

FHSMUN XXIX SECURITY COUNCIL

THE SITUATION IN SOMALIA

Introduction

The Horn of Africa is clearly an area of serious strategic and security concerns. Encompassing Djibouti, Ethiopia, Eritrea, Kenya, Somalia, and eastern Sudan, this strategic outlet to the Red Sea, Arabian Peninsula, and Indian Ocean is considered a critical area because of existing political and military conflicts and rivalries as well as hotbed for international terrorism. Within the Horn of Africa, the Security Council's primary contemporary concern is the instability and precariousness of the situation in Somalia.

Somalia is frequently cited as the most classic example of a "failed state," a country where no government actually exercises effective authority or even functions. In July/August 2007, *Foreign Policy* magazine ranked Somalia 3rd on its survey of failed states.¹ Further complicating the situation is the fact that military and political leaders are exploiting the divisive nature of Somalia's clan-based society; in 2007, the international non-governmental organization (NGO) Minority Rights Group (MRG) ranked Somalia as the most dangerous country in the world for minority groups.² While various initiatives have been attempted to restore order and stability in Somalia, no effective, and certainly no legitimate, government has exercised control in Somalia since at least 1991. Somalia's internal divisions and weaknesses have provided Somalia's neighbors, especially Ethiopia, with significant opportunities to seek to extend influence within Somalia and throughout the Horn of Africa. The lack of any effective national government has also been cited as providing terrorist organizations, including al-Qaeda, with crucial safe havens to organize, recruit, and actually carry out operations.

Recent Somali History

Somalia's strategic location made it an attractive possession during the height of European colonialism as well as during the Cold War rivalry between the United States and the former Soviet Union. Italy and the United Kingdom (UK) sought to establish dominance in the Horn of Africa and in the areas of modern Somalia during the first half of the twentieth century. After independence in 1960, Somalia implemented a parliamentary democracy until Mohammed Siad Barre seized power in a military *coup* in March 1969. Barre would hold power until he was, in turn, overthrown by various Somali rebel groups in 1991.

In the early 1970's, Barre would establish a socialist state under the control of his Somali Revolutionary Socialist Party (SRSP) and he would establish close ties with the

¹ The Fund for Peace and *Foreign Policy*, "The Failed States Index 2007" *Foreign Policy* July/August 2007.

² *BBC News*, "Somalia tops minority threat list" March 20, 2007.

Soviet Union. When neighboring Ethiopia underwent its own socialist revolution in the mid-1970's, the Soviet Union sought to expand its influence there. Somalia and Ethiopia fought a brutal war in 1977-1978 over the Ogaden Desert region and Somalia's humiliating defeat, as well as Soviet support for Ethiopia, would eventually convince Barre to seek an alliance with the United States in order to counter the Mengistu communist regime in Ethiopia. Barre and the US both reaped short-term benefits from this arrangement. "The United States granted Barre generous aid, directly and via the international bank [the World Bank Group], to enable his regime to survive. In exchange, Somalia allowed the United States to utilize docking services at the strategic port of Berbera, which had previously served the Soviet Navy."³ While this US aid would sustain Barre's regime for the short term, internal dissent would escalate and Barre would be deposed by a chaotic coalition of dissident clan and tribal leaders, some of whom were supported directly by the government of Ethiopia.

After Barre fled to Nigeria in 1991, the various rebel factions who had overthrown had to seek to form a government of national unity. In a country divided along clan, ethnic, and geographic lines, creating a legitimate national unity government would be daunting under the best of circumstances, much less in the immediate aftermath of the violent overthrow of a 22-year dictatorship. The United Somali Congress (USC), affiliated with the central Hawiye tribe, sought to provide new leadership for Somalia but infighting within the USC between Mohammed Ali Mahdi and General Mohammed Farah Aidid sparked a brutal civil war that would ravage Somalia. Shaul Shay notes that "the ruthless battle between the rival tribes and factions, the collapse of all governmental systems, including the supply of basic products, in addition to the severe drought that prevailed in the area (which reportedly caused the deaths of some 300,000 people in 1992)-all of these factors contributed to major disaster for Somali residents."⁴ As images of thousands of starving skeletal figures filled the television screens of people around the world, the Security Council, no longer hampered by the Cold War rivalries between capitalist and communist societies, authorized a large-scale peacekeeping mission to provide humanitarian relief to the people of Somalia.

