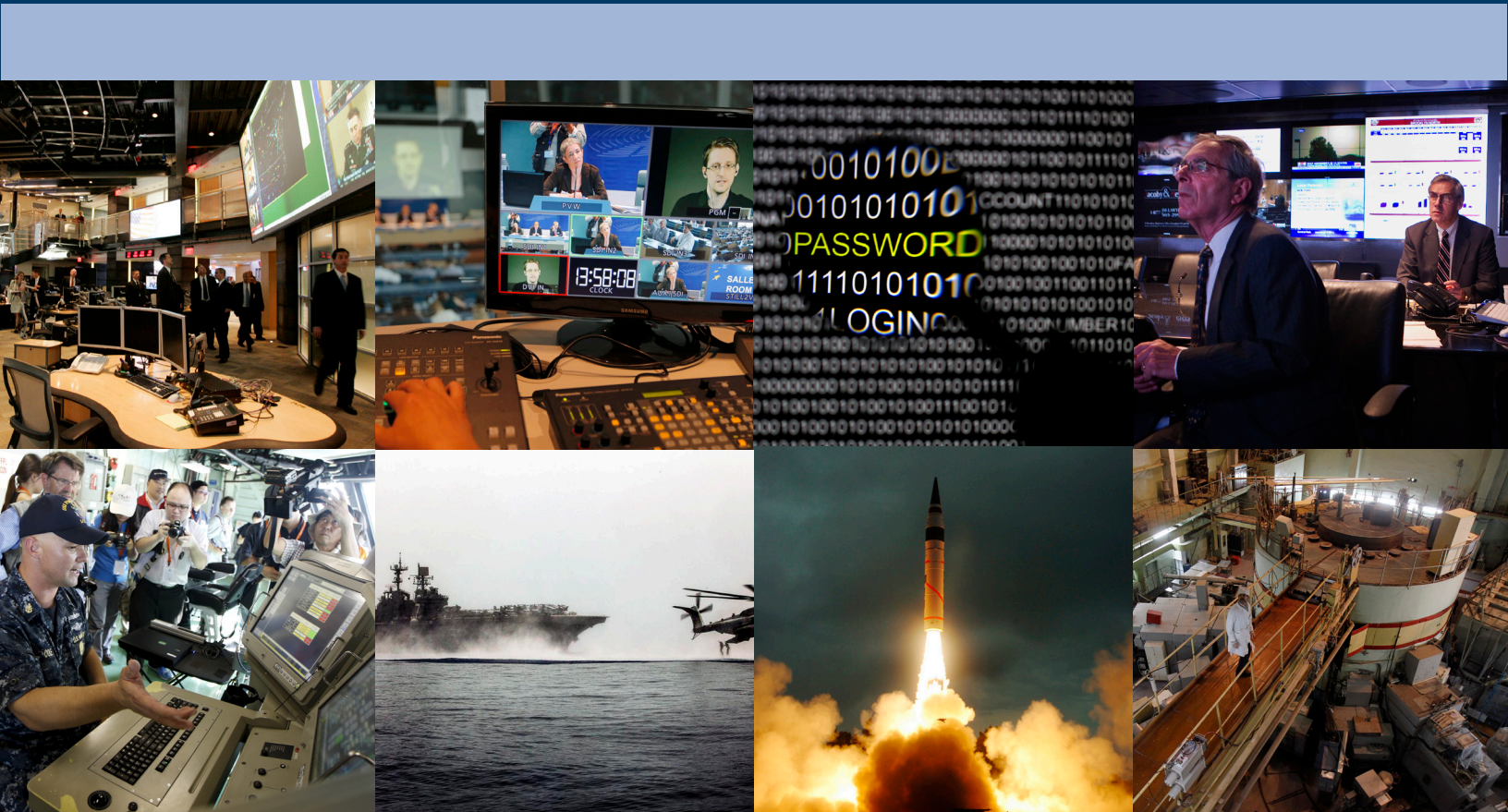


Expert Opinion on AMISOM Contributing Countries Continued Provision of Troops

DAVID MASTRO
Federal Executive Fellow, 2015



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Expert Opinion on AMISOM Contributing Countries Continued Provision of Troops

DAVID MASTRO

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The international community is beginning to grapple with several questions regarding whether one or more countries contributing troops to the African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM)—which has been key to successes against al-Shabaab in recent years—will prematurely withdraw their troops from the mission due a confluence of regional and international factors.¹ What is the likelihood that one or more troops contributing countries (TCCs)—Burundi, Djibouti, Ethiopia, Kenya, Uganda—withdraw from AMISOM? How would AMISOM's operational effectiveness be impacted if a TCC left the mission? Would another country or countries be willing and able to fill the void created by a TCC's withdrawal? This paper attempts to provide answers to these questions to inform policy discussions related to the long-term commitment of the TCCs to the mission. It also seeks to provide some actions or policies that the international community could undertake to reduce the likelihood that a TCC leaves AMISOM early.

This study utilized the Delphi method of survey research—a longstanding and reliable research technique that identifies consensus and/or lack thereof among experts on critical policy issues—to provide answers to these questions.² A two round Delphi survey found that a panel of 14 AMISOM scholars generally believed that Burundi is the only TCC that might leave AMISOM before 2018. Moreover, panelists thought that there would be substantial negative impact on AMISOM's operational effectiveness if a TCC left the mission, except for Djibouti, and were skeptical that countries other than current TCCs would be willing and able to fill the void created by a departed TCC. That said, the survey results also indicated that the departure of just one TCC would not be catastrophic to the mission's day-to-day operations. The panel recommended three policies or actions the international community should undertake to shore up the TCCs commitment to AMISOM and improving Somalia's future: stop reducing and potentially increase donor funding, increase the focus on improving Somali governance, and build a credible Somali security sector.

1. Elsa Mebrahtu, "Africa: Ethiopia and AMISOM Made a Stable Somalia Possible," *The Ethiopian Herald*, February 4, 2016, <http://allafrica.com/stories/201602040934.html>; Sundarsan Raghavan and Craig Whitlock, "Despite U.S. Airstrikes, a Somali Militia is Rising Again," *Washington Post*, March 8, 2016

2. Gregory H. Skulmoski, Francis T. Hartman and Jennifer Krahn, "The Delphi Method for Graduate Research," *Journal of Information Technology Education* 6 (2007); Chia-Chien Hsu and Brian A. Sandford, "The Delphi Technique: Making Sense of Consensus," *Practical Assessment, Research & Evaluation* 12.10 (2007).

