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COUNTERTERRORISM AND STATE-BUILDING IN SOMALIA:
PROGRESS OR MORE OF THE SAME?

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Introductory Remarks & Moderator:

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P R O C E E D I N G S

MR. O'HANLON: Welcome to Brookings and the inaugural event of our new Africa Security Initiative. We are very glad to have you here. I'm Mike O'Hanlon, joined by Vanda Felbab-Brown. We are both Senior Fellows in the Foreign Policy Program, which is the home base for the Africa Security Initiative.

It is also being done in very close partnership with our good friends in the Global Program at Brookings, in their Africa Growth Initiative. Amadou Sy and his colleagues are important partners in the effort, and we are looking to build a bit of a community of interested Africa hands throughout Washington and beyond who will discuss various issues, sometimes in these kinds of settings, and sometimes in more roundtable discussions, and we hope that many of you will want to be part of this.

If you haven't already heard from us, and probably most of you have and that's why you're here, but if you haven't heard from us in the context of the Africa Security Initiative, please get in touch with us. You can call Brookings at 797-6000, or otherwise e-mail me at mohanlon@brookings.edu. We will get you to the right people, get you on our mailing list, and hope to see a lot of you.

We began this effort because Vanda and myself and a few others here have been very interested in matters of Africa security for a long time, and yet Brookings over the years has occasionally tangentially gotten at the issues, but not in a systematic way for quite some time.

We have a colleague, Beth Ferris, who does excellent work with her team on internally displaced persons' issues. As I mentioned, we have colleagues in Global, Economy and Development who work on various aspects of economics and development.

We thought that with all the security crises and concerns throughout

Africa in general, it was important to focus a bit more on the subject.

In that spirit, today we are going to discuss Somalia. Vanda Felbab-Brown, while some of us were heading towards Florida or other normal destinations for spring break, chose to spend her March in Mogadishu and environs on a research trip.

Let me just mention briefly before Vanda gives a little bit of an overview of what she is learning and what she is researching and analyzing about Somalia, just give a brief word about her.

She, as I say, is a Senior Fellow here at Brookings. I think most of you know her excellent work. She is a real path breaker in the general realm of illicit economies, counterinsurgency, one of the most courageous and intrepid and effective field researcher I have ever met in my life. In fact, maybe even the best.

I have never seen someone who does quite what she does, including in Somalia, and what she has done in many parts of the world where she's done previous research, Afghanistan, The Andes Mountains of South America, Mexico, Brazil, Indonesia, and a number of other places, to really try to understand the detailed workings of many illicit economies.

This is for an ongoing book project that she's embarked upon. She's already published two books here at Brookings. "Shooting Up" was a study about counternarcotic strategies.

By the way, I should add she and our colleague, Harold Trinkunas, have just released in Bogota, Columbia a study done with colleagues on drug eradication and counternarcotic strategies, which is becoming a very interesting debate in the U.S./Columbia relationship right now, as you may know.

In addition to "Shooting Up," Vanda wrote an excellent book on Afghanistan, "Aspiration and Ambivalence," which I think remains probably the single

best book for understanding where we are in Afghanistan today and how we got there.

As I say, her current work is part of a broader effort on eliciting economies around the world, which extends well beyond the country she's going to talk about today, but certainly that has been a major focal point.

I think without further ado, since she is our featured speaker and our inaugural speaker for this Africa Security Initiative, ask you to join me in welcoming Vanda as our key noter. (Applause) My friend, thank you, and over to you.

MS. FELBAB-BROWN: Thank you very much, Mike, for the very, very generous and kind introduction. There is no way but to go down in the rest of the talk from the start.

In fact, the secret of life, the secret of happiness, and of policy evaluation, is no one sets the baselines. With this baseline, I can only disappoint in the rest of the talk.

The field of baselines is also a key field of my talk on Somalia. I was there in the spring, in March, after not being in the country for about a year, a little bit over a year, and managed to travel quite substantially beyond the south.

Nonetheless, the overall impression was of just a much more difficult situation than when I was last traveled in the country.

At the same time, however, if you set the baseline for policy evaluation and development in the country years like 2009, 2010, or even 1993, 1994, the situation today is remarkably better. There is a functioning government of sorts. We will get a little bit more into that. The fact that I could travel. Again, it would be easy to imagine not at all in 2009, 2008.

We had a recent historic visit by Secretary Kerry. He never left the airport in Mogadishu, many of us remember, but you had a substantial chance of being

hit by mortar attack at the Mogadishu Airport, and where the security was much smaller than it is today.

Somalia is very much again in the focus of international attention. 2015 is a very important year heading into 2016, the year where donors will want to see major delivery in the Somalia Compact, Somalia International Compact.

Nonetheless, if I set as the baseline the last time I was in Somalia, about a year and a half ago, I see a lot of disappointment, a lot of disenchantment on the political situation, and at best, a static security situation, perhaps worse security situation.