Operation Restore Hope

During the Cold War, the United States and Soviet Union rarely participated in UN peacekeeping missions; in fact, it was frequently quite difficult to authorize new peacekeeping missions because of these rivalries. In the optimistic aftermath of the Cold War, the Security Council authorized many more peacekeeping missions and the United States took the lead in the peacekeeping mission in Somalia (UNOSOM). When UNOSOM arrived in Somalia in December 1992, the peacekeeping soldiers were charged "with the following roles: providing humanitarian relief for Somalia's starving population, disarming the fighting sides, and forming a stable central government based on the Western model. The UN's steps met with dogged resistance on the part of traditional powerbrokers and entities with political interests in Somalia, and the UN's

³ Shaul Shay, *The Red Sea Terror Triangle: Sudan, Somalia, and Yemen and Islamic Terror* Transaction Publishers New Jersey 2007 p. 66.

⁴ Shaul Shay, *The Red Sea Terror Triangle* 2007 p. 71.

humanitarian mission rapidly deteriorated into a violent confrontation with local militias, particularly with the forces of General Aidid, which inflicted heavy casualties on the UN forces.”⁵ In June 1993, Aidid’s forces ambushed and massacred 24 Pakistani peacekeepers. This incident constituted a turning point in UNOSOM’s effectiveness and relationship with the Somali people. UNOSOM became closely identified with revenge in the minds of many Somalis and the perceived anti-Aidid bias of UN peacekeepers, including the 20,000+ US marines and soldiers in Somalia, despoiled the previous goodwill that had existed between Somalis and UNOSOM.

In October 1993, US forces conducted a “snatch and grab” raid aimed at capturing two of Aidid’s most trusted lieutenants. US forces were then ambushed by many well-armed Somali and Islamic militant fighters, some of whom would be linked to the nascent and, at that time obscure, al-Qaeda. Eighteen US soldiers would be killed as well as over 200 Somalis in the ensuing 12 hours. While the US would apprehend the suspects in this raid, the lasting images of 2 Black Hawk helicopters being shot down and a US soldier being dragged through the streets of Mogadishu would prove devastating for the new Clinton administration. President Clinton would remove all US forces from Somalia within months and UNOSOM would end without resolving the precarious political situation or ending the violence in Somalia. Shay concludes that “following the withdrawal of UN forces from Somalia in 1994, the civil war continued and UN efforts to achieve a ceasefire and reconstruct the country’s political system were temporarily put on hold.”⁶ The instability and deprivation that marred Somalia throughout the 1990’s would only strengthen the desire of various outside parties, including al-Qaeda and Ethiopia, to shape Somalia’s political future.

A unified whole?

Somalia’s coherence as a unified nation-state has always been rather fragile. The northern Somali province of Puntland has declared its autonomy from Somalia and the Transition Federal Government (TFG), the official government for Somalia, has struggled to establish its authority. In 2004, Puntland announced that it would expel Kenyan citizens in response to Kenya’s refusal to recognize Somali passports.⁷ The other primary northern province in Somalia, Somaliland, declared its independence from Somalia in the wake of Siad Barre’s overthrow but its independence has not been recognized by either the government of Somalia or any outside countries. Somaliland elected its first parliament in 2005 and it continues to issue its own currency and passports. While Somaliland has not been recognized by other countries, has experienced a “remarkable degree of stability - a sharp contrast to the continuing violence in some other parts of Somalia.”⁸ Unfortunately, on September 17, 2007, “fighting broke out between forces loyal to the self-declared independent republic of ‘Somaliland’ and the semi-autonomous region of ‘Puntland’ in Laascaanood, the capital of the disputed Sool

⁵ Shaul Shay, *The Red Sea Terror Triangle* 2007 p. 71.

