



Group Discussion Questions: U.S. Policy in Somalia

Review the key players in the quest for control of Somalia.

1. Who are the key leaders of the Transitional Federal Government? What is their background experience? (*Knowing the background of the leaders will shed light on why the populous may or may not support them.*)
2. Who helped form the Transitional Federal Government? Who supports them?
3. What are the challenges faced by the Transitional Federal Government?
4. What is the Union of Islamic Courts and what is its importance in Somalia?
5. Who supports the Union of Islamic Courts?
6. What are the challenges faced by the Union of Islamic Courts?

The United States policy towards Somalia has changed significantly from 1991 to 2007. The next few questions will examine the effects of U.S. policy, both on Somali citizens and on the political structure in Somalia. Support your answers with information from your research.

7. What are the benefits of a stable government in Somalia? What could be some of the implications of an unstable country in East Africa? Why might some perceive having an unstable country in East Africa as dangerous?
8. U.S. policy in Somalia has moved from providing humanitarian aid, to attempts at nation building, to backing warlords, to providing troops and support services for the TFG. What were some of the ramifications of moving from relief efforts to nation building?
8. Prior to December 2006, the United States was secretly supplying warlords with weapons and cash in exchange for their promise to help drive out terrorists. Do you think this was an effective policy? Why or why not?
9. Currently, the United States is providing military training and funding for Ethiopian troops. What are some of the ramifications, in Somalia, in Ethiopia, and on the U.S., of U.S. support for Ethiopia?
10. The United States is also working with the United Nations to form an 8,000 troop peacekeeping force to restore order in Somalia. Do you think this will be an effective policy? Why or why not?
11. If the Union of Islamic Courts were a front for terrorists, what implications would that have for the region? For the U.S.? What evidence suggests that they are a front for terrorists? What evidence suggests that they are not?
12. Based on your research, what do you think would be an effective policy for Somalia?