



# The Effectiveness of U.S. Policies for Al Shabaab

*United States Army Command and General Staff College*

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As one of the poorest countries in the world, Somalia continues to struggle due to a weak government, committed insurgency, and a dysfunctional counterinsurgency strategy. The international community, led by the U.S., has attempted to address Somalia's problems with limited success. This research project applies both qualitative and quantitative methods in addressing the primary research question: Are U.S. policies towards Somalia effective? The results are arresting: analysis reveals that U.S. policies during the Cold War and early years of our government's War on Terrorism may have led to the creation of Al Shabaab. Analysis also indicates that Al Shabaab possesses a strong organizational profile and that it will be difficult to eliminate in comparison to other terrorist organizations. Among other findings, research demonstrates that America and its allies must provide significantly increased resources to overall counterinsurgent strength if a military focused solution is to be pursued. However, research also reveals that a military focused solution is not the best fit for confronting Al Shabaab. A more patient and consistent policy approach oriented primarily on non-military methods (diplomatic, information, and economic) may provide the best chance of success against Al Shabaab.

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