

Crisis in the Horn of Africa

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Perspectives on the Conflict in Somalia

The Role of the Islamic Courts in the Somali Crisis
Somalia: Drivers of Conflict

Somalia - The Regional and Global Context

Eritrea, Somalia and Somaliland
The Somali Crisis: An Ethiopian Perspective
Piracy in the Horn of Africa

Terrorism and Human Security in the Horn

The US, Somalia and the Horn of Africa
Political Cultures of Independence and Liberation Movements in Kenya, South Africa, Zimbabwe and the Horn of Africa
The Role of NATO in the Horn

Diaspora, Displacement and Transnational Security

The UK's Horn of Africa Diaspora
Transnational Terrorism: Horn of Africa to Western Europe

Summary

Perhaps unsurprisingly due to recent concern over piracy, discussion of Somalia dominated proceedings. Indeed, the opening address began with the pointed question: how could a country with one language, people and religion fall apart so comprehensively?

The Somali Political Process

Peace overtures and political reconstruction in Somalia cannot be considered in isolation from the region as a whole. Regionally, there must be normalisation of relations, and sustained, high-level international diplomacy. And this will require the engagement of the US - and in this regard, there are opportunities as a new administration moves into the White House.

- Ethiopia's military presence is a key obstacle to the peace process
- But Ethiopia will not withdraw if it fears a security vacuum
- The Transitional Federal Government is ineffective and is beset by internal division
- The international community has misread the Somalia crisis over the last fifteen years
- Any comprehensive solution will have to come from the Somalis themselves.

Somaliland provides an intriguing example of Somalis laying down the foundations of statehood and democratic government, and developing peaceful neighbourhood relations.

Piracy

While as with other problems, responsible government and state control was the necessary solution for piracy, the management of this problem can involve an international response.

- The local response is inevitably weak
- International efforts are beset by material, operational and legal difficulties
- Private security for merchant navies is not a solution
- AFRICOM initiatives have involved working with regional maritime forces
- Though NATO has despatched a flotilla to the Gulf of Aden, it is uncertain whether this will be a durable role.

Radicalisation and Counter-Terrorism

Radicals emerge from existing conservative religious movements, not extremist movements - care must be taken not to conflate these motivations in armed groups. Al-Qa'ida has struggled over fifteen years to establish itself in Somalia. And transnational terrorist networks cannot teach certain essential skills for successful operation in Western countries. Counter-terrorism operations should therefore endeavour to avoid aggravating Somalia's insecurity.

The displaced Somali diaspora are unlikely to be a threat to transnational security. Their radicalisation, based on present data and trends, is unlikely. Conversely, they are likely to be stabilising influence by providing capital and expertise to the Somali economy. But their marginalisation in British society must be carefully avoided.

Session One: Keynote Address

Sir Kieran Prendergast (Former UN Deputy Secretary-General for Political Affairs) began his address by outlining the great puzzle of Somalia: how was it that a country with one people, language and religion could fall apart so comprehensively?

There have been waves of foreign involvement: US intervention, UN peacekeepers, and multiple peace initiatives. All have failed. Now, Ethiopia finds itself in a morass in Somalia. The mess has been deepened by the fact that in the UN Secretariat, there are fundamental differences between departments on the correct prescription for the crisis. The Security Council has also publicly disagreed over peacekeeping measures.

The Eritrea/Ethiopian conflict (1998-2000) also dominated much of Sir Kieran's time at the UN. It was an unnecessary war, symptomatic of deep and unfinished business between the two countries and, in particular, the Tigrayan and Eritrean elites. The war between these states was punishingly costly: a war of attrition fought with modern weapons but antiquated medical care saw an enormously high ratio of dead to wounded.

And today, the Eritrea-Ethiopia Boundary Commission rulings are still unimplemented on the ground. The Security Council has also washed its hands of the conflict, having wound up the mission with so much still to do with nothing in its place - a highly irresponsible move. There remains an ever-present danger of miscalculation and escalation between the two sides.

In Sudan, multiple conflicts and fault lines create an interesting set of problems. The

common factor is poor governance and the domination of other groups by the Arab riverine elite. Darfur is an exceedingly serious problem. But it distracts attention from the implementation of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement - which provides the model for solving other problems in Sudan. If this were to unravel, it would exacerbate many other simmering or open conflicts.

