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COURSE TITLE: INTERNATIONAL ORGANISATIONS AND CONFLICT RESOLUTION

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ASSIGNMENT: DISCUSS CRITICALLY AND INTELLIGENTLY THE THREE OF THE CHALLENGES OF THE AFRICAN UNION MISSION IN SOMALIA (AMISOM) USING PAGE 156-168.

ANSWER

**THE PROBLEM OF A DANGEROUS CONFLICT ENVIRONMENT**

As already stated, AMISOM is operating in a conflict environment that was initially characterized by statelessness. The stateless nature of the Somali state is explained in this context in terms of state collapse with no identifiable government that represents the whole country and commands the allegiance of the Somali people. Although the TFG was accorded recognition by the international community to assume this position and it functioned as such, its inability to operate as a de jure authority in Somalia contributed to the suspicions towards external third-party interveners among the Somalis that were against the TFG. Thus, rather than restoring stability to Somalia, the imposition of the FTG on Somalia increased anti-TFG feelings and this also flared up hostility that added to further deterioration of the security situation. In this kind of conflict environment, the African mission found itself with the dilemma of how to really function as a peace mission in the clear absence of a peace to keep the stateless order led to and increased weaponization in Somali society, all in the quest of predatory, personal interests and lust for power of the leaders of the various warring factions. Militarization of the society and clan politicization, and also the splintering of the armed insurgent groups negatively affected any hope of forging national reconciliation, which is needed in order to achieve broader political consensus for peaceful resolution of the fratricidal war. The absence of effective and sincere political process makes AMISOM’s complete operational success look utopian, at least in the interim. The failure of AMISOM and FGS forces to secure the whole of Somali territory and completely stabilize the liberated areas increases fears and uncertainty in the country. The dangerous security situation in other parts of Somalia, especially in rural areas, is slowing down the actions of would-be TCCs, and reducing to contribute to AMISOM.

**THE PROBLEM OF THE AU PEACEKEEPING CAPACITES**

The gap between the AU’s ambition and its capacity in relation to peace operations as experienced Burundi appeared in AMISOM. The AMISOM operation as experienced in Burundi reappeared in AMISOM. The AMISOM operation also reveals the chasm between the AU’s intent and the lack of capacity to do the job – thereby pointing to the organization’s problem in balancing the triangular area of tension in African peace operations. Apart from the problems of troop contributions that was discussed earlier, the AU lacked the logistical and financial resources for its peacekeeping operation in Somalia. Apart from the fact that only two countries initially contributed troops to AMISOM, the AU, as part of its organizational weakness and financial constraint, was beset by the strategic lift capability problem when it was obvious that both Uganda and Burundi would be unable to deploy their contingents without outside (i.e., non-African) assistance. This situation is reminiscent of the AMIB operation where the Mozambican and Ethiopian contingents were deployed, respectively, by the United Kingdom and the United States. In response to this strategic lift capability problem of the AU, NATO assisted in the United Kingdom and France helped the mission with some logistical requirements. Besides, the TCCs when compared against countries like South Africa and Nigeria are poor, lacking adequate funds and resources, with no extensive peacekeeping experience. This situation underlines the disturbing reality that the AU peace operations, especially AMISOM, are operationalized as an improvised arrangement of a few countries, and perhaps for this reason, the AU was initially unable to come up with a realistic force of adequate strength for AMISOM to do the job well in Somalia. The problem is exacerbated by the fact that these TCCs inundated with absolute poverty may be forced to withdraw earlier than they should. It’s a country that is struggling to deal with the problem of accommodating and paying for its larger than needed army, which is not the which is not the most capable and experienced in peacekeeping. Burundi is not a country with the capacity to do this kind of operation in Somalia. So, the real professional armies that could have come, that is, the robust type correlating with the tasks at hand are unfortunately not in Somalia to do the job that only they could do. Furthermore, despite the volatile environment in which the mission operated, AMISOM was not well resourced for its operational tasks. AMISOM was inadequately equipped to the extent that the troops lacked concrete shelters and bunkers for protection and consequently relied on sandbags even in very high-risk areas. Moreover, AMISOM’s many challenges have revealed the AU institutional capacity deficiency in planning peace operations. Nowhere has the AU’s institutional capacity deficiency in relation to planning peace operations become more glaring than in the lead up to AMISOM’s deployment. The persistent problem of financing AU peace operation plagues AMISOM, as the AU is incapacitated; it cannot pay for this difficult reality, the AU reintroduced the Burundi model in its operation in Somalia, where it ruled that the TCCs should be self-sustained for the duration of the mission. Based on this model, TCCs are expected to provide/supply their needed equipment (contingent owned equipment – COE) during the operation with the understanding that the AU would reimburse incurred costs immediately when it secured funds from its member states and partners. This was the reassurance the TCCs were given, so that the AU would not place the peacekeeping burden on them forever. At the beginning of the AMISOM operation, donors were not enthusiastic about providing the requisite financial resources to the AU peacekeeping efforts because it was thought that the operation would be a failure in the long-run for three reasons: the controversial Ethiopian invasion of Somalia with the support of the united states, Africans states’ jack of interest in the operation – exemplified by the low pace of troop contributions to AMISOM from African countries – and dangerous security, political and humanitarian situations within Somalia (Franke 2009: 260). At AMISOM’s inception, the AU relied solely on bilateral support from donors – the United States, the United Kingdom and the EU African peace facility – to supplement TCCs support from Uganda and Burundi. realizing its financial constraints and the difficult environment in which AMISOM is deployed, the AU appealed to the UN to grant it a support package that will, as I mentioned above, involve logistical and technical support as well as $800 million in financial assistance. Lack of consensus in the UN security council did not allow the UN to accede to the AU’s demands. The absence of consensus in the council is because Russia, the United Kingdom, and France vehemently opposed the idea of using the UN’s financial resources for backing the AU or other regional organizations’ peacekeeping missions when the UN institution itself is overstretched with peacekeeping operations across the world. AMISOM field commanders opined that trust fund delay their operation because of its unwieldy tendering process.

