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PARTICIPANTS:

MICHAEL O'HANLON, Moderator
Senior Fellow and Director of Research, Foreign Policy
The Brookings Institution

ADAM DAY,
Director of Programmes,
Centre for Policy Research, United Nations University

VANDA FELBAB-BROWN, Senior Fellow
Foreign Policy
The Brookings Institution

PAYTON KNOPF, Senior Advisor
United States Institute of Peace

ALLAN NGARI, Senior Researcher
Complex Threats in Africa Programme
Institute for Security Studies

ZACH VERTIN, Nonresident Fellow, Foreign Policy
The Brookings Institution

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P R O C E E D I N G S

MR. O'HANLON: Good afternoon everyone, or good day, wherever you may be because one of our panelists is in South Africa and many of you may be elsewhere as well. And welcome to this Brookings event on the Horn of Africa. I'm Michael O'Hanlon with the foreign policy program and my colleague and co-director of the Africa Security Initiative, Vanda Felbab-Brown and I are delighted to welcome you and our co-panelists to this discussion today.

We will proceed as follows. I'll say a few words of introduction about the subject at hand and then each of the distinguished panelists. Then we're going to work through the group three times before coming to your questions. First, we'll try to get some basic facts and figures on the table about the Horn. Not only Somalia and Ethiopia, but also the other players in the region who have a particular interest in the challenges and the opportunities that exist in this part of the world. And after that, we will then go to policy recommendations which may be a little bit different in focus from one person to the next because some people will be looking more at Somalia, some more in Ethiopia, some more at Saudi Arabia, or the UAE or Qatar. More at the general problem of armed groups and militias. Obviously, all of us with an interest in trying to explore the prospects for enhanced peace and stability and good public health since we're talking about this in a time of COVID-19 for this important part of the world where as many of you know, the United States, of course, has struggled in foreign-policy going back to the 1990s. The region has struggled, but also shown remarkable promise especially in Ethiopia, Africa's second most populous country, but certainly a country that faces a number of severe challenges today as well. So, to proceed, again, Vanda, who can be described as nothing less than a force of nature and many things can be said about Vanda's work, but I will content myself today to say that that she is one of the few people I know who's actually done field research and Somalia and interviewed warlords among other people to understand their way of looking at the situation in that troubled country that continues to have one of the largest peace operations in the world, and yet, of course, to be very far from peace, or any semblance of normalcy in its governance.

We will also hear from Payton Knopf, who is a retired U.S. diplomat and who has worked on this part of the world including Sudan as we want to generalize our focus and scope a little wider, and also the broader Middle East. Now at the U.S. Institute of Peace and continues to work on this set of questions

including very importantly Ethiopia.

We also have Allan Ngari from South Africa today at The Institute for Security Studies there, a native Kenyan. Also has worked extensively in other parts of the continent, including with a particular interest in the court system in a number of countries. One of the things that jumped out at me from his distinguished writings is how he has focused importantly on the rule of law and the importance of justice across the continent, which, of course, is often overlooked in a lot of emphasis on military conflict in the initial efforts at getting to a ceasefire or a peace deal, but Allan has also looked at how do you make those peace deals more stable and more durable. Adam Day has been with the United Nations, now, U.N. University, before that, a number of field operations in U.N. peacekeeping and with a distinguished background everywhere from the DRC to the parts of the continent that we are talking about today and with an interest on various kinds of militias, sub-state actors. And then finally, Zach Vertin, who also has U.S. Government experience working in this broader region in his case as well, especially with Sudan, but who has researched the general area, worked at the International Crisis Group, one of the best organizations for focused research on conflicts around the world and also, not a visiting lecturer at Princeton University. And he will explore some of the broader realities and players in the broader Red Sea Horn of Africa and Arabian Peninsula area.

So, it's a remarkable panel. Again, we look forward to your questions. We've already got a few and we'll get to those in about 45 minutes. If you want to send an email to events@brookings.edu. Again, eventsa@brookings.edu, we will be able to perhaps we've your questions then later on in the discussion.

So without further ado, let me welcome everyone and turn the floor please first, over to Vanda.

MS. FELBAB-BROWN: Good afternoon, Mike, and thank you very much everyone for joining the conversation today. It's great to be with many friends and great experts on the panel today to discuss the Horn Region of significant importance for the United States and the region that every U.S. Administration, including the next one, you'll need to grapple this about how it wants to change or a continue its policies in the country.

I will limit my remarks in the opening two minutes by focusing on Somalia, one of the principal centers of U.S. Foreign Policy, much of which is centered on the issues of terrorism and Al-Shabaab. A

prominent Somalia expert can manghouse [phonetic 0:05:37] once grapes that Afghanistan has the moniker of being the graveyard of empires. Somalia should be considered the graveyard of international state building. And indeed, many of the issues of state building are still challenging and oftentimes where there seems to be one step forward, two steps back takes place, then three steps forward, perhaps one step back.

2019 was a -- and 2020 have been challenging years in Somalia. The battlefield has overall worsened. The momentum that AMISOM, the international peacekeeping force ahead had essentially stalled and evaporated by 2015, 2016 and since then the battlefield is expressed in a stalemate and frequently favoring Al-Shabaab. Al-Shabaab is really the one group that's only taking offensive operations, neither the Amistad forces, nor Somali national forces engaged in offensive operations and are mostly locked up in jettison conditions. Both forces are rely extensively on militias, a broad and problematic endeavor that Adam and I have been engaged in doing research, but the research can define both on Brookings and U.N. website. One of the report is called, “The Problem with Somalia's Militias is That Almost Everyone Wants Them.”

So, the situation is steadily worsening and often is at the discretion of Shabaab, that controls major access roads frequently attacks AMISOM. While AMISOM was asked -- was originally planned to leave transition out of Somalia, that is not in the making as Somali forces are not able to control the situation, let alone improve it. But the situation has also worsened in the political domain in Somalia over the past year with a lot of contestation between the Central State of -- centered in Mogadishu and regions significantly worsening and worsening to the stage that we have, in fact, seen fighting between the forces of the national of National Federal Forces and President Farmajo with forces of the president of Jubaland State, President Ahmed Madobe, former Al-Shabaab high-level commander, then defector and the principal powerbroker in the south. This fighting that took place in the spring, displaced more than 50,000 people and it's critically fraud with many problems could easily pull the country back into a civil war that goes beyond the lines of grand militias and that goes beyond the lines of Al-Shabaab. It's all the more significant since it also involves members of AMISOM forces with Kenyan forces, essentially supporting Ahmed Madobe and Ethiopian forces supporting the federal national forces and both despite being members of AMISOM coming to crosshairs being at the stage of essentially on the cusp of shooting at

each other, which would have vast repercussions for both AMISOM operation and the international endeavor.

We are now heading into elections that were supposed to take place this year and the hope was that finally for the first time since 1969 they would be one man, one vote elections. That is not -- that will not take place. Once again, so-called electors when elders will appoint electors will then go vote the president. Those elections are an enormous source of corruption, fraud, possibilities on my tensions and take place in the context of this enormously fructuous relationship between the Central State and the federal member states of Somalia.

And my final point is that all of this is taking place in the context of highly intensified regional rivalries in the Horn of Africa and particular in Somalia. Where a country such as the United Arab Emirates and Saudi Arabia and locking horns with Qatar. Each grouping sponsoring its own militias. Some groupings like UAE sponsoring and developing very gross relations with member states, sub-federal member states in Somalia, at least such as Qatar and Ethiopia. Now, very closely aligned with the central government and President Farmajo, all of which then creates a very difficult, highly combustible, domestic internal space that's not conducive to either resolving the major state building issues that Somalia still has to grapple with, nor effectively countering Al-Shabaab.

Over to Payton and you, Mike.

