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Preface

The London Conference on Somalia hosted by the UK seemed to come out of the blue. Suddenly the UK wanted to engage in a 'humanitarian mission' in the region. Maybe the interests were transparent and simply represented those stated at the conference; however, I had an urge to dig deeper. Having learnt that events on the world stage rarely exist alone I felt that such a symbolic gesture, based on the rhetoric of counter terrorism and piracy, required deeper analysis.

The primary research for this essay was library-based, utilising a mix of open source academic, journalistic and intelligence report based material. However, whilst working in North East Kenya and Somaliland as an accredited photojournalist, I took the opportunity to ask questions where possible that may add to the depth of my research. I met and corresponded via email with a number of people who have firsthand knowledge of either the region or of British Foreign Policy. It is important however to recognise that each person who helped me gave his or her own opinions and were not speaking on behalf of any organisation; governmental or otherwise.

This essay is an analysis which argues that there are critical regional dynamics in the Indian Ocean, highlighting that counter terrorism and anti-piracy is part of a bigger end game; the maintenance of regional clout during a time of shifting power. This essay is not a value judgment on engagement in the region, be it Somalia or the Indian Ocean.

I feel its strengths come from the opinions of Stephen Burman, an FCO advisor, and my own experiences of working in the region. Whilst other important sources were interviewed, all of whom highlighted fundamental points; as key stakeholders in the engagement programme I was aware that they potentially held motivations which may cast a weakness on their objectivity.

This study has led me to believe that a deeper analysis is required of how different parts of the UK government may have competing or converging interests in the region. Therefore I feel this study, establishing that the UK-Somali engagement is beyond issues of counter terrorism and piracy, is the start of a series of investigations in East Africa and the Indian Ocean.

Summary

Somalia, known as the world's most failed state, has been labelled a threat to international security and a haven for terrorists. During the London Conference held in February 2012 David Cameron stated that Somalia is a threat to British security and economic interests. This dissertation will explore this statement and unfold my argument to show that whilst Somalia does pose problems, it is not a direct threat per se. However, by consolidating various, fragmented, open source information, it will show the deeper issues behind the UK's engagement on Somalia beyond the rhetoric of terrorism and piracy. Finally the document will conclude that Somalia is now an area of geostrategic importance that can no longer be ignored during a period of shifting powers in the Indian Ocean.

1. Introduction

Somalia, regarded by many as the world's most failed state, has returned to the Western agenda. It is largely recognised in the media for its vast piracy networks and Islamist militia, known as Al-Shabaab, argued to be ultimately commanded by Ayman Al-Zawahiri the Al-Qaeda chief. Since 1991, Somalia, due to its internal and regional destabilising factors, has been a headache for the international community and its inhabitants alike.

Until September 2001, many politicians and analysts discussed Somalia's problems, such as a lack of government and humanitarian emergency, while Jihadi groups and counterterrorism remained on the sidelines (Elliot and Holzer: 2009). Whilst state building as a solution to the Somali conflict lasted throughout the nineties, over time the US and others became gradually less willing to progress identified solutions.

However, post 9/11 Somalia's changing politics have increasingly been understood through the lens of terrorism. Somalia's statelessness, too many Western agencies, appears to provide a terrorist safe haven; thus becoming a threat to international security. While Somalia was relatively sidelined in the early days of the war on terror, the US backed the Ethiopian invasion of south Somalia in December 2006, highlighting that Somalia was now a part of this war.

In the path of the failure from the Ethiopian invasion, the emphasis that relates the country to international terrorism diminished (albeit its connection to piracy proliferated). Despite the fact that Al-Shabaab became a feared organisation from about 2007, the balance of opinion for the US, now under the Obama administration, had fallen back to a state building narrative that was now wedded to the goal of counterterrorism (ibid).

Therefore what were once two separate policy entities, state building and the war on terror, emerged a new, cohabiting policy of state building as counterterrorism. This is much in line with Duffields argument (2004) that enclaves of poverty become a source of threat to the Northern regions whereby developmental action is perceived as the antidote. Between 2001-2006 a Somali insurgency against the Transtional Federal Government (TFG) and Ethiopia ensued. Early in 2007 Ayman al Zawahiri,

then AQ's second in command, posted a message encouraging the UIC to attack the Ethiopians.

This link between AQ and the UIC was enough for the US and UK to once again become active in the region and militarise its policy. Al-Shabaab, seen to be in line with Al-Qaeda, is now a primary target of the US and UK governments with AU forces fighting on their behalf.

Chapter one of this essay will draw on theories by authors such as Duffield, Collier and Shinn to highlight why UK security is dependent on Somalia's security and thus why engagement is therefore understandable. This will enable a better understanding of the government's view which takes seriously the issue of international terrorist networks in a globalised era.

The following chapter however, will show that transnational terrorism has never been a significant entity in Somalia and that the international threat may potentially be a misdiagnosis (Menkhaus: 2004). To do this I will demonstrate how Somalia has only ever been host to permissive causes of terrorism. For example, during the nineties the minority groups holding salafist views associated with violence, such as AIAI, conducted local operations in Somalia and Eastern Ethiopia based on local political grievances where the organisations objectives were confined to the Horn of Africa. In 2003, Ethiopian forces destroyed AIAI and they "amounted to little more than a transient shadow cast across the horn by militant Wahhabism and Arab oil wealth" (Elliot and Holzer: 2009: 227). Furthermore while a few AQ operatives have used Somalia as an operational base or point of transit, it is more likely that AQ have networks in Kenya and in Western states.

Today the new ideological character of humanitarian intervention has impacted on the international relations theory. Even staunch pacifists who stand against foreign intervention are now in favour of the idea, with the caveat that any force used is humanitarian in its focus (Gibb: 2002). Seemingly world powers utilise their military force, in a post cold war era, not as an expression of realpolitik which was evident earlier, but as a technology to restore good governance, overcome famine and protect marginalised peoples (ibid). However due to the clan-like behaviour seen in Somalia, it is difficult for outsiders to get involved, be it business or humanitarian intervention, without pressuring existing clan-based fault lines (Elliot & Holzer: 2012).

Over the years, and with dozens of peace conferences, peace continues to be unobtainable for the region. Therefore it is a daunting task for any country wanting to stabilise the area. When considering the fail rate of intervention, one must ask why is it now, during a global recession, that a plethora of countries are involved when dismal failure has constantly resulted in the past? As with all international action, a cost/benefit evaluation must have been employed, therefore it seems the juice must indeed be worth the squeeze. It has become common to view Somalia, and indeed Africa, as holding a certain kind of insignificance to economic interests and thus engagement could be viewed as altruistic, serving 'universalistic goals'. Thus one has to ask, what are the larger multilayered dynamics happening regionally and internationally for such a pursuit to be undertaken?

