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The
Stanley
Foundation

NUMBER 64 | Fall 2009



WHY FRAGILE STATES MATTER

INSIDE | Smarter Peacebuilding • The Case for Targeted Interventions • Averting Chaos in Kenya



Safe Haven? A perpetually weak, sometimes nonexistent, central government in Somalia has long created prime conditions for terrorist training camps, offshore piracy, and illicit trafficking. Here Somalis are trained to handle assault rifles at the Arbiska training camp just outside the capital, Mogadishu. (AP Photo)

Fragile States

World's Weakest Nations Pose Greatest Threats

*Stanley Foundation promotes stable,
responsible states*

The most disturbing headlines in the world today all seem to share something in common. Whether in Somalia, Sudan, Pakistan, or elsewhere, too often these troubling news stories stem from a country too weak to control its own territory and provide opportunity for its citizens.

Today these so-called “fragile states” are seen as a major contributor to (or even the cause of) many global challenges including trafficking of all sorts, piracy, terrorism, nuclear proliferation, disease pandemics, regional tensions, even genocide, and more.

“In recent years, it seems we’ve had more security problems from states that have been in trouble than we have from strong states that have been an adversary to us in the traditional way,” says US Director of National Intelligence Dennis Blair. And Under Secretary of Defense for Policy Michele Flournoy recently wrote, “Conflict in the 21st century is at least as likely to result from problems associated with state weakness as from state strength.”

In other words, the world’s weakest nations can pose the greatest global security threats. Therefore, promoting stronger states and preventing actions that will destabilize more countries have become key goals of the Stanley Foundation.

Much work is being done to alleviate the symptoms or collateral damage from weak states. This includes helping refugees and internally displaced persons, putting an end to human trafficking, controlling nuclear proliferation, stopping pirates, and so on. But most of this does not promote state stability in a comprehensive, holistic manner.

At the international level, the United Nations is making this comprehensive approach to rebuilding states a centerpiece of its new Peacebuilding Commission. And the “responsibility to protect” doctrine spells out the obligations of both states and the world community to help states protect against genocide and similar terrible and destabilizing crimes.

In the United States and elsewhere, acting on this more holistic understanding of state stability will require new directions in diplomacy, foreign aid programs, military training and deployments, and more. We will collectively need to rethink many international policies and short-term national security actions to make sure they are not actually causing more troublesome fragile states in the long run.

Of course, every case of a fragile or failed state is unique. This argues for a world with a full and flexible toolbox of response options and a strategic commitment to use them. More importantly, it means the world

should be looking for ways to promote stronger states long before they are at risk of failure and conflict.

Pauline Baker and her colleagues at the Fund for Peace call this level of state stability “sustainable security,” which they define as “the ability of societies to solve their own problems peacefully without an outside military or administrative presence.”

As Baker explains in this issue of *Courier*, none of this means we support authoritarian governments that exist largely on corruption and deny their citizens the civil and political freedoms we hold so dearly. But in today’s global system, a functioning state is required to even engage in human rights and other issues. Ultimately we seek, and the world needs, countries that protect their own people and participate responsibly in the international community.

Also in this issue, the Stanley Foundation’s Sean Harder examines lingering instability in Kenya following post-election violence there and whether an intervention by the international community in 2008 was one of the first applications of the “responsibility to protect” principle. And the foundation’s Michael Kraig looks at what works and what doesn’t in helping states move from fragility to stability.

In all of this we must remember that doing this work well is to our common benefit. As US Ambassador to the United Nations Susan Rice said in a recent speech, “Our values compel us to reduce poverty, disease, and hunger; to end preventable deaths of mothers and children; and to build self-sufficiency in agriculture, health, and education. But so too does our national interest. Whether the peril is terrorism, pandemics, narcotics, human trafficking, or civil strife, a state so weak that it incubates a threat is also a state too weak to contain a threat. In the 21st century, therefore, we can have no doubt: as President Obama has said time and again, America’s security and well-being are inextricably linked to those of people everywhere.”

—Keith Porter

Director of Policy and Outreach, The Stanley Foundation

Online Resource

For more information on fragile states and to see a ranking of the world’s weakest nations, visit the Failed States Index put together in collaboration between the Fund For Peace and *Foreign Policy* magazine: www.foreignpolicy.com/failedstates.

