AL-QAIDA'S
(MIS)ADVENTURES IN THE
HORN OF AFRICA

Kenya

Eritrea

Sudan

Ethiopia

Somalia

Djibouti

HARMONY PROJECT
COMBATING TERRORISM CENTER
AT WEST POINT

Foreword

The United States will continue to lead an expansive international effort in pursuit of a two-pronged vision: 1) The defeat of violent extremism as a threat to our way of life as a free and open society; and 2) The creation of a global environment inhospitable to violent extremists and all who support them.[1]
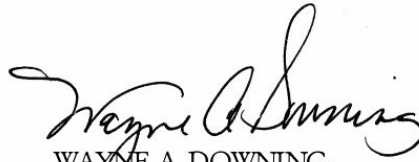
— President Bush September 2006

In February 2006, the Combating Terrorism Center released *Harmony and Disharmony: Exploiting al-Qa'ida's Organizational Vulnerabilities*. Its authors analyzed declassified internal al-Qa'ida documents captured during operations in support of the Global War on Terror and maintained on the Department of Defense's Harmony Database. These declassified documents, which are corroborated by multiple open source materials, provide evidence that al-Qa'ida struggles with many of the same issues and challenges that all organizations in the private and public sectors confront. The Combating Terrorism Center recommended that effective strategies to defeat al-Qa'ida and likeminded groups should include measures that leverage and heighten their dysfunctional structure, competition, and behavior.

In *Al-Qa'ida's (Mis)Adventures in the Horn of Africa,* the Combating Terrorism Center's team of area experts and terrorism scholars analyzed al-Qa'ida's attempts to establish bases of operations and recruit followers in the Horn of Africa. According to a new set of recently declassified documents from the Harmony Database, al-Qa'ida operatives encountered significant problems as they ventured into the foreign lands of the Horn. The environment was far more inhospitable than they anticipated. The same conditions that make it difficult, or in many cases impossible, for state authorities to exert control in this region—poor infrastructure, scarce resources, competition with tribal and other local authority structures—were significant problems for al-Qa'ida as well.

The theories and case evidence presented in this report indicate that the second part of the President's vision—creating a global environment inhospitable to extremists and their supporters—can be well served by recognizing, understanding, and reinforcing local and regional suspicions and often outright hostility to an unknown group of foreign, religious extremists. As the report's authors argue, we should neither assume that al-Qa'ida's members are any more adept at operating in foreign countries than we are nor should we inflate the appeal of their rhetoric or the resonance of their extremist ideology. In Africa, the U.S. and al-Qa'ida are in an ideological struggle and experience similar advantages and disadvantages; however, the U.S. has more (but not unlimited) resources and options at its disposal. The key is to efficiently apply these resources in a manner that is appropriate, sustainable, and does not strengthen al-Qa'ida's appeal. Crucial to this effort is a low-to-invisible American profile in the region. The report's specific recommendations—informed by al-Qa'ida's internal deliberations and formulated by counterterrorism practitioners and area experts—are a major contribution to this end.

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[1] *National Security Strategy for Combating Terrorism*, September 2006; http://www.whitehouse.gov/nsc/nsct/2006/

Sun Tzu warns that, "He who attempts to defend everywhere defends nowhere"; yet this is largely the challenge that confronts us in our current worldwide struggle against radical Islamist Jihadis. This report draws on the lessons learned from al-Qa'ida's experiences in the Horn to focus U.S. resources on those areas with the largest payoff in order to more efficiently allocate our scarce resources so that this country can sustain this generational struggle.

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The views expressed in this report are those of the authors and not of the U.S. Military Academy, the Department of the Army or any other agency of the U.S. Government.

Executive Summary

During the early 1990s, al-Qa'ida was beginning to coalesce as an organization, honing its operational techniques and dealing with its first internal conflicts. Its private deliberations during this period are revealed by a trove of documents captured in the course of operations supporting the Global War on Terror and maintained in the Department of Defense's Harmony Database. *Al-Qa'ida's (Mis)Adventures in the Horn of Africa,* by the Combating Terrorism Center (CTC) at West Point, draws on recently declassified Harmony documents, predominately from the 1992-1994 time period, original field work by CTC personnel and careful country studies to enrich our understanding of the terrorist group's early successes and failures in the Horn of Africa.

The Horn provides the backdrop for an intriguing tale of al-Qa'ida's first efforts to expand beyond Afghanistan and Sudan. As recounted by its leaders and operatives, al-Qa'ida's efforts to establish a presence in this region and use it as a base for attacks against Western targets elsewhere were largely a failure. Conventional wisdom suggests that Somalia, a failed state, would be an ideal safe haven for al-Qa'ida. Our analysis, however, indicates that weakly governed regions such as coastal Kenya, not failed states like Somalia, provide an environment more conducive to al-Qa'ida's activities. In Somalia, al-Qa'ida's members fell victim to many of the same challenges that plague Western interventions in the Horn. They were prone to extortion and betrayal, found themselves trapped in the middle of incomprehensible (to them) clan conflicts, faced suspicion from the indigenous population, had to overcome significant logistical constraints and were subject to the constant risk of Western military interdiction.

In Kenya, by contrast, the state's poor governance, combined with relative stability and basic infrastructure, created a potential base area from which to support operations in more unstable regions like Somalia and a favorable operational environment to attack lucrative targets within Kenya. More importantly, outside military forces could not conduct operations because of Kenyan sovereignty, yet the state had little ability to interdict the terror group's actions or effectively police its activities. Evidence from Harmony, open sources and recent in-country interviews support these conclusions. Based on this analysis, we believe coastal Kenya is the decisive arena in the fight against al-Qa'ida and associated movements in the Horn. More generally, our analysis shows that weakly governed states–not failed ones–provide the optimal operational environment for al-Qa'ida and similar terrorist organizations.

This report assesses al-Qa'ida's operations in the Horn of Africa using a similar approach to *Harmony and Disharmony: Exploiting al-Qa'ida's Organizational Vulnerabilities*, the CTC's first report based on the Harmony documents. We identify the organizational challenges al-Qa'ida faced in managing the jihad in the Horn. We also examine the individual motivations of the Somali clans and people that largely resisted al-Qa'ida's recruitment efforts in the region. Our most important new finding is that al-Qa'ida failed to gain traction in Somalia in the early 1990s because: (1) its members were perceived as foreigners; (2) it significantly underestimated the costs of operating in a failed state environment; and (3) its African vanguard did not understand the salience of

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either local power structures or local Islamic traditions. In a region dominated by clan-based authority structures and moderate Sufi Islam, the benefits of joining a foreign Salafi terrorist organization paled next to the costs of leaving one's clan.

After reviewing al-Qa`ida's Horn operations from a theoretical standpoint, we analyze al-Qa`ida's prospects in two key Horn countries: Somalia and Kenya. The nations composing the Horn of Africa are often aggregated into one overall counterterrorism strategy. However, each Horn country and even sub-regions within these countries present a unique set of socioeconomic, political and religious factors that create specific challenges and opportunities to both al-Qa'ida and to counterterrorism forces. Effective and efficient counterterrorism efforts in the Horn require tailored strategies that exacerbate the endemic challenges that al-Qa'ida encounters in this inhospitable region and minimize friendly government vulnerabilities.

We conclude this study by identifying concepts and techniques that may be applicable in other regions based upon al-Qa'ida's experiences in the Horn. Our primary conclusion is that the U.S. and its coalition partners should prioritize counterterrorism efforts on weak states–not failed ones. Both types of states demand attention but require different policy solutions. Effective and sustainable counterterrorism in failed states requires engaging with sub-state authorities to give them the means and the motivation to resist foreign intrusion. In weak states, successful counterterrorism policies must address core institutional and governance problems that render such states unable or unwilling to fully deal with the threat. Perversely, U.S. support to state and local counterterrorism efforts can create incentives to tolerate low levels of terrorism, a problem best addressed by conditioning aid on counterterrorism effort rather than on the presence of a threat.

To ensure Somalia remains an inhospitable location for foreign terrorists, we suggest four principles that should guide counterterrorism policy: (1) prevent the creation of a Somali state based on jihadi ideology, in part by leveraging the divisions between Somalis and foreign jihadis created by differences in Islamic ideology; (2) selectively empower local authority structures; (3) publicize the elitist nature of al-Qa'ida fighters and their disrespect for Somalis; and (4) maintain the capacity to interdict high value al-Qa'ida targets and provide humanitarian support, but minimize foreign military presence on the ground in the region.

In the past, al-Qa'ida has sought to draw the U.S. into entanglements where it can bleed the U.S.'s military and economic resources. In Somalia, al-Qa'ida encountered an entanglement of its own. Policy makers must understand how places like Somalia–where al-Qa'ida became plagued by clan conflicts and excessive operational costs–provide opportunities to employ an economy-of-force strategy whereby U.S. forces contain and monitor al-Qa'ida. This graduated containment approach to dealing with Somalia and other failed states would build rings of security around the failed state through diplomatic engagement with nation-states and local authority structures, increased military capability within states and economic development.

To reduce the attractiveness of Kenya as a venue for terrorist activity, U.S. policy should seek to implement the following measures: (1) focus on coastal Kenya where al-Qa'ida finds a Muslim populace that is distrustful of the central government and is tolerant of al-Qa'ida's ideology; (2) use targeted aid to raise al-Qa'ida's operating costs in at-risk areas; (3) support non-governmental organizations and inter-governmental organizations promoting democratic values among Muslim political parties and candidates in order to provide an ideological counter-weight to jihadi appeals; (4) subsidize efforts to address non-terrorism concerns, such as property crime and poor health care, in order to bolster government legitimacy and increase citizens' willingness to work with government on security issues; and (5) realign counterterrorism funding such that it increases state capacity without creating incentives for the Kenyan government to tolerate low levels of terrorism.

Given the Horn of Africa's history as a venue for terrorist attacks, and its potential value as a base area for jihadi operations, continued vigilance is required. By focusing efforts on weak states, working through local allies at the lowest possible level and supporting institutional reforms that eliminate incentives to tolerate low levels of terrorism, policy makers can efficiently ensure a greater threat does not develop in this important region.

Part II of the report provides summaries and full English translations of the twenty-seven recently declassified Harmony documents used in the study. The translated documents and the complete, un-translated originals are accessible at http://www.ctc.usma.edu/aq.asp. Key authors of these Harmony documents and terrorist groups operating in the Horn are profiled in the Appendices.

Work for this project contributes to the CTC's mission to prepare current and future leaders to better understand and respond to the terrorist threats facing our nation. As part of the Department of Social Sciences at the U.S. Military Academy, research conducted by the CTC faculty and staff is integrated into the Academy's curriculum and supports outreach efforts to inform military and civilian leaders engaged in formulating and executing counterterrorism policies. Please direct specific questions on this report or the CTC's Harmony Project in general to Clint Watts, CTC Executive Officer, or LTC Joe Felter, CTC Director. They can be reached by email at clinton.watts@usma.edu, or phone: 845-938-8495.

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1. Introduction

The Horn of Africa has been an important area of operations for al-Qa'ida and the jihadi movement[1] since the early 1990s. Recent information campaigns by Ayman al-Zawahiri and other jihadis demonstrate al-Qa'ida's desire to make Somalia a new front for jihadis to face off against the West. For example, in early 2007, Zawahiri called for attacks on Ethiopian forces in Somalia using "ambushes, mines, raids and martyrdom-seeking raids to devour them as the lions devour their prey," which strongly suggests that al-Qa'ida desires to use the Horn as a theater of operations.[2] The degree to which al-Qa'ida has actually established a foothold in the region–and why–is the subject of significant debate among analysts and policy makers. Much of this debate has focused on the potential threat from terrorism in the region, without paying sufficient attention to the operational challenges al-Qa'ida and other groups have faced when operating in the Horn. Taking these challenges into account, we find that in this region al-Qa'ida has been moderately successful when operating in weak states like Kenya but has largely failed to establish itself in failed states like Somalia.

To better understand al-Qa'ida's successes and failures in the Horn of Africa, we analyze and incorporate information from 27 newly declassified internal al-Qa'ida documents related to the region. These documents were captured during operations in support of the Global War on Terror and are maintained in the Department of Defense's Harmony Database. The vast majority of these documents provide detailed accounts of al-Qa'ida's efforts in Somalia between 1992 and 1994. This report builds on the theoretical framework presented in the CTC's study, *Harmony and Disharmony: Exploiting al-Qa'ida's Organizational Vulnerabilities*,[3] and provides recommendations for effective counterterrorism policies informed by these new insights into al-Qa'ida's early operations. We begin the report by developing a theoretical lens to assess terrorist operations in this region and in general. Next we present case studies that assess al-Qa'ida's operations in Somalia and Kenya–both of which have experienced significant al-Qa'ida activities, and whose unique local conditions each presented the terrorist network with a different set of underlying challenges and opportunities. Al-Qa'ida's successes and failures in the context of these African states have significant implications for developing more effective methods to reduce the threat of transnational terrorism in both weakly governed states and failed states, in this region or wherever similar governance conditions exist.

Our approach to understanding the threat of terrorism in the Horn of Africa is to carefully analyze the tasks that terrorists must accomplish and ask how the situation in the Horn makes these tasks easier or harder. Our starting point is that terrorist

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[1] We use the term as it is widely used in both the Western counterterrorism community and the Arab media. See William McCants, *Militant Ideology Atlas* (West Point, NY: U.S. Military Academy, 2006), 5.
[2] Ayman al-Zawahiri audio tape, January 5, 2007. See translation at "Al Zawahiri Audio Urges Somalis, Muslims to Fight Ethiopian Forces," *What Extremists Say*, U.S. Central Command. Available at http://www.centcom.mil/sites/uscentcom1/What%20Extremists%20Say/Al-ZawahiriAudioUrgesSomalis,MuslimsToFightEthiopianForces2.aspx [accessed 25 February 2007].
[3] *Harmony and Disharmony: Exploiting al-Qa'ida's Organizational Vulnerabilities* (West Point, NY: U.S. Military Academy, 2006). Available at http://www.ctc.usma.edu/aq.asp.

organizations may seek to use the Horn of Africa in two ways. First, they may use it as a place from which to operate, as a base of support. Here we can think of how al-Qa'ida used Khartoum as a place to maintain training camps and to conduct fundraising enterprises from 1992 to 1996, or of the al-Qa'ida militants who sought refuge in Somalia after the fall of the Taliban regime.[4] Second, they may use the Horn as a theater of operations. Al-Qa'ida did this in 1998 when it attacked American embassies in Nairobi and Dar es Salaam and again in 2002 when it attacked the Paradise Hotel and a jet leaving the Moi International Airport in Kenya.

Because a core constraint facing all terrorist organizations is maintaining an acceptable level of security, the different types of environmental conditions and government capacity within the Horn mean the threat from terrorism varies dramatically across the region. For example, areas such as Nairobi may be safe-albeit-expensive places for terrorists to engage in logistical tasks, but mounting terror attacks there may be relatively challenging to the extent that the Kenyan government decides to crack down.[5] In contrast, areas like Lu'uq in Somalia may be weakly governed, and hence a good place to locate military training camps, but the infrastructure is so poor that logistical challenges essentially eliminate the area's military utility.[6] Moreover, the lack of a strong central Somali government means that regional enemies have free rein to engage in cross-border military operations.[7]

To date, the details of terrorist operations in the Horn of Africa have been largely misunderstood. The Harmony documents in this study outline al-Qa'ida's operational environment in the early 1990s and suggest that common assumptions about the Horn as an operational environment and base of support are largely mistaken. In particular, the anarchic conditions in Somalia that many believe serve al-Qa'ida's purposes turned out to be as challenging for al-Qa'ida as for the Western organizations seeking to help Somalia. Al-Qa'ida's experiences in Somalia and Kenya illustrate the underlying conditions that have made the Horn of Africa more or less suitable for al-Qa'ida. In these two Horn countries, we find significant al-Qa'ida activity over the past fifteen years, as illustrated in the documents from the Harmony database. However, each exhibits a different mix of al-Qa'ida activity, government capacity and counterterrorism response. While al-Qa'ida has operated elsewhere in the Horn, our case studies of these two countries–supported by new evidence from the Harmony database–yield strikingly different conclusions from conventional thinking on the region.

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[4] The Sudanese government laid out the welcome mat for a wide variety of Islamic militants in the first half of the 1990s, leading the U.S. State Department to designate Sudan a state sponsor of terrorism in August 1993. However, as soon as Sudan began to face real costs for its support of militancy–following the failed June 1995 assassination attempt against Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak–its leaders became very careful about which groups they would support, avoiding links with transnational groups. In recent years Sudan has been applauded by the State Department for its cooperative stance against transnational terrorists despite once being the global headquarters for al-Qa'ida.

[5] On surveillance of Arabs in Nairobi making operations difficult see Harmony, AFGP-2002-800597, 7.

[6] Harmony, AFGP-2002-600104, 5.

[7] Ethiopia effectively crushed the Islamic Union of Western Somalia (*al-Ittihad al-Islami*, or AIAI) in a series of raids from August 1996 through January 1997 against bases in Lu'uq and Buulo Haawa; see International Crisis Group, *Somalia's Islamists*, Africa Report No. 100 (Nairobi andBrussels: International Crisis Group, 2005), 9. Available at http://www.crisisgroup.org/home/index.cfm?id=3830&l=1.

For example, a number of analysts have argued that al-Qa'ida has deep, long-standing ties to Islamic militants in Somalia and could draw on these ties to use Somalia as a staging ground for further attacks.[8] Chapter 3 of this report disputes that conclusion. Both the Harmony documents and recent journalistic and academic research suggest that the links are actually quite tenuous. Within Somalia, a failed state allegedly ideal for terrorist organizations, al-Qa'ida struggled to build a coalition in 1993-1994. Moreover, al-Qa'ida had little success forging alliances with local militias in Somalia[9] and its involvement in attacks against Western forces in Somalia was tangential at best.[10] Finally, foreign militants operating in Somalia are exposed to constant risk of detention and arrest by Western counterterrorism efforts.[11] Our analysis, informed by the documents from the Harmony database, reveals that while Somalia provided occasional passage and temporary refuge to al-Qa'ida, the country's lawlessness and isolation– which many cite as ideal for al-Qa'ida's efforts–were seen by the group as constraining their ability to create a secure base for operations.

In contrast to Somalia, analysts assessing the threat of terrorism in Kenya often portray it as being smaller than it truly is. Kenyan counterterrorism efforts, supported by generous Western assistance, have been at best ineffective and at worst counter-productive. In Kenya, a democratic nation with relatively weak counterterrorism capacity, al-Qa'ida operatives moved freely into Somalia during the early 1990s, conducted attacks against the U.S. Embassy in 1998 and continued to launch attacks against Western targets as late as 2002. Despite extensive U.S. support for countering al-Qa'ida within the country, Kenyan efforts have likely increased the alienation of the country's minority Muslim community, while Western aid has done little to increase popular confidence in the Kenyan authorities–especially given the economic and political conditions in their country. Taken together, these circumstances suggest that Kenyans are more likely to ignore foreign terrorists operating in their midst. Moreover, we find a pernicious pattern in Kenya. For the population, the threat of terrorism is a low priority relative to other security concerns. For the government, having some alleged terrorist activity in Kenya brings substantial Western military assistance that may outweigh the costs in terms of lost tourist revenue. In Chapter 4, we examine how this unique situation makes crafting effective counterterrorism policy extremely problematic for the U.S. government.

Our theoretical framework and case studies support a number of conclusions and policy recommendations for fighting terrorism in the Horn of Africa as well as globally.

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[8] A typical example is James Phillips, "Somalia and al-Qaeda: Implications for the War on Terrorism," *Backgrounder* no. 1526 (Washington, D.C.: The Heritage Foundation, 2002). Available at http://www.heritage.org/Research/HomelandDefense/BG1526.cfm.
[9] Chapter 3, below, discusses this problem at length.
[10] Lawrence Wright, *The Looming Tower* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2006), 188-9.
[11] *Counter-Terrorism in Somalia: Losing Hearts and Minds?*, Africa Report No. 95 (Brussels: International Crisis Group, 2005), 9-13. This otherwise excellent report includes some odd conclusions about the potential for Somalia as a staging ground for terrorism elsewhere. The report argues that "Somalia's lack of a functioning central government, unpatrolled borders, and unregulated arms markets make it a useful platform for actions aimed at foreign interests elsewhere in the region." (*Counter-Terrorism in Somalia*, 6) This conclusion does not follow from the facts presented in the report, which details the myriad problems jihadi terrorist have faced in Somalia.

In Chapter 5, we discuss several different approaches that Western nations might use in dealing with failed and weak states. Our analysis suggests that weak states, not failed ones, provide the greatest potential terrorism threat. In weak states, groups like al-Qa'ida find a target-rich environment where they are protected from Western counterterrorism efforts and yet not significantly interdicted by the state's law enforcement and intelligence apparatus. Meanwhile, in failed states like Somalia, al-Qa'ida suffers from logistical constraints, a hostile set of clans and other local powers and relatively unrestricted Western counterterrorism efforts. Our analysis thus reveals the peculiarities of the weak-versus-failed state dynamic and suggests a host of political, economic and military techniques that might be used in the Horn of Africa and globally to deny al-Qa'ida safe haven.

The appendices of the report provide valuable additional details on specific terrorists and terrorist groups active in the Horn. Throughout the study, we make use of newly declassified documents from the Harmony database. These documents support and deepen the observations provided in our theoretical and case study sections. Part II of this report contains summaries and English translations of these newly declassified documents, which can inform future research and provide more insight into al-Qa'ida's weaknesses as well as methods for exploiting these shortcomings.

The Africa Corps: al-Qa'ida's Operations in the Horn of Africa

The Horn of Africa presents the U.S. and its coalition partners with a diverse set of regional and country-specific challenges. Understanding the threat from terrorists operating in the Horn requires an appreciation of how terrorists' core organizational challenges play out in light of the peculiar history of the region. For more than 40 years, the Horn has been plagued by strife and conflict. Civil wars in Ethiopia, Somalia and Sudan have been compounded by several interstate wars between Ethiopia and Somalia (the 1977-1978 Ogaden War) and between Ethiopia and Eritrea (the 1998-2000 border war). Additionally, understanding the terrorist threat to this region is made more challenging by the numerous insurgent organizations that have been created to fight as proxy armies or have arisen to represent the interests of various populations.[12] Many of these organizations have shifted ideologically over the years, moving from nationalism to Marxism-Leninism to Islamism. In the Horn, by and large, groups like the Eritrean People's Liberation Forces (EPLF) choose their ideology to maximize the flow of outside resources–thereby maximizing their chances for military success in the name of larger political goals. Thus, what appears to be a Salafi-jihadi organization committed to supporting attacks against the West may in fact be a localized insurgent group seeking to wrap themselves in an ideological mantle to secure funds from wealthy foreign militants.

This backdrop–as well as the varying levels of government control and government corruption that exists throughout the region–creates unique challenges for both Western governments and al-Qa'ida in the Horn of Africa. The Harmony documents provided in Part II of this report describe al-Qa'ida in its infancy and in its first

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[12] For a useful summary of competing local interests see International Crisis Group, *Somalia: The Tough Part is Ahead*, Africa Briefing No. 45(Nairobi and Brussels: International Crisis Group, 2007), 4-6. Available at http://www.crisisgroup.org/home/index.cfm?id=4630&l=1.

operational theater. In 1992, Osama bin Laden moved his operations to Sudan and immediately initiated a series of business developments in and around Khartoum.[13] Within months, bin Laden had deployed cadres of operatives into the Horn of Africa in an effort to spread Salafism and the doctrine of jihad, but al-Qa'ida's Africa Corps ultimately failed to create a lasting front on the continent. The challenges of logistics, distance and culture that have undermined many foreign endeavors into rural Africa plagued al-Qa'ida's operations as well. By 1996, bin Laden and his Africa Corps had been run out of Sudan and were headed back to Afghanistan.[14]

The Harmony documents made available for this project provide a glimpse into the operational planning of the Africa Corps and specifically their efforts in Somalia. Although bin Laden's initial activities in Sudan were focused on military training and business ventures in the Horn, he was infuriated with the continuing presence of U.S. military forces in the "holy land" of Saudi Arabia and could not remain a mere Khartoum businessman. By the end of 1992, he began openly discussing the issue of U.S. troops in Somalia. Together with his religious advisor, Mamdouh Salim (aka Abu Hajer al-Iraqi), bin Laden began a campaign to recast the "far enemy" of Islam as the United States. With the fall of the communist regime of the Soviet Union, he and Salim turned their sights on the United States as the main international thief of Muslim oil wealth, occupier of the holy land and embodiment of corrupt Western values.[15] Unable to operate in Saudi Arabia, al-Qa'ida turned to Somalia as a possible base from which to strike the Americans and drive them out of the Middle East.[16] From Khartoum, al-Qa'ida deployed teams of operatives led by senior members with experience in military operations, logistics, religion, propaganda and negotiation. The Africa Corps, led by Mohammed Atef (aka Abu Hafs), ventured into Somalia with high hopes for jihad and redemption.[17]

The mission of what we will call al-Qa'ida-Somalia began in late-January 1993 when Abu Hafs designated a team of veterans to conduct operation "MSK" (an Arabic word meaning 'holding' or 'grabbing'). These veterans immediately began preparing for deployment to Africa. Beginning on 4 February 1993, al-Qa'ida members departed for Nairobi, Kenya. Abu Hafs tasked them to: "1- Find a location for military operations that would replace Afghanistan…. 2- [T]he location must be near the Arab region…. 3- [A]ttempt to help the brothers in Somalia and Ogaden."[18] Al-Qa'ida believed that Somalia would provide another safe haven for their operations, allow them to target the U.S. in both Somalia and the Arabian Peninsula and provide a steady flow of recruits. None of these hopes came to fruition.

As described in the Harmony documents, the first elements of al-Qa'ida-Somalia departed from Peshawar, Pakistan through Kenya en route to Somalia on 4 February 1993. The group behaved much like a traditional special-forces operation. The initial group of twelve senior al-Qa'ida operatives was broken into two- and three-man teams

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[13] See Wright, *The Looming Tower*, 165.
[14] Ibid., 219-222.
[15] Ibid., 170-175.
[16] The first al-Qa'ida attack was in December 1992 against U.S. troops in Yemen who were traveling to Somalia.
[17] See Appendix B-II.
[18] Harmony, AFGP-2002-600104, 1.

for the mission. Prior to departing, the teams went through intensive training, learning how to blend into their future environment, reviewing travel and transportation procedures and preparing for reconnaissance operations. Upon arriving in country, al-Qa'ida-Somalia began establishing three training camps with the agreement of the General Islamic Union, the Somali militant group better known as al-Ittihad al-Islami (AIAI).[19] The first two camps were established in Lu'uq and Bussaso, and a third was established later in the Ogaden region. In Nairobi, al-Qa'ida's ominously named "Team Green," led by Saif al-Islam, received new members from bases of operation in Pakistan and Sudan.[20] Al-Qa'ida-Somalia used an air infiltration route from Wilson Airport in Nairobi,[21] a water route from Lamu, Kenya, and at some point an overland route from Djibouti across the Ethiopian Ogaden region.[22] Al-Qa'ida's Africa Corps operations appear to have been headquartered in Khartoum from 1993-1994. Cells operating in the region maintained communications with personnel in camps in Afghanistan as well.[23]

The Harmony documents reveal that over a roughly 18 month period, al-Qa'ida found more adversity than success in Somalia. In order to project power, al-Qa'ida needed to be able to promote its ideology, gain an operational safe haven, manipulate underlying conditions to secure popular support and have adequate financing for continued operations. It achieved none of these objectives.

In pursuit of its first objective, al-Qa'ida-Somalia tried to promote its ideology through propaganda and by establishing administrative offices in each military training program. However, the Salafi message largely fell on deaf ears. While the military training was of value to members of AIAI, it did not ensure their loyalty to the greater jihadi movement. Al-Qa'ida-Somalia likewise failed to achieve its second objective as it faced constant security headaches in the seemingly anarchic environment of clan-dominated Somalia. Making matters worse, the challenges of long, insecure lines of logistics seriously hampered operations. Gaining local support was no easier. At one point al-Qa'ida operatives were so frustrated that they listed going after clan leaders as the second priority for jihad after expelling Western forces.[24] Internal discussions identify the lack of adequate communication equipment as an obstacle to building a coalition among Somalia's diverse Muslim clans.[25] Finally, insufficient financing ultimately made operations impossible to sustain on a long-term basis.[26]

Al-Qa'ida's failures in Somalia and elsewhere in the region are every bit as instructive as its tragic successes in Kenya. Weak states in this region provided terrorists with much greater opportunities than failed states. This pattern suggests that key adjustments to counterterrorism policy are in order at both the strategic and operational

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[19] See Appendix A-I for more in-depth background on AIAI.

