IDA SUPPORT TO THE THREAT REDUCTION IN AFRICA (TRIA) INITIATIVE

By Dr. Ashley Neese Bybee

Following the end of the Cold War, the U.S. Government (USG) established the Cooperative Threat Reduction (CTR) program to "prevent the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction (WMD) and related materials, technologies and expertise from former Soviet Union states." Today, the term "threat reduction" (TR) is also used in the context of partnering with other states, such as African nations where the proliferation of terrorist groups and an increase in commercial trade have raised concerns over the potential for chemical, biological, radiological, nuclear, and high-yield explosives (CBRNE) materials to fall into the wrong hands. Though nascent, USG partnership with African countries on TR activities could become an important aspect of our engagement with the continent. *more...*

IDA researchers provide analytic support to an interagency initiative co-led by the Defense Threat Reduction Agency and the State Department Coordinator for Threat Reduction to improve coordination of threat-reduction activities in Kenya. (Source: Photo courtesy of the author.)

Dr. Ashley Neese Bybee is a Research Staff Member in the Africa Program at the Institute for Defense Analyses

INTERVENTION IN SOUTH SUDAN: CHALLENGES AHEAD

By Sarah Graveline

On August 12, 2016, the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) adopted Resolution 2304, which renewed the mandate for the United Nations Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS) and authorized the creation of a 4,000-strong regional protection force to be drawn from neighboring states. While the regional protection force may improve stability in and around Juba in the short term, a political solution is ultimately needed to resolve the conflict. This solution appears unlikely, as mistrust over peace negotiations is high. Both South Sudanese President Salva Kiir and opposition leader Riek Machar will likely accept international intervention when it is perceived to be advantageous, but the international community has so far proved unable to pressure either side to commit to a realistic peace framework. *more...*

In this photo released by the United Nations Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS), children wait to be served with roasted maize in a refugee camp Juba, South Sudan, Friday July 22, 2016 . The United Nations refugee agency says thousands of people continue to flee South Sudan over violence between armed groups in the country, stretching the capacity of humanitarian efforts to look after the refugees. (Source: Isaac Billy UNMISS via AP.)

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About IDA

The Institute for Defense Analyses is a non-profit corporation operating in the public interest.

IDA's three federally-funded research and development centers provide objective analyses of national security issues and related national challenges, particularly those requiring scientific and technical expertise.
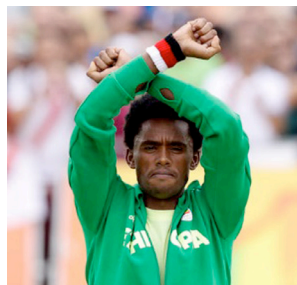
IDA's Africa team focuses on issues related to political, economic, and social stability and security on the continent.

ETHIOPIAN INTIFADA? ANTI-GOVERNMENT PROTESTS SHAKE THE ETHIOPIAN PEOPLE'S REVOLUTIONARY DEMOCRATIC FRONT

By Hilary Matfess

Ethiopia is once again witnessing protests against the ruling Ethiopian People's Revolutionary Democratic Front (EPRDF), a coalition that has been in power since 1991. The regime, dominated by the Tigray ethnic group, has long been challenged by protestors from the Oromia region demanding greater regional autonomy, but the most recent wave of protests may be a "tipping point" for the country. The protests that took place over the first weekend in August are being described as underprecedented by activists and international observers alike. *more...*

Silver medalist Feyisa Lilesa, of Ethiopia, acknowledges applause during an award ceremony as he crosses his wrists in an attempt to draw global attention to recent deadly protests in his home region, Oromia, after the men's marathon at the 2016 Summer Olympics in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, Sunday, Aug. 21, 2016. (Source: AP Photo/Robert F. Bukaty.)

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Following the end of the Cold War, the U.S. Government (USG) established the Cooperative Threat Reduction (CTR) program to "prevent the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction (WMD) and related materials, technologies and expertise from former Soviet Union states." Today, the term "threat reduction" (TR) is also used in the context of partnering with other states, such as African nations where the proliferation of terrorist groups and an increase in commercial trade have raised concerns over the potential for chemical, biological, radiological, nuclear, and high-yield explosives (CBRNE) materials to fall into the wrong hands. Though nascent, USG partnership with African countries on TR activities could become an important aspect of our engagement with the continent.

