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Blowing the Horn

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From *Foreign Affairs*, March/April 2007

Summary: The Greater Horn of Africa, the hottest conflict zone in the world, is a legitimate concern of U.S. officials. But their overwhelming focus on stemming terrorism there is overshadowing U.S. initiatives to resolve conflicts and promote good governance -- with disastrous implications for regional stability and U.S. counterterrorism objectives themselves.

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WASHINGTON'S FAILINGS IN AFRICA

The Greater Horn of Africa -- a region half the size of the United States that includes Sudan, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Djibouti, Somalia, Kenya, and Uganda -- is the hottest conflict zone in the world. Some of the most violent wars of the last half century have ripped the region apart. Today, two clusters of conflicts continue to destabilize it. The first centers on interlocking rebellions in Sudan, including those in Darfur and southern Sudan, and engulfs northern Uganda, eastern Chad, and northeastern Central African Republic. The main culprit is the Sudanese government, which is supporting rebels in these three neighboring countries -- and those states, which are supporting Sudanese groups opposing Khartoum. The second cluster links the festering dispute between Ethiopia and Eritrea with the power struggle in Somalia, which involves the fledgling secular government, antigovernment clan militias, Islamist militants, and anti-Islamist warlords. Ethiopia's flash intervention in Somalia in December temporarily secured the ineffectual transitional government's position, but that intervention, which Washington backed and supplemented with its own air strikes, has sown the seeds for an Islamist and clan-based insurgency in the future.

Recent U.S. policy has only made matters worse. The region, which has both suffered attacks by al Qaeda and hosted its agents (including Osama bin Laden himself), is a legitimate concern of U.S. officials. But stemming the spread of terrorism and extremist ideologies has become such an overwhelming strategic objective for Washington that it has overshadowed U.S. efforts to resolve conflicts and promote good governance; in everything but rhetoric, counterterrorism now consumes U.S. policy in the Greater Horn as totally as anticommunism did a generation ago. To support this critical but narrow aim, the Bush administration has too often nurtured relationships with autocratic leaders and favored covert and military action over diplomacy. Sometimes that has even included feting in Langley Sudanese officials suspected of having a hand in the massacres in Darfur or handing suitcases full of cash to warlords on the streets of Mogadishu.

The results have been disastrous. Sudan's autocrats are reverting to the extremism of their roots. In Somalia, the core of the Islamist militant movement remains intact after Ethiopia's invasion, its members' passions inflamed by the intervention. The leaders of Ethiopia, Eritrea, and Uganda have used the specter of war and the imperative of counterterrorism as excuses to crack down on political opponents and restive populations at home. The humanitarian situation throughout the region, fragile even in times of peace, is now catastrophic: nearly nine million people have been displaced, and chronic insecurity severely constrains access to humanitarian aid for the more than 16 million people who need it.

The fundamental flaw in Washington's approach is its lack of a regional diplomatic strategy to tackle the underlying causes of the two clusters of conflicts. These crises can no longer be addressed in isolation, with discrete and uncoordinated ad hoc peace initiatives. Washington must work to stabilize the Greater Horn through effective partnerships with Africa's multilateral institutions, the European Union, and the new UN secretary-general. Until it does, long-term U.S. counterterrorism objectives will suffer -- and the region will continue to burn.

DEATH ON THE NILE

Since gaining its independence in 1956, Sudan, the largest country in the region, has been engulfed in a series of civil wars pitting Arab-dominated governments in Khartoum against rebels from marginalized groups. In the face of continued unrest, the ruling National Congress Party (NCP), which took charge in a coup in 1989, has armed and trained ethnic-based militias in Sudan and throughout the region and granted them impunity for mass atrocities against civilians it suspects of supporting its opponents.

In the south, the 21-year civil war between Khartoum and the Sudan People's Liberation Army (SPLA) killed 2.2 million people -- making it the second-deadliest conflict in the world since World War II, after the civil war in Congo, which killed 3.8 million people. The NCP enlisted the Lord's Resistance Army, a millenarian rebel group based in northern Uganda, to open a second front against the SPLA. Khartoum also backed it to punish the Ugandan government for supporting the SPLA. The result there has been 1.7 million people in displaced camps and, courtesy of the Lord's Resistance Army, the highest rate of child abductions in the world.

