

Armed Social Work in the Horn of Africa

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Counterinsurgency operations can be characterized as armed social work.
--U.S. Army, Counterinsurgency Field Manual,
December 2006

The 1998 bombings of American embassies in Tanzania and Kenya alerted the United States that Africa had become an active center of Al-Qaeda operations. In particular, the United States focused attention on the group of states known as Horn of Africa—Somalia, Ethiopia, Eritrea, Djibouti, and Kenya—where civil war and lawlessness offered ideal breeding grounds for terrorist cells.¹ The recent upsurge of violence in Somalia, where a fundamentalist Islamist movement, the Union of Islamic Courts (UIC), nearly took control of the country, highlights the continued strategic importance of this region. The United States suspects that the UIC harbored the Al-Qaeda operatives responsible for the embassy bombings. Following the success of the UIC in late 2006, neighboring Ethiopia sent troops into Somalia with tacit U.S. approval. The Ethiopian forces quickly routed the Islamists and installed the UN-backed transitional government in Mogadishu. American forces then used an Ethiopian airstrip to launch bombing raids on Al-Qaeda targets in southern Somalia. In addition, the United States has allegedly offered covert support to the Somali militants fighting the Islamists.² Somali citizens express suspicion of Ethiopia's motives and doubt that the weak transitional government can consolidate power.

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¹ United States Department of State, Office of the Coordinator for Counterterrorism, "Country Reports on Terrorism 2005," April 2006, 6-7.

² Sue Pleming, "U.S. Says Somalia Must Not Be Proxy War for Others," Reuters AlertNet, Oct. 30, 2006. Found at: www.alertnet.org.

Following the outbreak of violence in Somalia, State Department official Eunice Reddick described the goals of US policy in the Horn of Africa as “addressing the threat of terrorism, supporting the establishment of effective governance and political stability and responding to the humanitarian needs of the Somalian people and promoting regional security.”³ A significant component of the U.S. response to the situation in the Horn has been the creation of the Combined Joint Task Force-Horn of Africa (CJTF-HOA). As members of the Task Force, soldiers undertake public works projects in remote areas of Ethiopia, Djibouti, and Kenya in an effort to build goodwill toward America and keep the areas under surveillance. As Marine Major General Timothy Ghormley, former commander of the CJTF-HOA, explained, “We are setting the conditions for victory... We’re avoiding another Iraq or Afghanistan.”⁴

Those who deliver military-sponsored humanitarian aid, sometimes labeled “hearts and minds” operations, believe that these efforts increase stability, win local allies, and bolster international legitimacy. For fiscal year 2007, the US Department of Defense requested \$40 million as part of its Humanitarian Assistance program. Humanitarian Assistance activities include donations of excess non-lethal supplies and the provision of humanitarian services by military personnel. According to the Department of Defense “humanitarian assistance programs support the Combatant Commanders by providing access to and fostering goodwill for the U.S. military in selected countries.”⁵

³ Bruce Greenberg, “Africanists Discuss Somalia as Regional Security Challenge,” US Department of State, Oct. 6, 2006. Found at: www.reliefweb.int.

⁴ Jim Garamone, “U.S. Servicemembers ‘Waging Peace’ on Horn of Africa,” *American Forces Press Services*, Jan. 3 2006.

⁵ U.S. Department of Defense, “Fiscal Year 2007 Budget Estimates, Overseas Humanitarian, Disaster, and Civic Aid, Defense (OHDACA),” February 2006, 4.

If not carefully executed, however, hearts and minds operations can actually undermine American interests—or at the least, fail to achieve any positive effects. Military planners can avoid such negative outcomes by relying on the humanitarian “do no harm” principle. In the context of the CJTF-HOA, and other similar missions, the do no harm principle suggests the following four guidelines. Military projects should complement the work of civilian organizations, rather than duplicating or bypassing it. Second, focusing on the long-term sustainability of projects will ensure that any goodwill generated does not quickly evaporate. Military forces should also target their capability to areas in which they hold a comparative advantage, such as disaster relief, logistics, and operating in insecure environments. Finally, hearts and minds operations should attempt to project an appearance of relative neutrality and separate humanitarian services from overt counterinsurgency activity.