So what can be done to solve these multiple conflicts? The major single lesson he drew from dealing with the Horn is that too much attention is paid to the individual components at the expense of the connecting components. There is a malaise in the region as a whole, which dates back far into the past. One might suppose that the Great Lakes is the most unstable region in Africa: but actually, the problems are deeper in the Horn. The divorce between Eritrea and Ethiopia might have been more peaceful, but where else has there been such a violation of *uti possidetis*? It is almost goes against the founding rules of the OAU, which held colonial borders as sacrosanct, in order to prevent the entire ball of string unravelling. We see the same dilemmas raised in Somalia.

Since the early 1990s, none of the treatments applied to Horn of Africa have worked. In the Great Lakes, the seemingly endless downward spiral was arrested by the Lusaka Conference. Plainly there is much still to do, but at least that conference did lead to a set of principles agreed by regional leaders, such as non-interference.

There is no equivalent in the Horn. The sense of unfinished business is coupled with a widespread belief that various member

states are arming and training extremist or separatist groups as part of a policy of mutual destabilisation. For example, Eritrea and Ethiopia ought to have a clear common interest in working against Islamist groups - but this is not reflected in their behaviour.

It is perhaps too ambitious to mirror the Great Lakes approach and have a similar regional peace conference - relations are too bad between parts of the Horn. The key to turning around the problems of the Horn is to focus on the relationship between Ethiopia and Eritrea. But this effort has been deadlocked. So how do we find a big picture, 'win-win' solution?

For this to happen there must be a normalisation of relations, including resumption of trade and transport ties. There is much scope for productive co-operation between the two countries. It should, in

theory, not be difficult to engineer deals between the two states. But proud, obstinate leaders operate in cultures where honour and face-saving are important. So this will not happen without sustained, high-level diplomacy. Yet this will require deep engagement by the US, the power that matters the most to both Eritrea and Ethiopia. It will also require deep and more informed diplomacy. Unfortunately, there has been an overemphasis on counter-terrorism operations in US policy towards the region.

Nevertheless, there will be a US new administration soon. There will be opportunities for renewed engagement; the Eritreans are in particular to build links with the US. Sir Kieran concluded by stressing that a new sustained, high-level and balanced approach is necessary not just in the Horn, but across the whole of Africa.

Session Two: Perspectives on the Conflict in Somalia

The Role of the Islamic Courts in the Somali Crisis

Mr Mohammed Nur (Head of the Alliance for the Re-liberation of Somalia) gave a presentation on the Union of Islamic Courts (UIC) and contemporary aspects of the Somali crisis. The UIC, he said, had been successful in winning the hearts and minds of the Somali population. They had much support in the Somali diaspora as they brought order and stability to a previously lawless country. They provided, in his words, ‘the change we needed for our country’.

Though the UIC was toppled by US-backed Ethiopian intervention, they have remained a political force: many have folded into the Alliance for the Re-liberation of Somalia (ARS).

Mr Nur criticised the Ethiopian occupation, highlighting a Human Rights Watch report that warned of alleged war crimes and failure to adequately prevent civilian casualties.

Ultimately, however, the problems in Somalia were due to governments. There are no irreconcilable differences between Ethiopians and Somalis, he stressed. Conflict stemmed from the authoritarian nature of government. And while the people of both states desired trade links and mutual investment, this must be preceded by military withdrawal.

Without the extraction of Ethiopian forces, Mr Nur warned, there could be no sustainable peace. Indeed, the very presence of foreigners perceived as occupiers would only

inspire armed resistance and, more worryingly, extremism.

The speaker emphasised that radicals emerge from existing *conservative religious* movements - not existing *extremist* movements. This would imply that outside powers, particularly those with counter-terrorism concerns, should be wary of conflating resistance movements with religious movements in determining the motivation of fighters.

The ARS believes that there must be dialogue with the Transitional Federal Government (TFG), but again, Ethiopian withdrawal is essential. To conclude, Mr Nur said that Somalia must not be held hostage because of a few terrorists. Somalis want a solution: and the Ethiopian presence is not part of it.

Drivers of Conflict

Roger Middleton (Chatham House) offered an overview of the variables that are driving the Somali conflict. He outlined key factors that serve to create a toxic mix:

- Ethiopian involvement
- The international community
- The Transitional Federal Government (TFG) itself
- Factionalism
- International arms flows
- Criminality
- Eritrean involvement
- Displaced people and refugees, and their potential for radicalisation.