MR. O'HANLON: Vanda, thank you. I'm just going to ask a quick additional question even though we're trying to keep this to two minutes and you did a very nice job. Thank you for doing so, but just get more information on the table, how would you rate the status of human welfare and well-being in Somalia today compared to previous periods? Obviously, it's not good. The country is still as you say, largely ungoverned, or at least the government's weak and there's ongoing violence. But in terms of violence and in terms of the economy and food security, how are things roughly speaking, compared with a decade or two ago?

MS. FELBAB-BROWN: Well, Somalia is still the poorest country in the world. It's a country that has enormously low human development index and very high corruption. It is governed, it's just not governed by the Central State in many places. Shabab extends a lot of governance and it's very, oftentimes, very effective in delivering justice that's swift, that seen as not corrupt, so much so that police

officers from Mogadishu will travel to Al-Shabaab courts to resolve disputes among them. But at the same time, it's justice that's obviously not cognizant of human rights issues. Shabaab also tends to be very adroit and inserting itself into clan rivalries and really being the one entity in Somalia that can operate at the point of (inaudible) basis and that can ease conflict, at the same time Shabaab also inserts itself into local conflict.

Famine is always grossly to be watched in Somalia. We have had recent years of both immense drought and immense rain all of which has been enormously destructive to crops. And when that happens, Shabaab, often significantly increases taxation and pushes people further into poverty. Shabaab incidentally, taxes the vast majority of actors in Somalia including AMISOM outpost and militia forward operating basis. We are talking about Somalia in the context of COVID. Many of us very frightened that COVID could just wipe through Somalia. The healthcare system is perhaps the most destroyed in the world and you have very large segments of population of people. Millions of people who are internally displaced and/or who are in very crowded often, not well-maintained camps for internally displaced people. So the chance of spread was massive. The official numbers are of some 3,500, 600 cases is the last I saw and only a hundred deaths or so. I am not holding my breath that is no testing systemically. My expectation is that the situation is much worse, but nonetheless, it's not as terrible. So far it hasn't been as terrible as it could be and we just have to both hope and do what we can support for the healthcare system in terms of aid, humanitarian aid to prevent a massive outbreak.

Now, it's a very young population and perhaps that's one reason why the effects have been as devastating as they could be.

MR. O'HANLON: Thank you very much. Payton, over to you. Thank you for joining us.

MR. Knopf: Thank you for having me, Mike, and thanks to Brookings and to Vanda was the driving force behind this event. As you suggested, I'll be very brief and let me just make sure the four observations, Mike, if I may, on the situation in Ethiopia.

The first, as I'm sure everyone who's took the time to tune into this event is that we've seen a really fundamental shift in the security and political environment in Ethiopia in the last six months. The most fundamental shift really since the prime minister came to power in 2018 and that's involved both an escalation of violence, a closing of a very substantial closing of political space and a number of other

issues that really have called into question the reform agenda. And I think it's fair to say that and there's more or less broad acknowledgement, I think across the Ethiopian political spectrum, that the transition as originally envisioned when Prime Minister Abiy came to power two plus years ago, is really dead. And so the question then is, what next?

And that brings me to the second observation which is that there's somewhat of an excess of political imagination about Ethiopia's future and about the trajectory of the transition. And that may not sound like a negative thing actually. And then, of course, political imagination can be a good thing to the extent that it opens up space for debate and creates a context for discussion on revitalized contract between state and society and, of course, one of the things that animated at the transition from the outset was a widespread aspiration for a different governing dispensation. The challenge, I think, Mike is that when political imagination is unmoored from, or unanchored and a set of foundational principles or norms or shared national identity, it can really open up a Pandora's box and potentially threaten the integrity of the state itself. And I think we're seeing a number of warning signs in that regard, but that I hope we have the time to get into as we go -- proceed through this discussion.

The third thing I would say is that the sheer number of sort of international accolades that accompany Abiy's rise to power have not really kept pace with his domestic legitimacy. Even if there are, I think, going to be some questions raised abroad about the state of affairs in the country. Abiy's also increasingly relied on securitized responses in the last number of months and while it's important to recognize that there's been a measure of support for some of these responses, particularly when you saw an eruption of violence this summer following the assassination of a very high-profile and popular and singer and widespread concerns about chaos and disorder, it's equally important to recognize that in a long-term rule of law is a two-way street, that the government in the public are equally obliged to respect it in order for stability to prevail.

And so, I think the question that that brings us to, this dissonance between sort of domestic legitimacy and international legitimacy is the extent to which that continues to diverge, it erode the leverage of the United States and its Western allies certainly, to contribute and support to de-escalation of tensions in Ethiopia. And that leaves room for other actors, both regionally and the immediate region and the sort of near abroad, if you want to call it that. Since I know Zach will talk about it at some length and

has already alluded to. As well as folks further afield, Russia, China, et cetera to influence events.

And the last point I would make is that I think when you look over the last two-and-a-half years or so since Abiy became to power, US policy towards Ethiopia has really suffered from a combination of neglect and more recently vindictiveness as opposed to the development of an agenda, or framework for U.S.-Ethiopia relations that could keep the reform agenda, or at least contribute to keeping the reform agenda on track.

On the one hand, there's been an Uber personalization and indeed somewhat of an adulation of Abiy. But adulation isn't really a policy, as I think everyone on this panel can appreciate. And on the other hand, in the two years since Abiy came to power in the most significant political transition in Ethiopia since the end of the Cold War, there's really been no significant mobilization of new international political or economic resources, rather to support that transition. No donors conference, no contact group to harness and coordinate the collective energy of the international community, no concerted international mobilization of support, no clear strategy to support democratization. And as the political and security environment has changed dramatically over the last 6 months as I've just outlined, it seems that Abiy has in fact had more op-eds in international news outlets, than he's had conversations with any of his Western counterparts.

And now, finally, and I'll conclude with this, what you've seen actually is a suspension of U.S. assistance or at least some U.S. assistance to Ethiopia out of a frustration with Ethiopia's policy towards the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam and the relationship with Sudan and Egypt that I'm sure Zach will touch on. But that suspension hasn't come with a clear articulation of what it's meant to achieve. Why it advances U.S. interests or even any reference to what is, in fact, the far more important question which is namely, the state of Ethiopian transition itself. So, I'll stop there and I know that we'll have time to discuss further sort of some policy responses to this and what a pathway forward could look like.

MR. O'HANLON: Payton, that's great and very tight and concise, but I am going to take the prerogative of asking you one question too, especially because we're getting sort of the basic parameters of these two key countries on the table with you and Vanda and your presentations. And this is a very simple question, but will you put all the pieces together in the Abiy period, going from winning a Nobel Peace Prize and then at war with Eritrea to now having these terrible challenges from within or at least

very frightening, how would you rate your overall level of hopefulness? I'm just trying to give the general listener a sense as to whether we're well on the path towards everything falling apart, or if you're just seeing trends in the wrong direction that with the right kinds of intervention can still sort of stabilize the situation and allow Ethiopia, which really has been an Africa success story, even longer than two years, at least by economic metrics to get back on that positive trajectory. So, what's your level of anxiety?

MR. KNOPF: I mean, candidly, I think my level of anxiety is fairly high partly because I think there's an under-appreciation of the risks internationally and certainly in Washington. And I think that has led to, or contributed at least to some of the challenges that I outlined before which is sort of a lack of a coherent Western response and I don't mean to anyway imply that the United States or any Western government can single-handedly you force this into success. But I do think that the magnitude of the opportunity that the transition has presented over the last number of years and the magnitude of the risk has been woefully underappreciated and underestimated. And just to put that in context, Mike, I think Tigray which is actually one of the sort of smaller populations in Ethiopia, smaller states even though at Tigrayan political party, the main political party there has long punched above its weight in Ethiopian politics. There is about the same number of people in Tigray as there are in all of Libya, right, so there was three times the number of Oromo as there are in pre-war Syria. So, we're talking about a state, very complex ethic and political identify of enormous size that is as you said it has been at least an anchor of instability, of stability rather in the Horn of Africa for a number of years. Sheriff's border seven other states including Somalia, many of whom like Sudan, like Somalia are very volatile, and so the risks are really high here and I think it demands a much more concerted international focus when I think it's fair to say we're entering an inflection point right and it could easily go either way.

