PRESS SUMMARY

15th November 2018

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## SUMMARY

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Somali security forces arrest IS militant operative in Mogadishu

MOGADISHU, Nov. 14 (Xinhua) -- Somalia's National Intelligence and Security Agency (NISA) confirmed Wednesday the arrest of an Islamic State (IS) operative in Mogadishu on Tuesday night.

NISA said that the IS militant operative who was in charge of finance used to transfer money to other extremists in countries across the world, adding that the latest arrest would help dismantle the group financially.

"Security forces arrested IS militant operative in an operation in the capital of Tuesday evening. He used to transfer money to the other extremists in other countries and his arrest would damage the group's economic route," NISA said.

The arrest came five days after the deadly attack on Nov. 9 on Sahafi hotel in Mogadishu in which more than 50 people were killed and several others injured by al-Shabab militants.

Al-Shabab executes foreign fighter in southern Somalia

November 13, 2018

Residents in Jilib district in Middle Jubba region say Al-Shabaab has executed a foreign jihadist on suspicion of having links with the Islamic State branch in the Horn of Africa country.

The foreign fighter identified as Abu Anas Al-Misri from Egypt was killed in bomb attack on a mosque in the rebel-held town on Monday night, according to sources.

The militant group has also arrested several Somali and foreign Al-Shabaab members during an operation which is part of a clampdown on elements trying to join ISIL affiliate.

Reports from the region suggest that a tension is brewing between fighters within the Al-Qaeda-affiliated Al-Shabaab group fighting to topple the UN-backed Somali Federal Government in Mogadishu.

Al-Shabaab has been driven out of key areas in southern Somalia, including Mogadishu in 2011, but, the group still capable of staging attacks in the country’s capital

Statement by HR/VP Mogherini on Reconciliation and Economic Integration in the Horn of Africa

14/11/2018

Statement by High Representative/Vice President Federica Mogherini on Reconciliation and Economic Integration in the Horn of Africa

The recent meeting in Ethiopia among the leaders of Ethiopia, Eritrea and Somalia, followed by the UN Security Council resolution lifting sanctions on Eritrea, offers an unprecedented opportunity to accelerate reconciliation and economic integration for all the countries of the Horn of Africa.

Leaders are overcoming old tensions and unlocking a process for a new era of cooperation which will require the participation of all the countries of the region. Success will generate prosperity in the whole region, integrate the economies of the Horn of Africa and create confidence to build peace and belonging within and among the nations of the region.

The European Union knows the benefits and challenges that accompany such a process well and stands ready to offer its experience and support. We expect all partners to support and invest in this historic opportunity for peace and prosperity in the Horn of Africa.

U.N. Lifts Sanctions on Eritrea, but Keeps Somalia Arms Embargo

Nov. 14, 2018

UNITED NATIONS — The United Nations Security Council voted unanimously Wednesday to lift sanctions against Eritrea following its thaw in relations with Ethiopia and other neighboring countries, but kept an arms embargo on Somalia and a ban on trade in charcoal, a key source of money for Shabab militants.

The resolution approved by the council, the United Nations’ most powerful body, commended “efforts toward peace, stability and reconciliation in the region” led by Ethiopia’s reformist prime minister, Abiy Ahmed, who came to power in April and accepted an international commission’s border decision favoring Eritrea.

Ethiopia is a regional power and actions by the country’s leader set off several diplomatic thaws, including one between Eritrea and Somalia. Leaders of Djibouti and Eritrea, which also had a turbulent relationship after border clashes, met with the help of Ethiopia, though there has been no breakthrough.

Mr. Ahmed’s office said after the vote that the lifting of sanctions will have far-reaching effects in improving stability and building peace in the Horn of Africa.

“It will further enhance the collaborative gains that have been achieved in the region over the past few months,” the prime minister’s office said.

Eritrea, a former Italian colony, gained independence from Ethiopia in 1993 after a 30-year guerrilla war. It had a decades-long border dispute with Ethiopia, including a war from 1998-2000 in which about 80,000 people died.
The Security Council imposed an arms embargo and other tough sanctions on Eritrea in 2009 for supplying weapons to Somalia’s Shabab rebels, who opposed the Somali government, and for refusing to resolve a border dispute with Djibouti, a key American ally in the Horn of Africa.

Eritrea’s chargé d’affaires, Amanuel Giorgio, called the sanctions “unwarranted punitive measures” and told the council after the vote that “the long overdue call for justice is finally answered.”

