SESSION 3: HOW TERRORISM ENDS IN THE HORN OF AFRICA

Objectives:
- Understand the current terrorist environment in the Horn of Africa within its historical context.
- Examine theorized pathways for the end of terrorism and demise of terrorist groups.
- Analyze modalities to apply those pathways to cases within the Horn of Africa context.

Background:
Terrorism in East Africa occurs in a geopolitical context characterized by weak states and dominated by authoritarian governments. Historically, aggrieved groups have lacked avenues for peaceful expression of dissent, while state governments in the region have typically met dissent with repression. Furthermore, governments in the region are highly corrupt, while lacking control over their hinterlands and borders, which frequently are typified by informal governance structures. Large populations of displaced persons and refugees (from long histories of conflict) live throughout the region. Internal politics suffer from ethnic, tribal and clan divisions. And state-to-state relations are often tense as well.

Terrorism in the countries in the CJTF-HoA's area of operations is a relatively recent phenomenon, dating from the 1990s. The Lord's Resistance Army (and its predecessor organizations) was among the earliest manifestations. Although its fighting strength has diminished substantially in recent years, it remains one of the longest lasting perpetrator groups in the region. Al-Shabaab has been the deadliest and the most active in terms of number of attacks. Al-Shabaab is the only group to have more than 10 attacks attributed to it in START's Global Terrorism Database in the last five years (2012-2016), during which time more than 2,300 attacks have been attributed to it. It is, without a doubt, the largest terrorism challenge in the region.
The theoretical literature on how terrorism ends, of which Crenshaw and Cronin are seminal works, note six primary pathways, not all of which are desirable. These include:
- Successful repression and defeat of the group(s);
- Success in reaching the group's goals;
- Transition by the group to nonviolent means of achieving its goals;
- Aging out/other loss of a group's membership without transfer to a new generation;
- Loss of popular support; or
- Transition by the group to other forms of illegality (such as organized criminality or full-blown insurgency).

These pathways are not mutually exclusive. For example, a loss of popular support may persuade a group's leadership to pursue nonviolent means or make the group more vulnerable to military defeat. Or, repressive pressure may result in a group's leadership and membership dying out without sufficient time to cultivate a new generation of leaders and members.

Just as the literature identifies multiple paths to the end of terrorism (or at least the degradation of specific groups or movements), the literature also identifies multiple strategies that actors – usually but not always governments – may adopt to influence the decision-making of violent extremist organizations (including terrorists) and thus influence the potential pathways towards desistance. These include:

- Coercion (that is, the use of force or threat of force);
- Deterrence (that is, policies that increase the potential costs of carrying out terrorist attacks, such as increasing police or military presence or surveillance, increasing legal penalties for terrorist attacks or providing material support, or even policies that entail collective punishment);
- Cooptation (such as policies meant to "buy off" potential leaders or influential members of violent groups or nonviolent dissidents);
- Grievance alleviation (which includes policies that make concessions to some of the demands of groups or more general policies that try to improve conditions within communities that are subject to recruitment);
- Delegitimization (which could include messaging that points out flaws, incompetency, or hypocrisy within leadership of violent groups or messaging that seeks to de-romanticize violent lifestyles); and
- Incentivization of non-violent alternatives (which covers policies that protect non-violent protest or guarantee access to decision-making for non-violent dissidents).

As with desistance pathways, these are not mutually exclusive options. Instead, the above list represents a menu of options – of which any one option is likely insufficient and the most effective combination of options may vary from scenario to scenario.

During this session the above topics will be explored and then applied to the cases of the Lord's Resistance Army – the longest enduring group in the region – and al-Shabaab – the deadliest group in the region.

Discussion Questions:
1. Given the geopolitical environment in the Horn of Africa, what policy levers/approaches to influencing violent extremist organization are possible?
2. Of these possible approaches, which policies are more likely to lead to more desirable outcomes as opposed to terrorist success or transition to other forms of illegality?
3. Where and to what degree can the United States, and CJTF-HoA in particular, influence policies undertaken to counter violent extremist organizations in the region?

Recommended Readings:

Audrey Kurth Cronin (2011) *How Terrorism Ends: Understanding the Decline and Demise of Terrorist Campaigns*, Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press. (Introduction available online: https://press.princeton.edu/titles/9012.html)

Mustafa Bananay (21 March 2017) "Can Military Might Alone Defeat al-Shabaab?" IPI Global Observatory, https://theglobalobservatory.org/2017/03/al-shabaab-amisom-extremism-afgoye/

Recommended Readings:

Martha Crenshaw (1991) "How terrorism declines," *Terrorism and Political Violence*, 3:1, 69-87, DOI: 10.1080/09546559108427093.

Erin Miller (2012) "Patterns of Onset and Decline Among Terrorist Organizations," *Journal of Quantitative Criminology*, 28:77-101, DOI 10.1007/s10940-011-9154-6 .

Jon B. Alterman (1999) "How Terrorism Ends," Washington, DC: United States Institute of Peace, https://www.usip.org/sites/default/files/sr990525.pdf.

"Al Shabaab," Mapping Militant Organizations, Stanford University, http://web.stanford.edu/group/mappingmilitants/cgi-bin/groups/view/61

Pamela Faber (April 2017) "Sources of Resilience in the Lord's Resistance Army," CNA Occasional Paper, https://www.cna.org/cna_files/pdf/DOP-2017-U-015265-Final.pdf

UNDP (2017), The Journey to Extremism in Africa: Drivers, Incentives and the Tipping Point for Recruitment
http://journey-to-extremism.undp.org/content/downloads/UNDP-JourneyToExtremism-report-2017-english.pdf