

An hourglass-shaped graphic with a globe inside. The top bulb is dark blue, and the bottom bulb is light blue. The globe is centered in the narrow neck of the hourglass. The text is centered within the hourglass.

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Africa and the War on Terrorism

Ted Dagne, Foreign Affairs, Defense, and Trade Division

Updated January 17, 2002

Abstract. African countries overwhelmingly expressed their support for the U.S.-led efforts on the war against terrorism shortly after the September 11 attacks on New York and Washington. Some African countries are reportedly sharing intelligence and are coordinating with Washington to fight terrorism in Africa. The governments of Kenya and Ethiopia are working closely with U.S. officials to prevent fleeing Al-Qaeda members from establishing a presence in Somalia. Africa may not be as important to the United States in this phase of the war against terrorism as European allies or Pakistan, but in the next phase of the terror war African may prove key.

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Africa and the War on Terrorism

January 17, 2002

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Summary

African countries overwhelmingly expressed their support for the U.S.-led efforts on the war against terrorism shortly after the September 11 attacks on New York and Washington. Some African countries are reportedly sharing intelligence and are coordinating with Washington to fight terrorism in Africa. The governments of Kenya and Ethiopia are working closely with U.S. officials to prevent fleeing Al-Qaeda members from establishing a presence in Somalia. Africa may not be as important to the United States in this phase of the war against terrorism as European allies or Pakistan, but in the next phase of the terror war Africa may prove key.

The Bush Administration has been courting African governments to join the U.S.-led coalition in the fight against terrorism. Administration officials are pleased with the level of support they have received from African governments. In late October 2001, President Bush told more than 30 African ministers who were attending the annual African Growth and Opportunity Act Forum that "America won't forget the many messages of sympathy and solidarity sent by Africans." Bush Administration officials note that Africa, with its large Muslim population, can play a pivotal role in solidifying support in Muslim and Arab countries.

Administration officials believe that Africa is a potential breeding ground for terrorism. Indeed, in recent years, Africa has emerged as an important staging area, training center, and a favored place to target U.S. interests. On August 7, 1998, mid-morning explosions killed 213 people, 12 of whom were U.S. citizens, at the U.S. embassy in Kenya, and eleven people at the U.S. embassy in Tanzania. In June 1995, members of the Islamic Group, an Egyptian extremist group, tried to assassinate President Hosni Mubarak of Egypt in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia.

U.S. officials are closely monitoring countries vulnerable to terrorist penetration and influence, as well as countries that are sympathetic to these groups. Although there are over a dozen countries where terrorist groups have established a strong presence in Africa, Administration officials are closely watching several countries, including Sudan and Somalia. Sudan has long been considered a rogue state by much of the world community because of its support for international terrorism. Somalia is another country where the United States is seriously concerned about terrorist activities. Since the ouster of the dictator Siad Barre government in 1991, Somalia has been without a central government. The absence of central authority has created a conducive environment for terrorist and extremist groups to flourish in Somalia.

Some African officials are concerned that despite the strong support African governments have provided to the anti-terror campaign, they are not seen as real coalition partners in the fight against terrorism. African officials note that cooperation between the United States and Africa in the fight against terrorism should also include extraditing and apprehending members of African terrorist and extremist groups active in Europe and the United States. They argue that these groups are raising funds and organizing in the west, often unhindered by western governments.

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Africa and the War on Terrorism

African Reactions to the Terror Attacks and Possible Support

African reactions to the September 2001 terrorist attacks on the World Trade Center in New York and the Pentagon in Washington were overwhelmingly supportive of the United States. Dozens of African leaders offered support to combat terrorism. South African President Thabo Mbeki said that “The South African government unreservedly denounces these senseless and horrific terrorist attacks and joins the world in denouncing these dastardly acts.”¹ The leader of Sudan’s National Islamic Front government, President Omar el-Bashir, who provided a safe haven to Osama bin Laden between 1991 and 1996, condemned the terrorist attacks and expressed his government’s readiness to cooperate in fighting terrorism. However, some celebrations were reported among Muslim militants in northern Nigeria in the immediate aftermath of the attacks. In the Somali capital, Mogadishu, thousands of people took to the streets in support of Osama bin Laden and burned American and Israeli flags. Somalia’s transitional national government condemned the terrorist bombings in New York and Washington but did not prevent the demonstrations from taking place. An estimated 25 Africans from 13 different African countries died in the World Trade Center on September 11, 2001.²

Subsequently, some African governments reportedly cooperated with the United States in its anti-terrorism efforts. According to press reports, the governments of Djibouti and Kenya offered their sea and airport facilities for use by the United States military. The United States has a military access agreement with Kenya, and the U.S. military has used the sea and airports of Djibouti for refueling and other purposes. The government of Sudan is also helping the United States, according to State Department officials. Secretary of State Colin Powell called Sudanese Foreign Minister Mustapha Ismail several days after the terrorist attacks, the first high level contact between U.S. and Sudanese officials in many years. Secretary Powell stated that Sudanese officials offered to cooperate with the United States and appeared eager to join the coalition. According to press reports, U.S. officials confirmed that the Sudanese government had given U.S. officials unrestricted access to files of suspected terrorists and suggested that they might be willing to hand over some of these individuals to U.S. authorities. South Africa evidently played a role as well. According to the September 25 South African *Daily Mail*, U.S. officials “forwarded a list of names with possible links to suspects in the attacks on New York and

¹The Washington File. Africans Condemn September 11 Terrorist Attacks on the United States, October 23, 2001.

² The Washington File. Kansteiner Reviews U.S. Policy Toward Africa After Terrorist Attacks, October 2, 2001.

Washington.” In October, South Africa and the United States signed an extradition treaty. Kenyan security officials also acknowledged receiving a list of names from U.S. officials.

Africa may not be as important to the United States in this phase of war against terrorism as European allies or Pakistan. Nonetheless, observers note that Africa has an important part to play in assisting the United States. The proximity of some African countries to the Persian Gulf region could prove useful to the U.S. military in some contingencies. Eritrea has ports at Massawa and Assab on the Red Sea and in the past several years, Djibouti has emerged as an important refueling station for U.S. military planes. A more immediate role for African governments is fighting terrorism and terrorist groups in Africa itself. Africa has emerged as a safehaven for a number of terrorist groups from the Middle East and extremist groups from Africa.

For over a decade, Sudan has been a safehaven for a number of terrorist organizations, including Al-Qaeda, Islamic Group, Hezbollah, and Palestinian Islamic Jihad. Some of the most destructive terrorist attacks in the 1990s took place on the African continent.³ Terror groups from the Middle East have established a presence in Somalia, Kenya, Ethiopia, South Africa, Tanzania, and Uganda. In 1997, Ethiopian security forces killed a number of terrorists inside Somalia after several terrorist attacks in the Ethiopian capital, Addis Ababa. A senior Ethiopian official recently stated that the government has “documents and pictures of dead bodies of Afghans and Arabs” captured during the Ethiopian operations against Al-Ittihad al-Islamiya, an extremist group, inside Somalia. Al-Ittihad is one of many groups designated for seizure of assets by the Bush Administration.

The Bush Administration is pleased with the level of support it has and continues to receive from African governments. In late October 2001, President Bush told more than 30 African ministers who were attending the annual African Growth and Opportunity Act Economic Forum that “America won’t forget the many messages of sympathy and solidarity sent by African heads of state.” President Bush also acknowledged the Organization of African Unity’s (OAU) political support for the anti-terror campaign.⁴ Bush Administration officials assert that Africa, with its large Muslim population, can play a pivotal role in solidifying support in Muslim and Arab countries. In late October, National Security Advisor Condoleezza Rice urged “African nations, particularly with large Muslim populations, to speak out at every opportunity to make clear that this is not a war of civilizations, that this is a war of civilization against those who would be uncivilized in their approach to us.”⁵

³For more on Sudan and terrorism see CRS Issue Brief IB98043 by Ted Dagne.

