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14. ABSTRACT On 06 August, Al Shabaab announced that it would withdraw from the capital city Mogadishu due to recent offensive operations by African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM) forces. This occurred after 5 frustrating years of AMISOM making very little progress in supporting Somalia's Transitional Federal Government (TFG). AMISOM's primary task is to restore order and a peaceful environment so the TFG can provide services to the Somali people. Al Shabaab's stated task is to turn Somalia into an Islamic theocracy with Sharia Law as its charter. For most of the last five years, Al Shabaab held the clear advantage in terms of terrain, popular control, freedom of movement and assistance from entities outside of Somalia but they were not able to dislodge AMISOM. Similarly, AMISOM had the combat power to dominate small parts of Mogadishu, but has only recently made significant progress against their adversary. The general intent of this paper is to analyze how AMISOM turned the corner and expelled AL Shabaab after 5 years of stalemate and what they and their supporters in the US and Europe must do to complete the mission.					
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MASTER OF MILITARY SCIENCE

THE NEXT STEP IN SOMALIA: EXPLOITING VICTORY, POST-MOGADISHU

SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT
OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF
MASTER OF MILITARY SCIENCE

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Executive Summary

Title: The Next Step in Somalia: Exploiting Victory Post-Mogadishu

Author: Major Paul E. Roitsch

Thesis: In order to rid Somalia of extremist influences, the African Union, the United States and other partner states must aggressively enhance the competence of the Transitional Federal Government, deploy a Joint Interagency Task Force, secure Somalia's borders and promote the government's progress with full-spectrum Information Operations.

Discussion: From 2006 to 2011, Al Shabab's repressive dominion over Somalia was largely uncontested with the exception of small parts of Mogadishu. The group's stated task is to turn Somalia into an Islamic theocracy, with Sharia Law as its charter. Opposing them are the Burundian and Ugandan forces of the African Union Mission in Somalia Peacekeeping Force (AMISOM), whose task is to restore order and a peaceful environment and to provide the popularly elected Somali Transitional Federal Government (TFG) an environment in which to function. Though the TFG enjoyed international recognition and support, it failed to fulfill its duties to govern because its membership was more concerned with jockeying for power and personal advancement. On the military front, AMISOM was unable to make progress against Al Shabab due to severely restrictive rules of engagement and a prohibitively narrow set of authorized tasks. In 2010, they made major diplomatic breakthroughs with the Somali clans and secured an alliance. With clan help, AMISOM was able to clear Mogadishu of Al Shabab in a way that complied with their mandate and rules of engagement. As of March, 2012, Al Shabab was unable to regain traction in the Somali capital and was on the run from Kenyan and Ethiopian unilateral operations in Southern and Western Somalia respectively. In order to continue the momentum, Allied forces must support the TFG in finishing or neutralizing Al Shabab while helping the former provide good governance. This can be accomplished by shutting down Al Shabab revenue streams and degrading their offensive capability while shaping the environment to ensure that conditions conducive to a revival do not exist. Failure to do so will likely see Somalia continuing to produce Islamic extremists and pirates to menace international commercial maritime traffic in the Western Indian Ocean.

Conclusion: The key to improving stability in Somalia is building the capacity of the TFG to provide essential services for the Somali people, shaping the environment to prevent the resurgence of extremists and doing so in a manner consistent with Somali cultural and traditional institutions.

Preface

After having spent five years in Burundi and Uganda serving as Trainer and Country Manager supporting those nations' AMISOM pre-deployment training, selection of a topic for this project was quite apparent to me. Preparing for and deploying to combat is a difficult and at times traumatic experience for American Soldiers and families. But observing how African forces do so tends to give a "Mizungu" like me a fresh perspective. Resources are scarce and living conditions, truly austere for them. Necessities are always in short supply and luxuries are unheard of. But the AMISOM soldiers train and fight with a diligence that rivals any other military I have seen without a single complaint. It is to these brave fighting men that I dedicate this project.

I wish to extend my sincerest gratitude to Dr. Adam Cobb for going well above and beyond the call of duty in assisting me with this project in more ways than I can acknowledge here. I would also like to thank Dr. Andre LeSage for all the time he spent providing me with situational awareness of the current strategic situation in Somalia, its root causes and many contributing complexities. I am grateful to the US State Department's ACOTA program for its many contributions in support of African Solutions to African problems and for inspiring me to explore this fascinating subject. Finally, I would like to thank my wife for her unflagging love and support in everything I do.