A selection of these points was elaborated upon. He suggested that Ethiopian withdrawal is presented as a panacea to

Somalia's problems, but explained that this was not the case. Ethiopia is there for some legitimate reasons - such as a fear of terrorism and irredentism - there is a consensus that its presence has made the security situation worse. But withdrawal is not a sufficient condition for peace. In fact, Ethiopia's presence is a unifying motivation for a number of disparate groups, and only temporarily disguises the factionalism that lurks beneath.

Nevertheless, some specific dimensions of insecurity generated by the Ethiopian presence can be highlighted. The early methods of operation angered the population of Somalia - what was perceived as excessive use of force. There is also the long historical tension between Ethiopia and Somalia as a backdrop. So, as mentioned, it acts as a focal point for the resistance, whether by criminals, businessmen, warlords and opportunists. And it invites attacks upon peacekeeping troops from other nations.

The international community has also been guilty of a serious misreading of Somalia over the last fifteen years. Many proposed solutions are based on the premise that Somalia is a *failing* state. But it is clear that, given the absence of institutions, there is no state to save. Somalia is a *failed* state. Any state that is created will be new. Solutions must be informed, but the fact that the UN mission cannot work from Mogadishu indicates the difficulty in achieving this. Intelligence is sparse, and relying on people who may be sympathetic to the international community's objectives may skew the available data.

Furthermore, solutions must be acceptable to the Somali people and indigenously created. Somaliland demonstrates how solutions are still possible. The problem, as illustrated by

the Union of Islamic Courts, is that popular indigenous solutions may rub uneasily with our own standards of human rights.

The international failings can be summarised as muddled priorities. Foreign actors have become involved in Somalia for a variety of reasons: counter-terrorism, humanitarian relief, support for the TFG president or institutions, and regional institutions. But each of these problems demands a different approach. And failures of the international community will undermine the confidence of local actors, who will then retain armed wings and defensive capability which complicates the peace processes.

A related problem is the weakness and failure of the TFG. The president is unpopular, and problems with democratic transition have led to serious divisions within the TFG. The prime minister is unable to carry out his agenda because of the unwillingness of these two figures to talk to each other. There has also been an inability to formalise relationships between the security services - they are still beholden to their commanders, not civilian control, which makes it difficult for the TFG to have a concerted strategy.

This factionalism is replicated throughout Somali society: even in the ARS, there has been splintering. For now, Ethiopian presence provides some centripetal tendency, but there are few other principles for groups to coalesce around. There is one possibility that a centrist coalition between the moderate wing of the ARS and the prime minister's wing of the TFG might form - this offers, perhaps, a glimmer of hope.

Discussion

Much of the discussion focused on the UIC and ARS; their ideology and relations with the TFG. It was stressed that the UIC is not a united body - one of the component groups was extremist, and it was this group's views which grabbed attention. Further, individual cells are hard to control by the upper echelons of leadership, who may not approve of tactics targeting foreign aid workers.

The question of Somali irredentism was also raised: does the UIC respect the territorial integrity of its neighbours? Again, the issue of disunity was raised: some groups had made reckless and alarming statements. But Somalis' rights abroad in neighbouring states had to be respected in order to guarantee stability.

Some solutions were offered for improving ARS and TFG co-operation. In particular, the

quality of personnel in the TFG was an obstacle that has to be surmounted: the president's anti-Islamist stance is a problem. To overcome this, a stronger parliamentary system is needed. Yet the low quality of parliamentarians is a barrier to co-operation too; as an institution, the parliament is unlikely to hold the confidence of the people as it is now.

So what were the ways forward? Could track-two diplomacy be involved in the peace process? One problem highlighted is that after seventeen years of chaos, the political economy of war has crystallised to the point where there are many spoilers with an interest in the status quo. And though there still exists an active civil society that provides education and welfare in the absence of a centralised state, traditional leaders have been weakened as a result of the persistent conflict.

Session Three: Somalia: The Regional and Global Context

Eritrea, Somalia and Somaliland

Professor Iqbal Jhazbhay (University of South Africa) asked: To what extent is Somaliland a success story? It has laid the basic foundations of statehood and demonstrated commitment to developing the structures of a formal democracy.

International recognition is not a prerequisite to the construction of formal structures of government. Indeed, we have the opposite in Mogadishu. Such efforts can go very far even embarked upon in an entity that formed only part of a collapsed state. So in this regard, Somaliland is a success story (and this is the consensus of most scholars).

