Third World Quarterly, 2015
Vol. 36, No. 10, 1866–1886, http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/01436597.2015.1074037

Routledge
Taylor & Francis Group

Building terror while fighting enemies: how the Global War on Terror deepened the crisis in Somalia

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(*Received 13 May 2015; accepted 15 July 2015*)

Somalia has become a front in the US Global War on Terror (GWoT) because of the potential connection between terrorism and state fragility. While originally oriented towards 'building states while fighting terror', Enduring Freedom in Somalia obtained quite the opposite result of deepening the existing conflict. Why and how did the GWoT result in the controversial outcome of 'building terror while fighting enemies'? This article argues that the GWoT sponsored in Somalia an isolationist strategy that encouraged the political polarisation and military radicalisation of the insurgency. To explore this argument, the article first analyses the structure of the intervention by focusing on the interests and strategies of the interveners. Then it evaluates the conditions under which the modality of intervention (through the use of diplomatic, economic and coercive measures) violated the conditions essential to resolving conflict.

Keywords: Global War on Terror; Somalia; radicalisation; military intervention

Introduction

Throughout the past three decades Somalia has been an arena of incessant conflict, attracting growing security concerns. After the failure of the UN–US led humanitarian intervention in the mid-1990s, the entire US foreign policy in Africa was influenced by Somalia Syndrome,[1] 'a risk aversion approach to intervention' supported by the emerging mantra of assigning African solutions to African problems. Following the attacks of September 2001 and the escalation of the Global War on Terror (GWoT) Somalia again conquered the attention of US foreign policy. In the wake of the collapse of its former institutions, Somalia was considered a safe haven able to facilitate, sponsor and nurture international terrorism.[2] As part of Operation Enduring Freedom in the Horn of Africa, in December 2002, the Combined Joint Task Force-Horn of Africa (CJTF-HOA) was established at Camp Lemonier (Djibouti) with the aim of 'prevent[ing]

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violent extremist organisations from threatening America, ensuring the protection of the homeland, American citizens, and American interests'.[3] This US-led counter-terrorism initiative was articulated as tripartite instrument of global security, ie a military response to the persistent crisis of sovereignty aimed at 'increas[ing] stability and strengthen[ing] sovereignty'; fostering partner nation security capacity and 'enabl[ing] leadership development'.[4]

Between 2001 and 2010 the 'Coalition of the Willing' composed of Ethiopia and the USA undertook a violent campaign of intervention in Somalia by fighting groups considered a threat because of their rhetorical, material or potential connection with al-Qaeda. Because of the necessity of conjugating local operations with global and regional security demands, the war on terror assumed in Somalia an indirect strategy oriented to combat not specific groups, but a broad spectrum of subversion represented by militant Islamism and piracy.[5] 'Building states while fighting terror' was the rhetorical horizon launched by the US Department of State inside the 2003 National Security Strategy.[6] 'Building terror while fighting enemies' has, however, been the dramatic outcome of this strategy. Why and how did the GWoT deepen the Somali crisis?

This article argues that the GWoT sponsored an isolationist strategy in Somalia that encouraged the political polarisation and military radicalisation of the opposition forces. To explore this argument, the article first analyses the structure of the intervention by focusing on the interests and strategies of conflict management adopted. Second, it evaluates the conditions under which the modality of intervention (ie the use of diplomatic, economic and coercive measures) violated the conditions essential to resolving the existing conflict.

The article shows that, at the diplomatic level, the GWoT sponsored an exclusionary model of negotiation, alienated key political actors and accelerated the ideological polarisation of rebel groups around the matrix of Salafi jihadism. At the military level the pre-eminence of the external security agenda, and the growing military offensive driven by Ethiopian and US forces, gradually radicalised the Somali insurgency. Analytically the article advances a critique of counter-terrorism but it also argues for a deeper understanding of the dangerous consequences generated by global security interventions in the political scenario of receiving countries.

The GWoT and its consequences

Critical assessment of the GWot can be divided at least into three broad discussions. First, legal scholars have emphasised the extent to which the GWoT challenges the relationship between legal and normative standards. Many have approached these challenges through the lens of the just war theory and of the two traditional pillars of the law of war, ie the *jus ad bellum* and the *jus in bello*.[7] Others have focused on the implications generated by technological innovations, such as the use of unmanned aerial vehicles.[8] Yet others have emphasised the irregular character of the GWoT,[9] the crisis of international legality,[10] the formation of No-Law Zones,[11] and the institutionalisation of a permanent state of exception.[12]

Second, the ideational, conceptual and discursive questions launched by the GWoT have attracted even greater attention in academic debate.[13] On the one side, scholars have claimed that the terrorism discourse has not been immune from mechanisms of knowledge production.[14] Fairclough has applied a critical discourse analysis to define the war on terror as a form of rhetorical bombardment producing predictive and prescriptive imaginaries.[15] For Stampnitzky the war on terror is a social product forged and developed by experts and policy makers who have gradually modelled the existing phenomena of political violence into the new category of terrorism.[16] Within this process scholars have focused on the semantic and semiotic struggles generated by the word 'terrorism'.[17]

Third, scholars have also attempted to define the political implications of the GWoT by exploring structural types of dilemma launched on to the existing political order. Many IR scholars used Schmittian categories to identify the crisis of political order and international legality produced by the unlimited character of the global war.[18] On the empirical side others have analysed both the political and security consequences of the GWoT,[19] revealing how strategic shortfalls have increased the level of insecurity and political instability,[20] provoked insurgent radicalisation,[21] spread violence,[22] strengthened the enemy,[23] and even discouraged the formation of bottom-up responses to human security challenges.[24] It is in following this third field of enquiry that this article questions the mechanisms which led the counter-terrorism strategy to deepen existing crises and conflicts.

