

Canadian NATO
Parliamentary Association



Association parlementaire
canadienne de l'OTAN

**Report of the Canadian Parliamentary Delegation
respecting its participation at the Joint visit of the
Mediterranean and Middle East Special Group (GSM) and the
Sub-Committee on NATO Partnerships (PCNP)**

Canadian NATO Parliamentary Association (NATO PA)

Djibouti, Republic of Djibouti

November 14 to 17, 2011

Report

A delegation from the NATO Parliamentary Assembly, comprising 20 members from nine NATO member states, visited Djibouti on 14-17 November 2011 to discuss NATO operations off the Horn of Africa, visit military installations engaged in these efforts, and explore a range of security, political and economic challenges in the broader region.

Canada was represented by Senator Raynell Andreychuk, Vice-Chair of the Mediterranean and Middle East Special Group (GSM).

Rear Admiral Gualtiero Mattesi, Commander of NATO's counter piracy task force briefed the delegation on NATO's counter-piracy mission, Operation Ocean Shield. During a visit to the flagship of the NATO taskforce, ITS Andrea Doria, participating parliamentarians learned that on-going counter-piracy operations have substantially reduced the number of pirate attacks in the region, but will not be positioned to entirely eliminate the problem as long as the root causes remain unaddressed. Rear Admiral Thomas Jugel, Force Commander of the EU NAVFOR Atalanta (Task Force 465) completed the extensive briefings on the anti-piracy operations off the Horn of Africa and the Indian Ocean. Somalia is a failed state and the central government exercises no control over vast swathes of the country, including a coastline from which many of these attacks are currently launched. Moreover, the area of pirate operations is so vast that several speakers likened the naval challenge to policing Europe with thirty police cars. To date, there has been no decision to engage Somali pirates on land.

Regional security issues and their relevance for Alliance security were discussed in meetings with senior military officials from France and the US as well as with diplomatic representatives from NATO member countries plus the Ambassador of the European Union in Djibouti. These discussions revealed how important the development-security nexus is in this region and the extent to which Western military forces operating in the region need to incorporate considerations of development challenges in their work there.

Composed of the Political Committee's Sub-Committee on NATO Partnerships, and the Assembly's Special Mediterranean and Middle East Group, the delegation also met with senior representatives of the government and the parliament of Djibouti, including Minister of Foreign Affairs, Mahamoud Ali Youssou, the Chief of Staff, General Fathi Ahmed Houssein as well as with Idriss Arnaoud Ali, Speaker of the Parliament.

The role of the African Union (AU) in regional security and particularly in Somalia as well as NATO-AU and EU-AU Co-operation were also on the agenda. In addition, representatives from the International Monetary Fund (IMF), the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), and the World Food Programme (WFP) briefed the delegation on economic conditions in the region, regional trade patterns, and persistent and serious famine in Eastern Africa.

DJIBOUTI

Though relatively small and sparsely populated (its surface area is a mere 23,000 square km and its population amounts to an estimated 750,000 inhabitants), Djibouti nevertheless is of crucial geo-strategic importance. Located near the Horn of Africa and close to the Bab el-Mandab which connects the Red Sea with the Arabian Sea, Djibouti is the centre of anti-piracy efforts in the Horn of Africa. It also serves as the headquarters for the European Union's Atalanta naval task force. A Japanese contingent is also operating out of that port and the city also hosts the forward operating base of U.S. Africa Command (AFRICOM).

Djibouti is a strategically vital country in an unstable neighbourhood. Host country speakers and representatives from NATO member states frequently portrayed Djibouti as a safe haven in a very unstable but strategically consequential region. In economic terms, Djibouti is faring better than most of its direct neighbours, even though, with an average 1,139 USD annual GDP per capita, according to the UNHCR representative, it is a poor country by any standard. The unemployment level stands at about 60%. Inadequate educational standards and a low level of vocational training constitute important barriers to economic development as does the dearth of water. Moreover, the people of Djibouti come out of a nomadic tradition and lack basic agricultural expertise. Djibouti does have potential as a generator of renewable energy but this will require substantial investment to develop. Djibouti's location will likely remain its primary economic asset and the region has become to depend on it for this reason. The port of Djibouti, for example, handles approximately 90% of Ethiopian seaborne imports and exports. This is critical to Ethiopia as its economy is growing rapidly.

