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# SOMALIA

## A Country in Peril, a Policy Nightmare

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*This is the first of two ENOUGH strategy papers on Somalia by Ken Menkhaus, a professor at Davidson College and a specialist on the Horn of Africa. Based on recent field research, the first half of this report provides an analysis of the current crisis in Somalia. The second half critically examines why international policies toward Somalia have produced disastrously unintended results, and makes an urgent case for a review of those policies. A follow-up report will explore options and make recommendations for a new, more effective, international approach to Somalia.*

The world has grown numb to Somalia's seemingly endless crises—18 years of state collapse, failed peace talks, violent lawlessness and warlordism, internal displacement and refugee flows, chronic underdevelopment, intermittent famine, piracy, regional proxy wars, and Islamic extremism. It would be easy to conclude that today's disaster is merely a continuation of a long pattern of intractable problems there, and move on to the next story in the newspaper. So Somalia's in flames again—what's new?

The answer is that much is new this time, and it would be a dangerous error of judgment to brush off Somalia's current crisis as more of the same. It would be equally dangerous to call for the same tired formulas for U.N. peacekeeping, state-building, and counterterrorism operations that have achieved little since 1990. Seismic political, social, and security changes are occurring in the country, and none bode well for the people of Somalia or the international community.

Over the past 18 months, Somalia has descended into terrible levels of displacement and humanitarian need, armed conflict and assassinations, political meltdown, radicalization, and virulent anti-Americanism. Whereas in the past the country's endemic political violence—whether Islamist, clan-based, factional, or criminal in nature—was local and regional in scope, it is now taking on global significance.

As Enough's April 2008 report on Somalia ("15 Years After Black Hawk Down: Somalia's Chance?") argued, this is the exact opposite of what the United States and its allies sought to promote when they supported the December 2006 Ethiopian military intervention in Somalia to oust an increasingly bellicose Islamist movement in Mogadishu. Indeed, the situation in Somalia today exceeds the worst-case scenarios conjured up by regional analysts when they first contemplated the possible impact

of an Ethiopian military occupation. How did it get to be this bad?

## PART I: THE CURRENT CRISIS

### 1. Hurling toward disaster

The current crisis in Somalia is the culmination of a series of developments since 2004, when national reconciliation talks produced an agreement on a Transitional Federal Government, or TFG.<sup>1</sup> The TFG, led by President Abdullahi Yusuf, was intended to be a government of national unity, tasked with administering a five-year political transition. But the TFG was viewed by many Somalis, especially some clans in and around the capital Mogadishu, as a narrow coalition dominated by the clans of the president and his prime minister, Mohamed Ghedi. It was also derided by its critics as being a puppet of neighboring Ethiopia.

Yusuf's deep animosity toward any and all forms of political Islam alarmed the increasingly powerful network of Islamists operating schools, hospitals, businesses, and local Islamic courts in Mogadishu. By early 2005, serious splits emerged within the TFG between what became known as the "Mogadishu Group" and Yusuf's supporters. Facing deep opposition in Mogadishu, the TFG was unable to establish itself in the capital, taking up residence instead in two small provincial towns. Weak and dysfunctional, the TFG appeared destined to become yet another stillborn government in Somalia, which has not had an operational central government since 1990.

The coalition of clans, militia leaders, civic groups, and Islamists which formed the Mogadishu Group were themselves divided, however, and war erupted between two wings of the group in early 2006. This war was precipitated by a U.S.-backed effort to create an alliance of clan militia leaders to

<sup>1</sup> A more detailed account of recent events in Somalia since 2004 can be found in Ken Menkhaus, "The Crisis in Somalia: A Tragedy in Five Acts," *African Affairs* 106 (2007): 357–90.

capture a small number of foreign al Qaeda operatives believed to be enjoying safe haven in Mogadishu as guests of the hard-line Somalia Islamists, especially the jihadi militia known as the *shabaab*. The cynically named Alliance for the Restoration of Peace and Counter-Terrorism, or ARPCT, as the U.S.-backed group was called, clashed with local Islamists and within months was decisively defeated. The clan militias' defeat paved the way for the rise of the Islamic Courts Union, or ICU, which for seven months in 2006 came to control and govern all of Mogadishu and most of south-central Somalia.

The ICU was a broad umbrella group of Islamists, and for a brief period was poised to end Somalia's 16 years of state collapse. The ICU quickly delivered impressive levels of street security and law and order to Mogadishu and south-central Somalia. It reopened the seaport and international airport and began providing basic government services. In the process, the ICU won widespread support from war-weary Somalis, even those who did not embrace the idea of Islamic rule. To its credit, the U.S. government made a good-faith effort to support negotiations between the ICU and the TFG, with the aim of creating a power-sharing government.<sup>2</sup>

But then things went wrong. A power struggle emerged within the ICU, pitting moderates against hardliners. The hardliners, led by Hassan Dahir Aweys (one of only two Somalis designated as a terror suspect by the U.S. government for his leadership role in an earlier group known as *Al-Ittihad al-Islamiyya*), began pushing the ICU into increasingly bellicose and radical positions that alarmed neighboring Ethiopia and the United States. The ICU declared jihad on Ethiopia, hosted two armed insurgencies opposed to the Ethiopian government,

made irredentist claims on Ethiopian territory, and enjoyed extensive support from Ethiopia's enemy Eritrea, which was eager to use the ICU to wage a proxy war. In short, the hardliners in the ICU did everything they could to provoke a war with Ethiopia, and in late December 2006 they got their wish.<sup>3</sup> For its part, the United States understandably grew increasingly frustrated with the ICU's dismissive non-cooperation regarding foreign al Qaeda operatives in Mogadishu, and as a result became more receptive to, and supportive of, an Ethiopian military solution.<sup>4</sup>

Ethiopia's U.S.-backed military offensive against the ICU was a rout. The ICU militias took heavy losses in the first engagements, and when they fell back to Mogadishu angry clan and business leaders forced the ICU to disband and return weapons and militiamen to the clans. While core ICU supporters fled toward the Kenyan border, the Ethiopian military marched into Mogadishu unopposed. Within days the TFG relocated to the capital to govern a shocked and sullen population. It was a scenario no one had foreseen, and it set the stage for the current catastrophe.