Somaliland is a demonstration that Somalis are capable of peace and stability. If a more nuanced view of Islamic movements is taken as a result, then it becomes apparent that rhetoric is toned down once the movement is in power.

An African Union report has also upheld Somalia as a positive example, without opening the 'Pandora's Box' of redrawing boundaries. Its success, therefore, should invite some creative accommodation as a de facto entity in international and regional bodies. South Africa has started taking this on board: its own legal advice is that Somaliland qualifies for statehood. Indeed, this advice concluded that in divided and fragmented states where peaceful separation was not possible, the principle of justice should take precedence over territorial integrity.

Part of Somaliland's success has is a result of its relations with its neighbours. It has come

to terms with the 'Ethiopian Question'. Ethiopia is the local regional power, and Somaliland leans upon its neighbour in security and diplomatic arrangements. There is also agitation for more open trade links between the two states.

Relations with Djibouti are not so straightforward: the port of Berbera in Somaliland is a competitor to Djibouti. But there are also tensions between Djibouti and Eritrea, and this has been pushing Djibouti and Somaliland together.

With Kenya, there is an intelligence-sharing relationship and there have been state visits. And with South Sudan, both states believe there should be a peaceful path towards secession. But with Eritrea, relations are cooler; the formal government position has been to not develop relations until the situation with Ethiopia has been resolved.

The Somali Crisis: An Ethiopian Perspective

His Excellency Berhanu Kebede (Ambassador of the Republic of Ethiopia) explicitly denied that his country has imperial designs over Somalia. Instead, he stressed that Ethiopia's national interest is in a peaceful and stable Somalia. To this end, Ethiopia has over the years been involved in numerous peace initiatives in the country, though they have been overshadowed by US and UN overtures.

The two states did suffer from tense and unfriendly relations during the Barre years, which often spilled into open confrontation. And more recently, irredentism has proven a worry for the Ethiopian government.

Ethiopia is certainly not acting altruistically in trying to create a peaceful Somali state; security demands a managed border. In this regard, bad government is better than no government. The Ambassador thus denied that Ethiopia had been involved in Somalia at the behest of others: national self-interest seeks a stable neighbour. He stressed that this has the potential to be a mutually beneficial relationship: regional peace benefits all parties.

For the Ethiopian government, the only way forward for peace and stability is the strict implementation of the TFG provisions of the Bagate Charter. And the international community must contribute to Somali peace in a more meaningful way. The TFG did not receive all the assistance and aid it was promised or expected.

The ambassador argued that a UN force with the means and mandate to assist in achieving these goals is essential; and there must also be a parallel development process to strengthen social institutions and highlight a peace dividend to bolster groups working towards peace and reconciliation.

He reiterated that ultimately, it is the Somalis themselves who will have to provide the solution: various factions must work together to ensure that the transitional period is successfully concluded.

Piracy in the Horn of Africa

Dr Thoko Kaime (Head of Africa Division, Exclusive Analysis) focused on piracy, a problem which has emerged as a particular headache for the international community in 2008. It is the side effect of Somali

instability, and its roots lie in the collapse of government in the 1990s.

Piracy initially involved taxing maritime traffic, particularly fishing vessels. However, hijacking and kidnapping have proven a lucrative new source of revenue. The average ransom demanded has risen from \$300,000 in 2007, to \$3 million in 2008.

These groups are normally composed of local fisherman, some with coast guard training from previous international initiatives. Additionally, intelligence and manpower is provided from militias tied to the authorities in Puntland. They operate in small speedboats, launching from larger motherships (trawlers equipped with GPS and satellite phones). The smaller boats will have hook ladders with which to board high freeboards.

Motherships afford the pirates a capability to operate well outside Somali territorial waters. They are even able to attack ships within the 'security corridor' patrolled by Coalition ships. The average distance of attacks from the Somali shore is 50 nautical miles. The furthest attack recorded to date is almost 350 nautical miles.

As the local response is inevitably weak, international efforts have been stepped up. But there are material, operational and legal difficulties. Currently, the Gulf of Aden is patrolled by Coalition Task Force 150, with assets from the UK, US, Australia, Netherlands, France, Canada and Pakistan. NATO has also recently despatched a flotilla of another five warships and one support ships.