INTRODUCTION

Numerous pundits, diplomats, and policymakers have been cautiously optimistic over the past few years about dismantling and ultimately defeating one of al-Qa`ida's most brutal affiliates, al-Shabaab.³ While the highly resilient Somalia-based insurgent group is far from being defeated, it is in dire straits compared to the height of its power in the late 2000s.⁴ Al-Shabaab no longer controls most of central and southern Somalia, including Mogadishu; dozens of its leaders and other key figures have been removed from the battlefield by local and international forces; and public support for the group is a fraction of what it once was because of its brutal tactics against Somali civilians as well as the establishment of the Federal Government of Somalia in 2012.⁵

Essential to successes against al-Shabaab has been the African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM), whose troop numbers have expanded from under 10,000 to nearly 22,000 since it began conducting a broader counterinsurgency and stabilization campaign across vast swaths of Somalia's countryside and many urban areas in 2011; AMISOM operations were largely limited to patrolling Mogadishu and providing protection to Somali government institutions and officials prior to this time.⁶ AMISOM's efforts to clear cities and towns from the influence of al-Shabaab over the past few years have played a significant role in making peace and stability in Somalia possible.⁷

Financial and materiel support from members of the international community, particularly the US and other Western countries, has been critical to AMISOM's expansion and increased operational effectiveness.⁸ Due to their reluctance to involve a substantial number of troops in any peacekeeping operation in Somalia, these countries have placed support for AMISOM's five Troop Contributing Countries (TCCs)—Burundi (5,432), Djibouti (2,000), Ethiopia (4,395), Kenya (3,664), and Uganda (6,223)—at or near the top of their strategies for defeating al-Shabaab and stabilizing Somalia's security situation.⁹

3. Abdi Ismail Samatar, "Defeating Al-Shabaab and Dismembering Somalia," Al Jazeera, July 1, 2014, <http://www.aljazeera.com/indepth/opinion/2014/06/defeating-al-shabab-dismemberin-201463019484226147.html>; Mark Townsend and Tracy McVeigh, "Somalia Promises West Oil Riches as Diplomats Vow to Defeat Al-Shabaab," The Guardian, February, 25, 2012, <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2012/feb/25/somalia-alshabaab-oil-west>; Karen Allen, "Obama Praises Ethiopia Over Fight Against Al-Shabaab," BBC News, July 27, 2015, <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-africa-33671340>; Hassan Sheik Mohamud, "How to Win the War Against Al-Shabaab," Al Jazeera, October 11, 2013, <http://www.aljazeera.com/indepth/opinion/2013/10/how-win-war-against-al-shabab-201310119652136824.html>.

4. Vanda Felbab-Brown, "Saving Somalia (Again)" Brookings, June 23, 2015, <http://www.brookings.edu/research/articles/2015/06/23-saving-somalia-again-felbabbrown>.

5. Al-Shabaab Lost 80% of their Territory, says AU Envoy," Strategic Thinking on East Africa, January 9, 2015, <http://www.strathink.net/somalia/al-shabaab-lost-80-of-their-territory-says-au-envoy/>; Greg Botelho, "U.S., Somali Commandos Nab Valuable Al-Shabaab Figures, Spokesman Says," CNN, March 10, 2016, <http://www.cnn.com/2016/03/09/africa/somalia-al-shabaab-fighters-killed/>; Robyn Kriel, "Somali Source: U.S. Attack Killed 2 High-Level Al-Shabaab Figures," CNN, March 10, 2016, <http://www.cnn.com/2016/03/09/politics/somalia-us-al-shabaab-leaders-killed/>; "Somalia: Shabaab Losing Grip of Backers, allAfrica," November 25, 2010, <http://allafrica.com/stories/201011260904.html>; Andrew Harding, "Somali Defector: Why I Left Al-Shabaab," BBC News, May 20, 2015, <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-africa-32791713>.

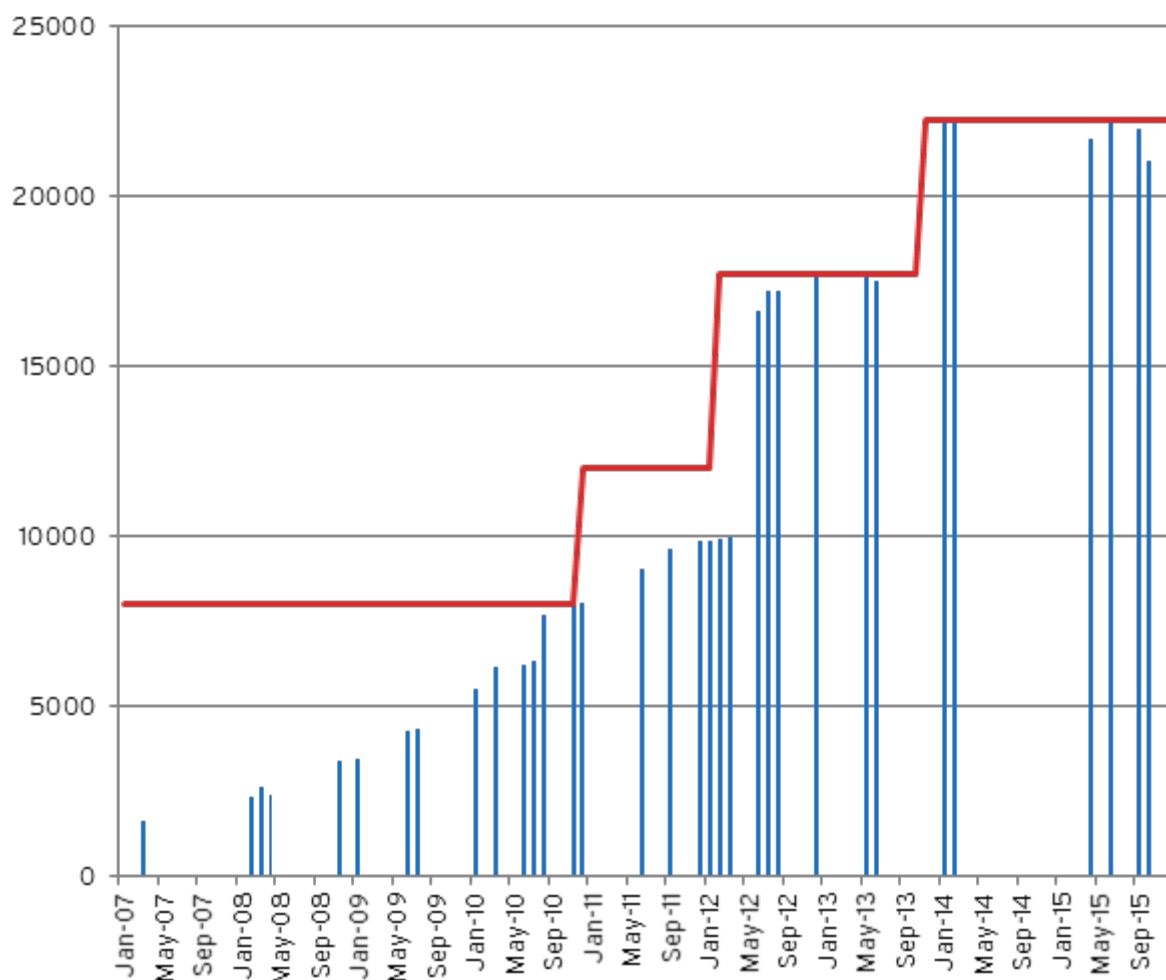
6. Isiaka A. Badmus, *The African Union's Role in Peacekeeping* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2015), Chapter 5.

