

Security Cooperation as Remote Warfare: The US in the Horn of Africa

Written by Rubrick Biegón and and Tom Watts

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<https://www.e-ir.info/2021/02/26/security-cooperation-as-remote-warfare-the-us-in-the-horn-of-africa/>

RUBRICK BIEGÓN AND AND TOM WATTS, FEB 26 2021

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Speaking in 2007, US Defense Secretary Robert Gates argued that the ‘most important military component in the War on Terror is not the fighting we do ourselves, but how well we enable and empower our partners to defend and govern themselves’ (Gates 2007).[1] Consistent with this claim, the Bush, Obama and Trump administrations have all engaged in a variety of efforts to build the capacity of foreign security forces to address security-related threats. This has required the Department of Defense (DOD) to develop a broad spectrum of bilateral and multilateral military activities under the rubric of security cooperation. These activities, of which the more widely debated security force assistance is a subset,[2] have been a critical component of contemporary US foreign and counterterrorism policy (Biddle, Macdonald and Baker 2017; Stokes and Waterman 2017; Tankel 2018b). They are also integral to the debates on remote warfare (Watson and Knowles 2019; Watts and Biegón 2017, 2019). Security cooperation is defined by the Pentagon as all

[...] interactions, programmes, and activities with foreign security forces (FSF) and their institutions to build relationships that help promote US interests; enable partner nations (PNs) to provide the US access to territory, infrastructure, information, and resources; and/or to build and apply their capacity and capabilities consistent with US defense objectives. (Joint Chiefs of Staff 2017, v)

(Joint Chiefs of Staff 2017, v)

This chapter introduces security cooperation as a tool of remote warfare, both in a general sense and in the specific case of US counterterrorism operations in the Horn of Africa. We argue that there is a twin security/strategic logic to its use: it functions to build the capacity of foreign security forces to deny terrorist organisations safe havens within their own borders or region; and to help secure American access to bases, airspace and foreign security personnel, ‘thicken’ political partnerships with overseas governments and to create new patterns of cooperation, influence and leverage.[3]

The notion that security cooperation is ‘political’ is not novel. It underpins much of the recent practitioner-oriented literature on the limits of recent Western partner capacity building efforts (Biddle, Macdonald and Baker 2017; Matissek 2018; Reno 2018; Tankel 2018b). A greater focus on the politics animating the use of security cooperation activities rather than the politics of the agents receiving this assistance, however, provides an alternative calculus for revisiting the debates on their effectiveness. Much of the existing academic-practitioner dialogue on US security cooperation activities in the Horn of Africa has focused on the failures to build capacity in Somali and regional security agents (Reno 2018; Ross 2018; Williams 2019). When the political dimensions of US military assistance are discussed, it is usually within the context of how misalignments in the political interests of the US and recipient have undermined the efficacy of partner building efforts. We argue that this is problematic because a greater sensitivity to the *twin* security and strategic logics of security cooperation can potentially help us better understand the apparent puzzle of why these activities have persisted despite their well-documented military failures.

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To be clear, we are not arguing that it is only the strategic logics of security cooperation which explain their use, nor are we arguing that the various forms of access their use generates offsets the failure to build partner capacity. Moreover, we are sensitive to the methodological challenges of documenting the relationship between security cooperation and securing the different forms of access discussed above, aware that there is not necessarily a clear 'transmission belt' between the two. Nonetheless, as we document through engagement with various primary source material, reference to the Cold War era use of military assistance, and the empirical study of contemporary US counterterrorism operations in the Horn of Africa, the use of security cooperation as a tool of remote warfare can be understood to have supported the pursuit of wider strategic goals.

Our analysis unfolds in three stages. Section 1 introduces the major trends in post-war military assistance with a particular focus on the Bush, Obama and Trump presidencies. Section 2 unpacks the twin security and strategic logics of security cooperation as an instrument of remote warfare. This framework is used in the final section of this chapter to examine the role of security cooperation in US counterterrorism operations in the Horn of Africa. Somalia, our principal case study, has been the centre of American security cooperation activities in Africa during the last decade (Ross 2018). It is also emblematic of the US' support for 'Fabergé egg militaries' which are 'expensive, shiny, and easy to break' (Matisek 2018, 278–279). Whilst their use has been greater in Somalia than in military operations elsewhere in Africa, this case is recognised to be representative of the wider demand for, and use of, security cooperation in fragile states (Reno 2018, 498).