⁴The Washington File (Department of State). *Bush Thanks African Officials for Anti-Terrorist Help*, October 29, 2001.

⁵Remarks delivered by National Security Adviser Condoleezza Rice during the second AGOA Economic Forum in Washington, October 30, 2001.

The View From Africa: Concerns

Some African officials are concerned that, despite the strong support African governments have provided to the anti-terror campaign, they are not seen as valued coalition partners in the fight against terrorism. Some observers are critical that the Bush Administration did not extend invitations to African heads of state to visit Washington for discussions on the crisis, as has been the case with many European and other leaders. The Nigerian President is the only head of state who has been officially received by the Bush Administration since September 11. Bush Administration officials dismiss this concern, saying what is important is the level of cooperation on the ground, and not a visit to Washington.⁶ African ambassadors in Washington are also worried that sub-Saharan Africa may become a lower priority and that U.S. financial support may be reduced because of the new focus on terrorism.

African officials assert that the United States has an obligation to assist them financially because they have suffered economically due to terrorism. In October 2001, the Tanzanian ambassador to the United States told a congressional gathering that his country's tourism sector has been hit hard and has not been able to recover since the U.S. embassy attack in Dar es Salaam, the capital, in 1998. Kenya's tourism sector is also suffering since the terror attack against the U.S. embassy in 1998, according to Kenyan officials. In October 2001, the Ambassador of South Africa told a congressional gathering that the South African airline industry has been harmed due to flight cancellations and reductions in flights. African officials maintain that they need U.S. assistance in fighting international terrorism in their countries. More specifically, they would like to build African security capacity to detect, and deter terrorist acts, but this would require extensive training and capacity building. African governments also would like U.S. support in effectively tackling money laundering by extremist and terrorist groups in their country. Expanding intelligence sharing is another area where African governments would like to see some improvement. U.S. security officials were appreciative of the support they received from Kenyan and Tanzanian officials during and after the embassy bombings, but African officials contend that they lack the resources needed to provide such support routinely.

Some African governments are concerned that they might become the next target for U.S. military action after Afghanistan. Sudanese officials are reportedly concerned that the United States may target their country despite recent cooperation with U.S. officials. While U.S. officials have said they will fight terrorism wherever it is found, they have not given any indication Sudan could become a target. The Bush Administration abstained in late September 2001 on a U.N. Security Council vote, permitting the lifting of sanctions against Sudan. In late October, however, the Bush Administration extended U.S. bilateral sanctions against Sudan, citing continued terrorism concerns. In a letter to Congress, President Bush stated that "because the actions and policies of the government of Sudan continue to pose an unusual and extraordinary threat to the national security and foreign policy of the United States, the national emergency declared on November 3, 1997, and the measures adopted on that date to deal with that emergency must continue in effect beyond November 3,

⁶ Remarks delivered at a conference in Washington by Jendayi Frazer, Senior Director for Africa, National Security Council, October 2001.

2001.” Somalis are also concerned that their country could become a target because of the activities of Al-Ittihad al-Islamiya and its alleged relationship with Al-Qaeda. President Bush added Al-Ittihad to the list of organizations that support terrorism and ordered the freezing of its assets, in accordance with Executive Order 13224. In early November 2001, the Bush Administration added a Somali business, Al-Barakaat, and froze its assets in the United States, because of Al-Barakaat’s alleged links with Al-Qaeda. According to U.N. officials, the freezing of the assets has had serious impact on Somalia’s fragile economy, because many Somalis depended on the services of Al-Barakaat and it employed many Somalis.⁷

Some African government officials are eager to see the coalition against terrorism led by the United Nations rather than the United States. These officials believe that a truly international coalition led by the United Nations is more acceptable to African opinion than a coalition consisting of mainly western powers.⁸ They propose to strengthen the capacity of the United Nations to fight terrorism, partly through the establishment of a new United Nations agency under the General Assembly dedicated to fighting and coordinating terrorism efforts. Some African ambassadors are concerned about pressures from the public at home concerning African citizens detained in the United States. These ambassadors assert that they have not had access to their citizens in detention and have been unable to learn their identity or nationality. Citizens of several African countries, including South Africa and Somalia, have been detained, according to African officials.

Cooperation between the United States and Africa in the fight against terrorism should include extraditing and apprehending members of African terrorist and extremist groups active in Europe and the United States, according to African officials. African officials assert that they have not been able to get the cooperation of western officials in extraditing individuals engaged in terrorism. They argue that these groups are raising funds and organizing in the west, unhindered by western governments. In October, the Algerian ambassador told a congressional audience that his country lost an estimated 20,000 people to terrorism, but received little support from the west. While some of these concerns are being expressed by a handful of African officials, many Africans maintain that the United States must address the terrorism problem in a more comprehensive way. Officials, especially in countries with large Muslim populations, see the need for a fair and quick resolution of the Palestinian problem.

Some observers are concerned that the anti-terror campaign could change U.S.-Africa relations significantly. Democracy and human rights advocates fear that governments with poor human rights records will be embraced by Washington as long as they cooperate in the anti-terrorism campaign. Others express concern that conflict resolution and development issues could become marginal for policy makers in Washington. Bush Administration officials have stated that while the fight against terrorism is a priority, other issues, such as trade, the fight against HIV/AIDS, and

⁷ Kaufman, Marc. Somalis Said to Feel Impact of U.S. Freeze of al-Barakaat. *The Washington Post*, November 30, 2001.

⁸Remarks made at a meeting between the Congressional Black Caucus (CBC) members and ambassadors from Algeria, Djibouti, Tanzania, South Africa, and Kenya.

conflict resolution, will remain important priorities as well. In early November, 2001, Assistant Secretary of State for Africa Walter H. Kansteiner told a gathering of African ministers that the Bush Administration has five policy priorities in Africa: expanding trade and investment; good governance and democracy; the environment; conflict resolution; and combating HIV/AIDS.⁹

Some human rights activists and others are concerned that governments in Africa may see an opportunity to label legitimate opposition forces as terrorists. In Zimbabwe, President Robert Mugabe recently accused members of the opposition of being terrorists. Since September 11, the government of Zimbabwe has used existing and new laws to harass and intimidate members of the opposition and independent journalists. In Kenya, members of the Muslim community complain of harassment by government security forces. In Somalia, the Mogadishu-based transitional national government is a target of attacks by other political groups, arguing that the transitional national government supports terrorism. In several other African countries, governments are enacting new security laws, allegedly to combat terrorism.

Some analysts believe that the United States must significantly expand its intelligence presence in Africa in order to effectively counter the threat of terrorism. They argue that the United States should also help build the security and intelligence capabilities of African governments. These observers contend that while it is desirable to secure and win the support of all African countries, only a handful are going to be capable and suitable to join an effective partnership with the United States. Experts note that Washington should identify relevant African actors and establish a special security relationship with these governments. In dealing with terrorist threats in Somalia, for example, Kenya and Ethiopia could provide key support to the United States, some analysts maintain. Others are wary, fearing that close U.S. support for some African governments would be interpreted as a reduction in pressure for democratization and economic reform. From their perspective, encouraging good governance, rule of law, and respect for human rights together with poverty alleviation measures are all pivotal in building a strong and terrorist-free Africa.