“Eritrea recognizes that a more difficult and complex task is waiting ahead,” Mr. Giorgio added. “It is determined to redouble its own efforts and work closely with its neighbors to build a region at peace with itself.”

As for Somalia, the resolution condemned continuing attacks by the Shabab, and expressed concern at the presence of affiliates of the Islamic State “and the security implications of the situation in Yemen for Somalia.”

It commended efforts by Somalia’s federal government to restore key economic and financial institutions and put in place anti-money laundering and counterterrorism measures. But it expressed concern at continued reports of corruption and diversion of public resources, including reports of “alleged financial impropriety” involving members of the government, Parliament and opposition.

Ghana: Somali Police Force Prepares to Take Over From AMISOM

14 NOVEMBER 2018

The Deputy Police Chief for the Somali Police Force (SPF), Brigadier General Zakia Hussein Ahmed, has assured the world that her country is working hard to build the capacity and competences of personnel to take over, after the withdrawal of the African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM). The transition is expected to take place in 2021. She said since the process would be conducted in a gradual way, the SPF was putting several measures in place, and working with all the relevant stakeholders for the nation to fully take charge of affairs.

The Deputy Police Chief, who is the first female to occupy the position in Somalia, said these when she interacted with journalists. Brigadier General Ahmed urged the journalists to help tell the positive story of Somalia, adding that the SPF was also intensifying community policing to breach the gap between the police and the public. She said community policing was also to get the citizenry actively involved in preventing crime and solving challenges in communities.

 Brigadier General Ahmed said schools and communities would be the immediate targets, to encourage and empower students and the youth to contribute to development. She said as the first female Deputy Police Chief she would convince more females to join the SPF to contribute to national development. Brigadier General Ahmed expressed her displeasure about what she described frequent negative stories by the international media. She said Somali citizens have now decided to project themselves by resorting to the use of social media, since it appears the international media would not tell their side of the story, which was to give hope to its citizens, and the entire world and also to encourage those outside the country to return and help.

https://allafrica.com/stories/201811130774.html
Finance minister says Government sufficient to pay to its soldiers

November 13, 2018

Abdirahman Dualle Beyle, the finance minister of Somalia said Monday that the government is now sufficient to pay the monthly salaries and stipends of its armed forces.

The minister announced the decision during his address to the national assembly in Mogadishu, where he presented a report on the country’s latest budget and fiscal document.

The government is planning to fill the gap after the US has suspended military aid to Somalia over corruption claims, a move that has become a blow to the Federal Government.

Somali cabinet approved $340,060,149 for next year’s budget submitted by the ministry for Finance.

On the other hand, Somali minister for finance has also tabled $7 million supplementary budget before the House.

Beileh has urged the members to approve the amount to supplement the budget.

Military Court In Puntland Slaps 4 Men With Death Penalty

14 November 2014

A military court in Puntland state has slapped a death penalty on four men over charges of terrorism. Those handed the death penalty by the court were identified as Jeylani Hassan Issak, Hassan Lamow Aden, Abdirazak Hussein Tahlil and Abdi Omar Iftin.

Another man identified as Bashir Osman Seed was sentenced to life in prison by the court during the trial. All the sentenced men were accused of belonging and having links with the terrorist groups of Al-Shabaab and ISIS, as the military court confirmed.

Abdirazk Hussein Tahlil, one of the men sentenced to death, was detained in a joint operation launched by US and Somali forces back in 2012. He was released in 2014. Somalia’s Islamist group has a base in Galgala mountains in Puntland, where it often carries out assaults against security forces. Puntland in North Eastern Somalia also faces a growing threat from ISIS fighters, who have split from Al-Shabaab.

https://madmimi.com/p/3d404d?fe=1&pact=6511692-148254239-5372507253-63b80cb138ec01e83cb64ab5e392bf93505f9c12
Somalia: Ethiopian's Comeback Flights to Mogadishu Worries Turkish Airlines