The war in southern Sudan officially ended in January 2005 with the signing of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement. The deal granted autonomy to the area and gave the SPLA majority control of the new Government of Southern Sudan, based in Juba, and a minority role in the Government of National Unity, in Khartoum. It also provided for a referendum in 2011, in which the people of southern Sudan will decide whether to secede from the rest of the country. But two years later, the situation is not encouraging. The implementation of critical components of the arrangement -- notably the demobilization of the NCP's proxy militias in southern Sudan, the demarcation of borders in oil-producing areas, and the transparent disbursement of oil revenues -- is lagging. War clouds have been forming again since John Garang, the SPLA's charismatic leader and a leading proponent of a unified Sudan, died in a helicopter crash in July 2005. Without him, the SPLA has failed to assert itself in the Government of National Unity.

Another problem is that the negotiations leading to the agreement did not involve opposition groups from Darfur and other northern areas. That left opponents of the government in Darfur feeling that they had no other recourse but to attack military outposts, police stations, and other government interests to win a place at the negotiating table. Since the rebellion broke out there in February 2003, the NCP has supported Arab militias, known as the Janjaweed, who routinely attack the non-Arab civilians backing the rebels. Some 200,000 to 450,000 Darfurians are estimated to have died since April 2003, 2.5 million have been driven from their homes, and two-thirds of all Darfurians -- some 4.3 million people -- now need humanitarian assistance of some kind. Partly thanks to U.S. efforts, the Darfur Peace Agreement was signed in May 2006, but the negotiators secured signatures from leaders of only one rebel faction, which alienated other groups and soon resulted in more fighting. The conflict has since spilled over into Chad and the Central African Republic -- causing another two million people in those countries to require humanitarian assistance. Khartoum has been supporting an array of rebel groups and militias in both countries in the hope of overthrowing their governments and installing friendlier regimes.

In eastern Sudan, too, rebels took up arms against the regime, more than a decade ago. Although the Eritrean government mediated an agreement between the NCP and rebels there in October 2006, the deal has yet to face a serious test. In the meantime, the regime in Khartoum continues to respond ferociously to all uprisings -- a sign that it is desperate to maintain power by any means and hold on to its growing oil wealth.

ALL TANGLED UP

The second cluster of conflicts centers on Somalia and also involves Ethiopia, Eritrea, and northeastern Kenya. Somalia, the only country in the world without an operational government, has been headless since 1991, when the country's leader -- and a U.S. ally -- Muhammad Siad Barre, was overthrown. Warlords held sway in urban centers for over a decade after that, despite no fewer than 14 initiatives to create a central government. Finally, in 2004, under the impetus of the Intergovernmental Authority on Development, a regional organization, a fragile body known as the Transitional Federal Government was set up, headquartered first in Kenya and then, in mid-2005, in the Somali town of Baidoa. In the meantime, however, Somali Islamists had established in and around the capital, Mogadishu, 11 clan-based Islamic courts backed by militias, a few of which had close links to jihadists and terrorists suspected of being associated with al Qaeda.

The struggle for domination started coming to a head in mid-2006, when the Islamic courts defeated the warlords in Mogadishu and expanded their control over much of south-central Somalia. The courts managed to win over the population -- which is Muslim but of a Sufi persuasion averse to the courts' radical Salafism -- by providing security and basic services, which both the ineffectual transitional government and the predatory warlords had failed to assure. The Ethiopian government, having grown increasingly concerned about the Islamists' rising influence, sent troops across the border at the end of 2006. The fighting was over before it began. The Islamists melted into the civilian population, leaving a few militia groups to be pursued by Ethiopian forces.

