



The Rt Hon Grant Shapps MP  
Acting Minister for Africa, the Overseas Territories and the Caribbean  
Foreign & Commonwealth Office  
King Charles Street  
LONDON SW1A 2AH

11<sup>th</sup> August 2015

Dear Grant,

#### **United Nations Somalia and Eritrea Monitoring Group Report**

You may be aware that Soma Oil & Gas, a British company, is currently the subject of a Serious Fraud Office ("SFO") investigation. These allegations relate to agreements Soma Oil & Gas entered into with the Government of the Federal Republic of Somalia, for oil and gas exploration in Somalia's deep water offshore fields. This is *not* the reason I am writing to you today. The SFO is of course rightly and completely independent of Government, and we are fully confident that this investigation will be concluded very soon in our favour due to the meticulously transparent, ethical and legally compliant manner in which we have conducted all our affairs with the Government of the Federal Republic of Somalia.

I am writing instead about a policy issue which may come before the United Nations Security Council in coming weeks. Based upon a recently leaked report from the United Nations Somalia and Eritrea Monitoring Group (the "UNSEMG") we understand that the UNSEMG will be recommending that the Security Council declare that the Federal Republic of Somalia should not be permitted to enter into agreements relating to the exploration or exploitation of its natural resources.

We hope that Her Majesty's Government ("HMG") will oppose any such idea and urge other Governments to do the same, for two reasons.

First, it would be inconsistent with HMG's own recently declared policy positions. After decades of severe difficulties, Somalia has at last an internationally recognised Government – one whose President and other leaders were received warmly by the Prime Minister in London in 2013, where he said "we are not here to impose solutions on a country from afar. Nor are we here to tell you, the Somali people, what to do". The Prime Minister spoke of his commitment to expand commercial ties between the UK and Somalia. Just a few days ago, the new UK Ambassador to Somalia was reported to have spoken of HMG's commitment to boosting bilateral trade investment (<http://www.somalicurrent.com/2015/07/20/uk-ambassador-to-somalia-presents-credential-to-somali-president/>). It would be most unusual for an internationally recognised sovereign state to be told that it may not develop its own natural resources.



Second, our Chairman Lord (Michael) Howard was careful to seek and receive advice in 2013/14 from Mark Simmonds, then the Minister for Africa, and FCO officials that reaching agreements with the Government of the Federal Republic of Somalia on oil and gas exploration would not be inconsistent with HMG's policy. Lord Howard has made it clear that he would have disengaged from Soma Oil & Gas had that assurance not been forthcoming.

It would be very helpful, and much appreciated, if it is possible for me to meet you, and your officials, in order to explain this policy issue further. Clearly it would be desirable to do so before the Security Council convenes to discuss the report from the Monitoring Group. I stress again my entire understanding that such a meeting could not, and would not, cover the matters being investigated by the SFO.

With your blessing, my office will be in touch with yours in the next few days to see if we could find a mutually convenient time to meet – perhaps around the time of the return of Parliament in early September.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Paddy Clanwilliam". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style with a long horizontal flourish at the end.

Lord Clanwilliam  
Non-Executive Director  
Soma Oil & Gas