President Ismail Omar Guelleh is the central political actor in his country and the parliament is entirely controlled by legislators sympathetic to him. Djibouti opted for a multi-party system in 1992, though in practice it is dominated by one party. One independent observer described the opposition, which is currently not represented in the parliament, as weak and divided and it was learnt that the governing party has co-opted opposition figures by bringing them into the ranks of that party. Clans and sub-clans continue to dominate Djibouti's political and economic life and this constitutes something of a barrier to constructing a more modern democracy along lines familiar to those in the West. The Government has initiated some economic reforms, but implementation has been problematic. Despite the myriad social and economic challenges it faces - including an influx of refugees, some political unrest and drought - Djibouti will likely remain reasonably stable over the short-term.

Although it does not confront any immediate threats, Djibouti's security situation is clearly conditioned by instability in the neighbourhood. The challenges to the country and to regional security derive from a host of inter-state conflicts like those between Eritrea and Ethiopia or Ethiopia and Somalia, as well as numerous internal conflicts such as those currently plaguing Sudan and Yemen. Illegal migration, arms and drug trafficking and refugee flows are both a source of the dangerous security landscape and a consequence of it. Many of the region's borderlands are unstable. Domestic conflicts in one country can easily spill beyond national borders according to Colonel

Abdourahman A. Cher, Commander of the Naval Forces of Djibouti. Poverty, emigration, persistent drought and rising food prices are aggravating the security situation in North-Eastern Africa. Located at the crossroads linking Africa, Asia, the Middle East and Europe, Djibouti has become an important transition point for migration flows towards the Middle East. It currently hosts approximately 19,000 refugees, of whom approximately 90% are from Somalia, according to the UNHCR representative in the country.

Several speakers suggested that the utterly chaotic situation in Somalia constitutes the overarching security concern for the region. The lack of central state authority has allowed criminal and terrorist groups to operate freely in parts of that country. Maritime piracy and terrorism have turned the region into a powder keg. As a result, Djibouti is spending approximately 10% of its GDP for defence, while garnering substantial Western military assistance and training support to improve the capabilities of the Armed Forces of Djibouti (Forces Armées Djiboutiennes - FAD). This assistance has helped Djibouti to contribute to regional stability. The government will deploy a battalion to Mogadishu to serve with the Africa Union Peacekeeping Force in Somalia (AMISOM) later in November.

The FAD was created in 1977 and there are 6,000 soldiers currently in uniform. The army forms the largest part of the country's military. The Air Force and the Coastal Navy are relatively small in comparison and need to further develop their capabilities. Independent observers noted that the FAD is now able to conduct adequate maritime surveillance and generate significant intelligence. Colonel Cher noted that Djibouti has participated actively in the fight against terrorist groups since 2001 and also contributes to combating maritime piracy.

Foreign Minister Mahamoud Ali Youssouf, and Colonel Cher both suggested that relations with Ethiopia are strong and that Djibouti enjoys close economic ties with that country. Relations with Eritrea, by contrast, remain tense and that country is seen as a highly problematic actor in the region.

Djibouti co-operates closely with the African Union (AU) and contributes to the Eastern Africa Standby Brigade (EasBrig). As suggested above, Djibouti will deploy forces to Mogadishu within EasBrig. Djibouti actively participates in the fight against international terrorism since 2001 and provides important support to international efforts in this regard. It is also providing critical support to the international effort to tackle maritime piracy. The Foreign Minister stressed that close cooperation with NATO is in the fundamental interest of his country. The militaries of France and the United States play different roles in the country, but both are important partners. The country's leaders recognize that the presence of Allied troops on Djibouti's territory provides a degree of stability and security in a region which needs more of both. The Minister also said that the government of Djibouti shares NATO's values of peace, security, and democracy.

MARITIME PIRACY

Briefings on the challenge of maritime piracy and both NATO and EU efforts to cope with it were key themes of the visit. Each year approximately 20,000 ships pass through the natural choke point of the Gulf of Aden, one of the world's busiest shipping lanes connecting the Gulf's energy producers to the world's energy consumers. The delegation discussed maritime piracy with host country officials as well as with senior Allied military officers and diplomats. The delegation visited the Italian Destroyer Andrea Doria, which was serving as the flagship of NATO Task Force 508 during the time of the visit. Rear Admiral Gualtiero Mattesi and senior officers of the Andrea Doria provided a comprehensive briefing on operation Ocean Shield, NATO's ongoing counter-piracy engagement off the Horn of Africa.