With the world's attention focused on high-profile conflicts such as Afghanistan and Iraq and the humanitarian crises in Darfur and Haiti, the troubled East African state of Somalia seems to have fallen off the global radar screen, though its duress eclipses that of the aforementioned nations in terms of both intensity of conflict and human suffering.¹ After five years of ruthless, incompetent and fanatical dominion of Islamic extremist group Al Shabab, Somalia has the distinction of once again gracing the top of Foreign Policy Magazine's list of failed states.² When its senior leaders publically contend that, "Al Shabab does not recognize, and will not respect human rights,"³ the contributing factors behind Foreign Policy's ranking become quite clear. The group's stated task is to turn Somalia into an Islamic theocracy, with Sharia Law as its charter.⁴ Opposing them are the Burundian and Ugandan forces of the African Union Mission in Somalia Peacekeeping Force (AMISOM), whose task is to restore order and a peaceful environment to provide the popularly elected Somali Transitional Federal Government (TFG) an environment in which to function.⁵ For five years, Al Shabab possessed the advantage of terrain, popular control, freedom of movement and support from outside Somalia, but they could not dislodge AMISOM. Similarly, AMISOM had the combat power to dominate small parts of Mogadishu, but has only recently made significant progress against Al Shabab. In order to rid Somalia of extremist influences, the African Union, the United States and other state partners must aggressively enhance the competence of the TFG, deploy a Joint Interagency Task Force, secure Somalia's borders and promote TFG progress with full-spectrum Information Operations.

Somali Political Landscape 1991-2006: Dictatorship to Anarchy

Normally, the ouster of a dictator who had seized power through a military coup would be considered a positive development. But in Somalia, the end of the Mohammed Siad Barre regime in 1991 signaled the end of organized government and the beginning of a new era of lawlessness and bloodshed. In the wake of this collapse of central government in Mogadishu, the

power vacuum in Somalia was filled by warlords and clans unleashing their militias to violently compete for personal and political power using food and humanitarian aid as a weapon of control.⁶ An estimated 500,000 non-combatants died of starvation, disease and violence as a result of this struggle.⁷ In response, the United States executed Operation Restore Hope in 1992, deploying its military to Mogadishu in order to subdue the warlords and allow Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) to provide relief to the beleaguered Somali population.⁸

After the US handed over mission responsibility to the UN in 1993, Mogadishu's dominant warlord, Mohammed Farah Aidid, initiated hostilities against the peacekeepers, culminating in the famous "Blackhawk Down" engagement in October of that year. Withdrawing all forces from Somalia, the US was followed closely by UN withdrawal in 1995.⁹ Despite 14 failed reconciliations and peace conferences over the next decade, the country was consumed by tribal and gang-related violence, effectively splintering itself into several regions controlled by clan-based factions.¹⁰ In September of 2004, the TFG was chartered and the world looked favorably upon it, almost universally recognizing its authority. Initially governing from neighboring Kenya, the TFG relocated to Baidoa, north of Mogadishu, in 2005, but failed to govern any significant territory outside of this provisional capital.¹¹ Meanwhile, the remainder of Somalia continued its descent into lawlessness and anarchy, eventually giving rise to the Islamic Courts Union (ICU) in 2006.¹² The ICU is a broad-based alliance of warlords, radical Jihadists, moderate Islamists and even Somali businessmen, which serve as "judges" in the interpretation and enforcement of Sharia Law in their respective localities.¹³ Although they managed to impose a degree of order in Somalia, the radical Islamist ideology that characterized their dominion would set the stage for the next violent episode in this troubled nation's history.

Ethiopian Invasion and Rise of Al Shabab:

Today, Harakat Al Shabab Al Mujahadin enjoys international recognition as Al Qaeda's East African proxy, with the manpower, firepower and finances enabling them to compete with professional armies and govern more territory than the duly-elected government. This is a far cry from their humble beginnings in 2003, with as few as two hundred men serving as enforcers for the ICU's Sharia rulings.¹⁴ Despite Al Shabab's diminutive genesis, Ethiopia viewed Islamist rule of Somalia as a threat. Backed up by intelligence indicating ICU support of their traditional adversary Eritrea, Ethiopia invaded in December of 2006, and quickly forced the ICU into exile.¹⁵ Al Shabab remained in Mogadishu to wage a guerrilla resistance against Ethiopia and subsequently a fledgling AMISOM force. But without the ICU's moral compass, they controlled the population with unheard of cruelty and barbarism. With hated Ethiopia occupying Somali soil, recruiting was easy for Al Shabab.¹⁶ Their ranks rapidly swelled into the thousands, and with a pledge of loyalty to Al Qaeda in 2007, their lethality was complimented by AQ assistance with tactics, techniques and procedures gleaned from engaging US forces in Afghanistan and Iraq.¹⁷

In 2009, Ethiopia declared "mission accomplished," and withdrew its forces without an organized handover of its sector to AMSIOM.¹⁸ This act enabled Al Shabab to; assume control of Central and Southern Somalia and multiple key terrain features in Mogadishu, increase Al Shabab's freedom of movement and ability to attack the TFG, and further hindered the latter's ability to serve the people. In September of 2009, Al Shabab audaciously infiltrated two Vehicle-Borne Improvised Explosive Devices (VBIED) into AMISOM Headquarters, resulting in 17 dead, including AMISOM's Deputy Force Commander, Brigadier General Juvenal Niyoyunguruza.¹⁹ This incident spurred AMISOM to redouble its training efforts. Its American and European allies responded in kind, increasing financial and training support. By mid-2011,

AMISOM was finally close to being in compliance with its 8000-man mandate and was receiving more intensive, high-quality training from the US, UK and France.²⁰ With both adversaries at the zenith of their strength and resolve in 2011, the stage was set for decisive action, but many Western nations questioned what would merit such an investment in this troubled nation.

