly poured weapons and military advisors into Ethiopia in the hopes that Ethiopia would become involved in Somalia's civil war and help to overturn the fundamentalist Islamic government, the Islamic Courts



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Union. The Bush administration maintained that the Islamic Courts Union was supported by al-Qaeda.

In July 2006, a few thousand heavily armed and U.S. trained Ethiopian troops invaded Somalia and opened a new front in the Bush administration's war on terrorism. This intervention by Ethiopia is considered by many to be illegal and immoral, as well as highly controversial in Ethiopia where the Meles government has become increasingly repressive. And while the Ethiopia government had reasons of its own for intervening in Somalia's civil war, there can be no doubt that Ethiopia's actions were largely done on behalf of the U.S.

The U.S. government has never publicly taken responsibility for their role in further destabilizing Somalia and the Horn of Africa region, which also includes Eritrea and Djibouti.

The Bush Administration has admitted that the U.S. and Ethiopian militaries have "a close working relationship," which includes intelligence sharing, arms aid and training that gives the Ethiopians "the capac-

ity to defend their borders and intercept terrorists and weapons of mass destruction."

By January 2007, within six months of Ethiopia's invasion of Somalia, the United States began to conduct air strikes in southern Somalia against suspected al Qaeda targets and members of the as part of the U.S. Global War on Terror. Those January 2007 air strikes, similar to the bombing that Monday, were confirmed by U.S. officials as a failure. Now, almost one year later, the Bush administration is reengaging in this failed tactic.

Last week's attack is proof that the global war on terror and the increased U.S. military presence on the African continent has created a theatre of war that moves beyond traditional battlefields, and into the living rooms of the innocent.

For the 80,000 Somalis and Somali-Americans living in Minneapolis, Columbus, Ohio, Washington, DC, Seattle, and Atlanta, the question remains: Why is their government and the U.S. government continuing to act in ways that terrorize their families in Somalia under the guise of fighting terror? That is a question that we, as American citizens, have to also ask.

Nicole C. Lee is the Executive Director of TransAfrica Forum.

## Wake up: Be about the business of money

By James Clingman

Special to Sentinel-Voice

"Let me issue and control a nation's money and I care not who writes the laws."  
— Mayer Amschel Rothchild

A long time ago, this country's and, indeed, the world's finances were commanded by a few power-hungry, greedy, treacherous families, the results of which have left us in a quagmire of corruption, underhanded dealings by politicians, and total rip-offs by corporate crooks.

Our meager and futile attempts at changing the way business is done in this country, mainly by petitioning and begging folks to "be fair" and to "treat us right" have fallen on deaf ears and gone unheeded for centuries. What can we do?

I read an enlightening email by Kenneth Price that discussed the current political situation and how Black people are so emotionally invested in the upcoming presidential election.

One point centered on the fact that other groups in this country are not wringing their hands about who will be president; they are not losing sleep over the next election and, in many cases, they couldn't care less who

wins. Of course, those groups to which the piece referred were busy taking care of their businesses and aggregating their resources among themselves. I know, I know; they have not been through what we have been through.

Another article titled "The New Black Agenda," written by Dr. Earl Trent, Pastor of the Florida Avenue Baptist Church in Washington, DC, stated, "We need to focus on becoming a respected competitor in the global marketplace."

Dr. Trent laid out a comprehensive strategy for Black folks to move from protest to parity. He ended his article by saying, "The new Black agenda is focused on creating a Black economy that competes like any other group in the global economic game. Currently we are marginalized, overlooked and disrespected."

We have a different history than other groups and must push for interventions that will change the status quo and level the playing field. It will not happen simply by good will. It will not happen without intention,



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without sweat or demands of quid pro quo. The new Black agenda is about winning something tangible, worthwhile and passing it on."

With all of the issues facing Black people in this country, politically, socially and economically, you would think we would not only have seen these points quite clearly but we would have acted upon them

long before now.

Politically, we are still on the outside looking in, at this point hoping to elect a Black president. Trent says, "Not even the election of a true Black president will solve the economic problems of Black America unless we have an agenda where the state of the Black economy is at the center of that agenda."

Economically, we are at the bottom of every good category and at the top of every bad category. We have a whole lot of income but very little wealth. We have a whole lot of "stuff" but very little substance. Our dollars, like our votes, are literally taken for granted by those who receive them.

Socially, we are ostracized, caricatured, criticized and demeaned. Just the other night, I heard one of this country's so-called conservative talk show hosts call Maya Angelou a "whore" and Michelle Obama a "hypocrite." And, if you think Obama has taken some body blows, believe me, you ain't seen nothin' yet.

All of this, despite our being in this country for 400 years and contributing more than any other group to this nation's foundational wealth by working without pay for 250 years or so.

It's quite obvious to me that those in charge are not coming to save us; after all, we have been here for four centuries and they have not come yet. What should we do now?

The first thing we must do is acknowledge

our situation. Understand what runs this country and deal from that perspective. Rothchild was right, and he proved it by accumulating billions of dollars for his family and future generations. Many others have done the same, and they don't care who is in office. They give money to both parties and cover their bets in politics because they definitely know what time it is.

"Our charge, as Black people in America, is to move from a social agenda to an economic agenda," as Dr. Earl Trent has so eloquently and straightforwardly suggested. Black folks are the only group in this country trying to assimilate, trying to be accepted, and trying to be approved and validated by White people. In the process of our inappropriate behavior, we are losing and falling even further behind in the collective economic game.

As Trent says, "It's like drinking water from a cup with holes in its sides... we may get a small drink, but we have nothing left in the cup to pass on to our loved ones."

We must wake up and then get up and be about the business of economic empowerment, regardless of who wins any election. We must not allow the hoopla of "making history" to divert our attention from the real action, and that action is building, owning, and controlling our own income producing assets.

As I began with a quote from Rothchild, I end with one from Dr. Trent. "An economic agenda is the central agenda of all politics, for it determines who gets a slice of the pie, who gets the crumbs and who gets nothing. The new agenda for Black America must consciously replace the social agenda with an economic agenda whose central focus is how we can improve the state of the Black economy."

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## Alford

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ously big — in profits and damage. Today, half of all imprisoned people (nearly 1.5 million people — mostly Black) are there for involvement in nonviolent drug activity. The Geopolitic brings it in through military and intelligence agencies and then punishes those who were targeted for its use and damage.

This judicial system that slants punishment towards Blacks; sets up slave labor through prison industries; cripples the economy of these targeted communities; lessens their liberties through criminal records and job opportunity reduction is one big con-

trol mechanism using politics, drugs and race as its modus operandi.

How do we fight it? It can be simple if we can leverage what political clout we have. Legalize drugs!! That would take the profit and vast revenue out of it. That would also bring transparency into the game. The Netherlands have legalized drugs and, to the surprise of all, this nation has a drug addiction rate that is 60 percent less than that of the U.S. and no one is in prison. Let's legalize drugs and upset this wicked game.

Alford is the co-founder, President/CEO of the National Black Chamber of Commerce.