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“Establishing a Comprehensive Stabilization, Reconstruction and
Counter-terrorism Strategy for Somalia”
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INTRODUCTION

Good morning, and thank you, Chairman Feingold and Ranking Member Sununu. At this first hearing of the Africa Subcommittee, I congratulate you both on your new positions. I look forward to working closely with you and the other members of this Subcommittee during the 110th Congress. Thank you, for calling a hearing on this timely and important issue. I am pleased to have this opportunity to publicly discuss U.S. policy and engagement with Somalia and the Horn of Africa. Mr. Chairman, given your longstanding interest in Somalia, I am not at all surprised that this is the subject of the Subcommittee’s first hearing.

Somalia occupies a unique space, both geographically and strategically. The country sits at the crossroads of sub-Saharan Africa and the Near East. The overall security of the region is affected by Somalia’s continued lack of internal stability. In this regard, U.S. interests in Somalia and in the Horn of Africa region are to promote and support regional stability and representative government, to eliminate any platform for al-Qaida or other terrorist operations, to provide humanitarian assistance in the wake of drought, flooding, and 16 years of near-constant conflict in southern and central Somalia, and to work with governments in the region to transform the countries through investing in people and good governance and promoting economic growth.

For the first time in 16 years, Somalis face the prospect of rebuilding their nation. We have a real opportunity to help Somalis restore effective governance that is representative of the full spectrum of Somali society. We are pursuing a strategy to help establish stability, move forward with a process of inclusive dialogue and reconciliation, and begin reconstruction within Somalia. Under my leadership, there is a growing interagency team working together to advance our policy objectives in Somalia.

DECISIVE MOMENTS

A lot has happened since I last appeared before this Subcommittee in July 2006. At the time, the United States was encouraged by the June 22, 2006 agreement between the Somalia Transitional Federal Institutions (TFIs) and the then-Union of Islamic Courts. The United States supported this agreement, which came to be known as the Khartoum Declaration, including the points of mutual recognition and cessation of hostilities.

While negotiations initially offered great promise, by late July the actions of the Islamic courts were beginning to run counter to the spirit and the reality of dialogue. Immediately after the Khartoum Declaration, the Union of Islamic Courts was re-named the Council of Islamic Courts (CIC) and Hassan Dahir Aweys, designated by both the United States and the United Nations as a terrorist, was elected to be the Chairman of the CIC Consultative Council. On July 19, 2006, the CIC attempted to provoke Ethiopia into a broader conflict by advancing towards the interim capital of Baidoa. During the following months, extremist elements within the CIC – particularly the radical *al Shabaab* organization – hijacked the broader Courts movement, driving the CIC towards an agenda of military expansion and aggression. Despite international efforts to encourage dialogue between the CIC and the TFIs, the CIC chose to repeatedly violate the terms of the Khartoum Declaration through the takeover of Kismaayo, the September 18, 2006 terrorist bombing attack on the Parliament building in Baidoa, and military build-ups around Baidoa and Puntland.

These were decisive moments. Ultimately, the CIC miscalculated in its decision to pursue a military agenda and to refuse to join the governance process and the TFIs through peaceful dialogue. When the Transitional Federal Government (TFG) and Ethiopia launched a counter-offensive against the CIC in December, the CIC structure disappeared faster than anyone had anticipated. However, they were also weakened immensely by the withdrawal of support from the Somali population. The extremists within the CIC very clearly did not reflect the will of Somalis, as represented by civil society and their government.

A HOPEFUL MOMENT IN TIME

Following these developments, Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice sent me back to the region to conduct regional diplomatic efforts. My trip included visits to Djibouti, Ethiopia, Kenya, and Yemen in support of broader efforts to achieve lasting stability in Somalia.

The most striking lesson I took away from my early January trip to the region is this: Somalis are ready. Somalis are ready for peace; they are tired of war. While the TFIs are not yet ready to stand entirely on their own without international support, they offer a promising vehicle forward for Somalia. While developments on the ground have maintained a frenetic pace, there are many reasons to be hopeful.

In an effort to make the most of this moment of opportunity, we have engaged in conversations and negotiations with Somalia's various stakeholders and regional governments. This approach is in keeping with Secretary Rice's Transformational Diplomacy approach. I have met with my counterparts in African countries and regional organizations, and I have been seeking the advice and counsel of African officials and diplomats to resolve this situation.

During my trip at the turn of the year, I participated in a series of high-level diplomatic meetings, conveying the United States Government's position on various issues. I spoke with President Museveni of Uganda and representatives of the African Union in Ethiopia. I also met with the leadership of the TFIs, including President Abdullahi Yusuf, Prime Minister Ali Mohamed Ghedi, and former Parliament Speaker Shariff Hassan Sheikh Adan, and representatives of Somali civil society.