The Ethiopian government had a number of reasons for taking out the Islamic courts. Ethiopia and Somalia have had a tense history, including three wars between 1960 and 1978. Somalia has hosted al-Itihaad al-Islamiya, a terrorist organization that planted several bombs in Ethiopia in the 1990s, prompting the Ethiopian government twice during that period to send troops into Somalia to destroy the group and dismantle its training camps. Last year, senior court officials made clear that they intended to incorporate Somali populations in the Somali region of southeastern Ethiopia into a greater Somalia. They were already backing Ethiopian opposition groups such as the Ogaden National Liberation Front and, in southern Oromia, the Oromo Liberation Front. This support was a direct challenge to Ethiopian Prime Minister Meles Zenawi, who, after a decade and a half of rule, faces internal political pressure from ethnic groups that feel underrepresented. Legislative elections in Ethiopia in 2005 were characterized by unprecedented openness, but after a strong showing by opposition parties, Meles' government cracked down.

These domestic troubles have also made it harder for Meles to budge on Ethiopia's border dispute with Eritrea -- another threat to regional stability. In the early 1990s, when Eritrea won its independence from Ethiopia after three decades of fighting, Ethiopia became a landlocked state. The two states' leaders, Meles and Isaias Afwerki, had good relations at first, but they soon fell out over economic and political matters, particularly the countries' ill-defined border. The tensions spiraled into an especially savage war in the late 1990s. In 2000, Eritrea and Ethiopia signed a peace deal and agreed to submit their border dispute to "final and binding" resolution by an independent international commission. The ruling, issued in 2002, awarded the disputed town of Badme to Eritrea. Meles has steadfastly refused to implement it, however, arguing that the commission's methodology was flawed. He also objects because he is sensitive to the widespread sentiment among Ethiopians that he is responsible for losing the country's access to the Red Sea at Eritrea's independence; he is careful not to appear soft on Eritrea.

The Eritrean government, for its part, is increasingly frustrated by the international community's unwillingness to pressure Ethiopia to demarcate the border. In protest, President Isaias has restricted the UN peacekeeping force charged with observing the cease-fire and expelled international aid organizations. Continually invoking the prospect of imminent war, his government has clamped down on all opposition while needling Ethiopia by supporting the Ogaden National Liberation Front and the Oromo Liberation Front. Ethiopia, meanwhile, backs the Eritrean Democratic Alliance, an umbrella organization of groups opposed to the Eritrean government.

Even more worrisome for regional stability is the fact that Ethiopia and Eritrea are playing out their differences through their neighbors. While the Ethiopian government supports the Sudanese government, the Eritrean government -- which accused Khartoum of wanting to expand its Islamist reach throughout the region and of backing a rebellion by the Eritrean Islamic Jihad Movement in the 1990s -- maintains close relations with rebels in Darfur and eastern Sudan. At the same time, it has been providing weapons and forces to the Islamic courts in Somalia, principally in opposition to the Ethiopian government, which backs the transitional government there. The Sudanese government is also involved in Somalia's affairs. Using its temporary leadership of the Arab League, for example, it convened in Khartoum a meeting between representatives of the Somali transitional government and representatives of the Islamic courts in March 2006 -- a move that raised concerns among officials of the transitional government who are wary of ties between leaders of the Islamic courts, universities in Sudan, and Islamists in the NCP.

BACKDRAFT

These proliferating threats could have been mitigated by smart U.S. policy, but Washington's approach to the Greater Horn of Africa, which centers on counterterrorism, has been erratic and shortsighted. The United States' overweening focus on stemming terrorism began early in the Clinton presidency in response to Khartoum's aggressive promotion of its ties to international terrorist organizations. Al Qaeda operatives based in Somalia blew up the U.S. embassies in Kenya and Tanzania in 1998 and, Washington suspects, attacked a hotel and an El Al plane in Kenya in 2002. Following the attacks of 9/11, Washington expanded its counterterrorism efforts in the region. It has deployed over 1,500 troops in Djibouti to carry out civil-affairs programs and help gather intelligence on suspected terrorists and has earmarked \$100 million a year to support counterterrorism efforts by local authorities. More than anything, however, the United States' counterterrorism policy in the Greater Horn of Africa now hinges on three strategies: almost unconditional support for the Ethiopian government, extremely close cooperation on counterterrorism with Khartoum, and occasional but spectacular forays into Somalia in the hope of killing or capturing al Qaeda suspects.