MR. O'HANLON: Thank you very much. Allan, thank you for joining us from South Africa. Great to have you. The floor is your, my friend.

MR. NGARI: Thank you, Michael and thanks to Brookings, a vendor for this invitation. It's a pleasure to be here. So, very quickly, in terms of insecurity in Kenya, the northeastern part of it continues and has always been the bearer of the brand of conflict in the country. And yes, there are other regions such as the coastal regions, the urban areas in the Rift Valley in Nairobi that experience violence and insecurity. But it's the north that's mostly affected and that is of great concern to us. And these conflicts

have multiple causes including a spillover from Somalia, spill over from Ethiopia, we just heard from Vanda and Poland and Payton in that. And it's also conflict that's revolving around competition for natural resources especially in the context of climate change and desertification, deforestation, youth and employment as well is a key issue. But Kenya's military intervention in Somalia has also lead to an insecurity in the northeast which mostly presented talkers' reprisal from violent extremist groups and notably here, Al-Shabaab.

As the most developed city, in the northeastern region is Garissa. It's an easy target for Shabaab because of its close proximity to the poorest Kenya-Somali border and Tukesmya as well so we see the trade in contraband goods, particularly sugar, charcoal, small arms. This has flourished because the environment of insecurity has made this very possible.

Conflicts are also localized between ethnic groups and clans. And this remains largely unaddressed. You can go as far back as 1963 when the country got independence and some of those residual issues continue. They are not unaddressed. Resettlement of internally displaced persons falling from difficult past election-related violence has also been a source of conflict. And so has the growing numbers of refugees in the Dadaab Camp in Garissa which has now close to over 650,000 refugees. So, I'm the region itself has historically been marginalized. Locked out of state resources, but with a devolved government system following the 2010 Constitution of Kenya, counties in the northeast now have access to resources that they never did before and they have control of natural resources and they can exploit this, but this is also led to other vices, arguably, the most notorious of them being as, you know, just mismanagement and corruption that have equally devolved to them as the government structures have. But it's an intersection between conflict security and development that best describes how violence, conflict in the northeast is related to low levels of development. There's an absence of development generally and this allows for informal shadow financial and security systems to thrive humanitarian organizations themselves and struggle to really work through such difficult terrain of insecurity. And finally with the COVID-19 pandemic and the closure of international borders, this has also had an impact in the situation in North East Kenya, although we're yet to fully understand that the ramifications are, but what has happened is there's a loss of revenue certainly to the government, but also, the communities that are around the border regions have suffered from these restrictions, just beyond benefiting from the

illicit economy that's going on there. This certainly will have a longer standing impact on the already impoverished border communities that have benefited from the lucrative trade in the northeast part of the country. Back to you, Michael.

MR. O'HANLON: Thank you. Excellent framing and very helpful. Adam over to you, please.

MR. DAY: Thanks so much. It's really good to be here. I will build on some of Vanda's points and speak to some joint research we at the Center for Policy Research at U.N. University did with Vanda and some others. On the phenomena of pro-government militias and proxy forces, we looked at Somalia, but we also looked at Nigeria and Iraq and at least there may be scoped to make some comparative points. But I just want to make three opening points to get some facts on the table. The first one is that between 2012 and today, the international community and the Somali government have relied more and more heavily on pro-government militias in the fight against Al-Shabaab. This is largely because despite the enormous state building efforts that Vanda mentioned by bilateral donors, the Somali state apparatus really just hasn't developed into a viable counterbalance to Al-Shabaab. And pro-government militias and those can include clan-based militias to more paramilitary forces aligned with the state like those that are called darwish are cornerstone to the counterterrorism anti-Shabaab fight today. And that includes, they played important role in the broader fight that AMISOM is waging as well.

The second point is that the current approach to Al-Shabaab doesn't seem to be working. As of today, Al-Shabaab controls large parts of rural, central, southern, and western Somalia. And the group's strength has swelled to more than double what it was three years ago. Now, estimate between 5,000 and 7,000 in its membership. Now, this is in part because even in areas where AMISOM, the Somali State and these militias have succeeded in the fight against Al-Shabaab in the short-term, the Somali State hasn't been able to hold, or govern many of these territories for long allowing them to slide back into control by Al-Shabaab.

The third point is the kind of obvious upsides of a pro-government militias, but they're the downsides as well and the use of pro-government militias in Somalia has created distinct risks for country and the region. And I'll just list a couple here. The first one is that many of these groups are willing to perpetrate serious human rights violations and, indeed, that's probably why some of them are hired. But because they fall largely outside the chain of command of the Somali Security Services, there aren't any

real accountability mechanisms and it's worth noting that there aren't really many accountability mechanisms writ large in Somalia, but especially not for these groups.

I'd say even more worrying and maybe more interesting for the group that we had to today, is the extent to which regional players have used proxy forces within Somalia to further their own goals. And there are reports of regionally aligned militias operating in different parts of Somalia, especially from the Gulf and that's something that I think Zach may touch in in a bit, about that kind of Gulf dynamic.

Now, some of these are ostensibly -- they began to combat piracy groups like the Puntland Maritime Police Force. There are also important ways for Gulf countries to exercise leverage in region in Somalia as well. And with Gulf tensions running extremely high, this makes Somalia an increasing arena for playing out their country's conflicts. And I just want to mention I think the point that Payton made about Ethiopia stability, a question that I have that kind of arose thinking about it is, how will that volatility in Ethiopia similarly impact the willingness and ability of Ethiopia to contribute to AMISOM and then how will the dynamics that Allan just described similarly affect its role, or Kenya's role in AMISOM and the push against Shabaab. So, I think looking around Somalia's neighbors and thinking about the use of proxy forces is an interesting way to think about the security dimensions of Somalia and then in the second round, I have a few policy recommendations or thoughts that might help think this through. Thanks so much.

MR. O'HANLON: Thank you very much and I'm before moving on to Zach, just to clarify a couple of things we've all been talking about AMISOM the Africa Union Military Assistance Mission in Somalia, if I remember correctly the acronym. That's about -- that's still about 20,000 troops strong. Still run by the African Union, but with the overall additional chapeaux with the United Nations blessing, right. So, it's considered to be U.N. peacekeeping mission funded through the U.N. as well.

MR. DAY: It's an African Union mission in Somalia. There is a U.N. unsung mission as well. It supports that, but that the all of the troops in AMISOM are directed by the African Union.

MR. O'HANLON: And are they financed by the African Union, or financed by the U.N.? Do we know how that works?

MR. DAY: I think the U.N. reimburses pretty heavily for them, but I don't know the exact numbers.

MR. O'HANLON: And then finally, sorry for all this, but I think it's helpful for many people listening to understand how this mission's gone on for so long and its strengths, but also its limitations. As I recall, it's largely made up of five or six troop contingents from five or six mostly relatively close by countries, Kenya, Ethiopia, Uganda, Burundi at one time, as I recall, is that about correct too? Sorry, you still on mute.

MR. DAY: I think you named all of them. Djibouti also has contributed to AMISOM, but yet, Ethiopia, Kenya, Uganda, Burundi, and Djibouti should be the full list of now.

MR. O'HANLON: Thank you. Very helpful to have that basic information on the table. Zach, over to you, my friend.

MR. VERTIN: Mike, very glad to be revisiting this topic. As you know, it's really at the heart of the Red Sea work we've done, a project I initiated at Brookings a couple of years ago and built on a series of publications and Red Sea events that we've done with you and others. So, happy to be here with everyone.