Al Shabab's Threat to Western Interests:

Although Al Shabab's *raison d'être* is oriented primarily toward domestic political objectives, it poses a significant, multi-dimensional threat against the US, its Western Allies and the entire world; One of the most visible security threats in the region is that of piracy in the Western Indian Ocean. Al Shabab contributes to this menace by effectively thwarting the TFG's ability to enforce law and order. Unrestricted commercial fishing has depleted marine wildlife in Somali waters and have eliminated the livelihood of countless subsistence fishermen. These fishermen have felt compelled to engage in piracy for lack of suitable alternatives,²¹ resulting in Somali pirates' interdiction of commercial traffic, particularly in the vital transit lanes of the Gulf of Aden.²² The net result is lost goods and higher costs of transport due to security, insurance premiums and the fuel and labor costs associated with bypassing the threat area. These costs are ultimately passed on to consumers.

Al Shabab has threatened to attack the US and other nations contributing to the AMISOM mission.²³ With Somali expatriates residing in the US and nearly every European nation due to the "Somali Diaspora," Somalia possesses the capacity and the means to act on this threat. Al Shabab's 2010 attacks in the Ugandan capital of Kampala during the World Cup Football Match was a clear demonstration of their capability to conduct such transnational operations.²⁴ With this capacity, Al Shabab could potentially shift their main effort to neighboring Kenya where they have safe haven amongst the huge Muslim population there. The danger here would be the

execution of Kampala-like operations to destabilize Kenya, which could in turn bring unrest to all of East Africa. Perhaps most dangerous is the potential for Al Qaeda to use its success with Al Shabab as a model for political exploitation of other vulnerable African Muslim nations and their respective resources, such as Senegal (diamonds), Niger (uranium), Sudan (oil) or Nigeria (oil, and 25% of Africa's human capital). Interruption in the flow of these resources could disrupt commodities markets and jeopardize the fragile global economic recovery.

2007-2011: Stalemate

On August 4, 2011, Al Shabab announced its withdrawal from the Somali capital of Mogadishu as a result of AMISOM operations.²⁵ This declaration represented the group's first strategic setback since initiating hostilities with the TFG, but came after nearly five years of deadlock, with Al Shabab punishing AMISOM and the TFG, but unable to oust them. When the African Union chartered AMISOM in 2007, its challenge was to establish credibility deploying to Mogadishu quickly to enforce its authority and stabilize the environment for the TFG. In doing so, AMISOM could field only 1,600 men with minimal training and preparation.²⁶ Historically, a well-disciplined and professional military can prevail over a numerically superior, but undisciplined force such as Al Shabab. Unfortunately, the TFG and AMISOM failed to subdue Al Shabab from 2007 to 2011 due to political ineptitude and corruption on the part of the former, and problematic operational planning by the latter.

Despite broad-based international support and funding to the TFG, its leadership and parliamentarians seemed more interested in securing their own personal power bases and comfort than governing; Senior TFG personnel did not live in Somalia until 2011, and constant squabbling by the lawmakers had essentially brought transitional efforts to a standstill.²⁷ When Sheikh Sharif Sheikh Ahmed assumed office as President of Somalia in January of 2009, hopes to move forward with the TFG's agenda to serve the Somali people were high, and to include

restarting constitutional reform, reviving the judicial system, establishing a central bank and using port revenues for the delivery of public services.²⁸ Unfortunately, most of these initiatives remained on the back-burner while TFG officials jockeyed for influence and power. President Sheikh Sharif failed to emerge as the strong leader as hoped, ceding much of his authority to subordinates such as the Speaker of the Parliament and the Ministers of State, Defense and Interior.²⁹ These TFG officials and many others conducted their duties similar to the clan-based warlords of years past, and even cut their own “separate peace” with Al Shabab and actively undermined the transitional process.³⁰

Arguably, the most significant failure of the TFG that contributed to this stalemate was its inability or unwillingness to provide the public with essential services.³¹ While they were paralyzed with in-fighting, Al Shabab had “liberated” most of Southern Somalia one village at a time under the guise of Islamic governance. With no competition from the duly elected government, the people in this region were quickly disenfranchised by Al Shabab’s draconian rule. Vice laws prevented anyone from listening to music, watching television, or playing sports. Punishments for infractions included amputation and stoning.³² Al Shabab has also forced the withdrawal of international humanitarian efforts resulting in famine due to a break in food aid, and disease caused by a suspension of medical relief efforts.³³ Most egregiously, if Al Shabab’s confiscation of money and livestock from an already poverty stricken population was not enough, they also abducted Somali children from their homes to press into service against the TFG in Mogadishu.³⁴ Thus, the group’s political assent was due less to overwhelming popular support but more as a result of a lack of alternative due to a weak TFG.