Ethiopia has been the United States' closest ally in the Greater Horn for the last decade, partly because the fight against Islamic extremism resonates powerfully with Ethiopian officials. Although the country is half Muslim and half Christian, its political and intellectual elites have historically been Christian. Ethiopia has also suffered firsthand from Islamist terrorism: radicals based in Sudan plotted an assassination attempt on Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak in the capital, Addis Ababa, in 1995, and the Somalia-based al-Itihaad al-Islamiya has repeatedly staged attacks throughout the country. In 2001, the Bush administration declared Ethiopia the United States' principal counterterrorism ally in the region. Even the U.S. Agency for International Development -- which gave Ethiopia over \$460 million in food aid and

assistance in fiscal year 2005 -- touts the country as being "of strategic importance to the United States because of its geographic position" and as "the linchpin to stability in the Horn of Africa and the Global War on Terrorism."

But Washington's narrow agenda has stifled U.S. efforts to press for more democracy and greater respect for human rights in Ethiopia. And it has undermined attempts to settle the border dispute between Ethiopia and Eritrea. In 1998, with full support from the State Department, the Defense Department, and the National Security Council, former National Security Adviser Anthony Lake led the multilateral efforts that eventually ended the Eritrean-Ethiopian war in 2000. But when Ethiopia started balking at implementing the 2002 border decision, rather than pursue diplomatic efforts to pressure it, the Bush White House did little, allowing its counterterrorism objectives to override peacemaking. The two states have barely budged in the five years since, and the Eritrean government has grown deeply skeptical of the international community's intentions. From its point of view, the border issue has been settled and Ethiopia must be held to account before negotiations on other questions can begin. While the stalemate lasts, U.S.-Eritrean relations sour: Washington now sees Isaias as unreliable and worries he is becoming friendlier to rogue states such as Iran, and Isaias continues to fume at what he considers to be favoritism toward Meles.

A second focus of the Bush administration's policy in the Greater Horn has been close cooperation on counterterrorism with Sudan. Khartoum's move away from its strong support for international terrorism started during the Clinton administration. From 1991 to 1996, bin Laden resided in Sudan, and the regime allowed numerous terrorists to travel on Sudanese passports and establish training camps on Sudanese soil. But then, in 1996, in response to U.S.-led sanctions by the UN Security Council, Khartoum expelled bin Laden and dismantled al Qaeda's camps and commercial infrastructure. Relations deteriorated in the summer of 1998, when Washington retaliated for the embassy bombings in Kenya and Tanzania by blowing up a Sudanese factory that it alleged stored biological weapons. And they improved somewhat again after the attacks of 9/11, which reinforced Washington's emphasis on counterterrorism and prompted the Bush administration to engage more with Khartoum.

The Bush White House, which was eager to respond to conservative Christian constituents who were demanding an end to human rights abuses and religious persecution in southern Sudan, also intensified its support for a peace deal there. But as the SPLA and the NCP were closing in on an agreement in 2003, Darfur blew up, exposing the weakness of the narrow approach of Washington and its partners. At that point, the U.S. government had to decide whether to continue to press for peace in the south or broaden its effort to also respond aggressively to the escalating crisis in Darfur. It chose the first option for fear that choosing (and failing at) the second would jeopardize both peace between the NCP and the SPLA and Khartoum's cooperation on counterterrorism. By doing so, however, Washington unwittingly gave the Sudanese government the upper hand: Sudanese officials realized that they could delay a deal with the SPLA while underwriting brutalities in Darfur without facing serious consequences. In both October 2003 and April 2004, even as Sudanese armed forces and the Janjaweed were massacring civilians in Darfur, the White House reported to Congress that Khartoum was negotiating "in good faith" with the SPLA.

President George W. Bush and senior U.S. officials have spoken out against the crimes in Darfur (they have called them genocide), and a UN panel has blamed them in part on senior NCP officials, including the director of national intelligence, the minister of the interior, and the minister of defense. But thanks partly to increased cooperation with Washington on intelligence, Khartoum has managed to avoid punitive action, stifle diplomatic efforts to reach durable settlements with the rebels, and resist international efforts to send a robust peacekeeping force to Darfur. Last November, the Bush administration clearly stated that if Sudan did not agree by the end of the year to welcome a mixed force of UN and African Union (AU) troops to Darfur, Khartoum would face unspecified measures. But when the deadline came and went, the Bush administration issued no condemnation. Meanwhile, Khartoum has continued to cultivate its image as a counterterrorism partner -- even as hard-liners in the NCP have been reconnecting with old terrorist allies. All along, the NCP's objective in cooperating on terrorism has been to make itself indispensable to Washington in order to lessen its exposure to international pressure over its human rights record. And it has succeeded: despite a vast grass-roots movement in the United States calling for a robust response to the atrocities in Darfur, no viable plan is forthcoming yet.