Major Terrorist Incidents in Africa

Terrorist Attacks on U.S. Embassies in Kenya and Tanzania

On August 7, 1998, mid-morning explosions killed 213 people, 12 of whom were U.S. citizens, at the U.S. embassy in Nairobi, Kenya, and eleven people (none American) at the U.S. embassy in Dar es Salaam, Tanzania. As many as 5,000 people were injured in Nairobi, and 86 in Dar es Salaam. On August 20, 1998, President Clinton directed U.S. military forces to attack a terrorist training complex in Afghanistan and pharmaceutical factory in Sudan believed to be manufacturing precursors for chemical weapons. U.S. Navy surface ships and submarines, operating

⁹The Washington File (DOS). Kansteiner Reviews U.S. Policy Toward Africa After Terrorist Attacks, October 2, 2001.

in the Arabian Sea and the Red Sea, fired 75 or more Tomahawk cruise missiles at the two targets.¹⁰

The government of Sudan condemned the attack, accusing the Clinton Administration of aggression. The government argued that the strike was designed to divert attention from President Clinton's personal and political problems at home. Government officials took reporters on a tour of the destroyed site to support their claim that the facility only produced legal drugs. Thousands of Sudanese, reportedly encouraged by government officials, took to the streets of Khartoum to protest the U.S. strike. Critics in the United States also accused the Clinton Administration of hitting the wrong target. Clinton Administration officials backed off from their initial claim that Osama bin Laden was associated with the bombed facility, but maintained that the facility was manufacturing precursors for chemical weapons. Secretary of Defense William Cohen wrote that the Afghan-Sudan strikes not only were retaliation for the embassy bombings but were also part of a long-term plan to fight terrorism.¹¹ In a letter to Congress, President Clinton wrote that "United States acted in exercise of our inherent right of self defense consistent with Article 51 of the United Nations Charter."

On October 7, 1998, U.S. prosecutors indicted four suspects in federal court on charges related to the Nairobi bombing. Two of the men were arrested in Kenya and extradited to the United States, and another was arrested in Texas. On November 4, 1998, a federal grand jury in New York returned a 238-count indictment against Osama bin Laden. Authorities charged bin Laden with the U.S. embassy bombings in Kenya and Tanzania in August and offered a \$5 million award for information leading to his arrest or conviction. In late May 2001, a federal grand jury in New York convicted four men for the embassy bombings. In October 2001, four more convicted terrorists were sentenced to life in prison without the possibility of parole.¹² In addition, eighteen more persons have been indicted, twelve are still at large, and six are in custody awaiting trial.

Assassination Attempt Against Egyptian President Mubarak

In June 1995, members of the Islamic Group, an Egyptian extremist group, tried to assassinate President Hosni Mubarak of Egypt in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. The eleven-man assassination team had been given safehaven in Sudan where they prepared for the assassination. The team was divided into two groups: nine were sent to Ethiopia to carry out the assassination; and two, according to a statement issued by the Ethiopian government, remained in Sudan to plan and direct the killing of Mubarak. The weapons used in the assassination attempt were flown into Ethiopia by Sudan Airways, according to U.S. and Ethiopian officials, although the

¹⁰For more on the embassy bombings see archived CRS Issue Brief IB10056.

¹¹ Cohen, William. *The Washington Post*, August 23, 1998.

¹² Weiser, Benjamin. A Nation Challenged: The Courts. *The New York Times*, October 19, 2001.

government of Sudan denied complicity in the foiled attempt. The passports used by the terrorists were also prepared in Khartoum, according to a United Nations report.¹³

The attempt on Mubarak's life was foiled when Ethiopian security forces killed five of the assassins and captured three several days later. One of the accused assassins escaped to Sudan on Sudan Airways, where he joined the two alleged conspirators who had remained in Sudan. The government of Sudan did not deny or confirm the presence of the three suspects when confronted by Ethiopian officials in late 1995. In an effort to close the case without acknowledging complicity, the Sudan government dismissed its Minister of Interior and reassigned some in the security services. Ethiopia's effort to settle the matter bilaterally failed after Khartoum refused to extradite the three suspects. Ethiopia brought the case to the Organization of African Unity (OAU) in an effort to resolve the matter regionally. Then, with Sudan's continued intransigence, Ethiopia turned to the United Nations Security Council. Although the three suspects were by then believed to have left Sudan, Ethiopia, the OAU, and the U.N. insisted that it was the responsibility of the government of Sudan to hand over the suspects. Meanwhile, the other three suspects, who had been in detention since June 1995 in Ethiopia, were sentenced to death in September 1996. In late March 1997, Ethiopia's Federal High Court upheld the sentence.

The United Nations Security Council passed three resolutions demanding the extradition of the three suspects to Ethiopia. In January 1996, the Security Council passed Resolution 1044 calling on the government of Sudan to "undertake immediate action to extradite to Ethiopia for prosecution the three suspects sheltering in Sudan." The same resolution called on the government to "desist from engaging in activities of assisting, supporting and facilitating terrorist activities and from giving shelter and sanctuaries to terrorist elements."¹⁴ In April 1996, in the face of non-compliance by the government of Sudan, the Council imposed a series of sanctions, including the reduction of embassy staff of Sudan and the banning of senior officials from visiting member countries. In August 1996, the Council imposed additional sanctions. Resolution 1070 banned Sudan Airways from flying outside Sudan, but called for a 90 day waiting period before implementation. The Council postponed imposition of the ban again in December 1996. The ban did not go into effect because of disagreement in the Council. In late 2000, the governments of Egypt and Ethiopia expressed support for the lifting of sanctions, but the Clinton Administration rejected such a move. In late September 2001, the Bush Administration abstained, paving the way for the lifting of the sanctions.

¹³See *Report of the Secretary General of the United Nations Pursuant to Security Council Resolution 1044*, 1996.

¹⁴For texts of these resolutions and background, see CRS Report 97-427, *Sudan: Civil War, Terrorism and U.S. Relations*, by Ted Dagne.

Focus Countries

Sudan and Terrorism: Background

Sudan has long been considered a rogue state by many because of its support for international terrorism. The State Department's 1999 *Patterns of Global Terrorism* report said that Sudan "continued to serve as a central hub for several terrorist groups, including Osama Bin Laden's Al-Qaeda organization. The Sudanese government also condoned Iran's assistance to terrorist and radical Islamist groups operating in and transiting through Sudan." According to the report, "Khartoum served as a meeting place, safehaven, and training hub for members of the Lebanese Hizballah, Egyptian Islamic Group, the Palestinian Islamic Jihad, HAMAS, and the Abu Nidal organization." The Department's 2000 report credited the NIF government with taking positive steps in the fight against terrorism. According to the report, by the end of 2000, "Sudan had signed all 12 international conventions for combating terrorism and had taken several other positive counter terrorism steps, including closing down the Popular Arab and Islamic Conference, which served as a forum for terrorists." The same report stated, however, that Sudan "continued to be used as a safehaven by members of various groups, including associates of Osama bin Laden's Al-Qaeda organization, Egyptian Islamic Group, Egyptian Islamic Jihad, the Palestinian Islamic Jihad, and Hamas."

The United States placed Sudan on the list of states that sponsor terrorism in August 1993 after an interagency review and congressional pressure. In announcing the decision, the Clinton Administration said that Sudan "repeatedly provided support for acts of international terrorism and allows the use of its territory for terrorist groups." Both the first Bush and Clinton Administrations had repeatedly warned the government of Sudan about the activities of groups such as Hamas, Hezbollah, Abu Nidal, and the Palestinian Islamic Jihad. Khartoum does not deny the presence of some of these groups on its territory but rejects Washington's description of them as terrorist organizations. Sudan has also been a safehaven for major terrorist figures. A particularly noteworthy example is the Saudi-born Osama bin Laden. He used Sudan as a base of operations until he went to Afghanistan in mid 1996, where he had previously been a major financier of Arab volunteers in the war against the Soviet occupation of Afghanistan. The government of Sudan claims that it expelled Bin Laden from Sudan due to pressures from the Middle East and the United States.¹⁵

Sudan: After September 11

Sudan's reactions to the September 11 terrorist attacks and U.S. military actions against the Taliban and Al-Qaeda have been mixed. President Omar el-Bashir condemned the terrorist attacks and expressed his government's readiness to cooperate in fighting terrorism. Secretary of State Colin Powell called Sudanese Foreign Minister Mustapha Ismail several days after the terrorist attacks, the first

¹⁵Gellman, Barton. U.S. Was Foiled Multiple Times in Efforts to Capture Bin Laden or Have Him Killed. *The Washington Post*, October 3, 2001.

high-level contact between U.S. and Sudanese officials in several years. Secretary Powell stated that Sudanese officials offered to cooperate with the United States and appear eager to join the coalition. According to press reports, U.S. officials confirmed that the government of Sudan has given U.S. officials unrestricted access to files of suspected terrorists and suggested that they might be willing to hand over some of these individuals to U.S. authorities.