The ill-fated nature of the GWoT has attracted growing criticism over the past few years.[25] After the tangible failures in Afghanistan and Iraq many scholars defined the conditions under which the pre-emption war doctrine inaugurated by the Bush administration produced destabilising outcomes.[26] Scholars usually refer to a double kind of data. From a purely quantitative perspective many pointed out that the number of international terrorist attacks proliferated between 2000 and 2012. According to data collected by the Global Terrorism Index, between 2000 and 2013 there was a fivefold increase in the number of terrorist incidents.[27] From a qualitative point of view scholars claim that the GWoT had the dangerous counter-effect of radicalising the insurgency.[28] The invasion of Iraq produced the opposite result (to that intended) of intensifying al-Qaida's call to arms,[29] turning the GWoT 'into the world's premier terrorist training ground'.[30] The operations in Afghanistan produced the similarly opposite result of re-enforcing al-Qaida attacks, motivating and radicalising the Taliban guerrillas, fostering (rather than demobilising) 'America's enemies'.[31]

As for Somalia, some questioned how far the Ethiopian–US joint operations precipitated the poor security conditions.[32] Others evaluated the long-term consequences of counter-terrorism, ie how far the GWoT inspired ideational reformulations and tactical changes in guerrilla warfare,[33] or generated a self-fulfilling prophecy of radicalising the Islamist movements.[34] So far, while the intensity of the failure has been measured, the mechanics leading the counter-terrorism intervention to produce ill-fated consequences have been less systematically analysed. Why and how did the Global War on Terror culminate in the opposite result of building terror?

Structure and modality of military intervention

To map this causal process, the paper makes use of two theoretical contributions focusing on the structure and modality of external interventionism.

According to Bercovitch and Jackson, conflict resolution should be explained in the light of factors affecting the choice of pursuing either negotiation or mediation.[35] While conflict management strategies, like negotiations, concern the means of dealing with a contested relationship and reducing the level of violence, conflict resolution refers to the successful management of hostilities, ie to the 'transformation of relationships in a particular case by the solution of problems which led to the conflictual behaviour in the first place'.[36] In their study of international disputes between 1945 and 1995 the authors found that negotiation was employed more in low intensity conflicts, while mediation was essential to settle conflicts marked by long duration and high intensity: 'High levels of conflict, complex issue-structure, heterogeneous parties, and a low motivation to reach an agreement make mediation the more likely strategy'.[37]

In a context of persistent and protracted rivalries conflict resolution might be complicated by a set of other factors, such as the involvement of external parties, their interests, roles and strategies. Modelski has formulated an influential interpretation of third-party intervention in civil wars, claiming that a third-party intervention is always polarised between the political infrastructures of the incumbent and insurgent, with three possible strategies: diffusion and encouragement of the insurgent, isolation and suppression of the insurgent, or reconciliation.[38] The choice of one strategy over another depends on whether the intervener prefers to help the weaker or the stronger party, or to remain neutral. In such a situation the choice is influenced by the relevance that the outcome of the war holds for the international system. According to Modelski, 'the international system favours those parties to internal war which accord with the current formula and which reinforce the current structure of authority; and it discourages their opponents'.[39] In particular, the decision to support the insurgent or the incumbent depends on the ability of the insurgents to challenge the formula of the international system, the structure of authority, and the 'ruling class' in the international system.

Following these contributions, the article first analyses the structure of the GWoT in Somalia by focusing on the interests and strategies of the intervener. Second, it evaluates whether the modality of intervention (ie the use of diplomatic, economic and coercive measures) satisfied or violated the conditions essential for pursuing conflict resolution.

The Global War on Terror in Somalia

Somalia became a new front in the US war on terror in December 2002, when the Operation 'Enduring Freedom – Horn of Africa' (OEF-HOA) was launched to support military operations against the al-Qaeda network and associated forces in the Horn of Africa. The doctrine of the GWoT has its roots in a deductive and reductionist logic that associates state failure with international terrorism.[40] Although criticised for its inconsistency,[41] this causal association has been hegemonic in building the 'Orthodox Failed State Narrative' supporting the doctrine of 'building states while fighting terror'.[42]

In 2001 Ethiopia and the USA inaugurated in Somalia a *glocal* strategy mixing global and regional operations, which aimed to fight international terrorism in the Horn of Africa. The first phase (2001–06) was signalled by a small-scale military campaign, accompanied by an intense diplomatic initiative oriented to isolate inimical forces and to enforce regime change. During this stage the two allies openly pursued indirect forms of intervention by supressing or supporting one of the contending parties. The second stage (2006–08), displayed a major military profile. Both regional and global actors were engaged in disrupting and dismantling the material and political bases of presumed adherents to al-Qaida: through a major involvement of Ethiopian troops on the ground, and the use of more sophisticated US technology for aerial surveillance and warfare.

The interests of the interveners

Counter-terrorism in Somalia has been a multilateral initiative, sustained by a number of African states and international organisations.[43] While multilateral responses have been privileged on the side of diplomatic, economic and judiciary cooperation, on the military side intervention has been based on a strict bilateral 'coalition of the willing' formed by Ethiopia and the USA, which intervened in Somalia out of different, but convergent, strategic interests.

The USA returned to Somalia with the dual aim of pursuing its own national security imperative (fighting terrorists) while enforcing state capacity (building states).[44] In 2002 the Bush administration moved towards a pre-emption doctrine, oriented to undertake military actions against any state considered a sponsor of international terrorism.[45] According to the National Security Strategy of 2002, state failure in Africa and the Middle East had become a US national threat because of the presumed proliferation of terrorist activities in a fragile context. The US interest in Somalia was thus to 'prevent terrorism', ensuring the eradication of any platform for al-Qaida.[46] However, the preference for a second-line posture made the US counter-terrorist initiative extremely prudent. Following the 1993 Black Hawk crashes US foreign policy in Africa was oriented towards an instrumental interpretation of the principle 'African solutions to African problems'. 'We don't want to be the bus driver' claimed the Acting Secretary of State for African affairs, Charles Snyder, when he presented US Foreign Policy Priorities in Africa for 2007. 'We'd like to sit in the third row on the bus. We don't want to sit all the way in the back of the bus, but we don't want to be the bus driver.'[47]

Ethiopia intervened in Somalia to contain a possible alliance between Eritrea, Ethiopian anti-government forces and Islamist insurgents. Since 1998, when the conflict between Ethiopia and Eritrea escalated in Badme, Somalia has been subject to constant and pervasive forms of neighbourhood mutual interference.[48] The turmoil surrounding the Ethiopian–Somali border was a source of preoccupation for Ethiopian national security, especially since the stability of ethnic Ethiopian federalism became vulnerable to the radicalisation of the Ethiopian diaspora. Tensions in the Horn between hegemonic states (Ethiopia) and diasporic states (Eritrea, Somalia) or populations (Ogadeni, Oromo) contributed deeply to defining the regional relationships of power. Motivated by 'centre–periphery dialectics' and regional hegemonic tensions,[49] the conflict between

Ethiopia and Eritrea in Badme remained unfinished business that had a long-term impact on the region,[50] and on the Somali conflict as well. It is within this context that the GWoT represented for Ethiopia the opportunity to pursue a regional foreign policy agenda, aimed at containing the Eritrean revisionist policy in the Horn.[51] In order to face the regional connotations of the GWoT, Ethiopia stretched the meaning of counter-terrorism in order to deal with domestic security concerns; it did this by targeting liberation and self-determination struggles, and by criminalising political opposition on the basis of the legitimacy granted under the umbrella of global priorities.