Cover Photo

Not Child's Play. *Child soldiers of the Mai Mai militia carry small arms in Kanyabyongo, Democratic Republic of Congo, demonstrating one of the more tragic outcomes of state fragility. One of the characteristics of fragile states is a failure of government to hold a monopoly on power. (Marcus Bleasdale/VII)*



Building Peace. Afghan men work on road construction under the World for Food Programme's food-for-worker project through which more than 560,000 people were assisted with more than 10,000 tons of food in March of 2009. Capacity building in post-conflict situations may be one of the only ways to sustain peace. (UN/DPI/WFP)

Fragile States

Smarter Aid Can End Conflicts

New peacebuilding approaches can build capacity in post-conflict countries

From Asia to Africa, the world is experiencing a severe strain on existing, tried-and-true tools for dealing with conflict-prone societies. Neutral and independent humanitarian relief workers are increasingly attacked and even killed, caught in the crossfire between “spoilers” of the peace. Peacekeeping budgets are ballooning, the provision of armed peacekeepers is not keeping up with demand, and the neutral doctrine of peacekeeping itself is proving increasingly unable to protect citizens and leaders in countries prone to instability and violence.

In war-ravaged and severely weakened states, former combatants often remain armed and there may be a dearth of trained judges or police officers to administer justice. Basic salaries and funds for public administration may not exist or may be lost to corruption. There may be chronic unemployment, including a lack of new jobs for disarmed combatants. There may be a lack of basic tools or seeds for new plantings by farmers in the often-crucial sector of national agriculture. And grave abuses against women may still be taking place.

Indeed, one of the most persistent findings across several continents is that the danger of chronic violence and insecurity does not necessarily decrease for the average civilian following the end of formal hostilities. Rather, violence “mutates” into more diffuse and unpredictable forms of coercion such as mafia-like criminality, kidnappings, and other unorganized forms that paradoxically make many citizens feel less secure in peacetime than in wartime.

All of which raises a simple question: are the strongest states in the international system truly building new capabilities and cooperating effectively to address these post-conflict challenges in the developing world? If not, what exactly is impeding peacebuilding? Where’s the resistance?

Understanding the Conflict

One of the principle conceptual divisions is continued reliance on Official Development Assistance (ODA) by the world’s most wealthy states, versus qualitatively new approaches and instruments that are needed for developing societies where strong sovereign institutions do not yet exist. Many governments still propose using the United Nation’s Millennium Development Goals as objectives and indicators of success for countries emerging from conflict and, indeed, development assistance is increasing for fragile/post-conflict states. For instance, there has been a great expansion in mandates for development funding toward child combatants and de-mining, and up to 38 percent of all ODA in 2007 went to projects that tackled issues dealing with the nexus between security and development.

However, in the end, ODA and peacebuilding are not the same. The “ODA approach” fails to recognize the political nature of development aid in the context of an immediate post-conflict situation where money, technical advice, and provision of security can have the effect of skewing benefits and legitimizing and empowering some actors over others. Humanitarian and developmental perspectives lack political sophistication in the countries concerned, in part because donor countries are often afraid to deal with local interests and politics head on.

Overall, there needs to be a clearer understanding of the structural factors—or “conflict drivers”—that are unique

to each country. These “drivers” foster grievances and cause violent conflict, and so the world needs the creation of new programs, methods, and civil servants to address such factors directly on the ground.

A More Nimble UN

To help encourage such processes in fragile states, an all new UN organizational player was created by the 2005 Millennium Summit, namely, the Peacebuilding Commission and the associated Peacebuilding Fund (PBF). The ultimate founding intentions of this new body of instruments are to bring together all of the relevant players involved in immediate post-conflict peacebuilding or early recovery. Financially, the role of the PBF is to establish a crucial bridge between conflict and recovery at a time when other funding mechanisms may not yet be available, and to do so in a way that is far more flexible, quick, adaptive, and “risk acceptant” than existing global development instruments, which tend to be highly bureaucratic, slow, and risk-averse.

Notably, the fund aims to address countries’ immediate needs, promote coexistence and the peaceful resolution of conflict, as well as reestablish essential administrative services and infrastructure. Currently, the fund is supporting the provision of “peace dividends” in Guinea-Bissau, the Central African Republic, Burundi, and Sierra Leone.