Operationally, the main problem is area. The Coalition Task Force's mandate also encompasses anti-terrorist operations in the

Straits of Hormuz: for this, they have only five ships. Even with NATO's contribution, assets are overstretched, limiting the mission's effectiveness in an expansive body of water. A further problem is the difficulty in identifying a pirate vessel *before* they attack. And once a merchant ship is boarded, there is little that can be done without endangering the lives of crew.

And the problem of jurisdiction and convention remains. While UN Security Council Resolution 1816 does give authority to foreign warships to pursue pirates, it is unclear whether it makes international piracy rules applicable within territorial waters. While the French launched a mission to capture pirates, other states are reluctant to pursue as pirates might claim asylum under international law.

Discussion

Two main themes were tackled in the discussion session: piracy and regional peacemaking efforts.

Is private security a better solution than international warships? Insurers in the London markets are against this. It exposes crew to a raised level of hazard; if there is a likelihood of armed security aboard vessels, pirates will expect a firefight. There is a further hazard due to the impossibility of detecting a pirate attack until it is too late.

The UN Special Envoy has accused the Puntland authorities of profiting from piracy, but they have also undertaken some anti-piracy operations. What accounts for this selectivity? It emerges that the two ships saved in these operations had close links to the local government - other ships will not be so fortunate.

Regarding regional efforts, a key point was raised: until Ethiopian withdrawal, there is no chance for peace or reconstruction. The panel argued that perhaps a new approach was needed, similar to the broad approach taken with the Democratic Republic of the Congo. In this case, a lead state with diplomatic muscle and energy gives it their full focus. For Somalia, there must be a synergy of local actors and credibly committed international stakeholders working in concert. But the Ethiopians will not withdraw if they perceive that a security vacuum will be left in their wake. Therefore, international efforts are vital in both bolstering moderate factions and providing stop-gap security.

Who should the lead state be in such an approach? One possibility was raised of Egypt or Saudi Arabia taking the lead because of religious affiliation. Another panellist argued that better candidates were Algeria or Ghana. The former has both African and Arab credentials and facilitated the Ethiopian-Eritrean agreement. Ghana, on the other hand, has an emerging role in African diplomacy and could thus also be suited. Regardless, there is certainly room for their contributions, but the process must be Somali-led. And *all* regionally affected states must be involved in the solution.

Factions that do not want to talk to each other must be co-opted into any process. So while foreign states can facilitate a solution, they cannot carry it through. The African Union, for example, is limited in its ability to deploy peacekeeping forces by the insufficient economic capacity of African states. And while patience with President Yusef is running out, the TFG is still the 'only government in town'. He should be supported insofar as he implements charter provisions.

One pitfall on the horizon was identified - namely, the regional precedent that would be set if south Sudan were to secede from the rest of the country after the referendum. Somaliland, which has already declared its autonomy from Somalia, would have a particular interest in developments. There are also developing business links between the Somaliland and Sudan, for instance in

communications, and UN programmes have used Somaliland leaders with demobilisation experience in both South Sudan and Darfur. But perhaps it must be recognised that Somalia has become so fragmented that a unitary state is impossible. Significant autonomy may be the only solution for the future.

Session Four: Terrorism and Human Security in the Horn of Africa

The US, Somalia and the Horn of Africa

Admiral James Hart (Retired; former commander of the Joint Task Force, Horn of Africa) outlined American involvement in the region, with a focus on the recently-launched Africa Command (AFRICOM). A new US approach was developing in the region based on partnership and co-operation. Persistent, sustained engagement is the foundation stone of this new paradigm. This involves engagement at strategic and operational levels, including:

- Liaison officer exchange
- Civil-military co-operation with regional governments
- Crisis response (including natural emergencies)

Nevertheless, there are endemic inter-state and intra-state tensions in the region, so there are many regions for the international community to continue to pay attention to the area and consider future deployments.

The key duties beyond military presence itself involve civil-military co-operation, capacity building and relationship building. Military force may be used when required, but there are a host of other functions uniformed services can perform, such as technical assistance in the field. Military to military land training is also a key element of regular activity. Maritime training is also a vital aspect of the US' work, for example with the Yemeni Coast Guard and Kenyan Navy (as well as British partners). As with land forces, the aim is to train indigenous maritime capability rather than substitute for it.

