

**AL-SHABAAB'S INDIRECT APPROACH AND THE INTENSITY OF TERROR  
ATTACKS IN KENYA (2011-2015)**


**ALDRIN OLAYO FELIX**

**A RESEARCH PROJECT SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF  
THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE AWARD OF THE DEGREE OF MASTER  
OF ARTS IN INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS OF THE  
UNIVERSITY OF NAIROBI.**

**NOVEMBER 2016**

## DECLARATION

This research project is my original work and has not been presented for a degree in any other university

Sign:  .....

Date: 23/11/2016

**Aldrin Olayo Felix**

**Reg. No. C50/74510/2014**

This research project has been submitted for examination with my approval as the university supervisor

Sign:  .....

Date: 23-11-16

**Dr. Musambayi Katumanga**

**Department of Political Science and Public Administration**

**University of Nairobi.**

## **DEDICATION**

I dedicate this work to my mother Helena Maende Olayo; you are my source of strength. My late grandmother Lucia Awimbo and my recently departed “mother” Clara Olal Olayo. The duo ensured that I didn’t make a false start at life by ensuring that I transitioned successfully into this planet. I will always fight to emulate your pioneering standards and indefatigable attitude.

My lastborn daughter Elena Olayo Felix, in you I see so many possibilities. I trust you to keep the fire lit by the Awimbo’s and other pioneers burning. This work is for you!

## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENT**

This project would not have been realized without the tutelage of my lecturers at the Department of Political Science, University of Nairobi, the non-teaching staff, family, my colleagues both in the university and from the National Police Service and a host of other friends and well-wishers. My lecturers, I sincerely appreciate your efforts at nurturing my academic dream and shaping my train of thought.

Dr. Musambayi Katumanga, to you I shall forever remain indebted. Your patience made my dream a reality. Many are the occasions you jolted me from “seating on my head” and steered me in the right direction. I lost count of the number of corrections you insisted I make but ultimately I developed resilience and the virtue of giving my all. Strategy you often said is simple, but not easy. I bear testimony to this!

Much appreciation to my children; Ajuma Thomas Jefferson, Garang’ Antony Felton, Tibaijuka Ana Kajumulo and Elena Olayo Felix. My brother Bernard Oduor Olayo, you baby sat me, dragged me to Anyiko Primary School and ensured that I graduated from Maseno University. I can never thank you sufficiently but rest assured I shall never be provincial in thought. The larger Helena Olayo family, thanks for giving me the inspiration to always complete my tasks.

My classmates notably Philip Tarus, Gichovi Dennis, Winnie Rutto, Hon. Lee Kinyanjui, Fr. Charly, Fred Bukachi, Michael Thon Mangok, Oburu, Omurwa and Guhad; you made the journey tolerable. Fellow officers like Emitundo; Kiongo your support was invaluable. The IDS library staff especially Mrs. Mercy Waithaka, you granted me the most conducive study environment. The library was my “home away from home” and place of nourishment.

Despite the contributions and critique by the above mentioned, this study remains Felix Olayo’s personal work and its limitations are not attributed to any party.

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## **ABBREVIATIONS**

AIAI	Al -Ittihad Al Islamiya
AMISOM	African Union Mission in Somalia
APS	Administration Police Service
AQ	Al Qaeda
ATPU	Anti- Terrorism Police Unit
CBD	Central Business District
CHRIPS	Center for Human Rights and Policy Studies
COG	Center of Gravity
COK 2010	Constitution of Kenya
DIG	Deputy Inspector General
EU	European Union
FLN	Algerian National Liberation Front
GOK	Government of Kenya
GSU	General Service Unit
IAGCI	Independent Advisory Group on Country Information
ICU	Islamic Courts Union
KDF	Kenya Defense Forces
KIFC	Kansas Intelligence Fusion Center
MRC	Mombasa Republican Council
NCTC	National Counter- Terrorism Centre
NGO	Non- Governmental Organization
NPS	National Police Service
NSP	National Security Policy
NSS (2000)	National Security Strategy 2000
NYPD	New York Police Department
PLO	Palestinian Liberation Organization
SAM-7	Surface to Air Missile
UNDP	United Nation Development Programme



## **ABSTRACT**

The aim of this dissertation is to highlight factors responsible for the intensity of Al-Shabaab terror attacks in Kenya between the period spanning October 2011 and December 2015. Between 17<sup>th</sup> October 2011 and July 17<sup>th</sup> 2014, Kenya had suffered 133 attacks orchestrated by the Al-Shabaab. By April 2015 these Al-Shabaab attacks had resulted in more than 600 casualties.