[20] Harmony, AFGP-2002-600104, 2-4.

[21] This facility is used primarily for small aircraft for local and regional flights, including tourist charters.

[22] Harmony, AFGP-2002-600113, 1-3.

[23] See Harmony, AFGP-2002-800081, which shows the routes that al-Qa'ida members took to South Asia.

[24] Harmony, AFGP-2002-800600, 2.

[25] The next chapter discusses the underlying conditions that worked to the disadvantage of al-Qa'ida throughout their campaign in the Horn.

[26] For detailed accounts of Somali training camps, refer specifically to Harmony documents AFGP-2002-600053, AFGP-2002-600104, AFGP-2002-800597 and AFGP-2002-800640.

levels. At the strategic level, security assistance should focus on improving counterterrorism and governance in weak states, not on bringing order to failed states. At the operational level, engaging with local allies, often non-state actors, may very efficiently deny terrorists the use of ungoverned regions. Our careful examination of al-Qa'ida operations in the Horn, informed by internal documents that provide a window into the group's thinking, suggests that the Horn was a very difficult place for al-Qa'ida to operate.

In the following chapter, we explain why the Horn was such a difficult environment for al-Qa'ida, drawing on key insights gained from the group's internal documents and our previous analysis of organizational weaknesses in terrorist groups. We then use case studies of Somalia and Kenya to understand both al-Qa'ida's past experiences in this region and the prospects for future jihadi operation in Somalia, Kenya and the rest of the Horn. Finally, we develop a set of options for policy-makers seeking to ensure that the Horn and similar regions remain inhospitable to transnational terrorists.

Figure 1. The Horn of Africa

2. The Challenges of Weak and Failed States

Weak and failed states present important policy challenges to both terrorists and governments. Failed states offer two potential advantages to terrorist groups. First, they may provide a safe haven for hierarchical systems that ease terrorists' core organizational problems. Second, the economic conditions that accompany state failure may create a favorable labor market for recruiting militants. The challenge for terrorists is that these advantages do not exist in all failed states. Despite the group's high expectations, operating in the Horn of Africa provided neither advantage to al-Qa'ida. On the government side, the challenge lies in getting weak states to spend scarce resources on counterterrorism. The challenge is not simply that governments in weak states may prefer to spend money on economic development or traditional military activities; it is that such governments can have strong incentives to maintain at least some level of terrorism in their country.

This chapter provides a theoretical perspective for understanding how to make the policy challenges harder for terrorists and easier for government. Section I outlines the core organizational challenges for terrorists. Section II shows why failed states may not be very helpful for solving these. Section III uses a labor economics perspective to examine why terrorists expect failed states to be a good recruiting ground. Section IV details why Somalia was not a good place for al-Qa'ida to recruit. Section V analyzes the problem of motivating weak states to take terrorism as seriously as Western governments would like.

I. Organizing Terror

Terrorists' core organizational task is simple to describe: the controlled application of violence in the service of political goals. Hitting the wrong targets, or conducting too many attacks, can be just as damaging to the group's political cause as doing too little.[1] The organizational challenge is that leaders need to work with others to conduct attacks, raise funds, and spread their ideological message. This creates a classic agency relationship in which the principal, the political or ideological leader, sets the goals and delegates operational activities to agents, the rank-and-file terrorists, to achieve these goals.[2] Working directly with operational elements is dangerous for obvious reasons and is simply not feasible if a group wants to conduct more than a few operations at a time or operations over a wide area.

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[1] Examples of counter-productive attacks abound. Indeed, there is evidence that members of al-Qa'ida considered the 9/11 attacks to have been counter-productive. See for example the June 2002 Al Adl Letter from the first Harmony report.

[2] This does not assume any particular level of formalization. An individual motivated by video tapes of Osama bin Laden and who operates outside of any formal organization is still Osama's agent. Likewise, an individual operating under the command of Seamus Twomey in the quasi-military hierarchy of the Belfast Brigade of the Provisional Irish Republican Army (P-IRA) in August 1971 is still the agent of the P-IRA leadership council. The key difference is that Osama bin Laden has much less ability to monitor and control his agent. On the P-IRA see Patrick Bishop and Eamonn Mallie, *The Provisional IRA* (London: Corgi, 1994), 171.

The problem with delegation for terrorists is that there are a host of reasons that the rank-and-file will want to do things differently than leaders might like. Essentially, the preferences of the agents will differ from those of the principals. Scholars who have done extensive interview work with terrorists report their organizations are torn by strife and disagreement.[3] Supporting this view, the Harmony documents are full of sometimes vitriolic letters flying back and forth as members of al-Qa'ida debate ideology, strategy, and tactics.[4] Even when there is no conflict within groups, leaders often engage in costly efforts to monitor their agents, suggesting the potential for disagreement exists.[5]

Historically, the most prominent cause of disagreements between leaders and their agents is the correlation between preferences over violence and skill at conducting violent actions. Simply put, those who are effective at conducting attacks often want to do more violence than is politically optimal. Marxist organizations such as the Russian Social Democratic Labor Party had regular problems in the 1890s and 1900s with local cells conducting revenge attacks that could not be justified by Marxist theory.[6] In like fashion, the Provisional IRA suffered repeated problems with Active Service Units (ASU), made up of combat specialists, pushing for violence when the organization as a whole wanted to limit attacks.[7] As we'll see later, a similar problem creates headaches today for leaders among the foreign elements of the Iraqi insurgency.[8]

Unless their political goals are truly transcendent, terrorist leaders would like to exercise some control over their agents, but doing so is problematic. Controlling the lower levels of an organization entails two tasks: (1) monitoring agents, so that undesirable behavior is detected; and (2) punishing them for not behaving as principals would like. Both of these present specific challenges for terrorist organizations. Monitoring reduces leaders' security because it entails additional communications and creates links between leaders and those most likely to be identified and captured by government. Moreover, the nature of the task means leaders can't monitor perfectly even if they want. Lastly, there is a huge random component in whether or not an attack succeeds. Leaders watching a cell have an inherent difficulty in figuring out if the cell

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[3] See for example J. Bowyer Bell, "Aspects of the Dragonworld: Covert Communications and the Rebel Ecosystem," *International Journal of Intelligence and Counterintelligence* 3:1 (Spring 1989): 15-43; Colin Crawford, *Inside the UDA: Volunteers and Violence* (Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan Press, 2003).

[4] Hassan al-Tajiki's Third Letter to the Africa Corps is typical. Hassan writes, "Here once again I remind you of one of your fatal mistakes, which is the quick changing of strategic targets, whereby now every action is tactical and improvised." Harmony, AFGP-2002-600053, 25.

[5] For example, some leaders in Jemaah Islamiyah required members to report their travel expenses in order to know if there was any corruption. That they never had problems with corruption could mean agents did not have different preference from the leaders, or that the monitoring deterred corruption. Author interview, Jakarta, February 20, 2007. We also see this reporting in Africa. See Harmony, AFGP-2002-800573.

[6] Anna Geifman, *Thou Shalt Kill: Revolutionary Terrorism in Russia, 1894-1917* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1993), 49-50; Anna Geifman, "Aspects of Early Twentieth-Century Russian Terrorism: The Socialist-Revolutionary Combat Organization," *Terrorism and Political Violence* 4, no. 2 (1992): 28-29.

[7] Bishop and Mallie, *op. cit.*, 203; M.L.R. Smith, *Fighting for Ireland? The Military Strategy of the Irish Republican Movement* (New York: Routledge, 1995), 120-121.

[8] Excessive violence at the operational level is a problem for senior leaders in al-Qa'ida in Mesopotamia. In 2005 they instructed a cell operating in Ramadi to be more careful in whom they kill or else "[the] people will start fighting us in the streets." Harmony, IZ-060316-02.

failed because it was not operating faithfully – perhaps because the member in charge of logistics was misappropriating resources[9] – or because government got lucky.[10] Even when leaders can monitor, punishment is costly because the agents whom leaders want to control wield two threats over the leadership. First, they are specialists in violence. They can attack the leadership. Davie Ervine, a former bomb maker for the Ulster Volunteer Force, a loyalist paramilitary, described the problem as follows: "In a military organization, the Admiral doesn't have to worry about the sailor getting off watch and shooting him. My admiral did have that concern."[11] Second, members unhappy with their punishment can go to the government. Jamal Ahmed Al Fadl who testified in the Africa Embassy bombings case followed this path. He had stolen money from al-Qa'ida, got caught, went on the run, and approached the U.S. government asking to join the witness protection program.[12]

Mechanisms that minimize preference divergence are costly and may create security risks for them.[13] For example, many groups use screening strategies to mitigate the preference divergence which creates agency problems. Here leaders require prospective members to participate in time-consuming or dangerous initiation rites, such as demanding that recruits engage in lengthy ideological debates.[14] Essentially, time-consuming debates make the costs of participation too high for anyone not extremely committed to the cause.[15] However, Iraqi insurgent recruiting manuals warn, this strategy can weed out people with useful skills who have neither the patience for lengthy doctrinal debates nor the education to participate in them.[16] Other screening strategies include

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[9] A problem for al-Qa'ida in Afghanistan. See Harmony, AFGP-2002-800581.

[10] This kind of measurement problem is a motivation for vertical integration in business firms. The organizational implications of this kind of uncertainty for terrorist financial systems is explored in Jacob N. Shapiro and David A. Siegel, "Underfunding in Terrorist Organizations," *International Studies Quarterly* 51 (2007): 405-429.

[11] Author interview, March 8, 2006.

[12] Jane Mayer, "Junior: The clandestine life of America's top Al Qaeda source," *The New Yorker* (Septermber 11, 2006).

[13] For discussions of the problems inherent in other screening strategies see Joseph Felter *et al.*, *Harmony and Disharmony: Exploiting Al-Qa'ida's Organizational Vulnerabilities* (West Point N.Y.: United States Military Academy, 2006). See also Jacob N. Shapiro, "The Terrorist's Challenge: Security, Efficiency, Control," Manuscript, Stanford University, 2006; and Jacob N. Shapiro, "Terrorist Organizations' Vulnerabilities and Inefficiencies: A Rational Choice Perspective," in Harold A. Trinkunas and Jeanne K. Giraldo, eds. *Terrorist Financing and State Responses: A Comparative Perspecitve* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2007).

[14] Groupe Salafiste pour la Prédication et le Combat (GSPC), an Algerian terrorist organization, uses just such a recruitment system in expatriate Algerian communities in France. See Mohamed Sifaoui's journalistic account of his penetration of a GSPC fundraising and recruiting cell in Paris, in, *Inside Al-Qa'ida: How I Infiltrated the World's Deadliest Terrorist Organization* (New York: Thunder's Mouth Press, 2003).

[15] For a discussion of how education serves as a similar screening mechanism for business firms see A. M. Spence, "Job Market Signaling," *The Quarterly Journal of Economics* 87 (1973): 355.

[16] Of course, as one Yemeni militant notes, groups do need some members who are educated to carry out effective operations. Harmony, AFGP-2002-800517, 37. On Iraq see Harmony, ISGZ-2004-M1000074-0148. A related problem experienced by Russian Marxist terrorist organizations is the frequent need to lower standards of ideological purity in order to bring in more recruits. Doing so increases the frequency of counterproductive actions and reduces security by bringing people into the group who are susceptible to monetary inducements from government agents. See Geifman, *Thou Shalt Kill*, 160-162.

requiring prospective members to attend arduous training camps or demanding they commit violent acts to prove their allegiance to the group.[17] Unfortunately for terrorist groups, both of these strategies create predicate offenses that make it more likely that law enforcement officials will identify operatives.

Taking these organizational challenges into account makes it clear that terrorist groups and other covert organizations face two fundamental trade-offs. The first is between operational security and operational control. Here agency problems and other group dynamics lead to counterproductive violence. Strategies to mitigate these problems through greater control entail security costs for groups as a whole. The second trade-off is between security and financial efficiency. Here problems of trust and control—agency problems—create inefficiencies in resource allocation. Strategies to mitigate these problems all entail security costs.

At the most basic level, this analysis presumes that organizations configure themselves and operate in ways that seek to maximize their utility given their cognitive constraints and limited information about the world.[18] At a minimum, we assume terrorist organizations, or at least their leaders, intend to be rational in their decision making.[19] For business firms, such rationality usually means attempting to maximize utility measured in terms of profit. For terrorist organizations, political impact is the goal. As this perspective suggests, we see many examples of terrorist organizations struggling to find the appropriate means, in terms of targets and organizational structures, to meet their political ends.[20]

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[17] On al-Qa'ida's use of training camps as a screening mechanism see "Testimony of FBI Agent John Anticev on Odeh," *United States of America v. Usama bin Laden, et al.*, 5 (7) 98 Cr. 1023, 27 February 2001, 1630-1638. On the logic behind requiring members to commit violent acts see Sun-Ki Chai, "An Organizational Economics Theory of Antigovernment Violence," *Comparative Politics* 26:1 (1993).

[18] Recent research by Scott Atran and others shows that the most committed terrorists - failed suicide bombers - exhibit the minimum requirement for this type of rationalist approach ("consistent transitive preferences") when discussing how to achieve their ends. However, they demonstrate irrational, "intransitive preferences" when discussing the morality of their chosen method or the theological justifications for their ends. Since this paper is concerned here with organizations making adjustments to achieve exogenously defined goals, Atran's results suggest the analysis rests on solid behavioral grounds. Scott Atran, "The Moral Logic and Growth of Martyrdom: Instrumental Reasoning vs. Sacred Values," paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the American Association for the Advancement of Science, St. Louis, Feb. 19, 2006.

[19] Terrorist organizations clearly make many decisions in a rational fashion. When one type of attack becomes more difficult, terrorists switch to another type and the baseline rate of attacks remains relatively consistent. Most evidence suggests terrorist leaders demonstrate exactly the kind of consequentialist logic required for intendedly rational behavior. On substitution effects see Walter Enders and Todd, "Patterns of Transnational Terrorism, 1970-1999: Alternative Time-Series Estimates" *International Studies Quarterly* 46 (2002):145-65. On consequentialist decision making in al-Qa'ida, see many examples in Rohan Gunaratna, *Inside Al Qaeda*, (New York: Columbia University Press, 2002). On rational reactions to political competition between terrorist groups, see Mia M. Bloom, *Dying to Kill: The Alllure of Suicide Terror*, (New York: Columbia University Press, 2005). On terrorist decision-making more generally, see Gordon H. McCormick, "Terrorist Decision Making," *Annual Review of Political Science* 6 (2003): 473-507.

[20] For a lengthy example of such analysis, see Abu Bakr Naji, *The Management of Savagery*, trans. William McCants (West Point, N.Y.: Combating Terrorism Center, 2006). For an analysis of terrorist groups'

With this basic rational choice-theory approach in mind, we can identify conditions under which groups will prefer to exercise central control over operations or finances. If these conditions exist, groups face agency losses but must balance their desire for control against the security costs it entails.

The security-control trade-off becomes especially challenging when:

- Preferences over tactics are not perfectly aligned, so that some agents want to attack different targets or want to conduct more or fewer attacks than leaders want.[21]

- It is costly to monitor agents' tactical planning or use violence to condition them.[22]

- Leaders' political goals are being placed at risk by the freelancing of operational elements.

The security-efficiency trade-off becomes especially challenging when:

- Agents below the leadership are less than perfectly committed.[23]

- Principals cannot perfectly monitor their agents' uses of money or punish them for observed infractions.

- Resources are sufficiently constrained that leaders won't just accept the financial inefficiencies created by agency problems.

Both trade-offs are minimized to the extent that terrorist organizations have a place where they can build the kinds of hierarchical structures that traditional organizations use to solve agency problems. Al-Qa'ida tried to use Afghanistan for this purpose from the mid-1990s through late 2001, just as the P-IRA used the Republic of Ireland as a safe haven until the mid-1990s.[24] Captured documents and public web

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intendedly rational choice of organizational structures, see Jacob N. Shapiro, "Organizing Terror," manuscript, Stanford University, 2006.

[21] This can occur for two reasons: (1) because operatives have different preferences over violence than leaders; or (2) because leaders and their operatives receive different information about the appropriate targets.

[22] It's important to keep in mind that the costs to monitoring/punishment don't just arise from government action. The need to maintain cohesion within groups can also limit leaders' options. Again quoting Davie Ervine: "We had some really heinous, counter-productive stuff going on. But we couldn't put a stop to it because we needed to keep the hearts and minds within the organization." Author interview, March 8, 2006.

[23] The agents can have the exact same preferences as the leaders, but the leaders have a problem unless everyone below them is perfectly committed. No matter what their preferences are between spending on attacks and allocating resources to salaries or other private goods, leaders want every cent passed down allocated to achieving political impact, often through violent operations.

[24] Just how far they moved towards having functioning hierarchical structures is a matter of debate, but the Harmony data show a clear intent to move in that direction. On al-Qa'ida's use of Afghanistan see Felter, *Harmony and Disharmony*, 9, 37. See also Shapiro, "The Terrorist's Challenge," 4. On the P-IRA, note the group's use of the border counties for military training and indoctrination from the 1970s onwards. See also Shapiro, "Organizing Terror," 23.

postings demonstrate that al-Qa'ida has been thinking about the necessity to exploit such weakly-governed spaces since their organizational founding. The importance of safe havens is evident in the documents where jihadi commanders argue for the need to preserve strong, secure rear areas in places like Sudan and Afghanistan while launching offensive strikes into Russia, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan.[25] In the context of the theoretical framework presented here, the existence of usable security vacuums greatly eases groups' organizational trade-offs. If there is a safe rear area for the hierarchy, then exercising a given level of control has much smaller security implications.

II. Failed states: an (un)safe haven for terrorists.

Do failed states actually serve as an effective safe haven for terrorists? There are a number of reasons to suspect not. In the first place, areas without functioning state institutions do not provide safety for their residents. The security vacuum creates problems for the terrorists too.[26] As a result, terrorist strategists do not think such spaces are very useful.[27] Here two documents are instructive. The first, from Somalia, identifies a five-point strategy to unite Somali forces and create an Islamic national front.[28] The author argues for: (1) expulsion of the foreign international presence; (2) rebuilding of state institutions; (3) establishment of domestic security; (4) comprehensive national reconciliation; and (5) economic reform and combating famine. This approach parallels that of the June 2005 Zawahiri letter addressed to Abu Musab al-Zarqawi in Iraq.[29] In that letter, Zawahiri argues that jihad in Iraq should proceed incrementally, according to the following phases: (1) expel the Americans from Iraq; (2) establish an Islamic authority or emirate, then develop it and support it; and (3) extend the jihad wave to the secular countries neighboring Iraq.

Notice that what is important to these thinkers is not the existence of a security vacuum but what comes next: establishing functioning state institutions under jihadi control.[30] What made Afghanistan so useful to al-Qa'ida from 1995 onwards was not an absence of state institutions; it was that al-Qa'ida could operate under the protection of a sovereign state, relying on that state's sovereignty to shield its infrastructure from potential attack by Western forces. Operating in a security vacuum, where training camps and the like can be more readily attacked directly by the United States and indirectly by local allies, is much less attractive.[31] In fact, existing security vacuums have not proven

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[25] Harmony, AFGP-2002-600053.

[26] In a series of reports form Somalia in the 1990s, Mohammed Atef (also known as Abu Hafs) details the challenges of operating in a failed state. Prominent among these are problems with local bandits, the costs of corruption in neighboring states, and the ability of Western forces to act in ungoverned spaces. See Harmony, AFGP-2002-600104, AFGP-2002-600110, and AFGP-2002-800597.

[27] For a thorough development of this argument by a very influential jihadi thinker, see Abu Bakr Naji, *The Management of Savagery*, trans. William McCants (West Point, NY: Combating Terrorism Center, 2006).

[28] Harmony, AFGP-2002-600053, 6.

[29] Available online at: http://www.dni.gov/release_letter_101105.html [accessed April 27, 2006].

[30] A similar argument is made in Naji, *The Management of Savagery*. The core argument there is that the jihadi movement should win public support by showing it can manage state institutions and provide public goods such as order and contract enforcement more effectively than secular governments.

[31] For example, in 1996 Ethiopian forces entered Somalia to conduct an offensive against Islamist forces in the Gedo region. In the same year the Ethiopians used a local proxy force, the Secularist National Front, to take a number of towns where foreigners had been operating. Harmony, AFGP-2002-600110, 1-2.

to be a viable base for exporting attacks abroad. No major international attacks have been supported out of Afghanistan, Iraq, or Somalia since the US military operations began in 2001. From this perspective, policy-makers should be concerned with ungoverned spaces only so far as they are allowing terrorists to operate openly and at reasonable expense.

The Horn of Africa does not afford terrorists such benefits. The Harmony documents reveal four problems al-Qa'ida and like-minded groups have had operating in the Horn. The first problem was that the lack of government-enforced order in many areas imposed what was effectively a tax on all operations. This tax came in two forms: (1) the need to provide security against local bandits,[32] and (2) the increased cost of getting personnel and resources into poorly governed areas.[33] The second problem was the unreliability of local allies.[34] The third problem was that the better an area was for training, the more remote and sparsely populated it was and thus the harder it was to meet basic sustenance needs.[35] The fourth problem was the challenge of getting fiscal resources in place. Financial services in the region were and continue to be weak, and groups did not seem able to effectively use the *hawaladars* who provide key financial services in weakly governed areas of the Horn.

In fact, these problems were so bad that after visiting the training camps his personnel established in Lu'uq, Somalia, Abu Hafs writes back to his superiors and suggests:

> "We found out that it is difficult to do this in the areas that we visited because of dangers pertaining to security. This is why it is preferred that the courses be done by you in Khartoum. As a result this will save us transportation expenses and others."[36]

As we will see in our country study of Somalia, there is little reason to think this region has become any more hospitable to jihadis since Abu Hafs rendered his judgment. So while the Horn should remain an area of concern, the implication is not that Western governments must take on the impossible task of preventing ungoverned spaces from emerging throughout the region. That would take immense resources and might produce unintended benefits rather than costs for terror groups.

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[32] In August 1994, Saif al-Islam writes a journal of his trip to Somalia to establish training camps on behalf of Abu Hafs, a senior al-Qa'ida military leader. Saif describes how it took a caravan of 80 local men to guard 8 Arabs on the trip through the Ogaden region to Lu'uq, Somalia. Harmony, AFGP-2002-600104, 4.

[33] In fact, the logistical challenges of moving from Kenya into Somalia were so great that in January 1994 al-Qa'ida operative Saif al-Adel suggested buying a boat for transportation and to raise funds through fishing. The biggest challenge he notes is that because the local can't be trusted, the group will have to train one of their own as a sailor. Harmony, AFGP-2002-600114, 1-2. Harmony, AFGP-2002-600053, 5.

[34] Harmony, AFGP-2002-800640.

[35] For a description of some of the challenges of operating in Somalia see AFGP-2002-600104, 5. On the problems of moving during the rainy season in areas with few paved roads, see AFGP-2002-600114, 5. In a March 1993 letter to "Brother Othman," Saif al-Islam describes the poor food in camps in the Ogaden, camps whose major expenditure was on food. Harmony, AFGP-2002-800621, 4.

[36] Harmony, AFGP-2002-800597.

Denying terrorists the benefits of ungoverned spaces in the Horn is a much more feasible strategy. The massive troop deployment in Iraq has so far denied terrorists the use of that country as a staging ground for attacks in the West. Meanwhile, terrorists are denied the benefits of a potential Afghan security vacuum with the deployment there of only 22,000 troops. A mere 1,600 troops based in Djibouti, Combined Joint Task Force-Horn of Africa (CJTF-HOA), have effectively denied Islamic terrorists the use of Somalia and the rest of the Horn of Africa.[37] In all three cases, these deployments are far less resource-intensive than would be required to actually impose government or support effective control by a central government. A more cost-effective strategy is thus to maintain the capability to act decisively when necessary while cultivating local allies who will monitor these spaces. Such a strategy prevents ungoverned spaces from easing terrorists' fundamental organizational challenges.

III. Why Terrorists Choose Failed States: A Labor Economics Perspective

In the first release of Harmony documents, we found that al-Qa'ida faced a familiar set of organizational challenges, leading to a trade-off between operational security and control of outlying agents acting on behalf of the organization. This perspective helped explain problems within the organization. However, it provided limited leverage for understanding why the organization made particular strategic choices, like trying to establish operations in the Horn of Africa. A labor economics perspective can be useful here in explaining why al-Qa'ida ventured into the Horn and why it faced such difficulties recruiting there despite poor economic conditions.

We can think of al-Qa'ida as a firm that produces terrorism against Western nations, specifically the United States.[38] Attacks require a combination of two factors of production: capital and labor.[39] For al-Qa'ida, capital includes durable goods like weapons and vehicles, training facilities, and the good will of local governments like Somali clans or the governments of Sudan and Afghanistan.[40] Labor is the individual terrorist recruits who provide services in exchange for wages and non-pecuniary compensation.

Just as firms locate themselves where they can minimize costs and maximize production and profits, terrorist groups choose operational venues in an essentially

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[37] Ken Menkhaus, *Somalia: State Collapse and the Threat of Terrorism* (Routledge, 2004).

[38] Wright's *The Looming Tower* provides a very effective discussion of the evolution of al-Qa'ida's strategic doctrine, including the relevant importance of attacks on Western targets versus providing militants to fight in defense of Islamic communities.

[39] In traditional firms, capital includes "inventory (stock) of a plant, equipment, and other (generally durable) productive resources held by a business firm, an individual, or some other organization." William J. Baumol and Alan S. Binder, *Economics: Principle and Policy,* 9th ed. (Mason, OH: South-Western, 2003).

[40] Sometimes the connection is very clear. A cornerstone of al-Qa'ida's operations in Sudan was the establishment of business endeavors to finance operations and earn the support of local leaders. Upon arrival in Khartoum, Sudan in 1992, Osama Bin Laden quickly established himself as a businessman as much as a terrorist leader. He invested heavily in the construction and agriculture industry and became "a generous employer by Sudanese standards, paying $200 per month to most of his workers, with senior managers making from $1,000 to $1,500." Wright, *The Looming Tower*, p. 168.

rational fashion.[41] The Horn of Africa presented important production advantages for al-Qa'ida. The Sudanese government provided safe harbor for operational planning, thus easing security concerns. Additionally, the Sudanese economy was very weak in the early 1990s, so labor was cheap. Bin Laden hired more than five hundred people in Sudan and "those employees who were actual members of Al-Qaeda received a monthly bonus between $50 and $120."[42] The Horn of Africa also presented al-Qa'ida with opportunities to strike against the United States. Bin Laden, still angered by the "continued presence of American troops in Saudi Arabia," felt compelled to take action against American forces that were present in Somalia as part of a UN Peacekeeping mission.[43] Al-Qa'ida leaders also thought Somalia would present a good environment in which to produce attacks against the U.S. and continue to grow its movement. They expected security costs to be low because of the lack of a central government and, on account of the pervasive poverty, they looked forward to a large pool of recruits. Neither expectation was met.[44]

Al-Qa'ida's reasons for venturing into the HOA appear obvious. However, analysts and pundits rarely reverse the question and attempt to determine whether individuals from the Horn of Africa would want to be part of al-Qa'ida and the broader Salafi-jihadi movement. In Somalia, those with the skills for militancy are in demand as the lack of a central government has led to a proliferation of militias. In this competitive labor market, al-Qa'ida had to provide a competitive compensation package to attract good recruits. While the average Somali's economic prospects were, and still are, undoubtedly very bad, it is not clear that this was true for those who would make good terrorist recruits.

Following the labor economics perspective, we assume individuals decide to work as terrorists based on a perceived level of compensation consisting of wages and intangible benefits.[45] When the compensation for joining the jihad exceeds that of the next best option, individuals join.[46] In the first set of Harmony documents, we found al-Qa'ida in the 1990s had clearly outlined its compensation package, understanding it had to provide wages to recruit and maintain its work force. These pecuniary benefits are stated outright in al-Qa'ida's employment contract where "the salary of a married Mujahed is 6500 Pakistani Rupee, and 500 Rupee for every newborn … [and] the salary of the bachelor Mujahed is 1000 Pakistani Rupee." Total compensation for an al-Qa'ida member included in-kind benefits, such as vacations, as well as wages. The group's

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[41] For example, the Provisional Irish Republican Army (P-IRA) in the 1970s chose rural, less populated areas of the Republic of Ireland for training operations. When a P-IRA training officer was captured with documents describing training facilities in County Galway and County Mayo, the groups leaders decided to move training in the Republic of Ireland to County Kerry and to prohibit other activities in that area. Sean O'Callaghan, *The Informer* (London: Bantam Press, 1998), 97-99.

[42] Wright, *The Looming Tower*, 169.

[43] Ibid.