⁶ Shaul Shay, *The Red Sea Terror Triangle* 2007 p. 86.

⁷ *BBC News*, “Puntland ‘to expel Kenyans’” April 26, 2004.

⁸ *BBC News*, “Somaliland: Stability amid economic woe” March 22, 2005.

region.”⁹ Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon’s new Special Representative in Somalia, Ahmedou Ould-Abdallah, has been working with both sides to quell this violence and to bring all interested parties to the negotiating table.

As the Transitional Federal Government (TFG) seeks to extend its authority throughout Somalia, it must confront its greatest challenge: stabilizing Mogadishu. According to the International Crisis Group (ICG), “the TFG’s inability to establish itself in the capital has undermined its credibility since it was formed in October 2004.”¹⁰ To effectively run Mogadishu and then extend its authority throughout Somalia, the Transitional Federal Government, led by President Abdullahi Yusuf must be prepared to constructively engage rival clans, including the Hawiye clan. The ICG argues that effective reconciliation between the TFG and the Hawiye leadership “will require a national power-sharing agreement that brings credible Hawiye leaders into positions of genuine authority within the transitional institutions.”¹¹ To be seen as a true government of national unity, the TFG must also refrain from seizing greater power for itself and its allies and must also seek to incorporate legitimate and peaceful leaders from all of Somalia’s disparate clans.

Regional tug-of-war

Somalia’s grave humanitarian and security situation is continually complicated by the efforts of neighboring states as well as Islamist and criminal organizations to ensure that Somalia remains weak and/or malleable. Ethiopia has exerted the most significant sustained influence over Somalia and since September 11, 2001, it has received crucial support from the United States, which considers Somalia to be a key front in the Global War on Terror (GWOT). Eritrea has also provided support to different factions in Somalia, primarily to counterbalance Ethiopia. These two bitter enemies have not only fought each other over border issues [Eritrea achieved independence from Ethiopia in 1993] but, according to the International Crisis Group (ICG), they “also waged a much smaller proxy war in southern Somalia.”¹² Eritrea has armed and supported the forces of Hussein Mohammed Farah Aidid, son of the late general who fought against the UN and the US in Mogadishu in the early 1990’s, and Ethiopia has backed several anti-Aidid factions, including the Rahanweyne Resistance Army (RRA). Tensions flared again between Ethiopia and Eritrea in October 2005 when Eritrea refused to cooperate with the UN peacekeeping force on the border of the two countries (UNMEE) while simultaneously increasing arms shipments to Somali allies and proxies, including the notorious Islamic Courts in southern Somalia. Analysts from the International Crisis Group (ICG) argue that even though Ethiopia has won its share of the battles with Eritrea, “Asmara’s [Eritrea’s capital/government] strategic gambit paid significant dividends. At relatively low cost, Eritrea maneuvered Addis Ababa [Ethiopia’s capital/government]

⁹ Ban Ki-moon, “Report of the Secretary-General on the situation in Somalia” S/2007/658 November 7, 2007 p. 3.

¹⁰ International Crisis Group (ICG), *Somalia: The Tough Part is Ahead* Crisis Group Africa Briefing No. 45 January 26, 2007 p. 9.

¹¹ ICG, *Somalia: The Tough Part is Ahead* January 26, 2007 p. 10.

¹² ICG, *Somalia: The Tough Part is Ahead* January 26, 2007 p. 6.

into a confrontation on two fronts: a major intervention in southern Somalia and a large defensive deployment along the Ethiopian-Eritrean border...¹³ Most disturbing of all, the ICG predicts that “Asmara may continue to provide support in order to tie down Ethiopian troops in Somalia for as long as possible.”¹⁴ While these political and security maneuvers may cost Eritrea relatively little in the short term, there is always the possibility that Eritrea may suffer unintended consequences in the future because of its strategic involvement in southern Somalia. In the more immediate future, continued political and military intervention by Ethiopia and Eritrea may lead to a further deterioration of the humanitarian and security situation in Somalia.