The US Army’s recently revised field manual on counterinsurgency explains that “the integration of civilian and military efforts is crucial to successful COIN [counterinsurgency] operations...Political, social, and economic programs are usually more valuable than conventional military operations in addressing the root causes of conflict and undermining an insurgency.”⁶ In conjunction with the CJTF-HOA, the mechanisms for achieving U.S. policy goals include the provision of humanitarian assistance by the Department of State and the US Agency for International Development (USAID), funding for international organizations and non-governmental organizations (NGOs), and perhaps most importantly, the establishment of the new Unified Combatant Command for the African continent (AFRICOM). American policy also emphasizes the need for a strong diplomatic relationship with Somalia’s neighbors, Kenya, Ethiopia and

⁶ U.S. Army, *Counterinsurgency Field Manual*, Ch. 2, par. 2-2, December 2006.

Djibouti. It remains to be seen whether the efforts of the CJTF-HOA can dissipate local perceptions that America is hostile to Islamic interests.

Winning Hearts and Minds in the Horn

Established in October 2002, the CJTF-HOA consists of around 1,500 members, representing each branch of the US military, civilians, coalition forces, and partner nations. The CJTF-HOA concentrates its activities in Djibouti, Kenya, and Ethiopia, especially in the areas alongside the Somalia border. It is headquartered at Camp Lemonier in Djibouti. As stated by its Public Affairs office, “The mission [of the CJTF-HOA] is focused on detecting, disrupting and ultimately defeating transnational terrorist groups operating in the region...CJTF-HOA counters the re-emergence of transnational terrorism in the region through civil-military operations and support of non-governmental organization operations, enhancing the long-term stability of the region.”⁷ Sergeant First Class Carl Miller, an Army Reservist, elaborates; “Our job here is, other than to draw out the terrorists and kill them...to show the people here there are better ways than what the terrorists have to offer.”⁸

The Task Force relies on Civil Affairs teams to help select and undertake civil-military operations in local communities. Types of operations include: short-range humanitarian programs, immediate impact military civic action projects, emergency services, and support to civil administration. Task Force members team up with local villagers to build schools, dig wells, and construct clinics. For many of these projects

⁷ CJTF-HOA Public Affairs Office, “Fact Sheet, U.S. Central Command Combined Joint Task Force-Horn of Africa,” April 2006.

⁸ Philip A. Fortnam, “Teacher/Soldier Fights Global War on Terrorism with Books and Pencils,” Combined Joint Task Force-Horn of Africa, Oct. 22, 2006. Found at: <http://www.hoa.centcom.mil/Stories/Oct06/20061022-001.html>.

CJTF-HOA provides funding and then contracts with local residents to complete the construction. As of 2006 the Task Force had completed 85 projects, including schools, health clinics, and wells.

Other aspects of the Task Force activity include Medical Civic Action Programs (MEDCAP) and Veterinary Civic Action Programs (VETCAP). For these missions, a small team travels to remote locations to provide medical care to the residents (and livestock) by setting up a temporary clinic. Over the course of a few days, the programs treat a few thousand residents. For example, one MEDCAP mission in Djibouti provided primary healthcare to 2,000 people over a period of two weeks.⁹ Specialist Jason Crohan, a medic, commented, “We did something in each village to bring hope, and all of us could feel the immediate impact with what we were doing.”¹⁰

The motivating assumption underlying the CJTF-HOA is that its projects will generate goodwill toward America and reduce local support for terrorists and Islamist factions. United States Senator Barack Obama confirmed this strategy during a September 2006 visit to Camp Lemonier: “The enthusiasm and appreciation of people shown in Ethiopia is indicative of the good will generated when we participate in these kinds of activities.” As a member of the Task Force elaborated, “We’re winning hearts and minds, hands down. So if al Qaeda were to move into this area, the people here would choose to side with us.”¹¹

⁹ Jason Moore, “Expeditionary Medical Force Helps with Medical Support to Djiboutian Citizens,” Combined Joint Task Force-Horn of Africa, Oct. 11, 2006. Found at: <http://www.hoa.centcom.mil/Stories/Oct06/20061011-001.html>.