14 November 2018

The national flag carrier airline of Turkey, Turkish Airlines should be wary of Africa’s largest airline by revenue and profit comeback as it seeks to grow its influence and dominance in the continent. Ethiopia Airlines, Ethiopia’s flag carrier resumed its Addis-Ababa flight early this month after close to four decades of absence. The Ethiopian halted its Mogadishu, Somalia flight over 41 years ago, following a border conflict that emerged between the two sister countries in the 1970s. The historical Ogaden War between July 1977 and March 1978 was a territorial and political vendetta that caused bad blood between the East African countries breaking economic cooperation. A similar incident was between Eritrea and Ethiopia that crippled any bilateral relations between them for a long time. Such political disputes have rendered most African countries growth and development in their economies leaving agony at the core of the disagreements. However, African governments are experiencing a reformation as they look to build better futures for their citizens. Since Turkish Airlines was the only other carrier operating the Mogadishu flight, the re-start of the Addis Ababa - Mogadishu flight by the Ethiopian will spur stiffer competition in the aviation sector. Ethiopian Airlines has proved to be no match for other African airlines as it has soared higher and wider beyond the boundaries of the continent. As cited by the African Exponent site, the Ethiopian Airline Group CEO Tewolde Gebremariam said: "Flight to Mogadishu is our 117 destination after over 40 years... that is achieved because of the peace and friendship prevailing in the Horn of Africa. "This direct commercial flight to Somalia promotes tourism, trade, and investment, we are planning to start cargo flight and increase the flight frequencies to daily and double daily. "We have already checked that Mogadishu is peaceful and secured now. "Our flights will quickly grow to multiple daily flights given the huge volume of traffic between the two sisterly countries and the significant traffic between Somalia and the rest of the world."

https://allafrica.com/stories/201811130359.html
UN Offers To Conduct Capacity Building Workshop For South West Electoral Body

14 November 2018

The United Nations Mission in Somalia (UNSOM) has offered to conduct a capacity building workshop for the members of the South West electoral coordinating committee, who are destined to preside over the upcoming presidential poll in the regional state. The move is geared at strengthening their abilities in conducting the exercise. The deputy head of UNSOM, Mr. Rai Zenenga, made the commitment when he met with South West acting President, Abdikadir Sharif Shekhuna, who is also the Speaker of the regional assembly. During the meeting also attended by other South West government officials in Baidoa on Tuesday. Mr. Zenenga underlined UN’s commitment to see a credible and fair elections take place in the region. UNSOM also agreed to dispatch election observers to monitor the poll exercise.

“We have a stake in the elections in the sense that we want to see a credible one, (but) we don’t support any particular candidate,” said Mr Zenenga, the UN Secretary General’s Deputy Special Representative for Somalia: “We are here to support the process and make it more transparent and more credible so that the result is not contentious and is accepted widely.” The UNSOM official also held a meeting with South West presidential candidates and traditional elders in Baidoa. Their meeting focused on the need to hold peaceful, free, fair and credible elections. He also had a separate sitting with representatives of South West traditional elders in Baidoa on Tuesday. Presidential aspirants have recently called for postponement of the election scheduled for 17th November 2018 to a later date. This view is shared by traditional elders, who have have separately postponed the polls citing interference from the Federal Government of Somalia (FGS). Fifteen members of the electoral coordinating committee, who resigned last week over “interference by FGS” are yet to be replaced.

Warring Sides In Central Somalia Urged To End The Hostility Through Dialogue

13 November 2018

Several people from two warring clans in Galgaduud region have been killed and dozens others injured in clan clashes. The Federal Parliament’s leadership has urged both sides to end the fighting, which has displaced hundreds of families from their homes.

The Deputy Speaker of Federal Parliament, Mahad Awad, has termed the clashes as unfortunate, saying it was unacceptable to see two brotherly clans shedding their blood: “On behalf of the Federal Parliament, I call upon the warring sides in Balanbale town to end their hostilities,” he said.

Mr. Mahad called on the elders in the affected region to resolve their differences for the common good of the country. The DPM proposed the holding of reconciliation meetings in the region with a view to unite the people. His call comes a day after the Federal Government of Somalia (FGS) deployed hundreds of soldiers in the area to intervene in clashes between two clan militias.

Somalia Moves To Join EAC Bloc

13 November 2018

Somalia has revived its interest in joining the East African Community (EAC). The Ambassador of Somalia to Tanzania, Mohamed H. Abdi made the request while paying a courtesy call on Amb Liberat Mfumukeko, the Secretary General of the EAC.

Abdi said the “long-term development of each EAC economy was influenced by the success of the regional integration efforts” and that “individual EAC economies are too small to compete effectively in international markets.” Mfumukeko praised Somalia for their interest in joining EAC. He assured Amb Abdi that the “process is on course” and the Secretariat will be sending a preliminary team to Somalia later this month to assess the level of readiness of Somalia as the preparation for the verification exercise team which will be constituted by the EAC Council of Ministers.