Security Cooperation in US Foreign Policy: From the Cold War to Trump

Military assistance, of which security cooperation is one component, has long been a key tool of American foreign policy.[4] The US is estimated to have provided military assistance to over 100 states after 1945 (Kuzmarov 2017). During the Cold War, an estimated \$390 billion was spent on military and developmental assistance (Matisek 2018, 273). This served multiple strategic purposes. Beyond helping partners defend against communist expansion, it was a key conduit through which the US stabilised access to overseas markets (Kolko 1988) and helped secure access to overseas bases (Kuzmarov 2017).

As Defence Secretary Robert McNamara told Congress during the 1960s, the US provided military aid because 'military officers were the coming leaders of their nations. It is beyond price to the United States to make friends with such men' (House of Representatives 1963, 291). Military assistance, he emphasised, generated 'important economic by-products for our foreign policy with respect to the stability and economic progress of the less developed and emerging nations' and helped secure 'access to overseas bases and installations' (House of Representatives 1963, 60). All three of these dynamics were apparent in in the Horn of Africa. Prior to the communist coup which overthrew Emperor Haile Selassie in 1974, Ethiopia had received \$286 million worth of military aid following the Second World War (Kuzmarov 2017). Thereafter, as the patterns of material support were reordered to reflect the region's new political landscape, the flow of military assistance was redirected toward neighbouring Somalia (Oberdorfer 1977). As the *Washington Post* candidly reported at the time, the US agreed to 'provide \$40 million in weapons in return for the use of Somali air bases and ports' (J. Ross 1981).

Such practices continued after the Cold War. Military assistance has been integral to post-9/11 efforts to deny transnational terrorist organisations safe havens in fragile states (Biddle et al. 2017; Ryan 2019; Tankel 2018b; Watts and Biegon 2017). Billions of dollars were spent by the US and its coalition partners training, equipping and advising tens of thousands of Afghani and Iraqi soldiers as part of the counterinsurgency campaigns in both countries. Whilst these activities have been smaller in scale, military assistance has also been central to what Maria Ryan has coined the 'War on Terror on the periphery' (Ryan 2019, 2020). Key for counterterrorism operations in Africa were the shifts laid out in the 2006 Quadrennial Defence Review, a highly influential defence planning document which distilled the Pentagon's evolving approach to irregular warfare (Ryan 2019, 144–152). It outlined a number of important adjustments to US defence strategy, including a shift from larger-scale military interventions toward fighting 'multiple irregular, asymmetric operations' (DOD 2006, vii). This required:

Maintaining a long-term, low-visibility presence in many areas of the world where [US] forces do not traditionally operate. Building and leveraging partner capacity will also be an absolutely essential part of this approach, and the

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employment of surrogates will be a necessary method for achieving many goals. Working indirectly with and through others, and thereby denying popular support to the enemy, will help to transform the character of the conflict. (DOD 2006, 23)

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(DOD, 2006, 23)

These commitments remained a core component of Obama's counterterrorism policies. The 2012 Defence Strategic Review, for example, placed the training, equipping and advising of foreign security forces at the centre of the ongoing war against al-Qaeda. 'As US forces draw down in Afghanistan', the document detailed, 'global counter terrorism efforts will become more widely distributed and will be characterised by a mix of direct action and security force assistance' (DOD 2012, 4). Speaking to the twin security/strategic logics of Security cooperation, the Obama administration's influential Presidential Policy Directive on Security Sector Assistance noted how security cooperation related activities were designed to accomplish more than just strengthening the security and governance capacity of partners. They also worked to 'promote partner support for US interests' including 'military access to airspace and basing rights; improved interoperability and training opportunities; and cooperation on law enforcement, counterterrorism, counternarcotics', amongst other policy areas (The White House 2013).

Despite the rollback of some Obama-era restraints on the use of force, the Trump administration has retained security cooperation as a key counterterrorism tool (Biegon and Watts 2020). The 2018 National Strategy for Counterterrorism restated the importance of 'augment[ing] the capabilities of key foreign partners to conduct critical counterterrorism activities' (The White House 2018, 23), which remained an essential component to the military response against transnational terrorist organisations. Institutionalising a process which can be traced to Obama's 'pivot to Asia', the Trump administration has recalibrated the overall strategic direction of US defence policy. According to the 2017 National Security Strategy, China and Russia 'are actively competing against the United States and our allies and partners' (The White House 2017, 25).