To sum up, the GWoT can be defined as a type of intervention that attempted to conjugate the security priorities of the intervening states – such as disrupting and detecting militant activities perceived as a threat to the USA's and Ethiopia's national security – with the state-building priorities of the receiving country – such as the normative claims and trajectories of state-building and democratisation processes. On the basis of these bilateral interests counter-terrorism was pursued within a specific division of labour related to the use of diplomatic, economic and coercive measures.

Diplomatic measures: no mediation, no resolution

The GWoT was officially operative in Somalia from October 2001, when the US Department of State included a Somali group, al-Itihaad al Islamiya, on the black list of organisations suspected of having connections with al-Qaida. Al-Itihaad was an Islamist organisation based in the Soomaali Galbeed, the Somali Region of Ethiopia, but also operative in the disputed border areas between the Somali region of Gedo, the Somali and Oromo regions of Ethiopia. Al-Itihaad took control of the Gedo region in 1991. The town of Luuq became the seat of its administration, where it established a police force, Islamic courts, Islamic education and health centres, all linked to the principles of Islamic Sharia law.

Some analysts claimed that the inclusion of al-Itihaad on the list of terrorists was an overstatement promoted by the Ethiopian government. Although some affirmed that al-Itihaad's presence in Somalia started in the early 1990s as a clear subcontractor of al-Qaeda,[52] others claimed indeed that the connection was rather deduced by the presence of foreigner fighters, as well by the existence of indirect connections between militants.[53] Yet in 2001 the organisation was considered the main connection between the global and local jihad in Somalia. In 2002 the Department of Defense affirmed that the USA had strong evidence about the al-Qaeda connection or presence in Somalia and, in November, the US Treasury blocked the accounts of the al-Barakaat Group, a money transfer company alleged to be the principal source of funding for Osama bin Laden. In 2004 an investigation by the National Commission on Terrorist Attacks affirmed that there was no evidence to link al-Barakaat to al-Qaeda;[54] however, on the basis of more indirect evidence, the US encouraged its allies to take measures against groups alleged to be linked with al-Qaeda. The logic of the war on terrorism started to permeate the ongoing process of reconciliation, deeply influencing the choices of conflict management strategy.

In May 2000 the government of Djibouti convened a conference at Arta supported by several international actors,[55] in which some 2500 delegates

(including political, business and religious leaders) participated. The Arta conference culminated with the formation of a Transitional National Government (TNG). However, given the 'Arab influence in the TNG, Ethiopia and Western Powers did not extend their support to the government'.[56] Furthermore, in October 2001 a group of Mogadishu-based leaders expressed the suspicion that the leadership of the TNG was pro-al-Itihaad. In reaction Ethiopia and the USA assisted the formation of a counterinsurgency movement, the Somalia Reconciliation and Restoration Conference (SRRC), a coalition of warlords intended to create an 'all-inclusive national reconciliation conference, in opposition to the Arta Conference'.[57] Although 'Ethiopia denied that there was a plan for the establishment of a "parallel government", the SRRC openly declared the aim to form a representative Transitional Government of National Unity'.[58] And the Ethiopian forces fomented opposition to the transitional government by training troops and providing military equipment.[59]

During this first stage of diplomatic negotiation the USA assumed an indirect role, sponsoring the exclusion of inimical political forces from the peace talks.[60] Even if negotiation was pursued, no real space for mediation was left on the ground, and the distinction between friends and inimical political forces was not based on the logic of Somali politics, but rather on the guiding principles of the GWoT. In October 2002 the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD) inaugurated a National Reconciliation Conference between the TNG and the SRRC in Nairobi, which culminated in the cessation of hostilities and the formation of Transitional Federal Institutions.[61] Despite Somali leaders officially claiming that it had been an 'inclusive, representative and acceptable' process for all the parties,[62] the conference was plagued by deep disagreements. On the one side, the TNG accused the Ethiopian government of training nearly 5000 young men inside Somalia 'with the aim of inflaming a new civil war'.[63] On the other side, the IGAD openly supported the SRRC, excluding the TNG from the formation of new transitional institutions.[64] The 'frontline states' (Ethiopia, Djibouti and Kenya) announced the formation of a Technical Committee that was practically immobilised by the hegemonic role played by the Ethiopian delegation, and by its constant disagreements with its Djiboutian counterpart.[65] As result, the IGAD talks gradually became a 'Farewell Symphony':[66] the delegates abandoned the talks and the IGAD's credibility was eroded by the shared suspicion that, under Ethiopian pressure, the Committee was orienting the talks in favour of the SRRC.

When the TNG collapsed in 2003 the IGAD undertook a second reconciliation process, the Mbagathi Peace Conference.[67] Disagreements about the formation of political representatives impaired the adoption of the Transitional Charter and the formation of transitional institutions. The SRRC in fact claimed that only the new president and the 24 leaders who signed the previous Eldoret Declaration were entitled to select the members of parliament (only this formula would guarantee the SRRC control over the new parliamentary formation). On the opposite side, members of the former TNG argued for the inclusion of the entire group of 38 delegates invited to the Nairobi conference, in order to limit the role of the SRRC within the new parliament.[68] The composition of the transitional parliament remained contested. As a regional official told the ICG:

> [The faction leaders] only signed because each of them received the recognition he wanted: Abdullahi Yusuf was recognised as president of Puntland; Mohamed Abdi Yusuf was recognised as prime minister of the newly-revived TNG; the G8 was formally recognised as a political grouping for the first time with Mohamed Qanyare as its head; Aden Madoobe got what he wanted as the only signatory from the RRA; and Abdiqasim got to sign the agreement as Head of State. Apart from this they agreed on virtually nothing.[69]

The IGAD's tortuous peace process culminated in October 2004 with the formation of the Transitional Federal Government (TFG), temporary based in Baidoa. The Transitional Federal Parliament elected Abdullahi Ahmed Yusuf as interim president, crystallising the outcomes of an exclusionary politics of reconciliation oriented to support those forces favourable to cooperation with Addis and Washington. The resulting alliance between Abdullahi Ahmed Yusuf and the Ethiopian government alienated large sections of the Hawiye clan, leaving the TFG with limited support with which to operate. Abdullahi Ahmed Yusuf's election fomented the opposition forces, which interpreted the Mbagathi process as part of an Ethiopian move oriented to secure its own boundaries with a friendly regime. This suspicion was stoked by the fact that the first cabinet formation concentrated power 'within a narrow circle, pro-Ethiopian forces from the SRRC, at the expense of clans and movements from the failed TNG'.[70] The decision to isolate the TNG, and to pursue a facade of negotiation without mediation, constitutes the first destructive form of interference exerted by the GWoT on the (already) complex Somali conflict.

