

Testimony
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Bureau of African Affairs
U.S. Department of State
Before the House Armed Services Committee
Hearing on “Combating Piracy on the High Seas”
March 5, 2009

Mr. Chairman and Members of the Committee: thank you for affording me the privilege of discussing the relationship between the conditions in Somalia and the blight of piracy in the waters off its shores. Somalia piracy, *offshore*, is born out of instability and insecurity *on shore*. Consequently, a complete, long-term and permanent solution to the piracy problem off the coast of Somalia will require a multi-faceted strategy that leads to political and economic stability on the ground in Somalia and the establishment of basic security. To protect U.S. national interests, our immediate policy objectives in Somalia are to help Somalia regain political and economic stability, respond to the humanitarian needs of the Somali people, and eliminate the threat of terrorism.

Sustainable change in Somalia requires a comprehensive regional strategy and a political solution to conflict that is authored and implemented by Somalis themselves and not by outsiders. In this regard, we continue to support the United Nations (UN)-led Djibouti Peace Process, which has provided the mechanism for Somalis to make important political and security decisions in recent months. We also continue to work with a broad international group of donors to support the UN-led process, including the African Union and the regional Intergovernmental Authority on Development.

The Djibouti process has led to the establishment of a new unity government with a respected leader as President, Sheik Sharif Sheikh Ahmed, and a well-experienced Prime Minister, Omar Abdirashid Ali Sharmarke. The Prime Minister has now appointed a Cabinet. The new team represents a broad cross-section of Somali clans and political opinions. The next step is for the unity government to foster deeper credibility with Somalis by establishing itself in Mogadishu, a process that has already begun, and to facilitate the delivery of services there and in surrounding regions. The United States worked with the other members of the UN Security Council Somalia Sanctions Committee to adopt resolution 1844 in November 2008, which empowers the Committee to designate spoilers of Somalia's reconciliation process for targeted sanctions.

While the recent political progress is encouraging, no political solution can be sustainable, even if widely supported, unless it is anchored by a robust security force capable of protecting the government and its activities. We encourage efforts by the international community to support the unity government as it stands up such a security force.

A good way to address African conflict or security issues is with African forces and expertise. Africans know and understand their terrain well, and have a paramount vested interest and stake in any outcome. In this regard, we continue to support the African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM) and are especially appreciative for the governments of Uganda and Burundi for sending soldiers to do the difficult work associated with peacekeeping in Somalia. We are currently funding the deployment of additional AMISOM battalions, which we hope will bring the total number of African Union forces on the ground in Somalia to over 5,000 within the

next few months. Non-traditional donors, such as Gulf Arab states, have indicated a possible willingness to support AMISOM and the unity government's security force.

Mr. Chairman, it almost goes without saying that security must improve in order for displaced people to return home; without political stability the humanitarian situation will remain dire. We remain the largest bilateral donor of humanitarian assistance to Somalia. We hope the relocation of the unity government to Somalia and the stand-up of the joint security forces in Mogadishu will help improve security conditions at the community level and produce arrangements to facilitate humanitarian access so emergency assistance reaches those in need.