The (re)emergence of great power competition as an organising lens for American foreign policy creates new uncertainties, including for the trajectory of remote warfare. According to Stephen Tankel (2018a), with the Trump administration 'focus[ing] more on great power conflict and rogue regimes, security cooperation with, and assistance to, allies and partners will remain critical for achieving global defense objectives.' Indeed, both the 2017 National Security Strategy and the 2018 National Defense Strategy emphasise the continued importance of such activities in tackling transnational security challenges in Africa while adding that they also have value in 'limit[ing] the malign influence of non-African powers' in the region (Department of Defence 2018, 10; see also The White House 2017, 52). Thus, whilst the immediate focus of these activities may be reoriented to reflect the new strategic focus on great power competition, security cooperation will likely remain an important instrument in the American foreign and counterterrorism policy toolbox.

Conceptualising Security Cooperation as a Tool of Remote Warfare

At the core of the current debate on remote warfare is the trend towards countering security threats at a greater physical, political and strategic distance. The Oxford Research Group defines remote warfare as a 'term that describes approaches to combat that do not require the deployment of large numbers of your own ground troops' (Knowles and Watson 2018, 2). Whilst there has been somewhat of a 'pick-and-mix' approach to the way these have been catalogued, a variety of tactical practices have been studied under this label, including manned and unmanned airpower, military assistance, cyber operations, intelligence sharing, private military security contractors and special operations forces (SOF). Whilst Western states may conduct direct combat operations against shared security challenges, they do so from the air or with elite SOF units, not their conventional ground forces. The bulk of the fighting is instead delegated to local security agents whose military capacity is strengthened through security

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cooperation and tailored packages of operational support, often comprising embedded SOF advisors, airpower and intelligence sharing (Knowles and Watson 2018, 2-3).

When situated within this debate, security cooperation offers the attractive prospect of shaping the security situation on the ground, particularly in sites like Somalia where important, but not vital, security interests are threatened. Security cooperation can help build the capacity of partnered security agents to conduct military operations to a standard or scale that surpasses earlier capabilities, thus enabling them to better tackle shared security challenges (Biddle et al. 2017, 100). This intuitive security logic has two dimensions. On the one hand, it constitutes an effort to improve the capacity of some foreign security agents to deny transnational terrorist organisations ungoverned spaces from which to operate (Tankel 2018b, 101). On the other, it provides a means of enabling other foreign security agents to participate in coalition operations alongside or in place of American forces (Ross 2016, 96-97). What binds the security logic of security cooperation as a tool of remote warfare is that, in theory if not necessarily practice, it can 'reduce the need for US troops to do the fighting by improving the ally's ability to do this themselves' (Biddle et al. 2017, 91-92).

Beyond this, security cooperation also has strategic logics. Andrew Shapiro, former Assistant Secretary of State for Political-Military Affairs, notes how cooperation on sensitive defence issues strengthens the diplomatic relationship between the US and the recipient state, creating new patterns of cooperation, dependency and leverage (Shapiro 2012, 29-31). Whilst security cooperation does not automatically translate into influence, it can 'help tie a country's security sector to the United States' and create 'strong incentives for the recipient countries to maintain close relations, both in times of stability and in crisis' (Shapiro 2012, 30-31). Furthermore, it can help secure geographical and political-technical access, a principle which is recognised in the Joint Publication 3-20 which notes how security cooperation activities 'supports US military campaign and contingency plans with necessary access, critical infrastructure, and [partner nation] support' (Joint Chiefs of Staff 2017, v-vi).

This geographical access takes multiple forms and is not restricted to just overseas basing rights. As noted in the wider literature, it can also include access to *airspace* to conduct aerial reconnaissance and strike operations; *foreign military personnel*, to build partner capacity, participate in joint counterterrorism raids and provide intelligence; and *transit*, whether this be intended to conduct military operations in a neighbouring state or to resupply US combat forces in theatre (Tankel 2018b, 105-107). In this way, the strategic logics of security cooperation can help provide the US with territorial access to partnering countries, but also a degree of technical access to those partnering security agents that, under remote warfare, do the majority of frontline fighting.