The amount of bribes it takes to travel from Mogadishu to Chisimayu today is much greater than it was a year ago. It is a function of many factors.

Let me review with you some of the key political and military developments, and then we can open it for conversation.

To some extent, some of the disappointment in Somalia and among Somalia people is a function of perhaps unreasonable expectations of what the current government of President Hassan Sheikh Mohamoud could and would accomplish.

When he came to power, there was a sense that Somalia just hit rock bottom. There was no way but to go up, and there was no way but to break out of the political dysfunction, the exclusionary clan based politics that have so plagued Somalia over the past two or three decades.

Part of the assessment came from the fact that the most difficult sector of the situation where Shabaab controls so much of the territory and so much of Mogadishu was being reversed.

He is a man that is not a war lord. He was a Somali civil society member, academic, who stayed in the country, who was then not beholden to the same level of clan, politic clan exclusionary machination.

At the same time, he was, of course, a man who was elected to power, elected by members of Parliament with very weak hands, with very little ability to control and direct anything, and it was inevitable that he would be sucked into the political dysfunction in the country.

What we are seeing of him today is continuing difficulties between him and his Prime Ministers, a lot of tension at the ministerial level, perhaps a lot of international engagement, but in practice, limited delivery, and very quickly, of course, the expectations of what would happen on the ground, how much governance would improve, and how much ethnic clan politics would be abandoned has not yet materialized.

At the same time, there is some retrogression in the situation. Yes, Shabaab doesn't control anywhere the level of territory that they used to, and yes, they are in Mogadishu, but people can go much beyond the airport, but at the same time, there has been a steady increase in daily attacks throughout Mogadishu and in other parts of the country.

Many of these attacks are not by Shabaab, per se. Many are among rival businessmen and politicians, the killing of each other, killing of each other's militias, even though Shabaab takes credit for them. Nonetheless, it worsens the perception of security.

The complexity for a businessman traveling from Mogadishu to Chisimayu is far greater than it was a year ago in the level of bribes and the unpredictability of bribes is much greater.

Shabaab still controls many of the roads, and indeed, AMISOM, the African Union Force, is essentially stuck, controlling perhaps some cities by day, but certainly not controlling them by night, and finding it very difficult to travel on roads, as do

Somalia people.

AMISOM in general avoids military encounters with Shabaab, even when nominally offensive operations are undertaken, just as this last year's. They often lead to Shabaab dispersing from a territory, AMISOM moves in, but gradually Shabaab trickles back.

Certainly, one of the key challenges has been hand over of both security as well as any governance to local authorities. It has certainly been a major challenge in Somalia where the Somali government or Somali security forces often do not materialize even after this clearing/dispersion operation by AMISOM.

AMISOM has been very reluctant to undertake any operations to win the hearts and minds of the Somali's. There is a major push now to get them to do more, build bridges, build clinics.

In my view, it is a double-edge sword and there are some good reasons why AMISOM was reluctant to do so, both because they have none of the training and capacity but also there are other challenges.

Nonetheless, from the perspective of the local population, nominal clearing takes place, but then the government does not necessarily materialize security -- critical structures and influences, perceptions, security, and economic behavior.

Shabaab is hardly defeated, and you often hear they engage in terrible attacks abroad like in Garissa because they cannot function in Somalia because they are defeated in Somalia. That is definitely not my take. They are forced to stay in Somalia for a long time, even as the population doesn't necessarily like the ideology, and was, of course, terribly victimized during the hay day of Shabaab's rule economically, but little was delivered.

In fact, lives of people were made much worse as well as ideologically,

the population doesn't easily at all embrace the version of Sharia, of Islam, that Shabaab preaches.

At the same time, however, it should be acknowledged that Somalia as a Muslim country is a conservative country that has become more conservative, and indeed, the current government is a very conservative government. Its version of Islam is only a few shades away from some of the key ideological aspects that Shabaab embraces.

Nonetheless, the AMISOM Commission and its interaction with Somali forces very much remains a work to be improved. There is little coordination to start with, very little information and coordination with headquarters and the key countries of AMISOM, essentially still independently reporting to capitals.

Yes, there has been some effort to coordinate with the Somali government and perhaps some effort to move away from treating some of the areas in Southwest or Juba as buffer states. Often, in practice that is frequently the attitude.

There is a lot of economic activity in Somalia. On the one hand, it is very good, and on the other hand, the formal economic activity is still very much about trade and money in and money out. To some extent itself is a source of some of the fighting, including among rival businessmen.

It will be interesting to see if the economic activity undertaken will in fact trickle down to the population in any robust way, but also more importantly, anchor political elites to generally embrace more inclusive, more accountable governance, or whether there will still remain this perception that money can be made quickly and opportunistically and pulled out.

And that if one can do so, one can have this economic operating mode without fundamentally changing notions of governance inclusiveness, marginalization,

breaking out of the personal networks and clan politics.