[44] There is an important point here; terrorist organizations have a limited ability to understand their operational environment, even when they are operating as openly as al-Qa'ida in the early 1990s.

[45] Rogert G. Ehrenberg and Robert S. Smith, *Modern Labor Economics: Theory and Public Policy,* 9th ed. (Boston: Pearson/Addison Wesley, 2006), 170.

[46] This perspective is consistent with the enlistment process described in Marc Sageman's *Understanding Terror Networks* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2004). The over-educated, under-employed, socially-isolated ex-patriots that became involved in al-Qa'ida and its affiliates are people for whom the non-pecuniary benefits of terrorism were quite powerful.

contract for new recruits states, "the married have a vacation by rotation for a week every three weeks…. A bachelor can have a vacation by rotation for five days every month."[47] Al-Qa'ida also helps its members with consumption smoothing, routinely providing loans to its employees for things ranging from basic necessities to alimony.[48] The provision of non-salary benefits is not unique to al-Qa'ida. Jemaah Islamiyah, an Indonesian jihadi organization, provides death benefits to its members' families, but only when they are killed while on assignment for the group.[49] Terrorist groups compete for labor with both the legitimate economy and with like-minded militant organizations.

Terrorists receive a unique set of non-pecuniary benefits from joining al-Qa'ida, distinguishing it from other militant organizations in the Horn. In particular, al-Qa'ida's religious doctrines provide members with an attractive set of spiritual benefits. Moreover, relying on these spiritual benefits as part of the compensation package effectively provides a screening mechanism that eases the organizational challenges identified above.[50] The group's media campaigns bring the terror recruit a sense of purpose, being part of a team, unparalleled adventure, and often fame. As the organization's stature increases in recruits' communities, the non-pecuniary benefits of participating increase, easing the problems of recruiting members.[51] From this perspective, the group's devotion to create an image as an elite institution is driven as much by the exigencies of the labor market as anything else.

The challenge for groups like al-Qa'ida is that other institutions also provide valued non-pecuniary benefits. Societies in the Horn of Africa present a complex set of overlapping motivations which made al-Qa'ida's recruitment efforts more difficult than the group anticipated. In many cases, the individual motivations of local Somali residents diverged from the group motivations and core tenets of al-Qa'ida. This meant there was a mismatch between the value of the non-pecuniary compensation package al-Qa'ida thought it was offering and what local Somalis perceived as the benefits to joining al-Qa'ida. The result was poor recruitment and excessive operational costs for the Africa Corps.[52]

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[47] Harmony, AFGP-2002-600045, 3.

[48] In the most recent documents, for example, we find what might be a bank document in the U.S., where, "Brother Omar Tajuddin has received the sum of 2,000 Bir to pay his personal debts." Harmony, AFGP-2002-800573, 21.

[49] Author interview, Jakarta, February 21, 2007.

[50] An excellent overview of the economics of religious militancy is presented in Laurence R. Iannaccone and Eli Berman, "Religious extremism: The good, the bad, and the deadly," *Public Choice* 128 (2006):109-129.

[51] This pattern holds true across groups. In the late 1980s the leaders of the Ulster Defense Association were replaced by younger members unhappy with the old leadership's focus on lining their own pockets. Once it became known that a new leadership committed to violence against Catholics was in charge, the group began to get more high quality recruits. Crawford, *Inside the UDA*, 157-8.

[52] The labor economics approach used here is adapted from a larger work. See Clinton Watts, "Jihadi Seeking Challenging Martyrdom Opportunity; Will Travel," (Working Paper, Combating Terrorism Center, May 2007).

IV. Al-Qa'ida's franchise in Somalia

Analysis tends to focus on whether al-Qa'ida wanted to operate and expand into the Horn of Africa. The information in these documents overwhelmingly supports the notion that it did. Al-Qa'ida leaders like Abu Hafs clearly expected that Somalia would provide a low cost recruiting ground where a disaffected and isolated people would gladly come under the Salafi banner. Al-Qa'ida expected Somalis to join the fight to expel foreign occupiers in the form of the UN peacekeeping mission. In the mind of the al-Qa'ida leadership, Somalia represented a new safe haven for planning and operating terrorist attacks. With little or no functioning government and a poor Muslim populace, Somalia appeared on the surface to be another Afghanistan. Confident from their recruitment success in the Pakistan-Afghan tribal regions, al-Qa'ida ventured into Somalia with mujahideen visions reminiscent of the 1980s.

But reality turned out to be far different from their expectations. Three major themes emerge from our analysis. First, al-Qa'ida leaders greatly underestimated the costs of operating in Somalia. Second, they overestimated the value to Somalis of their version of jihad, of the non-pecuniary benefits they were offering. Labor markets have two sides, supply and demand. On the supply side, we need to ask "Do people from the Horn of Africa want to be part of al-Qa'ida?" It is on this score that al-Qa'ida's expectations and the realities of Somalia diverged in 1993 and 1994. Third, where al-Qa'ida did find success in Somalia, it was by providing local order and not ideological motivation. By providing security, al-Qa'ida fulfilled the functions normally reserved for clan militias.

The difference between al-Qa'ida headquarters' perception and on-the-ground reality is clearly illustrated by the disparity between the guidance from Afghanistan and reports coming from the operational team leaders. In September 1993, Abu al-Waleed writes to Saif al-Islam, his team leader in Somalia, from the Jihad Wal training camp in Afghanistan. He suggests that "the political effort is clearly there and effective … [and] likewise, the military effort is simple, effective, and inexpensive."[53] When Saif has trouble motivating the Somalis during military training, he reports asking them, "don't you want us to come here and do this training in your poor country? You have no [other] opportunities here…. They said yes."[54] Despite this apparently pleasing response, Abu al-Waleed seems surprised by reports from Saif about materiel shortfalls, commenting, "I learned from your letter that there are very few weapons or ammunition in the area…. I recall when the events began many weapons were readily available and cheap…. Where did they go?"[55]

The low operational costs expected by the Somali franchise never materialized. Abu Hafs, the overall expeditionary leader, repeatedly discusses the high operational costs in Somalia, writing about a "brother" who "is in desperate need for the monies because he did not receive the amount of $21,600."[56] These high costs were encountered

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[53] Harmony, AFGP-2002-600053, 3.
[54] Harmony, AFGP-2002-600104, 13.
[55] Ibid.
[56] Harmony, AFGP-2002-800597, 9.

within Somalia and en route. Abu Hafs cites Kenya as an expensive route of transit for mujahideen and lists Djibouti as having an "abnormal high cost of living," where "Brother Khaled has no money … [and] his debts reached $4000."[57]

The documents suggest two reasons for this pattern. First, getting in and out of Somalia was very expensive. Abu Hafs refers to this problem in stating, "the operation pertaining to the transfer of the brothers from Nariobi to Luuq will be costly: $150 for rent per person, and the roadways are not good."[58] The transportation costs for operating in this region were substantial and paralyzing for the Somali franchise. Accounting documents reveal that shipping and transportation costs consumed a vast amount of their resources.[59] The very reasons that al-Qa'ida sought Somalia- an isolated safe haven for preparing and conducting terrorist operations- also made it nearly impossible to sustain operations.[60]

Second, the poor security environment and unreliable allies effectively imposed a tax on all operations. For example, getting into the Ogaden region of Somalia apparently came at great risk and with large financial costs. Abu Bilal describes movement through this area with an Islamist group: "I was saying to the leader of [the] caravan that the road is dangerous (unintelligible) let us choose another road, and he was saying that all these tribes here are Somali and are sympathetic to us."[61] Shortly after this discussion, the group becomes engulfed in a roadside ambush. According to Abu Bilal, they ultimately win this skirmish but still sustain casualties. The route from Djibouti through the Ogaden to Somalia proves difficult since the Islamist tribes lack vehicles that can traverse the terrain and they lack "a good and sharp guide of the region."[62]

In addition to these shipping costs, the firm sustained continual leakage through extortion from local clans and unintended losses during transportation as convoys and clan movements fell victim to banditry.[63] Greed and theft routinely enter the equation, leading Saif al-Islam to bitterly criticize the Somalis:

> "…even though the thorny trees I described have sap and gum, no one uses them for anything. All the people there prefer to subsist off wheat and camel milk, and because of this, they are stingy and greedy. There are some stories so you can know about these people, such as the one about the man who left his wife to die of hunger because he wouldn't slaughter a camel from his herd of more than 100. If they see a caravan of fair skinned-people approaching them, they will welcome them if the caravan looks rich. You would think this is so they can offer the caravan some hospitality, but it is exactly the opposite."[64]

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[57] Ibid., 11.
[58] Harmony, AFGP-2002-800597, 10.
[59] Harmony, AFGP-2002-800621, 4.
[60] Harmony, AFGP-2002-600104, 17.
[61] Harmony, AFGP-2002-800640, 7.
[62] Ibid., 6.
[63] Harmony, AFGP-2002-800573.
[64] Harmony, AFGP-2002-600104, 7.

An additional, somewhat surprising expense was incurred because of Somali clan leaders' parochial concerns. Although many Somali clan leaders wanted to expel foreign occupiers, their first goal ultimately was always the security of their clan against local competitors. Abu Hafs routinely runs into difficulties building consensus among Somali leaders to focus on foreign occupiers instead of other Somalis. He has to spend scarce resources to create and maintain alliances between the tribes. Saif al-Islam complains, "we had Abd al-Salam [in the Revolutionary Council], who had taken $20,000 from Abu Fatima (aka Abu Hafs) on behalf of the council! As for military affairs, they didn't even have any maps with enemy locations and movements."[65]

While the costs for operating in Somalia were greater than expected, the value of al-Qa'ida's compensation package to the locals was much lower than expected. The two major practical benefits al-Qa'ida offered to local allies were money for tribes and military training. The group's accounting records reveal that funding went to expected expenses such as individual salaries, personal loans, and a host of equipment needs such as socks, shoes, dishes, and camels.[66] Saif al-Islam outlines that meeting basic needs for "every individual will cost $1.50 daily- $45 monthly…. [T]herefore the camp force (30) will cost $13,500 per month."[67] But operating his camp for three months will cost a minimum of $130,000, and "this does not cover the administration, media and the tribe's expenses."[68] Clearly al-Qa'ida had to do more than just offer training; it had to directly pay "tribe's expenses".

Indeed, pecuniary benefits were the anchor for gaining support with the locals. Omar al-Sumali, a.k.a. Saif al-Adl, the expeditionary commander for Ras Kamboni, begs for resources with which to provide pecuniary benefits. He writes, "Give this locality a chance by supporting it financially and supplying good personnel. The potential is very good. We should move very quickly, and seize this opportunity for Jihad. It is a good locality, from which we can establish the expected (base for) work in Somalia."[69] The idea seems to have been to use pecuniary benefits as a foothold to begin providing the non-pecuniary benefits of Salafism and jihad.

Al-Qa'ida expected it to be quite easy to win the locals with money; after all, their country was poverty-stricken. However, once on the ground, al-Qa'ida's leaders realized that they had competition in Somalia. Their offer of pecuniary benefits bought only temporary commitments from the Somali clans. Even in the unstable environment of early-1990s Somalia, businessmen were a threat to al-Qa'ida's ability to recruit. Saif al-Islam explains how "a man came from Jarbo with money to distribute to the people, especially the tribal Sheikhs…. [H]e said that, 'we don't want political parties in our countries, and weapons either.... Our best interests are not being followed because the Islamic Union is here'."[70] Saif responds by recalibrating the al-Qa'ida strategy, establishing new "priorities of the jihadist effort: (which is) specify the primary enemy

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[65] Harmony, AFGP-2002-600104, 19.
[66] Harmony, AFGP-2002-800573.
[67] Harmony, AFGP-2002-800621, 13.
[68] Ibid.
[69] Harmony, AFGP-2002-600113, 7.
[70] Harmony, AFGP-2002-600104, 21.

(the businessmen), and postpone [efforts against] other groups."[71] By eliminating business people Saif seeks to reduce the value of the pecuniary benefits he must offer to gain local recruits. Essentially draining an area of all outside financial support is seen as a way to increase al-Qa'ida's leverage in recruiting individual terrorists and co-opting other groups to their cause. However, the group clearly recognized that to maintain the loyalty of the people, such a strategy must be followed by "supervision of liberated areas and securing of lives, funds, and property of all members of the populace."[72]

Once financial benefits gained a foothold, the group planned to use the ideas of Salifism and violent jihad to provide non-monetary motivations for continued support. However, al-Qa'ida encountered unexpected challenges in winning the hearts and minds of Somalis. First, the majority of Somalis are Sufi and not Salafi. Saif al-Islam writes, "this problem [of Sufi vs. Salafist] was beginning to chafe me – I had heard about it before – and the day began in a very unsatisfactory way for me."[73] In Somalia, overtaking traditional Sufi doctrine proved difficult for two reasons. First, the non-pecuniary benefits that Salafism offered did not exceed the tradition older Somalis valued in Sufism. Second, al-Qa'ida's non-pecuniary membership benefits were less than the costs of leaving one's clan. Even if they did find value in Salafism, individual recruits found the opportunity cost of leaving their established place in a clan far greater than the benefits of employment with al-Qa'ida. As Abu Bilal describes, "each member of the movement is fanatically attached to his tribe."[74] The risks of joining al-Qa'ida were high as a new recruit could not be: (1) certain that he would not be severely punished for leaving the clan; (2) sure that al-Qa'ida would not be overwhelmed by surrounding tribes; nor (3) certain that al-Qa'ida would continue to operate in Somalia for the long term, especially if foreign interventions were eliminated.

In the final analysis, al-Qa'ida's efforts to move into Somalia fell short for many of the same reasons that Western interventions there failed. Like United Nations and U.S. forces that ventured into Somalia, al-Qa'ida did not understand the political, economic and social dynamics of the country. The costs of this misunderstanding were felt in two ways. First, the lack of any form of governance created excessive operational costs for al-Qa'ida in Somalia. Instead of finding a safe haven like the tribal areas of Pakistan, al-Qa'ida in Somalia found a lawless land of shifting alliances, devoid of Sunni unity. Second, the Somali laborers ultimately placed a lower-than-expected value on the compensation package al-Qa'ida had to offer. The group could not provide benefits sufficient to overcome local loyalties. Although al-Qa'ida was successful in buying their way into a few tribes, the benefits of Salafism in 1993 did not outweigh the cost of tribal exclusion. The primacy of tribalism in Somalia ultimately frustrated al-Qa'ida's efforts to recruit long term and develop a unified coalition against foreign occupiers. Al-Qa'ida mistook its call for jihad in Afghanistan as a universal motivator for which Muslims in Somalia would join at an equal rate. In 1993 Somalia, this call fell on somewhat deaf ears as survival against local competitors trumped jihad.

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[71] Ibid., 23.
[72] Harmony, AFGP-2002-600053, 3.
[73] Harmony, AFGP-2002-600104, 21.
[74] Ibid., 5.

Al-Qa'ida did find success in certain distinct areas which may provide some clarity for analyzing the threat from foreign terrorists operating in Somalia today. One area where al-Qa'ida was successful was in recruiting some youth away from clans in 1993 and 1994. There are three reasons for this success. First, the call to jihad resonated more with younger individuals seeking adventure. Secondly, the costs for youth to leave the clan were markedly smaller than for more elder individuals. The longer one has been in a tribe or clan, the more benefits, tangible and intangible, the clan member gains from remaining in the tribe. Recognizing the vulnerability of the youth to recruitment techniques, al-Qa'ida sought "to establish a coordination and communications center to connect the youth in the different areas in and out of the country…. [I]t is important to strengthen the unity between the people…. [T]his is very important in Jihad."[75] Thirdly, successful jihadi operations resonated more with young people. Saif found that after conducting operations, "now many Muslim youth from the surrounding cities want to join up with them [al-Qa'ida in Ras Kamboni]."[76]

More interestingly, in the one area in Somalia where al-Qa'ida may have established an enduring presence, it did so by providing local order. Omar al-Sumali won one village over by providing security and then immediately began ideological efforts. He writes, "we already formulated a political program for the Bajuni and the region … [and] next week we will ask Sheikh Hassan to adopt the plan."[77] Al-Qa'ida was apparently able to effectively provide law and order near Ras Kamboni. The Bajuni, a tribal population of the east African coast, residing in the vicinity of Ras Kamboni, actually requested that al-Qa'ida operatives "stay and govern, and secure the city." As Omar al-Sumali explains, the Bajuni:

> "…have noticed that the presence of the brothers prevented the
> highwaymen from entering the city, and the fishermen began coming to
> the shore to spend the night in the city…. [T]hey told our people that they
> do not want them to leave. They await the arrival of our wives and
> children. They freely gave fish to our people, and our people guarded the
> well while reading the Koran, and helped the fisherman get water."[78]

Today, Ras Kamboni is considered a hotbed of radical Islam and a stronghold of the Islamic Courts Movement. Since 2001, numerous reports suggested that Ras Kamboni served as a terrorist training camp and that jihadis from outside Somalia have taken over the area.[79] In interviews with Kenyan fishermen, there were people in Ras Kamboni that "were not locals, but rather, Arabs and other more 'European-looking type people' but who were Muslims."[80] Over the past two years, the Union of Islamic Courts essentially took control of many parts of Somalia due to its ability to provide law and order. The nature of its very name, "Islamic Courts," suggests that the benefits of security may be the foothold that al-Qa'ida can use in an attempt to spread its ideology.

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[75] Harmony, AFGP-2002-800640, 3.
[76] Harmony, AFGP-2002-600113, 6.
[77] Harmony, AFGP-2002-600113, 3.
[78] Ibid.
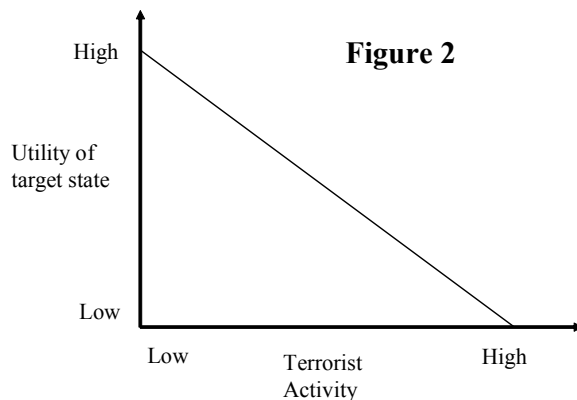[79] Author interview, Kenyan fisherman, 28 September, 2001. See Appendix C-I.
[80] Ibid.

However, despite the apparent local successes of Islamic militants, the dangers of operating in a failed state were dramatically illustrated during the recent Ethiopian invasion into Somalia. On January 8-10, 2007, American forces conducted a series of air raids on the area around Ras Kamboni in attempt to kill al-Qa'ida operatives seeking sanctuary there.[81] Such attacks are much less likely to occur against operatives working under the umbrella of state sovereignty.

V. Weak states and counterterrorism.

The basic problem faced by developed nations seeking to support counterterrorism in weakly governed states is that these weak states often derive benefits and positive externalities from tolerating some degree of terrorist activity within their borders. The overall utility for weak states is not always reduced as the level of terrorism decreases. This leads to an agency problem similar to that faced by terrorist leaders.

In an ideal world, donor and recipient states would strictly prefer less terrorist activity to more, thus deriving the highest level of utility when no terrorism exists and incrementally less as terror levels increase. The utility curve for this hypothetical state is depicted in Figure 2.[82] This relationship seems intuitive. Terrorism and the reputation for being at risk for terrorism inflict serious costs on a state. Domestic sources of terror can destabilize the government, call into question its legitimacy, and degrade its ability to govern effectively. Terrorists inflict casualties on civilians and the members of the militar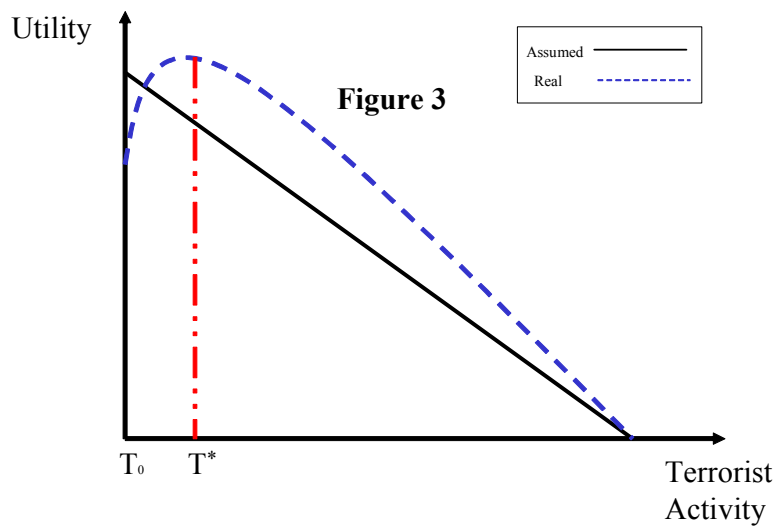y, police and internal security forces trying to combat the threat. Foreign investors, wary of the risks of investment in terrorist-prone states, are encouraged to move capital to safer, more stable markets. The economies of states that depend on tourism—like Kenya—are especially hard hit when their state is considered at risk for terrorism and subject to travel advisories initiated by foreign governments. Terrorism is detrimental to states' interests on many levels and its downside effects are quite evident.

Unfortunately, the impact of terrorist problems on important actors in a number of states is not always strictly negative. In some cases, local government officials, internal security organizations and other institutions derive benefits from tolerating a certain level of terrorism. In other cases, leaders may experience strong domestic political pressure to tolerate or condone some limited presence and activity of groups that enjoy popular support, despite the fact that they meet or approach threshold U.S. definitions of a

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[81] "Somalia says al-Qaida embassy bombing suspect believed killed," *The Guardian*, January 10, 2007.
[82] The following figures and analysis are adapted from Joseph H. Felter, "Aligning Incentives to Combat Terror," in Rohan Gunaratna, ed., *Combating Terrorism* (Singapore: Marshall Cavendish Academic, 2005).

terrorist organization.[83] Ultimately, it may not be politically viable for some state leaders to move from T* to T_0 as depicted below given the internal demands and aggregated interests of their constituents (See Figure 3). In such states, the optimal level of terrorism from the government's perspective is greater than zero.
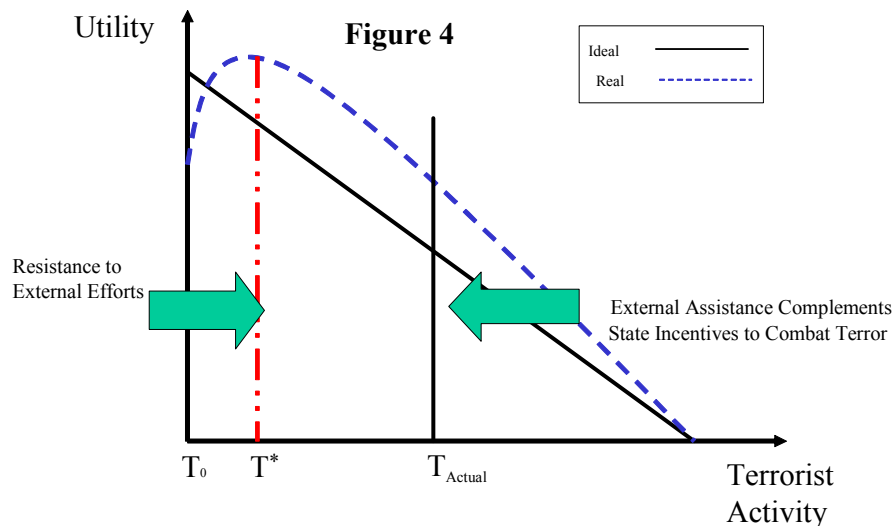
Figure 3

Utility (vertical axis)

| Assumed | ———— |
| Real | - - - - - - - |

T_0 T*

Terrorist Activity (horizontal axis)

Disaggregating the state to its institutional components helps reveal factors that could modify a state's commitment to "finishing the task" of defeating the terrorist threat within its borders. Consider the institutional interests and biases of a state's military, particularly in states like Kenya that have serious internal security threats and where the military is employed to maintain order. The military may secure a larger portion of the central government's expenditures, maintain higher force levels, and enjoy greater institutional prestige and autonomy if an internal threat such as terrorism exists. Thus members of organizations responsible for maintaining internal security may prefer a level of terror T* to no terror at all.

When the actual level of terror is greater than the ideal level for a given state or key institutions within the state ($T_{Actual} > T*$), external assistance to combat terrorism can complement and empower the state's efforts to reduce terror. While the assistance for combating terror may not be used as efficiently as the provider desires, the target state does have the incentive to implement strategies to reduce the overall level of terrorism to its ideal point T*.

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[83] Consider for example the Indonesian government's tepid response to Jemaah Islamiyah (JI) and their less-than-aggressive pursuit of Abu Bakar Bashir, the former emir of Jemaah Islamiyah who was released from prison in June 2006 after serving a reduced sentence for his role in inspiring the 2002 Bali bombings.

The challenge for effective strategies to combat terror from an external state's perspective arises when the actual level of terror approaches a given state's ideal level of terrorism. This shift in incentive compatibility is depicted at Figure 4.

Figure 4

Utility

Ideal ———
Real - - - - -

Resistance to
External Efforts

External Assistance Complements
State Incentives to Combat Terror

T_0 T^* T_{Actual}

Terrorist
Activity

When the actual terrorist presence or level of activity in a state (T_{Actual}) is reduced to a point close to T^*, a rational state leader or influential stakeholder within the government will resist efforts to reduce the level of terror beyond T^*. Reductions beyond this point may be in the interests of the aid provider but not the target state. Strategies intended to reduce terror further must anticipate the fact that leaders and key institutions may reach a point where they face negative returns from continued cooperation.

The dynamic described in Figure 4 confronts bilateral cooperation efforts in a variety of other circumstances beyond combating terror. For example, U.S. initiatives to assist and cooperate with other states to interdict threats from drugs, transnational crime, and insurgency also meet resistance when the incentives to cooperate diverge.

Since 9/11, divergent incentives between provider and recipient states have become an obstacle to combating terrorism. The United States-led Global War on Terror initiated a huge increase in foreign aid disbursed to states cooperating in efforts to defeat terrorist threats. Table 1 depicts some of the largest increases in foreign appropriations from the beginning of U.S. operations through the end of 2003. Clearly many countries have received a significant windfall from U.S. aid provided to support this effort.

Table 1: Foreign Appropriations (in millions)

Country	2001 (Pre 9/11)	Post 9/11 -2003	Real Increase
Pakistan	$3.50	$1,293.50	$1,290.00
Colombia	$4.67	$573.18	$568.51
Uzbekistan	$28.10	$171.10	$143.00
Georgia	$4.98	$116.30	$111.32
Philippines	$7.40	$82.90	$75.50
Tajikistan	$16.70	$70.40	$53.70
Kyrgystan	$35.30	$87.80	$52.50
Yemen	$5.30	$38.60	$33.30
Nepal	$0.20	$29.50	$29.30
Indonesia	$49.90	$76.90	$27.00
Turkmenistan	$7.30	$19.20	$11.90
Djibouti	$0.60	$6.40	$5.80

Federation of American Scientists Arms Sales Monitoring Project.[84]

This windfall has in turn created a set of perverse incentives for states with a terrorist presence.[85] Consider two states, a recipient and a donor. The donor state conditions its assistance on the level of terror observed in or projected from the recipient state. The donor state provides more assistance to states experiencing greater terrorist threats. Knowing it will get more aid in the future if it does not fully eradicate the terrorist threat, the recipient state has strong incentives to maintain some level of terrorism. This dynamic played out in the Philippines where local government officials profited from various terrorist activities by the Communist Terrorist Movement and later the Abu Sayyaf Group. Incentives to tolerate—in some cases even promote—a certain level of terrorism at local levels challenges efforts by the central government to combat the threat.[86]

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[84] Pre-9/11 figures reflect all sources of aid appropriated by the Foreign Operations and Appropriations Act for the year 2001. Post 9/11 figures include two supplemental appropriations acts passed in late 2001 and in 2002 as well as the aid included in the 2003 Foreign Operations Appropriations Act. Some aid was given to states to interdict terrorists with links to al-Qa'ida within their borders, e.g. Georgia, Philippines, and Yemen, while other states were cooperating with the U.S. in its operations in Afghanistan as part of Operation Enduring Freedom. In cases such as Colombia, special aid to interdict narco-terrorists was provided. This table was adapted from data compiled by Tamar Gabelnick and Matt Schroeder of the Federation of American Scientists Arms Sales Monitoring Project and published in the January/February 2003 *Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists*.

[85] For a game-theoretic analysis of this problem see Felter, "Aligning incentives."