To reiterate, the provision of military assistance does not automatically translate into direct influence (Ross 2016, 94). As understood through the lens of principal-agent theory (Biddle et al. 2017), political dynamics are central to the effectiveness of partner building efforts. Questions of efficacy flow from the substantial agency loss involved in the use of these programmes, as seen in the challenges generated by adverse selection problems, interest asymmetries and the difficulties in monitoring how military training and equipment is used by recipients (Biddle et al. 2017). In contested sites of security cooperation such as Somalia, there can also be competition amongst security cooperation providers for influence, further complicating matters. As one interviewee involved with British partner building efforts in Somalia put it, 'when you're there as a team of 15 you don't have automatic influence [...] so you need time to build relationships instead. You're there competing with other internationals for influence' (quoted in Watson and Knowles 2019, 3).

Even in such situations, however, security cooperation activities can help generate the different forms of access outlined above. As Knowles and Watson document, for a comparatively modest investment in manpower and resources the United Kingdom was able to secure access into the operations and intelligence room at AMISOM via its partner building efforts in Somalia: 'a high level of access – which could lead to more effective partnerships in the future' (Knowles and Watson 2018, 4). In addition to the political dynamics intrinsic *within* the delivery of security cooperation which impact the effectiveness of associated programmes, the political context informing the 'principal's' decision to provide the 'agent' with assistance are thus also worthy of consideration.

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The external training, equipping and advising of African security forces is not new. European powers relied heavily on locally-raised militaries to augment their own ground forces throughout the age of empire (Johnson 2017, 173–194). During the Cold War, the US government provided military assistance to states across the Horn of Africa (Kuzmarov 2017). The region was a site of acute East-West competition, with both superpowers active in advancing their respective ideological and geopolitical interests across the region (Makinda 1982, 98–101). The provision of military assistance had both security and strategic logics. It was intended to help maintain access to air and naval facilities in Ethiopia and later Somalia; defend the internal stability of partner governments; and maintain the openness of the strategically important Bab-el-Mandeb waterway, a key artery of global trade (Lewis 1987, 3). This effort to manage security challenges in the Horn of Africa from ‘over the horizon’ was given further impetus by the deaths of eighteen Army Rangers during the 1993 Battle of Mogadishu, popularly known as the ‘Black Hawk Down’ incident. As Robert Patman (2015) has argued, the resultant ‘Somalia Syndrome’ generated a profound scepticism about intervening on the ground in humanitarian crises, shaping later remote warfare campaigns in Africa.

Following the 9/11 attacks, Bush administration officials feared that al-Qaeda’s senior leadership would relocate to the Horn of Africa following their expulsion from Afghanistan (Ryan 2019, 82–83). Based at Camp Lemonnier in Djibouti, the Combined Joint Task Force-Horn of Africa (CJTF-HOA) was created in October 2002 to coordinate counterterrorism activities throughout the region with a strong focus on building partner capacity and civil-military operations (Ryan 2019, 85–88). Following its breakaway from the Islamic Courts Union in 2006 against the backdrop of the US-backed Ethiopian invasion of Somalia, al-Shabaab emerged as the principal target of CJTF-HOA’s activities. This al-Qaeda affiliated group has fought an effective insurgency against the Federal Government of Somalia and the African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM), the latter which was created in 2007 to support the nominal Somali state. Al-Shabaab has at times controlled large swathes of territory in central and southern Somalia, conducted terrorist attacks in neighbouring Kenya and Ethiopia, and infiltrated Somalia’s security and intelligence services (Reno 2018, 502–503).

Beginning in George W. Bush’s presidency, against the advice of local partners to keep a ‘low profile’ in order to minimise the risk to peacekeeping contingents (Wikileaks 2007a), successive US administrations have utilised Security cooperation alongside other remote practices of intervention.[5] In 2007 the DOD’s Joint Special Operations Command (JSOC) was authorised to conduct air strikes from manned/unmanned aircraft and conduct ‘kill/capture’ SOF raids against al-Shabaab’s senior leadership. By January 2017, between 32–36 covert strikes are reported to have been conducted, with the first drone strike reportedly occurring in June 2011 (the Bureau of Investigative Journalism 2017). Whilst disruptive, such strikes formed a small part of a larger package of intervention: ‘American strategy for containing and ultimately defeating al Shabaab relie[d] on AMISOM and the Somali National Army’ (Zimmerman, Meyer, Lahiff and Indermuehle 2017). This illustrates the centrality of security cooperation to this particular remote warfare campaign.