Politically, the Peacebuilding Commission is made up of actual UN member states, including troop contributing countries; large financial donors; regional powers; former post-conflict states; and representatives of the Security Council, the General Assembly, and the Economic and Social Council. The commission is struggling with an evolving political methodology that involves a top-down “strategy process” or “country-specific meeting” for each unique case. This allows the UN secretary-general to send a team of officials and experts into a post-conflict society to evaluate exactly what is needed from the international community to patch holes in sovereignty and deliver immediate peace dividends most effectively to exhausted civilians.

Political support for these new peacebuilding instruments, however, varies widely. The five permanent members of the UN Security Council, including the United States, have not fully embraced them. That’s due in part to a commitment to their own foreign aid programs as tools of influence toward other states. However, there is widespread hope that peacebuilding will come to form a new “pillar” in international aid to fragile states, complementing the existing tools of development, humanitarian relief, peacemaking diplomacy, and peacekeeping.

—Michael Kraig
Senior Fellow, The Stanley Foundation

World Must Promote Sustainable Security

Pauline Baker: Fragile states not destined to be failed states

Much has been written about fragile states and their dire consequences, but comparatively little on how to prevent state failure and promote state stability. The key question is: can we foster sustainable security so that fragile states can resolve their own problems peacefully, without an external military or administrative presence?

The short answer is “yes,” but with caveats. Sustainable security does not mean preserving “strongman states,” where stability lasts only as long as the leaders are in power. Predatory regimes were supported during the Cold War to gain ideological advantage, but by propping up authoritarian personalities in the 20th century, the superpowers helped establish conditions for the emergence of the fragile states of the 21st century. Promoting sustainable security also does not mean external military intervention to bring down rogue or unfriendly regimes. The overthrow of Saddam Hussein removed a brutal tyrant, but it also precipitated state collapse, insurgency, and civil war, the consequences of which are yet to be fully realized.

Military intervention may be necessary to save lives when mass atrocities are threatened. Without a forward-looking strategy, however, it risks leaving behind a political vacuum that will be filled by factional warlords, as occurred in Somalia, or a frozen conflict, as in Bosnia-Herzegovina, where hostilities ended on the battlefield, but did not dissipate in the hearts and minds of the ethnic rivals.

The Essence of State Building

The best way to promote sustainable stability is, first, to identify the risks of state failure through early warning in order to identify where international intervention might make a difference. Second, strategies must be developed to reduce the pressures on at-risk states, not only by addressing urgent problems but by building the long-term capacity of state institutions, particularly the “core five”—the police, military, civil service, judicial system, and leadership (executive and legislative branches). Other factors are also important, such as local government and a free media, but they are part of building the core five, which constitutes the immutable core of a state. These institutions must be representative, competent, and legitimate in the eyes of the people. Progress can be tracked by looking at how the state fulfills its functions: is it providing human security, producing adequate public services, protecting human





rights, ensuring the rule of law, fighting corruption, reducing poverty, growing the economy, fostering the well-being of the population, enforcing physical control throughout the territory, and acting responsibly in the international arena?

State building involves complex tasks. Often, they are tedious endeavors involving the establishment of administrative practices, such as financial disclosure, a professional public service, merit-based appointments, tax and revenue collection, and government accountability. However, what appears to outsiders to be hum-drum bureaucratic reforms are often seen by local elites as direct challenges to their ability to accumulate illicit wealth, expand their power bases, and operate patronage systems that sustain them. State building often challenges entrenched power structures. Even standard functions, such as conducting a comprehensive census or holding a free and fair election, can become hot button issues because they determine wealth, status, and political control. Vested interests often distort or delay them, leaving the state without reliable data for development and without representatives to address societal grievances.

Successful Cases

Notwithstanding such difficulties, two countries successfully pulled themselves back from the brink through self-driven reforms: India and South Africa. In the 1970s, India was widely predicted to be facing a Malthusian future, with high population growth, poverty, cultural divisions, crime, corrup-

tion, and insufficient agricultural productivity to feed its people. Today, despite continuing poverty and deep social cleavages, India is the world's largest democracy and one of the world's fastest growing economies. Similarly, South Africa in the 1980s was a pariah state locked in intractable internal conflict. It, too, successfully turned things around through a negotiated power shift that averted state failure, military intervention, and mass atrocities.