On the Military front, AMISOM forces failed to make significant progress neutralizing the Al Shabab threat during this time because they planned and executed a traditional peacekeeping operation and initially fielded an insufficient force package. UN Security Council

Resolution 1744 authorized the African Union under Chapter VII of the UN Charter to deploy the force and, “Take all measures necessary as appropriate to carry out their mandate.”³⁵ This language grants AMISOM the authority to neutralize threat forces since they are the driving force behind the conflict and the most significant barrier against the TFG’s provision of services to the people (apart from TFG in-fighting). However, the AMISOM concept of operations defined the mission with benign tasks such as, “support dialogue and reconciliation, protect infrastructure, monitor the security situation and facilitate humanitarian operations.”³⁶ Reducing the potency of the peacekeeping force further, the language in the AMSIOM Rules of Engagement (ROE) severely restricts the use of lethal force. Article 1 of the ROE states; “You are operating in a defensive posture. You are not to engage the enemy unless in self defense or if there is a command designated hostile forces.”³⁷ Article 2 of the ROE then states; “No forces have been declared hostile.”³⁸ This guidance would confuse even the finest soldiers.

With such a narrow band of authorized tasks and the severely restrictive ROE, AMISOM was at a significant disadvantage to Al Shabab, given their willingness to engage in barbarous acts to advance their agenda. AMISOM was in the unenviable position of being required to take all appropriate actions to stabilize the environment to support the TFG, while at the same time being restricted from eliminating the largest threat to said environment. Essentially, AMISOM could not take the fight to the enemy. Compounding the lack of offensive action was the absence of intelligence operations due to little or no training amongst the AMISOM staff.³⁹ This led to poor or non-existent predictive analysis of Al Shabab operations, resulting in a lack of AMISOM preparedness for hostile offensive activity. For example, Al Shabab planted Improvised Explosive Devices (IEDs) in the very same pothole on the main supply route on three separate occasions, catching AMISOM completely off guard each time. All three incidents were noted on the incident overlay in the Operations Center, yet no preemptive measures were taken.⁴⁰ With no

offensive operations to interdict Al Shabab and heavy casualties due to ineffective defensive activity, the only positive AMISOM accomplishment during this period was maintaining all of their positions and protecting what little ground the TFG controlled.⁴¹

The end result of TFG paralysis and AMISOM's ineffective Peacekeeping Operations from 2007-2011 was a strategic stalemate, characterized by a series of symbolic military, informational and economic victories for Al Shabab. On the streets of Mogadishu, Al Shabab was indistinguishable from the local citizenry, which gave them unrestricted freedom of movement.⁴² The ability to blend enabled them to plant unlimited IEDs and engage AMISOM and the TFG at their convenience. Many residents of Mogadishu attempted to flee from the violence, but Al Shabab responded by setting up checkpoints to prevent them from doing so. Keeping the population trapped in Mogadishu provided Al Shabab with abundant human shields, easily tapped labor pools and sources of revenue to continue the fight to topple the TFG.⁴³

Al Shabab's tactical victories did not deter AMISOM from accomplishing its assigned tasks, but it did provide substantial fodder for jihadist propaganda outlets across the globe. Exaggerated accounts of victories and grisly photos of AMISOM casualties were widespread on the internet. Al Jazeera has produced hundreds of high quality documentaries glorifying the plight of Al Shabab thus reinforcing the theme of Somalia's invasion by "African Crusaders."⁴⁴ The propaganda strategy worked. Islamic charities and other extremist groups, as well as Al Shabab fund raising cells embedded in Somali expatriate communities around the world have raised funds to support the cause.⁴⁵ Despite these victories, Al Shabab could not make significant strategic progress in ousting the TFG and establishing an Islamic Caliphate in Somalia in accordance with their long-term vision. Meanwhile, AMISOM had not been idle. The fatal, two-vehicle suicide attack on AMISOM Headquarters had strengthened their resolve and had incited its American and European partners to increase training, equipment and financial support.⁴⁶ By

2011, all stakeholders in Somalia would see returns on their investments, as it would prove to be the decisive year in the conflict.

2011: Breaking the Deadlock

In the beginning of 2011, AMISOM was at the peak of its strength and level of preparation for the challenging mission. Burundi had added an additional Battalion and Uganda had contributed another Battle Group, bringing the manpower total on the ground in Mogadishu into compliance with the mandated eight thousand. Pre-deployment preparation was augmented with training in the following skill-sets; Intelligence, Heavy weapons, Counter-IED and combat medicine. France and the United Kingdom sent training teams to each nation to complement training provided by the United States. The force was also provided a complete array of equipment to include weapons, body armor and the R21 MkII “Casper” armoured vehicle.⁴⁷

Most significant was the diplomatic breakthrough between AMISOM and several major clan-based militias in the Mogadishu area.⁴⁸ Family and ethnicity has a central role in Somali society. It is ethnically endogamous. The clan is a family-based social unit that serves as the primary component of Somali culture and politics. Typically, each clan in Somalia has a militia due to lack of protection provided by the central government. When the TFG, backed by AMISOM firepower, took over traditional revenue-generating activities in the parts of Mogadishu they controlled, the clans viewed this as trespassing into their territory and gave them yet another reason to support Al Shabab. Eventually, AMISOM became familiar enough with Somali culture to make the connection between popular support and operational success.⁴⁹ Accordingly, they temporarily appointed clan elders as TFG General Officers and permitted them to administer their traditional neighborhoods and districts within Mogadishu in the customary manner. Putting clans back in charge of their own areas resonated with the populace

and made the elders very happy with the increased revenue generated from control of their traditional “turf.”⁵⁰