Enmity between Ethiopian highlanders and Somalis is deep, rooted in centuries of conflict. The Ethiopian government, its allies, and its enemies all understood that a prolonged Ethiopian military occupation of the Somali capital would be resented by Somalis and was certain to trigger armed resistance. The proposed solution was rapid deployment of an African Union peacekeeping force to replace the Ethiopians. But African leaders, not unlike their European and North American counterparts, were reluctant to commit troops to such a dangerous environment, and after long delays were only able to

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2 It was never clear that any of the main players in the Somali saga—hardliners in the TFG (including the president and prime minister), Ethiopia, and hardliners in the ICU—would have been willing to see these power-sharing negotiations succeed, but at the time it was the best hope to bring peace to Somalia.

3 More details on the ICU and the Ethiopian-Eritrean proxy war in Somalia can be found in John Prendergast, "15 Years After Black Hawk Down: Somalia's Chance?" ENOUGH Strategy Paper #18 (April 2008), available at <http://www.enoughproject.org/reports/somalia>.

4 Considerable confusion exists about the U.S. role in the Ethiopian offensive. It was not, as some observers have claimed, a case of the United States "sub-contracting" the war on terror out to a regional ally. Available evidence suggests that Ethiopian decision makers had been committed to ousting the ICU by force for months, while the United States urged restraint in hopes of brokering a power-sharing deal between the TFG and the ICU. At some point in the fall of 2006, however, the U.S. government concluded that hardliners in the ICU were in control and were unacceptable. At that point the United States offered to provide diplomatic support, intelligence, and other help to back an Ethiopian intervention. Even then, U.S. military leaders urged Ethiopia not to occupy Mogadishu, warning it of a quagmire scenario. That advice went unheeded.

muster a force of 2,000. So Ethiopian forces stayed, joined in their efforts by TFG security forces which Ethiopia trained.

Within weeks, a complex insurgency—composed of a regrouped *shabaab*, clan militias, and other armed groups—began a campaign of armed resistance. Since early 2007, attacks on the TFG and the Ethiopian military have been daily, involving mortars, roadside bombs, ambushes, and even suicide bombings. The Ethiopian and TFG response has been extremely heavy-handed, involving attacks on whole neighborhoods, indiscriminate violence targeting civilians, and widespread arrest and detention. TFG security forces have been especially predatory toward civilians, engaging in looting, assault, and rape. The insurgency and counter-insurgency produced a massive wave of displacement in 2007; over 400,000 of Mogadishu's population of 1.3 million were forced to flee from their homes.

This violence and destruction has had other costs as well. The already fragile economy of south-central Somalia collapsed; the TFG was unable to establish even a token civil service or advance the political transition; Ethiopia took heavy losses and, as predicted, became trapped in a quagmire in Mogadishu; and thousands of Somalis became radicalized by their treatment at the hands of the TFG and Ethiopian forces, and, despite deep misgivings about the insurgents' indiscriminate use of violence, became either active or passive supporters of the increasingly violent *shabaab* and other armed groups.

By late 2007, open splits occurred in both the opposition and the TFG. These splits had the potential to be negative—leading to uncontrolled splintering of Somali political actors—or positive—providing a new opportunity for the creation of a centrist coalition in Somalia, which would marginalize hardliners on both sides. In the opposition, exiled ICU leaders established an umbrella group with non-Islamist Somalis, called the Alliance for the Re-Liberation of Somalia, or ARS. This alliance with secular Somalis

prompted the *shabaab* to publicly break with the “apostate” ARS. In the TFG, the corrupt and deeply divisive Prime Minister Ghedi was finally forced to resign, and a new prime minister, Hassan Hussein Nur “Adde,” came to lead a promising moderate wing. He formed a new cabinet, which included many technocrats from the Somali diaspora, and reached out to the opposition, pledging himself to unconditional peace talks. However, his efforts were viewed with deep hostility by the hardliners in the Yusuf camp.

The international community, led by U.N. Special Representative for the Secretary-General Ould Abdullah, sought to forge a centrist coalition of TFG and opposition figures. In June 2008, a U.N.-brokered peace accord was reached in Djibouti between moderate elements in the TFG and moderate leaders in the ARS, the latter led by Sheikh Sharif Sheikh Ahmed and Sharif Hassan (known locally as the “two Sharifs”). The Djibouti Agreement, which was finally signed on August 18 but which has yet to be implemented, calls for a cessation of hostilities, deployment of a U.N. peacekeeping force, and the subsequent withdrawal of Ethiopian forces.

Supporters of the agreement see it as a major breakthrough and call for robust international support for its implementation, especially U.N. peacekeeping. Their hope is that any agreement that facilitates the withdrawal of Ethiopian forces will open the door for an end to the insurgency. They point to the fact that most of the war-weary Somali public appears to want to see the agreement implemented as well. Critics of the deal argue that the moderates on both sides exercise little control over the armed groups engaged in fighting, that U.N. peacekeeping is overstretched and a force will take too long to effectively deploy, and that the accord runs the risk of further fragmenting both the ARS and the TFG in ways that could marginalize the very moderates the international community is trying to support. Prospects for the Djibouti agreement are discussed in more detail below.

However hopeful or pessimistic one is about prospects for the Djibouti agreement, few would disagree that the situation in Somalia has worsened considerably over the past six months. The current crisis has humanitarian, political, and security dimensions, all of which are interlinked.

## 2. Humanitarian catastrophe

The humanitarian nightmare in Somalia is the result of a lethal cocktail of factors. The large-scale displacement caused by the fighting in Mogadishu is the most important driver. The displaced have fled mainly into the interior of the country, where they lack access to food, clean water, basic health care, livelihoods, and support networks. Internally displaced persons, or IDPs, are among the most vulnerable populations in any humanitarian emergency. With 700,000 people out of a population of perhaps 6 million in south-central Somalia forced to flee their homes, the enormity of the emergency is obvious.<sup>5</sup>

Second, food prices have skyrocketed, eroding the ability of both IDPs and other households to feed themselves. The rise in food prices is due to a global spike in the cost of grains and fuel; chronic insecurity and crime, which has badly disrupted the flow of commercial food into the country; and an epidemic of counterfeiting of the Somali shilling by politicians and businesspeople, creating hyperinflation and robbing poorer Somalis of purchasing power. Mother Nature is not cooperating either: a severe drought is gripping much of central Somalia, increasing displacement, killing off livestock, and reducing harvests in farming areas.

Third, humanitarian agencies in Somalia are facing daunting obstacles to delivery of food aid. There is now virtually no “humanitarian space” in which aid can safely be delivered. Until recently, the TFG and its uncontrolled security forces were mainly responsible for most obstacles to delivery of food aid.

