

## **The War on Terrorism in Africa**

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*from Africa in World Politics*  
by John Harbeson

The war on terrorism in Africa did not begin on September 11, 2001. It began in Sudan in the 1990s, where Osama bin Laden operated and where an attack against Egyptian president Hosni Mubarak was organized. Three years later, in 1998, al-Qaeda cells blew up the American embassies in Nairobi and Dar es Salaam. In retaliation for these attacks, the United States, in addition to an attack in Afghanistan, bombed a chemical plant in Sudan, claiming that it was producing elements for chemical weapons for al-Qaeda. From the time of these attacks, moreover, U.S. policy in Somalia became preoccupied with searching out, capturing, and killing the perpetrators of those attacks who were believed to have taken refuge there. The seeds of later U.S. policy and all that has followed in Somalia were planted then. More recently, terrorist acts in Europe, particularly the train attack in Spain, have been linked to cells in Morocco and Algeria, which interact with North African residents in Europe, and both countries themselves have been victims of recent terrorist bombing attacks.

After 9/11, U.S. focus on terrorism in Africa became much more pronounced. For the first time since 1993, the United States deployed a sizeable contingent of American troops on the continent, with the establishment in late 2002 of the Combined Joint Task Force—Horn of Africa (CJTF-HOA) in Djibouti. In addition, President Bush announced a \$100 million counterterrorism initiative for East Africa and the Horn in 2003. At the same time, the U.S. European Command (EUCOM) spearheaded a series of training and military support operations in the Sahel, aimed at the Algeria-based GLPF; the program later blossomed into the much larger Trans-Sahara Counter terrorism Initiative that now involves both North African and Sahelian states.

Counterterrorism efforts became even more pronounced in U.S. Africa policy after the Islamic Court Movement took power in Mogadishu, Somalia, in 2006, leading to the Ethiopian invasion of Somalia, with tacit U.S. support, and the current fighting that now consumes that blighted country. Most importantly, the Pentagon announced in 2007 that it would establish a new unified Africa Command (AFRICOM) to bring together its varied programs on the continent, a sign of increasing U.S. focus on security in Africa.

U.S. concern is understandable. Africa is no more immune to the threats from terrorism than any other continent. Its combination of relatively weak states, ethnic and religious diversity and sometimes discrimination, its poverty, and in many places its “ungoverned space” all lend Africa a significant susceptibility to the growth of radical and sometimes internationally connected movements that employ terrorism. Some of these are aimed specifically at African governments, for example, the radical Islamic Maitatsine and “Taliban” in Nigeria, or the

pseudo-Christian Lord's Resistance Army in northern Uganda; others clearly have a more international agenda, for example, the al-Qaeda cells along the east coast of Africa and presumably the North Africans and Sudanese who have returned to their home countries from training and participating in the insurgency in Iraq.

While the "war on terrorism" usually relates to internationally linked terrorists, Africans face other security threats of equal or greater significance, posing a question of focus for American as well as African counterterrorism efforts. There are several organized rebellions or insurgencies in Africa, while not always classified as terrorists, which wreak terrible havoc on African people and threaten national stability. These include various militia in eastern Congo, who have been the target of the International Criminal Court for their crimes against humanity, the insurgents in the Niger delta of Nigeria, and the Janjaweed militia in the Darfur region of Sudan. It is notable that the U.S. African Command lists the Lord's Resistance Army, the Army for Liberation of Rwanda, and the obscure Afrikaner Boeremag in South Africa along with a host of Islamic groups as among the "Terror Groups in Africa."<sup>1</sup> Clearly, noting this broad scope, Africa cannot ignore the threat of terrorism any more than can any other part of the world.

African states have responded to this threat in different ways. In West Africa, Sahelian states have welcomed American help in getting control over their ungoverned spaces but still face unrest from within those territories. Others, like Kenya and South Africa, facing the growth of Islamic terrorist groups, have struggled to balance the need for new security legislation with the preservation of newly gained civil rights and, in Kenya's case, to avoid the worst repercussions from the recent developments in Somalia through active diplomacy. Some, like Ethiopia and the previous government of Mauritania, have used the terrorist threat to solidify policies of suppression and antidemocratic practices, while solidifying U.S. support for their anti-terrorist policies. And at least one, Zimbabwe, has turned the issue on its head, countering U.S. and other international criticism of its anti-democratic practices by labeling its domestic opponents as "terrorists."

Two major challenges now loom in the African and American responses to terrorism. Generally, many Africans and some American critics are very concerned that the new Africa Command and other U.S. anti-terrorism programs signal an increased militarization of U.S. policy in Africa. These critics argue that only a continual intensive attack on the root causes of terrorism and violence, that is, poverty, authoritarianism, discrimination, weak states, and similar conditions, will effectively combat such threats. They contend that a focus that relies too heavily on security will encourage authoritarian practices and undermine Africa's move toward more democratic governance. The style and focus of the unified Africa Command will be a closely watched measure of whether the United States pursues its counterterrorism policies with the requisite sensitivity, breadth of programming, and balance that is required.

A second challenge relates to the continued ability of the Africa Union (AU) to provide leadership in conflict resolution and the timely provision of peacekeepers as it has done in recent years in Burundi, Darfur, and Côte d'Ivoire. The current debacle in Somalia may have dragged the AU into an untenable situation that could fundamentally undermine the promise of that organization as a force for peacemaking and improved governance. This occurs

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at the same time that the AU may experience diminishing support from Nigeria and perhaps South Africa, as leaders change in those countries. Should both of these factors prove to be the case, U.S. counterterrorism policies, especially in the Horn, will have had lasting negative effects on Africa's overall security.

There follows a more detailed discussion of these issues.

## **THE HORN OF AFRICA**

The Horn of Africa is Africa's bridge to the Middle East. That fact explains much about the complex interrelationships between differing Islamic cultures within Africa, from east to west. It has a direct effect on the history of deepened terrorist activity first in Sudan and later along the east coast of the continent, the constant instability in Somalia, and the challenges facing counterterrorist efforts in the region. This complex set of relationships also poses an organizational challenge for U.S. policymakers, one that has hampered American response: The Horn of Africa comes under the policy direction of the Africa Bureau of the Department of State, the smallest and perhaps weakest of the bureaus, while key countries linked to the Horn—for example, Yemen, Egypt, and Saudi Arabia—are under the Middle East Bureau, whose focus is elsewhere.

At the same time, the Horn is the object of the most intense and the most militarized U.S. response to terrorism in Africa. Since 2002, the United States has stationed between 1,200 to 18,000 troops in Djibouti under the Combined Joint Task Force–Horn of Africa (CJTF-HOA). CJTF-HOA participates in a joint allied patrol of the Red Sea coastal area and carries out a series of civic action and military training programs throughout the Horn as well as gathering intelligence on possible terrorist infiltration. In 2003, President Bush announced a \$100 million program to improve the intelligence, border control, and police capability of the states in the region, with the goal of developing a system of regional coordination that would identify and block the movement of personnel, arms, money, and other forms of support coming from the Middle East into the Horn and moving down along the coast of East Africa. In 2006, the United States gave at least tacit backing and intelligence and material support to an Ethiopian invasion of Somalia to dislodge a radical Islamic government that had taken power in the capital. As followers of that government fled south, the United States bombed what they hoped were terrorist leaders, but the results were more civilian casualties than known terrorists killed. In March 2008, the United States again bombed southern Somalia, seeking in particular to kill one of the persons suspected in the embassy bombings of 1998. Nowhere else on the African continent has the United States been so directly and heavily involved in counterterrorist activity.

The focus on the Horn is understandable. The Horn is as ripe as any region could be to the threat of terrorist infiltration. As Robert Rotberg, who believes at least Yemen should be included in any such analysis, has observed:

The greater horn of Africa and Yemen region is bound together by recent history as a sometime target, by its geographical proximity to the homeland of Osama bin Laden and the primary object of his political anger, by long and continuing interrelationships of licit and illicit trade, by religion, by centuries of Muslim-Christian accommodation and antagonism, by

renowned resistances against Western colonizers (in the Horn), and by shared poverty, poor governance, and underdevelopment. This complex web provides a tasting menu for potential terrorists.<sup>2</sup>

The Horn also demonstrates clearly how complex any approach to terrorism must be. Issues of terrorism, even international terrorism, which is the prime concern of the United States, are inextricably bound up with other sources of conflict, border disputes, historic grievances, and broad regional involvement. They are not amenable to simple solutions, and alliances can be as costly in the long run as they appear effective in the short term. For example, seeking to address the threat of terrorism in the Horn, the United States has been drawn, after many years of avoidance, into the byzantine world of Somali politics and has become in the process allied ever more closely with Ethiopia. The growing reliance upon Ethiopia has developed despite the fact that Ethiopia has cracked down on its political opponents and on the press, and is accused of carrying out brutal suppression of unrest in its Ogaden region.