The simple, yet difficult step of reaching out to the clans and their militias proved to be the turning point for the TFG and AMISOM. With popular favor turning rapidly in their direction and the increased firepower from the clan militias, the next step was to eliminate the primary threat, namely Al Shabab. Clan leaders were more aware than anyone of what was happening in their neighborhoods and had pinpointed Al Shabab leadership and safe havens. These leaders along with their militias then received temporary appointments as TFG officers and took the lead, with AMISOM support, in clearing the city block by block of enemy fighters.⁵¹ This tactic served multiple purposes. First, the TFG was technically taking the lead in eliminating the threat. Secondly, AMISOM was fulfilling its mandate of supporting the TFG while not violating their ROE. And finally, with each neighborhood essentially being liberated of Al Shabab by local militias from the appropriate clan, the people enthusiastically supported the operations.⁵² By March of 2011, AMISOM and the militia-augmented TFG had secured key terrain such as the former Ministry of Defense and the milk factory. Being consistently outmaneuvered both tactically and morally, Al Shabab announced its withdrawal from Mogadishu in August of 2011.

The strategic effects of this change in operational tenor were profound. Al Shabab battlefield defeats made propaganda much more difficult, while accurate news reporting of TFG and AMISOM victories reduced the former’s street credibility. Small villages and tribes in the hinterland became emboldened to resist their oppressors and ejected Al Shabab from Central and Southern Somalia.⁵³ AMISOM contributions to these victories gave other AU members the confidence to enlist in the cause. Guinea, Djibouti, Kenya and Ethiopia have pledged troops to AMISOM while Nigeria has agreed to send the troops it had promised five years ago.⁵⁴

With Al Shabab in exile, humanitarian relief organizations and NGOs now have access to the most afflicted parts of Mogadishu, delivering much needed aid. Under Al Shabab rule, residents of Mogadishu seen talking to AMISOIM personnel were beheaded and their bodies were placed on display.⁵⁵ With that specter removed, countless tales of atrocities are being revealed to the government and international news media. With the combination of tactical defeats and negative press, Al Shabab's funding sources have been dramatically reduced.⁵⁶ To make their financial woes worse, Somalia has suffered from drought, which reduces the revenues Al Shabab can extort from the people in areas it still controls.⁵⁷ Until recently, Al Shabab involvement in piracy was insignificant.⁵⁸ In October of 2011, they sought to realize this vast financial potential, but it will take time to replace the revenue streams they have lost. Overall, Al Shabab is in financial ruin, and while it still controls much real estate, most of it is empty wasteland with few population centers. With nothing to offer those it wishes to control, Al Shabab's options are limited.

Al Shabab's Next Move

The militia-reinforced TFG, with AMISOM support, may have succeeded in putting Al Shabab on the run, but they still have the means to strike back. Although Al Shabab has nothing to offer the Somali people, the TFG presently offers little more. While their partnership with AMISOM has succeeded militarily, TFG governance has actually taken a step backward. Not all of its leadership lives in Somalia and they are still primarily occupied with maneuvering for personal enrichment.⁵⁹ This unfortunate development places the average Somali in the unenviable position of having to choose between one party that wants to govern, but whose rule they are likely to die under, and another party, who is theoretically competent, but places governing second on its list of priorities. AMISOM is not authorized or equipped to govern, but the disparate clans are somewhat functionally running their individual turf. In the short term,

this is enough to see to basic needs, but some entity must step in to govern from Mogadishu. As long as this vacancy of power exists, Al Shabab will attempt to fill it.

Strategically, there is no data to indicate that Al Shabab intends to abandon its ultimate objective of establishing an Islamic theocracy in Somalia with Sharia as its charter. In order to do this, they must choose between two populace-centric approaches: Their preferred approach involves a comprehensive reinvention of their image to convince those they wish to govern that Al Shabab is the lone entity capable of delivering effective governance in a manner that honors Islam. The second, and more familiar, approach is to simply re-take lost territory by force of arms. Success in either scenario is unlikely. Their previous attempt at governing using most un-Islamic tactics will be long remembered by the populace who will not support them unless physically coerced. This too is unlikely, given their comprehensive resource shortfalls, but with the TFG's lack of performance, it is still in the realm of possibility. Given these limitations, their first task will be to replace lost revenue streams. Data from 2011 indicate a heavy reliance on capital to fund Al Shabab activity.⁶⁰ Therefore, they can be expected to increase fund-raising efforts within their cells in the US and Europe. However, potential benefactors will not be inclined to part with their money in support of a losing endeavor, so Al Shabab will be required to quickly produce decisive battlefield victories.