7. Elsa Mebrahtu, "Africa: Ethiopia and AMISOM Made a Stable Somalia Possible," The Ethiopian Herald, February 4, 2016, <http://allafrica.com/stories/201602040934.html>.

8. "U.S. Support for Peacekeeping in Africa, The White House, August 6, 2014, <https://www.whitehouse.gov/the-press-office/2014/08/06/fact-sheet-us-support-peacekeeping-africa>; "Assistance to the African Union," NATO, June 20, 2016, http://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/topics_8191.htm.

9. Isiaka A. Badmus, *The African Union's Role in Peacekeeping* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2015), Chapter 5; "Uganda to Withdraw Troops from Somalia's AMISOM Force," BBC News, June 23, 2016, <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-africa-36606194>; Greg Jaffe, "White House Defends Somalia Strategy as Counterterrorism Model," Washington Post, April 3, 2015, https://www.washingtonpost.com/politics/white-house-officials-defend-somalia-strategy-as-counterterrorism-model/2015/04/03/f996e5c0-da1c-11e4-b3f2-607bd612aeac_story.html; "UK Commits to Help Somalia Improve Security and Prevent Famine," Gov.UK, May 7, 2013, <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/uk-commits-to-help-somalia-improve-security-and-prevent-famine>; Canada Strengthen Support for Security in Somalia, Global Affairs Canada, October 1, 2013, <http://www.international.gc.ca/media/aff/news-communiques/2013/10/01b.aspx?lang=eng>; Africa-led Peace Support Operations, The Africa-EU Partnership, <http://www.africa-eu-partnership.org/en/priority-areas/peace-and-security/achievements-and-milestones/african-led-peace-support>.

Figure 1. AMISOM Authorized and Deployed Strength, 2007-2015



Source: Walter Lotze and Paul D. Williams, “The Surge to Stabilize: Lessons for the UN from the AU’s Experience in Somalia,” International Peace Institute (May 2016).

The international community, however, has become increasingly concerned that the TCCs might lose their resolve for the fight against al-Shabaab and leave AMISOM before its mandate is accomplished (see Appendix A).¹⁰ This concern has been triggered by the recent resurgence and success of al-Shabaab attacks against African Union forces, a planned 20 percent reduction in European Union (EU) funding for the mission, and domestic political pressures within some TCCs to leave AMISOM.¹¹ This would be highly problematic since the Somali National Army (SNA)—the most likely candidate to take over after AMISOM ends its mission—probably remains years away from becoming a viable military force.¹²

10. Sundarsan Raghavan and Craig Whitlock, “Despite U.S. Airstrikes, a Somali Militia is Rising Again,” *Washington Post*, March 8, 2016.

11. “Shortages, Clan Rivalries Weaken Somalia’s New Army,” IRIN, May 28, 2014. <http://www.irinnews.org/report/100141/shortages-clan-rivalries-weaken-somalias-new-army>; Michael Oduor, “Funding Gaps Could Force to Kenya to Withdraw Troops from Somalia,” *Africanews*, May 20, 2016, <http://www.africanews.com/2016/05/22/funding-gaps-could-force-kenya-to-withdraw-troops-from-somalia/>; Jeremy Binnie, “EU Cuts AMISOM Funding,” *IHS Jane’s*, March 4, 2016, <http://www.janes.com/article/58523/eu-cuts-amisom-funding>.

12. Paul D. Williams and Abdirashi Hashi, *Exit Strategy Challenges for the AU Mission in Somalia*, Heritage Institute for Policy Studies, February 2016; Kevin Sieff, “Somalia’s Dysfunction Allows a Resurgence of Al-Shabaab,” *Washington Post*, April 11, 2016, <http://www.pressreader.com/usa/the-washington-post/20160411/281509340344921>; “Shortages, Clan Rivalries Weaken Somalia’s New Army,” IRIN, May 28, 2014. <http://www.irinnews.org/report/100141/shortages-clan-rivalries-weaken-somalias-new-army>.

What is the likelihood that one or more TCCs withdraw from AMISOM? How would AMISOM's operational effectiveness be impacted if a TCC left the mission? Would another country or countries be willing and able to fill the void left by a TCC's withdrawal? This paper attempts to provide answers to these questions to inform discussions on the commitment of AMISOM's troop contributing countries to the mission. It also seeks to provide some actions or policies that the international community could undertake to reduce the likelihood that a TCC prematurely withdraws from the mission.