The dissertation had two specific objectives; first to examine factors underpinning Al-Shabaab's success in executing terror attacks in Kenya. Second is to examine and analyze factors underlying the apparent inability of security apparatus to decisively defeat al-Shabaab. The three attacks selected as a case study are the Westgate mall attack of September 2013, the Mpeketoni and Lamu attacks of June and July 2014 and the two attacks in Mandera in November and December 2014. The researcher used in-depth (expert) interviews, observation and document analysis to collect both primary and secondary data. Content analysis was then adopted to analyze the data.

This study adopts the theory of Indirect Approach as postulated by Liddell Hart to explain these attacks. It complements this theory with the concept of Distance Decay Reduction as proposed by Ngunyi & Katumanga (2014) to further describe, explain and prescribe solutions to this Al-Shabaab menace in Kenya.

The main thesis of this study are; one, the success of Al-Shabaab group in executing these attacks is underpinned by their ability to efficiently operationalize the strategy of indirect approach and adopt it to suit their ends. Two is that the inability of Kenya security forces to decisively defeat Al-Shabaab owes to their alienation of the population. The assumption being that the support of the population holds the "intangible centre of gravity" in these engagements.

## **CHAPTER ONE**

### **INTRODUCTION**

#### **1.1 Background of the Study**

Terrorism gained global prominence on September 11, 2001 when 19 al-Qaeda (AQ) skyjackers- instructed by Osama Bin Laden attacked the Pentagon and the World Trade Centre Complex. Close to 3000 people from across 80 states lost their lives in this attack making it the single most catastrophic terrorist attack ever (Hoffman, 2006).

The 9/11 attacks cost Al Qaeda between \$400,000 and \$500,000, making it the most expensive terrorist attack in history with regards to logistics such as training the pilots and other operational costs. In contrast, the attacks inflicted a direct cost of \$27.2 billion on the United States, and subsequent operations in the “War on Terrorism” had cost about \$700 billion to mid-2008. In terms of personnel the US lost close to 5000 servicemen in Afghanistan and Iraq wars (Kilcullen 2009 p.56-8).

Boko Haram insurgency in Nigeria has engendered a loss of close to 5000 lives and destroyed private and public property worth billions of naira (Osita-Njoku, & Chikere, 2015). The UK Home Office put the estimates at over 5,500 deaths in 2014, a further 2,000 abductions and that Boko Haram may have killed more than 10,000 people since its emergence. According to their report Boko Haram fighters killed at least 1,500 civilians in the first three months of 2015 alone. They possess sophisticated weaponry financed through robbery, extortion and ransom as well as those stolen from the police stations and military bases it has overrun (IAGCI, 2015).

In Kenya the Al-Qaeda –AL-Shabaab terror campaign began on August 7 1998 when Al-Qaeda attacked the U.S. embassy in Nairobi killing 224 people and injuring roughly 5,000 others. On November 28 2002 Al-Qaeda attacked the Israeli owned Paradise hotel in Mombasa killing 15 people. It was followed by the firing of two

shoulder-launched missiles at an Israeli charter plane, which missed its target (Carson, 2005, DOD, Harmony 2006 & Khadiagala, 2004).

The recent escalation of terrorist attacks in Kenya is attributed to Al-Shabaab insurgency in Somalia. On 1<sup>st</sup> October 2011, Marie Dedieu, was kidnapped from her home near Manda island. On October 13, Al-Shabaab militants kidnapped two female Spanish Medicines sans Frontieres (MSF) aid workers from Daadab refugee camp. These kidnappings together with a series of other cross-border attacks pointed to an emerging complexity and ultimately spurred Kenya Defense Forces (KDF) to intervene in Somalia on October 14 2011(KDF, 2014).

### **1.2 Statement of the Problem**

Kenya militarily intervened in Somalia on 14<sup>th</sup> October 2011 through an operation christened “Operation Linda Nchi.” This followed the abduction of two tourists, a Britton at Lamu Island and a French at Manda island (Bocha. 2011). The logic of the military operation was to create a buffer zone between Somalia and Kenya’s North Eastern and Coast regions to contain the spillover of insecurity from the volatile nation(KDF,2014). Instead of the anticipated security the reverse happened as the attacks not only increased in frequency and intensity but their nature mutated as well (CHRIPS, 2014).

