

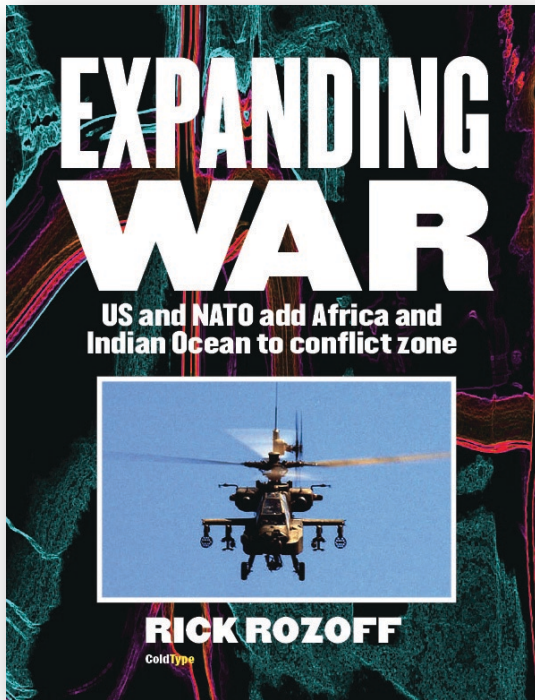
# EXPANDING WAR

**US and NATO add Africa and  
Indian Ocean to conflict zone**



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# EXPANDING WAR

In parallel with the escalation of the war in South Asia – counterinsurgency operations in Afghanistan and drone missile attacks in Pakistan – the United States and its NATO allies have laid the groundwork for increased naval, air and ground operations in the Horn of Africa and the Gulf of Aden.

During the past month the U.S. has carried out deadly military strikes in Yemen: Bombing raids in the north and cruise missile attacks in the south of the nation. Washington has been accused of killing scores of civilians in the attacks in both parts of the country, executed before the Dec 25 Northwest Airlines incident that has been used to justify the earlier U.S. actions *ex post facto*. And, ominously, that has been exploited to pound a steady drumbeat of demands for expanded and even more direct military intervention.

The Pentagon's publicly disclosed military and security program for Yemen grew from \$4.6 million in 2006 to \$67 million last year. "That figure does not include covert, classified assistance that

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the United States has provided.” [1]

In addition, “Under a new classified cooperation agreement, the U.S. would be able to fly cruise missiles, fighter jets or unmanned armed drones against targets in the country, but would remain publicly silent on its role in the airstrikes.” [2]

On January 1 General David Petraeus, the chief of the Pentagon's Central Command, in charge of the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq as well as operations in Yemen and Pakistan, was in the Iraqi capital of Baghdad and said of deepening military involvement in Yemen, “We have, it's well known, about \$70 million in security assistance last year. That will more than double this coming year.” [3]

The following day Petraeus was in the capital of Yemen where he met with the country's president, Ali Abdullah Saleh, to discuss “continued U.S. support in rooting out the terrorist cells.” [4]

White House counterterrorism adviser (Assistant to the President for Homeland Security and Counterterrorism) John Brennan briefed President Barack Obama

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on Petraeus' visit to Washington's new war theater and afterward stated "We have made Yemen a priority over the course of this year, and this is the latest in that effort." [5]

The alleged terrorist cells in question are identified by U.S. and other Western governments as being affiliated with al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula (AQAP). However, on January 4 CNN reported that "A senior U.S. official cited a rebellion by Huti [Houthi] tribes in the north, and secessionist activity in the southern tribal areas" as of concern to Washington. [6]

The Houthis' confessional background is Shi'a and not Sunni Islam and the opposition forces in the south are led by the Yemeni Socialist Party, so attempts to link either with al-Qaeda are inaccurate, self-serving and dishonest.