According to data provided by the Security Assistance Monitor (2019), Somalia was allocated at least \$248.6 million in military assistance in the period between FY 2006–2018.[6] In a 2009 diplomatic cable sent from the American embassy in Ethiopia, concerns were expressed about providing military support to the fledging Somali Transitional Federal Government without strengthening its capacity to govern and provide public services because such actions ‘raises US involvement in the morass of a Somali civil war in the name of counterterrorism’ (Wikileaks 2009a). In this spirit, it was not until 2013 that the Obama administration lifted restrictions on the provision of defence equipment and services to the Somali army (Ross 2018), with the effort to build capacity in the Somali National Army (SNA) gaining further momentum following the April 2015 announcement of the Guulwade (Victory) Plan which aimed to create a 10,900 strong person security force capable of facilitating AMISOM’s withdrawal from Somalia (Reno 2018, 500).

Despite these efforts, the SNA remained chronically undermanned, poorly led and badly equipped (Matissek 2018, 278–279). It was, in Paul Williams’ assessment, ‘an army in name only, largely confined to defensive and localised operations, unable to undertake a coherent national campaign, and often reliant on [others] for protection, securing its main supply routes, logistics support and casualty evacuation’ (Williams 2019, 2). The Lightning ‘Danab’ advanced infantry company, one of the few comparative successes of US partner building activities for example, generally operated separately from the SNA (Williams 2019, 2), and was reportedly insulated from the influence of

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some Somali government officials (Reno 2018, 508–509). Reflecting these and a myriad of other political, contextual and operational challenges (Williams 2019), the focus of American security cooperation efforts in the Horn of Africa concentrated on AMISOM.

The six AMISOM contributing states listed in Figure 1 received \$1.28 billion in military assistance between FY 2006-2018 (Security Assistance Monitor 2019).

| State | Year joined | AMISOM Peak | AMISOM troop contribution |
|--------------|-------------|-------------|---------------------------|
| Burundi | 2007 | 5,400 | |
| Djibouti | 2011 | 11,800 | |
| Ethiopia | 2014 | 44,400 | |
| Kenya | 2012 | 24,300 | |
| Sierra Leone | 2013 | 850 | |
| Uganda | 2007 | 6,200 | |

Figure 1: AMISOM troop contributing states.[7]

This assistance was provided both directly to AMISOM contributing states and indirectly via the United Nations Support Office in Somalia (Ross 2018). Examples of the first form of assistance include the use of the counterterrorism oriented Section 1206/Section 3333 programme (\$730.5 million) and the Counterterrorism Partnership Fund (\$59 million).[8] As a region, East Africa was also allocated \$275.9 million in Counterterrorism Partnership Fund assistance between FY 2015-2016 and \$112.2 million in Section 1207(n) Transitional Authority funds between FY's 2012-2014 (Security Assistance Monitor 2019).[9] Beyond this, AMISOM was also allocated at least \$2 billion in funding via the State Department's Peacekeeping Operations account (Security Assistance Monitor 2019). According to a 2014 White House factsheet, \$512 million had also been committed to support AMISOM via 'pre-deployment training, provision of military equipment, and advisors on the ground' (The White House 2014).

| State | Total US Military Assistance | Section 1206/Section 3333 | Counterterrorism Partnership Fund |
|--------------|------------------------------|---------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| Burundi | \$53.2 | \$34.7 | |
| Djibouti | \$77.4 | \$37.8 | |
| Ethiopia | \$121.5 | \$67.4 | \$18.7 |
| Kenya | \$628.3 | \$354.4 | \$31.4 |
| Sierra Leone | \$27.9 | \$0.1 | |
| Uganda | \$373.8 | \$236.1 | \$8.9 |
| Total | \$1,282.1 | \$730.5 | \$59 |

Figure 2: US military assistance to AMISOM contributing states FY2006-2018 in millions of \$.[10]

Consistent with the use of security cooperation to enable partners to participate in coalition operations, these funds were allocated to plug key gaps in their recipients' counterterrorism capacity. Section 1207(n) funds, for example, were intended to build the capacity of 'Djibouti, Ethiopia, and Kenya to conduct counterterrorism operations against al-Qaeda, al-Qaeda affiliates, and al-Shabaab' (Serafino 2014, 5 FN). Likewise, CTFP funds were requested to improve AMISOM contributors' intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance, counterterrorism interdiction, counter-improvised explosive device and command and control capabilities (Office of the Under Secretary of Defense 2016, 5–6). Such narrow focus on 'plugging in' greater tactical competences without building the institutional and logistical architectures to support them has raised questions about the sustainability of these gains once the funding taps are turned off (Ross 2018).