I was just thinking at the beginning that 2015 is an important year because it is the year a lot of key elements of the Compact, the Somalia International Compact, are supposed to be accomplished.

First of all, the constitution revision draft is supposed to be completed this year, very tall order for the remainder of this year, going into 2016.

The state formation is also supposed to be accomplished. You might know that Somalia has been a centralized state which many identify as a key to Somalia's problem, power being concentrated in Mogadishu and then generating key fights among those who control Mogadishu and resources.

One of the solutions that the international community very belatedly embraced was the notion that power needs to be decentralized, and indeed, Somalia has been going through a process of forming states, including in Juba, around Chisimayu, southwest states, as well as perhaps in the north, and it is still unclear what kind of relationships Somalia-land will have with the rest of Somalia.

Many would agree, including me, that the idea of power decentralization and moving towards a more subnational government is indeed critical.

Nonetheless, it is also very important that Mogadishu has now accepted that. Mogadishu now understands that states will be formed. Nonetheless, key questions remain for the rest of the year and heading into 2016 of what kind of federalism will it be.

We can also look at Nepal and we don't want to be in the situation that these issues of what kind of federalism, what kind of power distribution drags on for 10 years without resolution.

Typically, many of the states want very strong local subnational

governments, and of course, in Mogadishu, they want the opposite. No agreement has yet been reached, so major issues come up as to whether state authorities will be allowed to keep their own police or army forces, and some of these are militias, what kind of relationship they will have to the Somali National Army and the militias which are frequently composed.

Most disturbing to me, a lot of the governance formation and governance processes that we are seeing at the sub-state level is replicating some of the dysfunction and key problems of governance formation at the national level.

The whole idea of local governance was to be the solution to many of Somalia's problems was because there was a sense that local governance will have to be more inclusive and will be more accountable to the Somali people.

Nonetheless, what we are seeing with the state formation in Juba and Chisimayu and southwest and elsewhere brings that into question. In fact, what we are disturbingly starting to see such as in Juba is new exclusionary clan politics, new displacement of people, new embrace of particular tribes, particular clans, with very strong marginalization's of others.

Potentially, we are seeing a lot of new conflicts in the making, a humanitarian crisis potentially in Juba also in the making, coming now from the hands of local state authorities that were presumed to redeem some of these processes that had previously so undermined state-building in Somalia.

Yes, local governance and decentralization is important but how it is done is as important as the fact it is being done. I think international donors need to be paying attention to the processes and the behavior of the elites at the newly formed state level.

Shabaab will of course do what they do well, insert itself into clan

dynamics, embrace those clans at a particular point and mobilize them. They are still doing so.

Finally, 2016 is also supposed to be the year of elections in Somalia, including elections of the highest authority for the President. Many Somali's today are skeptical that elections can meaningful take place, if they are forced through by donors, the process will really be accountable and really be inclusive.

People point to problems such as the fact that the so-called Independent Electoral Commission is located within Villa Somalia, the presidential palace. You could easily say that is one of the most secure areas. Nonetheless, in the eyes of many members of Somali civil society, it raises questions of independence and what kind of accountability, what kind of free expression would be in the elections if they take place.

Donors here are in a very difficult position of having traditionally erred too much on the side of relaxing their conditions, and forgiving too much exclusionary politics, corruption, diversion of resources, and saying okay, next time we really mean it, you really have to do what we say will be specified as conditions.

Now we are almost on the flip side in order to avoid once again not having the conditions met, and once again the donors saying all right, next time, we mean it.

The three points, constitution revision, state formation, and elections all have to take place on a time line that is in fact very tight under a security situation that is worse than it was a year ago and really has no chance of becoming significantly better any time soon.

There is an adage, whether correct or incorrect, that Afghanistan is the graveyard of empires, and the addendum to the adage is that Somalia is the graveyard of international state-building. Whether correct or not, Somalia needs to do its own state-

building, but the international community can assist.

The question is how do we do this better than we have done before. I think there is a lot of momentum that has been built, a lot of focus on Somalia, that is very positive, and indeed, important elements with which to work.

It will do Somalia and the Somali people a great disservice if we ignored the problems that are emerging and are bound to emerge very quickly and simply emphasize 2009 as the baseline and ignore other baselines, including the expectations and aspirations of the Somali people.

MR. O'HANLON: Thank you very much, Vanda. You packed a lot into that and really brought a lot of clarity to a very difficult situation.

I really just have two questions I want to ask before we open it up. One of them will retread some of the ground that you just covered, but maybe with a different framing, and then another one is more about the future and what our policy options should be.

As you know, last summer we had the honor of hosting the President of Somalia when he was here in Washington for the Africa Leader Summit. I had the pleasure of interviewing him. We held the event across the street, but it was still a Brookings' event.