SCHOLARLY LITERATURE ON AMISOM

An obvious place to turn for answers is the robust set of books, academic articles, and policy papers on AMISOM that scholars have written by since the mission's inception in 2007.¹³ This body of scholarship has focused on why a country joined AMISOM in the first place, ways to improve AMISOM's operational effectiveness, assessments of the mission's performance, lessons learned from the African Union's experience in Somalia, and, most recently, exit strategy challenges. These foci are appropriate given AMISOM is an imperfect organization that suffers from several leadership, logistical, and coordination challenges.¹⁴ However, a review of this literature indicates that scholars have yet to seriously consider the possibility that one or more TCCs will exit AMISOM before its mandate is accomplished; even the sudden withdrawal of Sierra Leonean troops in 2014 has not received much scholarly examination probably because leaving the mission in response to an Ebola outbreak in West Africa is viewed as an extreme case.¹⁵ A 2016 report is the first study that touches on the idea that any of the current TCCs might remove its troops from AMISOM in the near future.¹⁶

Various methodological approaches are available to generate additional insights on the TCCs resolve, such as case studies and interviews. However, the Delphi method of survey research probably would generate a more robust dataset. This is because it allows the researcher to take advantage of the AMISOM scholarly community's deep knowledge base by scientifically synthesizing expert opinion on the TCCs.¹⁷ Thus, the Delphi method creates reliable data that essentially confirms or disconfirms anecdotal evidence found in scholarly literature.¹⁸

THE DELPHI TECHNIQUE

The Delphi method of survey research is a longstanding and widely used forecasting technique for gathering data from experts on specific real-world issues for the purpose of goal setting, policy investigation, and/or predicting

13. "AMISOM: Brief History," <http://amisom-au.org/about-somalia/brief-history/>.

14. Jonathan Fisher, "Managing Donor Perceptions: Contextualizing Uganda's 2007 Intervention in Somalia," *Africa Affairs* 111 (2012): 404-423; Brian J. Hesse, "Why Deploy to Somalia? Understanding Six African Countries' Reasons for Sending Soldiers to One of the World's Most Failed States," *Journal of Middle East and North Africa* 6 (2015): 329-352; Nikolas Emmanuel, "African Peacekeepers in Africa: The Role of United States Assistance and Training," *African Security Review* 24.1 (2015): 23-28; Paul D. Williams, "Fighting for Peace in Somalia: AMISOM's Seven Strategic Challenges," *Journal of International Peacekeeping* 17 (2013): 222-247; Major Michael A. DeCicco, "Helping African Union Forces With Peacekeeping Operations in Somalia," *Army Sustainment* 1 (2014): 16-14; Paul D. Williams, "Enhancing U.S. Support for Peace Operations in Africa," Council on Foreign Relations Special Report, May 2015; Paul D. Williams, "After Westgate: Opportunities and Challenges in the War Against Al-Shabaab," *International Affairs* 9. (2014): 907-923; Walter Lotze and Paul D. Williams, "The Surge to Stabilize: Lessons for the UN from the AU's Experience in Somalia," International Peace Institute (May 2016); Isiaka A. Badmus, *The African Union's Role in Peacekeeping* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2015), Chapter 5; Noel Anderson, "Peacekeepers Fighting a Counterinsurgency Campaign: A Net Assessment of the African Union Mission in Somalia," *Studies in Conflict and Terrorism* 37 (2014): 936-958; Bronwyn E. Bruton and Paul D. Williams, *Counterinsurgency in Somalia: Lessons Learned from the African Union Mission in Somalia, 2007-2013* (MacDill Air Force Base, Florida: JSOU Press, 2014); Walter Lotze and Paul D. Williams, "The Surge to Stabilize: Lessons for the UN from the AU's Experience in Somalia," International Peace Institute (May 2016).

15. Peter Albrecht and Cathy Haenlein, "Sierra Leone's Post-Conflict Peacekeepers: Sudan, Somalia, and Ebola," *The RUSI Journal* 160.1 (2015): 26-36.

16. Paul D. Williams and Abdirashi Hashi, *Exit Strategy Challenges for the AU Mission in Somalia*, Heritage Institute for Policy Studies, February 2016.

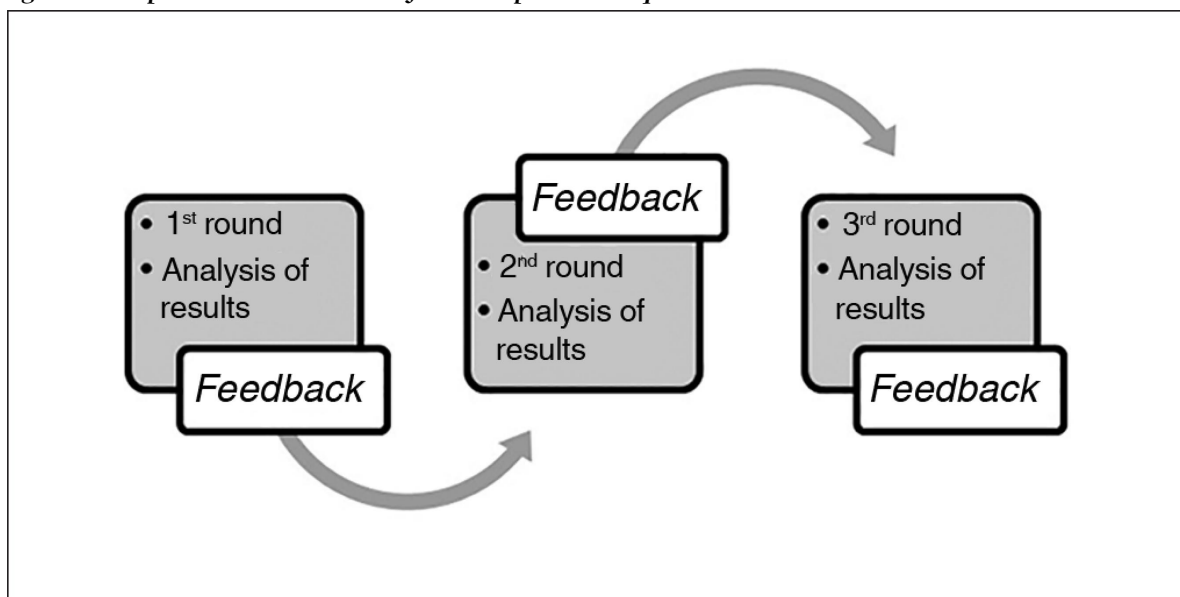
17. Gregory H. Skulmoski, Francis T. Hartman and Jennifer Krahn, "The Delphi Method for Graduate Research," *Journal of Information Technology Education* 6 (2007); Chia-Chien Hsu and Brian A. Sandford, "The Delphi Technique: Making Sense of Consensus," *Practical Assessment, Research & Evaluation* 12.10 (2007).