I'm going to paint it with a broad brush. External acts have, of course, long been present in the Horn, but what we've seen in the last few years is really different. I would argue both in degree and in flavor. So, the real and perceived interests in the Horn and in the adjacent seas have expanded for the Gulf States, for turkey, and for others. And for variety of reasons, from the war in Yemen, to the future -- shaping the future of global maritime trade, to countering extremism, et cetera. I'm happy to talk more about these motivations, but what's resulted really is a period of intense foreign rivalries playing out on African soil. And the most tangible minute manifestation of this is what I often refer to as a sort of mad dash for real estate that unfolded over the last three or four years, as actors from across the Red Sea neighborhood and from further afield really rush to snap up commercial ports, military bases, market share, et cetera.

So, what we have is this range of state actors with different models of government, different styles of diplomacy and very different pocketbooks all feeling each other out. And I think that's an important thing to note for those new to this discussion. One of the really defining features of these new dynamics is asymmetry. We have these smaller, far richer Gulf states engaging with far larger, as Payton mentioned. More populous and poorer states on the western the Red Sea. Now, the Africans have

sought to benefit from these new patrons and this new engagement, but without surrendering their sovereignty. And so, there's really upsides and downside risks this. All of this activity surely means real opportunities for political and economic integration and I think that needs to be part of the discussion, as there's some real growth potential here. But as we've seen in recent years, and as my colleagues have alluded to, not Eastern Somalia, this imbalance also presented consider a risks particularly to the states in the Horn.

Lastly, while this new engagement has been animated most by the GCC States and by Turkey, a much wider array of external powers are also active here, including the United States, China, Russia, the Europeans, India, Japan, et cetera. It's really a crowded neighborhood. Every one of those players is, of course, paying attention to the Bab-el-Mandeb one of the world's most important strategic points that passes very narrow leaf between Yemen and Djibouti and Eritrea. One of the world's most important strategic points, choke points and its most heavily trafficked shipping lanes.

But in addition, and as we argued in our recent Brookings report, I think it's also important to see the Red Sea in this choke point. They need to be in broader context and that is with the Horn and the Red Sea is the kind of Western anchor of a broader Indian Ocean region and water still Indo-Pacific. A region which I think men would argue may be the primary theater of strategic competition among great powers in the coming decades. Thanks.

MR. O'HANLON: Outstanding. Thank you very much and now, we'll proceed will proceed directly into round two, where again, the focus will be on policy and policy recommendations starting with my good friend and colleague, Vanda. Except Vanda, you're still muted. Yeah, there you go.

MS. FELBAB-BROWN: I got it. I would first start with the issue that you and Mike probing about AMISOM. There is a reason why we decided to do this the event today, thinking about different exodus in the Horn including Ethiopia and Kenya. They are by far, the two most important contributors to AMISOM troops, but they are also by far the most significant players in terms of security dynamics in Somalia, particularly, SEOPR has enormous implications and way before AMISOM had enormous implications for Somalia. And so, it's Ethiopia that is very fragile that reminds me of Yugoslavia in the last days of Yugoslavia before when we saw very significant ethnic mobilization by political entrepreneurs that ultimately led to a series of devastating ethnic civil wars. It's Ethiopia with vast repercussions for Somalia.

So, first step in stabilizing Somalia is to make sure that the critical regional actors like Ethiopia don't blow up. And now that Payton speaks more about what this means in terms of U.S. policy, but let me just put that point on the table that how the transition in Ethiopia unfolds, has enormous repercussions for the entire Horn of Africa for Somalia.

Second, dimension is then to escape from this unfortunate security situation that we have been in for the past four or five years, where at best it's a stalemate, at worse, it's really deteriorating toward Al-Shabaab and where AMISOM is really in effective in improving the security situation. That has been much effort to improve the capacity of Somali National Army as it is after years of efforts and a vast amount of resources from the United States, from Europe. It cannot even allow conduct defensive operation. Forget offensive operation or defensive operation, so clearly, there needs to be much more thinking in how bilateral and multilateral aid is dispersed. There's been some progress when Mohamed Abdullahi Farmaajo became president of Somalia. There was some push on improving the capacity reducing the corruption. Much more needs to be done and there needs to be really an important focus.

At the same time, like Adam Apostasy there's a result about touring work. I am very leery and reluctant to see the first to be -- to go about whether this is preference of Mogadishu, or preference of the United States, regional actors, or the federal member states. This is sort of the default mode in even for AMISOM, but it's a default mode that simply replaces one form of contact with the multitude of highly fraud, highly complex conflict and that ultimately provides very many openings for Shabaab. Serve policy intervention clearly needs to be on managing the extremely difficult state of relations between Mogadishu and federal member states.

There's been some positive development in the last few days. President Farmajo, the former national president, recognized Ahmed Modabe as the president of Jubbland that in the short-term eases the situation, but it's not fully resolved. It's not yet clear that he would recognize him for a full four years. But he's also given up on the one man-one vote. President Farmaajo agreed now that the electors will once again elect members of parliament who will then vote for the president. So, there's been some easing of the tensions, but nonetheless, the elections will be highly combustible just like the delayed election in Ethiopia will be highly combustible. With so many of the member states not wanting to see President Farmajo reelected.

It will be a lot of horse trading, a lot of bargaining, a lot of bags of money changing and very intense involvement of outside regional actors. Not managing this carefully provides a highly dangerous situation of a powder keg that can really blow up. So, managing the elections will be very important. And that relates to my next point on which is managing the external environment, the regional -- the involvement and outside actors is equally critical.

Right now, both the whole (inaudible) in Somalia is like when Payton and Adam also indicated is really being pulled in directions. It's a prime space of competition and rivalry. In some cases that was managed well of the external intervention helped like in the initial phases of the Ethiopia transition, but in other situation like in Somalia, it's just poured more fuel into very combustible situation. So, the U.S. really needs to pay far more attention and far greater engagement in the international community like, European actors, Britain, who is very keenly involved and interested in Somalia and managing and trying to stabilize the situation.

My final last bit, you know more positive note, at least until COVID hit, Somalia was on a better financial footing. It managed to renegotiate debts. It managed to get the debt relief and had a little bit more of a financial capacity. A capacity to tap into international financial flows. That needs to be preserved, nonetheless, COVID has meant a big economic downturn for Somalia as well, an enormous weight on the country. And so finally, humanitarian aid and thinking carefully with Somalia about how to use the financial access that it enjoys and that it hopefully will not jeopardize through very badly managed election will be another important step of policy.

MR. O'HANLON: Thank you. Very sweeping and very helpful. A lot of specific points that set a great example for the second phase of our conversation. Payton, over to you, please.

MR. KNOPF: I mean, I think in this, I think relates to the question you asked me sort of during the first round and I mean, Adam and Vanda have very eloquently laid out what the implications of an even steeper deterioration of the situation in Ethiopia would look like regionally, right because of its role in the peacekeeping missions in Sudan, South Sudan on the border between the two actually in Somalia. Sounds like the seed of the African Union and I think as we consider policy recommendations and what's feasible, to some extent, we have to think big, right, as I was sort of saying in my previous intervention. And I think much bigger than we thought to date because of the scope of the risk and, there's been a lot

of comparisons between Ethiopia and Yugoslavia and some of them may be irrelevant. Some of them are probably less relevant. One other think that I think it's important to keep in mind and Vanda just alluded to this is that if were Ethiopia to start to fragment as a state, unlike Yugoslavia which was a case of implosion, this is going to be about regional explosion. And so, we have to really, I think, really focus our thinking around that fact.