'The interventioning power, acting on humanitarian grounds, should serve universalistic goals common to all humanity: the power must also eschew parochial considerations of national interests, which tend to compromise the operations humanitarian character' (Gibb 2002: 42)

However, with the cold war players in the region this has not always been the way forward (Gibb: 2002).

The geographic location, next to the red sea shipping lanes and the straits of Bab el-Mandeb, was considered a major area of interest for the British in safeguarding trade routes in the 19th century (Lewis: 2002). The US military also safeguarded the sea-lanes during the cold war, as this channel was the primary transit point for oil shipments between the Persian Gulf and Western Europe. In the 1970s the OPEC oil embargo increased the Western interest in Somalia due to oil and shipping concerns. The US heavily backed the Barre regime, replacing the Soviet Union as the primary source of aid, regardless of its Marxist stance (Gibb: 2002). Interestingly economics, at least in this case, outweighed ideology. In return for US support, Barre allowed the US to use the ex Soviet naval base at Berbera in the northern region not far from the Bab-el-Mandeb Strait. Between 1979 and 1991, the US funded Somalia with over $800 million in economic and military aid as well as diplomatic support (ibid). However, even after the notorious 'Black Hawk Down' incident, and subsequent military retreat, the US still heavily donates to the country.

Chapter three of this document will discuss considerations of national interests for the British government, from an economic and a geostrategic point of view. East African countries such as Kenya, Sudan and especially Somalia, are known in the oil industry for their potential of untapped crude oil. Although the exact quantities of oil are unknown there is little doubt in the industry that significant reserves do exist with numerous oil companies prospecting in the region (Hulbert: 2012). This final argument, based on a realist geopolitical theoretical framework, will bring all three chapters together to conclude that Somalia is not a threat to UK security per se, as Cameron stated, but will highlight how all the factors together have converged to make Somalia a place of strategic importance during a time of shifting power bases is underway playing out within the Indian Ocean and East Africa.

2. Securitisation of Somalia

The London conference held on 23rd February 2012, where David Cameron stated that the world's security rests on Somalia's security (Karimi: 2012), is an example of a new gaze on international security. This initial section of the document will establish why developed countries, such as UK, believe that the security of a region far afield, such as Somalia, is paramount to local security.

'Reconstructing ineffective states to better support the human security of the people living on their territories has moved into the foreground of development policy', (Duffield 2007: 111).

With the end of the cold war's competition of superpowers there was hope that the founding values of the UN would persevere. However the breaking up of the former Yugoslavia and the start of the fallout in Somalia soon changed perceptions. During the 90's, civil wars were at their peak, thus impacting on policy discourse. Not only did conflict continue post the cold war but also the nature of it transformed (Kaldor: 2011). Unlike the past interstate war, modern conflicts were perceived to be intrastate, involving cruel and unusual violence towards civilians (ibid). This perceived changing nature of war became the West's justification for increased interventionism. Thus, since the end of the cold war there has been a fundamental shift in Westphalian principles, seen particularly with regard to respect for a country's sovereignty as sacrosanct.

Today, core countries utilise a moral ground of 'responsibility to protect' for grounds of military intervention. Due to the end of the cold war's bilateral power struggle, traditional threats to Northern countries, in terms of military invasion, have therefore shifted. Human security now seeks to comprehend a world in which the strategic concerns of Northern countries have been overlaid with a more diffuse threat that's associated with both breakdown and insurgency, emanating from the marginalised peoples of the global south (Duffield: 2007). The ability for northern populations to enjoy their lives is no longer solely about local affairs, now that they have become part of an international political agenda. Securing people for their benefit has become an objective of policy interest across the last few decades (Ibid). The International Commission on Intervention and State Sovereignty (ICISS) in the report 'Responsibility to Protect (ICISS: 2001), suggested that human security is not only

about a conceptual framework for action but also that the protection of human rights should be a fundamental objective of international institutions.

Human security, in this sense, appears as an enlightened perspective which broadens security beyond state-to-state war to include threats to life such as; pandemics, displacements and pollution (Duffield: 2007). Security policy, in the modern era, is perceived as a force to protect the balance of individual's ability towards an independent entrepreneurial life. It is embodied in the concept that underdevelopment and enclaves of poverty are a dangerous entity, threatening the ability of self-reliance (ibid).

Development, or specifically sustainable development, makes the connection between community and security. It is perceived by the international community that sustainable development bolsters community relations and therefore legitimates political identity, but internal war attacks these foundations. Therefore, as far as policy application is concerned, people in the developing world that can manage their poverty and are self-reliant, are to a degree secure. Such communities establish strong coping mechanisms and create new forms of collective identity and acts as a bastion against conflict and instability (Duffield: 2007).

 Furthermore, 'secure humans' are more able to defy illicit rewards from dangerous leaders whilst simultaneously reducing the type of social environments that provide recruiting grounds for terrorist networks (ibid). As far as policy discourse is concerned, political violence destroys the foundations of self-reliance while escalating cycles of poverty and state failure (Collier et al 2003). From such a perspective, whereby internal war destroys sustainable development, conflict becomes 'development in reverse' (Duffield: 2007). This theory is at the very heart of the CSD nexus and development discourse in the post cold war era whereby security cannot exist without development, whilst development without security is impossible.

Elaborated by Duffield (2007), conflict that is set in place during decolonisation is part of a deepening crisis of containment which has been in existence since the 80's. This crisis not only relates to refugee populations and asylum seekers but also shadow economies, illegal commodity flows, international criminal networks and terrorism that can emanate and flow from the world crisis zones. Such forms of

international circulation are thus associated with marginal populations that are seen to penetrate the borders of consumer society and have the potential to destabilise its way of life (ibid).

←   From the above one can understand why Somalia, with its protracted conflict, could be seen as 'ungoverned space' where such threats as those mentioned above can emanate from. Militant Islamic influence has existed in Somalia for decades (Shinn: 2011) but some may argue that it goes back to the late eighteen hundreds when the 'mad mullah' was fighting against British colonialism. With the overthrow of Siad Barre in 1991 and the collapse of central government leading to warlordism, Islamic groups also became more assertive. While many of the Islamists were focusing on local agendas and grievances, other Jihadists, such as Al-Qaeda (AQ), were trying to increase their foreign influence.