18. Ibid.

the occurrence of future events.¹⁹ The Delphi method attempts to address “what could/should be” rather than “what is,” which is the focus of common surveys.²⁰ The technique is particularly useful when there is incomplete knowledge about a problem or phenomenon, such as the one under examination in this paper.²¹

The Delphi method has maintained four key features since the RAND Corporation developed the technique in 1950s for a military research project.²² First, participants are anonymous from one another allowing them to freely express their opinion without undue social pressures. Second, the survey is conducted in multiple rounds or iterations—typically two or three—to provide participants opportunities to refine their views, which then allows the researcher to identify group consensus or lack thereof.²³ Relatedly, the third feature is that feedback is provided from round to round to inform participants of other participants’ perspectives and gives them the chance to clarify or change their views in response. Finally, statistical aggregation of group response allows for quantitative analysis and interpretation of data.²⁴

Figure 2. Representative scheme of the Delphi technique



Source: Pereira, Raphael Dias de Mello, & Alvim, Neide Aparecida Titonelli. (2015). Delphi technique in dialogue with nurses on acupuncture as a proposed nursing intervention. *Escola Anna Nery*, 19(1), 174-180.

Formulation of the Initial Questionnaire

The initial questionnaire serves as the survey instrument for the second round of data collection given the Delphi method’s iterative nature.²⁵ Typically, the initial questionnaire is open-ended so that collected information can be converted into a well-structured questionnaire for round two.²⁶ However, a modified Delphi process is acceptable

19. Ibid.

20. L.E. Miller, “Determining What Could/Should be: The Delphi technique and its application,” Paper presented at the 2006 annual meeting of the Mid-Western Educational Research Association, Columbus, Ohio.

21. Gregory H. Skulmoski, Francis T. Hartman and Jennifer Krahn, “The Delphi Method for Graduate Research,” *Journal of Information Technology Education* 6 (2007).

22. Chia-Chien Hsu and Brian A. Sandford, “The Delphi Technique: Making Sense of Consensus,” *Practical Assessment, Research & Evaluation* 12.10 (2007).

23. Ibid; D.C. Alexander, “A Delphi study on the trends or events that will influence the future of California charter schools,” *Digital Abstracts International* 63.10 (2004): 3629.

24. The Delphi method’s weaknesses are discussed in the concluding section of this paper.

25. Gregory H. Skulmoski, Francis T. Hartman and Jennifer Krahn, “The Delphi Method for Graduate Research,” *Journal of Information Technology Education* 6 (2007).

26. Ibid.

and commonly done if basic information concerning the target issue is available and useable.²⁷ In turn, this study's researcher utilized the anecdotal evidence found in scholarly literature on AMISOM to develop an initial set of survey questions. The questionnaire was then reviewed by Brookings scholars and two AMISOM experts for accuracy and breadth.²⁸ The research team agreed that looking no further than 18 months into the future would ensure the generation of valid estimative data given there is agreement within the literature that AMISOM will be unable to end its mission before at least 2018 because Somali security forces will remain ineffective.²⁹

The following questions were asked for each of the five TCCs:

1. What is the likelihood that Country X completely withdraws from AMISOM during the next 18 months?
2. Regardless of the likelihood that Country X completely withdraws from AMISOM, what level of impact would Country X's absence have on AMISOM's ability to maintain pressure against al-Shabaab and other armed opposition groups?
3. Regardless of the likelihood that Country X completely withdraws from AMISOM, would another country or other countries within or outside AMISOM be able and willing to provide troops that would fill the void created by Country X's absence from AMISOM?
4. If another country or other countries provided troops to fill the void created by Country X's withdrawal, how would this impact AMISOM's ability to maintain pressure against al-Shabaab and other armed opposition groups?
5. If another country or other countries provided troops to fill the void created by Country X's withdrawal, how would that affect the views of the Somali Government and other Troop Contributing Countries towards AMISOM?
6. Please provide any actions or policies that members of the international community could undertake to reduce the likelihood that Country X removes all of its troops from AMISOM during the next 18 months?

Selection of Panel Participants

Choosing appropriate panel participants is the most important step in the Delphi process because it directly relates to the quality of results generated.³⁰ This is often dictated by the disciplinary areas of expertise required by the specific issue under investigation. A consequence of this is that there is no exact criterion listed in Delphi literature concerning the selection of Delphi participants. However, the "solicitation of nominations of well-known and respected individuals from the members within target groups of experts [is] recommended."³¹

This study's research team identified an initial list of 38 non-governmental experts with similar levels of expertise on AMISOM, of which 14 agreed to be on the Delphi panel. Panelists included academics from Africa, Europe, and North America; fellows at research institutions in Africa and the US; and East Africa-based journalists. A larger panel size would have undoubtedly increased the robustness of the survey output. However, while there is no consensus in Delphi literature about what constitutes an optimal number of panelists, 10 to 15 participants is sufficient if the background of the Delphi panelists is homogenous.³²

27. Ibid.

28. The two AMISOM experts were not included on the survey panel to ensure there was no selection bias.

29. Kevin Sieff, "Somalia's Dysfunction Allows a Resurgence of Al-Shabaab," Washington Post, April 11, 2016, <http://www.pressreader.com/usa/the-washington-post/20160411/281509340344921>; "Shortages, Clan Rivalries Weaken Somalia's New Army," IRIN, May 28, 2014, <http://www.irinnews.org/report/100141/shortages-clan-rivalries-weaken-somalias-new-army>.

30. Gregory H. Skulmoski, Francis T. Hartman and Jennifer Krahn, "The Delphi Method for Graduate Research," *Journal of Information Technology Education* 6 (2007).

31. Ibid, 3-4.

32. Ibid; Delbecq, Van de Ven, and Gustafson, *Group Techniques for Program Planning* (Glenview, IL: Scott Foresman, and Co., 1975).

Number of Rounds

The number of rounds is variable and dependent upon the purpose of research.³³ If group consensus is desirable and the sample is heterogeneous, then three or more rounds may be required.³⁴ As noted earlier, Delphi surveys typically go two or three rounds given many panels have a homogenous panel makeup, which makes reaching consensus easier.³⁵ This study uses a two round Delphi survey given the homogenous nature of the panel and since researchers often see a fall in the response rate as the number of rounds increases.³⁶

Administration of the Questionnaire

Once the questionnaire was completed and panelists were selected, the research team distributed the survey to participants via email in late April 2016. A complete set of responses was received in mid-May 2016. After the research team collated and summarized the findings, panelists were given the opportunity to review the aggregated data and adjust their round one input in response to any critical on-the-ground developments as well as in reaction to the aggregated data from round one if these chose to do so. No panelists changed or updated their initial input. The second and final round of the survey process was completed in early June 2016.