On January fifth, Kenyan Foreign Minister Raphael Tuju, Norway's Deputy Foreign Minister Raymond Johansen, and I co-chaired a meeting of the International Contact Group on Somalia. This gathering demonstrated the depth of the international community's commitment to supporting a sustainable political solution in Somalia through broad-based national dialogue and providing appropriate development, security, and humanitarian assistance.

The Contact Group issued a communiqué at the meeting's end that recognized the historic opportunity now within the grasp of the Somali people, as they seek a sustainable political solution based on the framework of the Transitional Federal Charter. Further, the Contact Group affirmed the importance of inclusive governance and additionally emphasized that funding to facilitate the deployment of a stabilization force in Somalia, based on UN Security Council Resolution 1725, remains urgent. This communiqué and the other sentiments expressed by members of the Contact Group that day demonstrate the unity and common priorities of the international community on Somalia. These themes continued during my consultations and bilateral meetings on the margins of the January 29-30 African Union Summit in Ethiopia.

POLITICAL DIALOGUE

The United States' strategy for Somalia includes three major priorities in Somalia. First, encourage inclusive political dialogue between the leadership of the TFIs and other key Somali stakeholders. Second, mobilize international support to help build the governance capacity of the Transitional Federal Institutions and provide development and humanitarian assistance for the Somali people. And third, although perhaps most urgent, move forward with the deployment of an African stabilization force in Somalia.

These objectives remain consistent with the objectives that I articulated to this Subcommittee in July 2006. While the United States does not believe that the now-defunct Council of Islamic Courts should be reconstituted in order to engage in dialogue with the TFIs, the United States believes that the key to long-term stability in Somalia now lies in a process of inclusive dialogue and reconciliation leading to the formation of an inclusive government of national unity within the framework of the Transitional Federal Charter.

To a great extent, this process will rely on the government's willingness to reach out and create an inclusive political process. This remains the greatest

challenge. The leaders of the TFIs must serve as symbols and architects of this process. The statement that President Yusuf made to the Contact Group regarding his intention to engage with Somali stakeholders was a positive step. He further announced at the African Union Summit the intention of the TFIs to convene a national reconciliation conference inside Somalia involving all key stakeholders in an inclusive process of dialogue.

In recent months, the United States has encouraged the leadership of the TFIs to make clear through statements and actions that they are committed to an inclusive process of dialogue and reconciliation. We have been clear – we see a role in the future of Somalia for all those who renounce violence and extremism, and we strongly believe that the TFG must reach out to groups that have previously been marginalized from the political process.

The TFIs must reach out to key groups inside Somalia, including: clan leaders, business and civil society, women’s groups, and religious leaders, among others. These groups, particularly those in Mogadishu, must also demonstrate their willingness to engage with the TFIs and to work together constructively. Additionally, this means that we suggest that the leadership of the TFIs reach out to religious authorities, including the diverse range of local, organic courts affiliated with various clans. The Courts’ members were, of course, also a heterogeneous group from the outset, so there are moderate individuals who could be drawn into the larger, official political process.

This is not an either-or proposition. The security and political components of the policy I have just described must function as two simultaneous efforts, progressing toward the same end point.

SECURITY AND STABILITY

This dialogue must move forward very quickly to reach a sustainable solution, on the basis of the Transitional Federal Charter, in order to stabilize the situation in Mogadishu and allow all components of the TFIs to relocate to the country’s capital. Rapid deployment of an African stabilization force in Somalia will help create a secure environment in which this political process can move forward and will help instill confidence in the Somali people that the peace process is moving forward.

The United States is working closely with the African Union (AU), as they prepare for the deployment of a stabilization force to help provide a secure environment for political inclusiveness and transition. On January 19, the AU Peace and Security Council endorsed the deployment of this force. Several AU member-states have expressed their desire to contribute troops or provide logistical support for this effort. Uganda came forward first, offering to deploy 1,500 troops based on United Nations Security Council Resolution 1725. Ugandan President Museveni’s initial offer has since been followed by other

countries, including Ghana, Nigeria, and Burundi, expressing a desire to provide troops for this effort.

As a crucial component of our strategy in Somalia, the United States is actively supporting the deployment of this force, particularly the Ugandan contingent, which requires support with strategic transportation, equipment, and other logistics. Immediate U.S. support includes \$2 million for strategic transportation and \$8 million for equipment for the Ugandan force, as well as technical assistance. With our help, and following approval by the Ugandan Parliament, we anticipate that the Ugandans can deploy to Somalia as early as this week.