←   In 1982 a Wahabee based religious group established the Islamic Union terrorist organisation[1] also known as Al Ittihad al Islamiyya (AIAI) which reached its peak in the mid nineties. In 1992 bin laden moved to Sudan with a trusted AQ lieutenant Abu Hafs al Masri. Abu Hafs made numerous trips to Somalia, meeting with Somali Islamists to help with the provision of training and arms (Shinn: 2011). Whilst taking orders from AQ leaders in Khartoum in 1993 he organised a team of AQ veterans to start conducting operations in Somalia. AQ believed that Somalia offered a safe haven for operations in the area against the US in Somalia and Arabian Peninsula. While Al Qaeda had some initial problems in recruiting Somalis it did manage to recruit a number of youngsters to the cause and find strongholds in areas such as Ras Kamboni, an ocean port that is on the Somali/Kenyan border (Ibid). As long as the central government was unable to establish authority, and warlords fought amongst one another for power, the opportunity grew for Islamic groups. In 1998 three AQ operatives who were players in the bombings of the US embassies in Kenya and Tanzania took refuge in Somalia with the aid of AIAI. One was killed in a 2007 battle with Ethiopian troops, the other, of Kenyan and Yemeni ethnicity, was killed by US Special Forces just south of Mogadishu in 2009. The third terrorist is still at large (Shinn: 2011).

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[1] For more information read State Dept report on Al-Ittihad Al-Islami
http://www.state.gov/documents/organization/10304.pdf

← 	Religious terrorists are seen to pose a particularly threat to the international community for numerous reasons (Cronin: 2002); Jihadists perceive themselves to be engaged in a struggle between good and evil. Anyone within is good and anyone on the outside is evil, meaning there is an endless supply of targets. Innocent targets are not new but the exclusivity of the Jihadists faith may lead them to dehumanise their targets even further. Furthermore, religious terrorists engage in violent behavior directly or indirectly to please the perceived commands of a deity, thus concern about peer group moral perception is a far second to pleasing god. The UK and US are the two primary countries hosting Somali refugees since the end of the Barre regime and the start of the internal conflict in 1991. It is perceived members of the Diaspora, holding Western passports, can easily travel to Somalia and return, trained in terrorist tradecraft.

← 	'With today's global interconnections, a substantial number of Somalis living in UK and cases of young people in Britain wrongly informed or indoctrinated return to Somalia getting involved with activities of Al-Shabaab, we understand the fact Britain may think there is a danger...both in the UK and in East Africa' (Anonymous interview: 2012).

← 	According to the press there have been numerous UK passport holders of a Somali ethnic origin, whom travel to Somalia for training and return to the UK or allied countries such as US, creating a security challenge (Pantucci: 2012). Furthermore religious extremism in East Africa is argued to be exacerbated by poverty; Al-Shabaab pay more to recruits than individuals would receive if they worked as a TFG or Somaliland soldier; thus it is not simply ideology that is luring people but also money (ibid). The above then clearly goes someway in giving gravitas to Duffield's (2007) position whereby poverty creates an environment where people will follow dangerous leaders for financial rewards. This local security problem thus becomes international when taking into account globalised networks and the ability of Diaspora communities to travel relatively freely. As Cronin (ibid) may have pointed out, such Jihadists would not feel any loyalty to the State, such as UK, that may have granted asylum to them or their families since, in their view, the will of god supersedes the laws of nations. Such threats are of course a major concern for Northern countries in the post 9/11 era.

← 	In the last few years the terror group Al-Shabaab has been the key player in the Somali conflict. The Islamist militia was recently acknowledged by the media to

be working in conjunction with Al Qaeda and controlling the majority of South Somalia. At the back end of 2011 Al-Shabaab controlled a massive part of Somalia and most of the capital but in recent months a counterattack, led by AU forces, has 'secured' Mogadishu and is pushing them back to the interior[2]. Al-Shabaab opposes the Mogadishu based, Western backed, Transitional Federal Government (TFG), who are being bolstered from Ethiopia's military as well as Kenyan and Ugandan peacekeepers. The AU 'peacekeeping' force is therefore trying to keep the TFG from being toppled. Although, ironically, the TFG is only seen as legitimate within a few kilometres of Mogadishu. Outside the city, many Somalis see the TFG as corrupt and without authority (Menkhaus: 2004).

← Al-Shabaab is often in pitched battles against the TFG army and other militias causing regional problems from the fallout within Somalia. Kenya, East Africa's largest economy, is suffering from an influx of illegal weapons coming from Somalia over the porous border. The North East region, largely ethnically Somali, has little in the way of border posts or customs, allowing hundreds to migrate each day to and from Somalia.

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[2] See article in Guardian 'Al-Shabaab pushed back in Somalia by African peace enforcers' 15/6/2012 http://www.guardian.co.uk/world/2012/jun/15/africa-peacekeepers-push-al-shabaab-somalia. Also BBC http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-africa-18206856

←   (© 2012 Photograph taken by myself in Garissa province of North East Kenya near the porous Somali border. Pastoralists and traders often migrate between Kenya and Somalia bringing goods from food to weapons)

←   Many smuggle essential items such as food however the black market offers guns and ammunition causing Kenyan areas such as Garissa and Wajir to become unstable. According to a Kenyan security official;

←   'When you are in a border town, neighbouring a country like Somalia, a lot really happens. We are aware of people smuggling arms along these borders, but sometimes we choose not to arrest them for our own safety' (Yusuf: 2011).

←   With numerous bombings inside Kenya from the terrorist group Al-Shabaab, part of a vicious cycle of violence between the Kenyan Defence Forces and ethnic Somalis has motivated Kenya to wage a military campaign, 'Operation Protect Country' within Somalia. Such conflict has caused mass humanitarian problems and tension between Kenyan-Somalis and native Kenyans[3].

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[3] For more information see Human Rights Watch report 'Kenya: Investigate Security Force Abuses Against Ethnic Somalis: Military, Police Have Committed Rape, Assault, and Looting in North Eastern Province'

(©2012 Photo taken by myself in Garissa province of North East Kenya near the porous Somali border. In the foreground sits an eight-year-old child deformed from malnourishment whilst in the womb. Conflict and climate change is causing ethnic Somali nomad's severe humanitarian problems.)

←   There has also been numerous bombing, kidnappings and murders in Nairobi, Garissa, Wajir and Dadaab refugee camps from Islamic militants[4]. Al-Shabaab issued a press release warning the Kenyan government not to get drawn into an unending war with the Jihadi organisation on behalf of the West, elaborating that Somali security is Kenyan security[5]. However, the West also sees Kenyan security as an important facet in relation to regional and thus global developmental interests. Duffield (2007) explains there is nothing new about internal wars, but the conflicts of today are observed and manipulated by an international community of effective states. Such states deny the legitimacy of warring parties within ineffective ones. Kenya, unlike Somalia, is considered East Africa's model developing country due to its stance as a 'liberal democracy'. As discussed, the West uses development to counter threatening populations, therefore democratic institutions are perceived as a high point in efforts of counter terrorism. The UK therefore not only heavily funds development projects in Kenya, but also the West is backing the Kenyan military in its campaign in Somalia. As far as UK is concerned the problem with Al-Shabaab needs to be contained. The grievances from Al-Shabaab, emanating from a failed state, are not perceived as legitimate in comparison to the defence of a 'liberal democracy'.