In both the north and south the United States, its NATO allies – Britain and France closed their embassies in Yemen earlier this week in unison with the U.S. – and Saudi Arabia are working in tandem to support the Saleh government in what over the past month has become a state of warfare against opposition forces in the country. Saudi Arabia has launched regular bombing raids and infantry and armored attacks in the north of the country and, according to Houthi rebel sources, been aided by U.S. warplanes in deadly attacks on villages. Houthi spokesmen have accused Riyadh of firing over a thousand missiles inside Yemen, and in late December the Saudi Defense Ministry acknowledged that its military casualties over the preceding month included 73 dead, 26 missing and 470 wounded. In short, a cross-border war on the Arabian peninsula.

The West, though, has even larger plans for Yemen, ones which include in-



**In Western news reports, or rather rumor peddling, Yemeni rebels are accused of supplying weapons to Somali opposite numbers and the second are reported to have offered fighters to the former**

tegrating military operations from North-east Africa to the Chinese border. Typical of recent statements by U.S. officials and their Western allies, British Prime Minister Gordon Brown disingenuously claimed that "The weakness of al Qaeda in Pakistan has forced them out of Pakistan and into Yemen and Somalia." [7]

Brown told the BBC on January 3, "Yemen has been recognized, like Somalia, to be one of the areas we have got to not only keep an eye on, but we've got to do more. So it's strengthening counter-terrorism cooperation, it's working harder on intelligence efforts." [8] It is up to Mr. Brown to explain why, if al-Qaeda has been "forced out" of Pakistan, he is adding soldiers to the U.S. and NATO surge that will soon bring combined Western troop numbers to over 150,000 in Afghanistan while intensifying deadly attacks inside Pakistan itself.

The British prime minister has also called for an international meeting on Yemen for later this month and announced that "The UK and the US have agreed to fund a counter-terrorism police unit in Yemen..." [9]

In Western news reports, or rather rumor peddling, Yemeni rebels are accused of supplying weapons to Somali opposite numbers and the second are reported to have offered fighters to the former.

In short the officially discarded but in fact revived and expanded "global war on terrorism" is now to be fought in a single theater of war that extends from the Red Sea to Pakistan. A joint endeavor by the Pentagon's Central and Africa Commands and the North Atlantic Treaty Organization to build upon the consolidation of almost the entire European continent under NATO and Pentagon control and the ceding of the African continent to the new U.S. Africa Command (AFRICOM).

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(Except for Egypt, an individual Pentagon asset and NATO Mediterranean Dialogue partner.)

In fact the Central Command was inaugurated by the Ronald Reagan administration in 1983 on the foundations of the Rapid Deployment Joint Task Force (RD-JTF) that his predecessor Jimmy Carter activated three years before. [10] The latter developed out of the Rapid Deployment Forces (RDF) launched directly to counter developments in Afghanistan and Somalia in 1979 (an integral component of the Carter Doctrine) and was deliberately designed to establish military control of the Horn of Africa, the Arabian Sea and the Western Indian Ocean.

Administrations may depart – George W. Bush and Tony Blair have left public office – and names may change – the global war on terror has been rechristened overseas contingency operations – but Washington’s global geopolitical ambitions, limitless since the collapse of the Warsaw Pact and the Soviet Union in 1991, have only grown more universal and the military means employed for their realization more aggressive.

The White House and its European allies have of late resuscitated and inflated the al-Qaeda specter to a degree not witnessed since the immediate aftermath of September 11, 2001.

Under the guise of protecting the American homeland from this shadowy and ubiquitous entity, the Pentagon is involved in military operations from West Africa to East Asia against among other decidedly non-Osama bin Laden-linked forces: left-wing groups in Colombia, the Philippines and Yemen; Shi’a militias in Lebanon and Yemen; ethnic rebels in Mali and Niger; a Christian extremist rebellion in Uganda.

Like the notorious 19th century “body



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snatchers” William Burke and William Hare, paid so well to provide cadavers to the Edinburgh Medical College that, running out of corpses to sell, created them, al-Qaeda is a dependable villain to be evoked as needed.