TFG hardliners view the provision of assistance to IDPs as support to an enemy population—terrorists and terrorist sympathizers in their view—and have sought to impede the flow of aid convoys through a combination of bureaucratic and security impediments. They also harass and detain staff of local and international non-governmental organizations, or NGOs, and U.N. agencies, accusing them of supporting the insurgency. Uncontrolled and predatory TFG security forces, along with opportunistic criminal gangs, have erected over 400 militia roadblocks (each of which demands as much as \$500 per truck to pass) and have kidnapped local aid workers for ransom.

Since May 2008, however, jihadist cells in Mogadishu linked to the *shabaab* have become an additional threat to humanitarian actors. They are engaged in a campaign of threats and alleged assassinations against any and all Somalis working for western aid agencies or collaborating with the U.N. and Western NGOs. Not all *shabaab* members embrace this policy (the *shabaab* leader Sheikh Mukhtar Robow has condemned the assassinations and is known to be working to provide protection for aid operations in his clan’s home region), but jihadist cells in Mogadishu are now increasingly fragmented and answer to no one, and some of these cells are believed to have targeted national aid workers and civil society leaders.

As a result, Somali aid workers and other civic leaders face a terrifying combination of threats from elements in the TFG, criminal gangs, and *shabaab* cells. This has infused political violence with a high level of unpredictability and randomness in Mogadishu that has eroded the ability of astute Somali aid workers, businesspeople, and civic figures to take calculated risks in their movements and work. When threats and attacks occur, aid workers are never sure whether they were targeted by the TFG or the *shabaab*. “We used to know where the threat was and how to deal with it,” said one.

<sup>5</sup> The total population of Somalia is unknown and the subject of debate. The most common estimate is 8 million to 9 million for the entire country, including the population of secessionist Somaliland in the northwest.

“Now we have no idea who is shooting us.” Attacks initially believed to be the handiwork of a *shabaab* cell are later suspected of being ordered by one of the TFG hardliners; in the swirl of rumors and accusations, uncertainty reigns.

But the one thing that is certain are the casualty rates among aid providers, which currently earn Somalia a ranking as the most dangerous place in the world for humanitarian workers. In the period from July 1, 2007 to June 30, 2008, 20 aid workers were killed in Somalia—nearly a third of the 65 humanitarian casualties worldwide during that period, and two more humanitarian deaths than occurred in Afghanistan, which is widely considered the most dangerous humanitarian operation in the world.

These attacks have put thousands of Somali professionals, aid workers, moderate Islamic clerics, businesspeople, and civil society leaders at immediate risk, and have prompted a flight of aid workers and civil-society figures to the relative safety of Nairobi or Hargeisa, the capital of the self-declared independent republic of Somaliland. The July assassination of the top national officer for the U.N. Development Program, or UNDP, in Somalia was especially jarring, prompting relocation of most U.N. local staff and suspension of UNDP activities. Both local and international aid agencies are now either unable to conduct operations or are operating at limited capacity. This almost complete closure of humanitarian space is occurring at precisely the point when local coping mechanisms are breaking down and that 3.2 million Somalis are at immediate risk.

A critical dimension of this closure of humanitarian space is the role that western foreign policies have inadvertently played in creating it. *Shabaab* attacks against aid workers are a direct response to the U.S. designation of *shabaab* as a terrorist organization in March 2008, and the May 2008 U.S. missile strike on a safe house in central Somalia that killed the

*shabaab*'s leader, Aden Hashi Ayro. Prior to those policies, the *shabaab* was directing its attacks against the TFG and the Ethiopian military. After the missile attack, the *shabaab* declared its intent to widen the war to any and all Western targets inside and outside the country, including Somalis working in any way with the West. Threats and violence by hardliners in the TFG against civil society figures and aid workers also can be traced back to Western policies, inasmuch as the TFG police force, which is implicated in attacks on and abuse of Somali civilians, have been provided training and even salaries by Western donors, via the UNDP.

### 3. Political meltdown

The assassination campaign by TFG hardliners and fragments of the *shabaab* movement is the latest attack on Somalia's once vibrant civil society and has the potential to morph into a violent purge of all professionals and civic figures. Somali civic figures are in shock at this latest threat, and are either fleeing the capital or keeping a very low profile. This is an enormous setback for hopes to consolidate peace in the country, as civil society leaders are essential supporters of the centrist coalition of Prime Minister Nur Adde and the “Two Sharifs.” The group of people most needed to support peace and co-existence are being silenced or driven out, clearing the playing field for extremists.

At the national level, the Djibouti agreement remains the country's best hope, and merits sustained external support. At present, there is a sense of cautious optimism that the Djibouti agreement might actually work—or at least produce some positive momentum. Though the accord is still rejected by *shabaab* leadership, a wide array of opposition groups now express willingness to support the agreement, mainly in hopes that it will expedite an Ethiopian withdrawal. The ARS leadership also appears to be building a greater level of coordination with, if not direct control over, many

6 Correspondence with the author, July 2008.

7 Interview by the author, July 2008. Nairobi, Kenya.

of the clan-based armed groups fighting in the insurgency, improving its ability to control some potential spoilers. Equally important is the fact that Ethiopia appears committed to the agreement.

But implementation of the agreement will be challenging given the fact that both the TFG and opposition are fragmented; moderates on both sides will face difficulty managing their own camps. Open rejection of the Djibouti agreement by *shabaab* leadership highlights the fact that the ARS has no control over a principal source of the insurgency.

Internal fragmentation of the *shabaab* makes the challenge of implementation even greater, since any understanding reached with *shabaab* leaders may or may not influence the behavior of individual cells. Indeed, growing evidence suggests that at least some militias now calling themselves *shabaab* are just sub-clan militias “rehatting” themselves for reasons of political expediency; some have no discernible Islamist ideological agenda, and do not answer to *shabaab* leadership. “The militia who call themselves *shabaab* are just the same Haber Gedir gunmen who have occupied us for years,” observed a Somali resident from the Jubba Valley. “They just put a turban on their heads and gave themselves the new name, but their treatment of us is the same.”<sup>6</sup> This is an important observation in assessing the *shabaab*’s recent military takeover of the strategic port city of Kismayo in southern Somalia. Though portrayed in the Western media as yet another victory by jihadists over the hapless TFG, it is in fact better understood as the latest chapter in a long history of interclan struggles to control port access.

Even the portion of the *shabaab* that does exhibit ideological cohesion and answers to a chain of command is more capable as an armed force than as a political movement. In Middle Shabelle, Hiran, and other regions of south-central Somalia, the *shabaab* has succeeded in driving token TFG administrations out of towns but lacks the capacity to administer them, and so has been handing

over control of the “liberated” towns to local clan authorities.