A specific example of co-operation is US assistance to the Ugandan People's Defence Force. The Ugandan government asked the US for assistance before its Somali deployment. Two officers were sent to Kampala to build a logistical plan to move equipment from Entebbe to Mogadishu. Medical and peacekeeping training was provided, funded for by the US. This indicates the general model of involvement: communication of a need, followed by assessment and follow-up training.

Political Cultures of Independence and Liberation Movements in Kenya, South Zimbabwe and the Horn of Africa

William Gumende (Programme Director, Africa-Asia, SOAS) examined analytically the root causes of the political crises often encountered on the continent. Put crudely, there has been a failure of political culture to create democratic movements. We therefore have to deal with African political movements as institutions in and of themselves.

Six kinds of movement were identified, listed below:

- Independence movements, including:
 - Radical independence movements wanting total societal transformation, often ascribing to a Soviet model of revolution
 - Conservative, centrist movements; held a broad vision of reform without racial undertones (e.g. Kenyan African National Union)
- Second-wave independence movements, 1970s and onwards, as

seen in Angola and Zimbabwe. Fighting bitter liberation struggles, these movements had a military element and were often Marxist

- African rebel movements fighting existing independent regimes. These also had an extensive military element
- Individual military leaders forming authoritarian regimes (normally after a coup), ostensibly to transform society and draped in Marxist rhetoric. Examples are Barre and Mengistu
- Rapacious looters at the helm of criminalised states - see Idi Amin and Mobutu Sese Seko
- Religious states - see the brief rule of the UIC. One can make the case that Haile Selassie presided over a semi-religious state, but this used the same command structure as Marxist-Leninist states.

The character of each state leaves an indelible mark on political culture. Further, the post-colonial context is one of states arbitrarily pulled together, mixing linguistic and ethnic groups. The first priority for many movements is thus to unite these disparate groups. The second priority was to develop what were very poor states economically.

But the ethnic character of many of these movements was a problem. Initially it was overcome through super-coalitions and 'big tent' politics, either by persuasion or coercion. This, however, creates very unstable political movements. Parties that did not combine were marginalised, meaning no effective opposition existed. The real issues of society were not dealt with, and as a result when a large crisis occurs, the political order collapses.

And within these movements, power was also centralised to the point that a clique of leaders saw *themselves* as the embodiment of the nation itself. Militarised movements also created a cult of violence, which solidified a political tradition of violence. So when the opposition are seen not as competitors, but as the enemy, there is little hope for a democratic tradition of constructive adversarialism to emerge.

The Role of NATO in the Horn

Dr Jamie Shea (Director of Public Policy Planning, NATO) outlined the Alliance's new role in the Gulf of Aden. There is one obvious question: what can half a dozen ships do in such a large area of operations? Dr Shea highlighted operational developments from multinational experience in the Eastern Mediterranean (Operation *Active Endeavour*).

Network-centric naval operations now exhibit command and control capacity similar to that which is used in air control; ships can now be tracked, and patterns of suspicious behaviour/movement can be identified despite the vastness of the ocean. It is, of course, not a panacea - but Dr Shea remained confident that it ensured superior co-ordination of what assets were committed. Indeed, this same information can be passed onto civilian shipping companies, coast guards, and the International Maritime Organisation and Bureau (IMO, IMB).

It is not yet clear whether this is a durable role for NATO. The Alliance will have a dialogue with major shipping operators and oil companies to analyse the issues and share mutual concerns. With 22,000 ships passing through this route, carrying a significant share of world trade, it is in the international community's interest to be active. But co-ordination is the key, between Task Force

150, the EU and various national assets. Duplication must be reduced. Yet as mentioned previously, the final solution to the problem of piracy will be Somali: naval intervention can only realistically treat the symptoms of state weakness.

Looking more widely at NATO policy in the Horn, Dr Shea discussed material NATO assistance to regional peace efforts. The Alliance has helped airlift 31,500 troops in rotation during the AMIS II mission in Darfur. And co-operation is being considered in areas such as troop training for an AU standby force, doctrinal development and permanent NATO liaisons in Addis Ababa.

But it is uncertain whether these ad hoc efforts will translate into a wider NATO policy on Africa. The centres of gravity remain first Afghanistan, and next the Western Balkans. Nevertheless, links have developed both with Africa and its littoral - partnership with Gulf States, for example, has eased operations in the Gulf of Aden. NATO operations must add value in an environment already dominated by two foreign actors: the US (through AFRICOM) and the EU.