Due to the lack of effective infrastructure, the past decade has seen an explosion of piracy around Somalia, which has captured the world's attention. A booming trade has been created, generating wealth for pirates, sponsors, those whom negotiate on their behalf, and indeed increased revenue can be seen in areas from where the pirates operate. In October 2009 there were approximately eight vessels and one hundred and seventy crew members being held; by April 2011 the number had risen to approximately fifty ships carrying over eight hundred crew members (Harper:

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[4] Numerous targets have been attacked in Kenya including civilian and military personnel. The British are donating military equipment in the fight against terror in the region.
http://www.nation.co.ke/News/Soldiers+hurt+in+Mandera+blast+/-/1056/1410858/-/373tf3z/-/index.html
[5] http://dhanaan.com/for-immediate-release-kenya-your-security-depends-on-our-security/

2012). According to one BBC documentary each vessel can fetch ransoms as large as five million dollars[6]. Only in the last few months a Greek oil vessel the 'Smyrni' was captured carrying 135,000 tons of oil (Obulutsa: 2012). According to the International Maritime Bureau, Somalis have become the most active pirates in the world, costing the global economy billions (Berkowitz: 2012). Taking into account the importance of the Gulf of Aden in the global trade in oil it is no surprise that NATO naval security missions are becoming highly proactive in regional counter piracy efforts, which has included air strikes on areas of Somalia perceived to be pirate strongholds. Furthermore, with Britain obtaining large amounts of their resources via the Gulf of Aden, it would be ludicrous to think that they would not protect their assets.
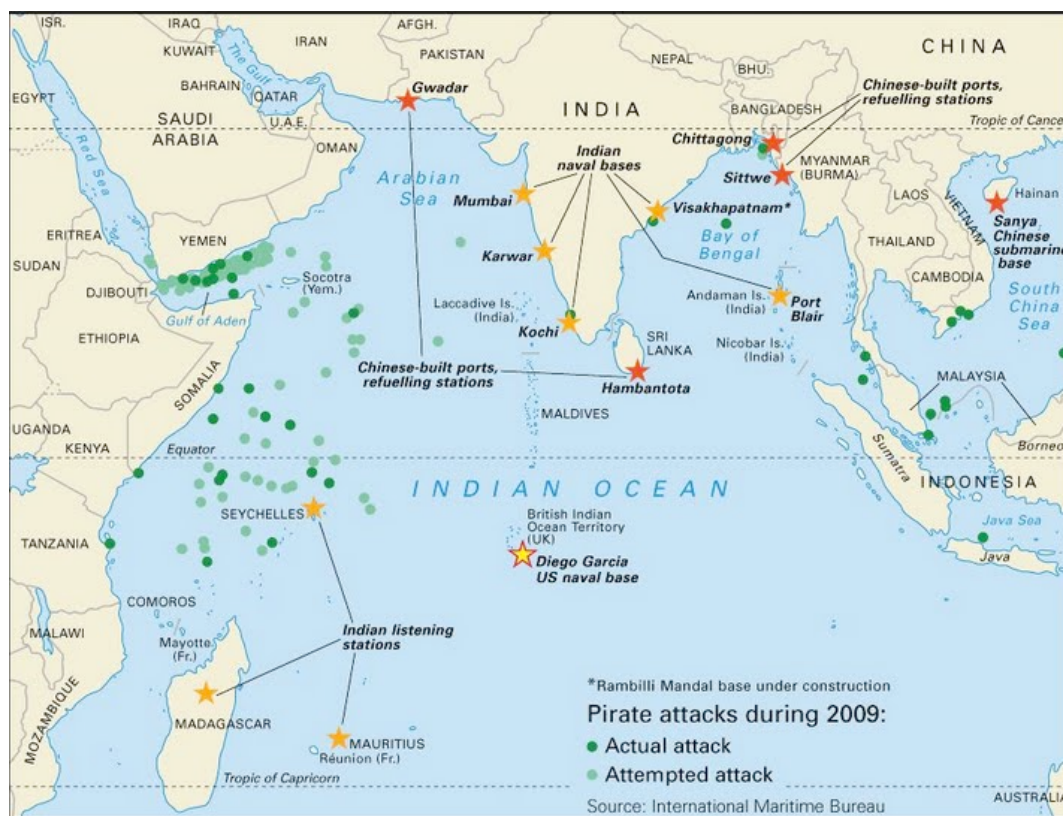
(Map by International Maritime Bureau. This highlights the actual and attempted attacks to vessels on the highly important shipping lanes in the Indian Ocean and Gulf of Aden where most attacks are clustered.)

By using arguments put forward by Mark Duffield in relation to the potential, or indeed perceived, threats emanating from enclaves of poverty, it is possible to establish the importance of international security efforts in a post cold war,

[6] Documentary 'The Trouble with Pirates'
http://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/b00tr1q3

globalised world, and thus reasons why the UK would want to stabilise and engage in Somalia.

Furthermore by highlighting the terrorist and piracy threat that has grown out of a lack of infrastructure in such a desperate region I hope to have bolstered Duffield's theory by bringing it to life. This goes some way to take seriously the British government's argument that Somalia's security is UK's security. However, in the following section I want to draw on numerous arguments questioning the extent of international terrorism emanating from Somalia and the longevity of fundamentalist organisations, and go on to discuss whether these issues of piracy warrant such media attention and the corresponding side effects this has on policy discourse.

3. Alternative conceptions of terror in Somalia

Menkhaus (2004) believes that the statement that Somalia is a safe haven for terrorists is a complete misdiagnosis. Somalia is not a good environment for terror groups such as AL-Qaeda, where the lack of infrastructure actually inhibits international terror organisations rather than encouraging them, as some might think. Somalia is also a dangerous environment for foreigners of any persuasion; a foreign Jihadist is at the same risk of kidnapping and extortion in Somalia as anyone else. To an extent known international terrorists are at an extreme risk of kidnapping, since they demand great ransoms from various international governments (Menkhaus: 2004). Additionally, Somalis are notoriously local people with a penchant for gossip; groups in hiding would find it difficult to maintain cover for long without the local community knowing about these newcomers (ibid).

For Al-Qaeda to be effective as an international organisation they require the ability to serve both the local and global jihads while maintaining relevance and support (Loidolt: 2011). For example, in Yemen, AQ are establishing shadow government engaging in helping local infrastructure to remain in place. At present the state of chaos in Yemen suits AQ. While Yemeni tribal lifestyle and AQ ideology may seem at odds, the love of battle in the men of Yemen makes it seem an ideal place for recruitment (ibid). However, in Somalia the mercantile nature of Somalis, alongside their non-Gulf state Sufi practices, as shown above, make it harder for AQ and Al-shabaab to recruit. In contradiction to theorists claiming that AQ did manage to garner a following, some believe that whilst there has been some correspondence between AQ and AS, the existence of AQ is limited.