Fragmentation of the opposition is one obstacle to peace, but a bigger impediment to implementation of the Djibouti agreement is the hardline element within the TFG—Yusuf and his supporters, who are deeply hostile toward any deal with the opposition and suspicious of the prime minister. Though they are now under pressure from the Ethiopian government, it is not at all clear they are ready to allow the agreement to move forward.

Perhaps the greatest challenge to the Djibouti agreement is the fact that hardliners on both sides have approached the talks not as a window for reconciliation, but as an opportunity to drive a wedge in their adversaries’ camp and weaken them. “I have hope for the Djibouti accord,” opined one top TFG hardliner. “Even if it fails, we’ve divided the enemy.”<sup>7</sup> Indeed, in the two months following the agreement, it did appear as though the deal had left moderates in the ARS marginalized and the opposition in disarray. Hassan Dahir Aweys sought to remove the “two Sharifs” from their leadership positions in the ARS, and diaspora members bitterly attacked them for what they saw as a capitulation to Western pressure. But by August, the tables had turned, and it appeared that the Djibouti agreement was more likely to divide and weaken the TFG. Now the fear is that hardliners in the opposition are coming to accept the agreement not in good faith, but because it offers the prospect of giving them the upper hand, especially if Ethiopian forces withdraw.

This quest by all sides to manipulate peace talks and state revival to engineer a “victor’s peace” instead of forging genuine reconciliation has long been a characteristic of Somalia’s 20-year crisis.

While implementation of the Djibouti agreement is the current preoccupation of the diplomatic corps following Somalia, other political problems

loom large. The first is the TFG's virtual collapse as a government. The TFG has never been functional, despite the best efforts of the international community to pretend otherwise. After almost four years of existence, the TFG has almost no capacity to govern and almost no functional civil service. Cabinet ministers have no ministries to oversee, and no budget. Ministers who in principal should have control over the only functioning branch of the TFG, its security forces, complain that the commanders refuse to answer to them and constitute autonomous armed groups. No progress has been made on key transitional tasks, though the government has only a year left to complete the transition. The parliament has been purged of opposition and so no longer represents a unity government. The TFG has lost control over most of the countryside and the capital. Funds from foreign aid and customs revenues have disappeared.

The TFG's lack of unity is equally worrisome. Deep divisions between President Yusuf's circle of hardliners and Prime Minister Nuur Ade's supporters have been a problem since early 2008 but have now erupted into open schisms that threaten to bring the TFG down. The latest crisis was precipitated by the Prime Minister's decision to dismiss the "mayor" of Mogadishu, a warlord named Mohamed Dheere, a risky move that prompted President Yusuf to overrule the prime minister. Subsequently, 10 pro-Yusuf cabinet ministers resigned in what appeared to be a bid by the president to undermine the prime minister. Ethiopian officials intervened to mediate, flying the prime minister and president to Addis Ababa for talks. The refusal of the top two Somali leaders to even meet one another directly exasperated the Ethiopians. A declaration was eventually released stating that the TFG's internal difficulties had been resolved.

Another worrisome problem is the complete autonomy of various security forces—the national police, the army, the Mogadishu city police, and the national security service—from the TFG. These

security forces are de facto paramilitaries led by commanders who hold official title in the TFG but who refuse to answer to cabinet ministers and who are increasingly acting like warlords. Because many of the rank-and-file are unpaid, they are themselves acting more like armed gangs than law enforcement forces.

The political dangers in the current situation are acute. Moderate opposition leaders have done a good job of building some degree of influence or control over much of the armed resistance, but cannot control the *shabaab*. Civic leaders who constitute the most important source of public support for a negotiated settlement are being systematically targeted and driven out of the country. Armed groups on both sides of the conflict are themselves increasingly fragmented and beyond the control of a single leader. The Ethiopian military continues to engage in brutal reprisals and indiscriminate responses when hit by insurgency attacks, producing heavy civilian casualties. Adding fuel to this fire, warlords who had fought both the TFG and the ICU are now being allowed by Ethiopia to rearm. And if Ethiopia pulls its forces out of Mogadishu unilaterally, as some observers believe they may in the near future, the capital could temporarily fall into a level of violence even worse than the current insecurity. The TFG would be unlikely to survive, but that would hardly be Somalia's biggest problem.

#### 4. Counterterrorism blowback

Far from rendering Somalia a less dangerous terrorist threat, the effect of the Ethiopian occupation has been to make Somalia a much more dangerous place for the United States, the West, and Ethiopia itself. Somalis are being radicalized, blaming the Ethiopian occupation and the uncontrolled TFG security forces for the extraordinary level of violence, displacement, and humanitarian need. But the blame does not stop there. Most Somalis are convinced that the Ethiopian occupation is directed by the United States. Though this

is a misinterpretation of the complex and often turbulent relationship between Addis Ababa and Washington—two allies with distinct agendas and preferences in the Horn of Africa—it is an article of faith in the Somali community. And the Somalis are not entirely wrong.

The United States has provided intelligence to the Ethiopians, is a major source of development and military assistance to Ethiopia, has shielded Ethiopia from criticism of its occupation in the U.N. Security Council, has collaborated with the Ethiopians and the TFG in multiple cases of rendition of Somali suspected of terrorist involvement, and has engaged in gunship and missile attacks on suspected terrorist targets inside Somalia. As Enough argued in its April 2008 Somalia report, these and other policies give Somalis the clear impression that the United States has orchestrated the Ethiopian occupation and is therefore responsible for its impact.

Moreover, Somalis hold the West responsible for abuses committed by the TFG security forces. This too is a partial misreading; Western donors and aid agencies have little or no control over the actions of these armed groups and are frequently furious with them over their mistreatment of civilians and disruption of relief aid. But the fact remains that the TFG police are trained by, and have received salaries from, UNDP, through which western donor states channel “rule of law” assistance. For Somalis whose businesses have been looted and whose family members have been raped or killed by TFG security forces, the West is partly culpable for their suffering.

As a result, anti-Americanism and anti-Western sentiment in Somalia is now very high, posing the risk that more Somalis could become either passive or active supporters of the *shabaab*. Some evidence suggests this is already occurring. Well-placed Somalis in Mogadishu report that growing

numbers of young men are being recruited by splinter jihadist groups and put through brief indoctrination and training on improvised explosive devices. Even so, the *shabaab*'s gratuitous use of violence against civic leaders has repulsed most Somalis and has the potential to create a backlash against the insurgents. In short, the average Mogadishu resident is shocked, desperate, and furious with the violence visited on the public by both the TFG and the insurgents. But most of their anger is currently directed at the group of actors they hold immediately responsible for the disaster—Ethiopia, the TFG, and the United States government.