Coercive and economic measures

In the meantime Ethiopia attempted to change a regime perceived as close to al-Qaeda (the TNG), while the USA provided the financial and military support indispensable to the formation of a friendly regime. The CJTF-HOA was established at Camp Lemonier, Djibouti in May 2002; afterwards the East-Africa Counter Terrorism Initiative was launched and US Special Forces started taking part in anti-terror operations in Yemen. When, in December 2002, Enduring Freedom was officially launched in the Horn of Africa the mission assumed a low-military profile and the USA focused on a set of operations necessary for strengthening the logistics and intelligence capability of its regional partners. The war on terror was not operative on virgin ground, but it made US foreign policy in Somalia more indirect, and based on the formulation of regional structures and networks of alliance. By the mid-1990s Ethiopia was undertaking military measures against al-Itihaad. In 1996 it first supported the Somali National Front, a group competing with al-Itihaad for control of a contested region. Afterwards the Ethiopian army raided Somali territory near the Somali border, with the aim of fighting al-Itihaad. And three months later the raids led to ground occupations in the Gedo region. Two events that occurred in 1996 precipitated the Ethiopian incursion: the attempted assassination of an Ethiopian government minister on 8 July and the bombing of the Wabe-Shebelle hotel in Addis Ababa on 4 August.

The counter-terrorism initiative undertaken in 2001 followed the pattern of mutual interference already existing by supporting the insurgent forces (the

SRRC) in the strategic plan to overthrow the TNG. However, when a friendly regime was established with the TFG, the new government faced the rising power and popularity of the Islamic Courts Union (ICU), an umbrella organisation composed at least by four factions (Harakat al-Shabaab, al-Itihaad al Islamya, Majuma Ulema, Ahlu Sunna Wal Jama'a) and various sharia courts. It is exactly in reaction to the growing influence played by the ICU that counter-terrorism efforts in Somalia proliferated.

To contain the increasing popularity of the ICU, in February 2006 Ethiopia and the USA supported the formation of a new coalition of forces oriented to fight terrorism, the Alliance for the Restoration of Peace and Counter Terrorism (ARPCT). The Alliance played a pivotal function in the US and Ethiopian project of dismantling the material bases of presumed adherents to al-Qaida.[71] As illustrated by Möller, many reports confirm that the Alliance was generously financed by the Bush administration in order to comply with the pre-emptive doctrine of the GWoT.[72]

As result of this new formation, clashes between the Islamic Courts and ARPCT erupted in February 2006. In May, the battle intensified and in early June the ICU took control of Baidoa and Mogadishu, forcing the Alliance to flee to Jowhar, where the ICU launched its last, successful, offensive. The battles of Mogadishu and Jowhar signalled the ICU's seizure of power inside the Benadir triangle. But since regional and global actors were not disposed to recognise the ICU as the emerging *de facto* authority, the Alliance's defeat was taken as a sign of the need to re-formulate the counter-terrorism strategy.

In August 2006 Ethiopian troops moved towards the Somali border and in December 2006 the US Assistant Secretary of State for African Affairs, Jendayi E. Frazer, confirmed that al-Qaeda controlled the Islamic Courts.[73] Afterwards fighting between the TFG forces and the Courts broke out around Baidoa. The Courts advanced and conquered key TFG bases in the southern territories of Baidoa and the government was close to collapse. However, on 22 December Ethiopian troops and tanks entered Somali territory and reached the two fronts in the conflict, Daynunay and Iidale.[74] The Ethiopian intervention was decisive in counter-attacking the Court's advance: while on 20 December the ICU was still able to conquer key government bases, it was only after the Ethiopian airstrikes and ground operations in the north that the TFG troops were able to establish government control over Muduug, Jowhar and Middle Shabelle areas.

To enforce the legality of the operation, the Ethiopian government used the GWoT to legitimise the incursion, claiming that the chairman of the Islamic Courts was the head of al-Itihaad, and that the intervention was a 'lawful exercise of self-defense'.[75] Clearly the Ethiopian offensive was not simply an 'instance of the US subcontracting the war of terror to a regional ally'.[76] As Menkhaus put it, 'Ethiopia pursued its own interests and would have acted with or without US approval'.[77] In November 2006 the Ethiopian Prime Minister, Meles Zenawi, stated that Ethiopia would intervene 'with or without the US', but that it preferred to do it with the country.[78] In December the former US Department Official, John Prendergast, granted full support to the Ethiopian operation, claiming that: 'We [the United States] are now giving a yellow-slash-green light to Ethiopia's policy of containment by intervention'.[79] The USA in fact assisted the Ethiopian occupation not only with aerial reconnaissance and satellite surveillance, but also with

direct military operations on the ground, which forced the ICU to withdraw into a defensive form of jihad in Djibouti and Eritrea.

On the economic side the USA provided huge support to the major Ethiopian involvement in Somalia.[80] Although Meles Zenawi often declared that Addis Ababa never requested or received financial support for the Ethiopian presence in Somalia, when in 2006 Ethiopia became a frontline state in the war on terror, no substantial variations occurred in Ethiopian military spending.[81] According to data retrieved from the Congressional Budget Justification for Foreign Operations, it was precisely in 2006 that Ethiopia became the largest recipient of US foreign assistance in Africa.[82] Between 2002 and 2009 Ethiopia received $27 million in the form of International Military Education and Training (IMET) funds and Foreign Military Financing (FMF). Figure 1 shows the total amount of US financial assistance (composed of economic, social and military programmes) to Ethiopia: in 2007 the country received $474 million of foreign assistance, an increase of 168% in comparison with the total ($176) received the previous year.[83] In 2008 the USA increased its military assistance to Ethiopia by 97%, spending a total amount of $933 million. And it was only in 2010, with the withdrawal of Ethiopian forces from Somalia, that US financial assistance started to decrease.