It is argued (ibid) that few Somalis have joined AQ and that attacks carried out in the name of AQ in east Africa have never actually been by people of a Somali origin. As discussed in chapter one, whilst Bin Laden's lieutenant went to Somalia to galvanise support, Bin Laden still turned his nose up at the idea of basing himself in Somalia (ibid). However, as Holzer (2009) mentions, there is a more systemic reason why Jihadi groups find it hard to operate in Somalia, at least in the long term. The Somali interpretation of Islam has been traditionally a Shafi'I version, governed by apolitical Sufi sects (Elliot & Holzer: 2009). While there were Islamist groups that formed after the collapse of the Barre government, few of them followed violence for political ends

of an international nature. As Menkhaus (ibid) also notes, the Wahabee version of Islam is largely seen as an imposition of 'un Somali' customs. Areas under fundamental rule are under a repressive security, the banning of football watching parties, music, revered Sufi saints and the overzealous covering of women in dark burkhas, has not won hearts and minds (MacDonald: 2006). It seems that rigid Islamist views, often gaining momentum during a crisis such as an Ethiopian invasion, are limited over a sustained period.

A resistance group known as Ahlu Sunna Wal Jamaah (ASWJ) are a Sufi force whom battle with Al-Shabaab effectively, driving them out of several towns. Initially they were a peaceful organisation with the objective of countering the militant Islamist ideology of AIAI. However in recent years and as Al-shabaab has pushed the Wahabee agenda too far, ASWJ has abandoned its non-violent stance, mounting armed resistance to the encroachment of Al-Shabaab[7]. Where ASWJ have secured regions back from Al-Shabaab, they liaise with IN officials and patrol the locality. It is important to note then there are organisations willing to fight extreme ideologies, Al-Shabaab and certainly Al-Qaeda do not have a carte blanche to operate freely in Somalia.

According to Faisal Devji (2005), the post 9/11 global processes were so far beyond Al-Qaedas imagination they were crushed by the weight of it. Such a statement means in essence that Al-Qaeda's violent statement of ethical disgust towards the West, seen with terrorist action such as 9/11 in the US, was largely lost amongst Muslims whom perceive such action as sanctimonious violence. While working as a photojournalist in the region and when speaking to Somalis about Al-Shabaab they'd often turn their noses up, labelling the organisation as bandits and gangsters capitalising on chaos. AQ are therefore a long way from gaining a foothold, or even the hearts and minds of the Somali people. Of course there are problems but there are other nations both developing and developed which may be more of a concern in regards to terrorist networks. However, if this is the case then why is the perception of Somalia as a terror state so pervasive?

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[7] Janes Intelligence http://articles.janes.com/articles/Janes-World-Insurgency-and-Terrorism/Ahlu-Sunna-wal-Jamaa-Somalia.html

In 1991, numerous clan-affiliated belligerents played a part in the expulsion of the Barre regime. These were notably based on Hawiye, Isaaq and Ogaden clan lines. In 2001 the Transitional National Government (TNG) was formed as an amalgamation of interests between the Hawiye and its Egyptian and Arab backers (Elliot & Holzier: 2009). Due to pressure from the restoration and reconciliation council the TNG collapsed and were replaced by the Transitional Federal Government (TFG) which was ironically backed by a rival set of alliances in collusion with Ethiopia and therefore, indirectly, the US (ibid). The rival Darod clan dominantly populated this new government alliance. Typically, after their exclusion from the TNG and perceiving a threat to their interests, the Hawiye projected their interests through the Islamic courts, who were also backed by the Ethiopian rival, Eritrea. Adding insult to injury the new government removed the parliament speaker; someone considered an ally to the Hawiye business class (ibid). The Hawiye, now completely disenchanted, organised an armed opposition to the government and hostility ensued. Therefore in 2007 conflict flared up, not due to Islamists versus its rivals, but due to fierce rivalry over access to the state, spurred on by economic class and signified by clans (ibid). More critically, taking advantage of the post 9/11 zeitgeist, the Darod dominated the TFG, and Ethiopia benefitted significantly from accusing their rival clans of Islamic Terrorism and reaping the rewards of US financial support (ibid). Jumping on this bandwagon were other countries such as Kenya and Ethiopia, who have been able to gather financial support in their 'war on terrorism'. Therefore national and regional players have managed to exacerbate the terrorist problem in the region for their own gain.

In a cruel irony, this has created a vicious circle, and somewhat of a self-fulfilling prophecy. The Ethiopian invasion of 2006 and the destruction of the UIC boosted Al-Shabaabs ranks. Whilst in recent years Al-Shabaab has been losing support for reasons discussed, there is a great danger of them being bolstered once again due to outside intervention; especially when taking into consideration Somalia's sensitivity to the ambitions of Kenya and Ethiopia (Hadi: 2012).

The self-declared, semi autonomous northern Somali region, Somaliland, has with very little Western aid and far less resource than South Somalia, created a secure state with a hybrid system that utilises clan elders with a western style democracy. According to an anonymous source of Somali origin, working as a political consultant in Somalia;

'Somaliland has no negative attitude towards Britain, as many during the war went to the UK so those links are beneficial…Somaliland has succeeded in (reducing) human trafficking and controls the movement of people to Yemen' (Anonymous: 2012).

This statement is interesting in so far as it shows the connection between the diaspora and the 'motherland' from a positive light. Somaliland's population benefits from having a diaspora, sending remittances, and thus they have a vested interest in reducing any criminal networks. Albeit, as Loan Lewis states (ibid), Somaliland's security exists *in spite* of the parliamentary institution, not because of it, and without the same interference by outside actors, as seen in Mogadishu. This demonstrates that Somalis are highly capable and, in this case, a war torn region left alone from foreign aid can reinvent itself into a successful entity whose security and economic concerns are also globalised.

A consultant to the British and Somali government and the Security and Community Engagement Advisor to Somali National Television (SNTV) informed me that SNTV broadcast any criminals or dangerous actors to the diaspora population worldwide, thus limiting the ability of any criminals to blend into Diaspora communities. What is of interest here are the local and global ways that the Somalis deal with threats. Ironically many of the young whom go to Somalia with ideas of training are actually radicalised in the UK, or in their respective countries, before heading to places such as Somalia, Afghanistan or Pakistan for 'training'. Therefore a credible argument is that Somalia is no more a threat than the radical Madrasah's that we have in our very own back yard.