Operationally, Al Shabab has promised to re-engage AMISOM and the TFG using Guerrilla tactics.⁶¹ Clearly, this is an acknowledgement that they no longer have the capability of seizing and holding key terrain in Mogadishu, as Guerrilla Warfare typically favors numerically inferior numbers and is only designed to dominate terrain for short periods of time. If Al Shabab is to fulfill this promise, they must act quickly. Prior to the August withdrawal, AMISOM only controlled an estimated 40 percent of Mogadishu.⁶² When Al Shabab withdrew, AMISOM forces found themselves struggling to secure an area that suddenly doubled in size, and they are still

struggling to find the manpower to adequately defend this new operational area.⁶³ It would stand to reason that Al Shabab is aware of this vulnerability and would seek to exploit it in order to regain their lost credibility in the eyes of their supporters, both domestically and internationally. Since their pledge to conduct a guerrilla resistance, Al Shabab has been carrying out hit and run attacks on small AMISOM positions in Mogadishu.⁶⁴ Two individuals dressed in TFG uniforms infiltrated an AMISOM camp, detonating their explosives.⁶⁵ These incidents indicate that Al Shabab is attempting to initiate their Guerrilla campaign now.

Successful guerrilla attacks over time combined with terrorist attacks in Uganda, Burundi and nations that support AMISOM will restore Al Shabab credibility and reinvigorate their propaganda campaign. Capitalizing on Somali xenophobia with so many foreign soldiers in the country will bolster recruiting as it did during the Ethiopian invasion. International exposure to their battlefield success will generate more financial support to purchase weapons, equipment and influence. Al Shabab can also be expected to increase their cooperation with Somali Pirates. Their involvement in piracy had been financially insignificant until late 2011, but now shows signs of becoming a higher priority to them.⁶⁶ With opportunities to replace lost revenues extremely limited, they will likely try to exploit and reinforce piracy as an existing income stream.

Al Shabab cannot secure victory through tactical success alone. Like AMISOM and the TFG, they must demonstrate that they can provide essential services to the people and govern effectively. They can be expected to promulgate the perception of a more benevolent Al Shabab, using a softer approach and undertaking community improvement projects as funds permit. Essentially, Al Shabab will attempt to regain lost territory, small pieces at a time as they did a decade ago but do so in a manner that appears more positive and service-oriented. With Al Qaeda operatives potentially still advising Al Shabab, they would definitely have the know-how

to execute such a campaign. Conversely, AMISOM's mandate is not indefinite,⁶⁷ and the clans can only rule their own micro-territories. If the TFG does not set self interest aside and start governing, the aforementioned scenario is likely to come to fruition.

The Next Step: Exploit and Shape

Al Shabab's withdrawal from Mogadishu was a major victory for AMISOM, the TFG and in fact the whole world. In order to continue the momentum, Allied forces must support the TFG in finishing or neutralizing Al Shabab while helping the former provide good governance. This can be accomplished by further shutting down all Al Shabab revenue streams and degrading their offensive capability while shaping the environment to ensure that conditions conducive to a revival do not exist. Al Shabab sources of revenue and their offensive capability must be at the top of the TFG's and AMISOM's target list because they are Centers of Gravity (CoG), meaning they are sources of power that provide moral or physical strength, freedom of action or the will to act.⁶⁸ Normally, a terror group's ideology is a CoG to be targeted. But in this case, Al Shabab's radical ideology has already failed because it does not resonate with the majority of the Somali populace.

Despite their relatively austere existence, financial capital figures prominently into Al Shabab strategic and tactical operations. It provides them with freedom of action because they can purchase support and cooperation from prominent clan and militia leaders, even though they may disagree with, or even hate Al Shabab.⁶⁹ Abundant funds are a source of strength for them because they enable the acquisition of resources used for combat and combat support such as weapons, equipment, manpower, fuel, food and information of intelligence value.

Al Shabab has a number of revenue streams to support their operations: Many Somali expatriate communities around the world have Al Shabab fundraising cells, including the US.⁷⁰ The cell collects from a diverse variety of benefactors and the funds are smuggled into Somalia

and distributed through the group's hierarchy. Some of the remaining Al Shabab territories have airports and sea ports that produce revenue in the form of landing and docking fees. Today, their most lucrative revenue stream in this category is the port of Kismayo in Southern Somalia.⁷¹ Finally, Al Shabab draws a great deal of funding from the Somalis over which they still rule. They attempt to legitimize the practice by calling it taxation, but are essentially extorting money and anything of value such as livestock, produce and even children with threats of violence.