## PART II: SHIPWRECKED POLICIES

Reversing these dangerous trends in Somalia will be extremely difficult, and will require a level of sustained commitment and coordinated, nuanced policy-making on the part of key external actors that has proven elusive to date. External initiatives since 2007 to promote peace and state revival in the country have effectively made the crisis worse. They are based on dubious assumptions and flawed analysis, are undermined by contradictory policies emanating from within the international community, and are compromised by questionable motives on the part of some external actors.

What is certain is a policy of staying the course, or proposals for incremental “course corrections” in Somalia policy, will not succeed. Somalia policy requires a complete review that is followed up with bold new approaches. Given the severity of the crises in Somalia and the extraordinary degree of failure at every level—in state-building, reconciliation, political transition, economic recovery, humanitarian access, and counter-terrorism efforts to combat radicalization—*the burden of proof must fall squarely on the shoulders of those advocating a “stay the course” approach, not on those calling for change.*

## 1. A history of ineffective interventions

The Somali crisis demands urgent action. But it is not enough merely to respond. The international community has to respond *effectively*. Effective response requires, at a minimum, three components: (1) accurate diagnosis and understanding of the crisis; (2) appropriate prescription (i.e., strategies and policies to address the crisis); and (3) effective implementation of those strategies.

Those elements of successful international intervention have almost never all been in place simultaneously in Somalia. Indeed, the history of the 20-year crisis in Somalia is littered with frustrated foreign mediation, state-building, and peacekeeping. Over a dozen national peace conferences have been convened since 1991; a U.N. peacekeeping operation failed disastrously in 1993–94; and tens of millions of dollars have been misspent on doomed efforts to revive a central government. Some of the blame for these failures must be laid at the feet of poor Somali leadership, and some spring from daunting structural and social obstacles to peace. But much can be traced to flaws in the policies themselves.

There is no shortage of individuals, embassies, and aid organizations genuinely committed to a durable solution in Somalia, but international policy toward Somalia is too often characterized by some combination of the following:

- Serious misreading of Somali political and conflict dynamics, exacerbated by the international community's isolation from political realities inside the country
- Weak institutional memory, made worse by high turnover rates in embassies and aid agencies
- Unimaginative, non-strategic, template-driven policy responses with little relevance to the Somali context and little input from Somali voices

- Lack of policy coordination both between and within key actors, so that humanitarian, diplomatic, development, and security policies tend to undermine one another
- Sharp resistance to critical assessment of policies and programs, no matter how obvious their shortcomings, creating dangerous levels of groupthink
- Lack of political will to provide timely and sustained support for promising policies
- A shocking lack of accountability on the part of some external donors, embassies, aid organizations, and defense agencies that are in some cases culpable of exacerbating the crisis in Somalia

These all point to a very uncomfortable truth: *Somalis seeking to extricate their country from this deadly and protracted crisis have to do so in spite of, not because of, involvement by the international community.* We have become part of the problem rather than the solution in Somalia. That must change.

## 2. The current policy impasse

At present, the international community is seeking to advance several different policies to address Somalia's multiple crises. None is succeeding, and several are working at cross-purposes.

### a. The humanitarian agenda

Aid agencies are focused on the urgent problem of response to a growing humanitarian crisis, but their main problem remains lack of access. The primary needs of humanitarian actors are the following:

- Political neutrality, and maximum distance from political and security agendas which could compromise their neutrality

- Forceful diplomatic support from the international community, by way of insistence by powerful states and the United Nations on unfettered humanitarian access as a top priority
- Specific commitment from the TFG to approach emergency relief not as aid to terrorist sympathizers but as vital assistance to citizens to whom the TFG has a responsibility to protect
- Resources, including food relief but also emergency aid for health and other sectors that have gone badly under-funded

As will be seen below, these seemingly innocuous needs collide with other external agendas and have proven difficult to secure.

### ***b. The state-building agenda***

Policymakers at the United Nations and lead donor agencies are committed to making the TFG viable, based on an entirely reasonable conviction that the root cause of the Somali crisis is the prolonged collapse of the state. However, the TFG state-building enterprise is in a state of profound crisis. UNDP and other aid agencies tasked with promoting state-building are finding that there is simply nothing to partner with inside the country. The TFG is, increasingly, an entity that exists only on paper.

Despite an abundance of problems since its formation in 2004, the TFG is viewed in policy circles as the “only game in town.” Improvements in its ability to legislate, advance the transitional process, and provide basic public security and services to the Somali people are seen as imperative for building the TFG’s legitimacy and for ushering in a post-transition era of stability. TFG leadership has benefited enormously from the external world’s embracing of the state-building project as the way out of the Somalia impasse, exploiting that article of faith and

the automatic legitimacy it bestows upon the formal government as a blank check for malfeasance. When high-level donor officials on Somalia opine that “a bad government is better than no government at all,” the bar is set low enough for even warlords to clear with ease.<sup>8</sup> Fears that any criticism of the TFG will erode its legitimacy also effectively block efforts to generate international political pressure on the TFG to respect human rights, protect its citizenry, and stop impeding humanitarian relief. The silence of external actors in the face of chronic abuses by the TFG has been one of many disturbing aspects of the post-2006 Somali crisis.

The commitment to making the TFG work was immediately embraced in 2004–05 by Ethiopia, some European countries, and UNDP, the flagship U.N. agency for governance programs. In coordination with the TFG’s minister for international cooperation, donor states, UNDP, and the World Bank set up an elaborate process called the Joint Needs Assessment as a mechanism for prioritizing and coordinating aid. By contrast, U.S. support for the TFG was initially tepid, as most American officials were skeptical about its viability. In early 2007, however, when the TFG rode the coattails of the U.S.-backed Ethiopian intervention and assumed power in Mogadishu, the U.S. Department of State and Agency for International Development threw their full support behind the TFG, starting with an immediate pledge of \$40 million as a supplemental aid package.<sup>9</sup>

Because the TFG was initially created as a government of national unity, international support to build its capacity did not, on the surface, appear controversial or politically problematic. Aid flowed to the TFG, mainly in the form of training and support for parliamentarians, police, and nascent ministries. The salaries of parliamentarians and police officers, as well as the costs of international travel and diplomacy for top TFG officials, were also covered by external donors. Much of this assistance

8 Interview by the author, July 2008. Nairobi, Kenya.

9 In a public speech shortly after the Ethiopian occupation of Mogadishu in January 2007, US Assistant Secretary of State Jendayi Frazer referred to this \$40 million package as a “down payment” with additional funds to follow. US Assistant Secretary of State Jendayi Frazer, “Securing Somalia’s Future: Options for Diplomacy, Assistance, and Security Engagement,” Keynote address to the CSIS panel on Somalia, January 17, 2007, available at <http://www.state.gov/p/af/rls/rm/79013.htm>

has been channeled through UNDP, which bears special responsibility for accounting for proper disbursement and usage of the aid money, since ongoing insecurity has prevented donor agencies and embassies from maintaining a physical presence inside Somalia.