[86] This agency problem between the Philippine central government and local officials stemmed from how resources were allocated by the central government to address terrorist challenges. Resources were committed based on the presence and level of terrorist activities in a certain area. This created perverse incentives to promote/signal a level of terrorist activity that could capture government rents conditioned on such activities. The increase in external assistance provided by the United States following 9/11 made this particularly problematic as good governance at local levels was in a sense being punished while the

The conditions for states to prefer a non-zero level of terrorism are likely to occur in states like Kenya where terrorism ranks low on the list of internal security problems, where the state faces no significant external threat, and where the presence of terrorism leads to large aid flows. In such states, providing economic and security assistance to combat terrorism based on the presence of terrorists, or the severity of its threat, actually risks *increasing* the expected future level of terror in that target state. Aid conditioned on *level* of terror provides a perverse incentive to tolerate more terror with the expectation of receiving even greater aid in the future. Conditioning foreign aid on the amount of measurable effort a state makes to combat terror, however, provides states the incentives to actively reduce their terrorist threats. Ultimately, states interested in combating terrorism are better off not providing *any* additional foreign aid to a state than they are disbursing aid based on the target state's level of terrorism or terrorist activity.

Successful counterterrorism assistance to weak states requires creating incentives that promote effective internally generated and sustainable counterterrorism measures. To do this, cooperative bilateral and multilateral efforts to help weak states must be based on how hard states try to fight terrorism. Basing such efforts on the threat of terrorism creates perverse incentives that may lead local officials to prefer low levels of terrorism to no terrorism at all.

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opposite was rewarded. See Joseph H. Felter, "Taking Guns to a Knife Fight: A Case for Empirical Study of Counterinsurgency" (Ph.D. diss., Stanford University, 2005).

3. Case Study: Somalia

I. Introduction: The Somali Context

An essential point of departure for understanding current manifestations of radical Islamism and jihadi violence in Somalia is an examination of the historical, cultural, environmental, and social context of the country. This section explores key aspects of this Somali context. The core thesis is that *the Somali context has generally tended to inhibit and constrain the rise of radical Islamism* (specifically, Salafi Islam) in both its non-violent and jihadi manifestations. Specifically, the practice of Sufi Islam and its deep integration into Somali culture; the enduring salience of clannism; and Somalia's pragmatic political culture have all inoculated Somali society to some degree from radicalism. Conversely, several newer features of the Somali context, including the diasporization of Somali society, rapid urbanization, and fifteen years of war and state collapse, have eroded some of these inhibitors to radicalism.

Sufi Islam. Traditionally, the practice of Islam in Somalia has been described as moderate–a "veil lightly worn." Islam was and remains integrated into local customs. The strict, conservative *Wahhabist* practice of Islam in neighboring Gulf States was largely unknown in Somalia and considered foreign to Somali culture.

Sufi brotherhoods are the oldest and most widespread Islamic organizations in Somalia, and also cut across clan affiliations. These religious orders are moderate and embrace peaceful co-existence with secular political authorities. The *Qadiriya*, *Salihiya*, and *Ahmadiya* sects–found worldwide–are the most influential in Somalia today. Of these, only the *Salihiya* sect is distinguished by its involvement in modern politics – it was the sect of Said Mohamed Abdullah Hassan, the "Mad Mullah," who waged a twenty year war of resistance against British and Italian colonial rule in northern Somalia. It is noteworthy that the two times in Somali history when Islamic identity was successfully mobilized for jihad were both anti-foreign, anti-Christian liberation movements–one, that of Said's anti-colonial resistance and the other a 16th-century jihad against Abyssinian conquest led by Imam Ahmed Gurey.

Clannism. Somalia is a lineage-based society, where virtually all members of society are identified in part by their clan family. Somali clannism is fluid, complex, and frequently misunderstood. At the risk of oversimplification, one can make the case that clannism–especially since the collapse of the state in 1991–forms the basis for most of the core social institutions and norms of traditional Somali society, including personal identity, rights of access to local resources, customary law (*xeer*), blood payment (*diya*) groups, and social support systems. Islamic identity is one of several "horizontal identities" that cut across clan lines, but in a manner which tends to be subordinate to or which complements rather than challenges the primacy of clannism. Religious leaders are often quite influential, but their authority is generally limited to their own clan. Beyond their clan, their role shifts to that of ambassador or negotiator representing their clan's interests. Likewise, s*haria* law has historically never been a primary source of law, but aspects of *sharia* were assimilated within *xeer*, the indigenous Somali justice system.

Somali sheikhs and religious leaders have traditionally controlled limited judicial functions–typically "family law," including divorce and inheritance disputes; respected sheikhs are also called upon as arbitrators or peacemakers (*nabadoon*). Despite the ascendance of a political Islamic movement in contemporary Somalia, clannism remains the dominant political logic within which Islamists and *sharia* courts are generally constrained. Because clan is the principal source of individual and household security, it tends to be especially mobilized in a context of state collapse, lawlessness, and chronic insecurity. This works against trans-clan movements like political Islam.

Pastoralism. Historically, most of the Somali population was pastoral or semi-pastoral. Though Somalia has in the past four decades experienced rapid urbanization, an estimated 50-60% of the population is pastoral or agro-pastoral. Pastoral populations are typically difficult to organize politically, for obvious reasons. This constitutes a constraint on Islamist movements seeking to mobilize communities. Pastoral mobility is an additional constraint on any movement seeking to establish a secret base–nomads are quick to learn of movements of strangers on their territory, and will contest any presence they deem contrary to their interests. An important part of Somali pastoral culture is also information sharing–what some have termed the "bush radio." News and rumors are rapidly spread by word of mouth, making it difficult for both Somalis and foreigners to maintain secrecy.

Cultural pride/suspicion of outsiders. Perhaps more than most societies, Somalis tend to be suspicious of the motives of foreigners and quick to take offense at perceived imposition of foreign values. This can manifest itself in a fierce sense of national pride, as well as in a tendency towards xenophobia. This has historically served to insulate Somali Islam from Salafi influences, which are viewed by Somalis as "non-Somali," Saudi Wahhabism.

Pragmatism. For a variety of reasons, Somali political culture is exceptionally pragmatic. Some observers link this to the physical environment itself, a harsh semi-arid environment which leaves little margin for error for pastoralists hoping to survive the dry season. Somalis have been especially expedient with foreign ideologies, adopting them when beneficial and discarding them the moment they become a liability. Related to this is a culture of negotiation that permeates Somali society and encourages Somalis to recalculate their bargaining position in partnerships on a daily basis. This aspect of Somali political culture provides little traction for movements based on sustained commitment to an abstract cause.

Diasporization of Somali society. More recent changes in the Somali context–especially since 1990–are making Somali society somewhat more susceptible to radical Islam. The first is the transformation of Somalia into a diasporic nation. Beginning in the 1970s, growing numbers of Somalis traveled to the Gulf States or Egypt as migrant laborers or students, where they were exposed to Salafi teachings of Islam. Many of the leaders of Somalia's multiple Islamist groups share this background. Since the onset of Somalia's civil wars in the late 1980s, over one million of the country's 8-9 million people fled as refugees, settling in Europe, North America, and in countries in Africa and the Middle East. The diaspora today plays a powerful and complex role in Somalia's economy and its political life. Remittances total up to one billion dollars annually, keeping the

economy afloat. Many if not most of the key leaders in secular political groupings, Islamist movements and civil society organizations are diaspora members. Some of the hardline Somali Islamists are diaspora members as well. Islamists have successfully recruited young Somali diaspora members to return to Somalia to join jihadi militias.

Urbanization. Though Somalia remains a mainly rural society, with about 60% of the population engaged in pastoral, agro-pastoral or farming activities, Somalia's urban centers have exploded in growth over the past twenty years. Mogadishu, which was home to only 40,000 inhabitants in the 1940s, is now a city of over one million. Hargeisa, capital of the secessionist state of Somaliland in the north, is the fastest growing large city in Somalia and is expected to reach one million people in coming years. Several small cities–including Bosaso, Galkayo, and Burao–have also seen dramatic growth since the outbreak of war in 1991. Each new humanitarian crisis and war in Somalia produces another wave of displaced rural dwellers into towns and cities; most do not return to rural life. For a variety of reasons, settled urban populations are easier to reach for Islamist movements, making this growing portion of the Somali population more susceptible to recruitment.

II. The Context of State Collapse

Somalia has been without a functional central government since January 1991, making it the longest-running instance of complete state collapse in post-colonial history. This unique context of state collapse has been an important factor in the evolution of both non-violent and jihadi Islamic movements in the country.

Over a dozen national peace conferences have been launched unsuccessfully over a fourteen year period, including the sustained efforts of a large UN peacekeeping mission in 1993-95 (UNOSOM). The latest reconciliation effort produced the Transitional Federal Government (TFG), which was declared in October 2004. At present, the TFG's prospects do not look good. But even in a best-case scenario, the TFG will possess only modest and loose control over the country. For the next several years, Somalia will remain a *de facto* collapsed state.

Governance without Government. Contrary to much of what is written in the popular press, the prolonged collapse of central government has not led to complete anarchy. Important changes have occurred since the early 1990s in the nature of armed conflict, governance and lawlessness, rendering the country less anarchic than before. Contemporary Somalia is without government but not without governance. Armed conflict is now more localized, less lethal, and of much shorter duration. Criminality, though still a serious problem, is much better contained than in the early 1990s, when egregious crimes could be committed with impunity. A variety of local forms of governance have emerged to provide Somali communities with at least minimal levels of public order. Informal rule of law has emerged via local *sharia* courts, neighborhood watch groups, the reassertion of customary law and blood compensation payments and the robust growth of private security forces protecting business assets. More formal administrative structures have been established at the municipal, regional and trans-regional levels as well. Somaliland in the north is by far the most developed of these polities, and has made important gains since the late 1990s in consolidating rule of law,

multi-party democracy, functional ministries and public security. Other sub-state administrations have tended to be vulnerable to spoilers and internal division or have had only a weak capacity to project authority and deliver core services. Collectively, these informal and formal systems of governance fall well short of delivering the basic public security and services expected of a central government, but they provide a certain level of predictability and security to local communities.

Interests and State Collapse. This phenomenon of "governance without government" has been driven by gradual shifts in the interests of key local actors and in the manner in which they seek to protect and advance those interests. The general trend is toward greater interests in improved security, rule of law and predictability. This shift in interests can be traced to the inadvertent impact of the UNOSOM presence in Mogadishu in 1993-1994. Though the intervention itself was a failure, the large UN operation poured an enormous amount of money, employment and contract opportunities into the country, which helped to stimulate and strengthen legitimate business, shifting business activities away from a war economy toward construction, telecommunications, trade and services. In the process, it helped to reshape local interests in security and rule of law, and eventually local power relations as well. It also helped give rise to a business community in Mogadishu which by 1999 broke free of local warlords and bought militiamen out from beneath them. The result is that today the businessmen's private security forces are the largest and best-armed militias in the city, and warlords, though still potential spoilers, are not nearly as powerful as before.

The evolving interest in rule of law and predictability is not only an agenda increasingly embraced by businessmen. It is also actively promoted by neighborhood groups, who have formed local security watch groups to patrol their streets. These groups consist of professionals, especially in education and health sectors, who are at the forefront of Somalia's nascent "civil society;" clan elders, who are seeking to recoup their traditional role as peacemakers; and even many militiamen, who over time prefer the stability of a paid job in a private security force to the dangers of banditry. In many instances these changes constitute potential opportunities for reconciliation and state-building.

It is important to recognize, though, that some Somali constituencies which have a growing appreciation for improved public security are not necessarily strong advocates of a return to centralized government. A revived central state poses a potential threat–to impose taxes, restrict or regulate certain types of economic activities, and potentially turn into an instrument of predation and dominance that empowered clans and groups will wield at the expense of their rivals. The collective Somali experience of the central state has not been a positive one and tends to produce "zero-sum" thinking about a revived state. This tends to multiply the number of spoilers when peace talks reach discussions of power-sharing.

The rise of non-state actors as essential components of informal governance and security systems in Somalia has posed a challenge to external organizations accustomed to dealing only with state counterparts. Over the past fifteen years, most development agencies have learned to adapt to this unusual operating environment by creating Memoranda of Understanding with whatever local authorities they encounter on the

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ground. These MOUs range from agreements or provision of security to international aid workers to procedures for hiring and allocation of contracts. The UN Department of Safety and Security (UNDSS) oversees MOUs with local authorities and militias on security matters; and neighboring states Ethiopia and Kenya routinely conduct diplomacy with clan leaders in border areas to manage cross-border security issues. These relationships are fragile and if mishandled can compromise local counterparts. The ability of external actors to partner with local non-state actors remains a challenge and a work in progress.

Both progressive and hard-line Islamic movements have benefited from the prolonged collapse of the central state in Somalia. The complete collapse of government social services, for instance, has provided Islamic charities the opportunity to become the primary provider of education and health care services. The absence of a formal judiciary has enabled local *sharia* courts to step into the vacuum at the neighborhood level. For the most part, these social service providers and local *sharia* courts were and are not radical. Most *sharia* courts are controlled by clan elders and businessmen and operated by traditional Sufi clerics, while most of the Islamic social services are associated with more progressive Islamists.

However, hardline Islamists have also exploited the prolonged collapse of the state in Somalia. As discussed below, hardline Somali Islamists were able to capture control of the Council of Islamic Courts (CIC) in 2006 and drive that umbrella movement into increasingly radical and ultimately self-destructive policies. These Islamists also forged links to foreign al-Qa'ida affiliates in the 1990s and later provided several terror suspects safe haven in Somalia. Hardline Islamists in Somalia were very successful at exploiting two commodities which Somali communities desperately craved after fifteen years of civil war and state collapse–a sense of public security and a sense of unity. By providing impressive levels of public order and policing in Mogadishu, and by appealing to a common identity as Somali Muslims rather than clans, the CIC attracted a considerable amount of public support from Somalis at home and abroad. They solidified this public support still further by tapping into strong anti-Ethiopian sentiments. By declaring jihad on Ethiopia, they successfully conflated Somali nationalism, anti-Ethiopianism and Islamism, mobilizing support from a broad range of Somali society, even those who were uncomfortable with some aspects of their Islamist agenda.

The balance of power between "moderates" and "hardliners" among Somali Islamists has been in a constant state of flux and is shaped principally by a combination of access to resources, coercive capacity to intimidate and the broader political context. Generally, situations marked by heightened external threats play to the interests of hardliners, while conditions favoring negotiations, compromise and normalization play into the hands of moderates. Not surprisingly, Islamist hardliners have sought to manufacture conditions of jihad with Ethiopia as a means of consolidating power and marginalizing moderate rivals.

State collapse and terrorist safe havens. It is often claimed that zones of complete state collapse are ideal safe havens for al-Qa'ida and other terrorist groups. The case of Somalia suggests a more complex relationship between "ungoverned space" and terrorist activity. Recent research reviewing empirical evidence of Islamic terrorist activity in the

Horn of Africa demonstrates that al-Qa'ida and its affiliates in the Horn have found Kenya a much more conducive country from which to operate than state-less Somalia. Somalia, it is argued, plays a niche role for terrorists–mainly as a transshipment point for men, money and materiel into east Africa, and in a small number of cases as a safe haven for al-Qa'ida operatives fleeing from the law in Kenya. But Somalia's condition of lawlessness and complete state collapse produces constraints and dangers for terrorist cells just as it creates what aid agencies refer to obliquely as a "non-permissive environment." Foreign terror suspects operating in Somalia are prone to extortion and betrayal; can get caught up in clan conflicts; are easily visible in a context of few foreign visitors; and face difficulties of communication, transportation, disease and access to clean water. The Harmony documents provide an excellent opportunity to test these claims in the existing literature.

III. Islamic Radicalism and al-Qa'ida Activity in Somalia since 1990

Political Islam in Somalia–that is, any movement expressing overt political objectives organized around the identity and principals of Islam–has been through two full cycles of ascendance and collapse since 1990. This section provides a brief overview of the main trends driving the rise and fall of radical Somali Islamic movements and related al-Qa'ida activities. More detailed studies of Somali Islamists and foreign al-Qa'ida activities are available in published studies such as the excellent series of reports put out by the International Crisis Group.

Two points must be made at the outset. First, most manifestations of Islamist revival in Somalia cannot be considered radical. The al-Islah Salafi movement, for instance, is generally considered to be a progressive and relatively moderate movement, despite efforts by critics to tar it with the same brush as al-Ittihad al-Islami (AIAI). Others, such as Tabliq, are missionary movements promoting rigid and strict adherence to Salafi interpretations of Islam but are focused on social, not political transformation. Graduates from Tabliq madrassas are nonetheless much more inclined to embrace radical and even jihadi agendas, making the distinction between "non-political" and "political" Islam difficult; equally problematic is drawing a meaningful distinction between "moderates," "radicals," and "jihadis."

Second, the dozens of Somali Islamist movements which sprang up in the late 1980s and early 1990s emerged independently of al-Qa'ida support. Al-Qa'ida began expanding cooperation with AIAI only after the group had already been engaged in several losing battles in the Somali civil war and after one branch of AIAI established control over the district of Lu'uq near the Ethiopian border. Most of the top leadership of AIAI had served as heads of precursor Islamist organizations as far back as the early 1980s.[1] AIAI was, in sum, a relatively established, independent organization and one with a leadership complex that was set in place. Non-Somali al-Qa'ida operatives were not therefore in a position to dictate terms to AIAI, and had only marginal influence over the national leadership. There were multiple tensions within AIAI–vertical tensions

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[1] International Crisis Group, *Somalia's Islamists*, Africa Report No. 100 (Nairobi and Brussels: International Crisis Group, 2005), 3. Available at
http://www.crisisgroup.org/home/index.cfm?id=3830&l=1.

involving disputes between top leaders and field commanders, and horizontal fissures that tended to manifest themselves along clan fault lines. The vertical tensions produced a context in which the problem of "agency" existed on multiple tiers. While al-Qa'ida sought to shape and direct AIAI activities in Somalia, it confronted internal AIAI problems of agency pitting Islamist leadership against local jihadi commanders.

The First Wave: 1990-1992.

The dozens of small Islamist movements which arose in the late 1980s and early 1990s coalesced into the AIAI movement. The Islamist movement briefly enjoyed rapid growth and strong support from cadres across clan lines in 1991, at one point boasting over a thousand men under arms and control of key seaports at Merka and Kismayo. The movement nearly took control of the northern seaport of Bosaso as well, but a combination of poor command and control, inexperience and clan divisions helped to produce serious setbacks which convinced most of the members that Somalia was not ready for an Islamic state and that da'wa, or preaching and proselytizing, was needed rather than jihad.

In the period from April 1991 to mid-1992, AIAI suffered two major setbacks. First, in April 1991, mainly Darood clan AIAI fighters fought a losing battle north of Kismayo against the forces of General Mohamed Farah Aideed. The Islamist fighters were convinced to protect the city by their clan elders, who duplicitously promised to set up an Islamic emirate in Kismayo in return for AIAI's protection. At the time, senior AIAI leaders urged the fighters to fall back from the Jubba Valley to avoid a calamity, but the AIAI youth were intent on fighting and refused the more cautious council of the leadership.[2] This was the first of what would become a series of differences in opinion between the more cautious national leadership of AIAI and militant commanders in the field. In the aftermath, AIAI restructured decision-making in an attempt to concentrate power in the hands of senior figures.

The second setback for AIAI occurred in Bosaso, Puntland, in 1992. There, the AIAI (including many fighters returning from Kismayo) settled and created what one analysis describes as a state within a state in Northeast Somalia, taking over control of seaport revenues.[3] AIAI briefly took control of all main towns in the region and declared an Islamic administration, but the dominant Mijerteen clan in the Northeast assembled a militia which routed the Islamists. An estimated 600 died and the rest fled into the remote coastal settlement of Los Qorey in Somaliland. Thereafter the main unit of AIAI gradually dispersed back into their own communities. With the exception of two branches of AIAI–the mainly Marehan clan unit that controlled the town of Lu'uq, and the mainly Ogaden clan movement based in Ethiopia–the rest of AIAI dissolved itself, becoming what some analysts refer to as an "alumni network."

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[2] Ibid., 5.
[3] Ibid*.,* 6.

Ebb Tide: 1992-2000.

Following the dissolution of AIAI in Los Qorey, the movement continued to operate as a discrete organization in two areas–Lu'uq, a stronghold dominated by Islamists mainly from the Marehan clan in the Somali region, and Ethiopia, where mainly Ogaden clan members of AIAI operated. Terrorist attacks against government and civilian targets by the Ethiopian branch of the AIAI in 1995 produced an Ethiopian crackdown on Islamists in the Somali region and also resulted in Ethiopian military attacks on Lu'uq, which was believed by the Ethiopians to have provided logistical support for the Ethiopian-based AIAI. Islamists fled Lu'uq and dispersed back to their own communities. AIAI was described at this point as a "spent force" in Somalia.

Though this appeared to be a low water mark for Islamism in Somalia, it was actually an important period of rebuilding and regrouping. Ex-AIAI members established themselves in business networks, in education, the media and the judiciary, building a base which would later prove critical to the new Islamist movement. An impressive network of Islamic schools, hospitals and charities sprang up, especially in Mogadishu. Locally, communities began to establish neighborhood, clan-based *sharia* courts to provide for themselves a modicum of rule of law. These *sharia* courts were not radical– they were funded by businesses, overseen by clan elders, and operated by traditional clerics. But they would later be used as a base for more politically minded Islamists. By 2000, political Islamism in Mogadishu was clearly an ascendant force. But the particular manifestation of political Islam that would emerge–progressive, moderate Islamism or radical jihadi Islam–was not a foregone conclusion.

The Second Wave: 2000-2006.

Since 2000, Islamist leaders with clear national ambitions–including Hassan Dahir Aweys–have resurfaced and used a succession of Islamic court umbrella movements as a platform to advance their national political aspirations. This period of recent Islamic ascendance is well-known and extensively documented and need not be repeated here.[4] What is important to stress is that the umbrella movement of *sharia* courts (which eventually became known as the Council of Islamic Courts, or CIC) developed its own financial support from local businesses and contributions from abroad; developed the most powerful, committed and well-trained militia in the country; attracted support from across a range of different clans; and at a fairly early stage struggled with an internal split between moderates and hard-liners, including a jihadi militia unit known as the *shabaab* which conducted a dirty war of political assassinations in Mogadishu from 2004 to 2006. The jihadis within the movement were also responsible for providing safe haven to a small number of foreign al-Qa'ida figures wanted for the 1998 terrorist attacks on U.S. Embassies in Nairobi and Dar es Salaam.

It was the CIC which decisively defeated the U.S.-backed Alliance for the Restoration of Peace and Counter-Terrorism in June 2006, expanding its control over all of Mogadishu and most of south-central Somalia. Over the second half of 2006, the CIC veered increasingly into more radical social and foreign policies, including declarations

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[4] See the series of International Crisis Group reports since 2002.

of jihad on neighboring Ethiopia. By fall of 2006, war between Ethiopia and the Courts was viewed as likely if not inevitable. The fear was that war was exactly what the jihadis wanted, and that they would use a protracted urban guerilla war against Ethiopia to generate backing from throughout the Islamic world.

Ebb Tide or Tsunami? 2007 and Beyond.

The war did take place, but not as most expected. Ethiopia's decisive rout of the CIC forces in initial battles, and the subsequent decision to dissolve the CIC and return militia and weapons back to clan elders in Mogadishu, precipitated a dramatic and sudden collapse of what had appeared to be a robust and politically ascendant Islamist movement. For the third time in fifteen years (1991-92 in Kismayo and Bosaso, in 1996 in Lu'uq, and in 2006 in Mogadishu) an Islamist movement in Somalia appeared to make fatally poor tactical choices, producing military defeats that exposed the thinness of their public support. If past trends are to hold, we can expect the Islamists to disperse, focus again on da'wa and building business and social networks within their communities, and wait before attempting another political or jihadi initiative. But at least some indicators suggest that this time the loss at the hands of the Ethiopians could produce a quick resurgence of radicalized jihadi violence in Somalia.

IV. Assessment of Harmony Documents on Somalia

Somalia is a prominent topic in the translated documents, comprising several hundred pages of transcripts, released for this report. All but one of these documents is sourced to al-Qa'ida operatives.[5] All but two documents are dated, or appear to have been written, between 1991 through 1995. This was a period of enormous upheaval in Somalia, and included the following events:

- a prolonged crisis of state collapse, civil war, and famine (January 1991-December 1992);

- the U.S.-led UNITAF humanitarian intervention (December 1992-May 1993);

- the handover to the UN Operation in Somalia (UNOSOM) and the protracted armed clashes pitting the UN and U.S. forces against the militia of General Mohamed Farah Aideed in Mogadishu, culminating in the "Black Hawk Down" battle of October 3-4, 1993 (June-October 1993).

- the subsequent period of failed UNOSOM efforts to broker a deal to revive a Somali state, ending with the UNOSOM withdrawal (October 1993-March 1995).

This was also a period when al-Qa'ida was first attempting to forge cooperative relations with Somali Islamists, establish training camps in Somalia and the Ogaden region of Ethiopia (known today as the "Somali region"), develop cells and a regional base of operations in Kenya and, upon the announcement of a U.S.-led humanitarian

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[5] The exception is a secret letter from the Intelligence Service of the Iraqi Embassy in Djibouti to the Director-office of the Iraqi Intelligence Service, regarding radical Islamist activities in Djibouti and Somaliland, October 2001. Harmony, ISGQ-2005-00024493.

intervention in Somalia in late November 1992, target U.S. and UN forces in Somalia. Most of the Somalia documents in the Harmony project thus reflect the concerns and preoccupations of al-Qa'ida at a very particular moment in the group's recent history in Somalia, a period defined by preliminary assessments, initial forays and, not surprisingly given the operational challenges that Somalia posed to all outsiders, initial mistakes.

An important backdrop to the Somalia Harmony documents of 1991-1994 is the relocation of Osama bin Laden from Afghanistan to Sudan in 1992, and the rise of Sudan as a major terrorist safe haven throughout the early to mid 1990s. Al-Qa'ida's increased penetration of East Africa, and its preoccupation with derailing the U.S. and UN intervention in Somalia, is in part a function of al-Qa'ida's physical presence in Sudan at the time.

Appropriate caution must be used in reaching unqualified conclusions about al-Qa'ida and Somali Islamists on the basis of this collection. First, the documents themselves are often fragmentary, due to damage or illegible handwriting. Second, they constitute only a small portion of the correspondence al-Qa'ida operatives certainly produced during this period. Third, some of the reports appear to make questionable claims of responsibility for events that al-Qa'ida may not have had a hand; in the potential for self-promotion and inflated claims in these communications must be considered.[6] Finally, and perhaps most importantly, at least some of the al-Qa'ida figures who produced these reports were new to the region, resulting in reports that are often simply mistaken about everything from basic Somali geography and clans to explanations of Somali politics.

That said, much can be gleaned from these documents, which are a treasure trove of invaluable evidence of al-Qa'ida's involvement in and perceptions of Somalia. They are equally valuable as glimpses into the internal debates and power struggles of the Somali Islamists themselves. Much of the documentation from this collection serves to reinforce widely held views about the nature of Islamic radicalism in Somalia; in some cases the documents challenge conventional wisdom.

In this section, observations about what the Somali Harmony documents tell us are broken down by topic.

Objectives of al-Qa'ida in Somalia.

The initial objective of al-Qa'ida, as it made preliminary contacts with Somali Islamists, was to explore an alternative base of operations to Afghanistan. Presumably the arrangement struck with the government of Sudan in 1992 reduced the urgency of this objective. Thereafter, the primary mission appears to be to promote recruitment and establish training bases in the Ogaden region of Ethiopia and inside Somalia in support of the Somali "mujahideen." Expeditions and training exercises are conducted in the Somali region of Ethiopia; exploratory missions are sent to Ras Kamboni along the southernmost

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[6] Such claims present leaders with a real problem. They cannot observe whether their operatives in Somalia are working hard to make alliances with problematic clan leaders or not. This may be one reason al-Qaida leaders required extensive reporting despite the obvious security risks this entailed.

Somali coast; and frequent flights to Lu'uq, the town held by AIAI from 1991 to 1996, are made for meetings with AIAI leadership.[7]

That the period of 1991-93 constituted an early, exploratory phase for al-Qa'ida in Somalia is clear from documents discussing the initial establishment of an operational base in Kenya and from the very rudimentary, often glaringly inaccurate knowledge that the al-Qa'ida operatives have of Somalia (discussed below).