And the second thing I would say that's important to guide this as we think about recommendations is that Ethiopian body politic is not what it was in 1995 when the sort of constitution and the framework and the power structure that still is being wrestled with, came into being, it's not what it was in 2005 when they were secretly contested and an not particularly credible elections at the end of the day and it's not what it was in 2015 even when the protests started that ultimately culminated in Abiy coming to power. So, it's important to remember that the majority of the Ethiopians are under 18, so they have no first-hand memory of any other governing dispensation then they currently have. And so, that all suggests to me and the sort of overarching frame, I think, any policy recommendation is how do you create nonviolent pathways for re-examining and meeting the aspirations for different governing dispensation in this country and unfortunately, there's been a tendency to look at preserving the unity of the Ethiopian state through military and security means. We've seen that certainly in the course of the summer. Essentially every major opposition figure or voice of dissent against Abiy is now in prison. And I think that's really the opposite of what we want to see, right. So, what we want to see his political dialogue and indications of a willingness to compromise, right. Because otherwise. There really isn't a path for it and look, I think it's all well and good to acknowledge, to call for dialogue and call for compromise and I think we all recognize that that is easier said than done. And I'd be a bit myopic really given the state of the political discussion the United States, if I didn't acknowledge that it's easier to implement dialogue and compromise in practice than it is in theory. But I think it's nonetheless important and to kind of put a little bit of a bright spot on this. I think what we have seen in the last couple of days actually, has been a really important, or at least the beginnings of an important dialogue between Oromo and Amhara political leaders. We saw over the weekend the call by the patriarch of the Ethiopian Orthodox Church in the context of the most important religious testables of the year calling for structured dialogue and so, I think as the international communities certainly considers its interventions, which as I

said, I hope and I accelerate and in both their creativity and in their robustness. I think it's really about how do you support a dialogue within Ethiopia to deescalate and diffuse some of these tensions and generate a constructive way forward.

And here, I just want to conclude by mentioning a couple of points from some work that my colleague students have done at USIP on national dialogues, a term that is being sort of come into the discourse on Ethiopia a lot. And I think there's important lessons to learn about when these national dialogues succeed and when one should be cautious about what they can achieve. And some of the negative outputs of that.

So, based on a significant body of research that many USIP colleagues have done, the trick is for national dialogues to be successful, they have to be inclusive; they have to be transparent; they have to have a far reaching agenda, the convener crucially has to be credible. There have to be clear rules of procedures and there has to be an implementation plan for any of those, for any conclusions that come out of a national dialogue.

The points of caution are that they can often and have been used, unfortunately, to stall Democratic processes and postpone elections; to bolster political elites' efforts to maintain the status quo and can sometimes facilitate procrastination, rather than decision-making. And I think the question here is how do you have both an effort that diffuses elite-level contestation, right, which is different than how do you create a political mechanism for reaching the aspirations for reform and fueling a new, rejuvenating, let's say, a new Ethiopian identity. This week, as a technical matter of the Parliament mandate will expire. Elections were postponed until next year sensibly because of COVID. They were meant to happen earlier this summer and so I think in the intervening period between now and election, which Abiy is saying what happens in the time in the first half of next year. The question really is, how do we look at this question of dialogue? And I think from the United States point of view and I'll conclude with this, there are ways that external actors without dictating in any way the outcome of these dialogues can help to negotiate and facilitate a negotiation on the parameters and the principles that guide them and serve as a guarantor to bolster their credibility, particularly if, and I think in the case of Ethiopia, it would be hard to see a dialogue convened by the government because one of the questions is the legitimacy of the government itself. And so, I think either this is one of those issues that actually requires

astute political diplomatic agility that we haven't seen yet from the West and I would hope as there are these increasing calls in the country for a dialogue that in Washington and some European capitals we consider what role we can play to incentivize that, to encourage the opening of political space that induces a more compromising spirit and to support the indigenous efforts for nonviolent pathways out of this increasingly concerning situation.

MR. O'HANLON: Thank you, excellent. Allan, over to you, sir.

MR. NGARI: Thanks Mike. The problem of Al-Shabaab in Kenya is not going away anytime soon. Especially, if the response is solely military which is what we are seeing a mostly. Complimentary responses that involve all of society are necessary and what does that look like when it is a criminal justice system that can detect and prevent terrorist attacks, and when they do happen unfortunately, if they do happen then effective investigations, prosecutions and adjudications ensue within the confines of international law norms because we know that some of the reasons why Kenyans are joining Al-Shabaab and other violent extremist groups is also as the result of the responses from the security. And just as actors to be on a judicial mandate and where there are convictions, then certainly, we hope that the convicts will undergo some rehabilitation that allows then to reintegrate back into their communities as positive contributor.

Second is, are the responses that might include, and I'm happy to hear Payton speak about national dialogues and then this is a really key aspect and other tools that have been well developed within the transitional justice field, for example, to engage communities, including vulnerable individuals who joined Al-Shabaab or any other group, any violent extremist group, be it for pull or push factors, this is really necessary in the country. But addressing those root causes of why these people join; why are these individuals join Al-Shabaab is also quite critical. If the government of Kenya is going to address the issue of Al-Shabaab.

And from a progressive constitution that was adopted in 2010, we still call it a new constitution despite the fact that it's 10-years old. There's also national legislation and quite an astute political system in the country. I think that these are the requisites tools that there, that can ensure Democratic governance whether rule of law is respected, but unfortunately, the recurrence of violence and conflict in Kenya that's not related to violent extremism, but as a result of historical injustices, these remain

unaddressed and this is why we have a lot of the conflict that is ongoing in the country in many parts.

One very unfortunate pattern that we have seen in the country and in this is perhaps a caution also on other neighboring countries that might want to perhaps pursue national dialogue is just the lack of implementation of a number of reports, commissions of inquiry that have been instituted for very long periods of time to address some of those historical injustices. For example, a Truth, Justice and Reconciliation Commission report that remains unimplemented in which could and has provided a roadmap to address some of those large-scale human rights violations as well as just some systematic and injustices that that have been in the country for long periods of time. So, these and other commissions at that dealt with land issues that are very big causes of conflict in the country. These reports just collect dust on government shelves and this needs to change if the conflict security and the development the business to change if the conflict security and the development tenure is to be resolved. Back to, Mike.

MR. O'HANLON: Thank you, Allan. Just a tiny follow-up from me before we go to Adam, because I asked you to comment more broadly about the overall state of Kenya today. I realize our focus is on the Horn of Africa and therefore, for you, on the part of Kenya that is closest to the Horn. But I wondered partly because we've actually done events over the years at Brookings on the Kenya electoral and political process especially at some of these key milestones at recent big elections. One of my takeaways and remembrances is that even when the presidential politics were not always that pretty to watch, a lot of the local politics in Kenya was impressively empowered, was becoming more broadly contested and that there was maybe a certain health in the democracy that was more apparent sometimes at the local or provincial level, even when presidential elections especially about a decade ago resulted in serious tension and even violence. Do you want to comment at all on the state of Kenya writ large today before we move on to Adam?

MR. NGARI: Sure. Well, you're right. There's been quite a lot of development politically and I think the 2010 Constitution really ushered in a new era politically. And it's quite astute, as I said earlier, I think the separation of powers and the capacity of the judiciary, for example, to really put the presidency and executive on check is quite a welcomed addition to the country and we're seeing this more and more. Quite recently there was this contestation actually still going on between the chief justice and the

president of country that relates to some constitutional provisions and the lack of enactment of certain laws by parliament and you can see a robust government system. You can see that things are changing at the default nature of governance as well to the different, to the 47 counties is also assisted in this, the process of governance of the people. And I think the people themselves feel closer to government. So, writ large, I think it's positive. We are expecting in the elections in 2022, I think it's going to be a very interesting run up to those elections to see how all these -- everybody will have to buy for positions, be it at the devolved county-level, or the state level and those contestations will really manifest much closer to the elections.