SURVEY RESULTS: COUNTRY SPECIFIC DATA

Panelists reached consensus on only 20 percent of questions during the two round Delphi survey, suggesting uncertainty among scholars when estimating the likelihood and impact of a TCC withdrawing from AMISOM before 2018. However, most panelists believed that it is “unlikely” or “not at all likely” that most of the TCCs will leave AMISOM before 2018. The only outlier was Burundi where panelists were largely split between “unlikely,” “somewhat likely,” and “likely.” Most panelists thought that the premature withdrawal of any current TCC, minus Djibouti, would have “moderate” or “significant” impact on AMISOM operations against al-Shabaab and other armed opposition groups; a majority of panelists thought that Djibouti’s withdrawal would have a “limited” impact.

Panelists were skeptical that countries not currently providing troops to AMISOM would be willing and able fill the void that would be created by a departed TCC, highlighting the reluctance within the international community about committing troops to any peacekeeping mission in Somalia.³⁷ Separately, there were mixed views among panelists on how the Somali government and other TCCs would view AMISOM if another country or countries had to provide troops to fill the void; answers to this question appeared dependent upon panelists’ opinions on which country or countries would provide troops to pick up a departed TCC’s responsibilities.

Burundi

Panelists’ responses reflected uncertainty about the future of Burundi’s participation in AMISOM given the ongoing crisis in the central African country. Of the 14 panelists, 57 percent thought it was “unlikely” or “not at all likely” that Burundi would leave AMISOM before 2018, citing the financial, training, and diplomatic benefits Burundi receives from its participation as the overriding reasons. However, several of these same panelists also pointed out that a premature withdrawal could occur if Burundi’s security and governance situation at home continues to deteriorate to the point that Bujumbura needs to recall a substantial number of troops to restore order. Furthermore, they believed that the African Union might force Burundi to leave AMISOM if widespread genocide occurred as the domestic crisis escalated. The remaining 43 percent of panelists responded with “likely” or “somewhat likely” given they either assessed that Burundi’s domestic crisis was at or near the point of no return.

Panelists were also divided on the level of impact that Burundi’s withdrawal would have on AMISOM operations against al-Shabaab. Seventy-nine percent believed it would have “moderate” or “high” impact since Burundian troops account for approximately 25 percent of AMISOM’s total forces, the military experience the Burundian

33. Ibid.

34. Gregory H. Skulmoski, Francis T. Hartman and Jennifer Krahn, “The Delphi Method for Graduate Research,” *Journal of Information Technology Education* 6 (2007).

35. Ibid.

36. Ibid.

37. Isiaka A. Badmus, *The African Union’s Role in Peacekeeping* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2015), Chapter 5.

military has gained while maintaining troops in Somalia, and pessimism about whether another country or countries would be willing and able to fill the void created by a departed Burundi. The remaining 21 percent of panelists choose “limited” impact and were more optimistic that another TCC or outside country could fill the void, citing Ethiopia, Kenya, and Uganda as possible candidates. Finally, if another country and countries took over for Burundi, panelists were largely split down the middle about whether this would have a positive or negative impact on AMISOM’s operational effectiveness.

Djibouti

There was consensus among panelists regarding the likelihood that Djibouti completely withdraws from AMISOM before the end of 2017. Seventy-one percent of respondents thought it was “unlikely.” Additionally, seven percent believed it was “not at all likely.” The income that Djibouti receives from its participation in AMISOM is the primary factor for this cited by panelists followed by Djibouti’s political stability.

Consensus was not reached regarding the impact a Djiboutian withdrawal would have on AMISOM’s operational effectiveness. Sixty-four percent of panelists indicated that it would have “limited” impact given Burundi provides the least amount of troops to the mission—approximately 2,000—that panelists believed could be easily replaced. The other 36 percent of panelists’ selected “moderate” impact given Djiboutian troops have established good relations with local populations and power brokers.³⁸ Panelists were confident that the most likely candidates to replace Djiboutian soldiers would be Ethiopian troops as no panelists believed that another country or countries would be willing and able to fill the void. However, panelists were mixed about the impact. Ethiopian troops could increase the operational effectiveness in Djibouti’s area of responsibility given their extensive intelligence networks in Somalia, but it could also raise alarm among the local populations if Ethiopian troops became too aggressive given historical animosities and grievances.³⁹

Ethiopia

Most panelists thought it was “unlikely” or “not at all likely” that Ethiopia would withdraw troops from AMISOM before 2018; 50 percent selected the former and 43 percent selected the latter. This result derives from Ethiopia’s geopolitical and military interests in Somalia. Addis Ababa views itself as a regional power that wants to continue exercising influence over certain domestic Somali actors in the western part of the country, which would be made more difficult if it withdrew its forces.⁴⁰ Moreover, Ethiopia desires to exert greater influence over the Somali government.⁴¹ Panelists also noted that Ethiopia is the only TCC that would probably maintain a substantial troop presence in Somalia if withdrew from AMISOM given its interests there.

All but one panelist believed that an Ethiopian withdrawal would have a significant impact on AMISOM’s ability to maintain pressure on al-Shabaab and other armed opposition groups. Panels cited Ethiopian forces’ combat skills and experiences in Somalia as well as Ethiopia’s strong intelligence networks as the primary reasons for this. It is worth noting, however, that one benefit that might occur if Ethiopia withdrew from AMISOM and did not keep at least some troops in Somalia is it would become harder for al-Shabaab to play the anti-Ethiopia media narrative card.⁴² Finally, 64 percent of panelists thought that no other actor within or outside AMISOM would be willing and able replace Ethiopia’s effectiveness as a fighting force.

Kenya

Seventy-five percent of panelists thought it was “unlikely” or “not at all likely” that Kenya would leave AMISOM for the foreseeable future due to Nairobi’s geopolitical and economic interests in Somalia. Some panelists also

38. Uganda to Withdraw Troops from Somalia’s AMISOM Force,” BBC News, June 23, 2016, <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-africa-36606194>.

39. Najib Gardad, “Somalia: How Ethiopian Intelligence Infiltrated and Took Control of Al-Shabaab,” September 28, 2015, <http://www.raxanreeb.com/2015/09/how-ethiopian-intelligence-infiltrated-and-took-control-of-alshabaab-by-najib-gardad%E2%80%8B/>; “Somalis Balk at Plans for Ethiopian Troops,” Al Jazeera, February 3, 2014, <http://www.aljazeera.com/indepth/features/2014/02/201422122028512719.html>.