This was August of 2014. He had some pretty elaborate plans, campaign plan, for what he was hoping to accomplish on the battlefield in the next few months. That was almost a year ago. It sounds like at least from what you have been able to ascertain, he hasn't made the kind of progress he was hoping for.

Let me just review a couple of basic facts and figures for those of you who have not been following this, and then tee up a question for you about why, or is it just a delay, or is this really headed in a fundamentally different direction from what he

had expected.

He had a fair amount of bullishness and confidence since at that point, as you were saying, things had been getting better for a while, and he had 20,000 or more African Union forces working with him. I think you all know, that is one of the facts I wanted to get on the table.

They have been from six countries, three close neighbors, Djibouti, Kenya, and Ethiopia, and also Sierra Leone, Uganda, and Burundi, and that has been the team, each one of those countries contributing 3,000, 4,000, 5,000 troops.

The United States has done the occasional strike, but not played a big role, again, as you know better than I, but just to remind and tee up the question.

One could say well, in a country of only 10 million people, it's a big country geographically, but it is modest sized population wise, as you say, there are clans but not particularly strong tribal or ethnic distinctions. There is not a lot of divisiveness or centrifugal force from ethnic divisions.

Why hasn't the President's campaign plan as articulated here at Brookings a year ago been working?

MS. FELBAB-BROWN: Several points. The divisions among Somali's, among clan lines, are extraordinary. The level of division and subdivision and the level of not acting has been a defining characteristic of the country, and it is only the various Islamic movements that often managed to rise and portray themselves genuinely.

Politics has been very much dominated by extremely narrow clan identifications, particularly including at Mogadishu. The intensity of cleavages and division and very narrowly based politics is in my view the most pernicious dynamic of Somalia, and sadly, the country has not broke out of that.

Perhaps the state formation will mitigate some of that, but again, as I

was saying, we are not necessarily seeing that.

As to the President's plans, the way you phrased it, Mike, was what he wants to do with his forces. The reality is that he really doesn't own his forces. It is still a collection of countries contributing to a mission without necessarily share entirely the objective.

Yes, nominally, the objective is to defeat Shabaab, and I think many of them will agree on that, but what it means in terms of follow up, how strong is Mogadishu, should it be about building a strong Juba state and strengthening a local proxy that will take care of our interests, is there some national plan, those are highly contested issues without any resolution, and in fact, there is very limited communication among AMISOM members, in terms of what it means in terms of the campaign.

Certainly, the presidency does not control where AMISOM goes, what they do, what kind of military action takes place.

There are Somali national forces. They include different elements, including the Army, not the West, the North. It is again very much a work in progress. They are often a collection of militias, clans, entities.

They are very poorly paid and a lot of times they are not paid, despite massive funding from the international community. A lot of the money continues to be diverted. Their access to intelligence is limited. Local population often doesn't like them. They don't necessarily like AMISOM but since AMISOM doesn't interact much with the local population, they tend to sometimes be more tolerant of AMISOM presence than the presence of Somali national forces.

At the state level, you will often hear Somali national forces are inadequate, that's why we need to have our own Army, our own militia at the state level.

The notion there is a force that is controlled by Mogadishu and acting in

the national interest is an objective to work toward in the future. We can question how capable the fighting unit capacities of either the Somali Army or AMISOM.

MR. O'HANLON: That's a very helpful answer because I was just thinking through in my head as you were answering, I think it is true today that with the major downsizing of the Afghanistan mission, the African Union mission in Somalia is the largest international deployment anywhere in the world in a single country, if I'm remembering correctly.

Congo is a little less than 20,000. The Sudan missions, of which there are three, tend to be in the range of 10,000 or so.

Anyway, that's just a random fact, just to drive home the point that you have a lot of people there in theory, but if they're not capable and they're not working together, it's a different story.

MS. FELBAB-BROWN: Right. Indeed, the AU went under the notion that somehow at some point this mission would be handled over to a United Nations' force. There is no United Nations' force in the making. No one is coming in. They certainly didn't expect they would be doing holding and any form of building.

They are very reluctant to engage in the limited stability operations to which they are being pushed by donors, but there is no one else materializing necessarily, although AMISOM has moved away from some of the very destructive and counterproductive policies of the early days in 2011, when there was heavy use of artillery fire killing a lot of Somali civilians, the down side now is they are very much in a position of not being able to push the counterinsurgency, so Shabaab rules the roads by and large, and they have a lot of presence in the cities as well.

A mission can go out, but that would be very bad from a security perspective, but there is also no one else coming in. The built up of the Somali national

forces, which needs to be ultimately the solution, is years away.

MR. O'HANLON: Thank you. That leads to my last question, which is going to be about what we should do. I'm going to ask this in the most theoretical and utopian way, if you could wave your wand and ask for the next big change or effort in Somalia from the point of view of international help, what would it be?

I can imagine a number of candidate options. You just alluded to maybe the U.N. should take this over, although one could ask the U.N., would it really have any different forces ultimately than the African Union, and how well would they perform.