This remains very much an AU-led and AU-coordinated effort. The United States and other donor partners are working closely with the AU, which recently selected Ghana's President John Kufuor as its chair. The AU is already working on plans to strengthen the Ugandan deployment with further troop deployments, and Kenyan Foreign Minister Tuju traveled to several African countries last month to solicit additional troop contributions.

Africans have developed a strong record of conflict resolution and peacekeeping in recent years. As Nigeria took the lead in Liberia and South Africa did in Burundi, we are hopeful that Africans will once again help what President Mbeki has called one of their "sister countries" move beyond strife and toward reconciliation.

However, it is the Somali people who must be responsible for local-level security without resorting to the warlordism of the past. We have advised the TFIs to make development of a civilian police force a priority, and ultimately the political process should lead to the formation of a unified military representative of all of Somalia's clans. For that reason, the United States has supported the call of the International Contact Group on Somalia to quickly "establish local-level stability throughout Somalia, effective Somali security forces, including a civilian police force." These efforts will be supported by the deployment of the stabilization force to Somalia, which will provide a secure environment in which a political process can move forward and effective security institutions can be developed.

In addition, we remain deeply troubled that foreign terrorists associated with al-Qaida have succeeded in establishing a safe haven in Somalia. Somalia's continued exploitation by terrorist elements threatens the stability of the entire Horn of Africa region. We will therefore take strong measures to deny terrorists safe haven in Somalia, as well as the ability to plan and operate from Somalia. In this regard, the United States continues to work with East African countries to build their capacity to counter terrorism and criminality that originates in Somalia. The United States Government remains committed to neutralizing the threat that al-Qaida poses to all Americans, Somalis, and citizens in

neighboring Horn of Africa countries. The Administration will continue working with Somalis, regardless of clan, religious, or secular affiliation to eliminate this common threat.

SUPPORTING THE TRANSITIONAL FEDERAL INSTITUTIONS

Developments in Somalia remain highly fluid. The fragile, nascent TFIs are only beginning to function and are only beginning to control territory, while spoilers and extremists continue to undermine stability.

U.S. engagement seeks to support the TFIs and encourage reconciliation among key Somali stakeholders. Given the absence of functioning governance institutions in Somalia for over 15 years, the rebuilding of governance and security institutions will largely be starting from scratch and will require significant external assistance. It is critically important that the United States help enhance the governance capacity of the TFIs, as well as support efforts to build governance capacity at the local and regional level. In this regard, U.S. assistance aimed at supporting short term, quick-impact, and high-visibility will be a critical element in building support for the TFIs and demonstrating to the Somali people that the TFIs offer a means of improving their overall quality of life.

At the January 5, 2007 meeting of the International Contact Group on Somalia, I signaled the Administration's intention to take concrete steps to assist Somalia. We are providing \$40.5 million in new assistance for Somalia. This contribution is a reflection of our commitment to, and engagement with, Somalia's revitalization. As announced by Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice on January 4, this total includes \$16.5 million in humanitarian assistance and \$24 million that will be used to support both deployment of a peace support mission and provide development assistance for the Somali people. We are also requesting \$60 million in FY 2007 supplemental funding for Somalia, including \$40 million for peacekeeping and \$20 million in humanitarian assistance for those affected by the current humanitarian crisis in Somalia.

We have signaled clearly that the United States intends to remain engaged for the long term in Somalia. Other donor partners have also agreed to identify additional resources for Somalia. However, post conflict institution building is ultimately a locally led enterprise. If international donor support is to be effective these resources must be linked to progress made by Somalis in achieving broad-based political dialogue and reconciliation on the part of clans, religious leaders, business people, civil society activists, women's leaders, and other political groups.

We understand that this is an ongoing process, and that we have not reached the end. Along with our African and international partners, the United States will remain engaged in supporting this much-needed process of inclusive dialogue, while also attending to the humanitarian needs of the Somali people.

CONCLUSION

The situation inside Somalia has changed a great deal since July. The United States, along with our international partners, have made significant progress toward supporting the TFIs and moving toward the rapid deployment of African peacekeeping forces.

Work remains to be done, if the political process is going to be inclusive and successful. While we welcome the positive statements from Somali leaders and encourage them to take positive action, we are cognizant of the challenges we face – which could include a lack of political will from some elements of the TFIs to engage in such a process.

One important factor continues to work strongly in our collective favor. The Somali people are tired of war and yearn for what the TFIs offer – stability, security, and governance. Our comprehensive strategy for Somalia is already showing promise, and we are likely to see more progress in the coming months.

Thank you, and now I would be happy to take your questions.