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INTERNATIONAL ORGANISATION AND CONFLICT RESOLUTION  
  
ASSIGNMENT: Discuss critically and intelligently the three challenges of the African union mission in Somalia (AMISOM).

INTRODUCTION.  
 AMISOM, the African union mission in Somalia is an active regional peacekeeping mission with the approval of the united nations security council. It was mandated to support the transitional government structures, implement a national security plan, train the Somali security forces, and to assist in creating a secure environment for the delivery of humanitarian aid. AMISOM was created by the African Union's Peace and Security Council on 19 January 2007 with an initial six-month mandate. The duration of AMISOM's mandate has been extended in each period that it has been up for review, lastly in May 2019. The current mandate expires on 31 May 2020, with a reduction of troop levels to a maximum of 19,626 by 28 February 2020.

CHALLENGES OF THE AFRICAN MISSION IN SOMALIA.  
1. The African Union’s Lack of Capabilities: It has been shown consistently that most African countries lack extensive military capabilities which are required to conduct a successful peacekeeping operation. The AU’s short record of peacekeeping provided little evidence to suggest that it would be able to find, deploy, manage or pay the 8,000 troops authorized to form AMISOM. the AU struggled to secure promises of just over 60 percent of the authorized troops. In practice, approximately 1,600 Ugandan troops were the total of AMISOM until December 2007 when a company of 100 Burundian soldiers arrived. By April 2009 AMISOM had around 4,300 troops from Uganda and Burundi. Nor could the AU pay for its own peacekeeping mission. Instead, it relied on funds from the U.S., UN, the European Union and several other states this is as a result of most poor African countries lacking the commitment of funds to peace operations. Deploying them also proved impossible without Western assistance and when they were deployed, they lacked crucial pieces of equipment and materiel (after mid-2008 these needs were partly fulfilled by scavenging assets from the defunct UN Mission in Ethiopia-Eritrea, UNMEE).

2.The Legacy of Black Hawk Down: in October 1993 18 American soldiers were killed and their bodies desecrated in Somalia by crowds angry at the American presence, this prompted the united states and subsequently all western countries to pull out of the mission in Somalia All contemporary discussions of peacekeeping in Somalia are colored by the events of October 3-4, 1993, and the images of a violent country awash with arms that they left behind. The deaths of American soldiers not only sparked the Clinton administration’s retreat from UN peacekeeping (codified in Presidential Decision Directive 25) but also acted as a major warning against putting boots on the ground in African war zones. Second, the subsequent U.S. disengagement from Somalia left Ethiopia as the central plank in Washington’s regional policy in the Horn. Third, when U.S. troops did return to the Horn, it was primarily to conduct counter-terrorism operations initially after the 1998 embassy bombings and then in the aftermath of 9/11. U.S. policy thus looked at Somali and regional politics through the narrow and distorting prism of counterterrorism.

3.The Shadow of Ethiopia’s Intervention: Established during Ethiopia’s attempt to forcibly install the transitional federal government (TFG) in Mogadishu, AMISOM was born into a war zone. Ethiopia’s 2006 campaign was the latest in a long series of military incursions aimed at degrading Islamist bases in Somalia, initially focused on al-Ittihad al-Islamiya, and more recently elements within the coalition of local Shari’a courts known as the Union of Islamic Courts (UIC). The main point was that the regime Ethiopia was trying to install was deeply unpopular with many Somalis and once installed, made little effort to build its political legitimacy or reach out to its opponents. AMISOM was thus mandated to support a weak, divided, and (in the view of many Somalis) illegitimate government which was widely seen as being one faction in the country’s ongoing civil war. It didn’t help that the TFG was unable to control many of its security forces and demonstrated virtually no capacity to govern effectively.

CONCLUSION

it is difficult to conclude that AMISOM has made a large contribution to peace and security in Mogadishu during its 30 months. While its personnel did engage in some humanitarian activities and protection of key infrastructure, these must be balanced against the popular outrage against instances of indiscriminate force, the loss of over 20 peacekeepers, and the limitations of African union forces. When a greater degree of stability did return to Mogadishu in early 2009 this was not because of AMISOM but rather a combination of the withdrawal of Ethiopian forces and the wider diplomatic activity that resulted in Sheikh Ahmed’s election and his subsequent ability to engage a wide range of parties and enact sharia law. Violence has flared again in recent weeks, and neither Somalis nor the world’s governments should look to the AU forces to quell it. Whether AMISOM has a future in Mogadishu is thus primarily a question for the new government, the UN Security Council, and the AU to answer. Whether AMISOM should have been deployed at all is a question analyst should debate.