Al-Shabaab fighters in Somalia can be conflated with pirates in the Gulf of Aden to provide the pretext for a permanent NATO and allied European Union naval presence in a nexus that includes the Red Sea, the Arabian Sea leading into the Persian Gulf and most of the eastern coast of Africa.

The American component of the Greater Afghan War is Operation Enduring Freedom, which takes in Afghanistan, Cuba (Guantanamo Bay Naval Base), Djibouti, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Jordan, Kenya, Kyrgyzstan, Pakistan, the Philippines, Seychelles, Sudan, Tajikistan, Turkey, Uzbekistan and Yemen.

Djibouti, which hosts some 2,500 U.S. military personnel in the Pentagon’s first permanent base in Africa, is also the headquarters of the U.S.’s Combined Joint Task Force – Horn of Africa (CJTF-HOA), set up in 2001 several months before Operation Enduring Freedom and overlapping with it in many respects. The CJTF-HOA, based in the French military base of Camp Lemonnier, was transferred from the Pentagon’s Central Command to its Africa Command on October 1, 2008 when AFRICOM was formally activated.

Its area of responsibility includes Djibouti, Ethiopia, Eritrea, Kenya, Seychelles, Somalia, Sudan, Tanzania, Uganda and Yemen. Its areas of interest are Comoros, Mauritius, and Madagascar. The last three are, like Seychelles, island nations in the Indian Ocean. The U.S. expanded Camp Lemonnier to five times its original size in 2006 and troops from all

branches of the U.S. armed services “use the base when not working ‘downrange’ in countries such as Kenya, Ethiopia and Yemen.” [11]

In announcing recently that “Yemen has received military equipment from the United States to aid the government’s fight against the al-Qaeda network in the south of the country,” a German news agency added this background information: “Yemen, in the 1990s, welcomed back Arab fighters who left Afghanistan after the fall of the Soviet Union.” [12]

As with Afghanistan itself and other locations where the American military is fighting insurgent groups – the Philippines, Somalia and Yemen – the Pentagon is frequently confronting fighters funded, armed and trained by its own government in Pakistan from 1978-1992 under Operation Cyclone, the largest-ever CIA covert undertaking.

A 2008 edition of U.S. News & World Report, a magazine that can hardly be accused of being unfriendly to the White House and the Pentagon, wrote of the war in Afghanistan that “two of the most dangerous players are violent Afghan Islamists named Gulbuddin Hekmatyar and Jalaluddin Haqqani, according to U.S. officials.” [13]

An assessment repeated in the August 30, 2009 Commander’s Initial Assessment of General Stanley McChrystal, commander of all U.S. and NATO forces in Afghanistan. The report, the basis for the White House increasing troop strength in the war theater to over 100,000, stated that “The major insurgent groups in order of their threat to the mission are: the Quetta Shura Taliban (QST), the Haqqani Network (HQN), and the Hezb-e Islami Gulbuddin (HiG).”

The U.S. News & World Report feature provided this background information:



**In the name of combating the very same bin Laden and al-Qaeda, the U.S. and its NATO allies are now, in addition to increasing combined military forces waging a war in Afghanistan now in its ninth year to over 150,000, more than the Soviet Union ever deployed to that nation**

“[T]hese two warlords — currently at the top of America’s list of most wanted men in Afghanistan — were once among America’s most valued allies. In the 1980s, the CIA funneled hundreds of millions of dollars in weapons and ammunition to help them battle the Soviet Army.... Hekmatyar, then widely considered by Washington to be a reliable anti-Soviet rebel, was even flown to the United States by the CIA in 1985.”

“U.S. officials had an even higher opinion of Haqqani, who was considered the most effective rebel warlord....Haqqani was also one of the leading advocates of the so-called Arab Afghans, deftly organizing Arab volunteer fighters who came to wage jihad against the Soviet Union and helping to protect future al Qaeda leader Osama bin Laden.” [14]

In the name of combating the very same bin Laden and al-Qaeda, the U.S. and its NATO allies are now, in addition to increasing combined military forces waging a war in Afghanistan now in its ninth year to over 150,000, more than the Soviet Union ever deployed to that nation.