The TFG and its supporters must degrade this CoG. In October of 2011, a Kenyan Army Brigade launched Operation Linda Nchi to establish a security zone and prevent Al Shabab from transiting to and from Nairobi and marched from the Northern border into Somalia.⁷² In February of 2012, they appeared to have culminated and were holding their positions near Afmadow awaiting political and military support from others in the region. A possible course of action would be to facilitate diplomatic engagement with other AU nations to deploy troops in support of Kenya so they can push sixty-nine miles north and secure Kismayo, particularly its port. Once secured, the port could be gradually turned over to Somali militias that have been working with Kenya in the current operation.⁷³ This would deny Al Shabab up to 35 million dollars in annual income,⁷⁴ and their robust defensive preparations indicate its value to them.⁷⁵

Another way to interdict Al Shabab finances would be to reduce international donations to their fundraising cells. These cells are hidden within the Somali expatriate communities in the US and Europe and would fall under the purview of each nation's law enforcement agencies.⁷⁶ Since this money pipeline is one of Al Shabab's most valuable assets, these nations should hold a conference and forge a diplomatic agreement for law enforcement cooperation involving Interpol, Europol and prominent international banks. The primary intent would be to jointly collaborate on the identification, interdiction and neutralization of Al Shabab fund raising cells, followed by the seizure or freezing of related assets.

In terms of Centers of Gravity, Al Shabab's finances are complemented by its offensive capability. Brute force is a form of currency in Somalia and can be wielded with equal effect as that of money. Violence or the threat of violence provides Al Shabab with freedom of action because it allows them to control desired terrain by coercing targeted population segments to acquiesce and supports their cause. In other words, popular support can either be purchased or seized by force of arms. Once secured, this terrain can then provide revenues in the form of tribute, taxation and control of commerce in a given area. Al Shabab's offensive capability also poses a direct threat to the legitimate governing authorities. In addition to directly degrading and destroying TFG capabilities, Al Shabab victories drive the propaganda theme that the TFG is weak and unable to govern. Offensive action also forces the TFG to devote more efforts to reacting to crises, securing its assets and defending itself rather than governing and providing essential services to the people.⁷⁷ This has the effect of giving the people little choice of whom to support. Degrading this Center of Gravity would greatly enhance the TFG's freedom to govern.

Recently, several African Union members pledged more forces to the AMISOM mission.⁷⁸ While symbolically encouraging, these increases have only enough substance to consolidate gains made in Mogadishu and surrounding areas. Kenya is in the midst of an operational pause in the south, and more troops will be needed to put pressure on remaining Al Shabab strongholds in the rest of the operational area. The US and European allies should engage AU nations to contribute more forces to this task. Forcing Al Shabab from Mogadishu is not enough to defeat them. Anti-Shabab forces must gain and maintain contact with them. Otherwise, if they are allowed to retire to the hinterland, they will re-organize, re-equip and resume the offensive at their leisure.

Increasing the numbers of AMISOM forces, while a good thing, must be accompanied by a proportional increase in pre-deployment training and preparation provided by the US and Europe. AMISOM's improved combat performance in 2010 and 2011 demonstrates the effectiveness of pre-deployment training programs such as the US Department of State's Africa Contingency Operations Training and Assistance (ACOTA) program. Mission success is not dictated by force ratios alone: ACOTA seeks to maximize the impact of, and minimize the risk to the incoming troops by enhancing the individual Soldier's combat skills and Officer/NCO leadership and competence. Augmenting programs such as this will necessarily require approval and funding increases at the highest levels. This would be difficult for contributing partner nations given the current financial climate, but would be a worthwhile investment resulting in increased lethality to the enemy, decreased risk of collateral damage, faster operational tempo and hence faster stabilization and redeployment of AMISOM forces.

The combat performance of AMISOM can be dramatically enhanced with limited, direct involvement of US personnel. American unilateral operations with Unmanned Aerial Vehicles (UAV) in Somalia have been effective and well publicized. Elite US Special Operations Forces that had been embedded with Ethiopian forces during their incursion returned after the withdrawal in 2009, occasionally interdicting Al Shabab forces by providing targeting data for UAV strikes.⁷⁹ Two of the three most wanted Al Qaeda personnel in Somalia have been killed in this manner. However, these operations were few and far between and all occurred outside of Mogadishu.⁸⁰ UAV operations should be increased along with sniper and Terminal Guidance Operations (TGO). TGO involves a US Special Operator on the ground identifying a high-value target, illuminating that target with a laser aiming module and a US aircraft dropping ordnance to follow the laser signature to its terminus. Currently, no unclassified data exists to indicate the US is conducting TGO in Somalia. Meanwhile, sniper operations conducted by foreign military

advisors have been very effective and have resulted in countless interdictions of low and mid-level enemy leaders in Mogadishu.⁸¹ If US Special Operators could embed with AMISOM to conduct UAV, TGO and sniper operations, AMISOM effectiveness would be multiplied substantially.

Shape the Environment

With Al Shabab's finances and offensive capability degraded or destroyed, the TFG and its supporters must shape the environment in order to prevent the resurrection of Al Shabab and preempt the inception of other insurgent groups intending to overthrow the government. This can be accomplished by directly enhancing the competence of the TFG, forming a Joint Interagency Task Force (JIATF), securing Somalia's borders and disseminating the good news of TFG progress with full-spectrum Information Operations (IO).