These successful transitions show that fragile states are not destined to become failed states. Robust and sustained reforms with visionary leadership can lead to sustainable security. The international community can help in important ways. For example, scientific research helped create the Green Revolution that fed India's masses, and diplomatic pressure was exerted to reverse some of that country's most reviled programs, such as forced sterilization. Eight years after economic sanctions were enacted by the US Congress against South Africa, Nelson Mandela celebrated the end of apartheid along with an array of international antiapartheid groups that provided material and moral support.

The most difficult state-building enterprises are those that take place in the midst of insurgencies. A record number of international initiatives have been undertaken to stabilize such countries: NATO in Afghanistan, the African Union in Somalia, the European Union in Kosovo, the UN in numerous missions, stability operations by the United States in Iraq and Afghanistan, and internal counter-insurgency programs in countries such as Indonesia and Nigeria. The notion that state failure threatens global stability is widely accepted, and the international community is responding.

To ensure that the world becomes a safer place, we need to build "institutionally strong states" that are politically inclusive, functionally capable, and legally accountable. This cannot be done on the cheap or on the quick. However, with the appropriate resources, organization, and time, it is an attainable goal.



—Pauline H. Baker
President of the Fund for Peace and
Adjunct Professor in Georgetown
University's Graduate School of
Foreign Service

Bosnia on the Brink. *Fata Smajic, a 9-year-old Bosnian girl pictured here, holds a jar of fresh strawberries to sell along the road north of Sarajevo. An escalating economic crisis and lingering ethnic tensions continue to threaten Bosnia's stability long after hostilities ended. (AP Photo/Amel Emric)*

How They Stopped the Killing

When Kenya descended into post-election violence, an international effort helped restore peace.

Nairobi, Kenya – Police kicked in doors as Kibera slum residents fled. One officer shot and killed seven people in the span of two hours, including a 12-year-old child.

Two hours away, in Kenya’s Rift Valley, mobs took to the streets with machetes, clubs, and metal pipes, attacking anyone not in their ethnic tribe. In the weeks following Kenya’s disputed presidential election in December 2007, the country’s long simmering ethnic and social tensions boiled over. More than 1,000 people died.

“It wasn’t just the election, but the election was the trigger,” said Pauline Baker, president of the Fund for Peace. “Sometimes countries just reach a tipping point where people expect change, and elections are often the vehicle of that change. When those elections are rigged or stolen, people say, ‘That’s it. We have no other alternative,’ and violence breaks out.”

In Kenya, it was an election many voters presumed opposition leader Raila Odinga would win. But instead, after suspicious delays in the vote tally, incumbent President Mwai Kibaki declared victory. That ignited violence between the country’s two largest ethnic groups: Kibaki’s own Kikuyu tribe and Odinga’s Luo.

Lingering Instability

The near collapse of an African country rarely attracts the attention and quick international action that was eventually applied to Kenya, long considered the most stable and economically developed nation in volatile East Africa.

Pressure by former UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan and African, European, and US leaders helped broker a power-sharing agreement in which Kibaki remained president but shared executive control with Odinga, who became prime minister.



Desperate Situation. A young Kenyan boy crosses a sewage stream in the Nairobi slum of Kibera, one of several locations where ethnic violence and extrajudicial police killings occurred following Kenya's disputed presidential election in December of 2007. With the coalition governments failure to live up to reform promises, tensions are again building in this traditionally stable East African nation. (Sean Harder/The Stanley Foundation)

Although the deal put an immediate end to the violence, tensions continue to linger more than a year later as issues of constitutional reform, land use, corruption, and extrajudicial killings remain unresolved due to political deadlock.

“You need to know that this country was at the precipice,” Odinga said in an interview with 12 US editors and producers who traveled to Kenya as part of the International Reporting Project. “The institution of the presidency has emasculated all other institutions of governance. It’s what we call the ‘imperial presidency.’ We want to dismantle that, and introduce checks and balances into the system.”

Government reforms won’t be easy in a country where politicians are more likely to use their positions to acquire personal wealth than serve their public. Kenya’s inability to root out corruption has created a dangerous “pattern of dissatisfaction” among its citizens, said Francois Grignon, director of the African Program for the International Crisis Group.

“They don’t believe that the state authority is serving everybody equally and fairly,” he said. “They don’t believe the electoral system is going to arbitrate or provide a legitimate, nonviolent modality to arbitrate between political disputes.”