Somalia continues to grapple with terrorism. But the restoration of peace in Mogadishu and other areas has given investors hope of a better future. Article 3 (3) of the EAC Treaty sets out conditions for membership; including adherence to universally acceptable principles of good governance, democracy, the rule of law, observance of human rights and social justice.

Others are contribution towards the strengthening of integration within the East African region; geographical proximity to and inter -dependence between it and the Partner States; establishment and maintenance of a market driven economy. Present at the meeting were the EAC Deputy Secretaries General in charge Planning and Infrastructure as well as Finance and Administration, Engineer Steven Mlote, and that of Productive and Social Sector, Hon. Christophe Bazivamo, Counsel to the Community, Dr Anthony L. Kafumbe and other officials from the EAC Secretariat.

Axed Jubbaland security minister accuses Madobe of dictatorship

November 14, 2018

Immediate former Jubbaland Security Minister Mohamed Abdi Kalil has accused state president Ahmed Madobe of iron fist leadership.

Speaking after being axed in a cabinet reshuffle Tuesday, Kalil said Madobe was keen on serving his own interests at the expense of the entire state. “Madobe is an individual who dictates and only seeks to advance his own interests,” Kalil told Goobjoog News.

Kalil said that he was already planning to resign from his job.

“I call on the people of Jubbaland to hold their hands and stay united against the tribalism system of Jubbaland administration,” said Kalil

Kalil was dismissed from the office of the Jubbaland state security minister on July following president Madoobe’s reshuffle of his cabinet Tuesday.

At least 7 ministries in the dark over electricity arrears

November 13, 2018

At least seven government ministries have in the last two days gone without electricity following a withdrawal of services by an electricity company over four months’ arrears.

Goobjoog News has established that the ministries of Agriculture, Commerce and Industry, Livestock, Petroleum and Public Works have been in the dark after Beco Electricity Company disconnected power. Others are Water and Energy and Labour and Social Affairs.

Officials in these ministries who wished to remain anonymous told Goobjoog News the utility company Beco disconnected electricity to their offices following arrears running to four months. “We go a warning earlier from Beco to pay off the electricity charges but the ministry does not have money to offset the costs,” a senior official at the ministry of Petroleum said.

An operational manager from Beco who sought anonymity confirmed the disconnection to the government ministries but said the matter had been resolved. “We held discussions and resolved the matter today.”

According to the 2018 budget, out of the seven ministries affected, the Ministry of Commerce and Industry got the highest budget allocation at $2.1 million while the Ministry of Livestock got the least-$986,236.

The Ministry of Agriculture was allocated $1.1 million, Energy and Water ($1.1m) while Public Works and Reconstruction got $1.1 million and Labour ($1.5m).

[Link to article]
Shabaab ‘Brides’ Face Seven Fresh Charges After Acquittal

13 November 2014 - Three women who were acquitted of terrorism charges, including being members of Al-Shabaab and conspiracy to carry out an attack, have been charged again. Ummulkheir Sadri Abdalla, Khadija Abubakar Abdulkadir and Halima Adan, who were accused of being Shabaab brides, were cleared in October. While ruling in their favour in October, Chief Magistrate Evans Makori said the prosecution failed to prove their membership to the terror group or even that the videos they were found with were to be used to instigate terror activities. The women returned to court on Tuesday and faced Mombasa Senior Principal Magistrate Henry Nyakweba. They faced seven fresh charges that arose from the past case; they are now accused of arranging a meeting in support of the terror group, charges that were preferred after the prosecution amended the previous ones. The prosecution said the women organised a meeting in Nairobi on March 27, 2015, the agenda being to cross into Somalia in support of the terrorists. They are further charged with conspiring with persons outside Kenya to carry out an act of terrorism, an offence they allegedly committed at Elwak on the Kenya-Somalia border. In the third to seventh counts, the suspects are charged with having articles for use in committing the act of terrorism. The prosecution told the court they were found with a Samsung laptop which had videos of slain controversial Muslim preacher Aboud Rogo, which they were also to use in the crime. The suspects denied the charges, saying they are similar to the ones they were acquitted of: “The charges are not true. We have been charged with the same offences and acquitted,” they said through their lawyer Hamisi Mwadzogo. Mr Mwadzogo said he will rely on the chief magistrate’s judgment to prove his clients’ innocence: “We will rely entirely on this judgment to defend our case. We are ready to proceed with the case right now.” State Counsel Erick Masila said the prosecution was also ready to proceed as its witnesses were prepared. Last month, Chief Magistrate Makori acquitted the suspects of charges including being members of Al-Shabaab, conspiracy to commit terrorist acts and collecting information for the purpose of committing these crimes. They were also cleared of the offence of being in possession of articles for use in instigating commission of terrorist acts.