One could ask some of the U.S. military units that you and I have visited in Afghanistan who are no longer there, and now we no longer have a predominant American footprint in Iraq and Afghanistan, which means in theory we have some more U.S. military capacity, not that America tends to want to send its brigades to Africa, but should we be. That's another option I could imagine being put on the table.

Or maybe try to encourage a European role with some of our European friends. The French, obviously, have some proclivity in Africa and some capacity although maybe it's all being used up now in Mawli, but should that be an approach.

Do you have any vision, if you could imagine the best next step, even a politically difficult, maybe even verging on unrealistic next step, to make the security effort in Somalia work better, what would you recommend?

MS. FELBAB-BROWN: Since we are allowed to go into the realm of fantasy, I would actually say the most important step is not for the international community, but for the Somali's.

Let me wind back to 2012/2013, okay, we have hit rock bottom. Governance needs to be changed. We will escape for one the grip of the clan politics, of the exclusion make money now before it all collapses.

If that could change, if we are going to see more accountable governance being formed at the sub-state level, then we can imagine better design of security policies, we can imagine perhaps even utilizing local security forces, although they are very reluctant and skeptical of militia forces.

I think then we can talk and engage with AMISOM about better design, what kind of stabilization operations, but without the political dynamics, the governance dynamics changing in Somali itself, we can make things better or worse.

Now, I think there are a lot of ways to improve policy including U.S. policy, which has been very narrowly cast as very limited counterterrorism, not paying sufficient attention in my view to the political dimensions, not having enough of a vision of a strategic outcome.

I think donors need to pay much more attention to the subnational level, there is a little bit too much comfort by saying states are being formed, Mogadishu accepted states, and not looking sufficiently at what kind of governance is being produced at the sub-state level.

In some ways, governance that is worse today at the sub-state level than it was at the time of even Shabaab's strong presence.

I would like to see that. I think we need to have very strong and very honest conversation about the election next year. Are we going to replicate the previous form of elections, does it make sense to push for elections, if not, can we somehow change levels of accountability in the system.

I think there are various elements in which donors are helpful and sometimes unhelpful, but at the end of the day, the magic wand rests with the Somali's.

MR. O'HANLON: Thank you. Let's open it up. We have about 25 minutes. Please wait for a microphone and identify yourself before posing a question to

Vanda. We will start with the gentleman in the blue shirt two-thirds of the way back over here, please.

QUESTIONER: Frank Barry, Washington correspondent for Europolitics. My question is about Shabaab. Do you have any evidence -- there was at one point connections between the foreign fighters' issue, Americans going back there. What is the position of Shabaab at the moment and what is its focus in terms of a very local focus or plans for a global focus?

MS. FELBAB-BROWN: Shabaab is still very much working through that. What we saw before was foreign fighters were in fact treated rather badly, and that was one of the reasons why the foreign fighters, including from the United States, Somali's who were living in the United States dropped off, but there was also some understanding in the Shabaab leadership that policy was counterproductive.

After some hits by the United States against a key member of the leadership, we are seeing a new leadership being formed, and very much in the movement of how much they embrace the foreign cause, how much they focus domestically.

I think we are actually seeing both. They are clearly involved in attacks abroad, certainly in Kenya, but there is also broader language about hitting the foreign enemy. Nonetheless, they are focused locally.

The view that they engage in the fights abroad because they cannot function at home, in my view, is fundamentally wrong. They are focused on home. They are attacking at home. The number of attacks is strong, but yes, they also have an international agenda.

I think they are also focused and driven by media and still working through what kind of relationship they have to ISIS, to what extent they try to compete

with ISIS, to what extent they embrace ISIS.

Shabaab had a difficult and uneasy relationship with al-Qaeda, yes. They nominally embraced al-Qaeda. In many ways, they still continued operating very locally, and certainly although they embraced al-Qaeda, Shabaab was and is a Somali movement. I think again they are still parsing their way while nominally embracing ISIS, in practice, ISIS is a big draw on money and on resources and on foreign fighters.

If you are a potential Jihadi, excited, would you rather go to really hot, dusty Somalia, or would you rather go fight in a more pleasant environment elsewhere. If you are foreign donor who is thrilled by the version of Islam that groups like ISIS and Shabaab offer, do you give money to the hot kid on the block taking over large territories, ISIS, or do you give money to Shabaab that is not gone but certainly nowhere in the field position that they were in 2009.

The disconnections are uneasy and difficult for them. They are domestically focused even as they maintain and have increased international operations.

QUESTIONER: Thank you. Laurence Freeman, the African Desk at EIR Magazine. Most of what you have said and the moderator said in terms of progress forward was in terms of military and counterterrorism terms, but isn't state-building much larger than that?

I was recently in N'Djamena working with the Lake Chad Basin Commission on refurbishing Lake Chad and opening up economic opportunities for about 40 million Africans.

