

US Policy Shifts towards Somaliland

by Scott A Morgan

In what appears to be an effort to reward stability in a highly unstable part of the World, The US is going to increase the amount of aid it sends to the "Breakaway Region" of Somaliland. On the surface that can be seen as the US growing increasingly frustrated with the Pace of "Nation Building" within Somalia.

In Recent Weeks there have been several Incidents of Piracy on the High Seas. In at least one instance there has been Western Intervention to Free some of those that were taken hostage. Several Nations will be deploying Warships to this volatile region in the near future to address this rapidly unfolding and deteriorating situation. The Situation on the Ground isn't much better either with Islamist Militias targeting Peacekeepers.

Earlier this year US Undersecretary of State for African Affairs Jendayi Frazier paid a visit to Hargeysa. Security Issues were forefront Naturally in her visit. The Combined Joint Task Force-Horn of Africa (CJTF-HOA) already has some contacts with Somaliland Authorities as well as several US Funded Aid Agencies. Somaliland has been registering Political Parties for its Presidential Elections in 2009.

The Visit by Jessica Davis Ba who is the US Diplomat Responsible for Somali Political and Economic Interests in the US Embassy in Nairobi and a representative from the USAID (United States Agency for International Development) was a follow-up to the trip of Undersecretary Frazier. The US Feels that Somaliland has made great Economic and Political gains since it declared its unilateral Independence back in 1991.

There are concerns in Washington that the rise in both Global Food and Petroleum Prices could be a hinderance to the Emergence of an Independent Somaliland. Several Countries have sent Delegations to Hargeysa in recent weeks to determine if any Economic Investments are indeed feasible. There are concerns about the youth of the country leaving school early to take on other endeavors currently.

With the rest of Somalia continuing to suffer Famine and the effects of a very effective Insurgency it is not a bad idea to reach out to People and areas that are having a modicum of success. Although the US has no immediate plans to open up a direct contact with Hargeysa the current Administration will use the contacts it already has to further improve ties. In the past the United States has stated that it will wait until the African Union Recognizes Somaliland as an Independent State before it does.

In Recent Weeks there have been reports that Ethiopia is considering pulling out of Somalia. If this occurs than once again the efforts of the United Nations to restore a functioning Government to Somalia will have failed once again. Efforts to have African Peacekeepers on the ground have been lacking. Famine is a growing concern as is the rise of Piracy in the region known as Puntland. So it appears that the US is once again hedging its bets in a volatile region.

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