40. Abukar Aman, “Ethiopia and U.S. Strategic Interest on a Collision Course,” Tesfa News, January 16, 2016, <http://www.tesfanews.net/ethiopia-usa-somalia-interest-on-collision-course/>.

41. Ibid.

42. “Somalis Balk at Plans for Ethiopian Troops,” Al Jazeera.

believed that al-Shabaab's increasing operational capacities inside Kenya makes it harder for Kenya to withdraw its forces because Kenya needs to maintain its buffer zone of Jubaland to protect itself from increased al-Shabaab attacks at home.⁴³ Panelists thought that something to watch, however, is if public opinion in favor of Kenya Defense Forces remains in Somalia continues to decline if al-Shabaab inside attacks inside Kenya's

Figure 3. Political map of Somalia



Source: Political Map of Somalia <http://www.nationsonline.org/onenworld/map/somalia-political-map.htm>

43. Makua Mutua, "El-Adde Could Prove to be Kenya's Defining Moment," Standard Digital, January 31, 2016, <http://www.standardmedia.co.ke/article/2000189964/el-adde-could-prove-to-be-kenya-s-defining-moment>.

borders. Twenty-one percent of panelists thought that it was “extremely likely” or “somewhat likely” that Kenya would leave AMISOM in the near future if this scenario occurred.

Strong consensus was reached among panelists regarding the question on the level of impact a Kenyan withdrawal would have on AMISOM’s operational effectiveness. Seventy-nine percent believed it would have a “significant” impact because these panelists assessed that the removal of Kenyan forces from southern Somalia—where they primarily operate—would cause urban and economic centers to descend into infighting and chaos between competing local factions and groups, including al-Shabaab. Uncertainty among the panelists about whether another country or countries could replace Kenya in AMISOM amplifies this; panelists were nearly split three ways on this question. However, Ethiopian and Ugandan troops were cited as possibilities for filling the gap.⁴⁴

Uganda

The Ugandan government has made public threats in recent months to pull its troops out of Somalia by the end of 2017.⁴⁵ However, panelists were nearly unanimous in their belief that this will not happen with 93 percent selecting “unlikely” and seven percent selecting “not at all likely.” Panelists argued that the international community should be prepared to deal with such threats from Kampala to withdraw troops from AMISOM to gain concessions and deflect criticism of its domestic politics and policies.⁴⁶ Panelists argued that Ugandan President Museveni places very high value on the income, prestige, and materiel support that participation in AMISOM, which is reinforced by amount of time and large number of troops Uganda has invested in AMISOM over the years; 93 percent believe that a withdrawal of Ugandan troops would have “moderate” or “high” impact given Ugandan is longest serving TCCs and provides the most troops to the mission.⁴⁷

Panelists were largely pessimistic that another country or countries could fill the void that would be created if Uganda prematurely withdrew from AMISOM. Almost 50 percent thought that no country would be able to provide a matching troop contribution level. Ethiopia and Kenya were cited as the only two possible replacements, but they probably would be unwilling to do so because of Uganda’s vast responsibilities within AMISOM. In addition, 36 percent of panelists thought that no country or countries would be willing and able to ever fill the vacuum that would be created by a Ugandan withdrawal.

SURVEY RESULTS: INTERNATIONAL POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

Panelists provided a plethora of policy recommendations for members of the international community—especially those in the West—to consider to reduce the likelihood and impact of one or more TCCs withdrawing its troops from AMISOM before 2018 and beyond. Several recommendations were country specific such as solving the crisis in Burundi and reducing Western diplomatic pressure on Uganda. However, there were three policy recommendations that most panelists cited and whose applicability are not TCC dependent.

Continue and Potentially Increase Funding

Not surprisingly, the most regularly cited policy recommendation was for members of the international community, especially the EU, to stop slashing funding for the TCCs and potentially strengthen the financial benefits of providing troops to AMISOM. The income from donors that the TCCs receive, minus Ethiopia, is at the top or near the top of the reasons why they have sent soldiers to Somalia. Moreover, “the single most important factor [in] peace operations in Africa is how they are financed, as that determines the size, scope, and duration of the missions, and therefore has a direct bearing on their impact.”⁴⁸ Panelists also mentioned increasing training and materiel support as other motivating factors for maintaining the TCCs resolve, but money was more strongly emphasized.

44. “Somalia: Fresh Kenyan Forces Enter Somalia,” allAfrica, March 10, 2016, <http://allafrica.com/stories/201603101130.html>.

45. Uganda to Withdraw Troops from Somalia’s AMISOM Force,” BBC News, June 23, 2016, <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-africa-36606194>.

46. Chris Suckling and Jordan Anderson, “Ugandan Withdrawal From AMISOM Unlikely But Capability of Al-Shabaab Improving Amid Poor Cooperation Between Ethiopia and Kenya,” IHS Jane’s, May 19, 2016, <http://www.janes.com/article/60484/ugandan-withdrawal-from-amisom-unlikely-but-capability-of-al-shabaab-improving-amid-poor-co-operation-between-ethiopia-and-kenya>.

47. Brian J. Hesse, “Why Deploy to Somalia? Understanding Six African Countries’ Reasons for Sending Soldiers to One of the World’s Most Failed States,” *Journal of Middle East and North Africa* 6 (2015): 329-352.

48. Cedric de Coning, “The Evolution of Peace Operations in Africa: Trajectories and Trends,” *Journal of International Peacekeeping* 14 (2010): 6-26.

Encourage Political Progress in Somalia

The second policy recommendation cited most often by panelists was for the international community to place more attention on improving Somali governance. Panelists conceded this is by no means an easy task, but doing so probably would eventually further reduce public support for al-Shabaab because it would provide the Somali people—which makes up the largest contingent of al-Shabaab fighting force and leadership—with a viable alternative to supporting the group.⁴⁹ A timeframe for AMISOM's exit would then become clearer thereby increasing the likelihood that the TCCs would continue providing troops until the mission's mandate is accomplished, according to panelists.