The wildcard that transforms al-Qa'ida objectives in Somalia is, of course, the sudden announcement of the U.S.-led humanitarian intervention into Somalia in December 1992. Thereafter, the abiding preoccupation expressed in the documents is the need to attack and derail the U.S./UN mission. On this count the Harmony documents confirm existing evidence from the *USA vs. Usama bin Laden et al.* trial, in which al-Qa'ida views the intervention in Somalia as a first step by the U.S. toward Sudan. In this sense, Somalia is a subsidiary priority for al-Qa'ida–the main objective is to thwart a dangerous precedent of American armed intervention in the Horn which could endanger al-Qa'ida's base in Sudan. Ironically, Somalia was a subsidiary priority for the United States as well, which intervened in Somalia, according to then Acting Secretary of State Larry Eagleburger, "because it wasn't Bosnia"–in other words, to set a precedent for robust UN peace enforcement in a place where it appeared doable.

The fact that al-Qa'ida had established working relations with Somali Islamists in 1991 and 1992, and earned at least a modest working knowledge of the country during that time, is recognized by al-Qa'ida operatives as a major advantage once the U.S. "Operation Restore Hope" forces arrived. "Your early arrival on Somali soil ahead of the enemy America gave you an excellent opportunity to gain knowledge of the battleground … and understand … the social and political situation," notes the author of "The Third Letter to the African Corps."[8]

The longer-term objectives of al-Qa'ida in Somalia appear to get lost once the American and UN presence is established there, at which point the sole preoccupation of the movement becomes striking at the enemy. The longer-term dispensation of Somalia is not given much attention, to the chagrin of one al-Qa'ida observer writing in 1995:

> The West was defeated and fled Somalia…. [But] the original problem that you went to address still exists. What happened to the Somali Salafia and where is it now…? Did you suddenly go to Somalia and suddenly withdraw, as happened in Afghanistan, without accomplishing any clear objective or follow up the victory and benefit from it to accomplish additional victories?[9]

Agency Problems.

One of the most fascinating findings emerging from review of the Harmony Somalia documents is the tensions within the triangular relationships involving the foreign al-Qa'ida operatives, the national-level AIAI leadership and the local Islamist commanders.

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[7] Harmony, AFGP-2002-600104; Harmony, AFGP-2002-800597; Harmony, AFGP-2002-600113.
[8] Harmony, AFGP-2002-600053, 13.
[9] Ibid., 14.

The tensions in these relations, which occasionally express themselves in incentives in some of the documents, arise from problems of agency.

The first sign of a power struggle between AIAI leadership and militant field commanders occurred in 1991 outside of Kismayo where, as was noted above, AIAI senior officials argued in vain for a withdrawal. Following the crushing defeat of AIAI in Bosaso in 1992, national leadership of AIAI no longer sought to hold territory and no longer saw jihad as an appropriate tactic. AIAI's top leaders believed instead that Somalia was unprepared for an Islamic state and required da'wa, or preaching, first. This position reflected the fact that AIAI leadership itself had concluded that the contextual factors noted in the first section of this chapter were indeed real constraints on political Islam and required a generational project of resocializing and preparing Somali society. This long-term and more incremental vision clashed with the desires of the more militant field commanders, especially those in the Somali region of Ethiopia. The Harmony documents capture this tension repeatedly.

In one of the best-developed examples, an al-Qa'ida operative, Saif al-Islam, is providing training to a unit of Ethiopian Somali Islamists in a remote camp in Somali region in July 1993. After first dealing with his own problems of "agency' (his al-Qa'ida superior repeatedly postpones committing to assistance to the Somali Ethiopian cell, and drags his feet on bestowing upon Saif the right to represent al-Qa'ida in discussions with AIAI), Saif must manage an emerging split between the more militant Ethiopian wing and their AIAI leaders in Somalia proper. The Ethiopian AIAI wing issues a decree which commits them to continued jihad against the government of Ethiopia, and which decides to separate from the General Islamic Union in Somalia (AIAI) due to its decision "to abandon jihad for the pursuit of peaceful solutions." The Ethiopia wing also confided to Saif that AIAI leadership "was angry with us when we contacted you in Sudan."[10]

What emerges from the collection of Harmony project documents is a tense triangular relationship in which the foreign al-Qa'ida operatives and the militant field commanders tend to share a common set of interests and perspectives in opposition to the AIAI leadership, which is perceived as too cautious and political. The position of the AIAI leadership accurately reflects the Somali penchant for pragmatism and risk aversion described earlier in this chapter.

Problems of Preference Divergence.

Al-Qa'ida operatives clearly desire jihadi attacks against the "enemy" (the U.S./UN in Somalia, Ethiopian forces in Ethiopia). Those high-risk preferences based on a global agenda diverge from the agenda of the AIAI leadership, which seeks power nationally and is less inclined to take on the risks of attacking the U.S. military. In one report, al-Qa'ida operatives meet with AIAI leader "Sheikh Hassan Tahir" (Hassan Dahir Aweys)[11] in 1993 and promise to fund "all operations" of AIAI if it engages in military operations against the U.S.; otherwise, al-Qa'ida will continue to aid the secular resistance forces

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[10] Harmony, AFGP 2002-600104, 15.
[11] See Appendix B-III for a more in-depth discussion of Aweys. Also, see Harmony, AFGP-2002-800611 for a Kenya Visa Application with the name of Hassan Aweys. Ironically, this document was seized by U.S. Forces in Afghanistan during the 2002 timeframe.

(factional militias). Sheikh Hassan's response is that "the time is not right to start conducting jihad" and that "they must work against the Americans through political means."[12] In a separate communication, this preference on the part of the top AIAI leadership to avoid or postpone jihad is treated with contempt by an al-Qa'ida official, who concludes that "only a coward or scoundrel would say such a thing." He continues: "I have no doubt that even Saddam Hussein, Aideed, Arafat, Sayyaf, Hikmatyar, and Burhan have more manhood than they have. Like the latter, they are useless. Beware of them."[13]

Clannism.

The Somali Islamist movement in 1991-96 was divided to some degree by clan, and at any rate was forced to operate in a context in which clannism was a highly mobilized and politically exploited identity. This confronted al-Qa'ida with horizontal as well as vertical cleavages in its local ally. Most of the al-Qa'ida operatives who write in these documents were new to Somalia and were poorly equipped to understand the complexities of Somali clannism. Their reports are littered with crude, inaccurate descriptions of Somali lineages and express the same level of bewilderment over clannism that one frequently hears from international aid workers and diplomats. Clannism is said by the al-Qa'ida reporters to infuse the Islamic movement itself. "Each member of the movement is fanatically attached to his tribe," complains one entry.[14] Another entry, from the Somali region in Ethiopia, reveals the extent to which the Islamists were unwelcome by local clans.

In several instances, documents reveal that al-Qa'ida encounters difficulties because its local Islamist allies are predominantly from one clan and are resisted by rival clans. Here al-Qa'ida runs into the same difficulty that so many international NGOs have faced in the field–the prospect of being "captured" by one clan and earning the emnity of others in the process.

Leadership and Organization.

A major complaint of the foreign al-Qa'ida figures writing in the Harmony documents is the poor leadership and organization of the Somali Islamic movement. At the time most of these documents were produced, AIAI had more or less dissolved itself as a formal organization, operating more like a loose network. Hence it is not surprising that al-Qa'ida discovers a lack of organization. It specifically complains about corruption and financial mismanagement,[15] and lack of chain of command. "How is it," one entry chides, "that military force is employed by order of civilians and the military commander doesn't even know about it?"[16] The disastrous early military losses by AIAI in Kismayo and Bosaso are also assessed as the result of faulty leadership. Interestingly, Hassan Dahir Aweys, the CIC leader who was a principal architect of the disastrous Islamist war with Ethiopia in December 2006, was a commander in both of those early losses.

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[12] Harmony, AFGP 2002-600110, 8-10.
[13] Harmony, AFGP 2002-600053, 4.
[14] Harmony, AFGP 2002-800640, 5.
[15] Harmony, AFGP 2002 600104, 19;
[16] Ibid.*,* 23.

Islamic Charities.

Following the 9/11 attacks, a number of Islamic charities operating in Somalia and Kenya were shut down on the grounds that they were being used as fronts for al-Qa'ida. The Harmony documents do not provide any specific evidence to back up charges against particular Islamic NGOs, but several passages allude to al-Qa'ida's use of charities. In one instance, an al-Qa'ida operative reminds his Somali counterparts that "jihad brings a lot of money from charities."[17] In another entry, an al-Qa'ida operative assesses the level of corruption and competence of relief agencies they have penetrated along the Somali-Kenya border, noting that "the situation of the relief agency in Lipouy [Liboi] is not yet corrupted, unlike that of Mandeera which is a hopeless case."[18]

Sufi Opposition.

In some cases foreign al-Qa'ida operatives appear stunned at the depth of resistance they face from Sufi clerics. In the Somali region of Ethiopia the al-Qa'ida operative describes with shock the "level of cunning and hatred" toward the Islamic Union; when one local cleric preached at mosque the local people kick the Islamic Union out of their village.[19]

Lack of Mass Support.

One of the more revealing and insightful criticisms of the Somali AIAI is the charge leveled by on al-Qa'ida official that the movement is too elitist and cut off from the masses. "A movement that is isolated from its masses," he argues, "that is suspicious of its people, and whose people are suspicious of it, can achieve nothing but destroy itself."[20] This was in fact precisely one of AIAI's biggest problems–it was a movement of educated, well-traveled elites, who did not speak the same political language of the average Somali. Ironically, however, the AIAI leadership's decision to focus on da'wa, to socialize Somali society and prepare it for Islamic rule, was an implicit recognition of the gap that existed between the AIAI leaders and the people.

Al–Qa'ida Pragmatism/Instrumentalism.

This same al-Qa'ida official argues that al-Qa'ida has erred in seeking out appropriate allies in Somalia. "Al-Qa'ida's Salafia tendencies have led it to search for a political ally in Somalia with an identical intellectual focus," he opines. "This is the greatest calamity."[21] In his view, Somalis are merely temporary allies of expedience, tools to use in the battle against the "Knights of the Cross." To that end, he argues for greater partnership with secular Somali factions (presumably General Aideed and the SNA) which may be more effective in battling American and UN forces. In a remarkably candid and pragmatic passage, he notes that "nearly everywhere your situation and ours has no place for the ideal; just for that which is the least bad…. You must find men you can deal with, even if they are not from our venerable forefathers…. I do not mind

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[17] Harmony, AFGP 2002-6000104, 17.
[18] Harmony, AFGP 2002-600113, 7.
[19] Harmony, AFGP 2002-600104, 21.
[20] Harmony, AFGP 2002-600053, 1.
[21] Ibid.

cooperating with Aideed if you have made sure that what he is doing with the Americans is not staged…."[22]

Al-Qa'ida Confronting Somali Culture.

Some of the culture clashes captured in the documents are predictable and sound remarkably similar to after-hours complaints by new aid workers about "ungrateful locals." "The strange people who received us were lukewarm and wary towards us," complains one al-Qa'ida entry. "They are stingy and greedy."[23] But setting aside the numerous disparaging remarks about Somalis that appear in these entries, the more significant complaint was over Somali decision-making. The Somali practice of inclusive, consensus-oriented decision-making (traditionally, the male elders gathering in a "shir" or assembly) collided with the need for rapid, streamlined command, and resulted in complaints about the lack of secrecy in Somalia.[24] This last point is particularly important because it points to the fact that local decision-making norms influence the value of areas as terrorist safe havens.

AIAI Terrorism.

AIAI was designated as a terrorist organization in late 2001, on charges that it was behind a series of lethal bombings and assassination attempts in Ethiopia in 1995. For years, Somali members of AIAI have argued that by 1995 AIAI was a very decentralized organization and that the Ethiopian Somali AIAI conducted those attacks on their own, against the wishes and advice of the AIAI groups inside Somalia. It was unfair, these ex-AIAI members claimed, to brand the whole organization as terrorists when they disagreed with the acts committed. The Harmony papers help to document the growing split between the Ethiopian and Somali-based AIAI in the early 1990s, and the clear militancy of the Ethiopian Islamists compared to their colleagues in Somalia. That heightened militarism on the part of the Ethiopian wing of the AIAI was no doubt linked to the fact that the AIAI in Ethiopia was fighting for very different objectives than the AIAI wing inside Somalia. The Ethiopian wing of AIAI was part of a long-standing irredentist armed insurgency by Somali Ethiopians. The movement's aim of imposing an Islamist state over all of Somali-inhabited East Africa required armed violence against one of Africa's largest and most seasoned militaries. By contrast, the AIAI wings inside Somalia were preoccupied with expanding their control in a country where they faced no government at all.[25]

Logistical Obstacles and Constraints Faced in Somalia and the Ogaden.

The Harmony documents present compelling evidence to support the thesis that foreign terrorists find remote zones of state collapse and armed conflict relatively inhospitable and challenging operating environments, not "safe havens." Field reports are replete with complaints about poor food, unsafe water, uncomfortable shelter, heat, disease, biting insects, defective vehicles and poor tires. The physical constraints are vividly presented

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[22] Harmony, AFGP-2002-600053, 2
[23] Harmony, AFGP 2002-6000104, 5.
[24] Harmony, AFGP 2002-800640, 17, 19.
[25] For more on AIAI, see Appendix A-I.

in an entry describing the condition in the remote, swampy, forested coastal area of Badadhe, near the Kenyan border.

Hassan Dahir Aweys.

The U.S. government placed Hassan Dahir Aweys on a designated list of terror suspects for his alleged links to al-Qa'ida and for his sheltering of several foreign al-Qa'ida operatives in Mogadishu. Aweys has repeatedly denied that he has ties to al-Qa'ida or has provided safe haven to terrorists, and his supporters have argued that there is no evidence to back up these charges. Some well-placed analysts have argued that Aweys is actually a moderate voice within the current Islamist discourse in Somalia, and that he is fighting a rear guard battle against young, radical jihadists in the *shabaab* militia.

Intriguingly, the Harmony documents provide evidence to back both of those claims. If repeated references to Sheikh Hassan and Sheikh Hassan Tahir refer in fact to Aweys and not someone else–and the contextual evidence in the documents points to Aweys[26]–then it provides a clear picture of regular, routinized contact between al-Qa'ida operatives and Aweys on matters of mutual cooperation. This includes early references to him traveling to Sudan,[27] and being present in Ras Kamboni while al-Qa'ida was establishing a training camp there in 1993.[28] He can, perhaps, deny that these contacts were consequential, but not that that they occurred.

At the same time, Aweys comes across in these documents as an Islamist leader who has tactically rejected the use of jihad during the period 1993-95. His al-Qa'ida contacts quote him as saying that the time is not yet right for jihad. He and other leaders of AIAI are the target of withering criticism by militant Somali commanders in the field, and by some al-Qa'ida operatives as well, for being a "coward." This portrait of a hardliner who is nonetheless viewed as a constraining force on younger, less patient jihadis is remarkably similar to the portrait some observers have painted of Aweys in recent times.

Use of Contractors.

One concern about al-Qa'ida's use of Somalia as a transshipment point for short-term operations into East Africa–for movement of money, men, and materiel–is the fact that terrorists need not locate fellow believers to conduct these operations, but that most any Somali businessman is willing to conduct a transaction for a fee with no questions asked. This fear is confirmed in one of the Harmony documents describing al-Qa'ida's rental of a boat and its Bajuni captain to ship them from Lamu to Ras Kamboni. The al-Qa'ida operative writing this report describes his Bajuni sea captain as one of those with "low morals and big egos. Cigarette smoking, chewing qat, chasing women and lying, etc., are common among them." While acknowledging that "we don't trust him," the operative

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[26] Harmony, AFGP-2002-800611.
[27] Harmony, AFGP 2002-800600.
[28] Harmony, AFGP 2002-600113, 6.

concludes that, "as far as his skills are concerned he is excellent. I traveled with him previously; he knows the best ways to approach shores."[29]

Use of Kenya as a Base of Operations.

The Harmony documents reinforce the observation that while Somalia was a target of al-Qa'ida efforts to establish training bases and project influence, Kenya proved to be a far more conducive setting to base al-Qa'ida operations. Multiple al-Qa'ida cells operated unimpeded throughout the country (mainly in Nairobi and Mombasa). Harmony documents paint a remarkable portrait of al-Qa'ida cells freely operating in Kenya, with few expressed concerns about being monitored or detained by Kenyan police or security forces. The ease with which they chartered small planes to fly in and out of Lu'uq, Somalia, in 1993, during a period when that town was controlled by AIAI, with no hint of authorities checking on their activities, is especially revealing, as is their transaction to hire and purchase boats on the coast for travel into coastal Somalia. Indeed, the only anxiety expressed in Harmony document communications is a complaint in 1993, during the worst moments of political crisis in Kenya, that "Kenya is not a good place…. [T]he cost of living is high, plus corruption is dangerously prevalent – there is theft, house break-ins, no political stability, and it is possible there will be an explosion in the country."[30] We explore al-Qa'ida's fascination with Kenya in greater detail in chapter 4 of this report.

Somalia Today.

Current events in Somalia are hard to interpret. In December 2006 it appeared that business leaders and clan elders in Mogadishu essentially told the CIC not to return to the city to wage a protracted guerrilla struggle. This interpretation of events is hard to reconcile with recent fighting in Mogadishu. One interpretation is that the violence is driven by rivalries between clan leaders, some of whom are deeply dissatisfied with the Transitional Federal Government's efforts to assert control over economic activity and so are giving free rein to their fighters.[31] So far there is simply insufficient evidence to fully understand the dynamics of this rapidly evolving situation. However, it does highlight the fact that a desire among Somali business and clan interests to end civil conflict does not necessarily mean they will support or tolerate a strong central state that could impinge on their prerogatives.

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[29] Harmony, AFPG 2002-600114.

[30] Harmony, AFPG 2002-800597.

[31] Journalists have suggested the violence is being driven by Hawiye clan leaders unhappy with increased import duties imposed by the new government. See "A failed state that threatens the region," *The Economist*, 7 April 2007, 43. Others suggest the violence is driven by rivalries between the Hawiye clan and the Darood clan of interim President Abdullahi Yusuf. See Jesse Nunes, "Fighting between Ethiopians and Somali insurgents escalates in Mogadishu," *Christian Science Monitor*, 30 March 2007; and Abdurrahman Warsameh, "Somali chaos: Clans, Islamists, foreigners," *ISN Security Watch*, 29 March 2007, available at http://www.isn.ethz.ch/news/sw/details.cfm?id=17430.

4. Case Study: Kenya

I. Introduction

Of all the countries in the Horn of Africa, Kenya boasts the most stable, most effective, and most democratic government. Kenya has also experienced the most terrorist attacks against Western targets and has been the most useful operational base for al-Qa'ida.[1] This "Kenyan Paradox" is driven by the convergence of four factors. First, Kenya provides a target-rich environment for terrorists because of its relatively advanced economy and its long-standing ties with the United Kingdom, United States, and Israel. Second, Kenya maintains a functioning sovereign government, one increasingly subject to public opinion. The former limits the operational freedom of Western intelligence and counterterrorism units, and the latter heightens the cost of being seen to be doing others' bidding in the "War on Terror." Third, Kenya suffers from weak governance in a number of critical areas, including security and the criminal justice system. This discourages those Kenyans who might have relevant information from providing it to the authorities. Fourth, the presence of a disaffected minority Muslim population,[2] especially along the Kenyan coast, provides al-Qa'ida operatives an environment in which they can operate with less security pressure than elsewhere in the region.[3] Simply put, Kenya is an attractive place for al-Qa'ida to operate.[4] The level of development and stability have increased the density of targets and logistical convenience of conducting operations in Kenya while the combination of a more responsive political leadership and weak governance reduce the security costs of doing so.[5]

Some of these factors can be ameliorated by adjusting existing policies to account for the complex forces at work in Kenya. Others are background conditions that cannot be changed but must be understood. Section II begins our analysis by reviewing Kenya's history as a target for terrorist activity. Section III examines structural factors that make Kenya an attractive place for terrorists. We focus mainly on the governance challenge in Kenya, drawing on theoretical insights developed in the last section of Chapter 2. The next two sections draw on a series of recent interviews along with other sources. Section IV looks at the historical and current status of Kenyan Muslims. Section V briefly reviews how current counterterrorism initiatives are

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[1] Since 1990 Kenya has suffered seven terrorist attacks, three of which were conducted by al-Qa'ida. The other four have not been linked to foreigners, or even specifically to Muslims. During the same period there were: four terrorist attacks in Eritrea, none of which involved al-Qa'ida; 34 attacks in Ethiopia, only two of which are attributable to jihadi groups, the rest being conducted by groups involved in political or territorial struggles with the Ethiopian state; and 21 attacks in Sudan, all of which were committed by groups involved in the Sudanese civil war or other local conflicts in which Sudan was involved. MIPT Terrorism Knowledge Base, available at http://www.tkb.org [accessed March 30, 2007].

[2] Various surveys put the country's Muslim population at 8-10 percent, though (as noted below) with particular and significant regional concentrations.

[3] In the documents surveyed for the two Harmony reports, al-Qa'ida operatives in the 1990s reported greater security pressure in Nairobi and in Somalia than along the Kenyan coast.

[4] For a somewhat different take on al-Qa'ida's experiences in Kenya and the recruiting potential for East Africa, see William Rosenau, "Al Qa'ida Recruitment Trends in Kenya and Tanzania," *Studies in Conflict & Terrorism* 28 (2005): 1-20.

[5] See Chapters 2 and 3 for a summary of the disadvantages of operating from a failed state. At the same time, al-Qa'ida documents reveal considerable concerns with both the level of criminal-insecurity in Kenya and its potential for (eventual) political instability, if not an actual "explosion." Harmony, AFGP-2002-800597, 7.

perceived by both the incumbent government and its citizens. Section VI attempts to explain the complex set of policy games played in Kenya. Section VII concludes by discussing the future prospects for terrorism in Kenya.

II. Terrorism in Kenya: A Brief History

Until very recently, terrorism in Kenya was mostly a foreign affair.[6] Operatives from elsewhere saw Kenya as a permissive, target-rich environment. The first major attack of the modern era was the Norfolk Hotel bombing in December, 1980, which killed sixteen people and injured more than one hundred. The Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) claimed responsibility. Most believe the attack served as retaliation for Kenya's decision to allow the launch of the 1972 Israeli military raid on Entebbe, Uganda from Kenyan soil.[7]

Nearly two decades later, on August 7, 1998, al-Qa'ida attacked the American Embassy in Nairobi with a truck-bomb. This attack killed some 220 people and injured roughly 5,000 Embassy staff, passers-by and people in neighboring buildings.[8] Al-Qa'ida simultaneously attacked the U.S. Embassy in Dar es Salaam, Tanzania, killing 11 and injuring another 70. An attempt to destroy the American Embassy in Kampala, Uganda, was reportedly foiled on this same date.[9] All three embassies were accessible and relatively unprotected, making them particularly attractive targets. The Kenyan attack also produced the first known al-Qa'ida operative from Kenya, Sheikh Ahmad Salem Swedan, from Mombasa, as well as Abdullah Muhammad Fazul (henceforth 'Fazul'), a Comorian who reportedly holds a Kenyan passport, though his legal citizenship remains unclear.[10]

Al-Qa'ida executed Kenya's third major terrorist attack on November 28, 2002. Two SAM-7 missiles were fired at, but narrowly missed, an Israeli passenger jet taking off from Moi International Airport in Mombasa. Five minutes later, a truck-bomb detonated just outside the lobby of the Israeli-owned and frequented Paradise Hotel in Kikambala along the beach north of Mombasa. Fifteen people were killed and another 35 injured in that attack.[11] Clearly, in this case

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[6] We use "terrorism" with reference to Islamic "extremism," but recognize the high level of violence associated with the Mau-Mau uprising/"freedom-struggle" of the 1950s.

[7] The choice of the specific target appears to reflect the fact that the hotel was then owned by a well-known Jewish-Kenyan family; ironically, today it is owned by a prince in the Saudi royal family.

[8] The bomb-laden vehicle attempted to enter the underground parking area, but security guards prevented it from doing so. Had they not, the number of Embassy casualties would have been far higher, and the "collateral damage" far less.

[9] All 20 people arrested in connection with the alleged Kampala plot were apparently released after being held for a month. "All but one of nine arrested over blasts to be released," *Agence France Press: International News*, February 17, 1999; Arye Oded, *Islam & Politics in Kenya* (Boulder, CO: Lynne Reinner Publishers, 2000); 82.
David H. Shinn, "Fighting Terrorism in East Africa and the Horn," *Foreign Service Journal* (September, 2004).

[10] Swedan was among those indicted, as was Fazul. *United States of America vs. Usama Bin Laden, et al.*, Indictment S (9) 98 cr. 1023 (LBS), available at http://cns.miis.edu/pubs/reports/pdfs/binladen/indict.pdf. Both of these individuals remain at large. See Appendix B-I for an in-depth profile of Fazul.

[11] The truck had just crashed through the entrance barrier after being denied entry by security guards. Most of the casualties were local dancers performing a welcome dance for the tourists; three Israelis were killed. For a detailed picture of the devastating economic impact of this attack on the local victims' families and the surrounding area, see Susan Richards, "More trouble in paradise," *OpenDemocracy* (Internet), 17 December, 2002.

al-Qa'ida's attention shifted from the U.S. to Israel with the perceived vulnerability of both targets a clear incentive for their selection.[12]

Shortly thereafter, in June 2003, Kenyan authorities foiled a plot to attack the temporary U.S. Embassy in Nairobi using a truck-bomb and an explosive-laden plane. The plane was to be taken from Nairobi's Wilson Airport. This same airport acted as the staging base for al-Qa'ida operatives' entry flights to Somalia in the early 1990s.[13] One of the suspects arrested by Kenyan police indicated a number of the same individuals involved in the November 2002 attacks on the Paradise Hotel planned this failed attack.[14]

A final incident, not associated with al-Qa'ida, occurred on May 12, 2006, when three assailants fire-bombed the Nairobi offices of the Christian radio station Hope-FM after gaining entry to the station's premises by killing a private security guard. An inner security door prevented the attackers from reaching the upper floor where several staff members were hiding. Little is known about their identity, but their motives appear less opaque. The station's weekly program, "Jesus is the Way," which many believe was explicitly designed to win converts to Christianity from the Muslim community, had just been aired.[15] Although minor in scale, this attack marked Kenya's first entirely domestic case of Muslim-based terrorism.[16]

Despite two major al-Qa'ida attacks on Western targets in 1998 and 2002, the group's operatives continued to move about the country freely, establish businesses in Mombasa, Nairobi and Lamu, operate Islamic charities, find local brides, rent light aircraft to come and go from Somalia, hold meetings, communicate with al-Qa'ida figures outside the country, transfer money, stockpile weapons and engage in years of undetected reconnoitering of possible targets.[17] The next two sections explore the factors which make Kenya a relatively safe haven for al-Qa'ida.

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[12] The killing of a policeman in Mombasa on August 1, 2003 is also connected to these twin attacks. An alleged accomplice of Fazul (the latter wanted in connection with the making of the bombs used in both the U.S. Embassy attack and that of the Paradise Hotel; see Appendix B-I) set off a grenade as he was about to be seated in a police vehicle, killing a police officer. According to a local press report, he was Feisal Ali, "the son of a prominent businessman in Kenya" and a Yemeni national whose wife is described as of "Somali origin." Reportedly, Fazul and Ali, "escaped in the confusion." "US lauds Kenya's fight against terrorism," *East African Standard* (Internet Edition), August 5, 2003.

[13] Matthew Rosenberg, "Al-Qaida plotted to destroy U.S. Embassy in Kenya in June," *Associated Press*, October 24, 2003; Harmony, AFGP-2002-600104, 3.

[14] See Appendix C-III, the disallowed confession of Omar Said Omar, a suspect in the 2002 attacks. As a result of this information, the Embassy was closed during June 20-24, 2003. A U.S. "terrorist alert" had been issued the previous month when Fazul was reportedly sighted in Mombasa; Desmond Butter, "Threats and Responses: 5-Year Hunt Fails to Net Qaeda Suspect in Africa," *The New York Times*, June 14, 2003.

[15] According to reports and conversation with the station's staff, text-message cell-phone threats had been received at the station during the program's broadcast. In addition, several guests on the program were recent converts from Islam, who explained why they had decided to change faiths and encouraged Muslim listeners to do the same, mainly by extolling the Bible while disparaging the Koran.

[16] On the other hand, religious conflict–on occasion of a violent nature–is not unheard of in Kenya's recent past. David C. Sperling, "Islam and the Religious Dimension of Conflict in Kenya," paper presented at USAID Conference on Conflict and Conflict-Resolution in Kenya, Nairobi, May, 1998.

[17] Appendix B-I and Appendix C-III detail how Fazul, an indicted al-Qa'ida operative, operated in Kenya from 1998 until very recently.