From the above perspectives we can see fundamental points of conflict coming into play against the terror state paradigm. The state for Somali, a clan based community, is a technology of power that can be utilised to maintain clan hegemony. Thus categorising a rival clan or region as a terrorist can be used to garner serious financial aid. With the Somalis practice of Sufi Islam, non-Sufi versions of Islam do not last for a particularly long term, albeit people do rally behind it during foreign occupation or intervention depending on the angle one approaches it. Where Al-Shabaab has taken a foothold, such an insurgency started off as more of a tactic dealing with local grievances – objectives of creating a global Islamic caliphate, or even a Wahabee Islamic state, are far beyond the interests of the vast majority of Somali's whom benefit from the connectivity of the diaspora. From the above then I have demonstrated that Somalia's statelessness does not necessarily provide the threat to international security that has been 'marketed' in the London conference. In fact the lack of infrastructure, the clan system, the general dislike of Wahabee practice and the subsequent attacks by ASWJ make it incredibly hard for AQ and AS to operate as effectively as some may think. Importantly it is the Somali, Ethiopian and Kenyan government's use of the post 9/11 language of terror in order to access resources that has helped to exacerbate problems in the region.

Another issue warranting a more informed approach is that of piracy. Another self declared semi autonomous region in Somalia is Puntland, a place that has rapidly become known as the central area of piracy. While there is, evidently, a problem with Somali piracy in the Indian Ocean, the media reaction and policy responses have been argued as disproportionate. In his 2012 study, Collins set out to research the extent to which the media influenced a disproportionate policy response in relation to Somali piracy. He argued media coverage was exaggerated in relation to the amount of broadcasts per hijack and the amount of violence dished out by pirates. Additionally the media gave a very narrow, post 9/11, framing of the situation, ignoring very important context that ultimately informed political discourse.

For example numerous global companies took advantage of the state collapse and lack of infrastructure by dumping toxic waste in Somali waters and overfishing the area. Ultimately it has been argued that this was the catalyst that destroyed the local fishing trade motivating Somalis toward piracy (Harper: 2012). Through misrepresentation the media were creating fear and intolerance within the international political community, while simultaneously ignoring the underlying structural conditions within Somalia (Collins: 2012).

(©2010 Photograph taken by myself during NATO Operation Joint Warrior. Sailors on board the DS Absalon training in counter piracy and the aiding of world food programme vessels as part of Denmark's NATO duties)

Therefore in 2005 the UN Secretary General's report to the general assembly equated piracy to a greater risk of terrorism. As a result, in 2006 the UNSC started passing resolutions related to the issue of Somali piracy.

However, the linking of terrorism to piracy is incredibly tenuous. As Harper (2012) states, while pirates may have paid Islamists operating fees, that is far as it goes and even this act was limited. Importantly, a period when piracy slowed down was when the UIC reined it in as the practice is considered against the principles of Islam. Additionally in 2010 Hizbul Islam launched an attack on pirate strongholds, driving them into the bush (Harper: 2012). This once again shows that a local will look to

break the back of criminal enterprise in the region. In a cruel twist of fate, with the diminishment of groups such as the UIC and Hizbul Islam by Ethiopia, backed by the US, chaos and piracy once again became an entity.

For Collins (ibid) the subsequent international response, via the deployment of warships to the Gulf of Aden, is a completely disproportionate reaction to the problem. One could understandably ask the question of how then, does one deal with such a problem? It seems that armed guards on ships are enough to put off would be attackers (Sheridan: 2012). So, why one needs an entire international naval fleet is of interest and something that will be considered in section four.

In the section above I have tried to highlight how the conception of Somalia as a safe haven for terrorists is questionable and that other, more developed regions such as Kenya or even places in Europe have terror networks that are facilitated more effectively. Furthermore, while there is a problem with piracy, the disproportionate response from the media which has linked piracy to terrorism, has also created a disproportionate policy response. The use of the language of terror has been utilised by local players and international shipping firms to secure interests. If this is the case then it would not be far-fetched to consider how other outside actors, such as the UK and the US, can gain from such a position.

NATO forces, as well as Russian and Chinese fleets are now operating anti piracy missions in the Indian Ocean. A new tactic has been to hit pirate bases on land as well as sea. Albeit it is argued (Holmes: 2010) that to strike targets on land would create costs far exceeding the value of the political stakes. Dealing with Somali piracy is difficult compared to campaigns in the past as there is not a state to threaten with sanctions or regime change in order to deal with them; the pirates of today are not privateers, as Francis Drake was in the past, working under a central authority (ibid). Furthermore, while villages and pirate bases could be cleared in the region of Puntland, they would soon re-populate. If NATO boots were on the ground, as it were, it would not take long for a counterinsurgency to erupt.

'What looks like a straightforward strategy of counter piracy would likely entangle the West in Somali politics for years to come. This would add up to a protracted engagement out of any proportion to the political stakes' (Holmes: 2010: 719).

So, if the potential costs of counter piracy via naval fleets exceed the rewards, at least in relation to Somalia, why do it? As Holmes (ibid) further argues, providing a service, such as maritime security makes regional naval hegemony more palatable to other lesser powers. However, while US operations that provide Sea Lines of Communication (SLOC) security may garner goodwill, if it is not properly managed it could work against the equilibrium of powers in the Indian Ocean. For example, if a land campaign went wrong, inflicting harm on civilians, then other regional powers such as India and China would speak out against US leadership in the region. Furthermore India, a US maritime partner, could have its images tainted with respect to other south Asian nations causing New Delhi to distance itself from Washington (Holmes: 2010). Therefore, as far as the US is concerned, less maybe more in regards to maintaining its hegemony in the Indian Ocean, and it could be, for the UK, a role that the US wants to stand back from.

As Holmes (ibid) highlights, the US has been the self appointed marshal of maritime's security in Asia since 1945. The Obama administration needs to muster enough multinational forces to prosecute an effective defensive strategy affording other sea powers like India, China and the EU a leadership role. This would create a collective effort upholding security while sharing the burden for the US navy. I argue that instead of creating a Sino-Indian-US consortium, the US and the UK are currently engaged in an Anglo-American coalition using counter terrorism and counter piracy to legitimise actions of pacification and naval realignment in an area of strategic importance. To stay in the game as it were there needs to be a legitimate reason for warships and the international community to stay in the region. As I have shown, Somalia as a terror state rife with pirates is not necessarily as much of a threat to the UK as was perhaps suggested in the London Somali conference. However, intervention based on such issues would certainly get the green light, as it has done in the past with Iraq (Burman: 2012). The next chapter will explore the underlying currents beyond terrorism and piracy, if they are not reasons enough in themselves to engage in the region.