Sudanese officials are sending mixed signals about their level of cooperation with the United States. According to Secretary of State Powell, the NIF government has been “rather forthcoming in giving us access to certain individuals within the country and in taking other actions which demonstrate to us a change in attitude.” The Foreign Minister of Sudan, on the other hand, downplayed the extent of the cooperation described by U.S. officials. He stated that “Washington has not so far presented Sudan with any list of wanted people ... and we have not turned over any suspects.” In late September, State Department spokesman, Richard Boucher told reporters that Sudanese authorities “recently apprehended extremists within that country whose activities may have contributed to international terrorism.”¹⁶

Sudanese government reaction to U.S. military attacks against the Taliban and Al-Qaeda forces in Afghanistan has been critical.¹⁷ In early October 2001, Sudan issued a statement criticizing the U.S. military action against Afghanistan, after a cabinet meeting chaired by President Bashir. The National Assembly of Sudan also criticized the U.S. military attacks against Afghanistan as “unjustified and lacking legitimacy.” Meanwhile, anti-American demonstrations in Khartoum became more frequent. On October 9, 2001, Islamic clerics led several thousand protestors in an anti-American demonstration in Khartoum. The demonstration was dispersed by police after protestors attempted to storm the U.S. embassy.

Somalia: Safehaven for Terrorist Groups?

Since the ouster of the government of dictator Siad Barre in 1991, Somalia has been without a central government. Efforts to bring stability to the Horn of Africa country have failed repeatedly. Warlords and political factions control territories, and factional fighting continues unabated. In 1991, the Somali National Movement (SNM) declared the north-west region independent and renamed it Somaliland. In the northeast, in Puntland, another group is in charge. In the south, a number of political actors and warlords claim legitimacy but no single group is in firm control of the region. In 2000, after several months of talks in neighboring Djibouti, a number of Somali political figures formed the transitional national government. The transitional national government appointed Abdulqassim Salad Hassan president and Ali Khalif Galaydh prime minister.¹⁸ Some members of the international community have expressed support for the Transitional national government but have not

¹⁶Wright, Jonathan. Reuters. *Sudan Arrests Extremists, Says Ready to Help*, September 29, 2001.

¹⁷ BBC Online. *Sudanese Government Rejects Attack on Afghanistan*, October 8, 2001.

¹⁸For more on this, see CRS Report RL30065, *Somalia: Prospects for Peace and U.S. Involvement*, by Theodoros Dagne. February 17, 1999.

recognized the fragile government. The Somaliland government is also not recognized by the international community, despite the relative stability in that part of the country.

Several Somali groups, as well as the government in Somaliland, are concerned about the spread of Islamic fundamentalism in Somalia. In the mid-1990s, Islamic courts began to emerge in parts of the country, especially in the capital, Mogadishu. These courts functioned as a government and often enforced decisions by using their own Islamic militia. Members of the Al-Ittihad militia reportedly provided the bulk of the security forces for these courts. A number of Somali groups and outside observers believe that the transitional national government is dominated by Islamic fundamentalist groups and that members of the Al-Ittihad security forces, who previously served as the Islamic courts police, are being integrated into the new government's security forces.¹⁹ The transitional national government has repeatedly denied any links to terrorist organizations and Islamic fundamentalist groups.

Transitional national government officials have repeatedly stated that they are "ready to cooperate with the United States in the war against terrorism."²⁰ The transitional national government is opposed by a number of groups in Somalia and has not received official recognition from a single country.

Somali Groups and Key Players

The Transitional National Government

Founded in 2000 after the Arta Conference in Djibouti. **Leader:** President Abdulkassim Salad Hassan. **Headquarters:** Mogadishu.

The Government of Somaliland

Declared independence in 1991. **Leader:** President Mohamed Egal. **Headquarters:** northwest Somalia (Hargeysa).

The Somali Reconstruction and Restoration Council (SRRC)

A coalition of Somali groups founded in March 2001 with the help of Ethiopia. **Leader:** Presidential Council composed of several faction leaders, chaired by Hussein Aideed. **Headquarters:** Baidoa.

The Government of Puntland

Founded in 1998 and headed until mid 2001 by President Abdullahi Yusuf, a pro-Ethiopia faction leader. **Leader:** Jama Ali Jama. **Headquarters:** Northeastern Somalia.

¹⁹Reuters. U.S. Forces Welcome in Somalia, December 15, 2001.

²⁰ Maclean, William. Reuters. U.S. Forces Welcome to Deploy in Somalia, December 16, 2001.

The absence of central authority in parts of Somalia has created an environment conducive to terrorist and extremist groups, and analysts do not doubt that they are present in Somalia, although their current strength and numbers are uncertain. Ethiopian security forces invaded Somalia on a number of occasions to disrupt the activities of Al-Ittihad and its allies. Al-Ittihad operates in Somalia and in the Somali-inhabited region of Ethiopia. U.S. officials accuse Al-Ittihad of ties to Al-Qaeda and other Middle Eastern groups. The U.S. government, in its indictment against Osama bin Laden and his associates for the 1998 U.S. embassy bombings, stated that “at various times from or about 1992 until in or about 1993, the defendant Osama Bin Laden, working together with members of the Fatwah (Islamic ruling) committee of Al-Qaeda, disseminated Fatwahs to other members and associates of Al-Qaeda that the United States forces in the Horn of Africa, including Somalia, should be attacked.” Furthermore, the indictment stated that Al-Qaeda members provided military training to Somali groups opposed to U.S. military presence in Somalia.

Key Factions. Somalia is a

country divided along clan lines, and many armed factions operate in different parts of the country. Principally, there are three major regions dominated by clan-based and coalition groups. In Somaliland, President Egal has been the dominant figure since the early 1990s. In May 1998, delegates from northeast Somalia created an autonomous region and named it Puntland. The leader of the Somali Salvation Democratic Front (SSDF), Colonel Abdullahi Yusuf, became president. Puntland supports the unity of Somalia under a federal system and is considered a close ally of Ethiopia. The south and the capital Mogadishu remain unstable, and numerous warlords compete for control of the capital, including Hussein Aideed and Osman Ato. The transitional national government is also competing for control of Mogadishu and is seeking international recognition as the legitimate government of Somalia.

Faction Leaders

Hussein Aideed

Leader of the United Somali Congress/Somali National Alliance (USC/SNA). **Area of Influence:** Parts of Mogadishu. **Clan Affiliation:** Hawiye.

Osman Ali Ato

Leader of a splintered faction of USC/SNA. **Area of Influence:** Parts of Mogadishu. **Clan Affiliation:** Hawiye.

Muse Sudi Yalahow

Leader of United Somali Congress/ Somali Salvation Alliance. **Area of Influence:** Parts of Mogadishu. **Clan Affiliation:** Hawiye

Mohammed Hirsi Morgan

Leader of Somali Patriotic Movement. **Area of Influence:** Kismayu. **Clan Affiliation:** Darod.

Mohamed Nur Shatigudud

Leader of the Rahanwein Resistance Army (RRA). **Area of Influence:** Bay and Baykol regions. **Clan Affiliation:** Rahanwein.

Aden Abdullahi Gabyow

Leader of the Somali Patriotic Movement. **Area of Influence:** Kismayu region. **Clan Affiliation:** Darod.