U.S. policy in Somalia has also been dangerously narrow. Washington intervened there as part of a UN humanitarian mission in 1992, but it quickly got bogged down and, following the killing of 18 U.S. troops in the streets of Mogadishu, withdrew all U.S. forces in 1994. Since then, its main goal has been to apprehend the foreign al Qaeda operatives it believes are being hidden and protected by Somali Islamists. (One suspected protector is Sheik Hassan Dahir Aweys, a one-time member of al-Itihaad al-Islamiya and now the chair of the Islamic courts.) To that end, Washington has funded Somali warlords to pursue terrorists on its behalf. By 2006, the enlisted warlords were calling themselves the Alliance for the Restoration of Peace and Counterterrorism -- and getting, according to our interviews with some members, about \$150,000 a month from Washington. In contrast, the United States contributed only \$250,000 to the \$10 million peace process that led to the formation of the Transitional Federal Government, and the United States gives far less humanitarian assistance to Somalia than to other countries in the region. The Bush administration has preferred to

create a strategic partnership with warlords in the pursuit of a few terrorists rather than to address Somalia's chronic statelessness, which will continue to draw many more terrorists to the country.

Although Ethiopia's intervention this winter dislodged the potentially hostile Islamic courts -- which can be considered a short-term counterterrorism success -- it is too early for Washington to roll out the "Mission Accomplished" banners. Ethiopia's invasion has only displaced the most visible part of the Islamist movement; other elements have survived, including a network of mosques, madrasahs, and businesses, as well as a militant wing, known as the Shabaab, that has threatened to wage guerrilla war. Meanwhile, the courts' collapse has left a huge vacuum that the transitional government cannot fill. The courts had brought peace and stability, and their defeat has returned Mogadishu to the warlords who have preyed on Somalia for much of the past two decades. Two related insurgencies are likely to break out in the future, one led by the remnants of the courts, the other by disaffected clans.

This leaves the United States' interests in Somalia at risk. Having pursued the narrow objective of capturing or killing a few terrorist suspects, Washington has now become embroiled in Ethiopia's policies in Somalia, which may diverge significantly from its own in the long run. Focusing on hunting down suspects without also investing in state building is a strategy that could not have worked, and the decision to support Ethiopia's military invasion without devising a broader political strategy was a stunning mistake, especially considering the U.S. experience in Iraq. Predictably, resentment over foreign intervention has been building among Somalis. And U.S. air strikes against Islamist holdouts in the far south of the country have turned Somalia into a much more interesting target for al Qaeda than it once was; they could boost recruiting for the Islamists for a long time.

A THREE-PART PLAN

A new framework for engagement in the Greater Horn is urgently needed to reverse these trends. The United States' counterterrorism objectives would be best served by a new comprehensive diplomatic initiative focused on resolving conflict and promoting good governance throughout the region. Any new strategy must be wide-ranging and multilateral. It must focus all at once on resolving conflicts, keeping the peace, and punishing spoilers, and it will require working with the UN Security Council and the AU.

First, the United States should launch a Greater Horn peace initiative with the AU and the new UN secretary-general to devise a comprehensive approach to the two main clusters of conflicts surrounding Sudan and Somalia. This should entail coordinated efforts to resolve the related crises in Darfur, Chad, and the Central African Republic; secure a deal between the Lord's Resistance Army and the Ugandan government; broker a power-sharing arrangement in Somalia; and settle the ongoing disputes in southern Sudan and between Ethiopia and Eritrea, in order to see the two existing peace deals concerning them fully implemented. These efforts would require the creation of a conflict resolution cell in the region, staffed by senior diplomats reporting to the State Department and assigned for at least one year, who would coordinate peace talks and support their realization. This initiative could follow the models provided by the partnership between the United States, the United Kingdom, Norway, and the Intergovernmental Authority on Development that ended the war in southern Sudan and the partnership between the United States, the European Union, and the Organization of African Unity (the AU's predecessor) that ended the war between Ethiopia and Eritrea. Unfortunately, so far, in both Somalia and Darfur, the international community has put the cart before the horse, working furiously to send peacekeeping forces before having secured viable peace agreements.