Unfortunately, I think because there isn't a culture of ideology politically, that's perhaps one of the downsides. We haven't seen that develop much in Kenya. And so the politics is really more of a personality issue. Who is the dominant political figures and that's how they formed their coalitions and you'll recall that the 2013 coalition, Jubaland currently is ruling the country was President Uhuru Kenyatta and Deputy President William Ruto who are on political opposite sides in 2007 during the post-election violence. So, the politics of personality, what really will drive and will continue driving the Kenyan political scene even in this coming election and it's something that we need to be really careful about and it's that time to the historical injustices that remain and unaddressed. Those are the ticking time bombs for the country.

MR. O'HANLON: Thank you very much. Adam, over to you.

MR. DAY: Thank very much. As I said before, I'm going to focus again on the proxy forces and the militias in the Horn and then the risks that they pose. And based on our research and largely Vanda's research in Somalia, but also a bit of a comparative look at similar dynamics in Nigeria and Iraq and I'll try and flag three, policy areas and questions I don't necessarily have the answer, but just to start, the audience for policy recommendations in the Somalia context is largely the EU and the U.S. The EU pays for the bulk of AMISOM's troops and I think there may have been a glitch in our last conversation. The U.N. is not the main source of funding, although it has an important political mission is shepherding the political process. But since this is a largely security area, I think the audience right now is largely the EU in the U.S. as the kind of dominant players.

So, the first is integration and militia groups like the Darwish in Somalia only have a limited

relationship with the government and even with the federal states. And they're more like contracted employees than any kind of entity operating within the chain of command. And so, when they do perpetrate serious human rights violations, or when they act along clan lines instead of serving the fight against Al-Shabaab, there's little recourse to hold them to account.

And this mean the international community is often indirectly supporting and unintentionally supporting some of the worse human rights violators without any means to control them. And so, integration might seem like an attractive path forward to bring them into a chain of command. And there are some other settings like, the popular mobilization forces in Iraq, have fairly successfully integrated into the states chain of command. But integration into the army, into the Somali Army can be really complicated and it hasn't been successful in Somalia to date. And one idea, one set of questions I have is, could you think of integration more broadly as a process to incorporate some of these militias into a range of state services. It could be police; it could be community policing; it could even be non-security branches of state. And I'm not suggesting the integration has to happen, but it's continually put on the table and if it remains something that's being discussed, I think a fairly broad approach to it might be interesting and the question really is what's a viable future for the militia forces that have come to rely upon this conflict for their livelihoods and how do you shape that dynamic in a different way.

The second area is and I think this comes out of a Vanda's great quote by Ken Menkhaus about Somalia being a graveyard for a state building and if that's right, we might need to stop pouring money into that grave. And it might be time for the international community to rethink its state building approach in places like Somalia and this would be especially important for the EU as one of the main funders and bilateral support to Somalia as well, from the U.S.

So, one idea might be, would it be possible or would it make sense for some international donors to create a payroll system for some of the militias like Darwish, based on a serious human rights vetting process and a bit more control. And this might recognize that some militias are here to stay. It's unlikely for them to be integrated into the state anytime soon. And one of the main risks that they pose is, they tend to respond to local power dynamics rather than acting as part of a broader national strategy against Al-Shabaab. Creating some sort of payroll scheme for some of these forces could give the international community more leverage in shaping how the groups behave, potentially even eventually some greater

control of the chain of command. There are some pretty big downsides to that too, but I just want to put ideas on the table.

And the third is, I think we should think of the approach to Al-Shabaab much more broadly than through a counter-terrorism lens, which is the dominant one that Shabaab tends to be talked about. And studying the militias of Somalia has demonstrated the important other roles they play in inter-clan and inter-communal dynamics and Shabaab is no different. It preys on community fears and insecurity; it participates in inter-communal conflicts and it ultimately had seemed to benefit recently from the many, many of the security approaches over the last few years. And today, it's in a far stronger position than it was three years ago. It holds more territory. It's embedded itself in more communities than before. It provides services, it taxes populations, and delivers justice and to add, it also perpetrates extraordinary abuses against many of the populations.

And I think some of the most impactful the UNAU and bilateral donors can do is at a more local reconciliation level looking to reduce the tensions and then build better relationships at that local level and ultimately try to undercut one of the main recruitment tools of Al-Shabaab which is disenfranchised excluded youth. And I think it's great. We have Allan here who has had a focus in his career on justice. It's another area to think about.

What I haven't talked about is how the regional dynamics can come into play and I'm keen to hear from Zach and Payton, in particular, about how the kind of Qatar, UAE aspects could play out and be influenced in one way or another going forward. Over to you, Mike.

MR. O'HANLON: And with that, over to you Zach to answer that and other questions.

MR. VERTIN: Thanks Mike. In terms of policy recommendations are, of course, lots of ideas. I too will put three on the table here. One is directed at regional actors and two for the United States. But each of which has which has implications, not only for Ethiopia and Somalia as we've been discussing in large part here, but also Djibouti, Kenya, Sudan, and Egypt. So, first, vis-à-vis, the region -- the countries of the Red Sea should make efforts, should make good on efforts to build a so-called Red Sea forum. So, until this year, there has been really no mechanism for dialogue among the countries of the Horn and Gulf despite all this new activity and that means there's really no place to ward off conflict early and it means also that there are opportunities for mutual or collective gain left on the table.

So, at its best, in my mind, these nations could use this kind of platform to address trade and infrastructure development. Maritime security, migration, labor relations, conflict management, it's really a broad menu. But at a minimum, I would argue that such an architecture could raise the cost of destabilizing activity undertaken by any individual member state in the region. Whether that's buying off politicians ahead of Somali's elections or fielding militias on hopefully (audio skip) as discussed. So, I can do this while also providing countries like Ethiopia and Somalia with a platform, I think, to engage their Gulf partners on more equal and potentially in the long-term less transactional basis.

So, the Saudis assumed control of this Red Sea form initiative last year and formally established such a body in January, but it really hasn't progressed all that much since. And I think there are both some real flaws in its design, for example, it's missing some key states, like Ethiopia. But there's also room, I think to shape this still into a meaningful platform for engagement and thus feeling this gap I've identified. I think this is also a place where external actors can help, including the United States.

With that, under the U.S. to recommendations, first, I think the U.S. can double down in resolving the Gulf era crisis. This feud has never really made sense for anybody and I would argue should have invited a much more rigorous diplomatic intervention from Washington from the get-go. We'll see how these most recent talks turn out and whether or not they bear fruit.

Now, U.S. involvement, of course, doesn't guarantee resolution surely, but letting it linger was a mistake. I think resolution won't necessarily end competition among Gulf states, but could very well take the edge off the destabilizing pursuits that have been alluded to here in the Horn.

Second, I think U.S. diplomats and military officials can do a better job of simply showing interest in the region. Showing interest in the emerging dynamics for the Red Sea. A lot of what has occurred over the last few years has happened with the Americans mostly absent from this debate. And I think there are opportunities here to both advance U.S. interests, but also to nudge Red Sea governance and some of these conflicts we've mentioned in the right direction. And it terms of very specific ideas, I think for starters, and I and Payton and others have argued this for some time that senior U.S. diplomats representing both Africa and near east affairs should really get on a plane together and tour capitols on both sides of the Red Sea and see what opportunities there are to exploit. I'll leave it there, thanks.

MR. O'HANLON: Yeah, it's super interesting as is your reminder that this part of the world is not

some distant corner of geography it's so crucial for sea lanes among other things and so close to the Suez Canal, which we take for granted, but it's so crucial that it should never be taken for granted. Thanks to all of you.