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Since 2013, USG members of the TR community have convened an informal working group that seeks to promote coordination; increase collaboration; and ensure efficient, effective, and sustainable implementation of USG TR resources and activities in Africa. The Threat Reduction in Africa (TRIA) initiative is co-led by the Defense Threat Reduction Agency (DTRA) and the Department of State's Office of the Coordinator for Threat Reduction Programs (ISN/TR), with participation from the Department of Energy and the Department of Homeland Security. It was created to improve interagency coordination and information exchange on TR activities in Africa. TRIA's purpose is twofold: (1) it provides a forum for USG stakeholders to discuss and coordinate plans and programs in Africa and enhance visibility of efforts across the TR community, and (2) it provides a forum for discussing how to improve delivery of TR assistance to African partners.

In 2014, DTRA asked the Institute for Defense Analyses (IDA) to provide analytic support to the TRIA working group by gathering data from various interagency partners to document existing TR programs and coordination processes. IDA provided regional and functional experts in the fields of African security and interagency coordination to facilitate these discussions and to document and develop lessons from the first TRIA workshop in Africa. The USG delegation at this January 2016 workshop was led by the State Department's Coordinator for Threat Reduction, Ambassador Bonnie Jenkins, who hosted 32 members of the Government of Kenya (GOK) in Nairobi.

Unlike the USG, which has a formalized TR community rooted in the CTR program, there is no equivalent community in Kenya. Recognizing this gap, U.S. participants in the TRIA initiative, with the help of the U.S. Embassy in Nairobi, identified and convened, in a two-and-a-half-day workshop, 20 Kenyan stakeholder organizations, which shared details of their TR programs, their existing capabilities, noteworthy gaps, and their plans for the future.[1] For many Kenyans, this was a rare opportunity to meet their counterparts in other agencies, ask questions about each other's capabilities, and identify areas of mutual interest. The forum provided by TRIA facilitated that interagency communication—a stated priority for the GOK that has historically been difficult to achieve due to the lack of incentives for coordination. U.S. Embassy Nairobi has observed that the stakeholders who attended the TRIA workshop in January continue to meet with each other on an informal basis, suggesting the possibility that an official TR community to coordinate stakeholders' activities may soon become a reality in Kenya.

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[1] The National Disaster Management Unit (NDMU); the National Disaster Operations Center (NDOC); the Kenya Defense Forces Disaster Response Unit (KDF/DRU); the Government Chemists; the Radiation Protection Board (RPB); the National Public Health Laboratory Services (NPHLS); the East African Public Health Labs; the National Commission for Science, Technology and Innovation (NACOSTI); the Kenya Medical Research Institute (KEMRI); the Kenya Field Epidemiology and Laboratory Training Program (K-FELTP); the Zoonotic Disease Unit (ZDU); the Directorate of Veterinary Services (DVS); the National Biosafety Authority (NBA); the Kenya Maritime Authority (KMA); the Kenya Ports Authority (KPA); the Kenya Revenue Authority (KRA); the Kenya Wildlife Services (KWS); Kenya Power; Kenya Electricity Generating Company (Kengen); and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA).

Challenges to Effective Management of TR Programs

The TRIA forum provided an opportunity for the GOK to discuss, and for the USG to enhance its understanding of, the challenges hindering the effective coordination and development of TR capabilities in Kenya. Above all, the greatest impediment to more effective management of Kenya's TR resources is the absence of legislation or official policy guidance to enforce collaboration among TR organizations. Although significant collaboration occurs at the operational level—for example, within biosecurity or detection and interdiction domains—there is little communication between functional domains across parent ministries. This results in the continued existence of stove-piped organizations. To be fair, this is a challenge that plagues many mature TR communities, including those in the United States.