Mapping the consequences of the war on terror in Somalia

The GWoT has been one of the most violent phases of foreign intervention in Somalia, imposing what Samatar defined as 'a reign of terror on the Somali people'.[84] According to Amnesty International, in 2006 fighting between the ICU and the TFG killed nearly 6000 civilians in Mogadishu.[85] According to Human Rights Watch, the conflict further deteriorated between January 2007 and December 2008;[86] it reached a new high in 2010 and became one of the major armed conflicts fought that year, after Afghanistan and Pakistan,[87] with almost 2100 battle-related deaths.[88] Several analysts and scholars agree that one of the immediate implications of the GWoT in Somalia has been the escalation of violence, galvanised by the presence of Ethiopian troops.[89] But *how* did the GWoT

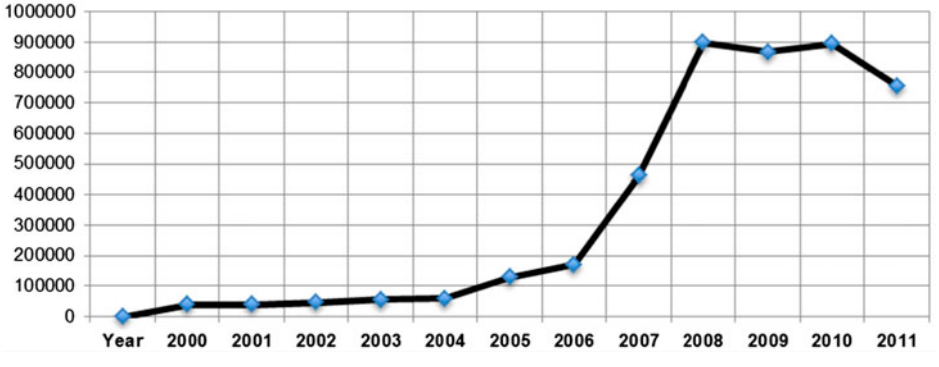

Figure 1. US Foreign Assistance to Ethiopia (FY 2000–10), $000.
Source: Author's illustration based on data retrieved from Department of State, "Congressional Budget Justification for Foreign Operations," 2000–12.

result in the opposite result of building terror? To reveal the mechanics of this process, the following section considers two aspects: the radicalisation of the military component, and the ideological polarisation of the insurgency.

Radicalisation

After the Ethiopian occupation the ICU's top political leadership moved to Asmara and Djibouti, while the military commanders of the Courts remained in Somalia. When, in January 2007, the former chairman of the ICU, Sheikh Sharif, surrendered to the Kenyan authorities, al-Shabaab and other militia continued the guerrilla warfare to recapture the South. By the end of March 2007 the conflict had intensified in Mogadishu, where Ethiopian and TFG troops were under daily attack. As illustrated in Figure 2, based on data available from the Prio Armed Conflict Dataset,[90] the Somali conflict reached its peak after the Ethiopian occupation in 2006.

Insurgents pursued a low-level guerrilla campaign, while Ethiopia used aerial bombardments, heavy artillery and mortars to counter the offensive.[91] In July 2007 the insurgency spread to the entire Banaadir region, Middle and Lower Shabeelle and parts of the Juba Valley: the TFG lost the majority of the territories it had conquered during the 2006 Ethiopian incursion. In October the guerrillas reached Hiiraan and Galguduud regions, and in December Sheik Qasim Ibrahim Nur (national security director of the TFG) announced that 80% of the country was no longer under the government's control.[92]

Since early 2008 the USA had also started launching a higher number of direct operations: mainly drones and missile attacks against villages (Dobley, 3 March 2008; Taabta, Lower Juba, 28 June 2011; Dolbiyow, 6 October 2009; and Baraawe, 14 September 2009) and training camps (Ras Kamboni, 9 January 2007; Afgoye, November 2009; Afmadow, 6 July 2011; Kismayo, 15 September 2011; and Afgoye, November 2011). Although until 2007 the USA had avoided becoming directly involved, 'the establishment of the TFG rendered overt US military action on Somali soil politically easier, and American AC-130 strikes targeting al-Qaeda players made sense from a strictly counter-terrorism standpoint'.[93]

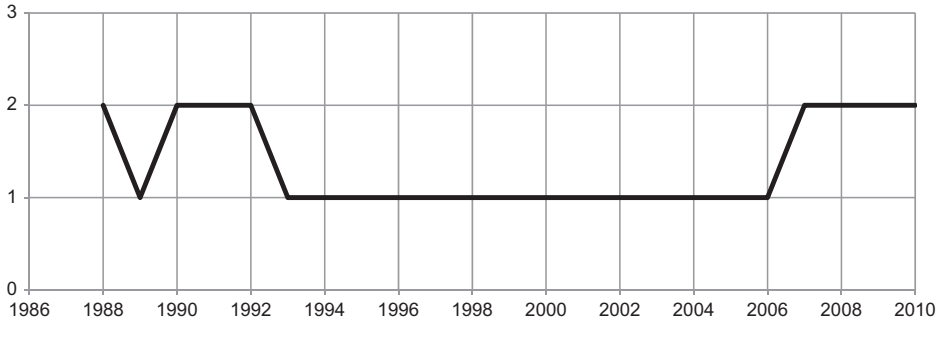

Figure 2. Intensity of conflict, Somalia, 1988–2010.
Source: Author's illustration based on data retrieved from UCDP PRIO, "UCDP/PRIO Armed Conflict Dataset."

In response to the rising aspirations, and increased level of violence, of the Ethiopian and US forces, the tactics and strategies of the Somali insurgency were suddenly radicalised. Until 2007 al-Shabaab had extended its political power through pragmatic means and used classic guerrilla tactics to oppose the TFG and Ethiopian troops. It was only in 2007 that group operational tactics and strategies changed.[94] According to Marchal, four indicators of such a change should be mentioned: the use indiscriminate methods, such as suicide bombs, land mines and roadside bombs; a more centralised command structure; the presence of foreign jihadists taking operational command; and a major focus on infantry. [95] Using data collected from the National Consortium for the Study of Terrorism and Responses to Terrorism, it is clear that, before the escalation of the Ethiopian occupation, the terrorist threat in Somalia was irrelevant. Figure 3 shows that, while between 1998 and 2003 Somalia had roughly three incidents a year classified as 'terrorist incidents', in 2007, after the Ethiopian occupation, the number of incidents rapidly rose to 158.

