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An open letter to Uncle Sam: America, pray leave Somalia to its own devices

Said S. Samatar

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Abstract

The al-Qaeda-linked Somali insurgent group al-Shabaab has raised alarm in the United States. The proliferation of Somali piracy, too, has US foreign policymakers concerned. This open letter to 'Uncle Sam' makes a straightforward case: with the pirates, America should mete out collective punishment; with the terrorists, it should do nothing.

Keywords:

Somalia

al-Shabaab jihadists

Islamic Courts Union (ICU)

Somali piracy

US involvement in Somalia

Somali lineage segmentation

clannism

stateless African societies

collapsed African states

poet Ismaa'il Mire

Brigadier R. F. Smith

Notes

- 1. From Mark Twain, a documentary biography directed by Ken Burns, volume 1, [2001](#).
- 2. See review of Michela Wrong's It is our turn to eat: The story of a Kenyan whistle-blower, reviewed in the New York Review of Books, 14 March 2010, LVII, no. 1: 35-8.
- 3. Ahmed Nasser Abdi, personal interview, South Orange, NJ, summer 2009.
- 4. See the bibliography of Andrew Wapner's Master's thesis supervised by this writer, History Department, Rutgers University, March 2010.
- 5. Mohammad H. Hussein ‘Sheeka-Hariir’, Fieldnotes interview, 25 February 1977.
- 6. Said M. M. Shire - more popularly known as Said Suugaan, or Said Culture on account of his amazingly vast collection of Somaliana books, magazines and archival material - kindly gave a copy of Ismaa'iil Mire's poem Osma Oga.
- 7. In the port town of Kisimayu, 2008.

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