In late December 2006, Ethiopia and the Somali Transitional Federal Government (TFG), with significant US assistance and support, drove the Council of Somali Islamic Courts from power. While the Islamic Courts no longer exercise any formal political control over southern Somalia, “the Islamist movement is likely to remain a significant feature of Somalia’s political and economic landscape for the foreseeable future.”¹⁵ Ethiopia’s government has indicated that it considers the dissolution of the Islamic Courts as a vital step in securing its own borders and in stabilizing Somalia internally. Careful observers, both within and outside of Somalia, have concluded that “Ethiopia would not be dissatisfied if its always suspect neighbour remained indefinitely disunited and preoccupied with internal quarrels.”¹⁶ Ethiopia is further concerned about Somali irredentism. Many ethnic Somalis live in both Ethiopia and Kenya and many Somali political leaders, including prominent Islamist figures, have called for integrating all ethnic Somalis under the banner of a larger and unified Somalia. The Islamic Courts also maintained close ties with the Ogaden National Liberation Front (ONLF), the United Western Somali Liberation Front (UWSLF), and the Oromo Liberation Front (OLF), all of which are committed to breaking away from Ethiopia in some fashion; the first two groups are committed to obtaining self-determination if not outright annexation to Somalia. The International Crisis Group notes that Ethiopia’s government is very concerned about the connections between the Islamic Courts and the Oromo Liberation Front (OLF) because Ethiopia considers the OLF to be a terrorist group. Further complicating the Ethiopian-Somali relationship is the fact that “hundreds of Oromo fighters reportedly arrived in Somalia between June and December 2006 to reinforce the Courts’ forces, and Oromo combatants were killed and captured in the December fighting.”¹⁷

US involvement in Somalia over the past 6 years has been predicated on stamping out links to international terrorism; the approaches are having mixed results, however. After the departure of all US troops from Somalia in 1994, the US focused its attention elsewhere until the September 11, 2001 attacks. The US and other countries became extremely concerned about the presence of al-Qaeda and other Islamist groups and networks in Somalia as well as the ease with which someone could obtain a Somali

¹³ ICG, *Somalia: The Tough Part is Ahead* January 26, 2007 p. 6.

¹⁴ ICG, *Somalia: The Tough Part is Ahead* 2007 p. 6.

¹⁵ ICG, *Somalia: The Tough Part is Ahead* 2007 p. 2.

¹⁶ ICG, *Somalia: The Tough Part is Ahead* 2007 p. 4.

¹⁷ ICG, *Somalia: The Tough Part is Ahead* 2007 p. 6.

passport in the 1990's and early part of this decade. By 2004, Somali diplomatic passports could be obtained for as little as \$100 USD and many countries began refusing entry to anyone holding a Somali passport.¹⁸ When the Islamic Courts began taking control of southern Sudan in 2006, the US "funneled key satellite imagery to Ethiopian troops as they rolled across the Somali border; American planes bombed fleeing Islamists."¹⁹ With the recent establishment of the US Africa Command²⁰ as well as a major counterterrorism base in Djibouti, as well as regular naval patrols along the Somali coast, it is clear that the US will continue to monitor developments within Somalia for the foreseeable future.