Some people in the military and some people in the new Nigeria government recognized economic component to fighting counterterrorism.

Last year, an U.N. envoy, Ambassador Kay, was here. He said there is no provision of anything the U.N. is doing for economic development in Somalia. When I

heard the President last year of Somalia speak, he had a list of things he wanted, power, building up the port, roads. There is no U.S. part of it as far as I see from the Obama Administration.

Doesn't state-building require -- if it's not implicit, isn't it explicitly required, economic development for the people to actually push out Shabaab?

MS. FELBAB-BROWN: The answer is yes, but the answer is also very much emphasizing pushing the money out to the people. That has not been happening.

I mentioned in my talk that there is a lot of economic activity going on. Somali's are brilliant businessmen, even Somali refugees throughout Africa tend to very quickly dominate business in local areas, often generating resentment against themselves from the local population.

There is a lot of business activity taking place in the country. What is not clear is whether the business activity will in fact trickle down as development to the people. Somalia is an extremely shredded country. You travel in Afghanistan and travel in Somalia, the level of destruction that you see in Somalia is even much greater than the level of destruction that you see in Afghanistan.

Somali's amazing survival is their capacity to go on under the most excruciating conditions. It is very admirable. That needs, however, to be channeled into demanding governance that will allow them to move beyond just living and surviving in the most difficult conditions.

I think the key problem with the issue of foreign aid is there is a real danger of pouring in too much money without governance structures being there to distribute the money to the people and this is just not happening, this just not becoming another major source of corruption.

I am not persuaded that these institutional structures have been set up.

There is still huge amounts of diversion of the security aid that is going to the country. The Somali military is often not paid for months. It makes no sense to put all of the foreign aid into a country where the money will be diverted and it will not make its way to the people.

I think the onus is on the Somali government to show how that money would be meaningful transparently used with involvement of civil society, of the local business community, local clan and governance structures, to really produce sustainable development and not just intensify conflicts.

QUESTIONER: I am with the Embassy of Kenya. I have two questions. Your thoughts on do you think Somalia is ready to accept the refugees from Kenya, and the reason I am asking this is because if you are very optimistic that Somalia -- why is it the international community -- we are sending mixed signals to the Somalia community that you are not ready to go back to your country. I'd like to hear your thoughts on that.

The second one is on political practice. Are we likely to see political parties in the run up to the 2016 elections, are there any you see beginning to form, and is that something that may happen?

MS. FELBAB-BROWN: Thank you for asking the question, and indeed, it has to do with the closure -- very large Somalia refugee community list, and where Kenya has been very concerned, it is a big breeding ground or enabling environment for Shabaab.

I think Kenya's concerns are very legitimate and of course, Kenya has born the impact of some really horrific events by Shabaab, including Garissa, the latest. That said, I think the closure of the camp will only make things worse. These people will not be easily accommodated in Somalia.

They will end up being displaced in Somalia. They will end up

augmenting conflicts over land that are preexisting, already going on, not to mention the humanitarian situation.

I think there is a real chance that many will in fact be susceptible to Shabaab mobilization or they are pushed out from the camp, or if it doesn't happen, they will simply end up victims in the midst of other camps into which Shabaab will be able to insert itself.

I think Kenya needs to find other ways to work with Somalia, in fact, develop a much more positive relationship with the Somali community, in Kenya, both with Somali's that were born in Kenya, but also Somali refugees in Kenya, and try to find ways to have the community self police itself to trust the Kenyan government far more than it has, to have a sense they are partners in the fight against Islamic terrorism, against extremism, such as Shabaab, rather than being hammered on both sides.

As in many countries, party formation is important and needs to take place, and it is a very slow process, and many a power broker has an interest in preventing party formation.

They are a long way to go from having meaningful parties that can mobilize but also be a sufficient voice for enough of a community to really channel political demands and then to transform political demands into some operational policies.

Yes, it's a very important objective to work with. It's not going to happen meaningfully by next year's election. It still will be about individuals and about clans.

The question is how can the clans, how can the businessmen be encouraged to move beyond the narrow short term and to think about the clan, the business that derives benefits from sustainability. That is where right now I think a political reckoning needs to happen.

QUESTIONER: Thank you so much for the discussion. My name is

Ebay. I wanted to hear your thoughts on -- you said something that is quite interesting, that the AMISOM, they don't coordinate. I believe you are aware of the report by the human rights organizations concerning some of the AMISOM -- what do you think can be done to help make the AMISOM structure to be stronger?

One of the recommendations from the African Union is that there isn't enough report of abuse from this country but in countries, what happens in their sectors, so what should we do because you can go in and tell these countries these are the things you have to do when you have these cases of abuses, but then the structure is not there. The AMISOM headquarters are destined to do the necessary things when these violations take place.

Why do you think we don't have strong elements within the AMISOM structure to really force these guys to have well documented reports of what's going on?