¹⁰ Doug Sims, “Soldiers Provide Aid Alongside Medical and Veterinary Personnel,” Combined Joint Task Force-Horn of Africa, Oct. 5, 2006. Found at: <http://www.hoa.centcom.mil/Stories/Oct06/20061005-001.htm>.

¹¹ Donna Miles, “Horn of Africa Troops Working to Stem Terror Before It Takes Root,” American Forces Press Service, Oct. 25, 2006. Found at: <http://www.hoa.centcom.mil/Stories/Oct06/20061025-001.html>.

Humanitarian Concerns

Many NGOs, however, express skepticism that missions such as the Horn of Africa Task Force can be compatible with traditional humanitarian activity. NGOs typically stress three guiding principles in their work: neutrality, impartiality, and independence. Neutrality requires an organization to refrain from taking sides in a conflict. Impartiality means basing the provision of aid solely upon need of the recipients. Independence ensures that governments do not influence the decision-making and actions of the NGO. These three principles are viewed as both core values and as practical protection measures. David Curtis, head of mission for Médecins Sans Frontières (MSF) in Somalia, explains: “When military and humanitarian groups are doing similar work it is hard for people...to differentiate between them. Yet the objectives of the two are utterly dissimilar; humanitarian agencies aid the population without taking sides and based on need, while the US military serve their own political and military objectives alone. The two are incompatible.”¹²

In contrast to the humanitarian ethos, the CJTF-HOA does not provide assistance based solely on need and does not claim to function independently of political considerations. The Army’s new field manual on counterinsurgency recognizes that many NGOs “do not want to be too closely associated with military forces because they need to preserve their perceived neutrality.” The guidelines go on to assert that “there is no such thing as impartial humanitarian assistance” in counterinsurgency operations.¹³ As Rear Admiral Richard W. Hunt, current commander of CJTF-HOA, explained to a group of thirty NGO representatives in June 2006, “Countering the transnational terrorist

¹² Médecins Sans Frontières, “Ethiopia’s Somali Region Falls Further into the Mire,” MSF report, Dec. 22, 2004. Found at www.msf.org.

¹³ U.S. Army, *Counterinsurgency Field Manual*, Appendix A, par. A-46 and 47, December 2006

movement is the centerpiece of the CJTF-HOA mission, and...the civil affairs and humanitarian projects are prioritized based on their potential to counter terrorist ideology in the region.”¹⁴

Humanitarians express concern that militarized charity does not effectively provide assistance to the neediest populations. For example, in Ethiopia’s Somali region ten percent of children die at birth and tuberculosis rages at five times the level that qualifies as an epidemic. USAID warned in July 2006 that more than 7 million people faced famine in Ethiopia, Kenya, and Somalia.¹⁵ Although its budget for fiscal year 2007 is \$49 million, the projects financed by the CJTF-HOA serve only a miniscule proportion of that needy population.¹⁶

A related concern is that the military-backed projects boost troop morale more than they help the local residents. In the last fifteen years humanitarian NGOs have intentionally moved away from a ‘feel good’ approach to assistance and focused more on effectiveness. That change reflects the realization in the humanitarian community that good intentions cannot ensure good outcomes—and in some instances actually contribute to negative outcomes. NGO hiring guidelines now stress professional qualifications rather than just a sincere desire to help others. The CJTF-HOA does not seem to have drawn on those lessons in developing its programs. For example, Army Specialist Eric Hayes, a member of the 478th Civil Affairs Battalion, described the attractions of

¹⁴ David Westover, “Horn of Africa Task Force Hosts First-Ever NGO Conference,” Combined Joint Task Force-Horn of Africa, June 19, 2006. Found at: <http://www.hoa.centcom.mil/Stories/June06/20060623-001.htm>.

