Upcoming Event

10–12 January 2012
Competitive Influence Game—Violent Extremist Organizations, Radicalization, and Piracy on the Horn of Africa

Location
U.S. Army Africa
Vicenza, Italy

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- Identifying Critical Vulnerabilities
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Members of AOWG,

I was pleased to be able to join you at the recent Asymmetric Operations Working Group (AOWG) Horn of Africa Immersion Workshop, held July 26–28 at the Office of Naval Intelligence, Kennedy Irregular Warfare Center in Washington, DC, as you developed friendly element actions to counter piracy and terrorism in Somalia and neighboring states. We at the Asymmetric Warfare Group (AWG) particularly welcome the infusion of Navy analysts that focus on the maritime challenges in this region.

As we prepare for the upcoming Cycle 6 Competitive Influence Game, I would like to share four thoughts that I have found useful in analysis of asymmetric threats.

Define the problem. Albert Einstein famously observed, “If I had an hour to save the world I would spend 59 minutes defining the problem and one minute finding solutions,” and that philosophy is at least as applicable to the world of asymmetric threats as it is to the physical sciences. We have to make sure we are addressing the right issues before taking action.

Understand the problem’s complexity. The issues of AOWG’s focus over the past few years involve interdependencies that defy easy solutions. Formulation of potential solutions to these “wicked problems” reveals greater comprehension. The ability to test possible solutions in a controlled environment is one factor that makes the Competitive Influence Game invaluable to our analysis.

Think in terms of probabilities vice possibilities. Almost anything may be possible within the realm of complex asymmetric challenges, but some possibilities are far likelier. By identifying and focusing on what is probable, rather than what is simply possible, we can increase the expected rate of success of our actions.

Use indirect methods. In traditional warfare, the effects of a tactic or weapon system are often fairly predictable and measurable. In combating irregular threats, however, intermediate mechanisms are often required to produce the desired results. The Competitive Influence Game helps us to develop an understanding of outcomes likely to arise from indirect methods.

The AOWG process, as refined over the past few years, is continuing to provide valuable insights to the warfighter, and I am proud to be a part of this effort moving forward. I hope you will be able to join us for the Cycle 6 Competitive Influence Game taking place in mid-January 2012 at U.S. Army Africa in Vicenza, Italy.

William Huff
Lieutenant Colonel, USA
Piracy and Islam in the Horn of Africa

Martin N. Murphy

Who is the fourth most influential figure in international shipping? The Secretary-General of the International Maritime Organization? No. The head of Shell, which charters more tankers worldwide than any other company? No. It’s a pirate. In late 2010, Garaad Mohammed, the pirate leader whose gang hijacked the Faina, with its cargo of ex-Soviet tanks, and the Sirius Star, a very large crude carrier ransomed for $3 million, was rated the fourth most important person in international shipping by Lloyd’s List, the daily paper of the international shipping and marine insurance industries.1 This recognition demonstrates just how concerned both these industries are about what has become the most serious challenge to the peaceful use of the sea, short of war, since 1945.

The attacks on shipping taking place off Somalia can justifiably be viewed as a piratical “perfect storm.” Modern piracy arises out of a mix of seven factors.2 Although the balance between these factors varies between outbreaks, they are all usually present to some degree.

Some piracy groups elsewhere in the world have arguably benefited from sanctuary by hiding among remote and largely sympathetic communities or by cowing or bribing local law enforcement to ignore their operations, but only Somali pirates have been able to hold large ocean-going vessels in plain sight without fear of reprisal or recapture. In this sense, they are unique.

Al Shabaab’s power should not be overrated, although its income is considerable and growing. It is a coalition, like many in Somalia, consisting of a core group, which has pledged allegiance to Al Qaeda, and peripheral groups, most of which have not. Overall, Al Shabaab is weak, has little public support, and has achieved no serious military success since 2009. On the other hand, the UN Monitoring Group assesses that Al Shabaab has an income of $70–100 million per year from a variety of mainly domestic sources and that it supports affiliated groups in Kenya, Uganda, and Tanzania. Al Shabaab also is linked to Al Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula, although the extent of these links remains unclear.