**THE PROBLEM OF FINDING AN APPROPRIATE EXIT STRATEGY**

AMISOM also confronted the problem of how to leave Somalia. After taking into consideration its organizational weakness, lack of peacekeeping resources and the constant attacks on its personnel from the Islamist armed groups, the AU struggled to find an appropriate exit strategy for the African mission. This problem becomes more embedded and chronic because of differing views of the UN and key Western countries on how to go about it, and the Somalis divisive opinion on the continuing presence of foreign troops in their country. During the transitional administration, while some shades of opinion saw AMISOM’s deployment as supporting the stabilization of the country, creating a conducive political environment for and assisting the TFG to establishing a functioning government and rebuilding the Somali state, others argued to the contrary; they saw the African mission as nothing more than the re-colonization of Somalia and an infringement on its sovereignty. Since then, finding an appropriate exit strategy has been a recurring problem for AMISOM. The AU commission has, on many occasions, reiterated its intention of handing over AMISOM to the UN in line with the PCS’s decision of 19 January 2007. However, the politics of the UN security council and lack of willing troop contributors, especially among key Western countries, to deploy their soldiers in Somalia, makes the deployment of UN peacekeepers to Somalia highly unrealistic proposition, at least for now. After initial period of the UN’s lack of enthusiasm on AMISOM’s replacement, discussions gathered momentum with the signing of the Djibouti Agreement in August 2008. The agreement was made between the TFG and the alliance for the Re-Liberation of Somalia (ARS) led by Sheikh Sheriff Sheikh Ahmed; its (the agreement) relevance was boosted when Ethiopia withdrew its 3,000 troops from Somalia in January 2009. Djibouti agreement succeeded not only in bringing together the rival groupings, the TFG and the ARS-Djibouti, but it also resulted in the formation of the new transitional administration (TFG II), which paved the way for the withdrawal of the Ethiopian forces (Kasaija 2010: 262 and 274; Tadesse 2009:2) additionally, the agreement envisaged AMISOM’s replacement when it called on the UN security council to authorize and deploy an international stabilization force from countries that are friends of Somalia excluding neighboring states. When it become obvious that the idea of deploying a 6,000-strong ISF was not going to materialize, the UN secretary general commenced efforts, do novo, to ensure that security prevailed in Somalia in January 2009. While the UN scribe still believed in the contingency planning for deploying a UN mission as the best option for securing Somalia, he put forward three options, which on the authority of Williams(2009b:524) could be summarized thus: first, AMISOM should be reinforced. This should be done through bilateral support to the troop contributing countries (Uganda and Burundi); support at the mission level in the area of logistical, medical and engineering capabilities; and the transfer of some $7 million worth of assets from UNMEE, Moreover, the UN should bolster its support AMISOM by providing an additional logistic support package and continuing to assist AU planning and deployment preparations through its planners team in Addis Ababa. Second, the UN should build the capacity of the Djibouti agreement signatories to restore the security sector and the rule of law. In the short term, this should involve training and equipping 5000 joint TFG-ARS forces, a 10,000 strong Somali police force, and other justice and correction personnel. The third step was for the security council to consider establishing a maritime task force, perhaps as part of the ongoing anti-piracy operations. Not only could this support AMISOM’s operations but it could host a quick- reaction force to support AMISOM peacekeepers and could serve to support AMISOM peacekeepers and could serve as an operational platform for any envisaged UN peacekeeping operation. This situation has created huge problems for the AU peacekeepers, as they become targets of incessant attacks.