Though this aid to state-building in Somalia appears innocuous to most external actors, it is anything but. The problem is that the TFG has not been a government of national unity since 2005, when the Mogadishu Group broke with President Yusuf's government. Since that time, the TFG has been one party in an increasingly brutal civil war. State-building assistance in this context is seen by local parties as taking sides. As discussed above, some of the TFG security forces that have received training and salaries from external donors via UNDP have been implicated in ongoing human rights abuses—looting, assault, rape, kidnapping for ransom, assassination, and indiscriminate targeting—of civilians in Mogadishu.<sup>10</sup>

In this way, state-building assistance has created serious problems for other international policies. For humanitarian aid actors, it has had the effect of compromising their neutrality, and hence contributing to the evaporation of humanitarian space. To the extent that TFG security forces have also been a major impediment to delivery of food aid—most of the 400 or more militia roadblocks in the country are manned by TFG police or army—external state-building support to the TFG has inadvertently undermined external efforts to feed the population that the TFG security forces have helped to displace. For U.N. diplomats, ongoing and generally unaccountable aid to the TFG thoroughly compromises U.N. efforts to play the role of neutral mediator in Somali political negotiation, as is discussed below.

Ironically, this problem would be even greater had TFG leaders used external assistance properly, to build a powerful government that could either

co-opt or defeat the insurgency. Instead, the corruption rampant in the TFG has meant that most of the foreign aid has ended up lining the pockets of opportunists rather than building up the TFG's capacity. The failure of the TFG to become an even minimally functional administration, despite considerable external support, points to a much deeper problem with the state-building agenda in Somalia—namely, the consistent failure of efforts to revive a conventional central government in Somalia over the past two decades.

Why Somalia has proven so impervious to external efforts to rebuild a state in our own likeness—that is, a state modeled after government institutions developed in the West—has been the subject of considerable debate. Some blame inappropriate, badly timed, and poorly conceived external assistance; others argue that Somalia is infertile ground for the kind of Westphalian state most “rule of law” programs tend to export; and still others insist that state-building efforts in Somalia have been sabotaged by a combination of local spoilers and external actors with an interest in keeping Somalia in a state of chaos. All three of these claims have merit. Whatever interpretation one prefers, the broader point is clear: Repeated efforts by foreign actors to promote the building of a state in Somalia have failed, raising the question of whether these efforts are based on flawed approaches to reviving rule of law in Somalia.<sup>11</sup> Again, given the scale and scope of the failure to revive the Somali state over the past 18 years, the burden of proof should be placed on those advocating continuation of the same boilerplate approaches.

### *c. The peace-building agenda*

The cornerstone of international policy in Somalia today is peace-building—specifically, the hope that moderates from the TFG and the opposition can be brought together in a new centrist coalition that will lead to a cease-fire, a power-sharing accord,

<sup>10</sup> This concern prompted an internal debate in the European Commission about possible implication in war crimes. See Chris Tomlinson, “EC ‘Complicit in Somali War Crimes,’” *The Independent*, April 7, 2007, available at <http://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/africa/eu-complicit-in-somali-war-crimes-443657.html>.

<sup>11</sup> For a recent analysis of this discussion, see Jeffrey Gettleman, “Anarchy-Cursed Nation Looks to Bottom-Up Rule,” *New York Times*, August 17, 2008.

and a unity government. Put another way, the hope is to bring the TFG back to its original starting point in 2004. This was the objective pursued at the June 2008 talks in Djibouti brokered by the U.N. Special Representative Ahmadou Ould-Abdulla between a delegation headed by Prime Minister Nur Adde and two moderate leaders of the ARS, Sheikh Sharif and Sharif Hassan (the two Sharifs).

The Djibouti agreement, signed on August 18, calls for cessation of hostilities, deployment of a U.N. peacekeeping force, and the subsequent withdrawal of Ethiopian forces. All agree that a phased withdrawal of Ethiopian forces is essential if the insurgency is to be quelled. The subsequent inability to implement the agreement and unintended political fallout from the accord are a source of anxiety in Somalia and diplomats based in Nairobi. Violence has increased steadily since June.

As argued earlier in this report, there are good reasons to support the Djibouti accord. It brings together political leaders from the TFG and the opposition who, despite some missteps in the past, are generally reasonable, respected among most Somalis, and committed to bringing peace to the country. Nur Adde courageously accepted the position of prime minister in late 2007 and used it to reach out to the opposition and reassure a shell-shocked Mogadishu population. For their part, the two Sharifs have shifted the opposition in exile away from the radical tilt that occurred when the Islamic Courts Union was in power and forged an alliance that includes both non-Islamist and Islamist wings. In sum, these are the right kinds of leaders embracing the right kinds of policies, and appear to enjoy support from a wide range of war-weary Somalis. And yet, as argued earlier above, the Djibouti agreement faces steep challenges.

The prospect of the Djibouti agreement being signed but not implemented is a worst-case scenario for peace-building. On the opposition side, it would leave the two Sharifs increasingly weakened and

exposed. A fragmented opposition would also make future negotiations much more difficult to convene. On the TFG side, the prime minister and his supporters are now being openly attacked politically by government hardliners who view Nur Adde with deep suspicion and seek to oust him from power.

The Djibouti agreement will stand a better chance of success if the international community seeks ways to contain and constrain hardliners in both camps. The Ethiopian government appears to have done its part in recent weeks by putting heavy pressure on President Yusuf's camp. But in general, international policies over the past two years have actually worked to strengthen and embolden hardliners. The U.S. decision to place the *shabaab* on its list of designated terrorist groups in March 2008 had the net effect of isolating the opposition moderates from their own coalition and preventing them from engaging in a strategy of outreach to at least some *shabaab* members. Some saw the U.S. declaration as an overt attempt to scuttle the peace talks entirely; others believed it to be a clumsy attempt to prevent individuals considered too radical from being brought into the process. In either case, the result was that the main source of armed insurgency in the country now had even more reason to sabotage the talks. Worse, some Western donor states have continued to provide direct support to TFG security forces which are controlled by hardliners in the government and which are undermining the prime minister and actively terrorizing populations sympathetic to the armed opposition.

