

## **Evaluating U.S. Policy Objectives and Options on the Horn of Africa**

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I thank the subcommittee and Chairman Feingold for inviting me to participate in this hearing. I have been asked to discuss recent developments in the Horn of Africa and their implications for U.S. military and counterterrorism policy towards this region over the past two years. I will also offer some comments regarding our efforts to improve regional security capacity more generally in this volatile area of the world. The views that I offer are my own, as an academic and former practitioner in African security affairs, and are not intended to be a statement on behalf of the United States Army, the Peacekeeping and Stability Operations Institute, or the current Administration.

### **Counterterrorism in the Horn of Africa**

I suggested almost two years ago that the U.S. response to terrorist hubs operating in African failed states, like Somalia, had been less than adequate. I noted that military strikes which target terrorists directly have enjoyed few successes in failed states, and have tended to legitimate terrorist groups by providing them combatant status under the Geneva Convention. Law enforcement efforts have likewise enjoyed few successes in failed states, as civilian law enforcement agencies lack the capacity to penetrate or operate effectively in the violent environments presented by countries like Somalia. Security assistance programs, while enjoying some remarkable successes elsewhere on the African continent, require partnering with host nation security institutions that are simply not present in those areas of the Horn at greatest risk. While attempts to address the root causes of terrorism may offer an effective counterterrorism strategy, such efforts require extended periods of time in order to show results—time which appears to be running short in the case of the Horn.

I argued in my original study of this topic that better integrating the efforts of the U.S. foreign intelligence community with U.S. military capabilities and U.S. law enforcement offers a more effective strategy for countering terrorist hubs operating in failed states and ungoverned spaces like those that confront us in the Horn of Africa. The foreign intelligence community is best equipped to identify terrorist hubs operating in these areas which may be developing global reach and directly threatening U.S. national interests. Once those threats have been identified, a synthesis of expeditionary military forces and civilian law enforcement agencies will be far more effective in dealing with the terrorist hubs than either element can be while operating independently. The military forces establish access to failed states and ungoverned spaces for law enforcement officers, and carve out a secure environment for those officers to perform their core function of indentifying, locating, and apprehending criminal, in this case terrorist, suspects.

Dealing effectively with terrorist groups and activities requires more than just taking them into custody, however. Once terrorists have been located, identified, and apprehended, they must be screened to assure that they are, indeed, the terrorist suspects that the apprehending officers believe them to be, a task that I suggested was appropriate to a properly constituted and administered military tribunal, which could be provided by the supporting military force. Individuals whose status as a terrorist suspect is confirmed would then be delivered to an appropriate criminal justice system,

whether national or international, for arraignment and trial. This strategy would avoid the legitimizing effect of treating terrorists as military targets, while discrediting their activities through public trials that shine the light of international scrutiny on their terrorist acts.

In the two years since that study was published, I believe that events have borne out several of my original conclusions. Failed states and ungoverned spaces have continued to provide platforms for terrorist recruiting and operational planning, as events in Somalia have demonstrated. Our continued dependence upon military strikes as our primary approach to counterterrorism has yielded a few tactical successes, but has yet to demonstrate any long term impact at the operational or strategic levels. Those strikes have, however, generated significant levels of controversy, skepticism and outright mistrust among many of our key partners, especially within the AFRICOM AOR. The collateral damage, including loss of innocent civilian lives, which is an unavoidable consequence of military strikes, no matter how carefully or surgically delivered, threatens to undermine the moral authority of our counterterrorism efforts and arguably contributes to the ongoing recruitment efforts of the terrorist groups themselves. This is particularly problematic in a country like Somalia, where clan politics and the complex web of alliances and obligations among dia-paying groups lend unexpected consequences to the exercise of lethal force.

On the positive side, however, the past two years have seen some significant progress in fostering cooperation and synergy between military and law enforcement communities in the Africa region, including the Horn. Several developments on the American side have contributed to this progress, most notably the promulgation of NSPD-44, the establishment of the Office of the Department of State Coordinator for Stabilization and Reconstruction, and issuance of Department of Defense Directive 3000.05, which established stability operations as a core mission of U.S. military forces. The emergence of whole-of-government approaches to stabilization and reconstruction, both within the U.S. government and among its international partners, is transforming strategies for dealing with transnational problems like terrorism and drug trafficking in failed states and ungoverned spaces. This transformation opens the door to pursuing an alternative counterterrorism strategy that leverages both military and law enforcement core competencies to identify, apprehend, and convict the planners and perpetrators of terrorist acts. The emergence of security sector reform as an effective tool of state, sub-regional, regional and international capacity building can facilitate and support the pursuit of such alternative strategies.

### **Improving Security Capacity in the Horn of Africa**

The same developments that offer opportunities to enhance regional counterterrorism strategies promise to enhance the building of security capacity in the sub-region more generally. Integrated strategies that address capacity building in a comprehensive way have the potential to fundamentally recast the security environment in the Horn. Promoting rule of law and good governance, to include strengthening accountability mechanisms and supporting democratic processes, can lay the foundation for a broader and more durable concept of sub-regional security. This is not a pipe dream: the process is already underway in West Africa, embodied in the ECOWAS Mechanism for Conflict Management and its Protocol on Democracy and Good Governance, and clearly evident in the comprehensive governance and security sector reform programs underway in Liberia and Sierra Leone.

An especially encouraging development in this respect is the emergence of the UN Integrated Mission as a key player in stabilization and reconstruction efforts. UN Integrated Missions, the best examples of which are currently in Liberia and the Democratic Republic of the Congo, provide a comprehensive framework within which partners, to include the U.S., can develop and implement a complete restructuring of the security environment in collaboration with the host nation. An

Integrated Mission can provide levels of resourcing and oversight that are not available from any other source, and can offer a vehicle for undertaking the massive, transformative reconstruction of the security sector that is necessary to the recovery of states that have failed as completely, as was the case in Liberia, and continues to be the case in Somalia.

The rapid recovery currently underway in Liberia demonstrates clearly the potential of even the most devastated area to restore legitimate, functional governance, once a genuinely secure environment is created for the host nation and its partners to undertake reconstruction activities. In the context of Somalia, a quick transition from African Union forces to a full-fledged, Integrated UN Mission is the key to jump-starting a recovery process that will ultimately support counterterrorism initiatives as well as broader governance and security agendas. U.S. support to such a mission in a whole-of-government approach orchestrated through the mechanisms currently being developed by the U.S. interagency, under the leadership of S/CRS, can provide critical mass to this effort. Active involvement of AFRICOM, the new Unified Command for Africa, can also contribute significantly to helping U.S. agencies focus effectively on a broader security agenda in the Horn. Such an agenda, while it cannot neglect the other major issues confronting the sub-region, must center, first and foremost, on addressing the ongoing challenges posed by the situation in Somalia.