I want to offer the chance for a very brief third round where anybody who wants to respond to anyone else can do so, but I'd like to keep that round brief, so we can use most alarm in 25 minutes for the half-dozen questions that have come in from the audience and my strategy is going to be to ask each you to have a piece of paper because I'm going to read you all six at once and then see if we can basically get one or two people to comment on each question. Not to have all five of you comment on every question. So, that'll be most of what we do with the last 25 minutes, but before that does anybody want to follow up in regards to anybody else on the panel and their specific idea and maybe one or two minutes?

MS. FELBAB-BROWN: Well, maybe Mike, I could make a few comments. One is that the issue of militias is becoming a very serious matter in Ethiopia as well. A lot of the ethnic degrading nationalization is congealing, but not simply at the political entrepreneur logo, but has a very robust three-component that has quite robustly congealed into a militia formation. For a long-time, the previous regime of manage the youth and employment issue that Payton talked about through -- by creating all kinds of stapling jobs for the youth, many of which are now evaporated or not available. The regime doesn't exist in the same way. So, combustible elements there.

My second comment here would be that many of those ethnic of close cross borders. So, many of the clans are not located solely within one country. They crossed multiple spaces in the Horn and let's add another element of linkage and another element of danger.

And finally, to come back to the notion of how good is policy building in Somalia, again, links to what's happening in Ethiopia. For a long time, the solution in Somalia was seen as a much more power evolution to the region away from Mogadishu, so that Mogadishu would not be the center of conversation. And the primary resource to fight over. Otherwise, that is challenged and it (inaudible), this is also being worked with positive in Ethiopia, is a solution and yet, in both countries challenged because many of the crucial elite, including the two presidents, do not like the revolution of power. In Somalia's case, the new constitution was to anchor this in, but it's still very much continuous process of who controls what

resources, financial resources, secular resources, revenue, et cetera. So, the two countries are in different phases and the different intensity undergoing say processing challenges and the governing at least are responding. Both at the national and sub-national level. It's quite interesting in parallel dimensions that creates new allies, such as Ethiopia, often for a long time align much more with particular regions in Somalia. Now, very strongly embracing the centralized government of a particular ethnic makeup than used to be the case before.

So, again, I want to try really the crucial importance that all of us have stressed of thinking very comprehensively of the Horn and what has really changed is the international cross-cutting dimensions of the regions that are much more intense, much more acute than say, a decade ago.

MR. O'HANLON: That's excellent. I think I'm going to take the prerogative and the moderator to now actually use that comment as a segue into the audience questions. So, anybody else who wants to comment on each other's views can do so in that round as we've got 20 minutes left. I want to give you each about three minutes in the final round. So, let me rifle through a half-dozen questions asking each of the panelists to make note of the one or two they most want to speak to. And then we'll come through in the same order -- actually, we'll do reverse order finishing with Vanda in this case.

So, question number one, how much should we worry about terrorism and specifically terrorism in Ethiopia? Is there a scenario that gets us to that unhappy place? Second question, and this is a more helpful visionary question. If Somalia is able somehow and someday to end the instability caused by or at least exploited by Al-Shabaab, what could the future hold for that country with Africa's longest coastline and a footnote is should Djibouti worry in this scenario about its privileged position as the gateway to Ethiopia at a time when maybe Somalia would take over that kind of privileged position itself if it were stable and a secure?

Third question, what is the anticipated economic effect of COVID on the continent? Vanda mentioned earlier that we don't know of a huge number of cases in Somalia, but let's focus in on the economic effects of whatever kinds of shutdowns or other precautionary measures have been taken and how they have affected the economic well-being of the -- is there anything -- excuse me, of that part of the continent? Anything to say on that front? And then a related economics question is about entrepreneurship and small business. It's just a general question to ask to what extent and we look too

small business to create economic growth and opportunity and therefore, indirectly one hopes more stability? Another question about budget and economics concerns the U.S. federal budget and the international affairs' budget specifically which remains pretty high today, but the Trump Administration keeps trying to cut it. And Congress keeps restoring what the Administration no longer really wanted. To what extent is this a big part of American policy and the policy tool kit.

And then, finally, this is actually a question from one of you for the others, from Adam, he's interested in the UN Horn of Africa Envoy position and the UN, as you know, recently created this post and gave it to a Parfait Onanga. He has a regional mandate is there anything that we can look to him to do more effectively than some of the other individual nation state, outside players, or the European Union, or African Union? So, with that I'm basically done rifling through questions and let's see if we can start with Zach about three minutes each, please as we finish up.

MR. VERTIN: Thanks Mike. I'll hop on, on the first two of those. I'll be happy to circle back on those others as well. Just a point on terrorism, is terrorism -- should that be a major concern in Ethiopia? I would actually argue the opposite, that the U.S. is over sort of focus -- its hefty focus on terrorism over the last decade has actually hurt our standing across the region. Not only in Ethiopia, but in Somalia and elsewhere where I think some of our partners are frustrated that we've neglected commercial engagement, political engagement, et cetera and it's really costs us opportunities. There's one example, in particular in Djibouti where I was recently as we released a report on China's new engagement in Djibouti. The Djiboutians say, "Hey, look you paid for your military base here over the last decade. You've been focused on terrorism. We asked you for help in building a water pipeline. We asked you for help in further developing our ports and thus, economic integration across the region and we were met with silence. So, don't turn around and criticize us (audio skip) and they build some of this infrastructure that we've been asking for. So, I think that's one way in which our over reliance on security in the region has been negative and I think that's deeper rebalance.

Second, very quickly and relatedly, on the question about Somalia and its stability there vis-à-vis Djibouti, yeah, I mean, we're all hopeful about Somalia eventually turning the corner and I don't think Somalia and developments of its economy or of a second port there would be a problem for the region at all. I think as you look at Ethiopia's 110 million people and expanding consumer classes and economic

development all across the region, there's plenty of room for another port. And in fact, some competition there could be the region salvation.

MR. O'HANLON. Excellent, thank you. Adam over to you.

MR. DAY: Great, thanks and maybe I'll start with my own. I was just -- the point by the regional envoy, I just think Parfait is such a capable and potentially invigorating person to be having this job, but I just -- listening to Payton and Zach talk about the need for kind of everyone coming together in the region. When I spoke to Parfait earlier in the year, he said that was actually one of the hardest parts of his job was just getting all the people in the same room and convening meeting where everybody showed up and so it's a genuine question about what can you do with a regional mandate from a U.N. that doesn't have many easy entry points. It's a genuine question.

Then, on question three, I mean, the big point about COVID, I think is it's already having a downward pressure on the economy and we've done some research that has shown that almost every major civil war is preceded by an economic shock of one kind or another. And so the question is really is a response to COVID going to be something that increases inequalities and creates greater disparities between poor and rich in places that already have conflict dynamics. In Ethiopia is certainly one we should be worried about. Or, will the response to COVID be something that might be able to address some of those inequalities? And I think what we've seen from some of the other research looking at how IFI, International Financial Institutions tend to give money, is it looks on paper like it's going to be spread evenly across vulnerable communities. In practice, it almost always gets captured by central capitals and that's a worry I'd have when we think about international support to countries on the continent. And then just on the point about what could Somalia -- what could the future hold? Well, I think, you've got a country that has an extraordinary diaspora. They've got amazing technological capacity on the coastline and I think if you look at Puntland and Somaliland, you get a little glimpse of some of the potential of what a better run country might be able to look like and so, I think there a significant reason to hope and invest. I'll just put a question mark over the way it is currently being done. Over to you Mike.

MR. O'HANLON: Thank you. And over to you Allan.