MS. FELBAB-BROWN: I don't think it is just a matter of they are not reporting abuse, there is no reporting to headquarters period, at all. Essentially, AMISOM headquarters in Mogadishu is by and large completely blind as to what is happening in the sectors. They can't have a lot of assets, they cannot go out for inspections.

Whatever comes in is totally at the discretion of the sectors, so the strongest sectors, the countries with the strongest and most competent military forces, Ethiopia and Kenya, responds to Ethiopia and Kenya. They will were only reluctant joiners. They originally went in on their own and it took a lot of diplomatic effort to bring them into the AMISOM structure.

Nonetheless today, there is somewhat better communication and coordination between Kenya and Ethiopia, but nonetheless, that has not translated into a strong AMISOM headquarters' capacity at all.

Donors have opportunities and responsibility. Donors are funding totally the AMISOM mission. The State Department is suspending military aid to Burundi because of the coup and the retaliation against those who are accused of being supporters of coup.

Nonetheless, donors, including the United States, were very reluctant to suspend any money for AMISOM for any reason. I think we have the opportunity to say we want much more reporting, much more coordination, at least sharing of information to be going on within the sectors, within AMISOM, and we have to hold the purse.

Michael mentioned the Europeans, while the Europeans are very much saying they don't have money for Somalia because they are putting in so much money in West Africa. You see a lot of drop off of funding and very much of a sense that future funding will be very difficult to get.

Nonetheless, some money will be going in, and to AMISOM, and we should be demanding they just talk to each other as well as talk to us. Right now, it is very much anchored to the neighbors as opposed to Mogadishu or any national project.

MR. O'HANLON: There are two questions in the fifth row. Whitney, and then the gentleman. I'll take them together, and see if we can do it that way for symmetry, and maybe we will have time for one more after that.

QUESTIONER: Witney Schneidman, African Growth Initiative. Two quick questions. One, the correlation between piracy and al-Shabaab. There used to be a line of thought that the piracy could never be addressed until Somalia was more stable, but in fact, there has been a tremendous drop in the incidents of piracy. I just wondered if you could comment on that.

The second is on the motivation for al-Shabaab attacks in Kenya, Westgate, University of Garissa, was this more central coordination? Do you see this

more of sort of lone wolf operations emanating from Kenya?

MR. O'HANLON: We will take one more. Sir?

QUESTIONER: I'm David from Johns Hopkins, CSIS. Could you say something specifically about the security and political situation in Juba? I'd be interested in hearing more about that.

MS. FELBAB-BROWN: Yes, there has been a dramatic drop in piracy, and to a large extent, that is a function of the Naval presence on the seas, in combination, and that is crucial here, with ships adopting a variety of defensive mechanisms, defense measures, including the citadels.

The problem before citadels were adopted and armed guards were brought, but particularly citadels, was when a ship came under attack, the ship would be seized very quickly, say within 30/40 minutes, which was usually long for an attack, and by the time the international Navy would get there, they couldn't act necessarily because now pirates have hostages.

The difference with citadels and monitoring is when a ship comes under attack, the crew can retreat to the citadel, and the international naval presence has a long time to act and still can act against a ship that was seized.

With a combination of the policies, a much thicker naval presence, and the defensive measures, it has made a crucial difference.

There are opportunities for pirates, but many of the pirates continue to be unemployed or face the same economic choices as they did before. Some of them are now hired as armed guards for ships that move through Somali's waters. Others are employed by various other power brokers.

Fundamentally, their economic choices have not changed. The difficulty of seizing a ship and making money on it has changed radically.

Shabaab has not been in the piracy business, despite the fact that they recently captured the Iranian fisherman. The Iranian boat washed out into Somali waters, and that's when they grabbed them. It was not that they actively sailed out on the water to capture the Iranian ship.

Nonetheless, perhaps there is some coordination of action between them, so to some extent, there is some linkages, but Shabaab is predominately not about piracy, but the chance of piracy escalating if international navies are pulled out is significant. That is sad because we have seen such big rise of piracy of a different kind, but nonetheless piracy, in the Gulf of Guinea, West Africa.

There is lots of talk of do we need to redeploy because that is where ships are being attacked.

I forgot the other question.

MR. O'HANLON: Kenya, the Kenya dimension, why the attacks in Kenya.

MS. FELBAB-BROWN: Right. I think there are multiple reasons for the Kenya attacks. One is Shabaab needs to demonstrate visibility, and yes, you have visibility and power by conducting motorcycle assassinations in Mogadishu, or laying IEDs around. You have a very different kind of visibility, especially with respect to international funders, donors, by engaging in attacks abroad.

Shabaab has repeatedly threatened Kenya because of its role against Shabaab. They also threatened Ethiopia, but they find it much harder.