4. Beyond the Terror Lens

During the nineties the World Bank stated that US oil companies believed that eight African countries were to be the next major oil suppliers – Somalia was top of the list (Kielmas: 2007). Throughout this period there were four major oil companies dealing in Somalia which had signed contracts with the warlord Farah Aideed. While three of the companies dropped out due to lack of security during the civil war, Conoco remained resolute. This particular company seemed to have particularly strong ties to Aideed's number two, Osman Ato, who was the owner of the Conoco compound In Mogadishu. This relationship between a connected local, Aideed himself, and the oil company is what cemented their security and political protection for the region (Gibb: 2002). Today it is known that Hilary Clinton and David Cameron have been promised that the West will have a share of the natural resources, by the Somali Prime Minister, for their part in a successful reconstruction attempt (Townsend & McVeigh: 2012). While there is no doubt the Somali PM said this during a conference, the extent to which he can secure the deal is questionable since the current Transitional Government is to be sidelined after the August elections are held in Somalia. However those elections are being watched carefully and facilitated by the international community, something many activist groups are wary of and consider the interference as a neo imperialist resource scramble.

'The armed forces, alongside the UN, will no doubt aim to protect the agenda of foreign governments, businesses and have aimed to protect transitional federal government of corrupt politicians… The future for Somali sovereignty and independence is currently bleak, but the future for investment in the natural resource industry that is western business in the region bright' (HoS/Anonymous author: 2012)

According to Mark Bradbury, director of the Rift Valley Institute and author of several reports on Somalia, oil is a big game changer in the region. He added: "The international community has been very quiet on the whole exploitation of minerals and hydrocarbons" (Hadi 2012: 7). Drilling in the region of Puntland was started by the Canadian oil firm Africa Oil just a month before David Cameron's call for the London Somali conference: the TFG confirmed that pipelines to the countries ports have been laid (ibid).

Also a report by Richard Copley (2010) of the Center for Strategic Studies (CSS) highlighted how the strategic balance of the horn of Africa and the red sea is about to be further transformed, with consequences for the global energy market over the next ten years.

The evidence that there is new wealth in the region demonstrates that not only will the intensity of conflict be transformed, but that it will also affect one of the world's most important trading routes: the Red Sea/Suez sea line of communication (SLOC). Furthermore, it is not only oil that is attracting the attention of international businesses but also new discoveries and exploitation of natural gas fields in the Indian Ocean.

According to the CSS report (Copley: 2010) the strategic balance in the horn of Africa and the red sea is rapidly shifting, becoming unstable with political, geopolitical, economic, and ideological issues clashing. For example during the turbulent Arab Spring, Egypt with a discovery of increasing quantities of natural gas, and had been supporting radical Jihadi actions along the Red Sea and in the Horn. Their goal was to limit Ethiopia's sea-lane dominance in the Red Sea, linking it to the Suez Canal. Egypt, which also supported Iranian expansion in the Red Sea/Africa framework, wanted to be firmly in control of the Red Sea/Suez SLOC all the way to the Bab el-Mandeb straits at the entrance to the Indian Ocean. Therefore, at the core of the regional dynamics lays a proxy war being waged by Iranian backed Islamists, supported by Eritrea and Egypt, keeping Ethiopia landlocked and disabling its ability to export gas via pipelines from Somalia (Copley: 2010). Considering last year's development, with Iran threatening to block the straits of Hormuz, thus increasing oil prices, it is extremely unlikely that the UK and its allies would appreciate actors such as this in control over, or destabilising important shipping lanes.

Furthermore security in the red sea would be paramount to the UK whom receives more than half of their liquefied natural gas imports via the Suez Canal (Cordesman: 2011). In late 2011 Russia threatened to cut off gas supply to Ukraine as a display of muscle to Europe, subsequently hiking up gas prices in the UK (Meyer: 2011). Since then the UK has been looking at increasing its gas purchases from alternative suppliers, such as Egypt and the MENA region (Ratner et al: 2012).

'The Red Sea, with the Suez Canal in the north and the Bab el-Mandeb in the south, is one of the most vital sea lines of communication and a critical shipping link between our Pacific and European allies . . . Since a significant part of USCENTCOM's forces would deploy by sea, ensuring these waterways remain open to free world shipping must be a key objective' (Gibb 2002: 44).

Therefore we can understand how Somalia continues to be a part of US central commands, and their allies' (such as the UK), regional strategy. It seemed that civil war, insecurity and lack of infrastructure ensured that the region became a no-go for western companies from the early 1990s when the government collapsed, leaving local warlords and militias to claw out territories. Therefore post the 'Black Hawk Down' debacle the region was, to some extent, seemingly forgotten about. But, with new players competing in the region the area can no longer be ignored. With an arguable shift in global powers it seems the cost of leaving the region to ones competitors could be too great. For some, the question of the century is how the West is going to deal with the emergence of China as a superpower (Ickenberry: 2008) which could have the clout to utilise its strength to reshape the international system to its own advantage, thus becoming a security challenge to the existing paradigm. China wants to protect its assets in the Indian Ocean region in the same way that the US secured itself during the cold war with strategic naval bases. China now has to protect its new interests in Africa, ensuring the flow of resources to East Asia, via the Straits of Malacca. Thus a new game of sea power projection is taking place. China for the first time, except maybe for the Ching Empire in the 18th century, has secured land borders and thus it now has the luxury of going to sea (Kaplan: 2011).

Copley (2012) asks if the Red Sea/Suez is as overall strategically important as it was back in the nineties. He states that for China and Japan, exports from the Persian Gulf are critical but they can bypass the red sea Suez SLOC. Furthermore, he argues that China is looking to overland oil and gas from Iran and the Caspian basin rather than sea-lanes. However, oil and gas from the horn of Africa, as well as Yemen, is increasing in importance. Countries such as Japan are becoming highly conscious of the vulnerability of their oil and gas lanes in the Indian Ocean. This is due to a perceived decline in US influence alongside increased Chinese sea power near critical chokepoints (Kaplan: 2011). The Indian Ocean is like a key interstate for the movement of energy; currently China is financing port modernisation projects on

strategic points around the Indian Ocean with the objective of creating a 21st century civilian maritime version of the strategic 19th century British coaling station that fuelled its naval empire. This will facilitate a future Chinese maritime empire, with naval bases built in Greece and Croatia.

(Red markers highlight Chinese port modernisation projects in areas of strategic importance. Map Courtesy of Strategic Forecasting)

It is important to note that the naval projection in this region is largely civilian, albeit they do have a large antipiracy contingent in the Horn; China does not want naval bases as it would appear a hostile move toward India (Kaplan: 2011). However China is building a propensity for anti access area denial capabilities, meaning that it becomes harder for the US destroyers to get close to where they want, thus effecting the decision making of the US deployment process: one of the ultimate goals in geo-strategy is to make an impact on the decision making of adversaries (ibid). The US have an interest in maintaining global sea lane control and the Chinese have a fear that such control will block their own access in the South China Sea, so they have put into play the sea lane denial capacity which makes strategic sense of a rising power (O'Rourke: 2012). Wars don't have to happen due to some nefarious power with a dark goal, but they happen when legitimate rising powers and establishments come into conflict over interests or concern for intentions for the future. This can be seen being playing out in the Indian Ocean with US and Chinese realignment of naval forces (ibid).