Discussion

The friction between American and Somalia/regional interests, perhaps unsurprisingly, dominated the discussion session.¹ Several problems were identified.

First, the US is primarily concerned with counter-terrorism operations, the expedients for which may clash with Somali security. Kenya and Ethiopia are seen as key pillars in

the War on Terror. This has led to complications, such as the US-backed Ethiopian intervention in Somalia which, it may be convincingly argued, has not advanced the cause of domestic Somalia security.

Second, AFRICOM is not communicating effectively enough its role in Somalia and elsewhere in Africa to sceptical local publics. It is misconception that AFRICOM is even operating in Somalia - it is not. Nevertheless, the difficulty of convincing publics who are distrustful of militaries is a key challenge, and one that must be overcome, especially for missions and activities that rely on partnership and co-operation.

Third, AFRICOM's blurring of military and humanitarian work concerns non-governmental organisations (NGOs): it risks jeopardising their work. Yet the US military often has crucial skills that are needed in emergency contexts. And AFRICOM is primarily concerned with building indigenous capacity, in particular the fostering of a military ethos that is subservient to civilian control. But where there are no security issues, then most if not all the work can be left to NGOs.

In sum, AFRICOM may be a hard sell to local publics if the question of when force will be used remains open.

¹ A fuller account is provided in the RUSI AFRICOM Conference report, available at <http://www.rusi.org/downloads/assets/AFRICOM_and_US-Africa_Relations.pdf>.

Session Five: Diaspora Displacement and Transnational Security

The UK's Horn of Africa Diaspora

Mohamud Gure (Chairman, Somalia Concern) focused his talk on the economic issues facing East African diaspora in Europe and North America, as well as the potential for radicalisation in these communities.

Small business is the dominant means of economic participation for diaspora. In particular, restaurants and grocery stores, internet and phone cafés and travel agencies. There is also a considerable contribution to professional fields, such as medicine, journalism, academia and transportation. There is considerable variation in education and earnings.

There are a number of dimensions to the diaspora's involvement in the domestic Somali economy and economic development. It is no secret that growth has been stunted by the ravages of war - and there exist formidable challenges to investment:

- Access to land
- Access to finance
- Corruption
- Political instability (insurgency)
- Criminal activity (kidnapping, gangs)
- Lack of rule of law to protect investments
- Energy shortages
- Skilled labour shortages
- High taxes and duties
- Fluctuating exchange rates
- Small market size (due to poor regional economic co-operation)

Despite these hindrances, there is a willingness to invest and there has been remarkable achievement in some sectors - such as mobile telecommunications. Despite

years of state failure, Somalia has the cheapest and best internet connectivity and mobile telephony in the region. And what hospitals and schools do function have been financed by foreign remittances. The lack of a formal banking sector has not impeded internet-based monetary transfers. Domestically operating charities have been funded by diaspora money, providing livelihood to many families in the region.

And poverty reduction is the key weapon against radicalisation. Promotion of good governance (particularly, an independent judicial system capable of upholding property rights) is essential. Credible alternatives to violence and insurgency are needed - and this means a functioning state with a popularly accepted government.

The upshot of this economic basis to much of the violence is that force itself is not a solution. It creates resentment and facilitates the recruitment of radicals. Further, neighbouring states must refrain from sustaining the Somali conflict - most arms entering the country do so from Ethiopia.

Yet the fight against radicalisation also takes place abroad. Using the example of Britain, Mr Gure advocated dialogue with radical groups and attention to the economic plight of the Somali diaspora: unemployment is currently very high, with many under-qualified youth providing easy pickings for recruiters for criminality or radical agendas. The youth must be brought into the job market, and there must be concerted government and community action to boost confidence in the UK and its values.

Transnational Terrorism - Horn of Africa to Western Europe

Peter Cole (Exclusive Analysis) assessed the risk of Somalia as a base for foreign terrorists or factor in domestic radicalisation. In both cases, the risk appeared low.

Since 9/11, attention shifted to failed states as potential havens for terrorist groups operating transnationally. But Al-Qa'ida has had a very difficult time operating in Somalia. Osama Bin Laden, it is believed, was certainly interested in setting up a base there. It was assumed that the lack of state control would allow a favourable operating environment, and that poor, disaffected locals would be easily recruited. These were incorrect assumptions.