The implications for the peace-building agenda are clear. First, it is very difficult for U.N. Special Representative Ould-Abdullah to serve as a neutral mediator when a U.N. agency, UNDP, is being used to funnel direct support to one party in the conflict. The United Nations cannot have its cake and eat it, too: It cannot support state-building initiatives which strengthen the security forces of one side and simultaneously lay claim to the role of neutral broker. The Somali opposition simply does

not buy it. Second, a peace-building agenda that is built on a strategy of building up a centrist coalition of government and opposition leaders is unlikely to succeed if those moderates are far weaker than hardliners on both sides. The peace-building agenda needs to be linked to a robust strategy designed to strengthen the moderates and contain or marginalize the hardliners in both camps, not arm hardliners.

International actors appear unaware of their contradictions, but to Somali observers they are painfully obvious. Somalis are divided over whether these conflicting Western and U.N. policies reflect incompetence or bad faith. Neither interpretation is flattering.

#### ***d. Overlapping security agendas***

Four very distinct external security agendas are at play in Somalia. One focuses on security for the TFG; a second focuses on security for humanitarian actors and U.N. offices to be relocated into Somalia in the future; a third is Ethiopia's quest to advance its own security; and the fourth is the U.S.-driven counterterrorism agenda. These security agendas dominate the political landscape in Somalia and are objectives to which the bulk of external funding and policy energies are devoted. The security of the Somali people themselves—the targets of so much of the violence in Somalia—is largely absent from the calculations of external actors. Moreover, external security interests are badly served by current policies, and some externally driven agendas are clearly undercutting other policy initiatives.

#### **Security for the TFG**

In order to facilitate the departure of Ethiopian forces and support the expansion of the TFG's authority, the international community, led by the United States, has sought to muster and support an international peacekeeping force to Somalia. With the specter of the disastrous U.N. peace operation

of 1993–94 looming in the backdrop, this has not been easy—peacekeeping in Somalia earned a very bad name that has been difficult to shake.

In 2007, efforts were focused on deploying an AU force. Convincing African leaders to commit troops into Somalia proved difficult, however, yielding only 2,000 of the 8,000 peacekeepers sought. The AU mission has successfully maintained control over a few key government installations in Mogadishu, but cannot do more. Ethiopia has remained in the capital as a result.

The U.N. Security Council has encouraged the secretary general to pursue contingency plans for a U.N. peacekeeping force to replace or join the AU mission in Somalia, and the U.N. Department of Peacekeeping Operations, or DPKO, is actively developing these plans. Yet DPKO is understandably reluctant to deploy another peace operation into Somalia, creating tensions between DPKO and another U.N. department, the Department of Political Affairs. Other problems include a dearth of countries willing to commit troops into Somalia, and differing views about what the mandate of a U.N. force should be. This latter point is critical. The mandate of the AU force is deeply problematic. It is tasked with providing protection for the transitional federal institutions, which in essence places the African Union in the position of shielding the TFG installations from insurgency attacks. In the eyes of the insurgents, AU forces are partisan and hence are subjected to periodic insurgency attacks. If a U.N. force is to avoid this fate, its mandate from the security council must be written in a way that affords it neutrality while expanding its responsibilities to include protection of civilians and humanitarian relief deliveries.

Even if the United Nations can plan, muster, deploy, and equip a U.N. peace operation with a viable mandate, U.N. peacekeepers are by no means a silver bullet for Somalia. At best, they can give Ethiopia an acceptable fig leaf to en-

able it to withdraw its forces from Mogadishu.<sup>12</sup> But what a U.N. force cannot deliver is the level of security and support to the TFG to enable it to remain physically present in Mogadishu in the face of sustained insurgency attacks. Absent robust Ethiopian protection, the TFG will likely be driven out of Mogadishu, or will be reduced to a house prisoner of Mogadishu-based opponents.

### Security for U.N. agencies and NGOs

Somalia has never been less safe for U.N. agencies and NGOs, and yet aid agencies have been under enormous pressure to keep operating, both to respond to the humanitarian emergency and to reinforce a political perception that Somalia is reasonably safe—important for those seeking to shore up the TFG’s flagging legitimacy. The U.N. Political Office for Somalia is planning its own physical relocation from Nairobi to Somalia at some point in the future for this reason, but agency personnel fear that politically inspired security decisions will result in avoidable deaths and kidnappings.

Authority over where and under what restrictions U.N. personnel can travel in Somalia rests with the U.N. Department of Safety and Security, or UNDSS, which has an extremely difficult task of striking a balance between minimizing risk of casualties to U.N. personnel and humanitarian imperatives to respond. Over the years, it has frequently been accused by aid workers of being too risk-averse, preventing agencies from committing personnel in parts of the country. At the same time it is sometimes accused of succumbing to political pressure not to designate a region a “no-go” zone. All of these point to a level of political and institutional pressure on UNDSS that could compromise its ability to render accurate, dispassionate judgment on security conditions. If a U.N. peacekeeping force is deployed with a mandate to protect humanitarian operations, this will have significant implications for U.N. agencies in the field.

### Ethiopian security agenda

The Horn of Africa is a tough neighborhood. Ethiopia is understandably preoccupied with regional and national threats, and seeks to prevent a range of enemies—domestic insurgency groups, hostile neighbors, and radical Islamists—from using Somalia as a base or a proxy against it. Yet Ethiopia has consistently demonstrated that it possesses the same capacity as other foreign actors to take actions which inadvertently end up rendering it less rather than more secure. That now appears to be the case with its heavy-handed armed occupation and counterinsurgency operations in Somalia, which have produced greater and more uncontrolled levels of radicalism than was the case in 2006.

How Ethiopia opts to pursue its security interests in the near future—what it can live with in Somalia and what it considers unacceptable, and when and how it opts to withdraw its forces—is key to the success or failure of almost all other policy agendas in Somalia. Especially critical is whether a *modus vivendi* can be reached between more moderate opposition members and Ethiopia, or whether Ethiopia will be inclined to allow the TFG to collapse entirely rather than risk it becoming a vehicle for a potentially hostile coalition. Recent Ethiopian actions—particularly its willingness to allow Mogadishu-based warlords to rearm—may reflect an intent to render Mogadishu ungovernable and prevent hard-line Islamists from reasserting control over the capital when Ethiopian forces withdraw.