There’s a “creeping level of fragility” in Kenya that wasn’t there before, said Stephen Ndegwa, a native Kenyan and lead public sector governance specialist at the World Bank. While Kenya has transformed from an authoritarian state to a more democratic model, a rise of ethnic violence and criminal gangs means the state is losing its monopoly on power. It serves to demonstrate that governments and the international community have not taken issues of state stability seriously enough.

“We have not thought through state fragility as a consequence of massive political change,” Ndegwa said. “These become tremendously important vulnerabilities for a place like Kenya where the entire edifice could unravel because of the pressures you have from the lack of fulfillment of people’s economic expectations: the grinding poverty, the inability of the state to fully control violence, and the inability of politicians to actually create compacts that hold and allow them to direct the state in ways that assure stability and economic growth. So it’s really problematic.”

A First for Responsibility to Protect?

The mediation Kofi Anan led to end the violence in Kenya has been, in retrospect, considered by many to be one of the first applications of the *Responsibility to Protect*, or R2P, a UN declaration Annan helped craft to prevent genocides and other mass atrocities.

“Here we have the first proper illustration of what an R2P effort could deliver,” said Grignon. “In its implementation it did illustrate that, yes, political action can contribute successfully to contain a crisis, to save lives, and it was a successful illustration of what R2P really meant on the ground with both African and Western actors working together.”

Still, there were some failures in the Kenyan intervention, and some lessons to be learned, Grignon said. The power-sharing agreement was essentially a compromise between two personalities: Odinga and Kibaki. It never laid out any future benchmarks for reform. That has resulted in Kenya’s present political gridlock, a disaffected public, and little leverage for the international community to use in holding Odinga and Kibaki accountable for the reforms they promised.

Baker, of the Fund for Peace, doesn’t see the Kenya intervention as a true application of R2P.

“I think it was more traditional diplomacy that worked, at least temporarily,” she said. “R2P really has great potential in moving the international community forward in a way I think it needs to be moved, by creating a norm. The problem, however, is that it’s been negotiated to the point where there are prior conditions that have to be met before there’s real international intervention. That could be used by those who want to block action.”

The R2P declaration says nations have the primary “responsibility to protect” their populations from genocide, war crimes, and other crimes against humanity. And the international community has a responsibility to remind states of this responsibility and offer assistance as needed—all of which could delay a stronger intervention.

“The problem, of course, is the state is the problem in a lot of cases, not the solution,” Baker said.

—Sean Harder
Program Officer, The Stanley Foundation

Resource

International Reporting Project. Twelve US editors and producers traveled to Kenya in June 2009 as part of a fact-finding trip. To view their reports, visit www.internationalreportingproject.org.

courier	No. 64, Fall 2009 ISSN 1044-5900	Vlad Sambaiew PRESIDENT
	<i>Courier</i> is published quarterly by the Stanley Foundation and mailed without charge to interested readers within the United States. The views expressed here are not necessarily those of the foundation.	Keith Porter EDITOR
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	209 Iowa Avenue :: Muscatine, IA 52761 USA 563-264-1500 :: 563-264-0864 fax info@stanleyfoundation.org www.stanleyfoundation.org	Margo Schneider COPYEDITOR
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The Stanley Foundation seeks a secure peace with freedom and justice, built on world citizenship and effective global governance. We promote public understanding, constructive dialogue, and cooperative action on critical international issues. Our work recognizes the essential roles of both the policy community and the broader public in building sustainable peace.

We believe a new consultative mechanism of world powers such as an expanded G-8 should incorporate rising powers, address peace and security issues, and work toward effective

global governance. We believe US leadership and robust implementation of international agreements could lead to all global supplies of nuclear material being secured and, where possible, eliminated. We believe state fragility must be addressed by national policies and international cooperation that treat the issue in a holistic, comprehensive manner.

The various resources available from the Stanley Foundation address these three policy priorities—evolving global system, nuclear security, and human protection.

HUMAN PROTECTION

Peacebuilding Following Conflict

The Stanley Foundation sponsored a conference on “Peacebuilding Following Conflict” to provide a forum for United Nations member states, officials from UN departments and programmes, and experts from leading US think tanks to assess efforts to date on peacebuilding, and to discuss the secretary-general’s landmark report on peacebuilding in the immediate aftermath of conflict. August 2009 conference report.