Indeed, when foreign activists were successful in 1993 in setting up in Somalia, it was in co-operation with a local Islamist group. And instead of Al-Qa'ida being a commanding presence, it was at the mercy of intra-Somali factional politics. Between 1993 and 1997, Al-Qa'ida attempted to set up three major camps in the region. And these were not the self-radicalised, naïve militants seen today: rather, they were well-organised and had tremendous initiative, setting up camps that trained hundreds at a time.

But they could not prevent failure. The camps ran out of money, operatives returned to Afghanistan, all because of insufficient logistics and an inability to gain local trust. Firstly, the camps were located in remote regions and were incredibly difficult to travel to: protection had to be paid, vehicles had to be hired, tribal leaders had to be bribed (of which there were many). And robbery was an ever-present problem. The three-month budget for the Ogaden camp was \$130,000, with little to show for it. Furthermore, interaction with the locals fell apart when Al-

Qa'ida ran afoul of cultural sensitivities, causing a familial and tribal backlash. Though by 1997 the camps had deteriorated, some heavily radicalised Somalis did stay on in local militias.

Today, there is some camp activity, although nowhere near the level of the 1990s. Does this matter to the West? It is true that transnational networks play a key role in marrying radical motivation with training and access to technical skills (such as bomb-making). And there is also a key role in building networks. But while they can teach small arms, command and administration training, these networks struggle to provide other crucial skills needed for covert operation. As a result, young activists even after training will make easily detectable mistakes, such as falling to basic surveillance and being arrested for minor misdemeanours. Fortunately for the West, organisation and secrecy are not easily taught.

So the Somali experience is, on balance, of little relevance to covert terrorism. And there are no indications that this will change in the Somali context. Further, the Somali diaspora in the UK does not show up as a threat when one considers the data on those arrested for terrorism offences or under monitoring.

There are some useful indicators of future risk which may be monitored, however:

- Evidence of Somalis fighting in or returning from other theatres such as Yemen, Iraq, Pakistan or Afghanistan
- Older Somalis appearing in Western European networks as organisers
- Business and organisational activity by radical networks in Kenya
- A new offensive in the Ogaden or Ethiopia by Al-Shabab.

Discussion

The question was raised as to potential radicalisation in UK communities of second and third generation Somalis. More specifically, did these Somalis have more affinity with a British Muslim identity, or with a radical Muslim identity? The latter is certainly encouraged by radical preachers. Encouraging a Muslim identity to take precedence over British has had some success in the Pakistani community where some cultural values sit uneasily with British ones, but cultural differences between Somalis and Asian Muslims will remain and hinder this direction of radicalisation.

This cultural distinction within the wider British Muslim community is often missed by external commentators. But perceived exclusion from economic opportunity and wider alienation can undermine the adoption of a British identity. This is the case, for example, more in the Pakistani community than in other Muslim communities in the UK.

Was there, therefore, more of a risk of radicalisation in diasporas than in the home community? Strong ties to lineage in Somali culture could mean that recruiters within a clan could have success. But it is impossible for foreigners to hide in Somalia. And in the UK, communities do not want radicals in their neighbourhood. Further, the British government has put much effort since the July 2005 bombings into targeting young men to offer them economic opportunity through training and other means of inclusion. Yet some difficulties remain - the leadership of community organisations is often self-appointed and is drawn from the professional classes, who may not necessarily speak for the community as a whole, especially those on the bottom rung of the economic ladder. Further, these same organisations can be dominated by ethnic groups within the wider

community: Somalis are not particularly well represented in UK Muslim community groups.

Attention then turned to the topic of Al-Qa'ida in Somalia. Questions were raised about the presence of the group during the UIC rule. As with so much about Somali security, fragmentary evidence is a problem. While observers should be wary of Al-Shabab aligning with Al-Qa'ida, there are significant factional rivalries and politicking that have undermined contacts in recent times. And whatever links there are, are under pressure from US counter-terrorism efforts.

But is there a risk of counter-productive radicalisation from these US efforts? In terms of the UIC, US intervention has perhaps made it a more coherent organisation, rather than a loose clan-based collection of fragmented parts. Now it benefits from a more popular uprising against foreign military presence. However, what radicalisation there is has been very localised and is not a threat to the US. And again, the ultimate solution is a functioning Somali government, especially one that can manage porous borders.

A general key problem was highlighted: evidence, as stated, is extremely fragmentary, and it is very difficult for foreigners to operate in Somalia. So people outside the country make assessments without information on the ground.