Between 17<sup>th</sup> October 2011 and 19<sup>th</sup> July 2014, Kenya was attacked 133 times. These occasioned 344 deaths and 923 serious injuries (Standard Newspaper, July 1, 2014). Commencing January 2012 and extending to April 2015, Al-Shabaab attacks across Kenya had resulted in more than 600 casualties (Watkins, 2016). Three attacks stand out for their severity and audacity;

Al- Shabaab attack of Westgate launched on the 21<sup>st</sup> September 2013, occasioned 67 deaths, several injuries and massive loss of property including part of the mall collapsing (NYPD, 2013).The second engagement nine months later, Al-Shabaab launched another devastating attack on Mpeketoni on June 15<sup>th</sup> 2014.They

commandeered two vans in Witu before storming Mpeketoni, disabled the areas communication infrastructure, attacked a police station and stole weapons (Anderson, 2014, Butime,2014).The operatives were selective in targeting their victims; whereas men were killed, women and children were spared.

The assailants used flares to illuminate the operation area and controlled Mpeketoni for 10 hours. They then recuperated before disappearing into Boni forest (RBC Radio, 2014).At the end of the engagement 60 people were dead, a police station torched and several vehicles burnt. The third engagement took place on 22<sup>nd</sup> November 2014, 28 passengers were executed after Al Shabaab militants attacked a Nairobi bound bus. Shortly after on December 3<sup>rd</sup> an armed attack at a quarry in Mandera left 36 workers dead. The brutality of these attacks in which non-Muslims, this time –including women- were singled out for killing, prompted some non-Muslims to flee Mandera (Daily Mail,25<sup>th</sup> November 2014,&US Dept. of State, 2015).

A common denominator in all the three attacks is the response of state security apparatus; not only have they apparently been slow to react but the time taken to neutralize attackers has been comparatively long, underpinning the size of casualties (Kansas Intelligence and Fusion Centre, 2013).Al-Shabaab, on the other hand demonstrate an apparent logic in their operations, for instance during the Westgate mall attack, they commissioned only four operatives but it took Kenya security apparatus four days to neutralize them, their strategy here was of stretching time as they maximized on their means. In Mpeketoni they commanded the theatre of operations for ten hours despite the proximity of GSU camp and KDF base.

It is this operational ability in comparison to their responses that interests us. This study seeks to respond to the following two questions; why does Al-Shabaab succeed in executing such attacks across Kenya? What explains the apparent inability of security organs to decisively defeat them?

### **1.3 Objectives**

1. To examine factors underpinning Al-Shabaab's success in executing terror attacks in Kenya.
2. To examine and analyze factors underlying the apparent inability of security apparatus to decisively defeat al-Shabaab.

### **1.4 Justification of The Study**

#### **1.4.1 Policy Justification**

The government of Kenya (GOK) in conjunction with United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) authored policy document titled "Strengthening Community's Capacity Against Radicalization And Violent Extremism In Kenya" in 2015. Its broad argument is that attacks suffered are executed by radicalized youth returning from Somalia. What it does not explain is why the said "returnees" or radicals have better combat intelligence and tactical capabilities that provide them ability to exploit terrain compared to Kenya security forces.

This study seeks to respond to this gap. It is concerned with issues of actor strategies at the strategic, operational and tactical level, with the view to locating the comparative advantage that favors Al-Shabaab; this is sine qua non to alternative security policy options.

In a bid to anticipate development, the Kenya government conceived Vision 2030 on economic, social and political development. Its protection challenges are beyond Kenya's traditional security planners. Most emphasis is on infrastructural development such as road networks, railways, ports, airports, water and sanitation facilities and telecommunications. Notwithstanding the salience and security implication of the foregoing infrastructural developments, the only reference to security is the idea of community policing (GOK, 2007).

Omitted herein is the question of how the envisaged community policing integrates with the whole security architecture. This glaring gap is discussed in Ngunyi &

Katumanga (2014) which extols the need for National Security Policy. We can only allude to the nexus this has with opportunities terrorists exploit. This study seeks to analyze the impact of absence of coordinating infrastructure and variables of mobilization, command and control and overall ability to respond. In responding to these, this study will affirm its policy justification.

The “Nyumba Kumi” initiative is aimed at anchoring community policing at the household level by empowering citizens in national security issues. Its operationalization requires government policing agencies and all stakeholders to display “a complete positive attitudinal transformation in the performance of their roles” (GOK, 2015 p.13). Its objectives include establishment of active partnership between government policing agencies and the community and building sustainable confidence and mutual trust.

The challenge of meeting these noble objectives lie in the following factors; the national police service still accommodates its officers in secluded camps, stations and posts. This creates a sense of distancing between them and the communities from which they operate. This study responds to this gap in its chapter four. Some Kenyan societies still practice pastoralism; this demographic attribute engenders social distance decay and poses obstacles to government security agencies that are deployed in a stationary manner.