¹⁵ Médecins Sans Frontières, “Ethiopia’s Somali Region Falls Further into the Mire,” MSF article, Dec. 22, 2004. Found at www.msf.org; and U.S. Department of State, “USAID Fact Sheet: Horn of Africa Complex Emergency,” July 5, 2006.

¹⁶ Email communication from Maj Kelley Thibodeau, Director, CJTF-HOA Public Affairs, Jan. 20, 2007.

engaging with the local community: “It fulfills me.”¹⁷ Similarly, Army Sergeant Rebecca Queen commented on her experience painting a school in Djibouti, “I thought it would be fun and something out of the ordinary...But I found it interesting and want to do more projects like this one.” Marine Corps Lance Corporal Manuel Montoya concurred, “It feels good.”¹⁸

It is extremely difficult to evaluate the success of the hearts and minds programs in terms of either humanitarian or political impact. The impediments to measuring outcomes could encourage a tendency to overstate the positive impact of the CJTF-HOA. For example, in one project, Task Force members spent two days with local residents rehabilitating a soccer field. At the conclusion of the project, Marine Staff Sergeant William E. Potts commented, “It’s a rewarding feeling to know you’re helping someone out.” The project culminated in a soccer match between the Americans and the Djiboutians.¹⁹ In the absence of confirming evidence, however, it certainly seems possible that the Task Force may be overestimating the long-term political effect of a soccer field.

Aid workers also increasingly worry about their own security in volatile regions. In Afghanistan, for example, militants have killed dozens of aid workers, often claiming that the NGOs are allied with the NATO forces. In situations where soldiers function as aid workers, humanitarian organizations fear that their own personnel could become

¹⁷Donna Miles, “Horn of Africa Troops Working to Stem Terror Before It Takes Root,” American Forces Press Service, Oct. 25, 2006. Found at: <http://www.hoa.centcom.mil/Stories/Oct06/20061025-001.html>.

¹⁸ CJTF-HOA Public Affairs, “Marine Company Completes Projects, Tour in Horn of Africa,” Combined Joint Task Force-Horn of Africa, Sept. 16, 2006. Found at: <http://www.hoa.centcom.mil/Stories/Sep06/20060915-001.html>.

¹⁹

targets. Thus far, however, that dynamic seems weaker in the Horn of Africa than in Afghanistan and Iraq.

In addition to the values of neutrality, impartiality, and independence, many humanitarian organizations have embraced what can be characterized as the “do no harm” philosophy. Advanced by Mary Anderson in the 1990s, this perspective seeks to identify and prevent the potential negative effects of humanitarian aid.²⁰ Such effects can include: contributing to a war economy, disrupting local markets and prices, legitimizing unsavory leaders, and fostering dependency. In recent years many NGOs have developed evaluation mechanisms and standards of operation to counteract those effects. While one cannot expect a military operation to adhere to the NGOs’ values of neutrality, impartiality, and independence, the “do no harm” philosophy provides a helpful metric for evaluating outcomes from both a humanitarian and political standpoint. Bearing that in mind, the following guidelines suggest ways in which military operations can incorporate the ‘do no harm’ approach in their activities.

“Do No Harm”

Complementarity

For the purposes of the CJTF-HOA, complementarity means engaging in projects that complement the activities of other organizations. Many NGOs have developed impressive expertise and specific areas of competence. If an NGO is training local healthcare providers, the CJTF-HOA can organize the construction of a clinic. Similarly, before erecting a school, the Task Force should make sure that it will have teachers and

²⁰ Mary B. Anderson, *Do No Harm; How Aid Can Support Peace—or War*, (Boulder: Lynne Rienner Publishers, Inc., 1999).

books. Building a health clinic or school in the absence of a sustainable source of supplies and personnel wastes resources and creates resentment among the local population. In large part, providing complementary services for each project extends beyond the competency of the CJTF-HOA. Thus, partnerships with local or international organizations are essential for long-term success.