Several analysts and scholars have claimed that the increased violence exercised by the Ethiopian and US forces in Somalia served 'as a jihadi recruitment aid', killing dozens of innocents and adding legitimacy to the Islamist insurgency.[96] As noted by the International Crisis Group: 'Never before Ethiopian intervention was the radicalisation so high and were people so numerous to be ready to lose their life to fight those they considered occupying forces'.[97]

Polarisation

The second important consequence of the GWoT in Somalia has been the political and ideological polarisation of the Somali insurgency around the matrix of Salafi jihadism. Since 2007 al-Shabaab has refused to pursue any compromise with the TFG until the Ethiopian troops withdrew. But the TFG refused to enlarge the alliance of moderates, and did not support the idea of power sharing

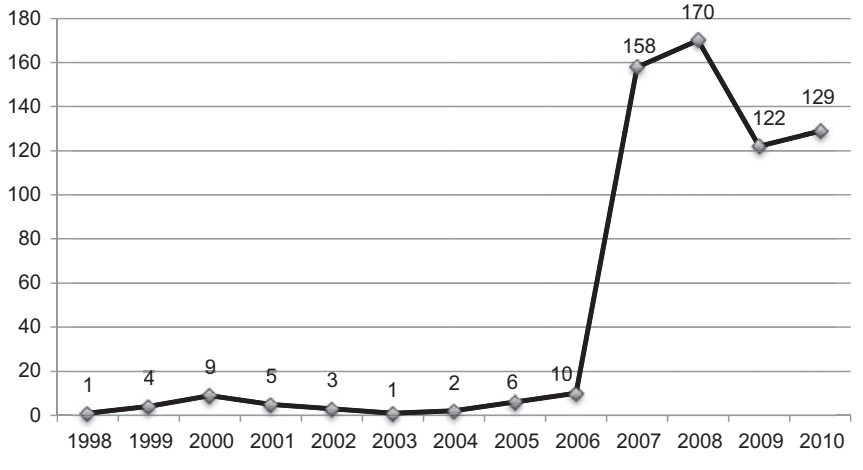

Figure 3. 'Terrorist incidents' over time in Somalia, 1998-2010.

Source: National Consortium for the Study of Terrorism and Responses to Terrorism (START) 2015; and Malito and Ylönen, "Bypassing the Regional?," 50, Figure 3.

with former comrades in arms.[98] Considering the divisions already existing between members of the former Islamic Courts,[99] the TFG and regional partners sponsored a model of *reconciliation by exclusion*, which aimed to weaken the insurgents by broadening their internal divisions, and by encouraging skirmishes in the hope of provoking an all-out military confrontation. However, taking this diplomatic risk achieved the opposite result of polarising al-Shabaab around the global rhetoric and strategic directions of global jihadism.[100]

The isolation strategy in fact intensified in 2008, when the Djibouti government launched reconciliation talks with members of the former Islamic Courts favourable to negotiation. An ARS delegation, including the leaders of the two wings based in Djibouti and Asmara (respectively, Sheikh Sharif and Sharif Hassan Sheikh Aden), met the UN Special Representative in Nairobi. In November 2008 the TFG and the ARS-Djibouti wing reached an agreement for the formation of a Government of National Unity, the expansion of the transitional parliament to members of the former Islamist Courts, and the election of Sheikh Sharif as the new president. However, the other factions interpreted this agreement as a betrayal,[101] since it established a dissociation 'from any armed groups or individuals that do not adhere to the terms of the agreement'.[102] The Djibouti talks marked a breaking point between contending forces, and the new government coalition intensified a strategy of institution building based on the exclusion of opponents.[103] Although the government was expected to engage in mediation with former members of the Courts, Sheik Sharif attempted to preserve his own credibility as a 'moderate Islamist' by trying to break up the insurgent fronts and by conducting secret talks with members of both al-Shabaab and Hizbul Islam. While Sheikh Sharif often stated that he had pursued successful negotiations with local civic, religious and political leaders in Mogadishu, the opposition forces often claimed that none of them ever met the Somali president.[104] The neo-elected president in fact attempted to use these negotiations to legitimise the political choices of his own coalition. As the ICG reported, 'The overall aim of the architects of the process was to create a powerful political alliance, capable of stabilising the country, marginalising the radicals and stemming the tide of Islamic militancy'.[105] As result, the parties never made practical efforts to mediate.

As the International Crisis Group alleged, it was in response to the exclusionary diplomatic negotiations undertaken by the new government coalition that 'Al-Shabaab moved closer to the al-Qaeda orbit, and the links…bec[a]me more solid'.[106] After the designation of al-Shabaab as a Foreign Terrorist Organisation in February 2009 the imperative of the Government of National Unity to roll back its former allies achieved a formal recognition and source of justification. As a result, those forces that in the meanwhile had consolidated their territorial control in southern Somalia were excluded from the diplomatic negotiations. As Apuuli has argued,[107] 'the discrepancy between the balance of forces on the ground and the political talks between two protagonists who control very little, made implementation [of the peace process] problematic'. Yet the paradox of isolating *de facto* authorities was not a strategic aim of the war on terror. External interveners have always tended to negotiate or support weaker groups on the ground. However, it was under the umbrella of the GWoT that the marginalisation of a set of *de facto* authorities generated a dangerous and unprecedented

polarisation of the insurgent forces. In fact, it was only in 2009 that Harakat al-Shabaab al-Mujahidin redefined its local agenda, invoking a more explicit jihadist identity, and in February 2012 that the chairman of al-Shabaab Godane officially declared the organisation's allegiance to al-Qaeda. Since the beginning of the counter-terrorism campaign, the USA and its allies have continuously accused various Islamist organisations (al-Itihaad, ICU, al-Shabaab and ARS) of being connected to al-Qaida. Until 2008 all the Islamist groups denied these allegations, emphasising instead the local dimension of the Somali jihad. But it was in February 2012 that the Somali jihad was officially connected to the need to unite the 'armies of the Ummah under one banner'.[108]

Conclusions

Originally aiming to 'build states while fighting terror', this article has revealed how and why the Enduring Freedom operation in Somalia achieved the opposite result of 'building terror while fighting enemies'. On the one hand, by analysing the structure of the intervention, the article reveals that the interests of the interveners influenced the choice of conflict management strategy in a way that privileged the pursuit of bilateral negotiations, but not mediation. The pre-eminence of an external security agenda (fighting terrorists) has gradually favoured the idea of marginalising hostile political forces because of their presumed connection with al-Qaeda.

By analysing the modality of intervention (through the use of diplomatic, economic and coercive measures), the paper shows that the GWoT had the predictable consequence of polarising and radicalising the insurgents. The intervention sponsored an isolationist model of negotiation that immobilised the proceedings of each peace process and marginalised key political actors. On the military side the isolationist strategy was pivotal to radicalising the opposition forces and amplifying the overall intensity of conflict.