Efforts at Mediation

The continual chaos in Somalia imperils the stability of the entire Horn of Africa. While some countries may perceive some short-term strategic benefits to keeping Somalia unstable and largely ungoverned, many Somalis as well as outside observers are striving to mediate a comprehensive settlement to the crisis. One of the key obstacles to achieving peace, reconciliation, and stability within Somalia is getting all the relevant parties to actually attend and participate in mediation efforts, such as the recent National Reconciliation Congress that was held in Mogadishu during July and August 2007. In his most recent report to the Security Council on the situation in Somalia, UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon pointed out that "some of the Hawiye subclans in Mogadishu, as well as the Asmara-based opposition, refused to attend the Congress. These opposition groups set preconditions for attending the Congress, including the withdrawal of Ethiopian troops from Somalia and the relocation of the Congress to a neutral venue, preferably outside Somalia, with an impartial party playing the role of the mediator."²¹

After many different attempts at mediation failed for a variety of reasons, a number of diplomats from the EU, the US, and Tanzania, headed by representatives from Norway and the United States, formed the International Somalia Contact Group (ICG) [sometimes referred to as the International Contact Group on Somalia] in 2006. The International Contact Group then immediately announced that it would invite observers from the UN, the African Union (AU), the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD), and the League of Arab States (LAS) to participate in the discussions centered on resolving the humanitarian and security crises in Somalia. At its second meeting in Brussels, Belgium in July 2006, the ICG urged the Security Council "to consider with a sense of urgency modifying the arms embargo to allow for training, capacity building, and development of a broad based, representative security sector building on successful dialogue between Somali parties. At the same time, the International Somalia Contact Group emphasizes the continued need for all to comply with the arms embargo."²²

¹⁸ *BBC News*, "UAE 'bans visas for Somalis'" May 10, 2004.

¹⁹ Jeffrey Gettleman, "As Somali Crisis Swells, Experts See a Void in Aid" *The New York Times* November 20, 2007.

²⁰ <http://www.africom.mil/>

²¹ Ban Ki-moon, "Report of the Secretary-General on the situation in Somalia" S/2007/658 November 7, 2007 p. 1.

²² European Commission (EC), "Second meeting of the International Contact Group on Somalia"

Ensuring that more weapons are not introduced to the already chaotic situation in Somalia must be one of the highest priorities for the Security Council and the international community in general. In September 2007, the International Contact Group (ICG) convened in Stockholm, Sweden to coordinate effective assistance strategies for Somalia as well as to urge donor leading donor countries, most of whom are members of the ICG to ensure that Somalia receives the outside financial assistance it needs to provide real development and security for its people.

Mediation efforts, both those that originate primarily from Somalis as well as those driven by outside forces, will ultimately bear little fruit if political leaders and warlords cannot put aside their personal and factional differences. In October 2007, “the deepening political rift between President [Abdullahi] Yusuf and Prime Minister [Ali Mohamed] Gedi became a subject of legal debate,”²³ ultimately leading to Gedi’s resignation at the end of October 2007. Political infighting and high levels of violence have not only destabilized Somalia but has made it much harder for those seeking to improve the situation to resolve the extant problems. Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon noted that “the United Nations security phases in effect in Somalia are indicative of the security situation. Mogadishu and the district of Badhadwe are in phase five (evacuation of all United Nations staff), and the remainder of Somalia is in phase four (emergency operations only), except for the western part of ‘Somaliland’, which is in phase three.”²⁴

Current Operations

While the UN is not currently undertaking a peacekeeping mission in Somalia, the African Union (AU) is. The African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM) was endorsed by the Security Council in resolution 1744 (S/RES/1744) on February 20, 2007, but it has been woefully undermanned since its inception. The British journal, *The Economist*, noted that “military experts reckoned that it would take at least 20,000 troops to impose order on central Somalia. The AU managed to get promises for 8,000. In fact, just 1,600 Ugandan troops have shown up.”²⁵ In addition to the fact that only 20% of the pledged AU peacekeepers have so far been deployed in Sudan, UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon stressed that “the African Union is facing serious financial, logistical and other constraints in deploying troops which would join the two Ugandan battalions already in the Somali capital.”²⁶ Improving the operational capacity of AMISOM as well as ensuring that it is properly financed will be of the utmost importance for the Security Council.

Brussels, Belgium July 17, 2006.

Found at: <http://www.reliefweb.int/rw/RWB.NSF/db900SID/EGUA-6RSSAG?OpenDocument>

²³ Ban Ki-moon, “Report of the Secretary-General on the situation in Somalia” S/2007/658 November 7, 2007 p. 3.