A second major challenge for the GOK is the need to balance resources between counterterrorism and other military operations and those programs that improve planning and preparedness. The threat posed by al-Shabaab takes much, if not most, of the GOK's attention and resources in the security field. This focus on counterterrorism and internal security has historically diverted senior-level officials' attention and resources from activities that are more preparatory and preventive in nature, including emergency preparedness and response planning. Perhaps as a result of the 2013 Westgate shopping mall attack, where questions arose about the ineffective response by the police and military, there seemed to be a concerted effort by the Kenyan authorities to improve their own capacity to respond to terrorist attacks. The National Disaster Operations Centre (NDOC), which has traditionally focused on droughts, floods, landslides, and epidemics, expanded its planning in recent years to respond to all hazards, including terrorist events. The interagency National Disaster Management Unit (NDMU), which was established more recently in response to the increase in terrorism in the region, is focused on preparation and interministerial coordination and communication.

Opportunities for Future Collaboration

Kenyan participants used the forum provided by TRIA to identify areas where they believed the GOK should increase its attention, which included Kenya's critical infrastructure (the physical and cyber systems that underpin the nation's security). Kenya Power and Kengen are two government agencies with significant roles to play in protecting Kenya's cyber infrastructure. Developing Kenya's physical infrastructure for TR is also a priority. Kenyan participants noted that DTRA programs that enhanced biosecurity infrastructure for the Directorate of Veterinary Services (DVS) have been helpful. Kenyan participants also agreed that better access control is needed for the growing number of laboratories, schools, and factories that handle CBRN materials. Standardization of laboratory building rules is one possible way to ensure better security of these facilities. Sandia National Laboratories has provided technical support to Kenyan regional labs in this area. Additional safety measures may take the form of training employees on the safe disposal or destruction of expired or spent CBRN stocks held in these facilities.

Conclusion

At the conclusion of its study, IDA found that the TRIA process provides a number of unique opportunities for USG and GOK stakeholders alike. There does not appear to be another process or forum that engages the GOK in this manner, and Kenyan participants emphasized that it was a unique opportunity to network with each other, learn about each other's TR activities, and provide feedback to the USG. These benefits are equally as applicable to USG stakeholders as to Kenyan partners. As Africa continues to grow in importance within the TR community and cultivates competent partners, the USG will likely invest more TR resources in the continent. IDA's team of regional and functional experts provided a level of analytic rigor and independence that enabled it to illuminate areas of mutual interest and advance the USG's goals in Kenya. This type of support typifies the role of a Federally Funded Research and Development Center (FFRDC) within a broader USG effort.

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Regional Protection Force to Bolster UN Peacekeepers

The regional protection force was created in response to an outbreak of violence between the Sudan People's Liberation Army (SPLA) and the Sudan People's Liberation Army in Opposition (SPLA-IO) in early July. The force, which will be based near South Sudan's capital, Juba, and report to the UNMISS Force Commander, is mandated "to use all necessary means" to provide "a secure environment in and around Juba."

While commentators have welcomed the regional protection force's robust mandate, the UN's experience in South Sudan has shown that even that mandate may not guarantee civilians' safety. UNMISS already has a strong mandate that calls on peacekeepers to "use all necessary means … to protect civilians under threat of physical violence, irrespective of the source of such violence … through proactive deployment [and] active patrolling." Despite this, UNMISS peacekeepers have been accused of failing to protect civilians from attacks by government forces in Unity state, attacks against internally displaced persons in a Protection of Civilians (PoC) site in Malakal, and, most recently, during attacks against aid workers at the Hotel Terrain in Juba on July 11.

The regional protection force may fulfill its mandate more successfully than UNMISS because neighboring states are more directly invested in ensuring South Sudan's peace. Regional intervention, however, also creates unique political challenges. The South Sudanese Government initially opposed the force, arguing that it violates the country's sovereignty. Although the South Sudanese Government later clarified that it would accept the intervention, it demanded that Uganda, Sudan, Ethiopia, and Kenya refrain from contributing troops. Both Sudan and Uganda have already stated that they do not intend to participate in the regional protection force, but Kenya, Rwanda, and Ethiopia are expected to contribute troops and equipment.

The new force may prove to be only a stopgap measure. Unlike the similarly structured Force Intervention Brigade, which partnered with the Congolese military in the Democratic Republic of Congo to engage and defeat the rebel group M23, the regional protection force will not cooperate with its host government. Conceivably, in carrying out its mandate to secure Juba, it could actually be asked to undertake operations against the SPLA. Because of this possibility, the regional protection force could be seen as challenging South Sudan's sovereignty. Given the atrocities carried out by the SPLA, the force is a short-term necessity, but may spawn larger political complications that would need to be overcome to broker a lasting peace deal.