III. Why Foreign Terrorists Like Kenya

Though few in number, the above attacks demonstrate Kenya's significance in terms of recent global terrorism. Moreover, the scale and complexity of attacks in Kenya strongly suggests a permissive environment exists for terror group operations. Understanding what it is about democratic, economically successful Kenya that makes it a relatively frequent target of jihadi terrorism is of paramount importance. A combination of international and domestic factors result in Kenya's targeting. Two specific international factors enhance Kenya's attractiveness. First, the country's foreign policy reflects a long history of close relations with the United States and Israel, as well as the United Kingdom–the former colonial power. Both the United States and Israel maintain a significant official and private-sector presence in Kenya.[18] In addition to current foreign policy issues, these historical relationships provide both an ideological justification for attacks in Kenya and a range of targets. The use of Mombasa as a supply-station for Western military operations and patrols in the Indian Ocean and Persian Gulf brought increased attention from al-Qa'ida beginning in the early 1990s.[19] During his infiltration into Somalia, Saif al-Adel illustrates his interests in a trip report along the Kenyan coast. Here he describes Mombasa as, "an island that teems with foreigners who stroll all over the place. It is said that the American army soldiers take their R&R there. Mombasa's security situation is terrible."[20]

Second, the country's geography puts it in close proximity to long-running conflicts in northern Uganda, Sudan, Ethiopia, Somalia, and Rwanda. Kenya's porous borders permitted al-Qa'ida operatives to enter and leave the country clandestinely. However, the expense of doing so may explain why most al-Qa'ida operatives traveled to and from Kenya using normal channels.[21] The exception was travel to Somalia. Throughout the early to mid-1990s, members of al-Qa'ida traveled to Somalia from Kenya by sea and land through the coastal route of Mombasa-Witu-Kiunga in Kenya to Ras Kamboni, Somalia.[22]

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[18] See Oded, *Islam & Politics in Kenya*; and Erik E. Otenyo, "New Terrorism, Toward an Explanation of Cases in Kenya," *African Security Review* 13: 3 (2004). Kenya also has a tiny but visible Jewish community. In recent years, some "surveillance" of the Nairobi synagogue has occurred but no specific threat of an attack has materialized. Author interview, Nairobi, March 23, 2007. In his confession statement, Omar refers to instructions from his al-Qa'ida mentors "to fight all Americans, British, Israelites and Australians," the latter presumably because of their contribution to current operations in Iraq (See Appendix C-III).

[19] Otenyo, "New Terrorism"; Johnnie Carson, "Kenya: The Struggle Against Terrorism," in Robert Rotberg, ed., *Battling Terrorism in the Horn of Africa* (Washington, D.C.: Brookings Institution Press, 2005), 173-192. Carson notes the U.S. military Access Agreement with Kenya for naval facilities there, in place since 1980.
Well before the 1998 attacks on the U.S. Embassy, al-Qa'ida operatives recorded their observation of American forces using the port city for "R & R," and their view of the security situation as being extremely lax. See Harmony, AFGP-2002-600111, 2.

[20] Harmony, AFGP-2002-600113, 3.

[21] As both the trial transcript from the 1998 embassy bombings trial and the Harmony documents show, al-Qa'ida operatives tended to move in and out of Kenya, with the exception of trips to Somalia, via commercial airlines. See "FBI Trial Transcripts," U.S. Federal Court, Southern District of New York. See also *United States of America vs. Usama Bin Laden, et al.*, S (9) 98 cr., 1023, 1301, 1302, 1305. Even though they had problems using commercial air travel with forged passports, traveling by land from Kenya does not appear to have been a common practice for foreign jihadis. See also Harmony, AFGP-2002-600104, AFGP-2002-600113, AFGP-2002-800081, AFGP-2002-800083, AFGP-2002-800088, and AFGP-2002-800089.

[22] Harmony, AFGP-2002-600104 and AFGP-2002-600113. In the words of former Kenya International Security Permanent Secretary Dave Mwangi (at least as of 2003), "our most serious vulnerability is that we are neighboring the Somali Republic, a land with no government" (Butler, *op. cit.*).

Turning to domestic factors, Kenya appears, at first glance, to be an unattractive environment for terrorists. In contrast to neighboring Somalia, Kenya boasts a relatively robust state equipped with a national police force, capable intelligence services, and a pervasive system of provincial administration.[23] Its overwhelmingly Christian population would also seem to bolster its capacity to deter terrorist activity.

Yet a number of domestic factors appear to trump such disincentives, making Kenya a more positive environment for al-Qa'ida. One is the presence of small but significant Arab, Arab-Swahili and Somali minorities concentrated in coastal Kenya, Nairobi and several other urban centers.[24] Some of these, especially those with Arab lines of descent, maintain closer ties with their home countries. Indeed, many residents of Mombasa, Malindi and Lamu hold stronger ties with the Arabian Peninsula than with Kenya's own interior.[25] These historical connections and the cover provided by a diverse population significantly reduce the visibility of foreign operatives.

Deep-rooted and continuing shared economic interests strengthen the coastal Kenya-Arab relationship still further.[26] The centuries-old maritime culture along the East African coast has given rise to many interlocking networks of kinship and commerce that the "modern" national borders of the Comoros, Zanzibar, mainland Tanzania, Kenya, Somalia, Oman and Yemen have not obliterated.[27] Further, modern transportation and communication that fosters rapid and detailed transmission of both political and religious information and messages significantly bolster this situation.[28] The net effect of all the above is that al-Qa'ida operatives have been able to employ a mixture of "mosque, madrasah, marriage"[29] and money to move about relatively freely while establishing more permanent local roots.[30]

Beyond these regional, historical and demographic factors, Kenya's weak governance climate makes a considerable contribution to the country's terrorist threat. Central here is its lack of effectiveness in investigating, arresting and convicting terrorists as well as more ordinary

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[23] Indeed, it may be this very stability, accommodating, among other things, an extremely high U.S. diplomatic interest and presence that has served to attract terrorists. See Carson, *op. cit.*, 178 and 192. On terrorists, see Otenyo, "New Terrorism," 8.

[24] North Eastern Province, inhabited almost entirely of ethnic Somalis, has apparently produced no al-Qa'ida outposts or associates, possibly due to the relative dearth of attractive targets.

[25] Carson, "Kenya," 186.

[26] Such shared interests sometimes overlapped with terrorist connections. Omar Said Omar had a "friend" from his home city of Mombasa (Issa Osman Issa) who "had relatives in Somalia." The friend took him to Mdoa where the two set up a lobster business in 1998. "Statement Under Inquiry of Omar Said Omar," Recorded by Superintendant John Mulalulu, Kenya Anti-Terrorist Police Unit, n.d. (but almost certainly August, 2003). See Appendix C-III.

[27] On historical ties, see R. A. Obudho, "Urbanization," in J. Hoorveg, D. Foeken and R. A. Obudho, eds., *Kenya Coast Handbook* (Munster: Lit Verlag, 2000), 85-97.

[28] The influence of external Islamic teaching is described in Mohamed Bakari, "The New '*Ulama* in Kenya," in Mohamed Bakari and Saad S. Yahya, eds., *Islam in Kenya: Proceedings of the National Seminar on Contemporary Islam in Kenya* (Nairobi: Mewa Publications, 1995), 168-193.

[29] See Andrew England, "FBI's most wanted leader of al-Qaida cell indicted for U.S. Embassy bombings, escaped," *Associated Press*, June 14, 2004.

[30] Recall here the case of one of the first al-Qa'ida operatives in Kenya, Mohamed Sadeek Odeh (see below), a Palestinian from Jordan who arrived in the mid-1990s. He settled in Witu, Lamu District. He later married there and set up a seafood supply business, obtaining a supply contract at Nairobi's 5-star Grand Regency Hotel. He was arrested in Pakistan the day after the 1998 U.S. Embassy bombing, having flown out of Kenya the day before, and later convicted in connection with that attack at a trial in New York.

criminals. While mundane bureaucratic ineptitude no doubt accounts for some of this, the general "culture of impunity" that has been said to reign in Kenya may be equally responsible.[31] For example, not a single (credible) conviction has been obtained with regard to the several assassinations and mysterious deaths of leading political figures.[32] The same applies to the "mass" killings of the 1990s that killed 1,500 and displaced several hundred thousand, as well as to the countless victims of torture in various detention centers and police cells, beginning after the failed Air Force coup attempt of 1982 and continuing well into the 1990s.[33] The current government shelved recommendations from a recent Presidential Commission for a "transitional-justice" process of exposure, confession and national healing.[34] In addition, despite local and diplomatic demands, the Kenyan government provided no explanation for either the March 2006 police raid on the offices of *The Standard* newspaper and its sister company Kenya Television Network, or for the breach of security at Nairobi's international airport several months later. At the airport, the same pair of mysterious "Armenian brothers" who led *The Standard* raid– allegedly business partners of Kibaki family members–stormed the Customs area to insure that associates arriving from abroad would not have their luggage searched.[35]

This history of impunity extends in particular to those involved in large-scale corruption. Kenya repeatedly finds itself among the most corrupt countries in the world. According to Transparency International, bribery "costs Kenyans about US $1 billion each year, yet more than half live on less than US $2 per day."[36] No senior public figure in either politics or the civil service has ever been convicted, let alone gone to prison, for abuse of office.[37] The current government's own former anti-corruption "czar" now resides in self-imposed exile in the UK, having feared for his life as he attempted to investigate corruption among the very government he was serving.[38] Corruption also makes it easier for terrorists to use airports and other official

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[31] Joel D. Barkan, "Kenya After Moi," *Foreign Affairs* 83:1 (2004): 87-101.

[32] Prominent examples are: Pia Gama Pinto (a key advisor to Kenya's first vice-president, Oginga Odinga, in 1965); Tom Mboya (Minister for Economic Development, in 1969); J. M. Kariuki ('renegade' MP and President Kenyatta's former Personal Secretary, in 1975); and Robert Ouko (Minister for Foreign Affairs, in 1990).

[33] Peter M. Kagwanja, *Killing the Vote: State-Sponsored Violence and Flawed Elections in Kenya* (Nairobi: Kenya Human Rights Commission, 1998); Republic of Kenya, "Report of the Judicial Commission appointed to inquire into tribal clashes in Kenya" (Nairobi: Government Printer, 2002); People Against Torture, *Never Again: Profiles in Courage* (Nairobi: People Against Torture, 2005).

[34] Republic of Kenya, "Report of the Task Force on the Establishment of a Truth Justice and Reconciliation Commission" (Nairobi: Government Printer, 2003). The commission's recommendations were reportedly never even brought to Cabinet for discussion.

[35] The police raids involved the roughing-up of staff, destruction and theft of valuable equipment, and burning of newspapers. See John Kamau and Cyrus Ombati, "Armenians: The Inside Story." *Sunday Standard*, June 11, 2006; "Artur brothers arrested after airport gun drama," *Saturday Standard*, June 10, 2006.

[36] *Transparency International Corruption Perceptions Index 2006*, 3 (6 November 2006). Available at: http://www.transparency.org/policy_research/surveys_indices/cpi/2006.

[37] Ironically, al-Qa'ida operatives in Kenya during the early 1990s complained about the costs imposed on them by corruption: "Kenya is not a good place … as the cost of living is high, plus corruption is dangerously prevalent" (Harmony, AFGP-2002-800597, 7).

[38] John Githongo, former Executive Director of Transparency International-Kenya. For details on corruption issues during Kibaki's first two years in office, see S. Kichamu Akivaga, "Anti-Corruption Politics in the Post-KANU Era," in Ben Sihanya, ed., *Control of Corruption in Kenya: Legal-Political Dimensions, 2001-2004* (Nairobi: Claripress, 2005), 242-283. Regarding the Kibaki government's failure (so far) to hold to account former President Moi or anyone connected with his 24-year rule, see Thomas P. Wolf "Accountability or Immunity?: Daniel Toroitich arap Moi, Kenya's First Retired President," in Roger Southall and Henning Melber, eds., *Legacies of Power: Leadership Change and Former Presidents in African Politics*, (Upsalla: Nordic Africa Institute, 2006) 197-

border points and to obtain identity papers and travel documents.[39] Testimony in the 1998 Embassy bombing trial revealed that Mohamed Sadeek Odeh used fake travel documents obtained at a government Immigration office to leave Kenya the night before the attack.[40] Omar Said Omar, one of those allegedly involved in the 2002 coast attacks, also claimed he used a fake Ethiopian passport to get back into Kenya in December 2001 after completing his al-Qa'ida weapons training in Mogadishu.[41]

Corruption may also have played a part in the failure to arrest and/or prosecute non-al-Qa'ida terrorists and other international criminals. Two examples stand out. The first is Abdallah Ocalan, for many years the leader of the Kurdistan Workers Party (PKK), the main Kurdish rebel group. According to reports, a foreign security team arrested him while he was being escorted to Nairobi's airport to board a "safe flight" out of the country. Reports alleged that two senior figures in the Moi government received $40 million from the Turkish government for allowing this.[42] The second example is Felicien Kabuga, previously Rwanda's wealthiest private businessman and today its most wanted genocide fugitive.[43] Despite a large U.S. government bounty of $5 million for his arrest, Kabuga reportedly made his home in Kenya for many years with the knowledge and support of senior figures in first the Moi government, and now that of his successor Kibaki.[44]

The examples above, taken together with Kenya's weak record in apprehending, holding and prosecuting high-profile terrorism suspects,[45] apparently serves as a serious disincentive for Kenyans contemplating going to the authorities, whether with regard to issues of general "public safety"[46] or indeed, their own problems.[47] A final governance issue that also seems to contribute to the government's inadequacies in this area, is, ironically, a reflection of the recent expansion

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[39] See Harmony, AFGP-2002-800611, for an example of a Kenyan document seized in Afghanistan.

[40] *U.S. v. Usama Bin Laden et al.*, S(9) 98 Cr. 1023, S.D.N.Y, Indictment, 29-31.

[41] See his confession-statement in Appendix C-III.

[42] Author interview, Nairobi, October 12, 2006. Another analyst claimed that Turkey paid an unnamed private mercenary group to capture Ocalan. Eric Margolis, "Freedom, Not Fake Autonomy for Kosovo," February, 1999. Available at www.ericmargolis.com/archives/1999/02.

[43] He is also said to have been one of the main sponsors of the Hutu *Interahamwe* killing-squads who, by some accounts, were involved in the pre-election killing-raids at the Kenya coast in August, 1997; Human Rights Watch, *Playing With Fire: Weapons Proliferation, Political Violence, and Human Rights in Kenya* (New York: Human Rights Watch, 2002), 55-56.

[44] "Disguised Kabuga still hiding in Kenya," *Weekly Citizen*, 10:14 (14-19 March 2007): 2; Evans Wafula, *Africa News*, February 21, 2007; Dedan Walsh, "Informant killed in failed sting to trap genocide suspect," *The Independent*, January 22, 2003.

[45] The case of Fazul's escape a day after his June 2004 arrest in Mombasa is relevant here (England, *op. cit.*), as is the acquittal of all suspects in the twin 2002 Coast attacks. See "A Year Later, Two Mombasa Attacks Suspects Released," *IslamOnline.net*, Article 2,November 28, 2003. See also Republic of Kenya, Criminal Division, High Court of Kenya, "Ruling," Criminal Case No. 91 of 2003, June 8, 2005.

[46] Whether the recent arrest of a high-profile al-Qa'ida suspect in Mombasa marks a change in this regard remains to be seen. In this case, a foreign-exchange dealer pressed a "panic" button because of "nervous behavior" of the customer in front of him. See "Kenyans make arrest in 2002 Israeli plane, hotel attacks," CNN.com (AP), March 19, 2006. Identified in this report as Saleh Ali Nabhan, it later emerged he was Mohamed Abdul Malik, identified by Omar as the driver of the vehicle involved in the missile attack on the Israeli airliner in 2002. See Appendix C-III, and below.

[47] A nationally representative survey undertaken on behalf of the government found that only 40 percent of the victims of all types of crime report these to the police, for a variety of reasons. Republic of Kenya, Ministry of Justice and Constitutional Affairs, "GJLOS National Household Baseline Survey," 2006, 49.

of the country's "democratic space." Kenya returned to competitive, multi-party politics in 1992 after more than three decades of either de facto or de jure one-party rule. Over the last three national elections, intense competition for votes in both parliamentary and presidential contests reflects in part the country's highly fluid partisan political landscape. According to Kenyan election law, victory in presidential contests requires a candidate obtain both an overall plurality and a minimum of 25 percent of the vote in at least five of Kenya's eight provinces. Muslims currently hold a great deal of collective political "clout" as they constitute at least 90 percent of inhabitants in North Eastern Province and over a quarter of the population in Coast Province. Because any incumbent or would-be government can ill-afford to ignore Muslim voters, counterterrorism policies that antagonize this section of the population are unlikely to be pursued with anything but considerable reluctance.

This issue of political sensitivity may well have influenced the government's response to one of the attacks described above: that on the HOPE-FM station in May 2006. Notwithstanding its clearly religious overtones, the official government spokesman, Dr. Alfred Mutua, called the attack "normal thuggery," going on to claim the attackers were the "same gang" that had been "molesting motorists" in the area, a view immediately disputed by the Minister for Information.[48] Although Mutua simultaneously promised "a thorough investigation," nothing more has been heard of the matter.[49] In this context, one Western diplomat may be justified in his view that, "even if the Kenyan government were seriously committed to apprehending and convicting these terrorists, whether they are foreigners or locals, it fears antagonizing the entire Muslim community."[50]

One particular element of the reform program with which the current Kibaki government came to power appears particularly relevant to terrorism. In July 2003, new rules of evidence were established for criminal trials setting stricter requirements for the admission of confessions as evidence in court. Specifically, the rules require that these confessions be made before judges and magistrates (and only before the former, in the case of murder), rather than before police officers, who were said to commonly use torture. This new requirement resulted in the prosecution's main evidence in the 2002 Coast attacks case, a confession made to the police by one of the suspects during the first week of August, being thrown out after it was challenged by the defense attorneys.[51]

IV. The Wider Context: The Muslim Situation in Kenya

Previously, we noted that foreign jihadis can move relatively unnoticed and may receive at least some sympathy for their objectives from certain parts of the Kenyan population.[52] This section takes a more focused look at the political character of Kenya's Muslims, especially at the coast. Much of this population nurses a profound sense of grievance against the Kenyan state. While

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[48] Cyrus Ombati, "Hooded thugs strike radio station, kill guard," *Sunday Standard*, May 14, 2006.
[49] In this case, it was reported that several Christian and Muslim leaders were brought together by the Mombasa police to "deal with this matter quietly." Exactly what was resolved remains unclear. Author interview, Nairobi, 14 March 2007.
[50] Author interview, Nairobi, February 20, 2007.
[51] The law came into effect on July 25. How soon the police learned about this change, and whether during the course of the trial any attempt was made to have the accused re-state this confession in accordance with the new rules, is not known; for other aspects of this issue, see a copy of this confession in Appendix C-III.
[52] Certain portions of the population may support the ends but not necessarily the means of foreign terrorists.

most assert that terrorists tend not to be especially disadvantaged, there is some connection between such grievances and support for terrorism in cross-national studies.[53] At the very least, such disaffection increases the probability that foreign jihadis will be tolerated.

The poverty affecting so many Kenyans combined with the history of the coast in relation to the rest of Kenya comprises the root of this disaffection.[54] Its foundation lies in the "status inversion" that an important section of the coastal community experienced following the transition from colonial rule to independence.[55] To simplify a very complex reality, its Arab and Arab-Swahili leadership went from being highly privileged under the British, to being subjects of a largely alien, up-country, and non-Muslim political elite.[56] A critical aspect of this reversal of relative status was the aversion to Christian mission-dominated education, so that Muslims became, in retrospect, "the first to read (i.e., the Koran), but the last to go to school." This placed Muslims at a distinct disadvantage in the post-independence competition for formal employment in both the public and private sectors.[57]

More recently, the opening up of the political space since the return to multi-party politics in 1992 has had an ambiguous effect on Kenya's Muslims. On the one hand, it led to increased participation in public life through attendance at public meetings and demonstrations, the initiation of civic education programs, and contributions to the effort to revise or replace the country's constitution.[58] Such opportunities give Muslims greater influence in national political life, and thus should reduce the frustrations of exclusion and marginalization. However, given the community's inferior competitive power, especially in the economic sphere, it is unclear whether increased "voice" will lead to more radicalism as a consequence of the frustration of popular demands, or more support for the current system.[59]

That some Kenyan Muslim leaders, such as Mombasa Imam Sheikh Ali Shee, call bin Laden "a hero" should not be taken as a sign that a radicalization process that legitimizes

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[53] For a good recent piece of research on grievances, poverty, and support for terrorism see C. Christine Fair and Bryan Shepherd, "Who Supports Terrorism? Evidence from Fourteen Muslim Countries," *Studies in Conflict and Terrorism* 29 (2006): 51-74.

[54] Over half of the population is said to remain below the official poverty line.

[55] Donal B. Cruise O'Brien, "Coping With the Christians: The Muslim Predicament in Kenya," in Holger Bernt Hansen and Michael Twaddle, eds., *Religion and Politics in East Africa*, (London: James Currey, 1995), 204, 201-2.

[56] Thomas P. Wolf, "Contemporary Politics," in Hoorveg et al., *op. cit.*, 129-155.

[57] Some have also argued that the academic burden of following two courses of study at the same time (one in school, the other in the madrasa) also constitutes an impediment to secular educational success.

[58] Mohamed Bakari, "A Place at the Table: The Political Integration of Kenyan Muslims, 1992-2003," paper presented at the International Conference on "The Political Economy of Kenya," St. Anthony's College, Oxford, June, 2004. This is so notwithstanding the government of Kenya's refusal in the early 1990s to register the coast-based Islamic Party of Kenya that nevertheless found opportunities to determine a number of races through an alliance with another (non-sectarian) political party. Thomas P. Wolf, "Contemporary Politics," in Hoorveg et al., *op. cit.*, 141-143.

[59] Both currents were clearly visible in the recent constitutional reform debates concerning a number of issues, including both the secular one of devolution, and the religious one of the position of the qadis' courts (i.e., the *sharia* courts).

violence is winning out.[60] In the view of one Western scholar who has spent considerable time among the coast's Muslim community:

> Bin Laden may have garnered admiration in Tanzania and Kenya, but he has not won the sympathy of Muslims…. [H]e symbolizes for East African Muslims the resistance against the global political and economic hegemony of the United States. Bin Laden is known as someone who has dared to stand up on his own against the world's No. 1 superpower. The people praise his courage, but not his actions. They admire him as a pop icon, but not as a "holy warrior." How strongly Bin Laden's Islamic legitimization for terror is rejected in the East African region is reflected in the fact that Kenyan and Tanzanian Muslims continue to argue that the true perpetrators of the World Trade Center attack could never be Muslims, as Islam prohibits such violence.[61]

Few Kenyan Muslim leaders or their followers appear willing to condone violence.[62] Indeed, they see it as inimical to their individual and collective purposes, if not simply morally wrong. Yet the perceived lack of integrity in the country's security and judicial apparatus, combined with an antipathy to being seen as a partner with "the enemies of Islam" makes a true partnership with the government on the terrorism issue even more problematic.

Despite the basically pacifistic inclinations of most of the population, the Kenyan coastal Islamic "sea" is certainly one that a few stealthy al-Qa'ida zealots used to good advantage. Taking this portrait into account with the inciting impact of external issues,[63] one might ask why so few attacks have occurred in Kenya and why so few Kenyans have been involved; rather than why they have occurred at all.[64]

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[60] Ironically, Shee is among a select group of Kenyans selected as "Democracy Fellows" during the 1990s by a USAID-funded study program in the U.S. aimed at acquainting current and potential future leaders with the institutions and processes of American democracy.

[61] Rudiger Seeseman, "East African Muslims After 9/11," paper presented at the African Studies Association Annual Conference, New Orleans, November 17-20, 2004. At the same time, it could be argued that an even greater distancing from at least the methods employed by al-Qa'ida would be needed before these same people were to accept that the perpetrators of these attacks *were* Muslims, and then disown them.

[62] The recent interviews transcribed in Appendix C-II provide a portrait of Kenyan Muslims' views on relevant issues. Comparing these interviews with the results of other surveys of this section of the Kenyan population contributes to a more accurate and nuanced understanding of Muslim grievances in Kenya.

[63] Oded notes three factors he considers more salient here: the oil boom of the 1970s and concomitant petro-dollars in the hands of Arab/Muslim benefactors for supporting communal causes throughout the Islamic world; the 1979 Iranian revolution with its impact on Islamic expansionist activity generally; and Kenya's own more recent process of democratization, in which the mobilizing of public support behind all issues becomes a more valuable "good." Oded, *op. cit.*, 8. Other factors include the ongoing Israel-Palestinian conflict and the highly visible (and controversial) use of American military power in such settings as Kuwait (1991), Afghanistan (2001-present), and Iraq (2003-present).

[64] For an analysis of this question with regard to the U.S. itself, see John Mueller, "Is There Still a Terrorist Threat?: The Myth of the Omnipresent Enemy," *Foreign Affairs* 85:5 (2006): 2-8.

V. The US-Kenya Anti-Terror Partnership: Protecting Kenyans, or Targeting Kenya's Muslims?

United States counterterrorism efforts in Kenya expanded significantly after the 1998 Embassy bombing.[65] In addition to joint military training exercises in North Eastern Province and in the Coast Province's Lamu District, U.S.-Kenyan counterterrorism efforts include: the establishment of the National Security Intelligence Service with support from the U.S. Anti-Terrorism Assistance (ATA) Program; creation of the Anti-Terrorism Police Unit (ATPU) in 1998, a Joint Terrorism Task Force (JTTF) and the National Counter-Terrorism Center (NCTC) in 2003;[66] and the National Security Advisory Committee (NSAC) in 2004. Altogether, these measures aimed to improve Kenyan capacity to investigate incidents, identify operatives and coordinate relevant work across agencies involved in counterterrorism.[67] Additional measures include participation in the U.S. Terrorist Interdiction Program (TIP), which provides technology to screen travelers arriving at airports and border crossings. With support from the Federal Aviation Administration, Kenya has improved airport security and worked with Uganda and Tanzania to harmonize regional aviation security regulations. Kenya also ratified or acceded to all twelve United Nations conventions on terrorism and continues to submit regular reports to the UN Counter-Terrorism Committee. Finally, beyond its bilateral cooperation with the United States, Kenya continues as an active member of the African Union. In this endeavor, Kenya reaffirmed its commitment to the 1999 Organization of African Unity Convention on Preventing and Combating Terrorism and established the African Centre for Studies and Research on Terrorism.

However impressive this list may appear, it is not clear how deep the Kenyan government's participation in the "War on Terror" can actually be. Kenyan leaders must take into account a key issue that goes beyond "security": their political standing among their own citizens, both Muslim and non-Muslim.[68] Close cooperation with America creates serious political liabilities stemming from a number of grievances.[69] First, the periodic and visible presence of FBI agents and U.S. Marines along the coast has left many Muslims feeling targeted by U.S. policy. Recent U.S. military actions just over the Kenyan border in Somalia, combined

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[65] Beth Elize Whitaker, "Reluctant Partners: The United States and Kenya in the War on Terror," paper presented at the International Studies Association Annual Conference, Chicago, February 28-March 3, 2007; Carson, *op. cit.*, 176-80.

[66] The JTTF basically ceased to function after the Kenya Commissioner of Police, General Hussein Ali, removed the Anti-Terrorist Police Unit from it in 2005, to the dismay of American and several other diplomatic missions. Author interview, Nairobi, March 24, 2007.

[67] It is likely that absent these steps, the planned June 2003 attack on the U.S. Embassy would not have been foiled. A Western diplomat who has followed more recent anti-terrorist efforts of the Kenyan government was unimpressed with them, though he was unable to explain their general failure in terms of a single factor. "More likely," he said, "it is a combination of (1) turf-struggles between competing bureaucratic (and thus financial) interests and thus an inability to concentrate decision-making authority effectively in one place, (2) incompetence in terms of insufficient resources, and (3) corruption." Author interview, Nairobi, February 9, 2007.

[68] In a recent nationally representative public opinion poll, the government received a combined positive rating of 42 percent ("very satisfied"; "satisfied") on its handling of terrorism issues. This constituted 9th place out of the 15 policy-areas so ranked. "March SPEC Poll," The Steadman Group, Nairobi, 2007.

