



Written by [Warren Mass](#) on April 14, 2017

Sending U.S. Troops to Somalia Evokes Memories of “Black Hawk Down”

U.S. military officials told the Voice of America (VOA) overseas radio broadcast that “dozens” of American soldiers have been deployed to Mogadishu to train and equip Somali and AMISOM (African Union Mission in Somalia) forces fighting the linked al-Shabab militant group in Somalia. Al-Shabab, which has been designated as a terrorist organization by Australia, Canada, the United Arab Emirates, the United Kingdom, and the United States, pledged allegiance to al-Qaeda in 2012.



“United States Africa Command will conduct various security cooperation and/or security force assistance events in Somalia in order to assist our allies and partners,” U.S. Africa Command spokesman Pat Barnes told VOA on April 14.

A “few dozen” troops from the 101st Airborne Division in Ft. Campbell, Kentucky, arrived in Mogadishu on April 2 at the request of the Somali government, the U.S. military official told VOA.

Former Deputy Secretary of Defense Rudy DeLeon, who is currently a senior fellow with the leftist Center for American Progress, told VOA in an interview that the U.S. team will help instill the “professionalism and discipline” that the local force can use to create the terms for security.

“It gives them the tools to help themselves,” DeLeon said.

Charles Prichard, a spokesman for U.S. Africa Command, said in an e-mail to CNN: “The objective of this particular train and equip mission is to improve the logistical capacity of the Somali National Army and the focus will be on teaching basic logistics operations, which will allow Somalia forces to better fight al Shabab.”

CNN reported on March 30, citing the Pentagon, that President Trump had approved an increase in the frequency of counterterrorism strikes in Somalia.

The report said that the White House had granted more authority to the military’s head of Africa Command to wage a campaign against al-Shabab.

“The additional support provided by this authority will help deny al-Shabab safe havens from which it could attack US citizens or US interests in the region,” CNN quoted U.S. Navy Captain Jeff Davis, a Pentagon spokesman, as saying.

A BBC report on this story noted that in 1993, 18 U.S. special forces personnel were killed in the incident dramatized in the American film *Black Hawk Down*. Following those deaths, the American public was shocked and support for the operation evaporated. U.S. military personnel were withdrawn from Somalia shortly afterwards.

A [report in *The New American*](#) back in 2015 quoted information from the online journal *Foreign Policy* (FP) exposing an expanding U.S. military presence in Somalia, including not only drone bases but boots



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on the ground. The report provided evidence of such from *Foreign Policy* as follows:

A spokesman for the U.S. Special Operations Command, which handles public affairs for JSOC, referred *Foreign Policy* to the U.S. Africa Command (AFRICOM) for comment. AFRICOM spokesman Chuck Prichard, in turn, confirmed that a “small number” of U.S. personnel within AFRICOM’s area of responsibility are special operations forces, but declined to comment on the size or location of their units. He also declined to comment on whether or not they are responsible for operating drones, saying only that they “are not tasked with directly engaging enemy forces.”

“While we cannot provide exact details because of operational security issues, we can tell you [U.S. AFRICOM] has sent a limited number of trainers and advisors plus a small military coordination cell to support AMISOM and Somali security forces in international efforts to stabilize Somalia,” Prichard wrote in an e-mail to *Foreign Policy*.

As we noted at time, in light of the lengthening American military footprint in Somalia and elsewhere, and the deadly drone attacks being launched from the secret African bases, it seems that the warning of James Madison needs to be remembered: “Of all the enemies to public liberty war is, perhaps, the most to be dreaded, because it comprises and develops the germ of every other.... No nation could preserve its freedom in the midst of continual warfare.”

December, 1992 photo of U.S. troops in Somalia: AP Images

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