²⁴ Ban Ki-moon, “Report of the Secretary-General on the situation in Somalia” S/2007/658 November 7, 2007 p. 4.

²⁵ *The Economist*, “The doves of war” November 22, 2007.

²⁶ Ban Ki-moon, “Report of the Secretary-General on the situation in Somalia” S/2007/658 November 7, 2007 p. 7.

UN Agencies in Somalia

While the UN is not currently carrying out a peacekeeping mission in Somalia, the World Food Programme (WFP) is actively involved in providing humanitarian assistance to prevent a repetition of the famine and starvation of the early 1990's. These shipments of relief assistance have been targeted by the nefarious groups of pirates that operate off the coast of Somalia. Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon noted that "nearly 80 per cent of assistance to Somalia by the World Food Programme (WFP) is shipped by sea, but the availability of vessels willing to carry food to the country has been cut by half because of piracy. According to the International Maritime Organization [IMO], 15 hijackings of ships took place in the first half of 2007, with 2 of the attacks involving WFP-chartered ships."²⁷ The potential for a humanitarian catastrophe is grave enough that the government of France announced that it would send warships to protect WFP shipments for several months. WFP and other UN personnel have been detained by Somali police and security forces in recent months as well; ensuring that all actors within Somalia treat UN and related personnel with respect and without interference in the course of carrying out their jobs is a vital component to securing lasting peace.

Keeping Somalia from descending back into full-scale civil war requires a sustained commitment by the Security Council and its international partners to remove the conditions that spawn the violence as well as the weapons that provides the means for carrying out that violence. In resolution 1766 (S/RES/1766), the Security Council extended the mandate of the expert Monitoring Group on the arms embargo in Somalia and reiterated the need for all member states to refrain "from any action in contravention of the arms embargo," and that the Security Council "should take all necessary steps to hold violators accountable."²⁸ Inducing countries and even non-state actors to respect and enforce this arms embargo is a critical step in the Somali peace and reconciliation process.

Conclusion

The precarious humanitarian and security situation in Somalia must be comprehensively addressed by the Security Council and the international community. The instability and violence in Somalia threatens to destabilize the entire Horn of Africa, an area that is already widely viewed as prone to strife and armed conflict. The Security Council needs to fashion innovative solutions that will bring together Somalia's disparate clans, political factions, and warlords, enhance the size and operational capacity of the African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM), and convince Somalia's neighbors that a stable, functioning Somalia presents the only long-term viable security solution for the region.

²⁷ Ban Ki-moon, "Report of the Secretary-General on the situation in Somalia" S/2007/658 November 7, 2007 p. 5.

²⁸ S/RES/1766 July 23, 2007.

Guiding Questions:

How can the Security Council, in consultation with the African Union (AU), the International Contact Group (ICG), and the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD), induce the relevant stakeholders to agree to comprehensive peace and development talks to resolve the humanitarian and security crises in Somalia?

What steps need to be taken by the UN Security Council and by the African Union Peace and Security Council to improve the operational effectiveness of the African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM)? If AMISOM's operational effectiveness is not dramatically increased in the coming months, and if the violence in Somalia escalates further, should the Security Council consider authorizing a new UN peacekeeping mission for Somalia?

How can the international community, and specifically the Security Council, convince Somalia's neighbors to respect the territorial integrity and sovereignty of Somalia as well as discontinue funding and supporting various militias and sub-national governments who are actively fighting the Somalia Transitional Federal Government (TFG)?

How can the Security Council and the international community work with Somali authorities and leaders to more firmly establish the authority of the Transitional Federal Government (TFG) while simultaneously respecting the rights and wishes of Somalia's many disparate clans?

How should the Security Council address the dimensions of national and international terrorism as they relate to the humanitarian and security crises in Somalia? How can the Security Council ensure that all countries and relevant non-state actors respect the existing Somali arms embargo?