Special Operations Command Africa Command Briefing

Asymmetric Operations Working Group Newsletter

Special Operations Command Africa (SOCAFRICA) leads, plans, coordinates, and, as directed, executes the full spectrum of special operations in the U.S. Africa Command (AFRICOM) area of responsibility (AOR): 53 African nations, covering all of Africa except Egypt. SOCAFRICA’s high-level objectives are to build operational capacity, to strengthen regional security and capacity initiatives, to implement effective communication strategies that support the organization’s strategic objectives, and to eradicate violent extremist organizations and their supporting networks. Accordingly, the SOCAFRICA Commander’s intent is to conduct Special Operations Forces (SOF) operations and leverage support of its components and interagency partners to

- protect U.S. lives and interests in Africa;
- build tactical and operational counterterrorism capability in select, key partner nations; and
- assist in the development and building of regional security structures and capability to create stability and combat regional threats.

SOCAFRICA’s engagement activities directly support a number of AFRICOM’s Theater Strategic Objectives (TSOs), including to

- defeat violent extremist organizations in the AOR;
- develop persistent country access to partner nations through SOF engagement, synchronization with country teams, and preparation of the environment;
- build partner nation and regional capacity that promotes stability, enhances security, and develops the capability of African governments to respond to emerging threats and crises; and
- mitigate the underlying conditions that create instability and permit violent extremism and, when necessary, take action against threats to U.S. interests.

One of SOCAFRICA’s focus areas is to set the conditions for future efforts by identifying SOF requirements for the theater, conducting preparation of the environment, conducting capacity building with selected key partner nations, and building a regional SOF network and “SOF Operator” experience. In addition, SOCAFRICA is responsible for command and control of deployed SOF forces in the AOR, including integration of sustained efforts and development of a persistent presence in selected country teams and key partner nations.

SOCAFRICA has identified several intelligence areas of concern in Somalia, including the following:

- Weak “governments”
- Al Shabaab/Al Qaeda affiliates’ growing regional reach and capabilities
- The all-time high number of foreign terrorists training in Somalia
- Pirates’ operational range and expanding numbers

SOCAFRICA’s concept of operations over the next 5 years is to gradually shift responsibility for combating terrorism from SOCAFRICA to components. The goal is to establish a sustainable partner nation defense capacity by 2015, including persistent presence; development of battalion-level counterterrorism capacity and functional brigade-level command, control, communications, computers, and
Focused Financial Targeting

Dr. Timothy Wittig, Program on Irregular Warfare and Special Operations Forces Studies, National Defense University

From the Taliban to Al Shabaab to Mexican drug-trafficking organizations, the behavior, capabilities, and ultimate success or failure of terrorist, criminal, and other transnational threat actors are closely tied to economic and financial factors. This close link among an adversary’s operational, strategic, and financial dynamics is widely recognized and has spawned a boutique art of counter threat finance (CTF) not only within the military but also within interagency counterterrorism and intelligence efforts, law enforcement, and the financial and charitable sectors. However, despite widespread consensus about its supposed potential, CTF has been, for the most part, poorly conceptualized and unsystematically operationalized, meaning that potential CTF benefits remain elusive, especially at tactical levels.

Addressing this gap, however, is a prototype methodology for Focused Financial Targeting (FFT), based on the concept that not only does financial activity impact enemy conduct and capabilities (thus making enemy financial networks or activities vulnerable to disruption, destruction, or manipulation) but also that threat finance reflects the social, political, and operational relationships and trends of an enemy (thereby opening up new subsets of information that are exploitable against them). Originally developed in partnership with the U.S. Army Asymmetric Warfare Group (AWG), the FFT methodology integrates the established F3EAD (Find, Fix, Finish, Exploit, and Disseminate) focused targeting approach with my research on the interaction of threat actors with financial, economic, and material support flows. I am currently testing and refining the methodology through field research in the Horn of Africa as part of a research project funded by the Program on Irregular Warfare and Special Operations Forces Studies at National Defense University.