Intensifying deadly drone missile, helicopter gunship and commando attacks inside neighboring Pakistan. A recent government report in that nation tabulated that 708 people had been killed last year in CIA drone attacks alone. Only five of those were identified as al-Qaeda and Taliban suspects. [14] On January 6 at least thirteen more were killed in a missile attack in the Pakistani tribal agency of North Waziristan.

Last month an American military newspaper reported that “A 1,000-strong Marine combat task force capable of rapidly deploying to hot spots could soon be at the disposal of the new U.S. Africa Command,” which announcement

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came “just a few months after U.S. Special Forces staged a daring daylight raid deep inside southern Somalia” and after another Marine force “had already deployed in support of training missions in Uganda and Mali.” [15]

In late October of last year NATO Secretary General Anders Fogh Rasmussen was in the United Arab Emirates [UAE] to rally NATO’s Istanbul Cooperation Initiative partners for a future confrontation with Iran. Addressing a conference on NATO-UAE Relations and Future Prospects of the Istanbul Cooperation Initiative, he expanded his mission to recruit the Persian Gulf monarchies for the ever-expanding Greater Afghan War. “We have a shared interest in helping countries like Afghanistan and Iraq to stand on their feet again, fostering stability in the Middle East...and preventing countries like Somalia and Sudan from slipping deeper into chaos.” [16]

Two months earlier it was reported that “About 75 U.S. military personnel and civilians will be headed to the Seychelles islands in the coming weeks to set up...Reaper operations, which could start in October or November. U.S. Africa Command is calling the Navy-led mission Ocean Look.

“The U.S. will base the Reapers – to be used for intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance – at Seychelles’ Mahe regional airport...” [17] The Reaper is the Pentagon’s newest “hunter-killer” unmanned aerial vehicle (drone) which is equipped with fifteen times the firepower and travels at three times the speed of its Predator forerunner, used to devastating effect in Pakistan and Somalia. Last October Somali rebels claimed to have shot down an American drone and local “residents routinely report suspected US drones flying over [their city]. The drones



**The permanent stationing of U.S. military forces in Seychelles is part of a pattern in recent years of basing American troops to man missile batteries, interceptor missile radar sites, air bases, counter-insurgency forward bases and other installations in countries where their presence would have been inconceivable even a few years ago**

are believed to be launched from warships in the Indian Ocean.” [18]

The permanent stationing of U.S. military forces in Seychelles is part of a pattern in recent years of basing American troops to man missile batteries, interceptor missile radar sites, air bases, counterinsurgency forward bases and other installations in countries where their presence would have been inconceivable even a few years ago: Afghanistan, Colombia, Bulgaria, Djibouti, Iraq, Israel, Kyrgyzstan, Mali, Poland and Romania. A report of January 7 claims that the U.S. plans to establish an air base in Yemen in the Socotra archipelago in the Indian Ocean. [19]

Later it was revealed that “In addition to the Reaper UAVs, the U.S. military is also considering basing Navy P-3 Orion patrol aircraft in the Seychelles for a limited time. Like the Reaper, the Orion can survey a large region...” [20]

A Middle Eastern news source reported on this development as follows:

“The United States is taking its military venture in Africa to new levels amid suspicions that Washington could be advancing yet another hidden agenda.

“American operatives are expected to fly pilot-less surveillance aircraft over the Seychellois [Seychelles] territory from US ships off its coast, in what Washington claims are [deployments] meant to spy on Somali pirates...[S]imilar pretexts were used to justify the US invasion of Afghanistan, the missile attacks in Pakistan, and its waning military operations in Iraq...Washington has also started to equip Mali with USD 4.5 million worth of military vehicles and communications equipment, in what is reported to be an increasing US involvement in Africa.” [21]

It did not take long for the U.S. to put

the Reapers into operation. In late October Associated Press reported “U.S. military surveillance drones are patrolling off Somalia’s coast for the first time....U.S. military officials say unmanned drones called Reapers, stationed in the island nation of Seychelles, are patrolling the Indian Ocean. [22]

“The developments come as the White House seeks grounds to establish a major military presence in Africa.