[69] Much of the following material is taken from Beth Elize Whitaker, "Reluctant Partners: The United States and Kenya in the War on Terror."

with the Kenyan government's unsympathetic response to Somalis seeking refuge in Kenya, reinforce this sentiment.[70]

Second, there is lingering bitterness about the level of compensation for the Kenyan victims of the 1998 Embassy bombing. This relates to the more general conviction among Kenyans that their country has become a terrorist target specifically because of its close relationship with the United States. Reflecting this belief, 5,000 Kenyans filed a class action lawsuit in a U.S. district court in 2002 seeking compensation for their losses.[71]

Third, the focus on terrorism angers Kenyans who see their country suffering from a variety of ills. Of these ills, terrorism places low on their list of concerns.[72] The U.S. State Department's frequent travel advisories reinforce this grievance. Many Kenyans see them as economic punishment to their tourist industry, now the country's leading foreign-exchange earner, while serving to divide Kenyans on a sectarian basis.[73]

Fourth, the perceived hand of the U.S. in the Kenyan government's efforts to steer unpopular anti-terrorism legislation through the National Assembly has not made open cooperation easier. Many Kenyans viewed the initial version of the bill as an effort to roll back vital human rights gains of recent years. Even after heated protests from both Muslim and non-Muslim human rights organizations led to the removal of its most abrasive provisions, resistance to the bill remains sufficient to deter the government from backing it with any real commitment.[74] Nevertheless, the association of such legislation with U.S. policy damages the credibility of both the American and Kenyan governments.

The final issue concerns just how much information about the two countries' anti-terrorist efforts should be made public. American officials seem inclined towards more disclosure than their Kenyan counterparts. Given that any successes achieved constitute clear political gains for Washington, this is not surprising. However, when Kenya is seen to be "caving-in" to pressure by violating Kenyan law, the cost is considerable. The recent capture of M.A. Malik, a participant in the 2002 Paradise Hotel attack, provides an illustrative example of this phenomenon. Reportedly, Malik's transfer to American custody for relocation to Guantanamo

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[70] Numerous press reports detailed both the military action, the plight of the refugees, and the public (including Muslim) reaction. These were expressed by several speakers and numerous members of the audience at a recent public event. Kenya National Commission of Human Rights' forum, Hilton Hotel, Nairobi, February 9, 2007. Out of 76 cases tracked, 17 of these refugees are known to have been "deported" to Somalia (most to unknown fates both there and in Ethiopia to which a number were subsequently sent), with the remainder still in Kenyan custody, as of the end of January ("Somali Crisis: Arrests Data", Muslim Human Rights Forum, Nairobi, n.d.).

[71] The suit was thrown out on the grounds that the claimants had provided no proof that the U.S. was responsible or had violated a specific law or policy. Similar unhappiness remains among those affected by the Kikambala hotel bombing, though in this case it is directed at Israel. Author interview, Majengo, Kikambala, March 8, 2007.

[72] Beth Elize Whitaker, "Reluctant Partners," 23.

[73] Salim Lone, "Terror alerts provide cause to alienate some communities," *Daily Nation*, March 9, 2007, 11. The advisories do not seem to be having much of an effect; according to just-released figures, 78,000 Americans arrived in Kenya last year, an all-time high; Statement by Minister of Foreign Affairs, R. Tuju, on the Nation TV (NTV) program, "On the Spot," 8 March, 2007.

[74] Whitaker, "Reluctant Partners," 11-13. Ironically, according to a prominent human rights lawyer-activist, it is the very absence of such a law that, however onerous, has encouraged even more deleterious consequences, as the Kenyan police operate "totally outside current law" as they pursue "a U.S.-driven agenda." Author interview, Nairobi, March 9, 2007.

Bay came with an understanding that the transfer would not be made public. Malik's arrival in Cuba became headline news triggering considerable outrage in Kenya.[75] Likewise, Malik's arrest reportedly led to the discovery of plans to stage an attack in Mombasa during the international cross-country championships to be held there a few days later.[76] The U.S. Embassy felt obliged to announce the possibility of "a serious terrorist threat" during the forthcoming event. However, Kenya's Internal Security Minister, with his eyes clearly on the international gallery associated with the event, rejected the warning as without justification.[77]

Altogether, such issues underscore the divergence of interests between Kenya and the U.S.[78] As Whitaker points out, the U.S., in deed if not in word, "has made clear that its top priority in Kenya is counter-terrorism."[79] However, most Kenyans seek a combination of improved security regarding "normal" criminal activity, economic development, and further consolidation of their fledgling democracy.[80] Even when U.S. support for these other goals is forthcoming, the American focus on counterterrorism encourages cynical Kenyans to see any investment in these areas as diplomatic-donor "bribery."[81]

VI. Different Games in the War on Terror

One way to think about the War on Terrorism in Kenya is as a set of three related games. In one game, the players are the U.S. and Kenyan governments. For the U.S., the game is about undermining al-Qa'ida and its local adjuncts. In Kenya, this entails convincing the Kenyan authorities and ordinary people of the importance of American anti-terrorism objectives. For Kenya, this game is more problematic. On the one hand, Kenya seeks to maximize the material benefits derived from its partnership with the United States which they employ for well-established neo-patrimonial purposes.[82] At the same time, however, Kenya seeks to minimize three accompanying costs: (1) the loss of political support from its citizens in an increasingly

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[75] "Family demands suspect's return: Pentagon confirms man in Cuba as US envoy in Nairobi alleges speculation," *Daily Nation*, March 29, 2007.

[76] Author interview, international news agency representative, Nairobi, March 26, 2007.

[77] "Kenya indignant over U.S. terror alert ahead of global sports event," *People's Daily Online* (Xinhau), March 8, 2007. The attack plans were never made public. The fact that no incident occurred made the Americans look unduly alarmist, and thus uncaring about the positive publicity Kenya would gain from the successful holding of this event. However, the possibility of an attack might have been quite likely. See Appendix C-IV for an account of Muslim grievances and its relation to this event.

[78] Such divergence has not gone completely unrecognized. The U.S. military commander in Djibouti is reported as having resolved "never to use the word 'terror' in meetings with African security heads." Rather, "he speaks only about 'insecurity' and 'extremism' when he meets such officials." Author interview, Nairobi, March 23, 2007.

[79] Whitaker, "Reluctant Partners," 23.

[80] In a recent national survey undertaken on behalf of the Ministry of Justice's Governance, Justice, Law and Order Sector (GJLOS) program, not one of the 12,442 respondents mentioned terrorism as a threat, even in Coast Province. This includes all responses grouped in the "other" category as well. Republic of Kenya, Ministry of Justice and Constitutional Affairs, GJLOS National Household Baseline Survey, 2006, 56. See the largely similar results in Volker Krause and Eric E. Otenyo, "Terrorism and the Kenyan Public," *Studies in Conflict and Terrorism* 28:2 (2005): 99-112.

[81] Whitaker, "Reluctant Partners," 5.

[82] Kenya was one of only 5 states to receive special training through the Anti-Terrorism Assistance Program in the 2005 budget. The program divided $88 million among these states in 2005 and $122 million was requested for the program in the 2006 budget. Kenya was the only country in the Horn to receive these funds. See http://www.state.gov/documents/organization/60647.pdf [accessed March 31, 2007]. On this phenomenon more generally in Third World states, see, Christopher Clapham, *Third World Politics: An Introduction* (London: Croom Helm, 1985).

competitive electoral environment;[83] (2) their higher profile as a legitimate target which accompanies close association with the U.S.; and (3) the concern that too much of a "buy-in" to terrorism concerns will hurt the vital tourism industry.[84]

Less visibly, reducing cooperation with American anti-terrorism efforts may also be a card to be played with regard to other distant issues. The Commissioner of Police in 2005 pulled the Anti-Terrorist Police Unit out of the Joint Terrorism Task Force. Some saw this as a jab at the U.S. and its allies who were pressuring the Kibaki government to move firmly against corruption involving some of his closest associates.[85] Kenya successfully parlayed its centrality in the War on Terror into other diplomatic advantages. In mid-2005, Kenya refused to ratify a bilateral immunity agreement promising not to turn American citizens over to the International Criminal Court in The Hague. In response, the Bush administration initially mandated substantial cuts to military and governance programs in Kenya. Later, the U.S. restored much of the money in late 2006.[86] As these examples show, the Global War on Terror provides a most welcome resource-pool. However, Kenya's incentives in that war are not fully aligned with those of the U.S.

The second game occurs between the Kenyan government and the Muslim community.[87] For its part, the Government would prefer to avoid antagonizing its Muslim citizens. Beyond the obvious electoral disadvantages, officials fear that doing so will make Kenyan Muslims more sympathetic to the terrorists' agenda(s). For their part, significant sections of the Muslim leadership see the often-clumsy efforts of the Government's security apparatus and its partnership with the U.S. more generally as a useful means of bolstering their own status as defenders of Islam and Muslims' human rights. That no Kenyan has yet been convicted on any charge directly related to the terrorist attacks that have occurred makes such posturing much more credible.[88] At the same time, playing the role of sectarian defender attracts applause and valuable resources from certain philanthropic individuals, organizations and even governments

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[83] With the opposition quick to call for greater attention to national pride and "sovereignty" in Kenya's relations with foreign powers, aggressively supporting American counterterrorism efforts risks alienating several important voting blocs. Non-Muslim aspirants are equally adept at taking advantage of such grievances, as opposition presidential aspirant M. Mudavadi did recently at a public rally in Lamu Town. Public Rally, Orange Democratic Movement-Kenya, Lamu Town, March 4, 2007.

[84] It's not clear that close U.S. allies are targeted more often, but this is certainly the perception in Kenya, especially in light of the Madrid and London attacks which appeared to be clearly linked to support for U.S. policies.

[85] This came in the wake of anti-corruption "czar" Githongo's flight into exile. "Clay's Parting Shot," *The People Daily*, July 2, 2005. Indeed, some well-placed individuals even viewed the government's "mis-handling" of the Mombasa/Kikambala attacks' trial as a "lesson to the Americans" in these terms. Author interview, Nairobi, March 26, 2007. More generally, such distaste for the West's governance agenda has been evident in efforts to develop ties with China. Leading government figures have recently boasted that Western donors' contribution to the Kenyan budget has been reduced to only about 5 percent.

[86] Whitaker, *op. cit.*, 15-17; *Africa Research Bulletin* 16639.

[87] Although there is some overlap, there are actually three largely separate games involved: with the ethnic Somali population of North Eastern Province, the mainly ethnic Somali (and Somali refugee) population of the Eastleigh section of Nairobi, and the coastal Swahili and Arab communities, both of which have their own important boundaries/divisions. See Appendix C-IV for a Mombasa example of the rhetoric employed by Muslim leaders in their exchanges with the government.

[88] This failure made it possible for one Nairobi-based Muslim NGO official to claim, for example, that "we did our own investigation of the Mombasa attacks and found that no Kenyans were involved." (Author interview, Nairobi, March 2, 2007).

in the wider Islamic world.[89] Taken together, this implies that Kenya's Muslim terrorism threat-level is not without some benefit to its Muslim leaders (whether or not this is consciously recognized as such). That is, the Government's propensity to engage in or allow periodic provocative actions provides various opportunities for them to mobilize their followers.[90]

The U.S. and Kenyan Muslims play a third game. American intelligence forces are presumably trying to penetrate certain sections of the country's Muslim communities so as to discover and apprehend terrorists and their sympathizers. Meanwhile other American agencies seek to mollify the Muslim population at the coast and elsewhere, through a combination of community aid projects, meetings with local leaders and more general public pronouncements.[91] Such efforts appear to be generally appreciated. Most Muslims are not averse to receiving material assistance from the U.S.[92] At the same time, as with the Kenya government, Muslim leaders know they can gain extra points among their followers and foreign benefactors by "standing up" to U.S. actions when provided with opportunities that encourage them to do so.

In each game, there are strong reasons why the best outcome from a counterterrorism perspective is unlikely to occur. However, some repackaging of desirable policies can reduce the incentives for Kenyan leaders, both in the government and in Muslim communities, to behave differently than the U.S. would like. In Chapter 5, we will outline some recommendations the U.S. might consider when designing policy with regard to Kenya.

VII: Conclusion: A Fragile Present and an Uncertain Future

Kenya's location on the map of international terrorism is not likely to change in the foreseeable future. Kenya remains only peripheral in al-Qa'ida's grand scheme, seen more as a battlefield than a future stronghold. The goal in Kenya seems limited to attacking symbols of "enemy" power and conducting logistical operations. Notwithstanding such modest aims, their capacity for attacks remains considerable, especially when compared with other Horn of Africa settings. Kenya provides attractive and numerous Western targets in a vulnerable security and governance environment. With rampant corruption, porous borders, weak investigative and prosecutorial systems, and a population within which foreign jihadis can move with a fair degree of anonymity while finding some sympathy for their causes, Kenya hosts all the necessary elements for a terrorist safe haven.

While investment by the United States can increase the Kenyan government's counterterrorism capacity, its commitment to this agenda remains somewhat equivocal. The central dilemma is that the incentives of the two governments are not aligned. As described in Chapter 2, efforts to combat terrorism generate a considerable supply of resources for the Kenyan government. Because aid appears to have been pegged to the perceived terrorism risk

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[89] Not all such philanthropists feel this way. One group in the Gulf was hesitant to help fund a new Islamic University at the coast without U.S. Embassy assurances that this would not be seen as support for "Islamic radicalism" in Kenya. Author interview, Nairobi, August 4, 2006.

[90] See Appendix C-IV for a copy of a letter from the Council of Imams in Mombasa to the Kenyan Minister of Defense.

[91] Most recently, this involved arranging discussion-meetings between New York Times analyst and author Thomas Friedman and various Muslim leaders. Author interview, April 3, 2007.

[92] Several civic leaders and other respondents in Lamu recently expressed nothing but satisfaction with the projects undertaken by U.S. Marines in the area which mainly involve physical repairs/improvements to local schools and health centers. Author interviews: Mombasa, March 8, 2007; Lamu, March 5, 2007.

rather than to the level of counterterrorism effort, Kenyan officials have incentives to tolerate a low level of terrorism. Moreover, close cooperation with the U.S. entails significant costs for the Kenyan government.[93] Terrorism is simply a much higher priority for the U.S. and certain other Western diplomatic missions in Kenya than it is for Kenyans themselves.[94] For them, insecurity, disease, and above all, poverty are the most ominous threats. Addressing these threats more aggressively may pay great counterterrorism dividends by reducing the political costs of supporting U.S. policy and thereby aligning the preferences of the Kenyan and American governments which would also be most welcomed by the Kenyan people.

Even if few Kenyans have joined the jihadi cause (some have), others are likely to continue to do so. But this seems to depend much more upon issues and contacts elsewhere than inside Kenya itself. To this extent, efforts to ameliorate the conditions in which Kenyan Muslims find themselves may bear little fruit in terms of direct deterrence. Similarly, it is not clear whether socio-economic improvement per se would eliminate the kind of religious motivation that prompted the HOPE-FM attack, the only entirely indigenous attack to date.

One final issue bears consideration. In the previous Harmony report, we stressed the importance of efforts that would help alienate terrorists from the local population. The lack of consideration given to local Muslims by the perpetrators of the attacks in Kenya and Tanzania suggests the willingness of jihadis to exploit African Muslims. Any terrorist could have predicted that there would be some fellow Muslims among the casualties, and there were. That the attacks went ahead suggests the perpetrators held the local Muslim population in low regard given the primacy of the wider, global goals. Alternatively, they may have expected that either: (1) since the vast majority of those killed would be non-Muslims, the attacks would create exploitable rifts between the local Christian and Muslim populations; or (2) a clumsy, heavy-handed response would further alienate Muslims, thus increasing the pool of local recruits. Our analysis suggests both, which bodes poorly for future efforts to deter jihadis from exploiting Kenya as an operational base on account of any such "sympathetic consideration" to their local co-religionists.

Painting Kenya as a stronghold for al-Qa'ida and other terrorist activity is an overstatement. In many ways, it remains East Africa's leader in both political and economic terms. Yet it is Kenya's very stature that makes it such a decisive battleground between al-Qa'ida and the West in the Horn of Africa as a whole. Its track record as a target for terrorists, combined with the underlying conditions of weak governance and religious-ideological influence on the coast, suggest that future terrorist attacks are likely. Efforts to defeat al-Qa'ida will require the U.S. and its allies to wade through a complicated set of actors and issues. Without the predictable operating environment offered by Kenya, it is unlikely that al-Qa'ida would have been able to mount effective operations in the Horn in the past. We therefore believe Kenya is the decisive point in the Horn of Africa.

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[93] The policy concessions required to sustain Kenyan cooperation on counterterrorism issues also cut against other U.S. priorities such as promoting human rights and exempting military personnel from the International Criminal Court.

[94] This minimal level of concern reflects the fact that the targets have been largely foreign, though the vast majority of the victims are Kenyan, and that attacks have been infrequent enough so as not to damage the economy.

5. Conclusion: Key Issues and Policy Recommendations

I. Conclusions

Al-Qa'ida's efforts to establish a presence in the Horn of Africa and use it as a base for attacks against Western targets were largely a failure. Their only significant successes in the Horn were in Kenya, where the state's poor governance capacity combined with relative stability to create a favorable operational environment. In Somalia, unfavorable operating conditions prevented al-Qa'ida from achieving any of its significant objectives.

Al-Qa'ida failed in Somalia for three reasons. First, their arguments about fighting a foreign occupier did not resonate with locals because they too were seen as a foreign force. Second, they significantly underestimated the costs of operating in a failed state environment. Third, they could not recruit at a sufficient level to sustain operations because the benefits of membership were perceived as low in comparison to the costs of leaving one's clan or tribe.

The key strategic lesson from our analysis of al-Qa'ida's experiences in the Horn of Africa is that *the threat from terrorists operating in <u>weak states</u> is greater than from those operating in failed states*. This implies the need for a much greater focus on supporting counterterrorism in Kenya than has been the case so far. At the operational level, we conclude that effectively reducing terrorist threats requires carefully tailored policies that only rarely involve a direct foreign military intervention. In weak states like Kenya, direct military involvement may not be an option. Foreign military presence in weak states can actually discredit government counterterror efforts and risks creating incentives for the host government to tolerate low levels of terrorist activity. In failed states like Somalia, empowering local authorities and clans who can police their territory and compete with terrorist organizations for local support may yield even greater dividends in fighting terrorism. Maintaining and demonstrating the ability to judiciously strike emerging terrorist targets of opportunity also reduces these regions' value as safe havens.

Al-Qa'ida learned two distinct lessons in Somalia. First, they discovered that the youth were more attracted to the benefits of joining the jihad than others. Throughout the Harmony documents in this report, al-Qa'ida operatives discuss the zeal with which youth participated in jihadi operations and their relative susceptibility to propaganda and recruitment. However, the enthusiastic reactions of a few young men did not translate into wide-spread recruiting success for a variety of reasons discussed in Chapter 3. Second, al-Qa'ida, like other terrorist organizations such as Hamas and Hezbollah, learned that providing social services in the form of security and economic favors helped build a base of support for jihadi efforts. But competition to provide such services from clans and other local powers made it prohibitively expensive for al-Qa'ida to win widespread support through this strategy.[1]

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[1] Harmony, AFGP-2002-6000053, 5-6. See also Abu Bakr Naji, *The Management of Savagery*, trans. William McCants (West Point, N.Y.: Combating Terrorism Center, 2006). Al-Qa'ida strategists recognize the importance of providing social services in weakly governed areas in gaining legitimacy and popular

Conditions in the Horn of Africa may preclude the slow creep of al-Qa'ida and other associated movements without any overt actions on the part of the U.S. or other friendly governments. With the possible exception of Kenya, the Horn of Africa has been an inhospitable environment for jihadi organizations.[2] Multiple internal documents used in this study suggest that local conditions will likely thwart al-Qa'ida's efforts. In fact, open and well-publicized U.S. initiatives in the area could possibly enhance al-Qa'ida's efforts rather them weaken them. There are subtle initiatives that can make it more difficult for terrorists to operate in or from the Horn and magnify the challenges this environment poses. The next section provides specific recommendations on how the U.S. and other nations can enhance efforts to prevent terrorism in the Horn of Africa and elsewhere. Our final section identifies several key issues for the future.

II. Policy Recommendations

Our analysis of al-Qa'ida's experiences in this region, informed by primary source evidence from the Harmony database, leads to a number of regional and country-specific recommendations for the Horn. This section first identifies three general prescriptions for combating terrorism in the region and globally. We then detail a series of measures for combating terrorism in failed states and a separate set of measures for weak states.

A. General Policy Prescriptions Generated by al-Qa'ida's Experiences in the Horn of Africa

1. Prioritize counterterrorism efforts on weak states–not failed ones.

Failed states are difficult places for terrorists to operate. Security is problematic, local allies are unreliable, transportation and supplies are expensive and Western counterterrorism forces can operate freely.[3] For a variety of reasons, weakly governed states often provide a more conducive environment for terrorists. Their sovereignty provides a measure of protection against strikes by Western forces. They often have a richer target set than failed states which have been abandoned by tourists and businesses. Their weak law enforcement capacity does little to increase operational risks to the terrorists.

2. Strike an effective balance between security and development.

Finding the proper balance between security and development continues to dog U.S. policy and programs in Iraq and Afghanistan. Most current nation-building efforts focus

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support. However, the security risks such higher profile activities currently entail inhibit al-Qa'ida from aggressively pursuing them.

[2] Al-Qa'ida's failure to sustain its presence in Sudan is another example from the region. In this case, tactical overreach, exacerbated by inhospitable local conditions, led to al-Qa'ida's demise. Although Hasan al-Turabi's Islamist government invited bin Laden to Sudan in 1992, it turned on him as soon as his presence threatened the value of controlling the Sudanese state. Later, the regime kicked Ayman al-Zawahiri's Egyptian Islamic Jihad out of Sudan for posing a threat to their control of the state by usurping the prerogatives of the Sudanese intelligence services. Relatively strong states like Sudan may provide the best safe havens, but they often rapidly turn on organizations operating from their territory when such organizations become too strong or begin to bring unfavorable outside pressure.

[3] Security concerns and logistical expenses are the main reasons that Abu Hafs suggested holding training courses in Khartoum after visiting newly developed camps in Somalia. Harmony, AFGP-2002-800597, 1.

on incremental military efforts to secure areas followed by slow, subsidized economic advancement. These efforts take large amounts of time, money and will. The reverse paradigm is also problematic. Resources devoted to economic improvement are quickly seized by criminal elements and rival factions in the absence of adequate security.

One way to strike the proper balance is to focus more on improving the capacity of local business interests to develop their own security infrastructure. The Somali case provides an example of how this can work. In late 2006, Somali clan leaders and businessmen in the Mogadishu area determined that a protracted guerrilla war against the advancing Ethiopian Army would be "bad for business." In order to protect their economic interests, they prevented the Council of Islamic Courts (CIC) from reentering the capital in December 2006. While the CIC was accepted so long as it provided order, Somali business interests kept it out when it did not.[4] Rather than focusing on building a security architecture that secures an unemployed, poor and restless populace ripe for radical recruitment, more pragmatic aid policies might support local actors with an economic interest in imposing favorable security conditions.

3. Sponsor efforts in weakly governed states that create the right incentives to effectively combat terrorist threats.

Successful counterterrorism policies in weakly governed states prone to corruption must address the challenge that governments in such states have strong reasons to prefer a low level of terrorist activity over no activity.[5] Simply put, low levels of terrorism often bring significant security assistance from Western nations but do little to reduce economic activity or hurt the political prospects of incumbent leaders. External assistance conditioned solely on the presence of terrorism in effect rewards state failure to invest in the types of local activities needed to effectively address the problem.[6] Overcoming these challenges requires creating incentives that promote effective, internally generated and sustainable counterterrorism measures tailored to unique local conditions. There are three steps to crafting the right policies.

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[4] Recent events are hard to interpret, but do not dramatically change our core assessment that Somali business interests prevented the CIC from returning to the capital. Two possibilities seem most likely with respect to current events: The first is that the recent violence in Mogadishu is being driven by clan leaders deeply dissatisfied with the Transitional Federal Government's attempts to assert control over economic activity. The second is that the violence is driven by competition between the Hawiye clan and the Darood clan of interim President Abdullahi Yusuf. While there is simply insufficient evidence to fully understand the dynamics of this rapidly evolving situation, it does highlight the fact that a desire among Somali business and clan interests to end civil conflict does not necessarily mean they will support or tolerate a strong central state that could impinge on their prerogatives. For a good summary of conflicts that could be driving current violence see Harun Hassan and Cedric Barnes, "A Return to Clan-Politics (or Worse) in Southern Somalia?" Social Science Research Council, March 27, 2007.

[5] Chapter 2 outlines this dynamic and Chapter 4 explores how it creates problems in Kenya.

[6] A similar dynamic is seen in the history of the West's efforts to address poverty and bring economic development to these same weak states. For example, African countries receiving the most economic aid in the 1960's remain the poorest, most poverty stricken nations. Influxes of aid to corrupt central governments rarely translated into effective programs tailored to local conditions. See William Easterly, *The White Man's Burden: Why the West's Efforts to Aid the Rest Have Done So Much Ill and So Little Good* (New York: Penguin, 2006).

First, use low-level engagement to determine why weak states tolerate terrorism. Leaders and institutions in weak states at both state and local levels have a variety of reasons to prefer low levels of terrorist activity rather than eradicate it completely, such as opportunities to use counterterrorism assistance funds to buy political allies and the ability to use support for Western counterterrorism policy priorities to ward off diplomatic pressure on issues like democratization and economic reform. Because no senior officials will admit having any tolerance for terrorism, high-level diplomatic contacts or military exchanges between senior officers will not provide an accurate picture. Active engagement at mid and lower institutional levels is necessary.

Second, promote activities that target the sources–not just the symptoms–of state incentives to tolerate terror. As the level of terrorism in weak states declines, the weight of economic and security assistance should shift to activities that help reduce corruption and improve the professionalism and competence of state internal security and law enforcement capacity.[7] Third, condition counterterrorism assistance on demonstrated effort to combat terror.[8] Conditioning aid on the level of the terrorist threat in a given target state creates perverse incentives to reduce terrorism only to the point where the gains from reducing terror are offset by the loss in aid that will follow from fully eradicating the threat. Conditioning aid on a reduction of terrorism also has drawbacks. States may avoid efforts to get tough on terror which "stir the hornets' nest" and increase the level of terrorist activities in the short term. Assistance strategies that reward a state's *effort* to combat terrorism avoid both problems.[9]

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[7] For example, Philippine Ramon Magsaysay, Philippine Defense Secretary and later President, is credited with turning the tide of the 1946-1954 Hukbalahap (Huk) Rebellion, an early incarnation of what is known now as the Communist Terrorist Movement in the Philippines. Magsaysay shifted from the more indiscriminate "Mailed Fist" policies favored early on by President Manuel A. Roxas, and instead focused on institutional reform within the Philippine constabulary and military to enhance effectiveness and reduce corruption that was challenging efforts to address the Huk rebels at local levels.

[8] The Program Assessment Rating Tool (PART) used to evaluate the effectiveness of U.S. security assistance disbursements is one example of the type of initiative needed to achieve this. Beginning in 2003, PART indicators were developed by region to measure the overall performance of recipients of military assistance. In Latin America, for example, the success of military assistance was measured using indicators that included: (1) number of terrorist attacks against the Cano Limon pipeline; (2) percentage of countries that volunteer for coalition operations when requested by the United States; and (3) percentage of U.S. security assistance recipients that have civilians in senior defense and leadership positions. U.S. Department of State report on Military Assistance accessed at http://www.state.gov/documents/organization/28973.pdf. Another way to credibly condition aid would be to ensure legislation funding counterterrorism assistance requires regular low-level evaluations of supported states' counterterrorism efforts. For example, legislation funding the $135 million Anti-Terrorism Assistance program could be written to prohibit providing aid to states that received a negative evaluation for effort in the previous fiscal year. The Bureau of Diplomatic Security, Office of Anti-Terrorism Assistance (DS/T/ATA) teams implementing the program in various countries would be responsible for the evaluation. For details on similar such restrictions see P.L. 87-195, Sections 571-574.

[9] Emphasis on providing counter terrorism training is key to effective security assistance efforts. The appropriate mix of CT and other professional military and police training versus provision of weapons and equipment must be carefully assessed. Arming and equipping corrupt military and police forces is inherently risky and often leads to unintended and dangerous consequences.

B. Countering Terrorism in Failed States: The Case of Somalia

Countering terrorism in failed states presents a unique set of problems that are quite different from those in weak states. In many cases, preventing the rise of terrorism in failed states may require little action on the part of the U.S. and other Western nations. The case study in Chapter 3 demonstrates that the threat of terrorism from Somalia has yet to materialize as predicted. We believe the inherent challenges of operating in a failed state combine with specific local factors to make Somalia an unfavorable place for foreign terrorists to operate in or from. There are a number of policies that can ensure that Somalia remains an inhospitable place for jihadis. Some of these concepts may also be applicable to other failed states around the globe.