Somaliland Bans Night Events

14 November 2018

Somaliland authorities have banned all night events, in a move designed to “curb immorality” in the country. At a press conference held by the breakaway region’s Deputy Interior Minister, Mohamed Muse, the government ordered that all social gatherings and events in hotels will no longer operate beyond 11:50 pm.

“The police are hereby ordered to take action against organizers and participants of any event that stretches beyond 11:50pm,” Muse told reporters in the Somaliland administrative capital of Hargeisa. Recent swoops in major towns of Somaliland have led to confiscation of alcohol and marijuana, which authorities are clamping down on. However, the move to ban night activities in private hotels has elicited debate among Somaliland youth. A number of youths interviewed by Radio Dalsan in Hargeisa, Burao and Berbera protested at the government decision saying it infringed on their democratic rights.

Somali refugees in Dhagahley camp hit by medical strike

November 13, 2018

Thousands of Somali refugees in Dhagahley camp in Dadaab, northeastern Kenya, are bearing the brunt of weeks of a doctors’ pay strike.

Health services have been paralysed in three health centres in the camp after 426 health practitioners including doctors, nurses, pharmacists, dentists, and interns went on strike in October.

A distraught Kamal Ali Mohamed, who is a diabetes patient, could only hope the doctors would at least prescribe some free insulin for him.

“I was an outpatient here and I have been getting insulin injections from the health centre, but for the last 10 days operations stopped at the centre,” said Kamal. “I am deeply concerned.”

Kamal is worried about his deteriorating health, saying he has no money to buy insulin. “Let alone buying insulin injections, I have no bus fare to go to the health post in the nearest camp to get the injections,” he said.

Ali Magan Mohamed’s wife Habibo Ismail had pregnancy complications last month and had a stillbirth. “They refused to treat my wife as the strike was underway. She is yet to recover fully and she has no medicine,” Ali told Radio Ergo.

The medical professionals went on strike to force the medical charity, Médecins Sans Frontières (MSF), which runs the camp health facilities, to raise their salaries.
Abdirisaq Digale Abdi, a nurse at one of the health centres in Dhagahley, said he would continue the strike until their salaries are increased.

“I work at a health centre and I earn a meagre salary of 9,200 Kenya shillings a month [about $92]. This amount is not enough for my family to live on. I have been negotiating with MSF for a long time but nothing has yet been implemented,” said Abdirisaq, a father of five children,

Abukar Mohamed, head of humanitarian affairs for MSF, confirmed that the strike had paralysed all health services and that the NGO was trying to find a solution.

“MSF can confirm that the medical staff stopped their work at the camps. The strike has had an impact on the daily routine. There are ongoing talks between the agency and the staff and I hope the issue will be resolved as soon as possible,” Abukar said.

Somalia: 10 Killed in Renewed Somali-Oromo Clashes in Moyale

At least 10 people are reported dead after renewed ethnic clashes between Gabbra and Somalis flared up on the Ethiopian border town Moyale, Radio Dalsan reports.

The fighting erupted on Sunday and went on to Monday before intervention by the Federal Police.

The Gabra and Boran sub-ethnic groups of Oromo are said to be mobilising against the Garre Somalis.

Medical sources put the number of those injured at 20s while hundreds are said to have been displaced.

Somalis in Moyale have appealed to the Somali State of Ethiopia President Mustafa Omer and the international community to urgently respond to what they term "massacre" and "displacement of entire communities".

"So called Ethiopian National Army is in Moyale and fighting in the town between communities is going on for two days. Is Moyale part of this country?. Moyale people deserve better attention" a local resident told Radio Dalsan

The resident said gunshots were heard on Wednesday around 5 am.

https://allafrica.com/stories/201811140283.html
Terrorism and Somalia

Al-Shabab continues to blight Somalia with terrorist attacks, which likely will continue until the country gets the support from the international community that it really needs, writes Mohamed Abdel-Wahed

The Somali capital Mogadishu and neighbouring areas were deeply shaken by a string of bomb car attacks on Friday, 9 November 2018, near a well-known hotel and the Criminal Investigation Division (CID) police headquarters. The bombings killed and wounded dozens of people, mostly civilians, in this latest episode in the long train of terrorist attacks since the collapse of the Somali state in 1991 and the spread, in Somalia, of extremist takfiri groups affiliated with international terrorist organisations such as Al-Qaeda and the Islamic State (IS) group.