No Political Solution in Sight

International observers recognize that a political solution is needed for the peaceful resolution of the South Sudan conflict. Efforts to find an acceptable political solution, however, have produced little progress. The political

process has primarily been led by a group composed of the regional [Intergovernmental Authority on Development](#) (IGAD) and representatives from the European Union, Italy, Norway, the United Kingdom, United Nations, and the United States, a group known as IGAD Plus. Thus far, IGAD Plus has concentrated its efforts on the restoration of the [Agreement on the Resolution of Conflict in the Republic of South Sudan](#) (ARCSS), the IGAD-brokered roadmap intended to resolve the issues that led to the outbreak of violence in 2013.

Progress toward restoring the ARCSS has been fraught with mistrust. As *[Africa Watch](#)* previously noted, in late July President Salva Kiir attempted to co-opt the opposition by confirming Taban Deng, a Kiir supporter, as the country's First Vice President. This move followed the attempt by a breakaway group within the opposition to unseat Machar. IGAD tacitly accepted this replacement, allowing Deng to attend an August 5 IGAD Plus summit and noting in the subsequent [communiqué](#) that "leadership changes in SPLM/A-IO . . . [are] solely an internal matter and the region should work with the current setup of the TGoNU [the Government of National Unity]." In addition, on [August 17](#), Kenya recognized Deng as the First Vice President, formally hosting him at a meeting in Nairobi. These steps may make it difficult for Machar to accept negotiations led by IGAD Plus.

While Machar may mistrust the international community, he is willing to accept assistance when it is to his advantage. On August 18, the [UN confirmed](#) that it had arranged an emergency airlift to transfer Machar to the Democratic Republic of Congo after he fled to the border on foot and in need of medical attention. In a report [leaked to the media](#), Kiir's staff have already argued that the UN seeks to undermine the South Sudanese government. The news that the UN provided an airlift to Machar will likely further this mistrust.

Conclusion

While both Kiir and Machar mistrust international intervention, both sides are also resisting the peace process because they feel they have more to win from remaining in conflict. Kiir is using Machar's absence as an opportunity to consolidate power. With Deng acting as a representative of the SPLA-IO, Kiir is promising to [integrate](#) the SPLA and SPLA-IO and to hold [elections](#). Pursuing either aim would help Kiir increase his legitimacy as the country's leader, improving his position when negotiations finally do occur. Simultaneously, the SPLA-IO is trying to shift conditions outside the capital to create a more favorable negotiating position. Machar's spokesman [stated](#) that Deng would be considered *persona non grata* in SPLA-IO–controlled territory, while SPLA-IO forces [reportedly engaged](#) SPLA soldiers in the Upper Nile state in early August.

As both sides fight for advantage, South Sudan's civilians suffer. Since the outbreak of violence in July, [70,000](#) South Sudanese have fled to Uganda, where they are living in dire conditions. To reverse this humanitarian crisis, more diplomatic tools are needed to bring combatants to the negotiating table. Asset freezes on elites supporting conflict or an [embargo](#) on the transfer of arms or ammunitions into South Sudan might help the international community apply more pressure on combatants. Ultimately, the international community needs to find a way to convince both Kiir and Machar that negotiations are more attractive than continued conflict.

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Ethiopia is once again witnessing protests against the ruling Ethiopian People's Revolutionary Democratic Front (EPRDF), a coalition that has been in power since 1991. The regime, dominated by the Tigray ethnic group, has long been challenged by protestors from the Oromia region demanding greater regional autonomy, but the most recent wave of protests may be a "tipping point" for the country. The protests that took place over the first weekend in August are being described as unprecedented by activists and international observers alike.