The overall strategic situation in Somalia is frustratingly bifurcated: The two main subsets of this theatre, politics and the military, are on two divergent trajectories.⁸² The TFG has been afforded every opportunity to improve its performance, but has not done so. AMISOM's primary task according to its mandate is to provide a stable environment in which the TFG can govern.⁸³ It has done so within Mogadishu and environs, allowing NGOs and other relief organizations to help the people. The international community including the African Union, the US, France, the UK and the Netherlands have provided financial and equipment support directly to the TFG and have enhanced the military capacity of AMISOM contributors Burundi and Uganda. Unfortunately, gains against Al Shabab have been offset by a lack of progress and even regression of TFG performance. Clearly, the AU and other states supporting the TFG assumed that if provided the tools and the stability to govern, the TFG would fulfill its duties. This assumption was incorrect.

The TFG's primary task is to develop, nurture and manage democratic institutions, but they must do so with a unique Somali flavor. As a nation that has known only dictatorship and anarchy, Somalia has no experience with such a concept. Therefore, embedded political and diplomatic mentorship is required to assist TFG leadership to reconcile Somali culture with a more service-oriented government. Currently, US personnel are allowed into Somalia only by Presidential decree.⁸⁴ This policy must be revised to allow US and allied diplomats into Mogadishu to work side by side with TFG leadership. Today, there is no grand strategy in Somalia, either by the TFG or its partner nations.⁸⁵ Rectifying this must be the first task, followed by a distinct, performance-oriented roadmap on how to achieve its desired objectives. This roadmap must include substantial engagement with the clans and sub-clans as they are arguably the Center of Gravity for rebuilding this nation.⁸⁶ At the same time, these clans must be controlled or they would pose a risk of returning to the splintered Somalia of the 1990s. Perhaps most significantly, TFG personnel must accept the fact that their success is based not on their own personal enrichment, but on how well they serve the people, and that lack of performance will result in their being deposed, and quite possibly dead.

A competently functioning TFG would be very well complimented by a Joint Interagency Task Force (JIATF) that pairs the unique capabilities of NGOs and other relief organizations with a military force to ensure they can perform their tasks safely. Today, some NGOs have returned to Mogadishu, but many have not because it is still a very dangerous place. NGO support is a major component of the AMISOM pre-deployment training curriculum, and each tactical unit has a Civil Military Officer (S-5) with substantial support assets.⁸⁷ Unfortunately, this capability has gone largely unused. It would be reasonable to assume that any NGO wishing to assist the Somali people would accept security assistance from AMISOM to help them accomplish their mission. However, AMISOM still has not found an NGO willing to be linked

so closely with them for fear of losing the perception of impartiality.⁸⁸ If diplomatic outreach to appropriate relief organizations could persuade them to set aside this reluctance to work with the military, a JIATF would effectively and synergistically apply the capabilities of NGOs and PVOs to build clinics, schools, libraries, infrastructure and the like, combined with the military's ability to protect them and surgically eliminate hostile remnants. The combination of security and increased service to the people would reflect well on the TFG and enhance public support of it.

Finally, with Al Shabab's Centers of Gravity degraded and the TFG, AMISOM and humanitarian organizations serving the needs of the people, Somalia's borders must be secured in order to prevent hard-core Al Shabab survivors from fleeing to neighboring countries, rebuilding their strength and bringing extremists back into Somalia. By February 2012, the Kenyan border had been secured due to Operation Linda Nchi,⁸⁹ while Ethiopian forces had established bases near the Al Shabab strongholds of Gur'iel, Abduqwaq and Balanbal after crossing into Somalia in November, 2011.⁹⁰ Arguably, the most critical border to secure is that of Somalia and Djibouti. Al Shabab and Eritrea have been mutually supporting partners since the former's founding, and the most efficient lines of communication go directly through Djibouti. Diplomatic outreach should be extended to Asmara to persuade them to curb their support to Al Shabab. Failing that, the US may approach Israel, an ally of Eritrea, to mediate or negotiate on the TFG's behalf. On the other side of the Djiboutian border lie the semi-autonomous regions of Somaliland and Puntland, over which the TFG has little interaction and *no* control. Currently, militias in these regions either assist or kill Al Shabab personnel, depending on prevailing interests at any particular time.⁹¹ If border control measures can be implemented, it would go a long way toward isolating Al Shabab remnants from external support, be they within Somalia or without.

From 2006 to 2011, Al Shabab reigned supreme in Somalia because of TFG weakness, corruption and personal advancement as well as the insufficiently manned, equipped and trained AMISOM force having planned for a traditional peacekeeping operation. However, at the end of 2011, AMISOM was able to hand the enemy its first strategic defeat, forcing them to retire from the Mogadishu area of operations. Proceeding forward, this victory can be capitalized upon by directly enhancing the competence of the TFG, forming a Joint Interagency Task Force (JIATF), securing Somalia's borders and disseminating the good news of TFG progress with full-spectrum Information Operations (IO). As a state, Somalia has devolved so profoundly that it is unlikely to join the ranks of stable nations for decades or even centuries to come. But for the short term, with Al Shabab kicked out of the capital and on the run, a window of opportunity exists to at least eliminate Somalia as an extremist breeding ground and safe haven that threatens the world. Even this limited objective is ambitious, and would require a nearly perfect symphony of international cooperation, application of all instruments of National power, both public and private, as well as an historic level of selflessness and competence on the part of Somali leadership.

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