Planners of the CJTF-HOA do not envision the Task Force as a lone actor in the Horn. The assumption behind the Task Force is that the combination of military action with humanitarian and political effort creates a force multiplier effect to advance US goals. As Marine Major General Timothy Ghormley, former commander of the CJTF-HOA explained, “We have a very good working relationship with USAID...We provide the impact, they provide the sustainability. We build a school; they provide the teachers and the books.”²¹ USAID established the Office of Military Affairs in 2005 with a budget of \$1.2 million to coordinate with the military by assigning a senior USAID staff member to each of the five geographic Combatant Commands.²² Presumably, the newly formed AFRICOM will also have a USAID liaison.

The United States Agency for International Development (USAID) provides the bulk of American civilian assistance to the Horn of Africa countries. USAID commitments for 2006 totaled over \$354 million (see Fig. 1). Most of that aid takes the form of the Food for Peace Program (FFP) which donates surplus agricultural production. The Food for Peace program was established in 1954 to meet the dual goals of ameliorating world hunger and providing economic assistance to American farmers. This

²¹ Jim Garamone, “U.S. Servicemembers ‘Waging Peace’ on Horn of Africa,” *American Forces Press Services*, Jan. 3 2006.

²² Rhoda Margesson, “International Crises and Disasters: U.S. Humanitarian Assistance, Budget Trends, and Issues for Congress,” *CRS Report for Congress*, Dec. 21, 2006, 8.

food aid supplies valuable immediate assistance in famine situations. In assessing the wider issue of food security, however, FFP assistance functions only as a short-term solution. Thus the budget figures for total US government aid to the Horn of Africa are significantly reduced when the FFP aid is subtracted.

Fig. 1 United States government aid to the Horn of Africa, FY 2006²³

Country	Food aid (Food for Peace)	UN/NGO contracts	Refugees (Dept. of State)	Total assistance
Djibouti	2,089,300	200,000	--	2,289,300
Ethiopia	138,697,700	15,601,905	4,078,907	158,378,512
Kenya	85,710,600	4,813,521	11,467,305	101,991,426
Somalia	81,400,000	6,418,412	4,070,000	91,888,412

As it addresses concerns about complementarity, the CJTF-HOA could learn from some of the debates concerning the Food for Peace program. A major point of contention is that in-kind donations of food replace, rather than complement, local initiatives. In addition, the FFP program requires that 75% of US food aid tonnage must be shipped on US flagged vessels.²⁴ Proponents of local purchase programs, such as the European Union, argue that in-kind donations are inefficient and distort local markets. The United States defends the need for in-kind donations, although the Bush administration has softened its position on the role of monetary assistance. Andrew Natsios, Administrator of USAID, argues that an entirely local purchase program “would have a total collapse of

²³ USAID, “Horn of Africa (Djibouti, Ethiopia, Kenya, & Somalia,” Situation Report #29, Fiscal Year (FY) 2006, Sept. 21, 2006.

²⁴ Margesson, “International Crises,” 8.

food assistance in the world.”²⁵ In response to this debate, the current Bush administration proposal is to use 25% of the FFP money for local purchase programs.

At the headquarters level, the coordinators of the Food for Peace program view it as a component of counterterrorism efforts. The drafters of the most recent FFP strategic plan assert that the program contributes to the broader State Department goals of conflict resolution and regional stability: “Because of its focus on improving livelihoods and increasing community resiliency in the countries and communities most vulnerable to food insecurity, the [FFP] program will also contribute to the ‘Counterterrorism’ strategic goal and to ‘Stable political and economic conditions that prevent terrorism from flourishing in fragile or failing states.”²⁶ The assumption is that food security programs financed by USAID are an effective counterterrorism tool.

The extent to which cooperative relationships among the CJTF-HOA, USAID, and humanitarian organizations succeed, however, depends on the individual NGO or community organization approached by the military. For the most part, USAID employees are not in the field building schools and training teachers. The US government contracts with UN agencies and NGOs to provide services such as water, sanitation, and medical care.²⁷ Some humanitarian organizations refuse to work with the military as a matter of principle. Security fears also discourage NGOs and UN agencies from a visible partnership with military actors. Recognizing those hindrances, the CJTF-HOA should focus on establishing cooperative relationships with those organizations that are most

²⁵ US Department of State, “Briefing by USAID Administrator Natsios and Deputy US Trade Representative Bhatia,” Hong Kong, Dec. 14, 2005.