Harakat Al-Shabab Al-Mujahideen claimed responsibility for the attack. Al-Shabab, as it is commonly known, is one of the groups that splintered off the Islamic Union, or Al-Ittihad Al-Islamiya (AIAI), in the late 1990s. After several defeats and setbacks, the old guard of the AIAI decided to renounce militant activity and re-assimilate into civilian life, a decision rejected by the younger generation and especially those freshly returned from Afghanistan. After the split, Al-Shabab Al-Mujahideen focused on training and recruitment and remained uninvolved in any of the conflicts in Somalia until 2005 when the Islamic Courts Union (ICU) came to power in southern Somalia. Al-Shabab’s star rose as a major component of the ICU system and its members occupied most of the executive posts. In 2006, Al-Shabab served as the military wing of the ICU when it seized control of Mogadishu. Al-Shabab forces also supported the ICU during its war against Somali government forces and the Ethiopian forces that supported them. However, it split off from the ICU in 2007 following the declaration of the Alliance for the Re-liberation of Somalia, led by Sharif Sheikh Ahmed who, at the time, was chairman of the ICU. Al-Shabab opposed the new alliance’s decision to enter into UN-brokered negotiations with the Somali government. In 2008 and 2009, the US and the UN designated Al-Shabab as a terrorist organisation with close ties to Al-Qaeda.
Civil warfare, the collapse of institutionalised government and, above all, the lack of viable military and security establishments in Somalia generated a fertile environment for jihadist groups that exploited the rampant poverty and famine in order to spread their influence through the country. Al-Shabab, a Salafi movement that aims to create a state ruled by a strict interpretation of Sharia Law, established links with Al-Qaeda through connections with some leaders of Al-Qaeda cells in eastern Africa as well as through the returnees from Afghanistan. The organisation has between 7,000 to 9,000 members including native Somalis and foreigners, primarily from Arab and African countries, as well as from Pakistan. The movement has clashed militarily and staged military operations against the transitional governments headed by Abdullahi Yusuf Ahmed and Sharif Sheikh Ahmed. It refused to recognise the presidency of Hassan Sheikh Mohamud whom it accused of being a US proxy and whom it tried to assassinate the day after he was declared the victor in the presidential elections. Al-Shabab would then carry out a number of terrorist attacks against government buildings and facilities during President Mohamud’s term in office.

The movement refuses to recognise all Somalian electoral processes which it describes as an American-made deception. It has, accordingly, sustained its extremist positions against current Somali President Mohamed Abdullahi Farmajo and continued its violent activities against the state in an attempt to embarrass the government and portray it to the international community as weak and incapable of asserting its control over the country, including the capital. Al-Shabab has a sophisticated media wing and the technological savvy to produce and disseminate professionally made footage of its terrorist operations and other such propaganda. Likewise, it takes advantage of social networking sites to screen and recruit new members both in Somalia or among Somalis living abroad, and it clearly has the networks of connections for the purposes of intelligence gathering, reconnaissance, sheltering operatives at home and abroad and training operatives on how to manufacture explosives, boobytrap cars or individuals, and engage in different types of combat.

In 2017, in the framework of its efforts to combat terrorism in Africa and especially in Somalia where extremely dangerous terrorist groups could spread their operations to neighbouring countries and threaten regional peace and security, the African Union created the African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM). An important part of the AMISOM is to support Somali government forces in their battle against Al-Shabab and, with the
encouragement of some African Union members, it steadily increased its troop levels to about 22,000 soldiers drawn from Uganda, Ethiopia, Kenya, Burundi, Rwanda, Djibouti, Nigeria and Sierra Leone. AMISOM receives logistical support from the UN and financial support from the EU. The salaries of the soldiers and staff and the operating expenses of the mission’s headquarters in Nairobi are financed by the African-European Peace Fund.