As noted in the wider literature, the efficacy of security cooperation activities is contentious (Biddle et al. 2017; Matisek 2018; Reno 2018). In Somalia, there has been an overemphasis on building the tactical capability of local security forces at the expense of the political and institutional reforms required for long-term conflict resolution (Williams 2019, 13), as well as an inattention to wider strategy (Ross 2018). Compounding these failures of execution are the structural limits of what is possible for security cooperation to accomplish in conditions of state collapse. These result from the misalignment of interests between the US and various local actors (Reno 2018, 505; Williams 2019, 15–17; Matiesk 2018, 278–279). Local partners retain their own agency, and in the case of Somalia, have lacked the political will or incentive to realign their behaviours according to America's security preferences. According to an unnamed Pentagon official, 'eliminating al-Shabaab is the easy part; the hard part is getting the institutions of Somalia to work' (quoted in Matisek 2018, 278). These barriers are consistent with the principal-agent issues that characterise the use of this particular policy tool. The very distance between the donor-as-principal and the recipient-as-agent that enables security cooperation to serve as a means of remote warfare also undermines its efficacy as a security tool (Biddle et al. 2017).

Notwithstanding these barriers to the conversion of military support into desired political outcomes, an expanded

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focus on the strategic logics of security cooperation opens up an alternative calculus to qualify the well-documented failures of these activities. Consistent with our earlier conceptualisation of the security logics of security cooperation, despite agency losses and aid misappropriation, security cooperation has enabled American policymakers to exert at least some influence on the ground in the region whilst continuing to distance conventional US ground forces from the bulk of frontline fighting. The training and equipment provided through the Section 1206 authority improved the capacity of frontline states such as Ethiopia and Kenya to better police their border and coastal regions prior to joining AMISOM, helping limit al-Shabaab's freedom of movement. Security cooperation also incentivised and facilitated AMISOM troop contributions to fight in Somalia itself. Contributing troops to AMISOM enabled the Uganda Peoples' Defence Force to access both US peacekeeping- and counterterrorism-orientated funding, training and assistance (Williams 2018, 176).

Similarly, as a prerequisite for its participation, the Government of Burundi 'compiled a 20-page list of requests that it considered necessary to join AMISOM, including trucks and bulldozers, aircraft, and helicopters as well as office supplies, sleeping bags, personal equipment, and optical equipment such as night vision goggles' (Williams 2018, 177). Whilst other political, institutional and normative considerations influenced the decision of the six AMISOM contributing states to provide troops to fight in Somalia, increased receipt of US military assistance alongside other avenues of financial support was often, but not always, a motivating factor (Williams 2018).

Additionally, discussions in leaked embassy cables and public press releases illustrate the ways in which security cooperation initiatives thicken political partnerships with key regional states. In 2007, the US ambassador to Kenya discussed 'synchronising efforts' across the Horn of Africa, through a 'multi-pronged approach involving continued military and security actions' with other diplomatic and development efforts. He also 'stressed the need for American officials and contractors to visit Somalia', as 'such visits were essential both for operations and to effectively publicise both within Somalia and the region the good work' the US was carrying out (WikiLeaks 2007b). In Ethiopia, the provision of aircraft maintenance was argued to be 'critical to continuing a viable (military-military) relationship with a proven partner in the war on terrorism' (WikiLeaks 2007c). Diplomatic staff based in Addis Ababa expressed concern that, due to the repeated failures to repair two Ethiopian operated C-130s military transport aircraft and the anticipated closure of the US-funded Ethiopian Defense Command and Staff College, some within the Ethiopian military were aiming 'to make China, and to a lesser extent Israel, their major military relationship' (Wikileaks 2007d). Security cooperation activities also strengthened cooperation between regional partners, including on sensitive areas such as intelligence (Hurd 2019), and provided the US with technical access to partnering security agents.