²⁶ Office of Food for Peace, Bureau for Democracy, Conflict and Humanitarian Assistance, “Strategic Plan for 2006-2010,” May 2005, 30.

²⁷ USAID Map, “FY 2006 USG Programs in the Horn of Africa,” June 13, 2006.

receptive to partnerships. In addition to international NGOs, receptive organizations may include local community groups which value the resources provided by the Task Force.

Another way for the military to complement existing humanitarian operations is to work in areas underserved by the NGOs. Currently the CJTF-HOA concentrates its activities in Kenya and Ethiopia along the insecure Somalia border. Because of the region's remoteness and volatility, fewer NGOs operate there than in other areas in the Horn.²⁸ Such geographic separation reduces the security risk to aid workers and diminishes the overlap between civilian and military operations.

Sustainability

Certain projects, such as vaccination campaigns, are easily accomplished in a short time. Other projects, however, require a sustainable commitment to succeed. For example, one Task Force project involved the installation of a pump in a drought afflicted Ethiopian village. The purchase of the 14-horsepower pump created an immediate success, but over the longer-term it is unclear how the villagers will procure spare parts and maintain and repair the pump. Africa is littered with rusted, broken-down equipment donated with the best of intentions, but without long-term planning.

For many Task Force missions, sustainability will also require an effort at complementarity. In other instances, repeated follow-up by the Task Force may foster durable success. Such follow-up could include regular visits to past project sites. Although this may limit the total number of missions, it will improve the quality of those

²⁸ UNOCHA Map of Ethiopia, "Who, What, Where, Nutrition Activities by Implementing Agencies," Sept. 2006; and UNOCHA Map of Ethiopia, "Who, What, Where, Health Activities by Implementing Agencies," Sept. 2006.

undertaken. Incorporating measures that ensure future sustainability should also create lasting, rather than ephemeral, goodwill toward the United States.

Comparative Advantage

The ‘do no harm’ principle suggests focusing on areas in which the military has a comparative advantage such as natural disaster relief, logistics, and operating in insecure environments. The Department of Defense rightly claims that “the DoD is unmatched in regard to command and control, logistics, transportation, and communications, and in the amount of cargo able to be transported by available air or sealift.”²⁹ For example, the CJTF-HOA offered invaluable emergency assistance during floods that struck the region in August 2006. Seabees from Naval Mobile Construction Battalion 5 aided the Ethiopian National Defense Force in building tent shelters for the displaced. NGOs, such as CARE and the International Rescue Committee, coordinated with the government and military to provide water treatment, medical care, food and other supplies. The Air Force delivered humanitarian assistance to Ethiopian flood victims and the crew of a C-130 Hercules aircraft moved nearly 100 tons of supplies into Gode, Ethiopia over a four-day period. The Task Force’s comparative advantage in airlift and logistics ensured a more timely delivery of assistance. The operation also allowed the Americans to cooperate with local government forces and demonstrated that during natural disasters, NGOs often welcome this assistance and work cooperatively with military forces.³⁰

²⁹ US Department of Defense, “Fiscal Year 2007 Budget Estimates, Overseas Humanitarian, Disaster, and Civic Aid, Defense (OHDACA),” February 2006, 9.

³⁰ Ann P. Knabe, “379th Expeditionary Wing Airmen Support Flood Relief Operations in Ethiopia,” 379th Air Expeditionary Wing Public Affairs, Nov. 21, 2006. Found at: <http://www.hoa.centcom.mil/Stories/Nov06/20061121-001.html>; and Robert Palomares, “Seabees Help Flood Victims with Temporary Shelter,” Combined Joint Task Force-Horn of Africa, Aug. 20, 2006. Found at: <http://www.hoa.centcom.mil/Stories/Aug06/20060821-002.html>.