Abdullahi Yusuf

Leader of the Somali Salvation Democratic Front (SSDF). **Area of Influence:** Puntland. **Clan Affiliation:** Darod

In addition to the clan-based factions are Islamic groups which are competing for control. Very little is known about the leadership or organizational structure of these groups. There are three Islamic groups in Somalia whose prominence has alternately waxed and waned: Al-Ittihad Al-Islamiya (mentioned above), Al-Islah (Reform), and Al-Tabligh (Conveyers of God's Work). In 1995, a group called Jihad al-Islam, led by Sheikh Abbas bin Omar, emerged in Mogadishu, and gave the two main warlords, General Mohamed Farah Aideed and Ali Mahdi, an ultimatum to end their factional fighting. The group claimed at that time that it maintained offices in several countries, including Yemen, Pakistan, Kenya, and Sudan. Not much was heard subsequently from Jihad al-Islam, although a group of Somalis later formed the Shari'a Implementation Club (SIC) in 1996. The group's principal objective was to establish Shari'a courts throughout the country. Some members of the transitional national government were key in the establishment of these courts. Very little is known about al-Islah, although it is perceived as a group dominated by Hawiye clan businessmen.

Al-Ittihad. Al-Ittihad is perhaps the most active and at one point successful of all the Islamic groups. Indeed, Al-Ittihad is an Islamic fundamentalist group whose principal ideology and objective is to establish an Islamic state in Somalia. Founded in the late 1980s and early 1990s, Al-Ittihad unsuccessfully sought to replace clan and warlord politics with an Islamic state. In the early 1990s, Al-Ittihad had modest successes; it administered territories under its control in the south. But Al-Ittihad never emerged as a major military or political force in Somalia. The clan-based groups and factions led by warlords in Mogadishu are secular and have been at odds with Al-Ittihad, even though some of these groups maintained tactical alliances from time to time with Al-Ittihad. Al-Ittihad's failure to maintain control over territories and spread its ideology, led to a shift in strategy in the mid-1990s. Al-Ittihad abandoned its ambition to spread its ideology through military means and began to concentrate on providing social services to communities through Islamic schools and health care centers.

Al-Ittihad's Somalia social activities and religious objectives seem inconsistent with its activities in the Somali region of Ethiopia. In Ethiopia, Al-Ittihad is actively engaged in military activities in support of ethnic Somalis. Al-Ittihad closely coordinates its activities with elements in the Ogaden region that are at war with the Ethiopian government. Several anti-Ethiopian groups are active in the Somali region and Al-Ittihad operates with these groups in carrying out attacks against Ethiopian targets. In 1999, the Ogaden Islamic Union under the leadership of Muhammad Muallem Omar Abdi, the Somali People's Liberation Front under the leadership of Ahmed Ali Ismail, and the Western Somali Liberation Front under the leadership of Muhammad Haji Ibrahim Hussein formed a coalition called the United Front for the Liberation of Western Somalia, their term for the Somali-inhibited region of Ethiopia.²¹ The Ogaden National Liberation Front also claims to be engaged in military activities in the region, and had in the past formed alliances with other Ethiopian opposition groups.

²¹*Foreign Broadcast Information Services (FBIS). Islamists Regroup Their Forces After Ethiopian Preemptive Strike, May 17-23, 1999.*

Many Somali watchers believe that Al-Ittihad's strength is highly exaggerated and that information about its alleged links with international terrorist organizations is unreliable. There is no reliable information or pattern of behavior to suggest that Al-Ittihad has an international agenda as has been the case with the National Islamic Front government of Sudan. Some observers note that if Al-Ittihad had a clear internationally-oriented agenda, its obvious ally in the region would be the NIF regime in Sudan or the Sudanese-backed Eritrean Islamic Jihad. The Sudanese regime did back regional extremist groups and international terrorist organizations, but there was no apparent relationship between the NIF and Al-Ittihad. But others accuse Al-Ittihad of being a secretive group that coordinates its activities with terrorist organizations. Some observers contend that Al-Ittihad and Al-Qaeda were behind the killings of the 18 U.S. Rangers in Mogadishu in 1993.²² Al-Ittihad is also accused of receiving funds from Al-Qaeda.

Since President Bush placed Al-Ittihad on the list of terrorism-related entities in September 2001 (see below), press reports and information about this group have increased. Somali warlords, especially those backed by Ethiopia such as the Somali Reconciliation and Restoration Council (SRRC), headquartered in Baidoa, and vehemently opposed to the transitional national government, have been actively engaged in a public relations campaign to portray their political enemies as terrorists. The government of Ethiopia has also been very vocal in portraying Al-Ittihad and the transitional national government as terrorist groups.²³ Information from these sources are generally vague and lacks clear evidence.

Moreover, neither the Ethiopian government nor others have been able to provide information about locations of training camps, links between the transitional national government and Al-Ittihad and Al-Qaeda, the identity of members of Al-Qaeda or their activities in Somalia. Nor have they offered clear evidence on acts of terrorism against U.S. targets by Al-Ittihad. Somali observers note that Al-Ittihad does not have territories under its control and does not have the military capabilities to wrest control from any of the well-entrenched warlords. In December 2001, however, Secretary of State Colin Powell stated that "some bin Laden followers are holed up there (Somalia), taking advantage of the absence of a functioning government."²⁴ Moreover, the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, General Richard Myers, stated in late December that the United States has "strong indications Somalia is linked to Osama bin Laden."²⁵ In January 2002, U.S. and allied forces reportedly expanded their military presence in East Africa. According to press reports the

²² FBIS Translated Text. Al-Hayah. Report on Links Between al-Qaeda, Somalia's Islamic Union, Part 4. December 13, 2001.

²³ FBIS Translated Text. Al-Hayah, Ethiopian Prime Minister on Terrorism in Somalia, Ties with U.S., Other Issues. November 24, 2001.

²⁴ Sipress, Alan and Peter Slevin. *The Washington Post*, Powell Wary of Iraq Moves, December 21, 2001.

²⁵ England, Andrew. Associated Press. Top U.S. Military Officials Links Somalia to bin Laden's Al-Qaeda, December 21, 2001.

United States and its European allies “have increased military reconnaissance flights and other surveillance activities in Somalia.”²⁶

Regional Actors and Concern Over Terrorism.

Ethiopia. Over the years, Al-Ittihad’s principal target has been the government of Ethiopia. Ethiopian officials have consistently accused Al-Ittihad of having links with Middle Eastern terrorist organizations and have portrayed Al-Ittihad as a threat to regional peace and stability. Al-Ittihad has carried out a number of terrorist attacks against Ethiopian targets and Ethiopian security forces have violently retaliated against the group and its supporters. The fighting with Al-Ittihad was triggered in the early 1990s when Ethiopian security forces brutally cracked down on the Ogaden National Liberation Front (ONLF), a member of the first transitional government of Ethiopia. The ONLF joined the transitional government of Ethiopia in part because the Transitional Charter provided nations and nationalities the right to self determination. The ONLF push for self determination created tension between the ruling Ethiopian People’s Revolutionary Democratic Front (EPRDF) and the ONLF. In the early 1990s, Ethiopian security forces assassinated a number of ONLF leaders, cracked down on the organization, and moved the Ethiopian Somali Region capital from Gode to Jijiga, a central government stronghold. Members of the ONLF fled to Somalia and joined Al-Ittihad, a fairly new group at that time. Hence, some observers view Al-Ittihad as a group largely concerned with domestic issues, although some within the leadership might have links with outside groups.