“The US military says it has deployed its drones [‘the size of a jet fighter’], capable of carrying missiles to patrol waters off Somalia....” [23]

Washington’s attempt to establish an Afghanistan-Pakistan-Somalia-Yemen connection is intimately connected with its plans for Africa as a whole. [24]

On January 4 a U.S. military website published this update:

“U.S. Africa Command has bolstered its anti-piracy forces with the recent addition of maritime patrol aircraft and more personnel in the Seychelles islands.

“The Navy last month deployed three P-3 Orion aircraft from the Maine-based VP-26 Tridents, along with 112 sailors, to the Seychelles to patrol the waters off East Africa....Patrol Squadron 26’s insignia, a skull over a compass and two bombs or torpedoes that form an X, resembles the Jolly Roger flag, which symbolizes piracy.” [25]

What sort of pirates the Pentagon is using as the pretext for its military build-up in the Horn of Africa and Eastern Africa as a whole was demonstrated last September when “Foreign troops in helicopters strafed a car...in a Somali town...killing two men and capturing two others who were wounded, witnesses said. U.S. military officials said American forces were involved in the raid.”

“Two U.S. military officials said forces



**A witness also reported that “the helicopters took off from a warship flying a French flag” and a rebel source said “We are getting information that French army gunships attacked a car, destroying it completely and taking some of the passengers”**

from the U.S. Joint Special Operations Command were involved.” [26] The Joint Special Operations Command was headed up by Stanley McChrystal from 2003 to 2008. He has moved on from overseeing counterinsurgency operations in Iraq during those years to assuming control over all U.S. and NATO operations in Afghanistan.

A witness also reported that “the helicopters took off from a warship flying a French flag” [27] and a rebel source said “We are getting information that French army gunships attacked a car, destroying it completely and taking some of the passengers.” [28]

French military forces remain in the former colony of Djibouti where they train for operations not only in Afghanistan but in several former African possessions. Troops, warplanes and armored vehicles from NATO nations – under the flags of NATO itself, the European Union, France and the United States – have intervened in civil and cross-border conflicts across the entire width of Africa over the past few years: Somalia, Djibouti-Eritrea, Chad, the Central African Republic, the Darfur region of Sudan and the Ivory Coast; from the Horn of Africa to the oil-rich Gulf of Guinea.

A report from last month provides some indication of the French role on the continent. Radio France Internationale described “French soldiers in Djibouti train[ing] for Afghanistan and keep[ing] an eye on Africa” with the following details: “Twelve special forces commandos arrived first” and “the army...storm[ed] the beach....The exercise, seen as crucial for battle preparedness in a region infamous for its fractious politics, included all the country’s military sectors – sea, land and air.

“As desert tanks zoomed onto the shore



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Mirage jets criss-crossed the open sky. Meanwhile, land troops were dispatched from the mouths of armoured personnel carriers and helicopters airlifted artillery guns onto the ground.

“It’s a show of force. It shows what France is able to do militarily,” said one army officer.

“In recent years French troops in Djibouti have been involved in a number of... military missions in Africa. They helped reinforce the UN brigade patrolling Cote d’Ivoire and last year provided logistical and tactical help to Djiboutian soldiers warding off an attack from neighbouring Eritrea.

“For the time being, the first theatre of combat these troops will see is Afghanistan, where France is part of the Nato contingent. The mountainous, arid countryside closely resembles Djibouti’s own undulating moonscape.