Relative Neutrality

Many NGOs criticize military provision of humanitarian assistance because of its inherent lack of neutrality. Unlike humanitarian NGOs, missions such as the CJTF-HOA do not engage in aid projects with the goal of remaining neutral. In fact, the opposite is usually true—the aid projects are explicitly designed to further political and military goals. The debate over neutrality raises the question of whether military involvement in aid projects, such as the CJTF-HOA, is inevitably polluted and undermined by a lack of neutrality.

Even the NGO community, however, is divided over whether neutrality should be valued as an end in itself, or whether it is useful merely as a means to provide aid successfully and safely. In its traditional formulation, neutrality requires an organization to refrain from taking sides in a conflict. Some NGOs, such as Médecins sans Frontières, condemn cooperation between aid organizations and government as injurious to the humanitarian imperatives of impartiality, neutrality, and independence. At the same time, other NGOs, such as CARE and the International Rescue Committee, continue to accept millions of dollars in government funding.

An examination of the goals and actions of the Task Force suggests that non-neutrality does not necessarily doom such military undertakings. From a military perspective, the success of hearts and minds operations, such as the CJTF-HOA, does not depend on neutrality. Success depends on favorable perceptions by the targets of the assistance missions. Such favorable perceptions require the appearance of *relative* neutrality. That is to say, Task Force members should seem to focus on humanitarian

activity rather than counterterrorism intelligence gathering. Local residents should feel that the benefits of the American presence outweigh the potential negative aspects.

Unfortunately for the hearts and minds operations in the Horn, the Ethiopian invasion of Somalia made public the presence of US Special Operations forces in the region. The activity of Special Operations forces in such proximity to the CJTF-HOA will reinforce local suspicions that the Task Force harbors ulterior motives. The difficulty of separating militarized charity from more traditional counterterrorism activity is likely to significantly reduce the effectiveness of the CJTF-HOA.

The Role of AFRICOM

The most significant American involvement in Africa, including the Horn, is likely to come through the new Unified Combatant Command for Africa (AFRICOM). According to the Department of Defense “AFRICOM’s mission will be to promote U.S. strategic objectives by working with African states and regional organizations to help strengthen stability and security in the region through improved security capability, military professionalization, and accountable governance.”³¹ Prior to the establishment of AFRICOM, military responsibility for Africa was divided among three regional Combatant Commands. Many observers think that AFRICOM signals a rising strategic interest in Africa, primarily due to the threat of terrorism and growing reliance on African oil.

The gathering of all US military activity under one command may undermine the Task Force’s hearts and minds efforts. It is probable that the perceived neutrality of the

³¹ Lauren Ploch, “Africa Command: U.S. Strategic Interests an the Role of the U.S. Military in Africa,” *CRS Report for Congress*, May 16, 2007, 1-2.

Task Force will be damaged by other U.S. activities in the region that do not have a humanitarian component. For example, the East African Counter-Terrorism Initiative (EACTI) provides \$100 million to states in the Horn of Africa for military training, increased border security, and other counter-terrorism measures.³² It seems unlikely that the local villagers would be able to distinguish among the various types of American military actors and their intentions.

In establishing AFRICOM, military planners are seeking closer cooperation with the Department of State and plan to staff the command with a relatively large proportion of civilian staff. This suggests that the Pentagon may rely more on political and humanitarian activity than in the past. The success of those activities requires addressing the issues of complementarity, sustainability, comparative advantage, and relative neutrality. The community of humanitarian organizations has spent many years learning from its mistakes and developing guidelines for aid practitioners. These lessons have been hard-won, often as a result of a tragic misuse of aid or the unforeseen negative results of humanitarian programs. It is unclear whether the military has drawn on this substantial literature in crafting its own programs. Despite the many differences in culture, goals, and organization between military and humanitarian agencies, the lessons learned by the UN and NGOs may prove valuable to the Combined Joint Task Force in the Horn of Africa and similar future missions.

³² Jessica Piombo, "Terrorism and U.S. Counter-Terrorism Programs in Africa: An Overview," *Strategic Insights*, vol. VI, no. 1 (Jan. 2007).