In brief, FFT begins with two parallel baseline assessments of the target adversary’s critical economic and financial requirements as well as of the local economic and human terrain with which the actor must interact to meet these requirements. From these assessments, one can then identify potential targetable vulnerabilities via investigation of particular gaps, overlaps, linkages, and anomalies between the two baselines. One can, in turn, develop potential courses of action, assess them (for impact, risks, and deconfliction of effort), and ultimately decide on, execute, and exploit for advantage one or more of the courses of action.

To illustrate the rough contours of FFT, let us look at Somalia—“the world’s largest duty-free zone”—which lacks a government but has a vibrant and globally connected economy, including a large transit trade of Asian-manufactured consumer goods imported via Dubai through Somalia and (mostly illegally) imported into Kenya and beyond for resale (the FFT economic terrain baseline). In parallel, Al Shabaab, like other Somali militant groups, taxes virtually all trade transiting through the territory it controls, and the group receives income from various other sources (the FFT adversary critical resource baseline). An interesting overlap between these two baselines (the FFT “Find” phase) is that this transit trade is facilitated by locally respected individuals who guarantee safe passage for traders and their goods through their own sub-clan’s area. In this case, Al Shabaab’s relationship with these locals (i.e., rather than the individuals themselves) could represent a potentially targetable point of vulnerability. This vulnerability almost certainly should be targeted via nonlethal means such as monitoring these individuals or attempting to recruit them as informants (the FFT “Fix” phase), given that overly harsh methods could likely have counterproductive results. Once a course of action is decided and executed (the FFT “Finish” phase), it is crucial to actively seek advantage from the targeting action (the FFT “Exploit” and “Disseminate” phases) because, ultimately, focused targeting is a means, not an end. Practically speaking, therefore, the emphasis is on linking existing information streams (classified and open source) and action specialties (lethal and nonlethal) rather than on building an entirely new field of practice.

The key innovation of FFT as compared with other forms of focused targeting and traditional CTF is to target value chains rather than individuals or networks, given the reality that any particular individual or even network of individuals involved in supplying or supporting an adversary is often easily replaced, even if they are a key node. Not easily replaced, however, are the chains of value upon which an adversary depends, such as a critical market from which they earn income or a key component of their operational supply lines.

Ultimately, although it is still in development, FFT offers a potentially important contribution to irregular warfare as a mechanism to expose new subsets of exploitable information, to contribute to human intelligence and

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Minimizing Threats and Maximizing Opportunities: A Framework for Assessment in a Dynamic Environment

Dr. Andrea J. Dew, Center on Irregular Warfare and Armed Groups, U.S. Naval War College

Security and humanitarian challenges in the Horn of Africa and Yemen present a complex and dynamic set of problems. This “Threats and Opportunities Assessment Framework” is intended to help operators and practitioners think through their net assessment of the challenge in order to consider the best strategic, operational, and tactical options given their policy goals.

The framework consists of six interlocking elements: (i) the actors, (ii) the environment, (iii) the way the actors exploit the environment, (iv) the effects of our interaction, (v) the way actors exploit our tangible and intangible seams and gaps, and (vi) our strategic, operational, and tactical options given this assessment.

The framework is question-based, analytical, and explicitly acknowledges the dynamic of “change” or interaction. It also extends into the strategic realm the current frameworks for assessing centers of gravity or key vulnerabilities, looks for second- and third-order effects, and considers how we can minimize the threats and maximize the opportunities created by armed groups.