Maritime piracy has become a lucrative "business"; according to Djibouti's Foreign Minister. In 2010 alone, pirates collected an estimated US-\$ 150 million in ransom money, according to Rear Admiral Gualtiero Mattesi. If higher insurance premiums, ransoms, security equipment, the re-routing of ships, the deployment of naval forces, prosecutions, anti-piracy organisations, and the costs to regional economies are included, maritime piracy is estimated to cost between US-\$7-12 billion per year. Since 2005, pirates have significantly expanded the area of operations, largely due to the deployment of so-called "mother ships". Pirate ships are now operating in a vast area spanning approximately 2,800 nautical miles from North to South and up to 1,450 nautical miles into the Indian Ocean.

Counter piracy operations off the Horn of Africa are primarily conducted by three task forces, namely NATO task force 508 (operation Ocean Shield, which currently consists of five vessels from Italy, the US, Denmark and the UK, supported by Norwegian air surveillance aircraft), the EU task force 465 (operation Atalanta, currently comprising six vessels from Germany, Spain, the Netherlands and France) and the Combined Maritime Force Task Force 151 with eight vessels (US, UK, Thailand, Turkey, South Korea, and Singapore). In addition, a number of independent deployers (Japan, China, Russia, and India) have also dispatched vessels to the region for counter-piracy operations.

Operation Ocean Shield, the Allied effort to contain maritime piracy in the Gulf of Aden and the Somali Basin focuses on four objectives:

- deterring and disrupting pirate operations at sea;
- coordinating international counter-piracy efforts;
- enhancing the maritime community's capacity to counter-piracy effectively
- developing a regional counter-piracy capability.

On the operational level, NATO forces protect ships passing through the International Recommended Transit Corridor (IRTC). Task Force 508 conducts escort operations for World Food Programme (WFP) and African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM) shipping. In addition, NATO vessels patrol and monitor the Somali coastline and intercept suspected pirate vessels moving offshore. They also encourage ships passing

through the region to adopt a range of measures to protect themselves from pirate attacks. Regular exchanges with commanding officers of EUNAVFOR Atalanta and the other counter piracy task forces ensure co-ordination of the wider counter-piracy effort.

While they are coordinating their co-operations, the EU counter-piracy mission differs from that of NATO, Rear Admiral Thomas Jugel, Force Commander of the EU NAVFOR, Task Force 465, told the delegation. Atalanta – the European Union’s first naval operation – is conducted within the framework of the European Security and Defence Policy (ESDP). Launched in support of United Nations Security Council Resolutions 1814, 1816, 1838 and 1846 adopted in 2008, the European Union’s Naval Force (EU NAVFOR 465) Somalia – Operation is designed to protect merchant vessels carrying humanitarian aid on behalf of the World Food Programme (WFP) and the African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM). EU NAVFOR also protects vulnerable vessels in the Gulf of Aden and Indian Ocean and deters and disrupts maritime piracy while monitoring fishing activity off the coast of Somalia.

The operation, originally scheduled for an initial period of twelve months, has been extended by the EU Council until September 2012. At present, eight EU member states are contributing to the operation: Italy, the Netherlands, Germany, France, Spain, Belgium, Luxemburg and Greece. Atalanta currently engages six ships, eight helicopters and six maritime patrol aircraft. The military personnel involved in the operation can arrest, detain and transfer persons who are suspected of, or who have committed, acts of piracy or armed robbery in the mission area. They can seize pirate vessels captured during operations as well as the goods on board. EU member states are positioned to prosecute those accused of piracy as can Kenya under the agreement signed with the EU on 6 March 2009 giving the Kenyan authorities the right to prosecute.

This broad counter piracy effort has helped lower the level of pirate operations in this region. Between 31 May and 30 November 2011 the number of pirated ships fell from 21 to 9 and the number of hostages declined from 485 and 240. Admiral Jugel noted that, since Atalanta commenced, no single ship of the WFP has been pirated thus ensuring the delivery of 130,000 tons of supplies to Somalia. Cooperation between the NATO and the EU taskforces and with the two other counter-piracy taskforces operating in the region has helped ensure a degree of efficiency.

Yet serious challenges are evident. Piracy is taking place over a vast area that simply cannot be entirely covered. Taken together, the counter-piracy operations of NATO, the EU, and the international community comprise a maximum of 30 ships tasked with patrolling an area the size of Europe. Admiral Jugel warned that Atalanta operates with very limited forces and could fall “below the red line” soon if EU member states failed to maintain current force levels in 2012. He noted that the operation urgently needs ships, helicopters and aircraft.

Various speakers suggested that the maritime piracy off the Horn of Africa can be reduced but cannot be completely eliminated with the available means and policies. Piracy in the region is tied to problems on land. Officials noted that the Allied forces in

the area could have the capability to engage on land, but are currently not authorized to do so as member states have not agreed on more robust rules of engagement.