Ethiopia’s principal interest appears to be to ensure that a united Somalia does not pose a threat to Ethiopia and that the Somali-inhabited-region of Ethiopia remains stable. Successive Ethiopian governments had to deal with Somali irredentism. In the late 1970s, Somali rebels backed by the Siad Barre government overran Ethiopian forces and captured large swath of territory. Ethiopian forces ejected the Somali forces with the help of troops from Cuba and Yemen. In the 1980s, Ethiopian dictator Mengistu began to arm and train Somali dissidents. Several Somali groups were created with the help of Ethiopian military and intelligence and were given training camps inside Ethiopia. The Barre government in Somalia, on the other hand, provided financial and political support to Ethiopian opposition groups, including to the current ruling party, the EPRDF. Somali rebels succeeded in 1991 in ousting the Barre regime, while the EPRDF forces overthrew the Mengistu regime in May 1991.

Some of the armed factions in Somalia today are the same ones that were allied with the Mengistu regime in the 1980s. It did not take long, however, for the EPRDF-led government and some of the factions to forge a new alliance. Ethiopia was an active participant in efforts to bring an end to the civil war in Somalia in the mid-1990s. Ethiopia organized a number of peace conferences over the years, but none succeeded in bringing an end to factional fighting. In recent years, however, Ethiopia has contributed to the unrest in Somalia, supplying warlords with arms and at times sending its troops in Somalia to fight faction leaders. Ethiopia appears determined to establish a friendly, proxy government in Mogadishu. Al-Ittihad is seen

²⁶Ricks, Thomas. *The Washington Post*, Allies Step Up Somalia Watch; U.S. Aims to Keep Al Qaeda at Bay, January 4, 2002.

as a major obstacle in achieving that objective. Regional actors such as Kenya and Djibouti express fear that Ethiopia's military activities and support for warlords may cause an increase in regional instability, and may lead to more refugees fleeing to neighboring countries.

Ethiopian officials by contrast point to Al-Ittihad and the transitional national government as a threat to Ethiopia and regional stability. Since the war with Eritrea in 1998, Ethiopia's interest in ensuring stability and eliminating potential threats coming from Somalia has increased, in part because of concerns of fighting two wars simultaneously. If the perceived threat from Somalia and the Somali region is not dealt with decisively, Ethiopia could be forced to maintain robust forces in both the north and the south-east. But a friendly government in Mogadishu or Hargeisa could relieve Ethiopia of the burden of maintaining a large force along the Somali border, saving Ethiopia scarce resources and helping concentrate its forces along the Eritrea border. Ethiopian officials are also concerned about alliances being formed between Somali groups and non-Somali Ethiopian opposition groups.

Kenya. The government of President Moi has been actively engaged in peace efforts in Somalia since the early 1990s. Kenya has a large Somali population and is home to tens of thousands of Somali refugees. Kenya has organized numerous peace conferences over the years and the most recent in December 2001. Kenyan officials are concerned that continued instability in Somalia could lead to region-wide instability. In July 2001, Kenyan officials closed the border with Somalia because of illegal arms smuggling into Kenya. The presence of large numbers of Somali refugees has also drained resources. But Kenya's efforts have been frustrated by other regional initiatives. Kenya's objective seems to be the formation of an all inclusive Somali government. But efforts to bring together the transitional national government and the pro-Ethiopia SRRC have not succeeded.

Djibouti. The government of President Ismail Omar Gelleh has also been active in peace efforts in Somalia. The small Horn of Africa country, a former French colony, hosted the Arta conference in 2000 that led to the formation of the transitional national government in Mogadishu. The Arta conference had the support of the OAU, U.N., EU, and the Arab League. Initially, Ethiopia supported the Arta conference in part because Djibouti sided with Ethiopia during the Ethiopia-Eritrea conflict. The transitional national government began to experience problems when Ethiopia organized a conference of anti-transitional national government factions. That conference led to the creation of the Somali Reconciliation and Restoration Council. In March 2001, in a letter to the President of the Security Council, transitional national government officials accused Ethiopia of interference in the internal affairs of Somalia.²⁷ Ethiopia rejected the accusations by the transitional national government. Observers had dubbed the Arta conference as one of the most effective efforts since the United Nations left Somalia in 1995. But critics of Arta argue that the Djibouti conference excluded key players and is dominated by political factions from Mogadishu.

²⁷Report of the Secretary General on the Situation in Somalia. United Nations Security Council, S/2001/963.

Somalia: U.S. Concerns and Policy Options

In late September, the Bush Administration added Al-Ittihad to a list of terrorism-related entities whose assets were ordered frozen by a presidential Executive Order. Bush Administration officials accused Al-Ittihad of links with Al-Qaeda. The Administration did not offer evidence to prove its allegations, but some officials asserted that links between the two organizations dated back to the U.S. presence in Somalia during Operation Restore Hope (1992-1994). According to a *Washington Post* article, “an interagency working group involving analysts from the State Department, Pentagon, CIA, and the National Security Council has been meeting for the past three weeks to discuss where and how Al-Qaeda operates in the East Africa country.”²⁸ Some observers are skeptical that Al-Ittihad is an international terrorist organization or that there is a strong link between Al-Qaeda and Al-Ittihad. They argue that there are no credible reports that Al-Ittihad ever targeted U.S. interests in Somalia or Africa. Some observers assert that Al-Ittihad does not have a regional reach let alone a global reach. Moreover, some Somalis credit Al-Ittihad for its social services and for restoring law and order in areas where it has maintained presence.

The focus on Somalia and Somali groups is expanding in Washington, nonetheless. In early November 2001, federal authorities raided several Somali-owned money transfer businesses in the U.S. operated by Al-Barakaat Companies. The Bush Administration ordered the assets of al-Barakaat frozen because of its alleged links to Al-Qaeda. Al-Barakaat was reportedly founded in 1989 by a Somali banker and currently has several dozen affiliates in Somalia, Africa, Middle East, and North America. After the collapse of the central government in Somalia in 1991, the banking system crumpled. As a result, al-Barakaat and other small companies became key players in the money transfer business and for other financial transactions for many Somalis inside Somalia and overseas.

In early December American officials reportedly visited Baidoa, Somalia and met with faction leaders and Ethiopian military officers.²⁹ The purpose of the one-day visit was not acknowledged by Washington, but reporters in the region stated that these officials asked about terrorist networks in Somalia. Bush Administration officials have repeatedly stated that Somalia supports terrorism and that Al-Qaeda has used Somalia as a base of operations to attack U.S. targets. Bush Administration officials are concerned that Al-Qaeda members may flee to Somalia from Afghanistan. According to Assistant Secretary of State for Africa Walter Kansteiner, Washington has three policy objectives. First, the United States will work with neighboring countries to make Somalia “inhospitable” to terrorist groups. Second, the United States will ensure that any activities in Somalia would not affect its neighboring countries. Third, the United States will work toward a lasting peace and economic development in Somalia.

²⁸Ottaway, David and Thomas Ricks. *The Washington Post*. Somalia Draws Anti-Terrorist Focus, November 4, 2001.

²⁹Vick, Karl. *The Washington Post*. Team in Somalia May be Planning U.S. Strikes, December 11, 2001.

U.S. officials have not yet presented evidence linking Al-Ittihad and the transitional national government with Al-Qaeda. In the absence of a central government and with numerous armed groups scattered throughout the country, it would be difficult to hold anyone accountable for past deeds or current activities. Al-Ittihad is the only Somali group identified by the Bush Administration as a terrorist organization. But Al-Ittihad does not control a single administrative area in Somalia and does not have fixed assets that Washington could go after. Nonetheless, the United States has several options to consider. Washington could seek to apprehend individuals in Somalia suspected of terrorist activities and bring them to justice. Another option is to infiltrate Somali groups suspected of terrorist links in order to monitor, disrupt, and dismantle terrorist networks.

A long-term and a potentially complicated policy option, in the view of some analysts, is to address the root causes of the problem. A stable Somalia under a democratic authority is perhaps the only guarantee of a terrorist-free Somalia. But establishing a representative government is a major undertaking. Some observers are convinced, however, that after ten years of instability and bloodshed, Somalis might be ready to resolve their differences with the help of the international community. Another contributing factor to the problem in Somalia has been the interference of regional actors in Somalia, driven largely by their own national interests. The United States can play a pivotal role in forging a strong regional alliance that can play a constructive role in bringing about an end to the instability in Somalia.