The first step is an assessment of the actors—states and armed groups alike. The level of assessment must begin with their policy goals and their strategies to achieve those goals and then proceed to their operational and tactical capabilities. All four elements are vital but the first two—the goals and strategies—are easily overlooked. We must ask who these actors are and what is their concept of warfare; what are their goals and why are they fighting; what are the roles of personal and group honor, grievances, greed, cultural mores, blood vendettas, heroic myths, and legends; why is this group willing to risk blood and treasure; what is their area of operations; who/what do they target and why; what are their command and control structures; what limitations and constraints do they face; and what do they need to survive and to thrive?

The importance of including the strategic dimension is fairly straightforward; an armed group such as Al Shabaab is a coalition of actors, each with their own interests, motivations, and goals. By assessing that network of goals, and the different strategies for achieving them, we may be able to find opportunities to exploit seams and gaps within their own network. Exploiting those vulnerabilities— their seams and gaps—should be part of our strategies to achieve our goals.

The second step considers environmental factors such as geography, historic tensions, grievances, alliances, and resources. These are tangible and intangible factors that affect both the motivation of actors and their ability to achieve their goals. Al Shabaab, for example, used historic tensions with neighboring Ethiopia as part of its recruitment message, and the popularity of this xenophobic strategic message appeared to catch even the founding members of the organization by surprise. However, by carrying out attacks against another “foreign” power—Uganda—during the soccer World Cup tournament in 2010, they may have overextended themselves and presented an opportunity for us to exploit. Again, focusing on how tactical interaction affects their ability to achieve their long-term goals may help to exploit seams and gaps to our advantage.

Third and fourth, it is necessary to consider how the actors use the environment to their advantage and how interaction (between the actors, the environment, and with us) affects their goals, strategies, and tactics. Some groups within Al Shabaab, for example, have used the drought and man-made famine to reinforce their recruitment message that foreigners are responsible for the hardships and that banding together to fight against foreigners is the only way to survive. The question is what strategies best undermine this message and how can operators and practitioners on the ground avoid playing into this narrative?

The fifth step examines how the actors exploit our seams and gaps. In the case of Al Shabaab, the seams can be tangible; separate U.S. military commands in the Horn of Africa and Yemen present an opportunity for Al Shabaab to use the maritime environment to their advantage by flowing between U.S. areas of operation. A suitable response, however, may focus on the intangible seams between different leaders in Al Shabaab or between Al Shabaab and the Al Qaeda sponsors they are so desperate to attract.

The sixth step addresses our goals and strategic options; specifically, given this thorough net assessment of the actors, environment, and interaction, should our goals change? Are they achievable, and if so what strategies must we use to achieve them? Who is best positioned to take advantage of the mistakes Al Shabaab and other

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Food, Famine, and Politics in East Africa

Michael J. Flaherty, Office of Naval Intelligence, Kennedy Irregular Warfare Center

Food is one of man’s oldest and most reliable asymmetric weapons. It can be used offensively or defensively, internally or externally. It can force an enemy into capitulation or allow a defender to withstand a prolonged siege. It can quell or inflame insurrection. Using this particular weapon is not without risk, however; it can undermine a regime just as easily as it can secure it.

Whether it is the wasting of fields during the Peloponnesian War, the Holodomor in Ukraine, or the Great Famine in Ireland, food has been used as a political tool throughout human history. In East Africa, climate and geography have made food security the most important political consideration for governance at any level. By extension, it is also the most potent means of control.

Fundamentally, famine is not the lack of food, but rather the lack of money to buy it. No affluent merchant in Mogadishu, Kismaayo, or Negele has died for lack of nourishment. When the pastoralist’s cattle die or the farmer’s crops wilt, he loses not only his food source but also his income. Having sold his meager possessions to buy scarce and more expensive food, he has no further coping mechanisms. He is forced to depend on others for his family’s well-being. Food then becomes an effective control mechanism.