By tackling piracy at sea, the international community is taking on the symptoms rather than the root causes of piracy. Military efforts, moreover, are not sufficient to deal with the challenge; a comprehensive military-civilian approach will ultimately be needed and Somalia itself will need to make a great deal of political and economic progress before the problem can be more fully addressed. Pirate cases will also have to be more effectively prosecuted.

SOMALIA

Members also discussed the situation in Somalia. The al-Shabab militia is not only threatening Somalia, but also neighbouring countries, including Djibouti. Continued fighting between the Transitional Federal Government (TFG) and the Al-Shabab insurgents in South and Central Somalia, combined with a recent drought, have led 350,000 Somalis in 2011 alone to leave their country, according to the UNCHR representative. The Foreign Minister called for the international community to maintain pressure on the al-Shabab militia to prevent it from extending its operations into Djibouti. He warned of al-Shabab's dangerous ideology, adding that 'the militia also has a plan of action to spread destruction and devastation to the whole world'. Speakers who commented on Kenya's recent military intervention into South Somalia expressed scepticism that the operation could contain Al Shabab successfully. In their view, AMISOM is better placed to take on the al-Shabab militia, though some wondered if AMISOM may not need more robust rules of engagement.

Somalia is a serious concern for all of East Africa and the situation is highly complex there. The country is not uniformly unstable. Somaliland, for example, is very stable and seems to have a bright future. Puntland is moving in this direction but it remains a centre for criminal operations that are holding its development back. South Somalia, however, operates in a Hobbesian universe characterized by violence, famine and anarchy. The situation there has broader regional implications and is obviously related to the problems of piracy and terrorism. The old clan structures of south Somalia have broken down, and there is simply no sign of civil society asserting itself in that region. The problem, in fact, is not piracy, it is the lack of legitimate and effective government in Somalia. Piracy is merely a symptom of a far greater problem. The security challenge is compounded by the sheer size of the Somali coast and its hinterland.

Minister Youssouf emphasized the need to stabilise as much of Somalia as possible. In this context he noted that the Transitional Federal Government (TFG) in Somalia needs the support of the international community. The Minister acknowledged that the TFG has been viewed sceptically. However, he reminded the delegation that the international community has no other official partner on the ground in Somalia. NATO and NATO member states should continue to support the AU and the AMISOM forces there. NATO could help in capacity building and in providing standby forces, he added.

Somalia's neighbours are working together to help stabilise the situation in the country. Djibouti hosted several UN-sponsored conferences on the stabilisation of Somalia in 2008 and 2009 and provided military training for troops of Somalia's Transitional Federal Government (TFG). Moreover, the seven member countries of the Inter-Governmental Authority for Development (IGAD), the secretariat of which is based in Djibouti, are committed to supporting positive change there. IGAD's mandate is to build regional cooperation and economic integration, and it has also sought to support Somalia's TFG.

The EU and its member states support AMISOM financially, in terms of planning and capacity building, in order to increase, in particular, the efficiency of the Somali police force and to combat violation of human rights. The Joint Strategy Paper for Somalia for 2008 – 2013 allocates EUR 215,8 million under the EC's 10th European Development Fund (EDF) It covers three main sectors of cooperation: governance, education and rural development. Bolstering the security of maritime routes is also included in the European Commission's 2009-2011 indicative programme.

The delegation also discussed other regional issues including the dangerous situation in Yemen as well as food security in East Africa. Yemen is a heavily armed country, has very weak institutions and is perched on the verge of civil war. An anarchic Yemen poses a general risk to the Gulf region and beyond.

THE ROLE OF NATO ALLIES IN DJIBOUTI

During the visit the delegation also had the opportunity to meet with senior US and French military representatives to discuss the roles and activities of France and the US in Djibouti and the region. The presence of French and US troops is a stabilizing factor for Djibouti and the region, according to Foreign Minister Mahamoud Ali Youssouf.

The establishment of an American command in Africa reflects both US recognition of the continent's strategic importance and the existence of an array of strategic challenges that the region is facing. East Africa has been a particular concern. Most American forces and assets are concentrated in Djibouti although US forces are present in a range of countries including Tanzania, Chad, Ruanda, Mauritius and Mozambique. Djibouti, however, is the only substantial US "footprint" on the continent and this is not likely to change.