In 2016, following the completion of the first annual military-to-military engagement event African Partnership Flight, a US Air Force spokesperson explained that bringing together participants from the Kenyan and Ugandan air forces under US instruction would 'build enduring relationships with (US) partner countries.' Speaking to the collaborative spill-over effects of security cooperation, the spokesperson further noted that through such activities the US had '[built] a partnership and friendship that has helped open the door for further engagement, knowledge sharing and interoperability between our forces' (quoted in Chavez 2016). A similar logic punctuates the US Army's annual Justified Accord Exercise, initiated in 2017, which functions to improve the capacity of regional forces to support AMISOM and develop intra-personal relationships with, and access, to local forces. As Lapthe C. Flora, the then US Army Africa deputy, put it in 2019:

'I cannot overemphasise the importance of exercises like Justified Accord [...] They not only contribute to the readiness of African nations and peacekeeping operations, but they also provide valuable opportunities to work together and create professional relationships and friendships.'

(quoted in Valley 2019).

Finally, whilst it is difficult to document an exact 'transmission belt' between an increase in security cooperation and the production of access, the increase in security cooperation activities to combat al-Shabaab has paralleled the rollout of military installations across the Horn of Africa. Officially, the US operates only one military base in Africa, Camp Lemonnier in Djibouti (Moore and Walker 2016, 686). Around this, however, a constellation of smaller 'cooperative security locations' orientated around drone, SOF and contractor assemblages have been operated, with

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suspected locations in Ethiopia, Kenya, the Seychelles, Somalia, South Sudan and Uganda (Moore and Walker 2016; Turse 2018). In the case of the Seychelles, there is evidence to suggest that military assistance was used to thicken the US' bilateral partnership with the host government following the basing of a small fleet of unarmed MQ-9 Reapers on the island to conduct anti-piracy and surveillance missions.

During an August 2009 meeting with AFRICOM commander General William Ward, Seychelles President Michel noted that his island was an 'aircraft carrier in the middle of the Indian Ocean without the planes' and welcomed 'this resurgence of American military activity in the Seychelles' (Wikileaks 2009b). Following the initial use of these facilities in September 2009, the overall level of US military assistance rose from \$251,299 in FY 2010 (an accounting period which began on 1 October 2009) to \$893,244 in FY2011 (Security Assistance Monitor 2019). Consistent with General Ward's expressed commitment to strengthen bilateral military relations and improve the capacity of the islands' coastguard (Wikileaks 2009b), \$535,000 was allocated in this year via the State Department Foreign Military Financing programme for Metal Shark patrol boats and 'Secure Video and Data Link equipment' (Department of State 2014, 11). Following the suspected suspension of drone operations from this base at some point in 2012 (Moore and Walker 2016, 696), overall military assistance to the Seychelles declined from \$627,580 in FY2012 to \$464,555 in FY2013 and \$268,224 in FY2014 (Security Assistance Monitor 2019).

Conclusion

Security cooperation offered the Bush, Obama and Trump administrations an attractive means of 'squaring the circle' on the use of military force. As a tool of remote warfare, it allows planners to exert limited influence 'on the ground' in complex overseas security environments, but without deploying large numbers of their own 'boots on the ground' to conduct frontline fighting. The security logic that is foregrounded in much of the study of these activities is an intuitive component of this feature of US military interventionism. However, as we have argued, this sits alongside a parallel set of strategic logics. Security cooperation has helped secure various forms of geographic and technical-political access, including on matters of basing, airspace and transit rights; thickened political partnership; and helped create patterns of cooperation, influence and leverage.

In consideration of emerging debates on the effectiveness of remote warfare, we have highlighted the need to account for the dual security and strategic logics of policy tools like security cooperation. The intersecting features of remote warfare, as expressed through its kinetic and non-kinetic dimensions, are illuminated in the recent history of US policy in the Horn of Africa. In Somalia, the US has consistently used security cooperation alongside other remote practices of intervention. The ability of the US to confront al-Shabaab directly or indirectly has been contingent on Washington's capacity to secure access and partnerships in the region. The significance of security cooperation in a country like Somalia needs to be understood against the backdrop of the conditions that elicited the turn toward remote warfare on the part of the US and other agents. Absent alternatives, security cooperation programmes have provided a pathway to continued intervention, the 'remoteness' of which applies only to the intervening actor, not the local communities for whom political violence is intimate. This is not to claim that US intervention in the Horn of Africa has been successful or that its failings are fixable using more or different configurations of remote warfare practices. Rather, it is to suggest that the dynamics of remote warfare need to be analysed holistically, and in conjunction with the twin security and strategic purposes they serve.