### *Somalia*

Somalia has become a centerpiece of counterterrorism activities in the Horn, and the policy and military actions there have largely undermined much of the hopes and plans for regional cooperation and coordination in the Horn that the United State had once envisaged. Somalia's sad state after the fall of dictator Siad Barre in 1991 is well-known. Warlords took control of the country, which led to famine, fighting, and lack of any central governmental authority. A U.S.- led humanitarian intervention in 1992–1993 ended in a disaster when eighteen U.S. servicemen were killed. U.S. and UN operations declined thereafter. For the next thirteen years, the United States basically withdrew from involvement in Somali politics, focusing solely on intelligence and activities designed to keep Somalia from becoming a training ground for international terrorists; another U.S. objective has been to find and capture those accused of participating in the bombing of American embassies in Kenya and Tanzania.

Fears that Somalia would become a terrorist training ground soon proved unfounded. As Ken Menkhaus has explained, terrorist organizations are not entirely comfortable operating in a failed state, where their own security is in jeopardy, where outside intervention (for example, by U.S. intelligence and military operations) can take place without much public attention or outcry, and where various militia can be paid to search them out, as indeed have all taken place in Somalia.<sup>3</sup> These factors may, however, have contributed to U.S. overconfidence about the threat from Somalia, as attention was directed to covert anti-terrorist operations, while the dynamics of Somalia's political and religious life were virtually ignored. As a result, many in the policy community were surprised when Somalia burst back onto the terrorist radar screen in mid-2006, after an Islamist movement took power in Mogadishu, defeating an alliance of U.S.-backed warlords and establishing a strict Islamist government. Radical leaders of the movement began talking about claims on Somali inhabited regions of neighboring countries, reviving the fears that Ethiopia had had a decade earlier and exacerbating the regional crisis of war, insurgency, and instability.

The rise of a fundamentalist Islamic government had its roots in the chaos and experimentation that went on in Somalia during the previous decade. As Roland Marchal has

reported, that period saw the rise of Islamic charities that fulfilled some of the social, educational, and humanitarian needs of the population. These organizations consciously competed with Western NGOs for influence. It was also a period in which the Somali business class became more religious, in part because of their reliance on business connections in the Middle East. Finally, in the confusion, chaos, and crime that dominated much of Somali daily life, the establishment of *shar'ia* courts, backed by the militia, offered a degree of stability and predictability, which the business class, as well as some of the feuding clan leaders, welcomed. The Islamic movement provided the leadership for these courts, first in northern Somalia, then more successfully in the south.<sup>4</sup>

Islam in Somalia had long had cross-currents of Sufi, Wahhabi, and other influences, with Sufi “traditionalists” dominant until recent times. Fundamentalist Islamic groups began emerging during the 1990s, some more radical than others. Al-Itihaad al-Islami (AIAI) distinguished itself by its development of an armed force and its focus on recruiting urban semi-educated youth. It also had plans to establish both a national and regional network including the Somali-inhabited areas of Ethiopia. It was responsible for several bombing attacks in Ethiopia and Somalia. The State Department labeled AIAI a terrorist organization in 1996. That same year, Ethiopian troops drove AIAI from the towns in which it had established control. For some years, AIAI seemed to be a spent force. But its leaders reemerged in the Islamic Courts Movement in the next decade.<sup>5</sup>

The *shar'ia* courts, which had been established in various parts of the country, but especially in the south, began moving toward unification in 2000. Over the course of the next several years, through various alliances, clan and subclan conflicts, and shrewd political moves, as well as growing military capacity, the Islamic Courts Movement unified control of Mogadishu, and in 2006 it established a government. Warlords who had controlled much of the city were driven out or brought under its control. Although the movement had several moderate Islamic leaders and had broad business backing, the presence of former AIAI leader Hassan Dahir Aweys at its head, who was on the U.S. list of international terrorists and was resurrecting claims on neighboring Somali regions, set off alarm bells in Washington and Addis Ababa. The United States was also concerned that three prominent terrorists, suspected in involvement in the bombings of the American embassies, were being protected by the new regime. The worst fears about Somalia after 9/11 seemed about to become true. The initial U.S. response was to try to defeat the movement militarily through an ill-conceived alliance of warlords (which took the name Alliance for the Restoration of Peace and Counter-Terrorism). The Alliance was defeated in June 2006. The next step for the United States was to seek a way to strengthen a weak countergovernment in Somalia that had emerged through complex African-led negotiations described below. With support from the United States the UN Security Council called for an Africa Union peacekeeping force to protect this government and help bring about a political settlement. The Islamic Courts Movement vowed to fight any such force.

These developments were taking place against a backdrop of longtime diplomatic efforts to find some solution to Somalia's political crisis. Various African-led attempts to put together a unified government had been launched and then floundered since the 1990s; each transitional or interim government that was established disintegrated shortly afterward in a sea of clan and subclan rivalries. In northern Somalia, a portion of the country seceded to form its own

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government, Somaliland, which, though it has failed to gain international recognition, exists as a relatively peaceful counterpart to the rest of the country. A somewhat autonomous region, Puntland, adjacent to Somaliland, was organized around the same time. In 2004, African-led efforts finally produced a Transitional Federal Government (TFG). However, the TFG, led largely by the Darod clan, was unable even to establish itself in the capital, Mogadishu. Threatened by the Islamic Courts Movement in 2006, it turned to Ethiopia for support.

In the last half of 2006, tensions grew between the Courts Movement and Ethiopia. In December 2006, with U.S. intelligence and material support, Ethiopian troops dislodged the Courts Movement from Mogadishu in relatively short order. As noted above, the United States followed up by bombing fleeing Somali elements as they approached the Kenyan border, purportedly aiming strictly at known terrorists, but, as would be expected, spawning charges of civilian casualties. Nevertheless, at first, Ethiopia's military intervention looked like a quick and successful turning back of a dangerous radical foothold on the African continent. Ethiopia promised to withdraw its troops as soon as peace was restored and when an international peacekeeping force would be in place. In an important move, with possibly far-reaching effects, the African Union not only endorsed Ethiopia's military action but pledged to replace Ethiopian troops in Somalia with an 8,000-person peacekeeping operation. The United States lobbied hard for AU support in this matter and quickly pledged \$40 million for humanitarian activities within Somalia and for helping finance the AU peacekeepers. The United States pressed other African nations to provide troops. Uganda was the first to agree, and dispatched 1,400 soldiers. But then things turned sour.

With eerie echoes of Iraq, the Ethiopians soon found themselves faced with a determined insurgency, fueled by Islamists, clan factions opposed to the leadership of the TFG, and others recruited to fight a foreign invader. In the spring of 2007, determined to root out the insurgency, the Ethiopians and its Somali allies went on an offensive in Mogadishu. At least 1,000 were killed, and subsequently hundreds of thousands of Somalis fled the capital. The fighting continues in the capital and elsewhere in the country. At least 250,000 and by some estimates as many as one million Somalis have now been displaced. In sum, the outcome has been a severe humanitarian crisis—and no real peace. In May, 2008, Ugandan troops took their first casualties, with five soldiers killed and five more wounded. Although Uganda and the United States continued to urge other African countries to provide more peacekeepers, only Burundi has provided a small contingent. An American appeal to the United Nations to take over this responsibility has similarly fallen on deaf ears.

Meanwhile, the TFG has proved unable or unwilling to create the broad unity government that was needed. Initially, it reached out only reluctantly and with conditions to the moderate leadership of the Islamic movement. It was unable to make peace with the dominant Hawiye clan in Mogadishu, and its control slipped elsewhere in the country as well. In early 2008, the TFG appointed a new prime minister, Nur Hassan Hussein, who has reached out more to moderate Islamists and seems interested in a broader peace process. But he operates under the weight of TFG internal pressures and rivalries and that of Ethiopian and American policy that brooks little accommodation with former Islamist leaders. In March 2008, the United States once again bombed southern Somalia in yet another attempt to kill a person suspected in the embassy bombings of 1998. The opposition to both the TFG and the Ethiopian presence, which has

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grouped under an Alliance for the Re-liberation of Somalia (ARLS), is also splitting, with a more extreme group—the Shabab—carrying much of the military effort and preaching a more universal jihadist agenda than the others. Gradually, Somalia appears to be slipping back to the clan and subclan-based semi-anarchy of past decades; only now there is a strong Islamic current running through the political culture and feeding the ongoing insurgency.

Like all such conflicts, Somalia's conflict involves many of its neighbors. Somalia has become part of a proxy war between Ethiopia and Eritrea, who have been feuding over a border dispute since 1998. Eritrea has been accused of providing financing and even fighters in support of the Islamic Courts Movement. In May 2007, Eritrea hosted a group of Somali Islamic leaders pledged to fight Ethiopian occupation leading to the creation of the ARLS now based in Asmara. Included was Sheikh Ahmed, whom the United States had described as moderate but who now seemed to have joined forces with those totally opposed to the TFG.<sup>6</sup> Eritrea has also been accused of providing support to at least two militant opposition groups in Ethiopia—the Ogaden National Liberation Front (ONLF) and the Oromo Liberation Movement. The ONLF has taken responsibility for an attack on Chinese and Ethiopian oil workers in April 2007, killing nine Chinese and wounding five more, as well as killing over sixty-five Ethiopians.<sup>7</sup> Several more Ethiopians were taken hostage.