Regular occurrences of drought in the Horn of Africa have established patterns of dependency that governing authorities take advantage of regularly. All regimes in East Africa are forced to cope with regular periods of drought, although reports indicate that this year’s drought is more severe than most. However, because of drought’s cyclic nature, no local government is surprised by current conditions. The Famine Early Warning System (FEWS), a satellite imagery interpretation system that monitors rainfall and crop development, enables the United Nations (UN), nongovernmental organizations (NGOs), and local nations to predict conditions that lead to the risk of famine. In theory, the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD) was also created specifically to manage the cyclical drought that affects the region, although it rarely performs this function. Responses to the indications provided by FEWS vary by locality, as does the relationship local governments have with NGOs.

Drought historically impacts ethnic Somali areas the hardest, both in Ethiopia and independent Somali-governed regions. Shifting political and clan boundaries, particularly during the civil war era, have greatly disrupted the pastoral society and heightened the effects of drought and made famine more likely. Additionally, constant conflict prevents the herder from normal migrations to graze and water the livestock on which his livelihood depends. This creates increased reliance on government benevolence during periods of water scarcity.

Overall, Kenya suffers least from the effects of drought in the region. Food scarcity impacts primarily the Somali-populated Northern Frontier District. Other areas of the country produce enough foodstuffs to adequately sustain populations in the north and east along the Somali border. The country also possesses the capacity to sustain the current Somali refugee population and additional refugees as needed. Whether the Kenyan government chooses to provide this aid is a different question. More often than not it does, after extracting financial concessions from the international community. To be clear, the sizeable refugee population does pose a genuine security concern for Nairobi given the ongoing civil war next door. The slow transition of temporary camps, such as Dadaab, into permanent settlements is also of concern to Kenya. However, the displaced Somalis are generally treated as a bargaining chip vice a humanitarian concern.

Ethiopia has proven quite adept at manipulating famine within its borders over successive regimes. From Selassie to Meles, the response to internal drought has been the same: ignore it, attempt to cover it up, and restrict access for relief agencies. As drought is common in minority Oromo and Somali regions, restricting access to aid becomes an effective tool for combating insurgency. A rebel force that does not eat does not fight. Once word of the famine got out in 1984, Mengitsu took the opportunity to transfer the population of the rebel area to the south and onto collective farms before aid agencies gained access. Not only did he use the famine to weaken an internal revolt, but his Marxist regime also gained a measure of international legitimacy from it.

Such is the norm in Africa. Western nations and their NGOs (including UN organizations) rarely resist the urge to intervene, even if such an effort extends conflict indefinitely. Endemic corruption at most levels of governance provides incentive to allow external actors to flood in, even in areas hit by civil war. The unfortunate side effect is that combatants are strengthened as well, through both the monetization and diversion of aid. It is a simple fact that men with guns eat before those without guns.

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Many dictionaries define diplomacy in the following way:

1. the conducting of relations between nations, as in making agreements; 2. skill in the management of international relations; and 3. skill in dealing with people; tact.

Our task is to consider the usefulness of this definition in today’s challenging national security environment.

The Diplomatic Ethos—Who Are These People?

Before the rules of diplomatic engagement were formalized, early messengers carrying their rulers’ correspondence lived uncertain lives. Much of what we know of the ancient world comes to us courtesy of early ambassadors’ reports of their travels to exotic lands. In Europe, accepted patterns of diplomatic practice grew up, but much of what had sprouted from Greek and Roman traditions was lost during the Dark Ages, when rulers on the receiving end of unpopular messages reportedly sometimes displayed their displeasure by beheading counterparts’ messengers and returning their heads in sacks. (Surely this practice not only led to difficulty in recruiting new messengers but also prevented rulers from engaging in meaningful negotiations that might have benefited both sides.) Although some useful diplomatic practices were retained through this period thanks to the Byzantines and the Roman Catholic Church, formal bilateral agreements most likely did not begin until the early 1600s.

As the 30 Years’ War was concluding, the practice of sending diplomats from one prince to another was formalized, and diplomats of the time would have thought of themselves as personal representatives of one sovereign before another. (To some extent, that self-image persists among many diplomats today.) Bilateral agreements covering diplomatic privileges and immunities were common among the many states of Europe and elsewhere.