“The troops taking part are a contingent of a 2,500-strong force based in Djibouti.” [29]

In addition to intermittent armed clashes between troops from Djibouti and Eritrea, in the past weeks reports have surfaced of deadly fighting within Eritrea and between that nation and neighboring Ethiopia. Djibouti and Ethiopia are the West’s client regimes and military proxies in the Horn of Africa and, as is demonstrated above, the integration of the South Asian and Northeast African war fronts is proceeding rapidly.

Starting in the autumn of 2008 NATO began what it calls counter-piracy operations off the coast of Somalia and further into the Gulf of Aden, often in league with comparable deployments by the European Union, with which it shares warships, commanders and “common strategic interests” under the Berlin Plus and other arrangements. [30]



**Starting in the autumn of 2008 NATO began what it calls counter-piracy operations off the coast of Somalia and further into the Gulf of Aden, often in league with comparable deployments by the European Union**

The NATO naval surveillance and interdiction operation in and near the Horn of Africa is an extension of its effective takeover of the entire Mediterranean Sea with Operation Active Endeavor [31] initiated in 2001 under the Alliance’s Article 5 mutual military assistance clause and augmented by the blockade of Lebanon’s Mediterranean coast by NATO nations’ warships under UN Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL) auspices that began after Israel’s assault on the country in 2006. The latter’s Maritime Task Force (MTF) “has hailed some 27,000 ships and referred nearly 400 suspicious vessels to Lebanese authorities for further inspection.

“Thirteen countries – Belgium, Bulgaria, Denmark, France, Germany, Greece, Indonesia, Italy, the Netherlands, Norway, Spain, Sweden and Turkey – have contributed naval units to the MTF.” [32]

The NATO and EU deployments in the Gulf of Aden are the first such naval operations in the region in both organizations’ history and the EU’s first in African coastal waters.

The expansion of military presence into the Gulf of Aden and the Arabian Sea gives NATO nations control of waterways ranging from the Strait of Gibraltar to the Strait of Hormuz.

As veteran Indian diplomat and analyst M K Bhadrakumar described it in 2008, “By acting with lightning speed and without publicity, NATO surely created a fait accompli.

“NATO’s naval deployment in the Indian Ocean region is a historic move and a milestone in the alliance’s transformation. Even at the height of the Cold War, the alliance didn’t have a presence in the Indian Ocean. Such deployments almost always tend to be open-ended.

“In 2007, a NATO naval force visited

Seychelles in the Indian Ocean and Somalia and conducted exercises in the Indian Ocean and then re-entered the Mediterranean via the Red Sea in end-September.” [33]

He added: “US officials are on record that Africom and NATO envisage an institutional linkup in the downstream.

“The overall US strategy is to incrementally bring NATO into Africa so that its future role in the Indian Ocean (and Middle East) region as the instrument of US global security agenda becomes optimal.” [34]

Last August the chief of AFRICOM, General William Ward, said that Somalia was “a central focus of the U.S. military on the continent.”

To indicate the scope of Pentagon plans in not only Somalia but the region, “General William Ward has pledged continued support to Somalia’s transitional federal government....He made his remarks during a visit to Nairobi, Kenya, which is a key U.S. ally in the region.

“When asked about U.S. warnings to Eritrea against its alleged support of al-Shabab, the U.S. general condemned any outside support for the Somali rebels.” [35]

U.S., British and other Western officials have been straining to establish (the most) tenuous connection between the so-called AfPak war front and the need for direct military intervention in East Africa and the Arabian Peninsula, as was seen earlier with the British prime minister’s risible claim that NATO has been so successful in expelling alleged al-Qaeda elements from Pakistan that they have sought refuge in Somalia and Yemen. Rather than, more logically, in locations like Kashmir, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan.

Similarly, Western governments are sparing no effort to fabricate or exagger-



**There is a plethora of evidence, however, documenting genuine foreign intervention in the region: U.S. missile, bombing, helicopter and special forces attacks in Somalia and Yemen and coordination with the armies of Djibouti and Ethiopia in conflicts inside Somalia and with Eritrea**

ate links between the numerous armed conflicts in the Horn of Africa. Somali rebels are accused of supporting the government of Eritrea in its border conflict with Djibouti; they are also accused of offering fighters for the internal conflict in southern Yemen.