As a result of these developments, Eritrean-U.S. relations have deteriorated. Accusing the United States of bias in favor of Ethiopia regarding the border dispute, and Ethiopian policy in Somalia, the Eritrean government closed down the USAID mission, refused to receive senior U.S. envoys, including the Assistant Secretary of State for African Affairs, and sharply criticized U.S. policies in the Horn. U.S. rhetoric against Eritrea has increased accordingly. The United States has hinted it might place Eritrea on the list of countries supporting terrorism. Eritrea controls much of the Red Sea coastline along which much of the infiltration of arms, people, and funding is infiltrated for support of African terrorism. With Eritrea's withdrawal from American plans and programs in the Horn, the regional counterterrorism structure has suffered a serious blow.

The United States may also have pushed the African Union beyond its limit by encouraging the organization to promise an 8,000 person African peacekeeping force to replace the Ethiopian troops in Somalia. With Ethiopia trapped in a fierce insurgency in Somalia, few African countries are willing to become engaged in its place. Following on the Africa Union's failure to establish a credible peacekeeping force in Darfur (see below), the Africa Union may be forced to pull back from its original bold promise of aggressive action on behalf of conflict resolution. Moreover, having sided so closely with the Ethiopian invasion, neither the United States nor the African Union is in a position to lead an effective peace process in Somalia. In both regards, the Africa Union's stature has suffered.

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Fears that Somalia would become a terrorist training ground soon proved unfounded. As Ken Menkhaus has explained, terrorist organizations are not entirely comfortable operating in a failed state, where their own security is in jeopardy, where outside intervention (for example, by U.S. intelligence and military operations) can take place without much public attention or outcry, and where various militia can be paid to search them out, as indeed have all taken place in Somalia.<sup>3</sup> These factors may, however, have contributed to U.S. overconfidence about the threat from Somalia, as attention was directed to covert anti-terrorist operations, while the dynamics of Somalia's political and religious life were virtually ignored. As a result, many in the policy community were surprised when Somalia burst back onto the terrorist radar screen in mid-2006, after an Islamist movement took power in Mogadishu, defeating an alliance of U.S.-backed warlords and establishing a strict Islamist government. Radical leaders of the movement began talking about claims on Somali-inhabited regions of neighboring countries, reviving the fears that Ethiopia had had a decade earlier and exacerbating the regional crisis of war, insurgency, and instability.

The rise of a fundamentalist Islamic government had its roots in the chaos and experimentation that went on in Somalia during the previous decade. As Roland Marchal has reported, that period saw the rise of Islamic charities that fulfilled some of the social, educational, and humanitarian needs of the population. These organizations consciously competed with Western NGOs for influence. It was also a period in which the Somali business class became more religious, in part because of their reliance on business connections in the Middle East. Finally, in the confusion, chaos, and crime that dominated much of Somali daily life, the establishment of *shar'ia* courts, backed by the militia, offered a degree of stability and predictability, which the business class, as well as some of the feuding clan leaders, welcomed. The Islamic movement provided the leadership for these courts, first in northern Somalia, then more successfully in the south.<sup>4</sup>

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With eerie echoes of Iraq, the Ethiopians soon found themselves faced with a determined insurgency, fueled by Islamists, clan factions opposed to the leadership of the TFG, and others recruited to fight a foreign invader. In the spring of 2007, determined to root out the insurgency, the Ethiopians and its Somali allies went on an offensive in Mogadishu. At least 1,000 were killed, and subsequently hundreds of thousands of Somalis fled the capital. The fighting continues in the capital and elsewhere in the country. At least 250,000 and by some estimates as many as one million Somalis have now been displaced. In sum, the outcome has been a severe humanitarian crisis—and no real peace. In May, 2008, Ugandan troops took their first casualties, with five soldiers killed and five more wounded. Although Uganda and the United States continued to urge other African countries to provide more peacekeepers, only Burundi has provided a small contingent. An American appeal to the United Nations to take over this responsibility has similarly fallen on deaf ears.

Meanwhile, the TFG has proved unable or unwilling to create the broad unity government that was needed. Initially, it reached out only reluctantly and with conditions to the moderate leadership of the Islamic movement. It was unable to make peace with the dominant Hawiye clan in Mogadishu, and its control slipped elsewhere in the country as well. In early 2008, the TFG appointed a new prime minister, Nur Hassan Hussein, who has reached out more to moderate Islamists and seems interested in a broader peace process. But he operates under the weight of TFG internal pressures and rivalries and that of Ethiopian and American policy that brooks little accommodation with former Islamist leaders. In March 2008, the United States once again bombed southern Somalia in yet another attempt to kill a person suspected in the embassy bombings of 1998. The opposition to both the TFG and the Ethiopian presence, which has grouped under an Alliance for the Re-liberation of Somalia (ARLS), is also splitting, with a more extreme group—the Shabab—carrying much of the military effort and preaching a more universal jihadist agenda than the others. Gradually, Somalia appears to be slipping back to the clan and subclan-based semi-anarchy of past decades; only now there is a strong Islamic current running through the political culture and feeding the ongoing insurgency.

Like all such conflicts, Somalia's conflict involves many of its neighbors. Somalia has become part of a proxy war between Ethiopia and Eritrea, who have been feuding over a border dispute since 1998. Eritrea has been accused of providing financing and even fighters in support of the Islamic Courts Movement. In May 2007, Eritrea hosted a group of Somali Islamic leaders pledged to fight Ethiopian occupation leading to the creation of the ARLS now based in Asmara. Included was Sheikh Ahmed, whom the United States had described as moderate but who now seemed to have joined forces with those totally opposed to the TFG.<sup>6</sup> Eritrea has also been accused of providing support to at least two militant opposition groups in Ethiopia—the Ogaden National Liberation Front (ONLF) and the Oromo Liberation Movement. The ONLF has taken

responsibility for an attack on Chinese and Ethiopian oil workers in April 2007, killing nine Chinese and wounding five more, as well as killing over sixty-five Ethiopians.<sup>7</sup> Several more Ethiopians were taken hostage.

As a result of these developments, Eritrean-U.S. relations have deteriorated. Accusing the United States of bias in favor of Ethiopia regarding the border dispute, and Ethiopian policy in Somalia, the Eritrean government closed down the USAID mission, refused to receive senior U.S. envoys, including the Assistant Secretary of State for African Affairs, and sharply criticized U.S. policies in the Horn. U.S. rhetoric against Eritrea has increased accordingly. The United States has hinted it might place Eritrea on the list of countries supporting terrorism. Eritrea controls much of the Red Sea coastline along which much of the infiltration of arms, people, and funding is infiltrated for support of African terrorism. With Eritrea's withdrawal from American plans and programs in the Horn, the regional counterterrorism structure has suffered a serious blow.

The United States may also have pushed the African Union beyond its limit by encouraging the organization to promise an 8,000 person African peacekeeping force to replace the Ethiopian troops in Somalia. With Ethiopia trapped in a fierce insurgency in Somalia, few African countries are willing to become engaged in its place. Following on the Africa Union's failure to establish a credible peacekeeping force in Darfur (see below), the Africa Union may be forced to pull back from its original bold promise of aggressive action on behalf of conflict resolution. Moreover, having sided so closely with the Ethiopian invasion, neither the United States nor the African Union is in a position to lead an effective peace process in Somalia. In both regards, the Africa Union's stature has suffered.

### ***Sudan***

Sudan was the first African country to become deeply enmeshed in international terrorism. Palestinian-led terrorist actions took place there in the 1980s, including an attack on the Saudi Arabian embassy and the assassination of an American ambassador. The link to a broader agenda of international terrorism began when Osama bin Laden came to Sudan in 1991, at the invitation of Hassan al-Turabi, leader of the National Islamic Front, which had just taken power in Sudan. Bin Laden lived there for five years before moving on to Afghanistan, building a network of financial and terrorist operations. Various networks of radical and terrorist groups operated in the country during that time. With radical Egyptian and al-Qaeda involvement, an attempt was launched from Sudan on the life of Egyptian president Hosni Mubarak in 1995 while Mubarak was visiting Ethiopia. The United Nations imposed sanctions on Sudan for the government's complicity in that attack. Sudan remained the home of known or suspected terrorists for some time afterward, with interplay among international movements and Sudan's own turbulent politics. Despite increased cooperation with the United States since 9/11, including intelligence sharing, Sudan remains on the U.S. list of countries supporting terrorism.<sup>8</sup>

The civil war in the Darfur region of Sudan, which began in 2003, has provided another opening for terrorist influence, though more rhetorical than material. In Darfur, facing a rebellion from the largely farming communities of the region, the Sudanese government has pursued a vicious policy of destroying the villages of populations suspected of supporting the rebel forces

and arming militia that have carried out murder, rape, and other crimes against humanity. These attacks have led to the displacement of more than 2.5 million people. At least 200,000 and possibly as many as 400,000, have died. Facing international condemnation, the Sudanese government agreed in 2004 to a relatively weak African peacekeeping force of 7,000 provided by the AU. The force proved unable to prevent further depredations. It was in fact poorly equipped and lacked a clear mandate.