The 1961 Vienna Convention on Diplomatic Relations codified these practices and established the modern, uniform framework for diplomatic relations between countries. The Vienna Convention essentially delineated the traditional practices from the past, formally establishing the privileges and immunities for diplomatic agents, including inviolability of the diplomatic agent (e.g., immunity from arrest, detention, or taxation).

American Diplomats—How Do We Get and Temper Them?

The Department of State is small by DoD standards, consisting of approximately 6000 foreign service officers, another 6500 foreign service specialists, 9300 civil service personnel, and 37,000 foreign locally engaged staff members. These personnel must staff the Department of State and its 267 embassies, consulates, international organizations, and other locations.

The chief of mission, usually an ambassador, is nominated by the president, confirmed by the Senate, and appointed by the president. There are two ways to become a U.S. ambassador: (i) to rise through the ranks of the foreign service, as described below, obtaining the president’s nomination upon the recommendation of the secretary of state, or (ii) to obtain a direct appointment from the president.

The president routinely instructs U.S. ambassadors to coordinate the activities of all U.S. executive branch employees in their host nations, with certain exceptions such as for those working under international organizations or those under the authority of a U.S. area military commander. The president thus grants authority over executive branch personnel and activities to the chief of mission, except for those under exceptions.

Applicants enter into the foreign service through a written and oral examination and have a tough up-or-out promotion process not unlike that in DoD. Foreign service generalists may eventually rise to positions that lead to ambassadorial postings, whereas foreign service specialists generally specialize in one of 18 career fields, including medical, construction, security, information management, office management, and personnel.

National Security Architecture and U.S. Diplomats—Who Makes Foreign Policy?

Congress established the Department of State in 1789, and Thomas Jefferson served as its first secretary. The Department of State is the lead foreign affairs agency, responsible for the United States’ international relations.

Embassies’ country teams are the mechanism through which U.S. ambassadors implement their instructions to coordinate multiagency activities. (Note that this establishes a whole-of-government approach at ground level, just as a National Security Council-coordinated D-level or interagency planning committee meeting might do at the top.) The figure on the following page illustrates a notional country team organization, although all country teams are somewhat different. Common to all country teams is that they consist of embassy leadership (i.e., the ambassador or deputy chief of mission plus the heads of all sections and agencies represented at post). Smaller, more focused teams might be formed to deal with isolated contingencies. The U.S. defense representative, normally the senior DoD
member in the country, is usually the designated military country team member at post.

The Department of State, like DoD, is organized along regional and functional lines. The ambassador reports administratively to the Secretary of State and does the majority of his or her coordination with regional or functional bureaus as well as with the appropriate geographic combatant commander and the Office of the Secretary of Defense.

Of interest to our discussion is how well this Westphalian model, which establishes the ambassador as the representative of the president to the host nation’s leader, serves our national security interest given the new, difficult security environment.

**Diplomats and Our National Security—What’s Next?**

The established country team-centric organizational structure described above faces modern challenges from a number of issues one might call the “new world disorder,” including globalization, sovereignty issues, porous borders, failing states, ungoverned areas, weapons of mass destruction, and mass migration. Borderless problem sets also include the movement of illegal narcotics, aliens, and weapons; other international crimes; and illnesses, famines, natural disasters, terrorism, and more.

In this new environment, it is interesting to note that the Westphalian model we described above establishes, in addition to the president’s personal representative, a strong executive presence in embassies abroad. This structure offers the president, through his letter of authority to his chiefs of mission, civilian leadership of civilian executive branch personnel and activities in countries abroad.

Note that this model suffers from leadership gaps at many and various seams, such as in ungoverned areas, where the Westphalian prince-to-prince model breaks down, or in multinational or regional issues, where the bilateral nature of the model presents additional difficulty.