By questioning the conditions under which the GWoT in Somalia contributed to generate destabilising rather than state-building prospects, the article has also advanced a broader way of understanding how global security concerns interact with domestic post-war political scenarios. After the escalation of the GWoT, Somalia was proclaimed the prototype of the collapsed state. Since then the academic debate has often uncritically emphasised the role of state fragility as a determinant of transnational and international security risks. Greater attention has been devoted to defining the security challenges provoked by 'failed states' to the stability of the international system. But less attention has been paid to other side of the coin, ie to the destabilising role played by external interveners in the receiving countries. This article has attempted to make a contribution in this direction of enquiry by arguing that the GWoT should be approached as a form of military intervention that sponsored an isolationist strategy unable to satisfy any of the conditions essential to promoting conflict resolution in Somalia. These findings support existing criticisms of the dangerous fallacy of the Bush pre-emption paradigm. However, the article also proposes a more nuanced way of understanding the systematic and contextual challenges launched by the GWoT to the political order of the receiving countries.

Acknowledgements

I am grateful to Andrea Carati and Alessandro Colombo for their valuable feedback and discussions on earlier versions of this article. I thank the two anonymous reviewers for their helpful comments and suggestions.

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Notes

1. Patman, "The Roots of Strategic Failure."
2. Rotberg, *When States Fail*.
3. CJTF-HOA, "About the Command."
4. "CJTF-HOA Factsheet." April 26, 2009. http://web.archive.org/web/20090426223216/http://www.hoa.africom.mil/AboutCJTF-HOA.asp.
5. Ibid.
6. Quaranto, "Building States while Fighting Terror."
7. Brunstetter and Braun, "The Implications of Drones"; Elshtain, *Just War against Terror*; Ratner, "Jus ad Bellum"; and Sloane, "The Cost of Conflation."
8. Brunstetter and Braun, "The Implications of Drones"; and Shah, "War on Terrorism."
9. Cassidy, *Counterinsurgency and the Global War on Terror*.
10. Agamben, *Stato D'eccezione*; Aradau and Van Munster, "Exceptionalism and the 'War on Terror'"; Patman, "Globalisation"; and Rojecki, "Rhetorical Alchemy."
11. Blum and Heymann, *Laws, Outlaws, and Terrorists*.
12. Agamben, *Stato D'eccezione*; Ralph, *America's War on Terror*; and Neal, *Exceptionalism and the Politics of Counter-terrorism*.
13. Erjavec and Volčič, "'War on Terrorism' as a Discursive Battleground"; Hodges and Nilep, *Discourse, War and Terrorism*; and Jackson, *Writing the War on Terrorism*.
14. Fairclough, "Language in New Capitalism"; Fairclough et al., "Critical Discourse Analysis"; and Stampnitzky, *Disciplining Terror*.
15. Fairclough et al., *Discourse and Contemporary Social Change*.
16. Stampnitzky, *Disciplining Terror*.
17. See, for instance, Borradori, *Philosophy in a Time of Terror*.
18. Chandler, "The Revival of Carl Schmitt"; Colombo, *La Guerra Ineguale*; Müller, "'An Irregularity that cannot be Regulated'"; and Odysseos and Petito, *The International Political Thought of Carl Schmitt*.
19. Patman, *Strategic Shortfall*.
20. Eland, *The Failure of Counterinsurgency*; and Rogers, *Why We're Losing the War on Terror*.
21. Bryden, *The Reinvention of Al-Shabaab*; Hoehne, *Counter-terrorism in Somalia*; and Marchal, "The Rise of a Jihadi Movement."
22. Rogers, *Why We're Losing the War on Terror*.
23. Keen, *Endless War?*
24. Verhoeven, "The Self-fulfilling Prophecy of Failed States."
25. See Pape, "It's the Occupation, Stupid"; and Rogers, *Why We're Losing the War on Terror*.
26. Cole and Lobel, "Why We're Losing the War on Terror"; Dodge, *Inventing Iraq*; Dodge, "The Causes of US Failure in Iraq"; Dodge, "The Ideological Roots of Failure"; Eland, *The Failure of Counterinsurgency*; and Mitchell and Massoud, "Anatomy of Failure."
27. "Global Terrorism Index."
28. Van Linschoten and Kuehn, *An Enemy We Created*; Dear, "Beheading the Hydra?"; and Marchal, "A Tentative Assessment."
29. Hoffman, "The Changing Face of Al Qaeda"; and Cole and Lobel, "Why We're Losing the War on Terror."
30. Cole and Lobel, "Why We're Losing the War on Terror."
31. Galbraith, *Unintended Consequences*.
32. See Bradbury and Kleinman, "State-building, Counterterrorism, and Licensing Humanitarianism"; Möller, "The Horn of Africa and the US 'War on Terror'"; and Menkhaus, *Somalia after the Ethiopian Occupation*.