Simply monitoring events in Somalia is also a policy option, but some see this cautious approach as one that would allow the terrorist threat to increase. On the other hand, a heavy handed approach in the absence of clear evidence could be seen as targeting a weak and defenseless country. U.S. military measures could also be seen as settling old scores. Some Somalis believe that they will be targeted by the U.S. not for terrorism, but rather to avenge the killings of the 18 U.S. Rangers killed in battle in Mogadishu in 1993. Many observers contend that Somalia may be a safehaven for Somali warlords, but not for foreign terrorists. Somalis are notoriously independent; foreign terrorist groups would have a difficult time establishing a strong presence in Somalia because, experts contend, it is difficult to hide in Somalia due to the non-secretive nature of Somali society. Somali experts further believe that, even if a foreign terrorist organization manages to establish a presence, the group is likely to be betrayed by potential allies because there are no permanent loyalties in the Somalia of today.

The African Diamond Trade and Links to Al-Qaeda and Hizballah³⁰

Recent press accounts, notably a November 2001 *Washington Post* article, assert that the resale of diamonds purchased from African rebel movements has been used to fund terrorist networks. The *Washington Post* article, attributing its facts to “U.S. and European intelligence officials” alleges that “diamond dealers working directly with men named by the FBI as key operatives in bin Laden’s Al-Qaeda network,” as well as Hizballah representatives, have purchased diamonds from members of the Sierra Leone Revolutionary United Front (RUF).³¹ The *Post* account also ties sales of RUF diamonds to funding of the southern Lebanese Hizballah militia movement, and notes that a minority of diamond traders in the Lebanese diaspora in Africa have long been believed to be involved in such activities. Other press accounts have reiterated this assertion, and have tied similar activities in Angola to the funding of the Lebanese Amal militia.³²

The RUF, which has been named as a terrorist group by the U.S. State Department and is infamous for waging a brutal war against the government of Sierra Leone, has agreed to disarm and participate in scheduled elections.³³ Following the publication of the *Post* story, RUF officials denied having any links with Al-Qaeda or selling diamonds to the organization, but have reportedly acknowledged that such sales could have taken place without their knowledge. Omrie Golley, an RUF official who chairs the Sierra Leone Political and Peace Council, reportedly stated that a panel would be established to investigate the reports.³⁴ Recent press reports suggest, however, that extensive diamond mining activities in the diamond-rich Eastern Province of Sierra Leone – where disarmament has not been completed and where the Sierra Leone police and UNAMSIL peacekeepers reportedly have only a skeletal presence – are occurring. Some observers have questioned where newly mined

³⁰Section on diamonds by Nicolas Cook, analyst in African affairs.

³¹See Douglas Farah, “Al Qaeda Cash Tied to Diamond Trade Sale of Gems From Sierra Leone Rebels Raised Millions, Sources Say,” *Washington Post*, November 2, 2001, page A1.

³²See Reuters, “Al Qaeda could be smuggling African diamonds - Expert,” November 5, 2001; Panafrican News Agency, “Belgium Accused Continuing Sale of Unita Diamonds,” April 24, 2001; and Agence France Presse, “Belgian diamond traders dealing with Angolan rebels: press,” April 23, 2001. On Al Qaeda, see CRS Terrorism Briefing Book EBTER131, *Al Qaeda* and CRS Report RL30588, *Afghanistan: Current Issues and U.S. Policy Concerns*. On Hizballah, see CRS Issue Brief IB93033, *Iran: Current Developments and U.S. Policy; Issue Brief* and CRS Report RL30713, *The Current Palestinian Uprising: Al-aqsa Intifadah*.

³³See U.S. State Department, *Patterns of Global Terrorism 2000*, available on the State Department's web site at [<http://www.state.gov/s/ct/rls/pgtrpt/2000>]. See also CRS Report RL30751, *Diamonds and Conflict: Policy Proposals and Background* and CRS Report RL31062, *Sierra Leone: a Tentative Peace?*

³⁴ See: IRIN News, “Sierra Leone: RUF denies terrorist links,” November 5, 2001; VOA News, “Reports Say Sierra Leone Diamonds Funding Al-Qaida,” November 3, 2001; and Caroline Hooper-Box and wire services, “Bin Laden link with War Gems Shocks De Beers,” *Sunday Independent (SA)*,” November 4, 2001.

diamonds are being sold, by whom they are being sold, and to whom such profits are accruing. The *Washington Post* account suggests that this heightened activity may be in direct response to a request by Al-Qaeda buyers, although the story also implies that RUF leaders may not have known the identity or affiliation of the diamond dealers who are alleged to have purchased RUF gems.

Alleged Al-Qaeda/RUF Relationship³⁵

Diamonds are said to have been smuggled into Liberia from Sierra Leone by “senior RUF commanders,” and are then said to have been purchased by Al-Qaeda-affiliated dealers in transactions arranged by Ibrahim Bah. The dealers reportedly flew between Belgium and Monrovia several times monthly to make purchases, which were reportedly undertaken in premises safeguarded by Liberian government security forces. In Monrovia the dealers “are escorted by special [Liberian] state security through customs and immigration control.” According to the *Washington Post*, Bah is a former member of the separatist Movement of Democratic Forces of Casamance (MFDC) in Senegal, his birthplace. He is said to have later trained in Libya under the patronage of Libyan leader Muammar al-Qadhafi, to have fought as a “mujahedin” in Afghanistan against Soviet forces in the early 1980s, and is said to have close ties to President Taylor of Liberia and RUF founder Foday Sankoh.

Ibrahim Bah, a key RUF official who was the subject of a recent report by a panel of experts investigating compliance with U.N. Security Council resolution 1343 (2001) concerning Liberia, S/2001/1015, is reported to have had primary responsibilities for marketing RUF diamonds. He is also reported to have been a key middleman in transactions between the RUF and diamond buyers associated with the Al-Qaeda and Hizballah organizations.

Beginning in September 1998, Al-Qaeda buyers were reportedly able to purchase diamonds at sub-market prices and sell them in Europe at a steep profit worth several – perhaps tens – of millions of dollars.³⁶ Since mid-2001, however, the *Post* reports that top prices have been paid by the Al-Qaeda operatives, possibly with the expectation that the organization’s business or bank accounts could be frozen following the September 11 attack. The heightened transaction activity could also indicate an increased need to launder funds from a variety of sources – possibly including other illicit dealings, such as drug sales – and to transfer their value into the fungible, the concentrated form of value that diamonds represent.

In late December 2001, the *Washington Post* reported that some of the same diamond traders alleged to have arranged the sale of Sierra Leonean diamonds to Al-Qaeda operatives were also active in the diamond trade of the Democratic Republic

³⁵The following account summarizes the *Washington Post*, “Al Qaeda Cash Tied to Diamond Trade,” and draws from the report of the U.N. panel of experts monitoring implementation of U.N. Security Council Resolution 1343 (2001) concerning Liberia, S/2001/1015.

³⁶No precise figure is known. The volume of RUF trade, generally, is difficult to ascertain, because no independent monitoring of diamond mining in areas of eastern Sierra Leone controlled by the RUF has been undertaken, and because RUF sales are, by their nature, covert.

of the Congo (DRC), although the traders named in the story deny any link between their businesses and Al Qaeda.³⁷ The story contained further allegations, made by American and European officials investigating the financing of Al-Qaeda and other terrorist operations, that the sale of Congolese diamonds is – and has long been – tied to the funding of Hizballah and other radical Islamic groups. The *Washington Post* account described how armed conflict, corruption, and lack of state regulatory capacity in the DRC – a vast country about the size of the United States east of the Mississippi – have allowed the illicit export of millions of dollars worth of Congolese diamonds to major diamond trading centers, such as Antwerp, Belgium, and to secondary diamond trading centers, such as Dubai, Mauritius, and India. U.S. and European investigations are also focusing on the association between the financing of radical Islamic groups and trade in other high-value Congolese commodities, like gold, uranium, and non-diamond gem stones, according to the report.