In recent years, the Department of State has been moving to confront these and other problems, most recently in the 2010 21st Century Statecraft and Quadrennial Diplomacy and Development Review initiatives. Recent innovations show how Department of State leadership can provide interagency responses to these challenges, such as Provincial Reconstruction Teams, increasing numbers of political advisors assigned to military commanders at all levels, interagency exchanges, and the advent of the Civilian Response Corps.

This article is a summary of the briefing given by Ambassador Daniel A. Johnson. A former foreign service officer with the Department of State, Ambassador Johnson is active in international policy matters as an advisor and consultant to the Departments of State and Defense and as a speaker on political/military and diplomatic issues. In 2005, Ambassador Johnson completed a 2-year assignment as foreign policy advisor to the Southern Command’s four-star combatant commander, during which time he furnished expert advice and analysis on issues involving the formulation and execution of U.S. foreign policy. As diplomatic advisor to the commander, he provided recommendations on means to achieve U.S. foreign policy goals while working with foreign governments and institutions as well as domestic constituencies. From September 2000 until June 2003, Ambassador Johnson served as U.S. ambassador to the Republic of Suriname, where he was responsible for coordinating the U.S. government’s engagement with the government of Suriname, with the objectives of consolidating that country’s fledgling democracy, improving its stagnant economy, and fighting international crime and terrorism. He previously served as U.S. consul general in Monterrey, Mexico, and Guayaquil, Ecuador, managing U.S. government operations and activities in large areas of these two countries and orchestrating multiagency initiatives in support of U.S. policy objectives.

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(Piracy and Islam in the Horn of Africa, continued from page 3)

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<th>Basic Piracy Factors</th>
<th>Somalia Piracy Factors</th>
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<tr>
<td>Inadequate security</td>
<td>Sanctuary enables ships to be held at low cost without serious risk of recapture</td>
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<tr>
<td>Legal and jurisdictional</td>
<td>Lack of political will to enforce law</td>
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<td>openings</td>
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<tr>
<td>Favorable geography</td>
<td>Skirted by two lucrative sea lanes</td>
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<tr>
<td>Conflict and disorder</td>
<td>Just enough conflict and disorder to enable criminal enterprises to operate relatively freely with ready access to arms and fighters</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Permissive politics</td>
<td>Gangs operate with sub-clan protection and support</td>
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<tr>
<td>Maritime tradition</td>
<td>No depth of maritime skill but enough among local fishing community</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reward disproportionate to risk</td>
<td>Return on investment in excess of 1200% possible; individuals can earn $50–$150,000 for less than 6 months of work (compared to median income of $2 per day)</td>
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- **Naval:** Piracy has rarely been suppressed by sea-based action alone; successful campaigns have required action on land or from the sea. The current naval presence is too small for the area of responsibility and is hampered by overly restrictive rules of engagement. Naval presence is being used to cover the lack of political will to deal with the source of the problem, which is politically and criminally inspired disorder within Somalia.

- **Geo-strategic:** The Gulf of Aden is a gateway to the Indian Ocean, which is the crossroad of world trade. A zone of instability extending from Yemen to Kenya exists already and is likely to worsen the longer that instability is allowed to fester.

- **Political:** Without political and economic engagement on land, the navy will continue to fail. The United States is the ultimate guarantor of maritime security. The American system is the world system that free navigation sustains. Continuing piracy will bring into question the United States’ commitment to defending that system. Without engagement, Al Shabaab will continue to grow; piracy will become endemic and harder to eradicate. Continuing disorder will draw in new powers to suppress the disorder, challenging U.S. influence in the process. Piracy has always had a political significance greater than its economic impact.

Solving the problem of piracy in Somalia is a political, not a military, matter. It is about summoning the political will to change the current incentive–disincentive balance. The international community needs to build on existing areas of stability within Somalia, starting with Somaliland and Puntland. Piracy is already big business; therefore, suppression alone will not work. Economic alternatives, but not aid, need to be offered. Piracy needs to be crowded out economically, and Al Shabaab’s factions need to be peeled away economically and politically. Above all, the U.S.-led international community needs to work with the grain of Somali society, not against it.