Second, a concerted effort must be made to boost the peacekeeping capacity that would be needed to implement any peace deals. The United States and the European Union have spent hundreds of millions of dollars in the past decade to prepare African armies to participate more effectively in peacekeeping operations. But judging by the limitations of the AU operations in Darfur, peacekeeping objectives need to be refocused. Lacking an explicit mandate to protect civilians, the AU troops in Darfur have often been either irrelevant or counterproductive, serving as a lightning rod for local hostility and as an excuse for the inaction of the international community. The AU does not have enough forces to deploy in multiple theaters; it could barely scrape together the 7,500 troops it sent to Darfur. And with Western donors failing to fully fund the mission, the troops were ill equipped and remained unpaid for months. The inescapable conclusion from the AU's experience in Darfur is that the UN should lead peacekeeping operations in Africa (as it does elsewhere in the world), with substantial AU participation and a mandate to protect civilians.

Third, Washington must do a better job of garnering international support for using, or at least threatening to use, multilateral penalties of some type. In Sudan, Somalia, and Ethiopia, the U.S. government and some Western states have offered much and gained little in return, partly because they have failed to apply instruments of pressure; they are like barking dogs with no bite. Real leverage comes from the early use of multilateral punitive measures -- such as prosecutions by the International Criminal Court, targeted sanctions against senior officials and rebels, and oil embargoes and other instruments of economic pressure -- and from their suspension when compliance is achieved. How can the regime in Khartoum be expected to act any differently in Darfur if its activities bear no cost?

WALKING THE WALK

Boosting conflict resolution, peacekeeping, and punitive measures will unquestionably be difficult, but it can be done if the United States builds multilateral partnerships to share the diplomatic and financial burdens. In Sudan, this will require preventing the NCP from continuing to channel U.S. policies into separate streams -- one on southern Sudan, another on Darfur, another still on counterterrorism. Washington needs a cohesive Sudan policy that addresses all U.S. goals simultaneously and uses multilateral punitive actions to achieve them. Until the power-sharing agreement is fully implemented in the south and wealth and power devolve from the ruling elites in Khartoum to marginalized areas in Darfur and the east, the tensions that have fueled 50 years of civil war in Sudan will not subside.

Despite its flaws, the Comprehensive Peace Agreement in southern Sudan remains a key building block for altering the distribution of power and reestablishing democracy throughout the country -- but only if it is fully implemented. Enforcement means overcoming several major obstacles: the NCP's failure to demobilize its proxy militia forces in southern Sudan, its refusal to accept a border commission's ruling regarding the oil-producing region of Abyei, and the lack of transparency in the division of oil revenues between the Government of National Unity in Khartoum and the Government of Southern Sudan in Juba. NCP hard-liners simply will not implement key elements of the agreement -- or abandon their militaristic policies in Darfur -- unless Western governments subject them to the coordinated pressure of UN sanctions, asset freezes, and criminal indictments.

At the same time, the United States and other donors must live up to their commitment to help build the capacity of the nascent Government of Southern Sudan. International donors pledged \$4.5 billion for Sudan at a conference following the Comprehensive Peace Agreement in Oslo in May 2005, but they did not fulfill their obligations fully because of mounting concern over Khartoum's role in the atrocities in Darfur. They must now refocus on the south to prevent a return to conflict. And they must prepare for the increasing likelihood that the region will vote to secede in the 2011 referendum. Southern Sudanese participating in focus groups convened by the National Democratic Institute in April 2006 expressed near-total support for independence. With little progress in their relations with Khartoum, it is unlikely that southerners will change their minds in the next four years. But Khartoum will probably return to war rather than allow the referendum to occur and risk losing access to 80 percent of its oil resources. More focused international support for the Government of Southern Sudan, especially for helping the SPLA become a regular army, would not only decrease insecurity in the south in the run-up to the referendum but also help deter the NCP from resuming the conflict (or at least give southerners the means to defend themselves if it did).