The problem for Somalia is that Ethiopia is simultaneously the single most important external actor, yet its motives, interests, strategies, and intentions are the most difficult to understand and predict. Even U.S. diplomats, defense, and intelligence officials who work closely with Ethiopian counterparts confess that Ethiopian policies and policy making are at best the subject of informed speculation. Ethiopia’s future policies thus constitute the key “wild card” in the Somali crisis.

<sup>12</sup> No one is under the illusion that Ethiopian forces or operatives will disengage entirely from the country.

Since intervening in Somalia, Ethiopia leaders have shifted the conditions they say must be met in order for Ethiopia troops to withdraw. Throughout 2007, their position was that arrival of adequate numbers of AU peacekeepers would allow withdrawal. In June of 2008, that position shifted, as Ethiopia claimed it would withdraw when the threat of Islamic extremism had been eliminated from Somalia, an alarmingly open-ended benchmark. In August 2008, the Ethiopian Prime Minister Meles Zenawi revised the condition for withdrawal again, noting that the successful establishment of the TFG is “not necessarily a precondition for our withdrawal” and hinting that the financial costs of the occupation could lead Ethiopia to withdraw with or without a functional TFG in place.<sup>13</sup>

What is clear from the track record of the past several years is that Ethiopian policies have not been coordinated with the Nairobi-based donor community. Indeed, relations between the two have often been estranged. Not surprisingly, Ethiopian security and political actions have frequently clashed with and undermined the aims and policies of Western donors and aid agencies. Ethiopian officials do not disagree, but complain that Western embassies and donors are to blame for undermining legitimate and better-informed Ethiopian initiatives. They are also annoyed at having shouldered most of the costs of an intervention supported by Western friends while enduring criticism from Western quarters. As Prime Minister Meles put it in a recent interview, “We didn’t anticipate the international community would be happy riding the Ethiopian horse and flogging it at the same time.”<sup>14</sup>

### U.S. counterterrorism agenda

Observers routinely conflate U.S. and Ethiopian policies and presume their relationship is one of a superpower and client state. However, the U.S. counterterrorism agenda in Somalia is related to but distinct from Ethiopia’s security concerns, and the

two countries’ relationship is quite complex and often turbulent. While Ethiopia pursues the regional security agenda outlined above, the United States’ preoccupation in Somalia has been more narrowly focused on preventing Somalia from being used as a safe haven for foreign al Qaeda operatives. Somali radical Islamists who provide safe haven for foreign terrorists or who have business and other dealings with al Qaeda-affiliated individuals are another major concern. Until recently, however, Somalia’s various armed Islamist movements generally focused their attacks on the TFG and Ethiopian forces, not on American targets.

U.S. counterterrorism policies have been executed both with high-tech measures—such as the Tomahawk missile attack which killed the *shabaab* leader Aden Hashi Ayro in May 2008—and via partnerships with local non-state actors who receive various forms of support in return for their efforts to monitor and apprehend terrorist suspects. In the period up to 2007, the United States worked with and through a collection of militia leaders who later formed the aforementioned Alliance of the Restoration of Peace and Counter-Terrorism. When that alliance was defeated by the ICU in June 2006, United States counterterrorism officials temporarily lost most of their eyes and ears in Mogadishu. The Ethiopian military occupation and installation of the TFG in Mogadishu provided new partnership opportunities with selected TFG security forces. But it is important to stress that these counterterrorism partnerships are not channeled through and forged with TFG ministries; they are stand-alone relationships with particular security sector leaders who have operated largely autonomously from the TFG.

U.S. counterterrorism support is not, therefore, supporting a state-building agenda: It is actually undermining it by providing what some observers claim is robust financial and logistical support to armed paramilitaries resisting the command and control of the TFG, even though they technically

13 Barney Jopson, “Ethiopia Signals Shift As Somalian War Drags On,” *Financial Times*, August 28, 2008.

14 Ibid.

wear a TFG hat. This point is generally lost on many analyses of U.S. policy in Somalia, which presume that the United States is seeking to use the TFG as a partner in the war on terror. Far from it, the TFG's principal governing bodies are bystanders in U.S. counterterrorism initiatives in Somalia. And to the extent that these security forces also deeply oppose the prime minister's reconciliation efforts with the opposition, U.S. counterterrorism partnerships have also undermined peace-building efforts by emboldening spoilers in the government camp.

U.S. counterterrorism policies have not only compromised other international agendas in Somalia; they have generated a high level of anti-Americanism and are contributing to radicalization of the population. In what could become a dangerous instance of blowback, defense and intelligence operations intended to make the United States more secure from the threat of terrorism may be increasing the threat of jihadist attacks on American interests.

## CONCLUSION

In May 2008, the U.N. Security Council supported a proposal from the secretary-general to create an "updated, comprehensive, integrated United Nations strategy for peace and stability in Somalia, aligning and integrating political, security, and programmatic efforts in a sequenced and mutually reinforcing way."<sup>15</sup> Given the analysis presented in this report, such a strategy is badly needed, and planners face a Herculean task of untangling, de-

conflicting, and rendering more intelligible the many policies at play in Somalia.

But creating and enforcing a coherent and integrated strategy for Somalia is only a first step. Getting the strategy right is even more important. Efforts to integrate a flawed strategy into the policies and programs of the many external donors, diplomatic missions, and aid agencies will only accelerate the disaster. Unity of purpose is only a virtue if the common strategy makes sense; otherwise it is a recipe for a "lemmings to the sea" *en masse* plunge in the wrong direction. The United Nations and the donor community have for years devoted considerable energy to coordinating policy among themselves, but far less time critically examining those policy choices.

Finally, the push to create an integrated strategy must directly address the question of which policy agenda is to be prioritized over others in the event that trade-offs and conflicts occur. Is a common strategy intended to ultimately promote the strengthening of the TFG? Support and consolidate peace? Facilitate humanitarian access? Or promote the security interests of key external states? Which of these goods is to be privileged, and which subordinated in support of the privileged agenda? What we have seen to date is that each donor and aid constituency fiercely promotes its own agenda, viewing other projects as playing a subordinate support role for their cause. With 3.5 million Somalis at risk of famine, the human cost of continued failure is escalating by the day.

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<sup>15</sup> UN Security Council, Resolution S/Res/1814 (May 15, 2008), p. 3.

## APPENDIX—SOMALIA MAP



Source: Map adapted from United Nations Department of Peacekeeping Operations Cartographic Section, Map No. 3690 Rev. 7, January 2007. The boundaries and names shown and the designations used on this map do not imply official endorsement or acceptance by the United Nations.



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