Eventually, the AU appealed for the United Nations to assist and in effect take over much of the responsibility. Only after endless negotiation, and public urging from China, one of Sudan's principal allies and protectors, and threats of further international sanctions, did the Sudanese government agree in late 2007 to a United Nations/AU peacekeeping force of 20,000, but the force has only begun to be deployed and faces continuous obstacles thrown up by the Sudanese government. Meanwhile, rebel forces have fractured into competing and squabbling groups, and others have entered the fray for both political and personal gain, making the peace process ever more difficult. The Sudan government has used the fluidity of the situation to continue to bomb and attack rebel positions. The crisis has spilled over into Chad and the Central African Republic, further destabilizing the region.<sup>9</sup>

Into this situation, al-Qaeda sought to make inroads. In April 2006, Osama bin Laden called on his followers to prepare for a jihad against Westerners who "would be occupiers" in Darfur. The Sudanese government swiftly distanced itself from the call, but it had contributed to the opening. Sudan has consistently described U.S. concern with Darfur as a cover to gain control of Sudan's oil resources, force regime change, and crush Sudan's Islamist movement.<sup>10</sup> Almost taking up Osama Bin Laden's call, both the government and the rebels have threatened to attack the UN/AU peacekeepers once they are deployed.

In many ways, the United States has been the most active country condemning the actions of the Sudanese government in Darfur, being the only country to label these as genocide. At the same time, the United States has been accused by activists focused on Darfur of having prioritized anti-terrorist collaboration with Sudan above resolution of the humanitarian crisis there. One of the Sudanese officials indicted by the International Criminal Court for crimes in Darfur has been a close contact of the United States on terrorist matters and was flown to the United States for consultations. Although the accusations against the Bush administration in this case are somewhat exaggerated, there are disputes within the administration over whether rewarding Sudan for the cooperation the United States has received on terrorism should outweigh the repeated threats of further sanctions over Darfur. Meanwhile, Sudan feels that its cooperation on terrorism has gone unrewarded, furthering its suspicion that at heart the United States is bent on regime change.

The United States walks a tightrope in Sudan: seeking full implementation of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement that ended the decades-long North-South civil war, finding a solution to the crisis in Darfur, and working with a prickly and suspicious Sudanese government on terrorism. Now on its third special envoy for Sudan in the Bush administration, the United States struggles with no clear end in sight for the crisis in Darfur, a still fragile North-South peace, and a fractious government in Khartoum.

## ***Kenya***

Although not technically part of the Horn, Kenya is deeply affected by events there. Kenya, moreover, remains a potentially prime target for terrorists in its own right. It has substantial Western tourist activity, the headquarters of the United Nations Environment Program and the United Nations Habitat Program, a large number of Western embassies, and several international businesses. Kenya sustained terrible casualties in the bombing of the U.S. embassy in 1998. That act, and the 2002 attack on Israeli facilities in Mombasa, revealed the extent of terrorist cells operating within Kenya. The cells have taken root in the Muslim community, which traces its roots to the Middle East. The community has experienced a steady decline in political and economic influence since Kenyan independence, as Kenya's African population gained power and competition for jobs increased. As conditions have declined, religious interest has risen, Muslim religious and social groups have taken on more responsibility and influence, and there has been more interchange among young people seeking opportunity in the Middle East. The radical cells that developed in this milieu represent only a small portion of the Muslim community, which itself is only about 10 percent of the Kenyan population. Nevertheless, the outsiders directly involved in the bombings of 1998 and the Mombasa attacks were clearly assisted by Kenyan citizens.<sup>11</sup>

Two of the foreign perpetrators of the bombing of the American embassy, Mohamed Sadek Odeh and Mohamed Rashed al-Owahili, were apprehended and turned over to American custody. Others, including some involved later in the Mombasa attacks, fled to Somalia, touching off the long U.S. intelligence and military effort to capture them there.<sup>12</sup> But Kenya has since been faced with the serious challenge of finding and arresting cell members, while maintaining the fragile opening to multiparty democracy and greater respect for human rights that began with the retirement of longtime ruler Daniel arap Moi in 2002. Backlash against the American pressure on terrorism among some Kenyan leaders and from leaders of the Muslim community, weakness in the police and judiciary, and bribery have impeded efforts against domestic cell members.<sup>13</sup> As a result, two prominent suspects escaped custody, and no Kenyan citizens, though many have been arrested and held, have yet been convicted for participation in or for support of terrorism. The proposed anti-terrorism law, which the U.S. backed, has yet to pass.

Kenya also lacks basic control over parts of its own territory. Well before the most recent Somalia fighting, Kenya faced a serious problem in the border area. Ken Menkhaus described it as follows:

Kenya has lost control over a good portion of the north-eastern hinterland; armed convoys are required for overland travel to border towns and refugee camps, and for most of the 1990s, the Kenya side of the [Somali] border was generally more lawless and dangerous than the Somali side. The lawlessness has found its way into the heart of Nairobi. The teeming Somali slum of Eastleigh has become a virtual no-go zone for the Kenyan authorities, a world unto itself where black-market activity is rife, criminals can slip away undetected and guns can be rented for the day.<sup>14</sup>

Not surprisingly, when supporters of the Islamic Courts Movement fled south from the Ethiopian assault in 2006–2007, Kenya closed its border, fearing the influx of new terrorist or radical personnel. Although no Kenyan Somalis have been found to be involved in Kenya's al-Qaeda cells, the complexities of the Somali situation and the potential spillover of events in Somalia, add to the difficulty Kenya has in addressing domestic threats.

As the situation in Somalia continued to deteriorate after the Ethiopian invasion, and the implications for Kenya were becoming clearer, Kenya began in early 2008 exploring possible new diplomatic means to overcome the political impasse. However, the internal crisis in Kenya, sparked by allegations of a stolen presidential election in March 2008, followed by major riots and killings, have overtaken all such efforts. Whether Kenya will be able to resume its strong diplomatic leadership in Somalia and elsewhere in the Horn is in question. Internal political demands and restoring internal peace will surely dominate the Kenyan agenda for some time.

Overall, it is fair to say the U.S. position in the Horn remains strong. Kenya and Ethiopia are basically reliable and committed allies in the war on terrorism. The CJTF-HOA continues to reach out across the region with a mix of civic and military activities and to gather intelligence on possible terrorist activities. But the deepening crisis in Somalia, the spillover of the Ethiopia-Eritrea dispute, the complexities and cross-currents of priorities in Sudan, and the weak support from the Africa Union make the Horn a continuing source of worry. The danger of over-militarizing the U.S. response, as in support for the Ethiopian invasion of Somalia, and the difficulties of U.S. diplomatic coordination of its Africa and Middle East policies have weakened America's role in forging a broad political coalition that could address both the political and the terrorist issues in the region. The dream of a broad regional system of coordinated and cooperative counterterrorist programs seems farther than ever from achievement.

## **EAST AFRICA AND SOUTHERN AFRICA**

The presence of al-Qaeda cells is apparent along the east coast of Africa, including Tanzania, Zambia, the Comoros, and perhaps other countries. Outside of Tanzania, the site of one of the American embassy bombings in 1998, there have been no incidents against American or other allied targets in these regions. The worry is that these cells allow international terrorists to find safety from arrest and extradition, to raise funds, and to transport people and material for terrorist purposes elsewhere. Both Zambia and South Africa have extradited known terrorists to the United Kingdom and the United States, respectively. Counterterrorism activities, as a result, focus on intelligence capacity building, sharing of information, financial controls, coastal security, and, on occasion, extradition.

In all these countries, there are reports of reinvigorated religious activity supported from abroad, particularly from Saudi Arabia and Pakistan. Much of this is in the form of building mosques, providing imams and preachers, and developing Muslim social and welfare organizations. These are normal and respectable activities. But if the experience of Kenya, Somalia, and other countries is any guide, these activities can also provide cover and openings for radical influences.

South Africa is a special case, because of its superior intelligence capabilities, its modern financial and business systems, and its strong democratic tradition since 1994. These give South Africa some advantages in combating terrorists. The Muslim population is quite small, divided between various groups that historically came from primarily South Asia and Southeast Asia. civic organizations. Three of President Mandela's original cabinet members were Muslims: Dullah Omar, Attorney General; Kader Asmal, Minister of Water and Forestry; and Mac Maharaj, Minister of Transportation. The Pahad brothers—Aziz and Essop—have played prominent roles in both the Mandela and Mbeki administrations. However, another part of the Muslim population is poor. Locked into satellite towns, they are victims of some of the same economic hardships that exist for the majority of black South Africans. It is from this latter population that a radical organization, the People Against Gangsterism and Drugs (PAGAD), organized in the 1990s purportedly to fight drugs and crimes in the townships where their constituents lived. But soon its focus shifted toward anti-Israel and anti-Western activities, and eventually to bombings of cafes and other entertainment sites. South Africa has largely quelled PAGAD through a vigorous campaign of intelligence and arrests.