33. Hoehne, *Counter-terrorism in Somalia*; Marchal, "The Rise of a Jihadi Movement"; Möller, "The Horn of Africa and the US 'War on Terror'."
34. Verhoeven, "The Self-fulfilling Prophecy of Failed States."
35. Bercovitch and Jackson, "Negotiation or Mediation?"
36. Burton, *Conflict*, 3.
37. Bercovitch and Jackson, "Negotiation or Mediation?," 75.
38. Modelski, "The International Relations Internal War." Diffusion occurs when the interveners encourage insurgents and demoralise incumbents. Isolation occurs when foreign actors aim to weaken the insurgents: they reinforce the incumbents because the insurgents' claims seriously challenge the international system. Reconciliation occurs when 'the outcome of the war itself is less important than the very fact of the occurrence of violence'. Ibid., 35.
39. Ibid., 61.
40. Verhoeven, "The Self-fulfilling Prophecy of Failed States"; and Patrick, "'Failed' States and Global Security." See also Piazza, "Incubators of Terror."
41. Hagmann and Hoehne, "Failures of the State Failure Debate." See also Piazza, "Incubators of Terror"; Samatar, "Ethiopian Occupation and American Terror"; and Sanín, "Evaluating State Performance."
42. Verhoeven, "The Self-fulfilling Prophecy of Failed States."
43. Initially, the OEF-HOA consisted of seven African partners (Sudan, Ethiopia, Eritrea, Djibouti, Somalia, Kenya and the Seychelles).
44. According to Jendayi E. Frazer, Assistant Secretary for African Affairs, at the House International Relations Committee Joint Hearing, 'When considering the Africa policy of this Administration it is worth noting that this credo has two implications; the United States is contributing generously toward improved democratic governance, health and economic growth in Africa, and the United States is also actively engaged in denying safe haven to terrorists with the help of African partners. Africa finds itself involved in the Global War on Terror, and Somalia is a critical element of our broader efforts to fight global terrorism.' Frazer, "Somalia."
45. Swan, "U.S. Policy in the Horn of Africa"; See also Malito and Ylönen, "Bypassing the Regional?"
46. Ibid.
47. Smith, *Securing Africa*, 185.
48. Abbink, "Ethiopia–Eritrea."
49. See De Guttry et al., *The 1998–2000 War*. See also Iyob, "The Ethiopian–Eritrean Conflict."
50. Jacquin-Berdal and Plaut, *Unfinished Business*.
51. Reid, *Eritrea's External Relations*.
52. Rabasa et al., *Beyond Al-Qaeda*.
53. Menkhaus, *Somalia*.
54. Roth et al., *Monography on Terrorist Financing*.
55. The Arta process was supported by IGAD member states, the UN, the Organisation of African Unity, the League of Arab States, the Organisation of the Islamic Conference and the European Union.
56. Bradbury and Healy, "Whose Peace is it Anyway?," 117.
57. United Nations Security Council, "Report of the Secretary-General on the Situation in Somalia," October 11, 2001, 3.
58. Ibid., 2.
59. United Nations Security Council, "Report of the Monitoring Group."
60. Malito and Ylönen, "Bypassing the Regional?"
61. The first meeting was held in Eldoret, the following ones, from February 2003, in Mbagathi.
62. Somalia National Reconciliation Process, "Declaration on Cessation of Hostilities."
63. United Nations Security Council, "Report of the Secretary-General on the Situation in Somalia," June 27, 2002.
64. International Crisis Group, *Can the Somali Crisis be Contained?*
65. International Crisis Group, *Somalia: Continuation of War by Other Means?*
66. Malito and Ylönen, "Bypassing the Regional?"
67. Somalia National Reconciliation Conference, "Phase II Mbagathi."
68. International Crisis Group, *Somalia: Continuation of War by Other Means?*
69. Ibid., 8.
70. International Crisis Group, *Can the Somali Crisis be Contained?*, 3.
71. International Crisis Group, *Can the Somali Crisis Be Contained?*
72. Möller, "The Horn of Africa and the US 'War on Terror'."
73. Frazer, "Somalia."
74. "Ethiopian Tanks Roll." December 26, 2011. http://www.hiiraan.com/news4/2006/Dec/738/ethiopian_tanks_roll_in_somali_battle_s_fourth_day.aspx
75. Allo, "Ethiopia's Armed Intervention in Somalia."
76. Menkhaus, *Somalia after the Ethiopian Occupation*, 3.
77. Ibid.
78. Berhane, "Meles Zenawi asked US for Intel." April 11, 2011. http://hornaffairs.com/en/2011/11/04/meles-zenawi-asked-us-for-intel-ethiopias-somalia-intervention-2006/

79. Landay and Bengali, "US Policy in the Horn of Africa."
80. Department of State, "Congressional Budget Justification."
81. SIPRI, *SIPRI Yearbook*; Department of State, "Congressional Budget Justification."
82. According to the Congressional Budget Justification for Foreign Operations for fiscal year 2009: 'The increase of funding between FY 2008 and FY 2009 to support programs in the Peace and Security Objective reflect increased national security threats posed by domestic insurgents, Eritrea, and extremists from Somalia, requiring a significant increase in foreign assistance for this strategic partner of the United States.' Department of State, "Congressional Budget Justification."
83. Department of State, "FY 2008 Congressional Budget Justification."
84. Samatar, "Ethiopian Occupation and American Terror," 177.
85. "Amnesty International Report 2007."
86. Albin-Lackey, *'So Much to Fear'*.
87. Melvin and De Koning, "Resources and Armed Conflict."
88. SIPRI, *SIPRI Yearbook*.
89. See Hoehne, *Counter-terrorism in Somalia*; International Crisis Group, "Popular Protest in North Africa and the Middle East."
90. Gleditsch et al., "Armed Conflict 1946–2001."
91. "Eight Killed in Mogadishu Clashes." March 28, 2008. http://www.hiiraan.com/news4/2008/Mar/6162/eight_killed_in_mogadishu_clashes.aspx; Gettleman, "Ethiopia Attacks Airport in Somali Capital." December 26, 2006. New York Times, http://www.nytimes.com/2006/12/25/world/africa/25cnd-somalia.html?pagewanted=all.
92. "Somalis Poised to Launch a Massive Attack." December 17, 2007. http://www.ethiopianreview.com/index/1643
93. International Institute for Strategic Studies, *Strategic Survey 2007*, 260.
94. Marchal, "The Rise of a Jihadi Movement."
95. Ibid.
96. Hagmann and Hoehne, "Failures of the State Failure Debate." See also Hoehne, *Counter-terrorism in Somalia*; Mantzikos, "The International Community's Role"; Marchal, "Warlordism and Terrorism"; and Marchal, "The Rise of a Jihadi Movement."
97. International Crisis Group, *Somalia: The Transitional Government on Life Support*.
98. International Crisis Group, "Somalia's Divided Islamists," 14.
99. International Crisis Group, "Somalia's Divided Islamists."
100. See Bryden, *The Reinvention of Al-Shabaab*; Marchal, "The Rise of a Jihadi Movement"; and "Partial Translation of AlShabaab's Leader Oath of Allegiance."
101. Ali, "Somalia: Cautious Welcome for UN-Brokered Peace Deal," *Garowe Online*, http://allafrica.com/stories/200806101135.html
102. United Nations Security Council, "Report of the Secretary-General on the Situation in Somalia," S/2008/466, 3.
103. Interview by the author in Somaliland, 2011.
104. "Al-Shabaab reiterates opposition to new Somali leader". February 12) 2009. http://www.hiiraan.com/news2/2009/feb/al_shabaab_reiterates_opposition_to_new_somali_leader.aspx
105. International Crisis Group, *Somalia: To Move Beyond the Failed State*, 20.
106. International Crisis Group, "Somalia's Divided Islamists," 6.
107. Apuuli, "Somalia after the United Nations-led Djibouti Peace Process," 24.
108. "Partial Translation of AlShabaab's Leader Oath of Allegiance."

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