In return, Yemeni rebels are accused of providing arms for Somalia’s al-Shabaab fighters and hovering over it all is the implication that Iran is sponsoring Arab Shi’a forces in Yemen’s north.

There is a plethora of evidence, however, documenting genuine foreign intervention in the region: U.S. missile, bombing, helicopter and special forces attacks in Somalia and Yemen and coordination with the armies of Djibouti and Ethiopia in conflicts inside Somalia and with Eritrea. Saudi air and land assaults in Yemen with the resultant deaths of hundreds and displacement of thousands of civilians. French commando operations in Somalia and combat training in Djibouti for warfare in the area and beyond.

The true outside forces engaged in military actions are ignored in the West in favor of unsubstantiated contentions that the region is being inflamed by the same adversaries the U.S. and NATO are waging war against on the Indian subcontinent and that the villains in and near the Horn of Africa are, in addition to being the local al-Qaeda franchise, inextricably linked and moreover somehow tied with piracy operations. Such are the tortured logic and far-fetched subterfuges used to prepare Western publics for an escalation of military intervention over 3,000 kilometers across the Indian Ocean from the Afghanistan-Pakistan war theater.

NATO warships are bridging the two extremes. Last August the military bloc launched its second naval operation off the coast of Somalia the name of which,

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Ocean Shield, alone indicates the scope of the Alliance's objectives in the Africa-Asia-Middle East triangle. The mission includes military ships from Britain, Greece, Italy, Turkey and the U.S. and according to NATO "other countries are thinking of coming to reinforce the operation which could evolve at any moment." A NATO spokesman said at the time, "No timeframe has been set for this long-term operation, which will last as long as it's deemed necessary." [36]

The European Union is conducting a complementary mission, Operation Atalanta, "which has six frigates and works with fleets from the North Atlantic Treaty Organization and the U.S.-led coalition" and "operates in the Gulf of Aden and the Indian Ocean...from Somali territorial waters east to 60 degrees longitude, which runs south from the eastern tip of Oman and 250 miles east of the Seychelles." [37] Rear Admiral Peter Hudson at the fleet's command center in Britain announced last month that the operation may expand its range even further, taking in most of the western Indian Ocean.

Last September the commander of NATO's Maritime Group 2 in the Gulf of Aden met with officials of Somalia's Puntland autonomous region to plan operations.

In mid-December NATO made a direct link between its South Asian war and its expansion into the Indian Ocean by announcing it was considering dispatching AWACS surveillance aircraft to the second location. "Commanders are seeking to back up a five-ship counterpiracy task force with one of the airborne warning and control system surveillance planes, possibly sharing it with the allied International Security Assistance Force fighting in Afghanistan." [38]



**Rear Admiral Peter Hudson at the fleet's command center in Britain announced last month that the operation may expand its range even further, taking in most of the western Indian Ocean**

On the first day of this year a Canadian news agency, in a feature titled "Canada to help defend Yemen from al-Qaida reinforcements," revealed that "A NATO spokeswoman said warships patrolling international shipping lanes through the Gulf of Aden, which separates Somalia from Yemen, were aware al-Shabab, an al-Qaida-inspired armed group based in Somalia, had announced plans to send fighters to Yemen" and as a result "A Canadian warship involved in NATO-led counter-piracy operations off Somalia's coast now has an additional task..." [39]

....

Somalia and Yemen lie across from each other on either end of the Gulf of Aden where the Red Sea meets the Arabian Sea and the Mediterranean is connected with the Indian Ocean. An arc that effects the conjunction of three of the world's five most important continents. Territory too important for the United States, whose head of state last month proclaimed himself commander-in-chief of the world's sole military superpower, and what for the past decade has declared itself expeditionary and global NATO to leave untouched.

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