Nevertheless, South Africa is attractive to terrorists because of its superior transportation links, its infrastructure, its international linkages, and its relative freedom of movement. Ronnie Kasrils, South Africa's chief of intelligence, has continuously warned of the dangers of terrorist infiltration. Another problem is the value and apparent availability of South African passports. South Africa instituted new passports after 1994, so that they are now more secure from counterfeiting, but corrupt officials within the Department of Home Affairs have been linked to the leakage of many legitimate passports. South Africa is a way station for illegal migrants, who come through South Africa to pick up false documents and then go on to the United States or Europe. Terrorists have the same desire and, apparently, the same ability to do so.

South Africa has a strong interest in containing any terrorist threats as it prepares to host the World Cup in 2010. It has thus taken the initiative to improve security throughout the Southern Africa region. The Southern African Development Community (SADC) agreed in December 2006 to establish an anti-terrorist unit in Harare, Zimbabwe, based at the Interpol Sub-Regional Bureau. The unit aims to be the focal point for regional information-sharing on terrorist organizations and groups. Member countries will submit regular reports to the center, which will be linked with the UN Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC). Ironically, Zimbabwe, whose autocratic government has been sharply criticized by the United States and other Western countries, has cooperated with the United States on terrorism, including intelligence-sharing and combating money laundering and other means of financing.<sup>15</sup>

Cooperation on counterterrorism nevertheless runs into the same problems in South Africa as in Kenya. Muslims have accused the United States of unfair harassment, and the South African government has hesitated to cooperate on some high-profile cases. South Africa, using its rights as a member of the UN Security Council in 2007, put a hold on the U.S. recommendation to place two South African nationals, Farhad Dockrat and Junaid Ismail Dockrat, on the UN terrorist list. Inclusion on the list, administered by the UN's al-Qaeda and Taliban Sanctions Committee, triggers travel bans, asset seizures, and passport revocations for the suspects. In this instance, South Africa argued that the United States must



first show conclusive evidence of terrorist activities. One of the two, Farhad Docrat, is a prominent critic of U.S. policies in Iraq and Somalia.

## **WEST AFRICA: THE SAHEL**

Critics of U.S. counterterrorism policy complain that the frequent use of the term “ungoverned spaces”—used to describe the vast area of the Sahel, the pirate-ridden Gulf of Guinea, and some other such places in the world— exaggerate both the anarchic character and the threat that such areas present. As much as the critics may be right, the Sahel, a vast semi-desert region between North Africa and West Africa could well qualify for the term. It is an area of formidable geography, limited government presence, and a long history of smuggling, banditry, human trafficking, and violence. More recently, it has become a battleground in the war on terror, in particular to deny that space to the Algerian terrorist group al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (formerly the Salafist Group for Preaching and Combat, the GSPC) and to other terrorist groupings that might develop in the region.

The Sahel, like the Horn of Africa, presents a bureaucratic challenge to U.S. policymakers. North African Sahelian states—Morocco, Tunisia, Libya, and Algeria—come under the Department of State’s Middle East Bureau, whereas Mauritania, Senegal, Niger, Mali, Chad, and Nigeria—at the southern flank of the Sahel—are under the Bureau for African Affairs. The U.S. military, under the leadership of the European Command, had no such limitations and actively promoted security cooperation among the regional states of both north and west. Here, as in the Horn, the U.S. defense establishment has gotten out ahead of the diplomatic establishment and could give the impression that U.S. counterterrorist strategy is overly militarized.

There is no question that terrorism is a serious problem in the Maghreb. Both Algeria and Morocco experienced terrorist attacks in the spring of 2007. Moroccan nationals have been implicated in several of the terrorist attacks in Europe. But the seriousness of the threat in the Sahel is questionable. It is clearly one of the poorest areas on earth. Mali and Niger are near the bottom of the countries on the United Nations Human Development Index. Chad, while having discovered oil, is still wretchedly poor, wracked by civil conflict, and suffering the spillover effects of the conflict in Darfur. Mauritania has suffered decades of declining living conditions among its nomadic population, now crowding into cities. Senegal has done better but has never reached its economic potential. Yet this region has demonstrated remarkable commitment to democracy, defying beliefs that democracy is incompatible with either Islam or poverty. Both Mali and Niger have had to address longtime unrest among northern minorities as one of the bases of their democratic frameworks. Senegal has been a consistent civilian democracy, including a transfer of leadership from one party to another. Mauritania, after a period of what one might call electoral autocracy, overthrown by a military coup, has successfully returned to civilian rule in what were reasonably well-run elections.

It is not difficult to find examples of unrest and radical thinking in the region. A study by the International Crisis Group found a significant number of Pakistani Islamic preachers in the area who were bringing radical views to their congregants. But it is necessary to distinguish the occasional signs of radicalism, for example, young people wearing Osama bin Laden T-shirts,

sharp denunciations of American policy in Iraq or Somalia, growing adherence to *shar'ia* law, and so forth, from involvement in international terrorist activities. Almost all the people in this region, whether Muslim or Christian, are primarily focused on their domestic interests and their national politics. Issues like U.S. policy in Iraq are more of an academic or rhetorical interest than active motivators of international jihad, but rather—perhaps more significant for the United States in this region—reason to become suspicious of U.S. motives closer to home. In northern Nigeria, I found interlocutors in 2005–2006 primarily concerned that what they perceived as U.S. international anti-Muslim policy was leading the United States to support a third term for Christian president Olusegun Obasanjo. A northern Muslim elected to the presidency in 2007 should ameliorate these worries.<sup>16</sup>

What makes the area of concern, nevertheless, is that the mix of poverty, discrimination, and long-standing networks of criminality can produce support or openings for influence to terrorists that are present in the region. The authors of the ICG study concluded that the most serious threat of terrorism came from disaffected minority groups, for example, the Tuareg in Mali, who felt discriminated against in terms of development investments in their region and who sometimes resented interference in their economic activities, which bordered on, if not crossed the line of, illegality. Herein lies a dilemma for counterterrorism programs. The steps promoted in U.S. counterterrorism programs to improve border control and intelligence about the movement of possible terrorist materials are precisely those that produce the strongest reaction from those groups who have long lived on smuggling and similar activities.

The Sahel is in fact rife with criminality. There are at least three main land routes across the Sahel into northern Africa (the gateway to Europe) and south to the ports of Nigeria, through which people and contraband flow. Drug trafficking has increased substantially in recent years, followed by an increase in illegal migration, along with more traditional smuggling of cigarettes and similar goods. Masters of this trade include the Tuareg and other nomadic groups, who are the most marginalized in national politics and development. In 2002, the group then called GSPC relocated to this region from Algeria and allegedly made commercial alliances with Tuareg smugglers. At least one of the GSPC attacks on a Mauritanian border garrison in 2005 is believed to be linked as much to protecting the smuggling route as to political objectives.<sup>17</sup>

Into this atmosphere, the United States entered in 2002 with its first counterterrorist program in the region, the Pan Sahel Initiative (PSI). The program aimed to improve the intelligence and border security capability of several of the Sahelian countries. The program scored its first big success in 2004 when, with U.S. intelligence assistance, GSPC elements were chased from Mali by that government's forces and captured and killed by Chadian forces. The United States has since moved to create a much larger program, the Trans-Saharan Counter-Terrorism Initiative (TSCTI), which involves economic, political, and public diplomacy as well as military components. Notably, EUCOM also took the lead in successfully bringing together both northern and Sahelian African states in steadily increased intelligence and other counterterrorism programs. The United States has also stepped up joint exercises in the region, for example, Operation Flintlock in 2005, which involved 1,000 U.S. Special Forces.

To the distress of Mali and Niger, these very activities have stoked a resumption of rebellion among the northern groups with whom peace accords were critical to their democratic

future. In 2005, Mali and Niger, with U.S. assistance, restored a military presence in the desert regions of their countries, areas that had been demilitarized in the mid-1990s as part of the overall political settlements of the time. In response, Malian Tuaregs rebelled near the Algerian border in May–June 2006. The subsequent peace accord included removing some of the army units along the main smuggling routes. But Tuareg rebellion broke out once again in Mali in August 2007, demonstrating the fragility of such agreements. Niger has experienced a similar rebellion since February 2007. The Niger government accuses the rebels of involvement in drug trafficking and banditry, whereas the rebel group claims it is fighting for more investment in their region. The mix of crime, discrimination, poverty, and limited governmental capacity are apparent and no easy challenge for any security program. Whether a broader-based TSCTI will be better able to address this complex of factors remains to be seen.

Another problem in the U.S. approach has been the lack of political oversight in the counterterrorism programs. PSI involved close cooperation with an autocratic and unpopular government in Mauritania that was subsequently overthrown. U.S. forces cooperated closely with Chadian forces, as described above, in the capture of the GSPC group. Chad's president has recently enabled himself to become president for life, faces continuing rebellion from several quarters, and is not always involved constructively in the Darfur conflict. Balancing terrorism concerns with U.S. support for democracy and better governance in Africa is an important objective, especially in a region where political and economic factors are basic to the loyalty and cooperation of indigenous populations. A senior EUCOM officer told me in 2005 that he would have welcomed some overall political direction in PSI, but there was none. State Department officials assure questioners that this will be remedied in TSCTI, which is structured as a State Department program. In addition, AFRICOM will have a State Department official as one of two deputies, as well as both State and USAID personnel on its staffing. The United States also recently granted Mali over \$500 million under the Millennium Challenge Account, which may assist in overcoming regional disparities. All indications are that a broader and more politically sensitive approach is being made. Yet State lacks the personnel in its embassies to closely monitor the situation in the Sahel, and the complexities of the region will remain challenging for any security program.