Notes

[1] The authors would like to thank Maria Ryan, Simone Papale and the reviewers for their comments on earlier versions of this chapter. Any mistakes remain our own.

[2] As explained in the Joint Publication 3-20 security cooperation, security force assistance 'is the set of DOD [security cooperation] activities that contribute to unified action by the [United States Government] to support the development of the capacity and capabilities of [Foreign Security Forces] and their supporting institutions, whether of a [Partner Nation] or an international organisation (e.g., regional security organisation), in support of US objectives' (Joint Chiefs of Staff 2017, vii).

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[3] Beyond this, security cooperation activities in Africa can also be theorised as having a political-economy component, see (Stokes and Waterman 2017, 838–840; Ryan, 2020).

[4] For a more detailed discussion of the relationship between Security cooperation and the other channels of US military assistance, see (White 2014).

[5] American SOF have also been active in Somalia from 2007 onward providing local security agents training, advice, mission planning, communication support and medical expertise (Stewart 2014). They have also conducted covert kill-capture raids against Al-Shabaab's leadership (Mazzetti, Gettleman and Schmitt 2016).

[6] This figure has been calculated by subtracting peacekeeping operations funding from the total military assistance allocated to Somalia during this period. As the Security Assistance Monitor notes, whilst 'the US has historically appropriated Peacekeeping Operations assistance to Somalia with the intent to support both the Somali National Forces and AMISOM [...] [the] US Government reports do not provide details about how [Peacekeeping Operations] amounts are divided between the two security providers' (Chwalisz 2014).

[7] This table is modified from (Williams 2018, 174).

[8] Prior to its consolidation into the larger Section 333 authority as part of the 2017 National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA), the 'Global Train and Equip Authority' was used to build the capacity of foreign military, maritime and border forces to conduct counterterrorism operations and support US coalition missions. For a more detailed discussion of this authority's history and purpose, see (Ryan 2019, 153–156). Authorised in the FY2015 NDAA, the Counterterrorism Partnership Fund was intended to build partner capacity principally in frontline states in Africa and the Middle East, with a focus on intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance, border security, airlift, counter-improvised explosive device capabilities and peacekeeping (Office of the Under Secretary of Defense 2016, 2).

[9] The Section 1207(n) Transitional Authority was a three-year transnational authority, attached to the Global Security Contingency Fund in the FY2012 NDAA, which supported counterterrorism operations in the Arabian Peninsula and the Horn of Africa. It had two specific goals: 'enhance the capacity of the national military forces, security agencies serving a similar defence function, and border security forces of Djibouti, Ethiopia, and Kenya to conduct counterterrorism operations against al-Qaeda, al-Qaeda affiliates, and al Shabaab' on the one hand, and '[t]o enhance the ability of the Yemen Ministry of Interior Counter Terrorism Forces to conduct counterterrorism operations against al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula and its affiliates' on the other (Serafino 2014, 5 FN).

[10] This table has been generated from data from (Security Assistance Monitor 2019). The total US military assistance figure includes support provided through both Pentagon-managed security cooperation programmes and State Department-managed Security Assistance programmes.

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About the author:

Rubrick Biegón is a Lecturer in International Relations in the School of Politics and International Relations at the University of Kent. His current research interests include US foreign policy, international security, and remote warfare. His recent articles have appeared in *Global Affairs*, *The Chinese Journal of International Politics*, and *International Relations*, among other outlets.

Tom Watts is a Teaching Fellow in War and Security at Royal Holloway, University of London with research specialisations in American foreign policy, military assistance programs, and lethal autonomous weapons systems. His PhD thesis asked what the Obama administration's military response against al-Qaeda's regional affiliates in the Arabian Peninsula, the Horn of Africa and the Sahel tells us about the means and goals of contemporary US military intervention in the Global South. Working within the historical materialist tradition, it advances a more critical reading of these processes which places military assistance programs and the reproduction of 'closed frontiers and open-doors' at the centre of its analysis.