US forces in Africa have an essentially "soft" mission, the delegation learned. Their primary role is outreach, the promotion of good governance and civil-military capacity building. There are, however, some active operations conducted out of the US base in Djibouti. While sea-based anti-piracy missions are the responsibility of US Central Command (CENTCOM), US Africa Command (AFRICOM) would oversee any land based operations were there a political decision made in support of such operations. This presence has been established since the 9/11 attacks and was initially driven by concerns about terrorist operations on the continent. Building security capacity across the region remains a primary goal, and the US military has adopted a comprehensive approach which puts a special emphasis on good governance. For this reason

AFRICOM works very closely with the US State Department and USAID to advance a range of diplomatic, development and defence goals. This outreach includes military to military contacts but also efforts to improve civil-military relations in the region. US forces are also conducting training operations in Africa.

AFRICOM's work includes, among others, coalition integration, international peace support training and a range of smaller projects that have positive military or security implications. For instance, the US military is extending support to the new government in South Sudan, which faces serious capacity, development and governance challenges. U.S. support to that country has recently focused on helping it to develop logistics and salary systems for its military. US support in the region also includes infrastructure projects which can yield both security and development benefits. AFRICOM looks at aid first from a security perspective but also wants to ensure that it advances productivity rather than simply creating a culture of dependence.

Famine in East Africa poses another set of serious challenges to regional security. The United States has spent roughly \$1 billion a year on famine relief in Ethiopia alone and has spent nearly as much in other areas. Famine itself has become a recurring feature of life in East Africa, which has grown significantly drier in recent decades. OXFAM estimates that there have been 42 famines in the region since 1962. Some of this is avoidable, the delegation learned. For example, Ethiopia could be a highly productive agricultural producer, but it lacks capital, know-how and a culture to exploit its potential, although this is beginning to change.

The American military work very closely with allies in the region and the relationship with French forces is particularly close. US and French forces conduct joint training operations and collaborate on a range of military, security and intelligence matters. That said, the missions of the two forces are different. France, for example, has a mutual security pact with Djibouti that is a strictly bilateral affair.

Djibouti hosts the largest French military base in Africa, with 2,000 soldiers. The presence of the French Forces in Djibouti (FFDJ) is based on the formal security agreement of 1977. The agreement guarantees Djibouti's territorial integrity against foreign incursions. More generally, the FFDJ work together with the Armed Forces and the authorities of Djibouti in a broad range of areas, including the civil-military realm, and Rescue at Sea. In addition to the operational military cooperation with the Armed Forces of Djibouti, the mission of the FFDJ includes a range of bi-lateral military cooperation with different countries in the Horn of Africa as well as a multilateral cooperation with the Eastern Africa Standby Force (EASF). The EASF, part of the African Standby Force (ASF) which falls under the African Union (AU), is composed of standby multidisciplinary contingents with civilian, police and military components in their countries of origin and ready for rapid deployment at appropriate notice. The FFDJ have a good knowledge of regional issues and are closely co-operating with Djiboutian authorities.

Moreover, the FFDJ provide logistical assistance to the German and Spanish detachments, which form part of the EU counter piracy operation Atalanta. Djibouti is one of the main forward operating locations for EU NAVFOR with significant maritime and aviation facilities. Since 2010, the FFDJ have also trained together with the EU Military Training Mission Somalia (EUTM) and soldiers from Somalia's TFG.

The delegation also had the opportunity to exchange views with Members of the Parliament of Djibouti. Discussions with Parliament President Idriss Arnaoud Ali and Members of the Defence Committee of Djibouti focused on regional security issues, particularly maritime piracy and Somalia. Meetings with representatives of the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the United Nations Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) on regional economic, development, and food security issues concluded the programme. In these sessions, the region's very serious development challenges were outlawed and the role of each institution in coping with a range of problems was discussed. The lack of security in the region is a fundamental hindrance to economic development and has been a factor in famine.

Respectfully submitted,

The Honorable Senator Joseph A. Day

Canadian NATO Parliamentary Association (NATO PA)

Travel Costs

ASSOCIATION	Canadian NATO Parliamentary Association (NATO PA)
ACTIVITY	Joint visit of the Mediterranean and Middle East Special Group (GSM) and the Sub-Committee on NATO Partnerships (PCNP)
DESTINATION	Djibouti, Republic of Djibouti
DATES	November 14 to 17, 2011
DELEGATION	
SENATE	Senator Raynell Andreychuk
HOUSE OF COMMONS	
STAFF	
TRANSPORTATION	\$5,220.69
ACCOMMODATION	\$668.07
HOSPITALITY	\$0.00
PER DIEMS	\$239.63
OFFICIAL GIFTS	\$0.00
MISCELLANEOUS / REGISTRATION FEES	\$256.19
TOTAL	\$6,384.58