## **WEST AFRICA: NIGERIA AND THE GULF OF GUINEA**

If there a prize target for terrorism in Africa, Nigeria should be it. Nigeria, the most populous country in Africa, has the largest Muslim population on the continent, over 65 million. It is Africa's largest oil producer. Tensions between the Muslim and the equally large Christian population are persistent and often lead to violence. Evidence of successful proselytizing by either side is an explosive source of such violence, as is any sign that one side or the other is being subject to either economic or religious discrimination. Political rivalry between the largely Muslim north and largely Christian south is a constant in Nigeria, with a barely tolerated agreement on rotating national leadership between the two. Until the election of 2007, northern Nigerians smarted over a serious decline in their influence in the military and government. Politicians also often play on religious identities to provoke tension and sometimes violence, for example, in recent riots in Plateau state where the roots of the tension are more about land than religion.<sup>18</sup>

Add to this mix, the Muslim north is particularly poor and ranks below standards elsewhere in the country in literacy, health status, and economic activity. Of particular significance is the de-industrialization that has taken place in the north, for example, in the industrial cities of Kano and Kaduna, due to inefficient production capabilities on the part of indigenous plants and the influx of cheap consumer goods from China and other Asian countries. Many plants of long standing have closed. One major textile company that has operated in Nigeria for decades reports employment in its factories has declined from 22,000 to 7,000 with more cuts likely. All over Nigeria, not just in the north, the population has in recent decades, despite the country's oil wealth, suffered an extraordinary decline in living standards. Per capita GNP declined by two-thirds between 1980 and 1999. Nigerians are experiencing a level of poverty not seen in many years. The recent rise in oil prices has improved the macro-economy but has as yet done little to impact the grass roots.

Attitudes toward the United States in northern Nigeria traditionally tend toward sharp criticism of U.S. policies in the Middle East. The United States is considered to have a generally negative policy toward Muslim states; in the 1980s, I experienced sharp criticisms of U.S. policy toward Libya. The criticism has grown since the U.S. invasion of Iraq. The recent concern in the north that the United States was encouraging Christian president Olusegun Obasanjo to seek a third term and deny the north its "rightful" turn for leading the country has passed. Nevertheless, there are some deep-seated negative feelings about the United States, which while not general, nor is the population openly hostile, merit close monitoring.<sup>19</sup>

Not surprisingly, Osama bin Laden once named Nigeria as a prime target for his Islamic revolution. Yet despite some fertile ground, there is little evidence so far that al-Qaeda per se has penetrated much in Nigeria. Mainstream Islam in Nigeria has a long tradition of its own in structure, continual adjustment, and overall moderation. The main influences are through two Sufi traditions, the Tijaniyya and the Quadiriyya, which have been rivals but also sources of reform and stability. Nigeria's own Islamic beliefs and traditions have been the target of challenges from abroad. The latest come from the Wahhabis in Saudi Arabia, Iran (though Nigeria is overwhelmingly Sunni), and to a lesser extent, Pakistan. None of these have seemingly produced any strong allegiances in Nigeria to international radical movements. Twelve of Nigeria's thirty-six states did adopt *shar'ia* law in the early 1990s, largely in response to the election of Obasanjo but also in reaction to growing crime and seeming lawlessness that afflicted the people on the street. Contrary to the fears of some foreigners and Nigerian Christians, the adoption of *shar'ia* has not basically changed the nature of Nigerian Islam nor resulted in any greater confrontation between Muslims and Christians than before.<sup>20</sup>

All that being said, there is much in Nigeria that is not well known or understood. Some al-Qaeda cells may well exist.<sup>21</sup> And some other radical movements have shaken the country. A long existing radical religious sect, the Maitatsine, erupts in violence every few years. This sect appears to be entirely indigenous with no known outside sponsorship. In 2006, however, a new group, calling itself the Taliban, launched an attack in the northeast city of Borno. In April 2007, the same group launched a more serious attack in Kano, killing thirteen policemen and wounding five more. In the resulting battle, the Nigerian military reported twenty-five Taliban members were killed. This group remains something of a mystery. Members were reported to be dressed in long white gowns and speaking a language not native to the region. Most appear to have escaped,

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traveling west rather than back to the northeast, indicting some means of organization and perhaps indigenous support.

But the biggest unrest in Nigeria is related not to Islam, nor to international terrorism, but to the militias in Nigeria's oil-producing region of the Niger Delta. This region produces at least 80 percent of Nigeria's wealth, the bulk of its foreign exchange earnings and almost all of its government revenue. Yet it has been the site of extraordinary environmental degradation and shows little if any benefits in schools or hospitals or other gains from the precious commodity it provides. A riverine area, its rivers and streams have been perhaps irreversibly damaged from oil and gas spills, its soils equally damaged, and the population left with little employment either from traditional sources such as fishing or farming nor from the oil industry, which is largely capital intensive and dependent for its personnel on highly skilled workers, not general local labor. After decades of such conditions and inadequate response from both oil companies and the Nigerian government, younger members of the region took up arms, beginning in the 1990s.

Unfortunately, what began as a demand for better conditions, reparations, and employment has morphed into something very different. The militias, in collaboration with corrupt officials—including some high-ranking officials— have become engaged in the stealing (known as bunkering) of oil. The rates of theft are contested, but the proceeds could well exceed \$1 billion annually. A large part of the proceeds go into the purchase of ever more sophisticated arms. Delta militias are now capable of not only hitting local oil stations, and occasionally local oil company offices, but attacking offshore installations and taking on armed conflict with the police and the army. They regularly kidnap oil workers of every nationality, usually releasing them after a time, but some have been killed. At the same time, the militias have succeeded in shutting down a significant portion of Nigeria's legitimate production, that is, 200,000 barrels a day and sometimes more from Nigeria's more than 2 million barrels per day capacity, contributing to the sharp rise in crude oil prices on the world market.

The delta crisis does not lend itself to easy solutions. Initially, President Obasanjo tried a military approach to the problem, but the Nigerian army not only was incapable of beating the militia on their home turf of rivers and creeks but committed so many human rights violations that their presence provoked outrage from the local population. The police forces are simply too small, too ill-equipped, and, in some cases, too corrupt to help. Efforts to reduce corruption have been only partially successful. President Obasanjo cashiered four navy admirals for their involvement in bunkering, but the process continues, and other officials are surely involved.

Efforts to pump more resources into the region have foundered on corruption, ethnic rivalries, and conflicting agendas. Under the constitution, the oil producing states receive an automatic allocation of 13 percent of the country's oil and other revenue, resulting in billions of dollars flowing to regional governors and local governments each year. A Niger Delta Development Commission was established in 2000 to channel further resources to the region. But there is little to show for these efforts. Several regional governors have been impeached for corruption, but even that step has been caught up in the ethnic rivalries and complexities of the unrest. A case in point is the governor of Bayelsa, who was arrested in London carrying stacks of cash, and later arrested in Nigeria on charges of corruption. Nevertheless, his prosecution was opposed by one of the major militia, which saw the arrest as ethnic discrimination against the

Ijaw people. The Yar Adua government, elected in 2007, released him. The oil companies, ready to commit substantial resources to development in the region, find that the security problems, on the one hand, and the inefficiencies and corruption of government, on the other, make it very difficult for them to contribute substantial sums for development. As a result they have largely reverted to seeking to mollify local leaders and dissidents with small projects and minimal offers of employment, and shutting down production in the most volatile areas when that becomes necessary.

Following his election, President Yar Adua promised to make the Niger delta one of his main priorities. His vice president, Goodluck Johnson, is from the Niger delta and was seen as a natural person to lead such an effort. But in fact Johnson lacks credibility beyond his own community; his house was burned right after the election as a sign of the militants' lack of confidence in him. Moreover, a rivalry exists within the Yar Adua administration for control of Niger delta policy, with the secretary of the presidency, Baba Gingibe, competing with Johnson for primacy. On the ground little has changed. A long promised summit has been repeatedly postponed. Promises of development projects fail to be realized, and those that are started are often attacked by militants. At bottom, there is not sufficient incentive in the system to resolve the situation. The militants and their political allies are profiting from oil sales and growing military power; high-level as well as local officials are similarly profiting; and, with oil at more than \$100 a barrel, the central government can afford to have some of its production shut in and other shares stolen when nearly 2 million barrels are still being produced within the system.