Dr. Martin N. Murphy is an internationally recognized expert on piracy and unconventional conflict at sea. His latest book Somalia, the New Barbary? Piracy and Islam in the Horn of Africa was published in January 2011. In addition he has published several other books and book chapters on maritime conflict in Asia, naval support for counterinsurgency, maritime domain awareness, and international piracy law and has written journal articles for numerous publications. He is a research fellow at the Centre for Foreign Policy Studies, Dalhousie University, Halifax; a visiting fellow at the Corbett Centre for Maritime Policy Studies at King’s College, London; and was a Senior Fellow at the Center for Strategic and Budgetary Assessments, Washington, DC, between 2008 and 2010. Dr. Murphy holds a B.A. with honors from the University of Wales and master’s (with distinction) and doctoral degrees in strategic studies from the University of Reading.

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intelligence (C4I); planning and execution of sustainment operations; and providing advisors/mentors to the appropriate levels. At the same time, SOCAFRICA will develop interagency capacity to assess ministerial capability and assist in the development of national security and defense infrastructure.

While maintaining a small but sustained presence throughout Africa, SOCAFRICA forces work closely with both U.S. Embassy country teams and their African partners. SOCAFRICA’s persistent SOF presence provides an invaluable resource by furthering U.S. government efforts to combat violent extremist groups and building partner nation counterterrorism capacity.

open-source intelligence efforts, and ultimately as a means to more holistically attack and defeat asymmetric threat actors.

Dr. Timothy Wittig is a researcher at National Defense University’s Program on Irregular Warfare and Special Operations Forces Studies and author of the new book Understanding Terrorist Finance (2011). He has advised and trained various public and private-sector organizations as well as several major financial and charitable institutions in the United States and Europe on illicit and threat finance issues. Dr. Wittig’s research focuses on improving methods of collecting, analyzing, and exploiting information about the financial dynamics of transnational threats, and he has personally conducted extensive field-based research on threat finance. Currently he is researching the financing of Al Shabaab in Somalia. Dr. Wittig holds a Ph.D. from the University of St. Andrews in Scotland, and from 2009 until January 2011 he was a lecturer at the University of Amsterdam in the Netherlands.

armed groups in the region are making? What seams and gaps, tangible and intangible, are we overlooking? By beginning our net assessment with this Threats and Opportunities Assessment Framework, by focusing first on the actors in the region, and by including the strategic level and dynamic of change into our assessment, this framework may provide a place to start.

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Regardless of ideology, the use of food as an internal weapon is not without risk. A regime that is unable to provide for the basic needs of its people is inherently unstable. At the same time, a government that can shepherd its people through crisis is greatly strengthened. This is the opportunity and risk to both Al Shabaab and the Transitional Federal Government (TFG) in southern Somalia now, as drought has evolved into famine. The faction that manages humanitarian concerns more effectively will gain additional legitimacy from both local clans and the international community.

Initial responses have been mixed. Al Shabaab reversed some aid restrictions but maintained others. On the other side, TFG “soldiers” were responsible for looting a UN aid convoy in early August 2011 (although this key fact was largely unreported by Western news agencies). Several camp residents were killed by TFG militia in African Union Mission in Somalia-held territory. The end result is a propaganda victory for Al Shabaab forces, even as they evacuate Mogadishu. The State Department has also lifted restrictions for aid organizations cooperating with the Islamic faction, providing some measure of increased international legitimacy.

Although it is too early to tell which faction will manage the humanitarian concerns of Western aid agencies more effectively this year, the side that does will gain a tangible advantage in the ongoing civil war. Such concerns are often irrelevant locally, but do offer significant political opportunity if managed correctly.

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“Even the brave are scared by a lion three times: first by its tracks, again by its roar, and one last time face to face.”

—Somali proverb
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