Threats in Other Countries³⁸

South Africa

In South Africa, People Against Gangsterism and Drugs (PAGAD), a Muslim group, is suspected in a number of bombings and other violent incidents in the Cape Town area, including the August 1998 bombing of a Planet Hollywood restaurant, part of a U.S. chain. The potential for Islamic fundamentalism in South Africa generally would appear to be limited, since only 2% of the population is Muslim. However, the Muslim community around Cape Town is quite large. Khalfan Khamis Mohamed, a Tanzanian later convicted in the bombing of the U.S. embassy in Dar es Salaam, reportedly sought to hide among Cape Town's Muslims after he fled Tanzania, but was arrested by South African authorities and deported to the United States. The Department of State's 1999 and 2000 reports on patterns of global terrorism mention a militant group known as Qibla as associated with PAGAD. The word "Qibla" is a reference to the direction in which Mecca lies.

Nigeria

In Nigeria, where sectarian tensions have risen after the decision of 12 northern states to establish Shari'a legal systems, hundreds of people have reportedly been killed in recent Muslim-Christian violence in the central city of Jos and in Kaduna in northern Nigeria. This follows similar violence in the northern state of Bauchi in July, and extensive religious unrest in Kaduna in 2000. Overall, an estimated 7,000 have reportedly died in religious violence over the past two years.³⁹ Available accounts do not indicate that outside radical Islamic organizations are inciting sectarian violence within Nigeria, although some reports do suggest that Nigerian Islamic militants in Jos

³⁷See Douglas Farah, "Digging Up Congo's Dirty Gems; Officials Say Diamond Trade Funds Radical Islamic Groups," *Washington Post*, December 30, 2001, A1.

³⁸ Section prepared by Raymond Copson, Specialist in International Relations.

³⁹Chris McGreal, "Militants Wrestle for the Soul of Nigeria," *The Guardian*, September 15, 2001.

and Kaduna have drawn inspiration from the attacks on the World Trade Center and the Pentagon.⁴⁰ Demonstrations in support of the attacks, organized by the Islamic Youth Organization, were reported in Zamfara state, a center of the Nigerian Islamist movement.⁴¹ An estimated 50% of Nigeria's 120 million people are Muslim, while 40% are Christian.

Radical/Terrorist Groups in Africa and U.S. Policy

The number of radical or terrorist groups in Africa has steadily increased since 1995, according to the State Department's *Patterns of Global Terrorism* report for 2000. As a result, the number of incidents characterized as terrorist attacks has risen sharply over the past several years. According to the State Department, dozens of terrorist attacks took place in nine sub-Saharan African countries in 2000. Most of these attacks were carried out by rebel movements fighting central authority. UNITA rebels were accused of attacking World Food Program (WFP) convoys in northern Angola in May 2000. In Sierra Leone, members of the Revolutionary United Front (RUF) killed five United Nations peacekeepers and kidnaped 500, most of whom were later released. The RUF was also blamed for the killing of two foreign journalists, including one American in May 2000.

The Anti-Terrorism and Effective Death Penalty Act of 1996 directed the State Department to designate Foreign Terrorist Organizations (FTO). Once an organization is designated as FTO by the State Department, members of the group are not allowed into the United States, assets are blocked, and U.S. citizens are prohibited from giving it funds or other material support. The designation of organizations is made every two years by the Secretary of State. According to the State Department, there are three criteria for designation: (1) the group must be foreign; (2) the group must engage in terrorist activity; and (3) the group's actions must be aimed at U.S. interests. In October 1999, then Secretary of State Madeleine Albright designated 28 organizations as FTO. Osama bin Laden's Al-Qaeda was the only new addition, while the twenty seven other organizations were re-designated. Under a second terrorist related category designated by the Secretary of State, three African groups are listed: Army for the Liberation of Rwanda (ALIR), the Revolutionary United Front (RUF) in Sierra Leone, and the People Against Gangsterism and Drugs (PAGAD) in South Africa.⁴²

U.S.-Africa Intelligence Cooperation

Until the end of the Cold War, the United States had an active intelligence presence in many parts of Africa, especially in Cold War-driven conflict countries, and in major African powers, such as South Africa and Nigeria. Security cooperation

⁴⁰"Obasanjo Demands End to Strife," BBC report, September 16, 2001; "Nigeria Pledges to Curb Religious Strife," September 13, 2001.

⁴¹Daniel Pipes, "A Middle East Party," *Jerusalem Post*, September 14, 2001.

⁴²For more see the Department of State website at [<http://www.state.gov/r/pa/prs/ps/2001>]

between the United States and its allies in Africa was considered good. In the 1960s, the United States actively monitored the activities of pro-Soviet liberation movements and left-leaning political leaders, including Kwame Nkrumah of Ghana and Patrice Lumumba of Congo. A Senate investigation implicated the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) in planning the assassination of Lumumba, although recent research indicates that Belgians and Congolese were directly responsible for killing the Congolese leader. In the 1970s and 1980s, the United States provided covert aid to rebel groups in Angola to counter Soviet influence. After the end of the Cold War, the United States sharply reduced its intelligence presence in sub-Saharan Africa by closing more than a dozen stations considered non-essential to U.S. interests (*The Washington Post*, June 23, 1994).

The cuts in U.S. intelligence presence in sub-Saharan Africa, some believe, may have inhibited Washington's ability to predict events in Africa. The United States was reportedly ill prepared when President George H.W. Bush decided to deploy U.S. troops to Somalia in December 1992. The CIA did not have a presence in Somalia in the early 1990s and U.S. intelligence officials were said to be reluctant to get involved in the Somalia situation (*The Washington Post*, February 27, 2000). U.S. intelligence officials were successful in capturing Somali faction leaders, but failed to capture their primary target, General Aideed. The U.S. intelligence community did not predict the Rwandan genocide in 1994. In 1996, U.S. intelligence officials had only limited knowledge of the Rwandan-led invasion of Congo and failed to predict the downfall of the Mobutu regime. In August 1998, U.S. officials only had limited knowledge of the situation when Rwanda invaded Congo for the second time. U.S. officials were informed after the fact by Rwandese officials of the Congo invasion.

In Sudan, until the closing of the U.S. embassy in 1996, the United States was able to monitor the activities of radical and terrorist groups based in Sudan. But U.S. ability to monitor the activities of these groups did not lead to a reduction in the growth of radical and terrorist groups in Sudan. The primary suspect in the U.S. embassy bombings in Kenya and Tanzania, and the September 11 attacks on New York and Washington, Osama bin Laden, was able to recruit, train, and establish a terrorist network during his five year (1991-1996) stay in Sudan. According to recent press reports, Al-Qaeda's activities have expanded to a number of African countries, including Kenya, Uganda, Tanzania, Ethiopia, Somalia, and Eritrea. According to press reports, U.S. intelligence officials were able to prevent a number of terrorist attacks aimed against the United States in Africa, although the inability to prevent the bombings of the embassies in Kenya and Tanzania was seen by some observers as a major intelligence failure.

Since the bombings of the U.S. embassies, security cooperation between some African governments and the United States has expanded. In October, 2001, a senior FBI official told a gathering of African officials and observers that without the support and cooperation of the security services in Kenya, Tanzania, and other African countries, the United States would not have been able to identify and arrest the terrorist suspects. In the wake of the renewed focus on Somalia, cooperation between Ethiopia and the United States could expand, since Ethiopia has been fighting against Al-Ittihad for the past several years. President Obasanjo of Nigeria has pledged to support the U.S. effort and U.S. officials expect expanded cooperation with Nigeria.