1. Prevent the creation of a Somali state based on jihadi ideology, accept one based on Islam.

Any functioning Somali state is likely to be highly religious. However, it need not be a threat. Indeed, even the CIC initially said it would not allow its territory to be used as a staging ground for international jihad. One way to ensure a favorable outcome may be to provide aid resources through clan leaders who may be intensely religious but who are too pragmatic to allow their territory to be used for transnational jihad. Doing so has the added benefit of reinforcing patrimonial behavior that, as our case study of Somalia shows, inhibits terrorist recruitment. This policy may be inefficient in terms of delivering aid to individual Somalis, but it is the most feasible alternative in the absence of any state method for distribution of aid and provisions.

Another method to reduce the chances of a jihadi state emerging in Somalia is to leverage the divisions between Somalis and foreign jihadis created by differences in Islamic ideology. The Somali version of Sufi Islam proved incompatible with the puritanical Salafi Islam preached by al-Qa'ida and its affiliates. One reason al-Qa'ida encountered such difficulties in Somalia is that the locals were largely uninterested in the ideology al-Qa'ida was promoting. Policy makers might look to support this bulwark against jihadi ideology by working through intermediaries to support appropriate Somali Sufi sects. Doing so would require a better understanding of subtle ideological differences than currently exists within the U.S. government. Limited intelligence and a dearth of experts on the ideological alignments of Somali clans make this task difficult to accomplish but it is nevertheless essential.

2. Selectively empower local authority structures in failed states.

Empowering local authorities in failed states can be problematic. Many such authorities are undemocratic, disrespect human rights, engage in irredentist politics and exploit local resources for illicit purposes.[10] However, some local authorities also provide effective governance, greatly enhancing the welfare of the people living under their control and stability in the area. Whatever the merits of their rule, local authorities often have strong reasons to oppose those who would upset local conditions by doings things like using

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[10] E.g., the Afghan drug trade, the trade in diamonds that funded local militias during the civil war in Sierra Leone, or the tacit support Kurdish rebels fighting in Turkey received during the mid-1990s from the leaders of what is now Iraqi Kurdistan.

their territory to attack Western targets.[11] Groups like al-Qa'ida pose a competitive threat to local leaders' ability to tax the population, bring the threat of increased external attention and, as the Somali experience shows, risk being labeled as unwelcome foreign occupiers. Local authorities can be so effective at inhibiting foreign terrorists that in February 1993 one al-Qa'ida operative writes that in the Somali jihad, "The second period will be all against tribe leaders...."[12] Al-Qa'ida's recruitment efforts continue to target youth in failed states. The most effective way to fight these efforts is to minimize the benefits of membership in al-Qa'ida and raise the benefits of remaining loyal to their clan leaders or other local authorities.

Development in poor areas might reinforce loyalty to clan and local leaders. However, it is not clear that Western nations know how to foster state-centric economic development in failed states. A more pragmatic approach might be to reinforce the kinds of clan and tribe loyalties that prevented al-Qa'ida from making significant recruiting inroads in Somalia. Economic aid, and potentially security assistance, should be directed to those clans that: (1) maintain an ideology counter to Salafi-jihadi doctrine; (2) provide effective and non-oppressive governance over their people; and (3) have the ability to provide a security buffer against terrorist interests. The U.S. and its allies should avoid overtly employing military forces to implement any such development strategy. Instead, they should work with NGOs and other development institutions that are better suited for providing aid, understand local power structures and have regional and country experts on hand to monitor program effectiveness. From a counterterrorism perspective, empowering local leaders, especially when it comes at the expense of an ineffectual central government, may actually reduce terrorists' operational freedom.

Respect for state sovereignty and international law will prevent the U.S. from supporting separatist or irredentist claims. Short of endorsing their political agenda, however, the U.S. should support local leaders who exhibit greater potential to provide good governance than the central state. Doing so may yield more effective policing of a given territory and deny terrorists safe haven. In Somalia, such a policy would mean supporting locally generated government in the absence of governance from the center. For example, there are counterterrorism benefits to be gained by working through the United Nations to establish Somaliland and Puntland as effectively governed autonomous regions and providing targeted international aid and assistance to these areas. In addition to supporting the relatively responsible leaders who have made things better for their populations, such a strategy can help isolate and contain the more dangerous potential safe haven of southern Somalia.

3. Publicize the elitist nature of al-Qa'ida's fighters and their disrespect for Somalis.

It is clear that on several occasions al-Qa'ida's Arab operatives thought themselves superior to the native Africans they encountered. We see this in the cavalier attitude taken towards Kenyan and Tanzanian Muslims in the 1998 Embassy bombings. Working to

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[11] Indeed, in 1997 the Taliban leadership allegedly invited Osama bin Laden to move from Jalalabad to Kandahar so that they could more effectively monitor his activities. Wright, *The Looming Tower*, 226, 245, 247.
[12] Harmony, AFGP-2002-800600, 2.

publicize the derisive attitude many al-Qa'ida operatives have towards the locals may reduce the ability of foreign jihadis to operate in African countries. Any U.S. efforts to directly promote this discussion through Western media outlets will likely be seen as propaganda. However, facilitating the discussion of this issue through academic and political forums in Africa and the Middle East may be possible. There are many journalistic and academic accounts of al-Qa'ida's disdain for segments of the African population. Bringing these discussions forward through the funding of debates and research initiatives may assist in shedding more light on this cleavage.

4. Work through surrogates whenever possible to provide interdiction and maintain the capability to conduct covert and/or clandestine surgical strikes against high value targets.

Whenever possible, the U.S. and its allies should rely on countries within the region to deal with terrorism within their own borders. Any large scale U.S. military action is likely to create more terrorists than it eliminates and will serve to confirm al-Qa'ida's claims that the U.S. has imperialistic ambitions in the region, claims which appear to be viewed with skepticism by many Africans. Moreover, regional military interventions that cross state borders may fare no better. Recent violence against Ethiopian troops in Somalia suggests that any foreign force, be it American, African or jihadi, will meet strong local resistance in Somalia. Engaging at the lowest possible level, often with sub-state actors, may be the most effective approach to putting military pressure on terrorists operating in failed states. However, as recent actions in Somalia demonstrate, a capacity for U.S. or U.S.-sponsored overt, covert and/or clandestine surgical strikes raises the risks for al-Qa'ida and associated movements to operate in Somalia.

5. Implement strategies of graduated containment around failed states.

Somalia demonstrates that al-Qa'ida is likely to flounder in areas where: (1) it is difficult and costly for any organization to operate; (2) Salafi ideology clashes with local strains of Islam; and (3) clan and familial powers are likely to resist the expansion of al-Qa'ida's influence. When al-Qa'ida ventures into such regions, efficient strategies to degrade al-Qa'ida's effectiveness may entail refraining from hunting al-Qa'ida directly and instead seeking to *contain and monitor* it in those areas.

In the Horn, such a strategy of graduated containment would create a ring of security around the failed state of southern Somalia such that al-Qa'ida may be able to enter the region but will not be able to project any power from it nor sustain long-term operations. The outer ring would involve continued diplomatic engagement and civil society capacity-building in Sudan, Eritrea, Ethiopia and Kenya. The next ring would include enhanced border controls, law enforcement efforts and economic development in the Ogaden region of Ethiopia and on the coast of Kenya. The final ring would include supporting autonomy for Somaliland and Puntland. These two states-within-a-state treat their people well by regional standards and can be used as buffer zones against the failed state of southern Somalia. By granting them a measure of recognition, it becomes easier to support economic development as well as their efforts to secure their borders, thereby narrowing al-Qa'ida's operational space.

C. Countering Terrorism in Weak States: The Case of Kenya

Weak states pose a unique policy dilemma for Western counterterrorism efforts. Because they are sovereign the U.S. and other nations cannot directly intervene. Instead, the U.S. and others must rely on weak states' efforts to serve a global end. However, these states lack sufficient capacity to fully interdict terrorists' efforts. Additionally, weak states provide a plethora of Western targets which, combined with a permissive operating environment, presents terrorists with a distinct advantage over U.S. counterterrorism forces. Dealing with weak states in the Horn and globally will require a delicate assessment of each country's dynamics, capacity and motivation.

1. Focus efforts on coastal Kenya as a key battle ground against al-Qa'ida.

The Kenyan coast provides the best opportunity in the Horn for al-Qa'ida and its associated movements to operate and project force. Not as anarchic as Somalia, coastal Kenya provides a permissive environment for jihadis. Terrorists operating there are shielded from U.S. military action by Kenyan sovereignty and find a sympathetic population from which to draw support. While casting Kenya as a terrorist stronghold would be an overstatement, the internal divisions between Kenya's coastal population and Kenya's central government do provide a mobilizing issue for Islamist terrorism. Elements of the disaffected population of Mombasa, a recurring location for terrorists seeking safe haven, may tolerate the presence of al-Qa'ida and AIAI operatives. At the very least, they will be slow to report suspicious activity to the central government, which Muslims believe to be corrupt and repressive.

2. Use targeted aid to raise al-Qa'ida's operating costs in at-risk areas in weak states.

Pursuing development and foreign aid that helps rural disaffected populations in coastal Kenya will not only earn good will and legitimacy for the central government, but will also increase the price terrorists need to pay to buy local assistance and acquiescence. Removing local tolerance of al-Qa'ida activities and preventing the emergence of safe havens requires persistent development and law enforcement efforts.

Current efforts by the U.S. military are popular among local Muslims but are seen as too small in scale and clearly tied to counterterrorism and not economic development. The U.S. should increase economic development and government capacity beginning in Lamu and working back along the coast towards Mombasa. A sustained commitment to improving the economic status of coastal Kenyans is likely to produce three benefits. First, it will increase intelligence on terrorist activities. Second, it will decrease the political costs Kenyan politicians pay for supporting U.S. counterterrorism priorities, and so increase their level of cooperation. Third, increased economic aid raises the cost to terrorists of providing social services as a buy-in mechanism for their larger goals.

One area of common interest which would indirectly support counterterrorism efforts is counter-narcotics operations. Kenyan Muslim leaders have grown increasingly concerned with the influx of illicit drugs along the coast.[13] By working with coastal Muslims to counter narcotics, the U.S. would: (1) illustrate that it respects the values of

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[13] Author interview, Nairobi, March 9, 2007.

the Muslim religion; (2) assist Kenya in reducing criminal activity; (3) improve border control thus minimizing the ability of terrorists to move through Kenya; and (4) improve the reputation of Kenyan law enforcement. The U.S. could provide police and customs advisors to the Kenyan Coastal Police for improving law enforcement and interdiction capacity as well as transparency.

3. Promote greater pluralism and participation in the political process by engaging Muslim political parties and candidates through NGOs and IGOs.

Kenya boasts a lively democratic political process. Although a minority, Muslims actively seek government office along Kenya's coast. An effort that might truly undermine terrorist ideology is the support of Muslims seeking elected office.[14] U.S. support should be directed to NGOs that assist Muslim political organizations, which have often been unrepresented in Kenyan government and discouraged by their lack of access to the democratic process. Doing this will make support for U.S. counterterrorism priorities among Kenyan politicians more viable. These activities should aim to: (1) garner support for Muslim politicians who reject the Salafi ideology of al-Qa'ida and like-minded terrorist groups; and (2) elevate the capacity, education and rights of coastal Muslims, who have had limited opportunity to date, thereby making them less likely to tolerate a jihadi presence.

4. Identify and subsidize institutional reforms that will reap indirect rewards in counterterrorism.

The greatest threats to the security of Kenyan citizens are disease and crime. Helping the Kenyan government address these top concerns, especially on the coast, will make Kenyans more likely to report suspicious activities and might encourage them to more aggressively oppose terrorist influences. Improving health care and criminal justice may thus do more to combat terrorism than policies that specifically seek to enhance "counterterrorism" or "antiterrorism" capacities. Two policy efforts that would meet this goal are: (1) conditioning security assistance on criminal justice reforms such as increased professionalism among police officers and prosecutors; and (2) focusing aid on the health care system.

5. Condition security assistance on Kenyan effort to combat terrorism.

The massive amounts of counterterrorism-related funding provided by the U.S. means Kenyan officials may actually gain from having a continuing terrorist threat in their state. There are two ways to ease this problem. First, security assistance can be refocused to areas which offer fewer opportunities for patronage than direct payments for military hardware, such as increased police training, governance training and anti-corruption efforts. Second, policy-makers can take advantage of low- and mid-level contacts with the Kenyan security service to evaluate how counterterrorism funding is actually being used by the Kenyan government. If it turns out that Kenyan government institutions are less than fully devoted to counterterrorism or are using security assistance funds for

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[14] In Lamu district, there is currently at least one female Muslim candidate running for office and she appears to be both well respected and receiving some base of support.

patronage purposes, future security assistance should be explicitly linked to improved <u>effort</u>.

III. Future Prospects for Terrorism in the Horn of Africa

Outside of Kenya, the prospects for a serious terrorist threat to emerge in the Horn of Africa seem quite low. The region has consistently proven much less hospitable to foreign jihadis than conventional wisdom has suggested. Engaging with sub-national authorities in failed states like Somalia will ensure this remains the case. A strategy of graduated containment can effectively minimize the threat when such engagement fails. Inside Kenya, institutional reforms in the law enforcement sector and economic development on the coast are the key to preventing the emergence of terrorist safe havens. Direct military assistance will have limited impact given the political constraints on the Kenyan government. Moreover, substantial military assistance conditioned on the threat of terrorism creates counter-productive incentives to tolerate low levels of jihadi activity because fully eradicating the threat means losing the security assistance. Instead, counterterrorism efforts should focus on reducing the factors–weak police capacity and disgruntled citizens willing to tolerate the presence of foreign militants–that make Kenya, or any weak state for that matter, a valuable operational haven for terrorists.

Elsewhere in the Horn of Africa, the potential for terrorism directed at Western targets seems low. There are few lucrative targets and local insurgent organizations have few incentives to attack Western targets. They also have few incentives to ally themselves to the global jihadi movement. Doing so would bring a dramatic increase in security pressure without a concomitant increase in resources or recruits. However, given the region's history as a venue for terrorist attacks, continued vigilance is required. The policy recommendations outlined in this report provide guidance for how best to pursue this goal. By focusing efforts on weak states, working through local allies at the lowest possible level and supporting institutional reforms that eliminate incentives to tolerate low levels of terrorism, policy makers can efficiently ensure that a greater threat does not develop in this important region.

Appendices to Part I

A. Case Studies of Regional Terrorist Groups

B. Cast of Characters from the Horn of Africa

C. Notes and Interviews from Kenya

APPENDIX A

CASE STUDIES OF REGIONAL TERRORIST GROUPS

I.   Al-Ittihad al-Islami (AIAI)
II.   Eritrean Islamic Jihad Movement (EJIM)

I. Somalia's al-Ittihad al-Islami (AIAI; Islamic Union)

The Rise of al-Ittihad al-Islami

Al-Ittihad al-Islami (The Islamic Union) is one of the most widely discussed Islamist groups from the Horn of Africa, yet its ties to the global jihadi movement remain obscure. The lack of clarity stems from the fluidity of organizational alliances in Somalia; it is often difficult to confirm formal ties between jihadi groups, and this is particularly true in the Somali landscape. Despite that fact, AIAI it is known to have had ties at the highest levels of leadership to global jihadi groups, including al-Qa'ida.

Now essentially defunct, the group rose to prominence in the 1980s and its influence peaked in 1992; yet its leadership remains active in Somalia and does present a threat for further al-Qa'ida influence in the country. Al-Ittihad was established in the early 1980s through the merger of Salafi groups that enjoyed popularity in Somalia in the 1960s and 1970s, largely as a result of their attempts to regain lost Somali land after independence and resistance to dictator Siad Barre and Western influence. As such, they gained the support of the Somali people through nationalist causes more than through a common affinity for Salafism; indeed the ideology was widely unpopular in the county in previous years.

Salafi ideology was first introduced to Somalia in the 1940s by scholars trained in Saudi Arabia. Somali Muslims were predominately Shafi`i Sunnis and there was a long-standing tradition of Sufism in the Horn of Africa, making it initially a difficult grounds for the ideology to spread. Local scholars issued fatwas banning Salafi ideology from being propagated. With independence in 1960, however, political tendencies had changed. The Somali government looked to the West for technical assistance in modernizing as Islamic revivalist movements influenced by Salafism, namely the Muslim Brotherhood, called for resistance to Western influence, coinciding with traditional scholars' frustration with Western involvement in the country.

The oil boom of the 1970s and 80s brought Somali workers to the Gulf, the majority of them to Saudi Arabia. Reportedly thousands of Somalis were also offered scholarships during these years to study at Saudi institutions, and most ended up at the three most prominent Salafi educational institutions—the Islamic University of Medina, Umm al-Qura` in Mecca and Imam Muhammad bin Saud University in Riyadh. This development, along with the changing internal dynamics in Somalia, transformed the country from one hostile to Salafi thought into one receptive to its order, militancy, and vision for a rigid implementation of Islamic law.

Some of the nascent Salafi centers, in the suburbs of Mogadishu and in northern Somalia in particular, began to gain a steady following of worshippers, coming to daily prayers but also seeking instruction on *tafsir* (Qur'anic exegesis), and regular lectures on a variety of religious, social and political issues. Like most other Salafi movements, these were focused on doctrinal matters and attempting to instill an understanding of the *shari`a* in its followers, creating a loyal segment of Somali society dedicated to the

eventual implementation of Islamic law in Somalia. Chief among these organizations was al-Jama`a al-Islamiyya.

It is common among militant Salafi groups for the leadership to have studied at Salafi institutions in Saudi Arabia while rejecting the legitimacy of the Saudi royal family. Somali Islamist groups have been no exception. Leaders such as Shaykh `Ali Warsame were training in Saudi Salafi institutions while working with social-activist minded Islamists akin to the Muslim Brotherhood movement. His group, Wahdat al-Shabab al-Islamiyya (Unity of Islamic Youth), partnered with al-Jama`a al-Islamiyya and, at the same time between 1982-84, the leadership of these two organizations merged and renamed itself al-Ittihad al-Islami. Warsame became a key leader in the new organization, and the leadership from the parent organizations largely remained unique.

The Global Jihadi Presence in Somalia

The early 1990s brought further chaos and violence to the country, especially northern Somalia and Mogadishu, with the fall of the Siad Barre regime. Al-Ittihad had been openly denouncing the Barre regime, and amid the onset of civil war and growing lawlessness, the organization was transformed from one spreading the message of Salafi Islam to one engaged in armed conflict. Another key development that occurred during this time was the emergence of Dahir Hasan Aweys as the leader of the military wing of al-Ittihad, waging battles against rival clans and warlords fighting for control of the country. He was one of the group's leaders to establish ties with other militant Islamist groups, including al-Qa'ida members based in Sudan. Al-Ittihad enlisted thousands of fighters during the early 1990s.

Following a conference in 1991 (during which time al-Ittihad was attempting to exercise control in the power vacuum of Somali politics), `Ali Warsame was serving as a head of the group with Aweys as the leader of the military wing. From this point forward, al-Ittihad began receiving substantial funding from wealthy Saudi individuals and ostensibly charitable organizations like the Muslim World League and the International Islamic Relief Organization—two organizations known to be financial supporters of al-Qa'ida.

Al-Ittihad militants attacked foreign aid workers in Somalia and continued to launch attacks against rival factions. They took over and maintained control of some areas of Somalia and implemented strict versions of Islamic law there. Members of the group traveled freely throughout the Horn and established an extensive network in Kenya.

While al-Ittihad was attempting to establish an Islamic state in Somalia, al-Qa'ida was sending funding, arms and fighters to support the Islamists, and shared the same goal—the creation of an Islamic state in Somalia—although their support was not solely directed toward the al-Ittihad organization. Bin Laden acknowledged in two interviews that he supplied arms and training to the mujahidin who killed 18 American soldiers during Operation Restore Hope in October, 1993. Reports published by CNN and others

indicate that bin Laden provided these materials to the fighters under the warlord Muhammad Farah Aideed, who had affiliated himself with al-Ittihad. (Aideed plotted the coup against Siad Barre, and also switched his loyalties among various Islamist and tribal groups in Somalia during the early 1990s.) Such links were typical of al-Qa'ida's involvement in Somalia, given the fluidity of leadership and organizational structure among the militant groups.

Beginning in 1992, Muhammad Atef (aka Abu Hafs al-Masri) made multiple trips to Somalia from al-Qa'ida's base in Khartoum and met with militant leaders, accessed capabilities and made connections to provide training and arms to fighters there. The aim of these visits, according to the indictment against him by the U.S. Department of Justice, was to support local forces in attacking U.S. and UN forces in Somalia. It also coincided with a fatwa from bin Laden in 1993 calling for attacks on Western interests in Somalia. This culminated in the deaths of 18 U.S. military personnel on October 3-4, 1993, when three helicopters were downed by al-Qa'ida trained Somali militants.

Some analysts believe bin Laden devoted up to $3 million towards the establishment of an Islamic state administered by al-Ittihad al-Islami. The purpose of this investment can be understood in terms of bin Laden's and his senior aides' desire to find alternate bases for their operations. Despite denials from bin Laden and Somali militants at various times of al-Qa'ida involvement in these battles, it is hard to deny the group's participation at some level in Somali militancy during this time, or the fact that bin Laden and others eyed Somalia as a potential safe haven for their organization.

In the following years, al-Ittihad was greatly weakened and began dissolving. One of the group's long-term aims was to reclaim Ogaden, the Somali-inhabited land in eastern Ethiopia, yet the group seems to have underestimated the resolve of the Ethiopian military, which determined to eradicate al-Ittihad in 1996. Although some members participated in the Islamic Courts Union that came to power a decade later, this was more a matter of leadership regrouping than a continuation of the at-Ittihad organization. According to one analyst:

> "Al-Ittihad al-Islami is now largely defunct. It never recovered completely from Ethiopia's cross-border rout of the organization in 1996. While some members of AIAI joined the Islamic courts, most notably Aweys, the courts movement was distinct from AIAI and should not be considered a reincarnated version of it."[1]

Despite questions about the level of al-Qa'ida's involvement in Somalia since the early 1990s, the statements by the group's senior leaders and strategists make clear the importance placed on Somalia for the global jihad movement. Additionally, during the late 1990s, mid-level operatives such as Harun Fazul and Wadih al-Hage were active in the Horn of Africa, in Nairobi and Mogadishu, while plotting the U.S. Embassy

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[1] Marquardt, "Al-Qaeda's Threat to Ethiopia."

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bombings in Dar es Salaam and Nairobi. Indeed, the lack of attacks on Western interests in Somalia is probably due to the fact that very few of them exist there, and the impact of actions are felt far greater on targets in other countries.

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II. The Eritrean Islamic Jihad Movement (EJIM)

Eritrean separatism began in earnest during World War II, as Eritrea passed from Italian to British rule in 1941 and remained under British administration until 1950. The initial constitution in 1952 was ratified by Emperor of Ethiopia, Haile Selassie, but Eritrea and Ethiopia were linked through a federal system, under the sovereignty of the emperor. Eritreans resisted Ethiopian rule and began armed struggle for their independence in 1958.

The Eritrean Islamic Jihad Movement (EIJM) began activity in 1975 when a group of Islamist-minded guerrillas split off from the Eritrean Liberation Front (ELF) that had been fighting since the beginning of the Eritrean independence movement. The EIJM was formally established in 1980. Since independence in 1993, the EIJM (and its factions) have been the principal Muslim opposition group in Eritrea, seeking the violent overthrow of the ELF government led by President Isaias Afewerki. EIJM claims to only target the Eritrean government and its apparatus in the country, not Western targets, and seeks the establishment of an Islamic caliphate in Eritrea.

The group is based in Sudan and is made up primarily of dissidents from the ELF, conservative Eritreans (and some other Muslims from Horn of Africa countries), and a Muslim youth network. The group is also known by a variety of other names—the Eritrean Islamic Reform Movement, the Abu Suhail organization, the Eritrean Islamic Salvation Movement, and the Eritrean Islamic Party for Justice and Development—but many of these appear to be break-away groups that operate with some degree of autonomy.

This is reflective of the climate for political and militant Islamic organizations in the Horn of Africa. Like other neighboring countries during the last three decades, Eritrea saw a number of Salafi organization rise to popularity, where before the mid-1950s the ideology had been largely alien to this region. In the 1980s, the Jabhat Tahrir al-Iritriyya al-Islamiyya al-Wataniyya (The National Eritrean Islamic Liberation Front), the Munzzamat al-Ruwwad al-Muslimin al-Iritria (The Organization of Eritrean Pioneer Muslims), al-Intifada al-Islamiyya (Islamic Awakening) and others were founded, some in Sudan. By 1988, these organizations merged to form the EIJM.

This union of militant Islamists, however, continued to fragment. Within five years, a militant Salafi faction emerged under Shaykh Abu Suhail (also known as Muhammad Ahmad), who participated in the Afghan jihad against the Soviets. He is mentioned as the leader of the Eritrean Jihad movement in documents captured from al-Qa'ida in Afghanistan[2]. It is from this connection that some allege EIJM has ties to al-Qa'ida; its operations in Khartoum may also have put members in contact with al-Qa'ida,

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[2] See "Harmony and Disharmony: Exploiting Al-Qa'ida's Organizational Vulnerabilities", Harmony, AFGP-2002-801138.

which was also based in Sudan during the early- to mid-1990s. A more moderate faction calling for dialogue and reconciliation also emerged within the EIJM opposed to Abu Suhail.

Currently led by Khalil Mohammed Amer, the EIJM today falls under the umbrella of opposition group known as the Eritrean National Alliance. This can be a near dizzying array of organizations and factions in the Eritrean Islamic scene, but over the past decade, they have carried out relatively few successful operations. In 2003 EIJM claimed responsibility for a hotel bombing and an ambush killing 46 Eritrean military personnel. The group was initially blamed for the 2003 killing of British geologist Timothy Nutt, but EIJM denied the claims and reaffirmed its goals only to target the Eritrean government. In March 2006, a reincarnation of the EIJM, renamed the Harakat al-Islah al-Islamiyya al-Iritri, issued a statement claiming responsibility for five attacks over a one month period on Eritrean forces which resulted in the death of five soldiers.

With its base in Khartoum, the EIJM runs most of its operations in western Eritrea near the Sudanese border. Ethiopia temporarily allied with Sudan in the 1988 war between Ethiopia and Eritrea, and Kalashnikovs and RPGs originating in Sudan have been found on EIJM rebels. Sudanese support has not been unconditional or long-term, however. While Hasan al-Turabi ruled most of Sudan in the early 1990s, he cracked down on some of the EIJM members and closed some of its offices and operations. Sudan hosts tens of thousands of Eritrean refugees, and as with other refugee diasporas, there was likely fear that they could influence Sudanese politics.

The main EIJM body led by Khalil Muhammad Amer, as described by its deputy Abu al-Bara' Hasan Salman in a 1998 interview with the now-defunct Islamist magazine *al-Nida*', aims to carry out: "Armed struggle and training youth; da`wa [outreach] and education… [W]e accompany the Qur'an and Sunnah and aim to fulfill as a group all the aims therein and to realize our position as servants of Allah, and to establish the Islamic State." He states, "The Islamic Jihad Movement is striving against two groups, the Christian regime and the hypocrites. The movement also represents the only military option which had proved its fortitude in confronting the Christian regime in Eritrea."

Salman went on to say, regarding the "external front," which is "very sensitive ... from the aspect of our strategic security," that they aim to "exchange our experience and expertise with other Muslim organizations which also work to challenge the various corrupt regimes in the region… Strive to generate the suitable opportunities to support our Jihad through Islamic means; and [m]ove around neighbouring countries and expose the corruption of the Eritrean regime and its danger over the entire region on the religious, security, and political fronts."

As is clear from this description, the group has aspirations for uniting with like-minded Islamist groups (the majority of them militant Salafi) and moving toward the establishment of an Islamic state. There is thus a legitimate concern that the EJIM would seek to cooperation with al-Qa'ida, though the former remains ostensibly dedicated to only attacking Eritrean targets.

The Eritrean jihad movements are highly active online, promoting their message, providing extensive news coverage of developments and information condemning the Eritrean regime in three languages. Websites connected to or maintained by Eritrean Islamic Jihad include: (the now defunct) www.eijm.org, www.alkhalas.org (the Eritrean Islamic Salvation Movement, renamed the Eritrean Islamic Party for Justice and Development), www.islaher.org (the Eritrean Islamic Reform Movement), and the more moderate news portal awate.com.

Given the high degree of fragmentation, illustrated by the proliferation of factions and continual renaming of the organization, the movement remains ineffective, but not inactive. There is a shared set of ideology and goals between al-Qa'ida and the Eritrean Jihad movement, but given the absence of high-impact Western targets and the disharmony among Eritrean Islamist, it is unlikely al-Qa'ida or the wider global jihad movement would become seriously involved in Eritrea.

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