China however has numerous problems in this capacity for such, as its attempt to create anti area access denial whilst being a long way off from a navy that can project itself anywhere in the world (AKA blue water navy). Also, it relies heavy on the US that is employing its own counterstrategy, such as moving a large force into the South China Sea to try and make sure any future sea lane denial is limited (Kaplan: 2011). However, empires start somewhere,

'The Venetian empire in the Mediterranean began as an attempt to suppress piracy along the Adriatic coast, something Chinese warships are doing near the Horn of Africa. Then there were the purely commercial ventures of the British and Dutch East India companies in their early days, which led to full-fledged imperial domains' (Kaplan: 2012).

All the above alludes, to the engagement with which Somalia in relation to counter terrorism may be secondary to economic and geostrategic manoeuvring – specifically with the emergence of BRIC countries but specifically the Chinese's 'new' focus on Africa and sea lanes. According to one anonymous informant based in Somalia (Anonymous: 2012) working alongside the UN and the Electoral Commission, something recently prompted the British government to be more proactive in relation to investment in Somalia than ever before. There is speculation as to whether this relates to oil, security or both, but certainly 'something is missing out' (Anonymous: 2012).

He further added that conflict between Iran and Saudi, something that is not out of the question since it often happens in proxy, would seriously impact on the Somali economy and rise oil prices globally. Thus, according to the source, it is in all of our interests to free up and diversify trade routes.

Stephen Burman, advisor to the British Foreign and Commonwealth Office informed me, in a personal capacity, that Somalia has been high on the British agenda for some time for such reasons as explained. Whilst it has not received a great deal of publicity those in policy take the region very seriously because of its strategic significance going beyond counter terrorism. While the US has a strategic desire to reduce commitment in the Middle East and focus on Asia, specifically the South China Sea, it will still engage in the Indian Ocean, an area perceived to hold an arc of instability from East Africa through to the Asian subcontinent. Far from a focus on direct "war fighting" approach between major powers, there will be greater efforts on

building stability and on maritime issues, such as keeping the sea-lanes open (Burman: 2012).

'As for the division of labour between US and UK, as in most cases interests are seen to be common and I think it is fair to say that the UK would have more to contribute to the pursuit of common interests in the Horn than it does in Asia. This provides a basis for the UK to take the lead in fostering international collaboration - hence the conference, where the broad agenda accurately reflected the range of UK concerns' (Burman: 2012).

While direct conflict is stated by some analysts to be unlikely (Friedman: 2011), due to the economic dependency between China and the US, the shifting Pacific balance could still influence day to day choices by surrounding countries to align their policy closer to China than it would with the US.

While conflict is not inevitable as an established Western order is easier to join than to topple (Ickenberry: 2008) I believe the US and the UK are implementing diplomatic strategies to keep hegemony. Hilary Clinton spoke last year at the world economic forum and there she discussed smart power and initiatives of economic statecraft. This approach utilises economic, social and cultural factors such as US international university placements, foreign aid and international partnership for example. It does not replace hard power, such as a powerful military, but is seen as a more open approach by persuading others they want what you have.

With the US squandering of goodwill post 9/11, and mistrust of US intentions by Somalis, it would make sense for the UK to be America's Lieutenant in the horn, especially if the UK can secure its own interests in the meantime (Friedman: 2012).

While the UK and the US are making concerted efforts in the region to forge international partnerships, China is giving significant diplomatic and financial support to the surrounding regions of the Indian Ocean. China may not want full-fledged naval bases yet, due to any potential political fallout, however it wants 'places not bases' with solid access built on economic and political bilateral relations (Kaplan: 2011). For Africa this is often a welcome alternative to Western aid for two primary reasons: firstly the Chinese strategy of non-interference in domestic affairs accords well with African leaders, and secondly the rapid growth of the Chinese economy has encouraged African governments and private enterprise to nurture ties with a country perceived to be the next superpower (Alden: 2005).

As shown above, the strategic balance around the horn of Africa is changing. While oil has been a known resource in Somalia for some years, post 1991 and up until recently many international companies and countries have stayed away due to the high risks involved. However in a period of shifting powers in the Indian Ocean, notably from China, and with some competition in Africa, Somalia can no longer be ignored. With its expansive East facing coastline, access to resources, placement on the Bab-el Mandeb choke point and potential for further instability, the West, led by the UK, needs to bring Somalia on board.

5. Conclusion

Prime Minister Cameron stated that Somalia threatens the security of the UK due to piracy and terrorism. Yes, terror and piracy is a problem but from the above I feel that this reason alone is not sufficient for the UK to become bogged down in the region. As shown, the risk from international terrorism and Al-Qaeda emanating from the country is questionable if one considers there are also high risks from other countries in Africa, the Middle East and even Europe.

I hope the examples throughout this document have cast doubt on that issue. By using Menkhaus, Holzer and others I have drawn out the uneasy alliance between Wahabism and Somalia. This fact along with local agency such as ASWJ, Somali National TV and a lack of support for groups such as AS and AQ goes some way to showing that Somalia is no greater threat to the UK than terror networks within our own country.

Furthermore terrorism and piracy may have been a problem that is potentially exaggerated by regional actors and the media, but with the chance of pacification and the bringing together of positive links between the region and the west, led by the UK, then such issues could legitimately be managed through intervention. The chances of regional oil extraction and resource diversification are of great interest. While it has been attempted by the US in the past and has been known for its potential oil wealth for a while it had been left alone due to the high risks.

Therefore it seems that there would be the requirement for a serious incentive to invest in extraction and security in such a problematic region. That incentive to engage recently, answering the question of why now, I have argued is the rise of China, the deployment of Chinese ships in the Indian Ocean and the subsequent realignment protecting SLOC chokepoints and diversifying resource routes from the US and thus the UK.

As shown there are now serious converging events making Somalia once again a place of geostrategic importance that can no longer be ignored. However due to issues of sovereignty it would not be sufficient for a force to be based there without legitimate reasons, such as efforts of counter terrorism and piracy.

Numerous countries such as China, UK, US, Russia and other European countries are sending their Naval fleets to the region to counter piracy. This discussion however has shown that this is potentially an exaggerated move if it were solely piracy that was the concern. What I have argued however is that piracy and counter terrorism is at the centre of a social dynamic of shifting powers and competition in the Indian Ocean. By understanding regional and international events we can certainly see how Somalia is an important piece in the geo-strategy of the UK in a time of shifting powers. Therefore the UK, with converging interests to the US, is playing its role as regional deputy while simultaneously trying to maintain Western hegemony in a strategically important area during a particularly turbulent era. Somalia is thus not a threat per se but it sits in a region of fundamental importance well within the remit of naval realignment, resource diversification and international security as far as the UK and US are concerned.

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