With Sudan's oil revenues up to \$4 billion a year, Khartoum is now driven more by greed than by Islamist ideology. This presents an opportunity for the United States to increase economic pressure on Khartoum. But Washington cannot make the most of this without engaging more deeply with China and Arab League countries, which have strong economic interests in Sudan and regularly run interference for the regime. In response to U.S. economic sanctions in the 1990s, the Sudanese oil sector established close ties with China and, to a lesser extent, with Malaysia and India; as a result, Beijing is now reluctant to lean on Khartoum. But the growing perception that Beijing is turning a blind eye to continuing atrocities in Darfur could mar its international image as it prepares to host the 2008 Olympics. Recent efforts to build consensus among China, Russia, and the Arab League for enhancing peacekeeping forces in Darfur are a good start. But it is also necessary to build multilateral support for a comprehensive peace strategy that would force Khartoum to stop supporting rebel groups in Chad and the Central African Republic, negotiate amendments to the flawed Darfur Peace Agreement, and accept a properly mandated international peacekeeping force -- with UN troops under UN command and control -- to protect civilians and dismantle the Janjaweed. The United States should work through the UN Security Council to freeze the assets of senior NCP officials and their businesses and impose travel bans on them, as well as facilitate the flow of information about suspected war criminals to the International Criminal Court. In case the situation deteriorates and Khartoum continues to obstruct peace efforts, the international community should urgently plan for deploying ground and air forces to protect civilians without Khartoum's consent.

In Somalia, too, a multilateral approach to peace building is necessary to prevent protracted insurgencies from engulfing the region. There has been little history of sectarian violence in Ethiopia, but many Ethiopians now worry that an extended war with Somali Islamists could create religious divisions at home, pitting, in particular, Muslims against the government. Rather than relying primarily on military force, regular intelligence from and occasional intervention by Ethiopia, anti-Islamist warlords, and a weak transitional government, as it has done, Washington must adopt a more nuanced approach to Somalia. It should work with the European Union, the AU, the Arab League, and the Intergovernmental Authority on Development to pressure all parties into negotiating a power-sharing deal between the transitional government, clan leaders in Mogadishu, and the Islamic courts. The Somali transitional government will negotiate only if pressed by Ethiopia, and the United States has more clout with Ethiopia than does any other external actor. By contrast, Washington lacks direct leverage with the Islamic courts and excluded clan elders, and so U.S. diplomacy on that front should focus on getting governments in the region and in the Arab League to persuade them to accept a government of national unity.

None of this will be easy. Washington must appoint full-time envoys to press for a power-sharing deal in Somalia and to nudge Ethiopia and Eritrea toward accommodation. Letting these disputes fester would ensure the advent of Islamist and clan-based insurgencies in Somalia and increase the possibility of another war between Ethiopia and Eritrea. Both developments would be disastrous for the people of the Greater Horn and for long-term U.S. counterterrorism objectives.

The essential lesson of U.S. counterterrorism policy over the last five years -- apparently unheeded by the Bush administration -- is that in order for local Muslim populations to take the United States' counterterrorism agenda seriously, the United States must take their state-building and power-sharing agendas seriously, too. Ironically, the strategy is already there on paper. In its 2002 National Security Strategy and elsewhere, the Bush administration has argued that failing states foster terrorism and has laid out a comprehensive approach to counterterrorism that involves promoting peace building, state reconstruction, and good governance. When it comes to the Greater Horn, however, the Bush administration has simply not implemented its own policies. By relying on sporadic military strikes and continued support for autocrats without broader political planning, it has combined the worst elements of its current strategy in Iraq with the Cold War-era policy of cronyism. Conflict resolution and good governance are, in fact, the keys to countering terrorism in the Greater Horn over the long term. Failing to recognize this will likely result in hundreds of thousands more deaths, billions of dollars more spent on emergency humanitarian aid -- and the increased prospect of another terrorist attack against U.S. interests in the region. With a few more dollars spent on preventive diplomacy, these outcomes could be avoided altogether.

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