The Responsibility to Protect and Foreign Policy in the Next Administration

The “responsibility to protect” (R2P) framework offers conceptual, legal, and practical answers to the prevention and mitigation of mass atrocities. In an effort to contribute to the continuing debates around prevention of mass atrocities such as genocide, the Stanley Foundation convened a dialogue among leading US, intergovernmental organization, and civil society experts and officials to explore R2P-related issues, including new civilian and military capabilities required to implement the overall framework. January 2009 dialogue brief.

The Roots of the United States’ Deteriorating Civilian Capacity and Potential Remedies

This brief is from a joint Stanley Foundation–Center for a New American Century project titled *What an Engagement Strategy Entails: Is the United States Government Equipped?* It focuses on past lessons and current realities for the reform of US civilian international affairs agencies to orient them toward a coherent and integrated global engagement system. October 2008 dialogue brief.

NUCLEAR SECURITY

Realizing Nuclear Disarmament

The Stanley Foundation convened a mix of UN diplomats and other officials to examine the first steps toward a world free of nuclear weapons. This report outlines the key points from the conference discussions, specifically noting that the world has an historic opportunity to make great progress on nuclear arms reductions. The window for progress may last no more than two years. April 2009 online conference report.

The Next 100 Project: Leveraging National Security Assistance to Meet Developing World Needs

A collaborative effort between the Henry L. Stimson Center and the Stanley Foundation targeted sustainable implementation of UN Security Council Resolution 1540. The focus of the project was to identify new sources of assistance for addressing endemic threats in the developing world, including poverty, corruption, infectious disease, and economic underdevelopment by tapping national security resources and addressing mutual concerns. February 2009 executive summary and online conference report.

Toward an Integrated US Nuclear Weapons Policy: Address US Security in an Interconnected World

Reducing American dependency on nuclear weapons will lead to greater security for the United States and its allies and should be the driving force behind US nuclear weapons policy. The ultimate American goal should be multilateral, verifiable nuclear disarmament, according to a new report by the Stanley Foundation. To achieve this, the US will need to take several steps, including adoption of a no-first-use policy, pursuing the removal of all remaining US nuclear weapons from Europe, negotiating an extension of the START verification protocol with Russia, and engaging China in ways that build a secure nuclear future. With the incoming presidential administration, the US will undertake a formal review of its nuclear weapons policy. With this in mind, the Stanley Foundation launched a US Nuclear Policy Review project to produce recommendations for changing US nuclear weapons policy. January 2009 project report.

EVOLVING GLOBAL SYSTEM

At the World's Summit: How Will Leading Nations Lead
Sixty years ago, the dual shocks of the Great Depression and World War II spurred the creation of international institutions such as the United Nations, International Monetary Fund, the World Bank, and a sturdy global political order. Now we seem to be at the threshold of another burst of invention—"Creation 2.0," as it has been called. Rather than a world war, the ferment this time comes from the combination of a global financial crisis, the emergence of novel and interconnected transnational problems, and the swift rise of a new cohort of powerful states, all of which have exposed the limits of the post-war institutions, and perhaps rendered them obsolete. Veteran journalist James Traub, a contributing writer for *The New York Times Magazine*, examines Creation 2.0 and concludes it will be marked more by a protracted evolution than a big bang. June 2009 analysis brief

India Rising

What does it mean for its aspirations if many Indians don't have a stake in its new economic miracle? Moreover, what does India's success or failure mean for the US and for the rest of the world? Follow an award-winning team of reporters in this Stanley Foundation radio documentary as they search for answers and explore the complexities of what many believe will be the world's next superpower. 2009 CD.



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Fragile States

Piracy, One Example of New Global Threats

The recent uptick in ship seizures by Somali pirates underscores a new fundamental truth: The world's weakest nations pose the greatest global security threats, not the world's strongest.

There is now a new international effort to patrol the waters off Somalia, the east African nation that's become a glaring example of a failed state.

The world has undergone a great transition from Cold War competition between two ideological, economic, and military blocs to a more complex security equation. We are experiencing a global surge in transnational, stateless, and nontraditional threats, often emanating from failed or fragile states such as Somalia or Pakistan.

More

To read the rest of the article visit:
www.stanleyfoundation.org/courier.

REUTERS/Eric L. Beauregard/US Navy