You have to recognize that a lot of the Shabaab activity in Kenya is driven by Kenya's security policies, the discrimination of Somali's in Kenya. It is just not government policy, but deeply seated among people, so they are finding a lot of ground, a lot of the Kenyan security policies have been very heavy handed, they are

assassinations of key Muslim community leaders. There is a lot of this done domestically in Kenya that makes Kenya a ready target, ready mobilization place.

In fact, there have been some very interesting studies done by African scholars of comparing recruitment strategies in Kenya and Somalia by Shabaab, and the issue of economic opportunities and clan discrimination is very strong in Somalia.

In Kenya, it is very much about Somali's versus non-Somali's, about government policies, a set of grievances, a recruitment mechanism, and the issue of, for example, economic opportunities or escaping that which is a big driver of why people join Shabaab, ordinary people. It doesn't come up in the Kenya context. It is about grievances and sense of mistreatment and government discrimination against the Muslim community.

Juba, very difficult, very complex situation. The key proxy of Kenyan forces, the President of the Juba State, working with some of his ministers are rather interesting people, who used to be his enemies when they were ministers in Mogadishu.

Shabaab controls the port, there is a tremendous amount of charcoal flowing through the port, and you can draw your own conclusions on who makes money on it.

Nonetheless, there is a lot of new displacement of people, a lot of land grants along the Juba River, some of the most fertile, most important economic areas, and in my view, that is a huge trigger of potential conflict draw of Shabaab as well as a humanitarian crisis in the making.

I think it is critical that donors, including Kenya, demand far greater accountability and restrain some of the behavior that we are seeing from the Juba State than has been the case.

Right now, there is sort of suspension of tension between Mogadishu

and Juba and Chisimayu. It is just suspension. It is going to come back probably again.

MR. O'HANLON: We will take the two in that same row, if you can each have one question, and we will try to wrap there, with apologies to the rest of you. We will have another event soon.

QUESTIONER: I'm from George Mason University. I have two questions.

MR. O'HANLON: Can you do just one?

QUESTIONER: Okay. Most critical. Since we are in nation building, it seems that EGAT was created for intergovernmental development. Now it seems that EGAT is really into state-building within Somalia, and stepping over to the local community. It's not given its own freedom and the government is not saying anything. That is one of the barriers that we are facing now within the relation between those states as well as the government. That is why we are having problems, political problems.

That is the first question.

MR. O'HANLON: Thank you. Ma'am?

QUESTIONER: Hi, I'm Lindsey from Congressman Ellison's office. With reference to the building of economic institutions, you focused on foreign aid.

Something our office has been working heavily on is the remittance flow, 40 percent of Somalia's GDP is from remittances from abroad, and folks in our District who want to send money home to loved ones for school, building businesses, food, et cetera, run into massive problems because banks won't process those transfers.

We are hearing the fire alarms ringing, we are on the brink of a humanitarian crisis. Kenya just announced they are closing some of the accounts as well.

I wanted to see if you shared that view and also if you sort of have any

ideas about possible remedies to the problem.

MS. FELBAB-BROWN: Thank you. EGAT has played at times a very constructive role, such as in 2013 and 2014, some of the handling of state formation, including Juba and Southwest State, could have gone much worse, and we could have seen a lot more conflict and not get the level of acceptance of the idea that there would be power decentralization if not for EGAT activity.

I think EGAT also ended up being stuck, and it is still very much treated as essentially a matter of coordination between Ethiopia and Kenya, and the level of voice that Mogadishu and local actors have is limited.

What I would like to see EGAT do with the help with international partners is to bring Mogadishu but not just Mogadishu, to bring civil society voices, to bring the Peace Commissions that are being stood up in various parts of Somalia, into some of the discussions, at least to provide information, to be a voice.

Part of the reason why EGAT has not been doing it is because Kenya and Ethiopia still continue to treat the state-building project in Somalia with great skepticism, and instead believe in creating buffer zones in Juba and Southwest State.

Unless they buy into the state-building project in a deeper way, there will be these dynamics taking place.

That issue is crucial, maybe \$1.4 billion of money goes to Somalia every year. That is a very substantial amount of money and it is the critical life line for many Somali's.

Yes, some of the money is diverted to terrorist groups like Shabaab, some of the money is mishandled in other ways. Nonetheless, that might well be what is necessary, and the idea that remittance flows will be cut off is unsustainable because new forms of remittances will emerge, it will just push them more into the background,

they will be channeled through Djibouti. The money will flow in because Somalia and Somali's will not survive without them, and it will be even more opaque.

Rather than saying we will fine banks very heavily or shut down accounts, as we are seeing in Somalia, and as in Kenya, we should say how can we take some of the money that is going to bad actors, including to Shabaab, to develop actionable intelligence out of following the money flows.

In my view, it will be both ineffective and counterproductive to shut down the remittances and will generate greater opportunities for terrorist mobilizations, for Shabaab mobilizations, than the bad side effect of some of the money going to terrorist groups.

MR. O'HANLON: Thank you all very much for being here, and please join me in thanking Vanda. (Applause)

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