As a demonstration of its growing resolve to combat terrorism in Africa, in 2010 the African Union created a subcommittee on counterterrorism in accordance with the founding protocol of the African Union’s Peace and Security Council (PSC). Terrorism has remained a permanent item on the agenda of the AU’s Executive Council meetings and, in the Malabo Summit in 2014, it underscored the particularly grave threats of terrorism in the Sahara and the Sahel, in Somalia, Kenya and Djibouti, and in Central Africa. In September 2014, a special summit on counterterrorism was held in Nairobi in order to discuss a mechanism for fighting terrorism in the continent, ways to cut off its sources of finance, the creation of an African counterterrorism fund, as well as a mechanism for cooperation between African security forces: the African Police Cooperation Organisation (AFRIPOL). The summit concluded with a declaration stating that a terrorist attack against one African country is a terrorist attack against the entire continent.

Because of the rise of terrorist attacks across the continent in 2015, terrorism-related issues topped the agenda of the 25th African Summit in Johannesburg that year. The subject would again dominate the agenda of the special session of the African Peace and Security Committee which was held during the 26th African Summit in Addis Ababa on 30-31 January 2016. The same would apply in the 30th summit in Addis Ababa on 30-31 January 2018, during which participants discussed Africa’s readiness to deal forcefully with the approximately 6,000 African returnees from the ranks of the terrorist IS organisation because of the serious threat they would present to African security. In a similar spirit, the African Peace and Security Council summit discussed “a comprehensive approach to combat the transitional threat of terrorism in Africa” and how to handle extremist groups and dry up their sources of funding.

Despite the successes of the AMISON in Somalia, it was felt that the challenges to its sustainability may be too great. Therefore, in July 2016, the African Peace and Security Council adopted a plan for the withdrawal of AMISOM forces whereby, after helping the
Somali state to assert its full control over Somali territory in 2018, the mission’s authorities would be gradually transferred to the Somali army by December 2020. Still, it should be borne in mind that terrorism in Somalia will not end unless the international community follows through on its pledges to establish genuine security and stability throughout that country and to give the Somali government the types of support it needs to rebuild the institutions of the state, to increase the rates of economic development and to rehabilitate the Somali people psychologically and physically. Also crucial is the need to ensure that the Somali army and security forces have the ability to assert sovereign control over all parts of the country so that terrorist groups can no longer find a safe haven there.

[http://weekly.ahram.org.eg/News/25849.aspx](http://weekly.ahram.org.eg/News/25849.aspx)
U.S. senators alarmed if China gets control of Djibouti port

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Two prominent U.S. senators expressed alarm on Tuesday about the military and political consequences if China gains control of a port terminal in Djibouti, and said they were concerned it could further boost Beijing’s influence in East Africa.

In a letter to Secretary of State Mike Pompeo and Secretary of Defense Jim Mattis, Republican Senator Marco Rubio and Democratic Senator Chris Coons said they were concerned about Djibouti’s termination of a contract for the Doraleh Container Terminal with United Arab Emirates-based DP World in February and the nationalization of the port in September.

Reports that Djibouti, heavily indebted to Beijing, would likely cede the port’s operations to a Chinese state-owned enterprise were “even more alarming,” they said.

The letter was the latest in a series of efforts by members of Congress who want to counter China’s growing international influence, which they see as a threat to U.S. economic and security interests.

Trump has been focusing on the economic threat from China and has brought the two countries to the brink of a trade war, but many lawmakers want to ensure the administration also treats the country as a security threat.

A tiny nation strategically located at the entrance to the Red Sea on the route to the Suez Canal, Djibouti became home to China’s first overseas military base last year. A U.S. base
located just miles away stages operations against Islamic State, al Qaeda and other militant groups.

Rubio and Coons sent Tuesday’s letter as lawmakers returned to the Capitol for the first time in several weeks after congressional elections on Nov. 6.

Asked for comment, a Pentagon spokesman said the Defense Department welcomed infrastructure and other investment that could benefit the region, but added “countries should be wary of piling on monumental debt.”

A State Department spokesman had no immediate response.

The Senate last month passed legislation overhauling the way the federal government lends money for foreign development, in a shift meant largely as a response to Chinese influence.

U.S. officials say they worry about what they call China’s “debt trap” diplomacy, in which countries end up giving up control of major assets such as ports or roadways when they fund infrastructure projects with Chinese loans that they cannot pay back.

Marine General Thomas Waldhauser, the top U.S. military officer for Africa, told a Congressional hearing earlier this year the U.S. military could face “significant” consequences if China took the port in Djibouti.