Build Credible Somali Security Sector

The third major policy recommendation is related to the previous one. Some panelists argued that a credible Somali security sector is the ultimate response to fighting terrorism and securing Somalia. They noted that the Somalia National Army and other military and security organizations are years away from being capable of taking over for any of the TCCs. According to two recent studies, this is highly problematic there can be no successful AMISOM exit without building, legitimate, and inclusive national security forces.⁵⁰ Furthermore, scholars have argued that it is not ideal that the SNA undergo major training programs while simultaneously trying to conduct joint operations with AMISOM against al-Shabaab.⁵¹

CONCLUSIONS

This paper has attempted to add to the scholarly literature on AMISOM by determining whether one or more troop contributing countries will withdraw from the mission before 2018. This was achieved through employment of the Delphi method of survey research—a technique that synthesizes expert opinion on critical policy issues—which generated data on several questions about the commitment of Burundi, Djibouti, Ethiopia, Kenya, and Uganda to AMISOM. The results of the Delphi survey provide a reliable set of data that is consistent with the anecdotal evidence already found in the literature.⁵²

Many researchers argue, however, that it is difficult to generalize the results of a single Delphi survey to a wider population or experts primarily due to the sample size.⁵³ In turn, most researchers recommend further study to refine and verify Delphi results, to investigate related sets of research questions, and to extend the results to similar or larger samples. This study should be no exception. In-depth case study analysis that combines the Delphi results, interview data, and other scholarly research on AMISOM would create more internally and externally valid data. In particular, additional studies that collect data from country experts vice AMISOM generalists would provide deeper insight into domestic factors that might drive, or are driving, pressure for a TCC to withdraw from the mission.

49. NCTC, "Al-Shabaab Profile," 2016, https://www.nctc.gov/site/groups/al_shabaab.html.

50. Paul D. Williams and Abdirashi Hashi, *Exit Strategy Challenges for the AU Mission in Somalia*, Heritage Institute for Policy Studies, February 2016; Walter Lotze and Paul D. Williams, "The Surge to Stabilize: Lessons for the UN from the AU's Experience in Somalia," International Peace Institute (May 2016).

51. Paul D. Williams, "After Westgate: Opportunities and Challenges in the War Against Al-Shabaab," *International Affairs* 9. (2014): 907-923.

52. "AMISOM: Brief History," <http://amisom-au.org/about-somalia/brief-history/>; Jonathan Fisher, "Managing Donor Perceptions: Contextualizing Uganda's 2007 Intervention in Somalia," *Africa Affairs* 111 (2012): 404-423; Brian J. Hesse, "Why Deploy to Somalia? Understanding Six African Countries' Reasons for Sending Soldiers to One of the World's Most Failed States," *Journal of Middle East and North Africa* 6 (2015): 329-352; Nikolas Emmanuel, "African Peacekeepers in Africa: The Role of United States Assistance and Training," *African Security Review* 24.1 (2015): 23-28; Paul D. Williams, "Fighting for Peace in Somalia: AMISOM's Seven Strategic Challenges," *Journal of International Peacekeeping* 17 (2013): 222-247; Major Michael A. DeCicco, "Helping African Union Forces With Peacekeeping Operations in Somalia," *Army Sustainment* 1 (2014): 16-14; Paul D. Williams, "Enhancing U.S. Support for Peace Operations in Africa," Council on Foreign Relations Special Report, May 2015; Paul D. Williams, "After Westgate: Opportunities and Challenges in the War Against Al-Shabaab," *International Affairs* 9. (2014): 907-923; Walter Lotze and Paul D. Williams, "The Surge to Stabilize: Lessons for the UN from the AU's Experience in Somalia," International Peace Institute (May 2016); Isiaka A. Badmus, *The African Union's Role in Peacekeeping* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2015), Chapter 5.

53. Gregory H. Skulmoski, Francis T. Hartman and Jennifer Krahn, "The Delphi Method for Graduate Research," *Journal of Information Technology Education* 6 (2007); Chia-Chien Hsu and Brian A. Sandford, "The Delphi Technique: Making Sense of Consensus," *Practical Assessment, Research & Evaluation* 12.10 (2007).

In addition, developing risk indicators within the wider international peacekeeping literature would provide a theoretical framework for future analyses. International peacekeeping scholars have done a nice job of examining the reasons for intervening or not intervening in a conflict, but, similar to the literature on AMISOM, have not spent much time examining why a country might leave a peacekeeping mission early.⁵⁴ Such a framework would also be timely given more and more countries around the world seem to be getting involved in peacekeeping operations in Africa, the Middle East, and elsewhere.⁵⁵

54. Aruto C. Sotomayor Velazquez, "Why Some States Participate in UN Peace Missions While Other Do Not," *Security Studies* 19 (2010): 160-195; Peacekeeping, Regime Security, and 'African Solutions to African Problems': Exploring Motivations for Rwanda's Involvement in Darfur," *Third World Quarterly* 31.5 (2010): 739-754; Xenia Avezov, "Why Contribute? Understanding Asian Motivations for Troop Contribution to Peace Operations," *Journal of International Peacekeeping* 18 (2014): 256-280; Chin-Hao Huang, "From Strategic Adjustment to Normative Learning? Understanding China's Peacekeeping Efforts in Africa," *Journal of International Peacekeeping* 17 (2013): 248-271.

55. Source: UN Current Peacekeeping Operations, <http://www.un.org/en/peacekeeping/operations/current.shtml>.

Appendix A: Current AMISOM Mandate¹

- Take all necessary measures, as appropriate, and in coordination with the Somalia National Defense and Public Safety Institutions, to reduce the threat posed by al-Shabaab and other armed opposition groups,
- Assist in consolidating and expanding the control of the FGS over its national territory,
- Assist the FGS in establishing conditions for effective and legitimate governance across Somalia, through support, as appropriate, in the areas of security, including the protection of Somali institutions and key infrastructure, governance, rule of law and delivery of basic services,
- Provide, within its capabilities and as appropriate, technical and other support for the enhancement of the capacity of the Somalia State institutions, particularly the National Defense, Public Safety and Public Service Institutions,
- Support the FGS in establishing the required institutions and conducive conditions for the conduct of free, fair and transparent elections by 2016, in accordance with the Provisional Constitution,
- Liaise with humanitarian actors and facilitate, as may be required and within its capabilities, humanitarian assistance in Somalia, as well as the resettlement of internally displaced persons and the return of refugees,
- Facilitate coordinated support by relevant AU institutions and structures towards the stabilization and reconstruction of Somalia, and
- Provide protection to AU and UN personnel, installations and equipment, including the right of self-defense.

1. Source: UN Security Council Resolution 2232.

Appendix B: Delphi Survey Round One Questionnaire

[21csi_201610_amisom_appendix_b.pdf](#)

Appendix C: Delphi Survey Round One Results

[21csi_201610_amisom_appendix_c.pdf](#)

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