MR. NGARI: Thanks Michael. I wanted to just pick up a on the points that Adam had mentioned about the use of proxy forces in the region, in the Horn and how that could possibly be an avenue through

which we could address some of the challenges especially in Somalia that's really struggling with accountability mechanisms. It remains very shocking that the counterterrorism law in that country, you know, it's just difficult for me to see how the military can continue conducting trials and noticeable in Court and I mean, the good practice is that civilian Courts should have jurisdiction over this. And so, I'm also picking up on the points that time that Payton also made about the non-violence pathways of dealing with conflicts and then in this instance of violent extremism and that we need to actually look at the region and regional mechanisms. Are we going to look to the African Union beyond the AMISOM and seeing what other processes could be initiated that would try in the system Somalia which seems to be that the hotbed where most of the activities around violent extremism in the Horn emulate.

And that's something that I think we need to interrogate some more. And on to the questions, how much we should be worried about terrorism in Ethiopia? In fact, I'm more optimistic and I actually see that with the repeal of the anti-terror legislation in the country a couple of years ago, that was a positive step in trying to get the country to be more in line with international best practices around terrorism legislation. It's under that old repealed act that there were a lot of political, politically motivated convictions and incarcerations that were more geared towards political opponents of the regime and seeing a new law that actually all those convicts were released which is very positive. And now we can actually use this new legislation or the country and use this new legislation to add to deal with the terrorism offenses, I think that is quite optimistic in my opinion.

The impacts lastly, on economy, on -- Amy because of COVID-19 in Africa and specifically in the Horn of Africa. My biggest worry is the shift in government priorities and everybody is now responding. All governments are responding and they legitimately should to the pandemic, but it's the other aspects that will take the back burner. Development has always suffered as the result of many other government priorities. And certainly, these are the root causes of conflict, these are the root causes of violent extremism and it might unfortunately take the countries in the Horn of Africa many steps back. But it's also the shift in priorities from the donor countries. The donor governments that might also want to perhaps push some of those security concerns a little further back.

I was very interested to see the stimulus packages that are offered throughout the continent from various institutions, the IMF, World Bank, et cetera. And as much as they're welcomed, we know very

well that's a lot of these governments have accused of corruption and I think that is our biggest fight right now, to really call African governments to address corruption. It's systemic. It's such a vice and it's eating into all the good things that could happen on the continent and any stimulus package anything that could be availed to governments in to people who been affected by the pandemic and the loss of jobs which is monumental, the loss of income. I mean, that is all -- corruption is going to take all that away and that is the biggest problem that we have them in the continent and that is exacerbated by COVID-19. Thank you.

MR. O'HANLON: Very good, excellent. Payton, over to you.

MR. KNOPF: Thanks and I mean, I couldn't really agree more with Allan on that on that last point in particular on corruption. I think when we think about the transitioning in Ethiopia, certainly, Sudan as well. That was really one of the proximate and remains one of the proximate drivers of the of the restiveness and the sort of desire for change that animated these transitions in the first instance. And I think until that's addressed, it's very hard to see that restiveness assuaged if we can call it that writing that, right. And it's certainly not through security responses. But let me just make two final comments to try to tie this all together with some of the comments that were made in the questions. When the terms in question, I agree with Zack certainly that it's been a significant error to predicate U.S. strategy in this region or see it sort of through a kind of counterterrorism lens. I do think we have to keep an eye though on that in the Ethiopian context, but from a broader vantage point, as Vanda suggests of the sort of state of the security sector and not just the cohesion of the official security institutions, but the increase in militia and particularly, you know, we've seen an uptick in both religiously motivated and ethnically motivated killings in Ethiopia in various parts of the country over the last number of months. Some by, to be clear by official entities, but some I by non-state armed groups and so I think that there is a risk there, but I think we have to look at it not through this lens per se of Islamists terror, but more through how do you see that the different armed actors in the country relating to one another and how that is either aggravated by or diffused based on the political contests, again, among the elites or the sort of polarization politically and ethnically throughout society. And so, as I just suggested, I think one of things to watch is certainly the cohesion of ENDF. It is the actions of, as many folks know, probably who are watching each of the regional states in Ethiopia have their own forces that fall under the control of the

state leadership, and then you do, as Vanda said, have a number of armed groups and so I think that's something to watch.

That relates to the second point which I think is actually this question of both international assistance, but also kind of what Zach was talking to it eloquently, which is the role of international actors and I just want to echo that I think here is a case where Libya should serve as a cautionary tale for the Horn of Africa for all of us, right. We're looking at populations, this is not just a question about Ethiopia, it's a question about Sudan and elsewhere, certainly Somalia, when you see these rivalries grafted onto conflicts and choosing their own proxies to fight those and investing their own resources, something has to push back on that, right. And I think it's hard for me to see any other state being in the position to do that other than the United States. This is not an instance, certainly when we look at Ethiopia where China is the most destabilizing actor. This is an instance in the Horn of Africa we want to be external actors who are causing the most problems are all core security partners of the United States with whom presumably, we have a fair amount of leverage, right, both to mitigate negative actions, but also harness their interests in a way that is constructive and meets the challenge of these transitions. Ethiopia certainly is included and to conclude with a data point that was pointed out to me the other day, when the peace agreement ending the war between Sudan and South Sudan that ultimately led to South Sudan's independence was signed in 2015 -- in and 2005 rather, the United States pledged and delivered on a pledge of $1.9 billion to support that peace agreement. Now, one can argue when there's God knows, I've spent a lot of time thinking about what could have been done better in that regard. The point is, when there is political will to mobilize resources, we can do it as the (inaudible), right and I think one of the tragedies frankly, of the last couple of years as I sort of said in my first intervention is that you haven't seen anywhere near the mobilization of political will and certainly an economic resources to meet the historic nature of the changes that are underway in this region. And I think given the risks that's going to be to our detriment and COVID certainly only compounds that, right. So, none of this can be fixed by aid dollars. It has to be tied to a political strategy, but I also don't think it can be done on the cheap. And that's both in terms of the aspirations of the people of this region certainly, but also, in the interests of the United States given the geostrategic implication.

MR. O'HANLON: Thank you, Payton and Vanda over to you for the last word of the session.

MS. FELBAB-BROWN: Well, I would like to echo everyone's comments in urging the Untied States and for the method other countries to place terrorism and counter-terrorism in the right prism in the Horn. It's often vastly exaggerated in the scene as the sole dominant point of intervention to our detriment.

Allan spoke about the great benefits of easing the counter-terrorism laws in in Kenya and the United States has very important role here in not allowing or persuading governments not to use counter-terrorism narratives as an excuse for repression, for continual marginalization, for continual dismissal of genuine grievances that local populations have. And I do see some dangers there in Ethiopia as well, but in addition to ethnic dimension that are also religious communal dimensions and it would be very easy and very tempting to suggest that assassination, street violence, political disquiet are (inaudible) to have the terrorism that would be very wrong lens to apply, even as much as we need to push against any kind of political violence and condemn it and urge the peaceful resolution.

All that said, Shabaab still is international continually motivated activity continues to conduct international terrorist attacks and it's continually motivated to conduct international terrorist attacks. Certainly in the neighborhood, it probably doesn't have significant reach beyond the neighborhood, but that is the case in the neighborhood and we need to be watchful and countering that. However, simply bombing Al-Shabaab chance or relying on militias is not the most effective way to go about it. And I would stress Adam's point here about a lot of the focus in Somalia, but I would say broadly about the region centering on very difficult nitty-gritty, highly diplomatic and politically involved, but in my view, essential efforts to resolve local dispute between local ethnic groups, between local clients as much as the national reconciliation needs to take place at the national level, it is absolutely fundamental that it takes place at the local level and I would posit that often at the local level it might be the critical blog for being able to scale up to a national level.

With that, I will close, if you allow me, Mike. Thank all of our wonder panelists. Thank you, Mike for so skillfully guiding us through the session and very many thanks to all those who submitted questions. Sorry that we didn't get necessarily to answering all questions. And thank you very much, stay tuned, more coming from our Africa Security Initiative and I look forward to collaboration in different ways with all of Michael's panelists.

MR. O'HANLON: Well said.

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