The problem in the Niger Delta is but one part of a larger concern over security in the Gulf of Guinea, from which almost all of Africa's oil is shipped. It has one of the highest rates of piracy in the world. Moreover, not one of the producing states is able to provide adequate security. Concern over the safety and security of this vital oil-producing region has thus engaged the United States as much as the international terrorist threat in the region. Again, with leadership coming from EUCOM, the United States has convened oil ministers and security officials from the Gulf of Guinea region, demonstrated detection and other security techniques, and promised support to a Gulf of Guinea collaborative program for securing the area. Not all the countries have responded enthusiastically, however. In some cases, this may reflect probable official connections with illegal oil sales and other corruption; in other cases, it may be due to a lack of regional solidarity. Angola, in particular, has been hesitant to cede leadership to Nigeria, which had taken the lead in forming a Gulf of Guinea Commission. Now that the secretariat for the commission has been located in Angola, the cooperation may improve but so far the secretariat there has been inactive. Nevertheless, as is clear from the situation in the Niger Delta, a largely military solution to this problem may not be feasible and would be far from adequate. One American expert estimated that for \$100 million, a nearly foolproof system of maritime coverage against bunkering out of Nigeria could be put in place. Nigerian officials, when asked if they would accept such assistance if made available, demurred. Nevertheless, AFRICOM has made the Gulf of Guinea one of its highest priorities. It continues to offer training and advice on coastal security and stands ready to provide more substantial assistance once the countries of the region request it.

## **THE AFRICA COMMAND (AFRICOM)**

In early 2007, the United States announced that it would create a single Africa combatant command to bring together all the security programs the United States supports on the continent. AFRICOM is expected to become fully operational in the fall of 2008. Previously, U.S. defense operations for Africa were divided among EUCOM, which covered West, Central, and Southern Africa; Central Command, which covered the Horn; and Pacific Command, which covered the island base at Diego Garcia and maritime programs related to the Middle East. The decision to create a single African command is logical and should provide a clearer focus and a more coordinated approach to security programs in Africa.

However, the announcement of the command has raised questions about the intent of U.S. security intentions in Africa. To some, the combination of stepped-up American counterterrorism efforts and growing attention to the security of oil production in the region portend a strong security-oriented emphasis in U.S. policy in Africa. In the minds of these critics, these concerns will outweigh priorities of promoting democracy, economic development, justice, and human rights.<sup>22</sup> In Africa, there is also concern that stepped-up U.S. security programs in the region could result in the strengthening of African militaries, which have only recently withdrawn from politics and which continue to pose a threat to fragile democracies. There is also suspicion that this portends a more security-oriented emphasis in U.S. policy in Africa.<sup>23</sup>

The controversy was not helped by the reluctance of U.S. planners to articulate AFRICOM's mission at the outset. Most of the early explanations focused on the processes of organization and the desirability of coordinating existing and future programs.<sup>24</sup> That raised some suspicion about what might be the actual purpose. But the real dilemma for AFRICOM is that it is caught between presenting itself as a largely internal bureaucratic restructuring, and trying to be more bold. AFRICOM might have continued to be described as simply a way for the United States to better organize and coordinate its security programs in Africa. That might have produced less suspicion and indeed less notice in Africa. But as plans for AFRICOM developed, and as Pentagon spokespersons traveled across the continent to explain and promote the concept, the Pentagon went out of its way to portray it as something new and different from other combatant commands. The chair of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, General Peter Pace, emphasized that the Africa Command will not be a clone of the other traditional commands. He envisages a greater emphasis on interagency cooperation in order to "build African capabilities to effectively govern." He also denied any interests in sending U.S. troops to Africa.<sup>25</sup>

Stressing its interagency structure and staffing—a senior State official as one of the deputies, and both State and USAID personnel in the structure— AFRICOM was put forth as being part of a broad strategy to support democracy, development, and security. Though vague, plans appeared to include U.S. military cooperation, beyond training peacekeepers and other security related activities, in various civilian development projects, as CJTF-HOA had been doing—wells, clinics, environmental programs, help with fisheries development, etc. Close cooperation with State and USAID programs was envisaged, though again the dimensions of this cooperation were unclear.

While this approach might well be praiseworthy, in terms of recognizing that Africa's problems were as much related to poverty as to security, it gave the appearance that AFRICOM would be playing a large role in all U.S. program in Africa. Not just Africans but people in the

State Department wonder if Africa policy might be shifting to Stuttgart, especially given the fact that AFRICOM staff would likely exceed that of the Africa Bureau of the State Department by a goodly number. USAID officials, as well as those associated with NGOs, are very concerned that their development activities will become increasingly embedded within American security and intelligence activities, as has happened in Iraq and Afghanistan. This has already occurred to some extent in the Horn of Africa. Such a shift would diminish U.S. capacity for institution building and long-term development in Africa, relegating such USAID programs to a lower priority.

The second problem for AFRICOM was projecting its eventual headquarters on the continent of Africa. This immediately fell victim to traditional African opposition to foreign military bases in Africa, and allowed African politicians the opportunity to score points against the United States by publicly opposing not only that decision but AFRICOM itself. Nigeria and South Africa in particular made strong statements to this effect.<sup>26</sup> South Africa said it would not cooperate with AFRICOM. A team of senior U.S. military personnel visiting South Africa in March 2008 to discuss AFRICOM was unable to meet with any senior officials.<sup>27</sup> Only Liberia indicated that it would welcome AFRICOM headquarters on its soil, seeing in that a way to restore its “special relationship” with the United States. But Pentagon planners did not want it located there. Fortunately, after extensive consultations in Africa, planners have agreed that for some time in the future it would be better to locate it in Stuttgart, Germany, where EUCOM is headquartered, and to contemplate small satellite presences at select sites in Africa.

## **CONCLUSION**

Africa cannot help but be drawn into the global war on terrorism. Internationally sponsored terrorist networks have struck at American and Israeli targets on African soil, built local cells that could strike again in Africa or recruit for operations elsewhere, and found sufficiently sympathetic elements within the population to provide safe haven for terrorists fleeing from Europe or America. North Africa is far more integrated into internationally radical Islamic terrorist activity than sub-Saharan Africa. Algerians and Moroccans have figured in several terrorist acts in Europe and constitute most of the Africans who have reportedly traveled to join al-Qaeda insurgents in Iraq. But sub-Saharan Africa is not immune. It is widely recognized that terrorists seek out and have more success in developing their infrastructure in weak, rather than failed, states, utilizing the relative predictability and protection of an operating state, while exploiting its weaknesses in intelligence and other security capacity and the marginalization of disaffected elements in its population. Africa is replete with weak states.

Moreover, the Horn of Africa is intimately linked—in geographic, religious, ethnic, political, and economic terms—to the Middle East. The development of the radical Islamic Courts Movement in Somalia reflects those linkages. People, arms, money, and material flow from the Middle East along the Red Sea coast, through Somalia and south to other East African countries, while commerce and religious interaction moves in both directions. More than anywhere else on the continent, the Horn of Africa has become a front in the military battle against internationally sponsored terrorism, backed largely by the United States but involving ever more deeply the Africa Union.



Yet the vast majority of conflict and “terrorist” activity in Africa is not linked to international sponsorship or any vast conspiracy against the West. The Lords Resistance Army in Uganda, the various militia in eastern Congo, the militants in the Niger Delta, the extremist sects in Kenya, Nigeria, and elsewhere are the principal security threats to the African population. Programs that seek to bolster African capacity against internationally sponsored terrorism, the kind of most concern to the United States and Europe, must also build capacity against these threats. Yet the roots of these conflicts go much deeper and are more complex than a “global war against terrorism.” They demand stronger and more just African states, significant progress on economic development, and regional peace agreements, as much as improved intelligence and military capacity. And because the conditions that breed these homegrown forms of violent activity are the same as those that open the door for internationally sponsored terrorism, any “war” on the latter must address these broader issues.

Thus, the challenge in combating terrorism in Africa is to balance a legitimate program of security improvements with a continuing and sustained attack on poor governance, poverty, and deprivation of human rights. Getting the balance right is particularly acute because the democracies in Africa are fragile, and any crackdown on terrorist activity has to be carried out with great sensitivity to the historic grievances of marginalized groups, the incipient struggle for human rights, and the relatively weak civilian oversight of the military and security institutions. This is why, despite the best efforts of the planners of AFRICOM to follow such a broad approach, the heart and center of American counterterrorism programs cannot be based within a security apparatus. U.S. support for military civic actions programs, designed to win the hearts and minds of local populations, the centerpiece of CJTF-HOA, is not the same as USAID support for the strengthening of African institutions, the building of economic infrastructure, and the support of African civil society. Nor is it a substitute for strong political leadership from the Department of State to maintain the right balance.

African institutions are at a similar crossroads. The Africa Union was met with tremendous expectations when it was created in 2000, especially in the area of conflict resolution. Departing from the more traditional and narrow defense of sovereignty of its predecessor organization, the AU has stated that conflict within any African state could affect the region. It established a Peace and Security Council and promised African leadership and responsibility in bringing such conflicts to a close. It backed this declaration by sending African peacekeepers to Burundi, Côte d’Ivoire, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, and Darfur, ahead of the United Nations. The AU and regional organizations, such as ECOWAS, IGAD, and SADC, have taken the lead in negotiating peace agreements in Burundi, Liberia, the DRC, and elsewhere.