Numerous protests have taken place across the country, including in 10 towns in Oromia and several cities in Amhara, uniting previously antagonistic ethno-political blocs. The protestors, reportedly numbering in the tens of thousands, have persisted despite government repression, including blackouts of social media. Reuters reported that more than 90 people were shot and killed at protests from 5 to 8 August 2016. Videos emerging from the protests show civilians being subjected to "beating, kicking, and dragging" on the streets by Ethiopian police. Given the uncertainty surrounding these events, the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights has requested that international observers be allowed into the country to determine what transpired. To date, the EPRDF has condemned the activists, with the Prime Minister deriding the protestors as being "ethnic chauvinists" and "anti-development." What prompted these anti-government protests, what makes the latest round of resistance different from previous ones, and what do these protests portend for the future of an American ally in an unstable region?

Protesting the Master Plan and the Government's Response

The trigger for the protests was the Addis Ababa Master Plan, a development plan intended to expand the perimeter of the capital city into the surrounding Oromia land. Protests over the plan began in April 2014, when those living in areas to be incorporated into Addis Ababa complained that the government was not compensating them for their land and that the eviction process was frequently violent and poorly managed. Despite being the largest ethnic group in the country, the Oromo are politically marginalized and face government discrimination, according to a 2015 report by Amnesty International. This report points out that Oromo students were monitored and harassed by the government, and Oromo cultural expressions were considered to be "manifestations of dissent."

Part of the government's response to the Oromo protests has been to crack down on certain human and civil rights. Protestors and members of political parties, especially Oromo ones, have been jailed and prosecuted under the country's 2009 Anti-Terrorism Proclamation, which has been referred to by some experts as "draconian." Association with such groups (real or alleged) has been used to justify detention and arrest of activists. There have been allegations that those being held have been subjected to inhuman conditions and torture. In April 2014 the "Zone 9 Bloggers," who ran a website critical of the EPRDF, were arrested and charged as terrorists. They were held for more than a year and were only released following significant international pressure.

While initial protests were focused on the land policy, it appears that the latest round of protests reflects an expanded set of grievances related to the authoritarian tendencies of the government, the treatment of political prisoners, and discrimination against the Oromo by the ruling party. One Oromo activist asserted that the original protests were

"manifestations of a much deeper crisis of political representation, equality, and justice that has been simmering underground, waiting to erupt." Long-standing Oromo grievances, which had previously resulted in sporadic demonstrations on narrow policy issues, seem now to be channeled into broad, public protests against the government.

Despite the state's efforts to silence protestors, they gained such momentum that in January 2016, the Ethiopian government canceled the planned expansion of the capital. Does that outcome suggest that the Oromo protests may have made a crack in the regime's armor? Will others take to the streets to vent their complaints in hopes of a similar result? Merera Gudina, the head of the political opposition party the Oromo People's Congress, told AFP: "We are nine months into this protest. I don't think it will stop. This is an intifada."

Ethnic Discrimination and Unlikely Alliances

One noteworthy feature of the most recent wave of protests is the simultaneous protests of the Amhara ethnic group—a group that has historically been pitted against the Oromo as part of the EPRDF's strategy to maintain political control. The protests by the Amhara have involved both public demonstrations in urban centers like Gondar, as well as a "stay at home" protest that has brought parts of the region to a halt.

Amhara and Oromo protestors have expressed solidarity with one another, suggesting the potential for cooperation between the two groups. The demographics of a potential Amhara-Oromia alliance are important. These two ethno-regional blocs account for about two-thirds of the country's total population. One Oromo activist believes that the Amhara protestors are "bitter against . . . old guard" representatives from the region within the EPRDF. This new class of Amhara activists also bristles at the Tigrayan dominance of the EPRDF. Regardless of the Amhara protests' origins and specific grievances, an alliance with the Oromo could destabilize the EPRDF's political control.

What's Next for This American Ally?

The relationship with Ethiopia is an important one for the United States. Ethiopia plays a critical role in countering al-Shabaab and has been described as a "linchpin of stability" in the region. It is a significant recipient of U.S. foreign assistance, accepting $650,926,000 in 2015. The EPRDF's control of the country's police and military forces suggests that the government will ride out the recent wave of protests. It is possible, however, that the united front presented by the Amhara-Oromia alliance could prompt governmental reform. The EPRDF's scrapping of the Addis Ababa Master Plan suggests that although peaceful protest may be met with harsh repression, it also has the possibility to bring about reform.

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