But Somalia has brought the AU directly into the global war on terrorism. Coming on the heels of a noble but flawed AU peacekeeping operation in Darfur, the failure to mobilize a peacekeeping force in Somalia may undermine the will and capacity of the AU to play this kind of role in the future. The AU’s diplomatic role may be similarly compromised in its full commitment to Ethiopia’s position in Somalia. In other such situations, the AU—like the UN—has striven to be neutral, to help parties negotiate peace, and to provide peacekeepers to back up an agreed-upon settlement among the contending parties, or, as in the case of Darfur, with the agreement of the host government. If the AU’s readiness and capacity to provide leadership in

peacekeeping in Africa are undermined, Somalia will have cost Africa and the West a vital means to fight all the other conflict situations on the continent. It will have been a big price to pay.

A new administration in Washington will need to reexamine these issues and the totality of American counterterrorism efforts. Fortunately for the United States, most African states share the concern over terrorism and are prepared to cooperate in fighting it, for their own safety and security. They are also, however, beset with other priorities and limitations. The United States has the tools to respond broadly, with recent initiatives such as PEPFAR, the Millennium Challenge Account, and generally rising aid levels. It has skillful diplomats and the ability to call on the United Nations and others to advance complex political solutions, as will surely be needed in the Horn. Keeping these fully engaged along with direct security programs, and the benefits of a well-organized AFRICOM, the partnership with Africa in this area can be advanced and deepened.

## NOTES

1. Brigadier General Jeffrey Marshall, *EUCOM Engagement in Africa*, briefing presented to the Conference on AFRICOM at Airlie House, Virginia, sponsored by the Department of Defense, September 23, 2007, p. 16.

2. Robert Rotberg, ed., *Battling Terrorism in the Horn of Africa* (Washington, D.C., Brookings Institution, 2005), p. 2.

3. Ken Menkhaus, "Somalia and Somaliland: Terrorism, Islam, and State Collapse," in Rotberg, ed., *Battling Terrorism*, pp. 40–41.

4. Roland Marchal, "Islamic Political Dynamics in the Civil War," in Alex de Waal, ed., *Islamism and Its Enemies in the Horn of Africa* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2004), pp. 115ff. The designation of the Courts movement eventually became the Council of Somali Islamic Courts (CSIC), but the courts have also been designated by the title Islamic Courts Union (ICU) as well as Supreme Council of Islamic Courts (SCIC).

5. Ibid., pp. 125–26. The Islamic Courts Movement, like most other Somali institutions, was not entirely unified nor free of clan and subclan politics. The courts were originally organized on a subclan basis and then were later brought under a central structure. The Hawiye clan, with its power base in Mogadishu, was a strong supporter. However, tensions between the Courts Movement and the Hawiye also surfaced. For more detail on these factors, see Cedric Barnes, SOAS, and Harun Hassan, SMC, *The Rise and Fall of Mogadishu's Islamic Courts* (London: Chatham House, Africa Program, AP BP 07/02, April 2007).

6. Some splits have begun to take place in this coalition, with a more militant group, the Shabab faction, criticizing both any broadening of the opposition movement beyond the Islamic core and the coalition's dependence on Eritrea, and preaching a more militant Islamic internationalist agenda. Daveed Gartensen-Ross, "Will Divisions Undermine Somali Rebellion?" *Middle East Times*, February 28, 2008, [http://metimes.com/International/2008/02/28will\\_divisions\\_undermine\\_somali\\_rebellion?](http://metimes.com/International/2008/02/28will_divisions_undermine_somali_rebellion?) For a full account of the Ethiopian-Eritrean conflict and its regional dimensions, see Terrence Lyons, *Avoiding Conflict in the Horn of Africa: U.S. Policy Toward Ethiopia and Eritrea*, Council on Foreign Relations, Special Report, CSR no. 21, December 2006.

7. Rob Crilly, "Chinese Oil Workers Massacred in Attack by Army of 200 Rebels Linked to Islamists," *Times* (London), April 25, 2007, at <http://www.timesonline>

.co.uk/tol/news/world/africa/article1701450.ece.

8. For a detailed account of radical Islamist movements and terrorist activity in Sudan, see de Waal, ed., *Islamism and Its Enemies*, pp. 71–113.

9. For details of the difficulty in the negotiations and splits among the rebel groups, see Kelly Campbell, *Negotiating Peace in Darfur*, United States Peace Briefing, Washington, D.C., January 2008.

10. Cheryl O. Igiri and Princeton N. Lyman, *Giving Meaning to “Never Again”: Seeking an Effective Response to the Crisis in Darfur and Beyond*, Council on Foreign Relations, Special Report, no. 5, September 2004, p. 21.

11. A full account of the roots of terrorism and the subsequent efforts against terrorism in Kenya can be found in Johnnie Carson, “Kenya: The Struggle Against Terrorism,” in Rotberg, ed., *Battling Terrorism*, pp. 173–192. See also Gilbert Khadiagala, “Kenya: Haven or Helpless Victim of Terrorism,” in *Terrorism in the Horn of Africa*, United States Institute of Peace, Special Report no. 113, January 2004.

12. The three most wanted terrorist suspects thought to have been in Somalia are Fazul Abdullah Mohammed, Saleh Ali Saleh Nabhan, and Abu Taha al-Sudani. Fazul Abdullah Mohammed twice escaped from Kenyan custody. Saleh Ali Saleh Nabhan was the target of the March 2008 U.S. attack on southern Somalia.

13. The lead in complaining about harassment of Muslims under the anti-terrorism program is coming from the religious community rather than the political representatives of the community, reflecting the growing role of the former. Jume Namlola, “Speak Out on Harassment, Say Muslims,” *Nation* (Nairobi), May 1, 2007. Carson, “Kenya: The Struggle Against Terrorism,” p. 187, makes the same point. For a summary of complaints from both religious and civil liberty groups about the implications of Kenya’s anti-terrorist programs, see the report from the International Commission of Jurists, “Eminent Jurists Conclude Hearings on Terrorism and Human Rights in East Africa,” March 2, 2006, at [http://ejp.icj.org/hearing2.php3?id\\_article=4&lang=en](http://ejp.icj.org/hearing2.php3?id_article=4&lang=en).

14. Ken Menkhaus, *Somalia: State Collapse and the Threat of Terrorism*, Adelphi Paper 364 (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004), p. 52.

15. Department of State, U.S. Office for Counterterrorism, Country Reports: Africa Overview, May 2007.

16. For a number of anecdotal examples of such attitudes, see Jeffrey Tayler, *Angry Wind: Through Muslim Black Africa by Truck, Bus, Boat, and Camel* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 2005).

17. Oxford Analytical Daily Brief, “Africa: Trans-Saharan Criminality,” May 23, 2007.

18. Muslim and Christian interlocutors both separately told me in 2005 that recent ostensibly religious riots that had taken place in Nigeria had been provoked by political leaders.

19. For further examples of such attitudes, see Princeton N. Lyman, “A Strategic Approach to Terrorism,” in Donald Rothchild and Edmond J. Keller, eds., *Africa-US Relations: Strategic Encounters* (Boulder: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 2006), pp. 60–61.

20. The best recent analysis of Nigeria’s Islamic traditions and their role in modern Nigerian politics can be found in John N. Paden, *Muslim Civic Cultures and Conflict Resolution: The Challenges of Democratic Federalism in Nigeria* (Washington D.C.: Brookings Institution, 2005).

21. American officials believe there are such cells. Personal conversations with American officials in 2006–2007.

22. For a highly critical account of the rationale for the creation of AFRICOM and the motives of some of its backers, see Paul Lubeck, Michael J. Watts, and Ronnie Lipschutz, “Convergent Interests: U.S. Energy Security and the ‘Securing’ of Nigerian Democracy,” a publication of the Center for International Policy, February 2007, <http://www.ciponline.org>.

23. Al Pessin, “African Officials Express Concern About U.S Africa Command Plan,” at <http://www.globalsecurity.org/military/library/news/2007/04/mil-0704>, April 23, 2007; “The Proposed U.S. Africa Command,” *This Day*, Lagos, Nigeria, May 9, 2007; and Greg Mills and Jeffrey Herbst, “Africa, Terrorism, and AFRICOM,” *RUSI Journal*, April 2007, at <http://www.rusi.org>.

24. Council on Foreign Relations, “The Pentagon’s New Africa Command,” meeting with Admiral Robert Moeller and Ambassador Robert Loftus, April 11, 2007, at <http://www.cfr.org/publications/13348/-25k>.

25. Herman Cohen, “The U.S. Military’s New Africa Command,” *Peace Operations* 2, no. 5 (March–April 2007).

26. Wyndham Hartley, “More U.S. Soldiers Not Welcome in Africa, Says Lekota,” *Business Day* [Johannesburg], August 30, 2007.

27. Some of this is clearly posturing. South Africa, like other African countries, continues to participate in various U.S. military training, health, and other programs that were formerly conducted out of EUCOM and that will simply shift bureaucratically to AFRICOM.