Thirdly, senior officers such as officer commanding a police station (OCS) and administration police commanders tasked with maintenance of this community policing on a permanent basis rarely stay long enough in one duty station. This creates further gaps in the policy implementation.

#### **1.4.2 Academic Justification**

Galula (2006) points to the centrality of the population, the protracted nature of the war, the fluidity of the insurgent versus the rigidity of the counterinsurgent and disparity in terms of costs. In prescribing solutions to a viable counterinsurgency,

Galula delves on the nature of military personnel, training, weaponry, type of command and nature of a revolutionary war as 20 percent military action and 80 percent political action (Galula, 2006).

Galula lays emphasis on increased opportunities for individual contact between population and counterinsurgent personnel, every one of whom must participate in intelligence collection (not just specialists)(Galula, 2006 p.99).Not anticipated is the doctrinal divide between intelligence specialists and regular forces coupled with bottlenecks that make unified approach nearly impossible. This study will address this gap too.

The Kenya government invoked article 51 of the UN charter to invade Somalia. It cited Al-Shabaab threat as compromising its sovereignty and territorial integrity (KDF 2014 p253). KDF adopted a three pronged attack through El Wak, in northern sector, Liboi in central sector and Ras Kiamboni in the south. To further enhance their indirect approach, they enlisted the services of local Somali forces notably the Somali National Army (SNA) and Ras Kamboni Brigade (RKB).

This facilitated their conquering of Kismayu-the Al Shabaab centre of gravity and winning other landmark battles such as Hoosinga and Miido (KDF, 2014). To crown their victory the KDF cite “liberation of 300,000 square kilometres and over 175 kilometres inside Somalia”(Ibid p.39). A major gap in this KDF theory is the reliance on liberation of physical territory and prevailing in conventional battles as a measure of success.

Since the fall of Kismayu in September 2012, Al-Shabaab has been able to launch devastating attacks like Westgate, Mpeketoni and Garissa University attack. The most recent being the January 2016 El-Adde attack in Somalia when they overran a Kenyan defence. KDF rightly pointed out Al-Shabaab’s propensity to resort to guerrilla tactics and “fight elusively without trying to defend terrain against concerted attack”(Ibid p.27).Their inability to anticipate such attacks is what anchors this

study's academic justification. Its theoretical framework places the support of the population as a core element in winning asymmetrical engagements.

### **1.5 Scope and Limitations of The Study**

This study examines terrorism in Kenya between 2011-2015. The selection of 2011 is predicated on the fact that that is the point of entry into Somalia by KDF in a bid to contain al-Shabaab attacks. 2015 is selected for the fact that it not only frames the period of intensity in attacks but also because it marked Al-Shabaab's most devastating attack against the homeland (Garissa University attack). This is not to argue that events in 2016 are ignored, while these are indicated in post time, the study is cognizant of the fact that the year is still evolving.

The study faced the limitation of restricted access to classified documents on terror attacks in Kenya. Data from online News Networks, Newspapers and published reports on terrorism in Kenya were relied on to overcome this limitation. Such News Networks report real time on activities as they unravel.

### **1.6 Definition of Concepts**

**Strategy:** Liddell Hart conceptualized strategy as "the art of distributing military means to fulfill the ends of policy." Gray defines strategy as "the use that is made of force and the threat of force for the ends of policy" (Gray, 1999 p.17). The strength of these definitions is their emphasis on balancing the means and ends in pursuit of policy objectives.

**Terrorism:** Laqueur (1987, p.143) defines it as "the use or threat of use of violence, a method of combat or a strategy to achieve certain targets...[I]t aims to induce a state of fear in mostly civilian victims. Terrorists apply acts of violence that are ruthless and do not conform with the internationally acknowledged humanitarian rules...[P]ublicity is an essential factor in the terrorist strategy." This study adopts this definition of terrorism for its emphasis on combat aspect. In this study Al-Shabaab terror campaign is conceptualized as a means of warfare aimed at fulfilling their caliphate project.



**Indirect Approach:** Military theorist Liddell Hart, viewed the indirect approach as a method to orient upon, target and upset the adversary's equilibrium in order to plan for and direct decisive blows (Hart Liddell, 1941). This study adopts Hart's definition for its emphasis on dislocating the enemy stability that fundamentally depends on control, morale and supply.

A major limitation of Hart's definition is that he conceived engagements pitting conventional forces. Its reliance on physical geography is another challenge. This study responds to these challenges by introducing the concept of 4<sup>th</sup> generation warfare which responds better to virtual geography and actions of non-state actors like Al-Shabaab.

### **1.7 Literature Review**

This section reviews broad literature on insurgencies, counter insurgency and terrorism starting from the broad global perspective and narrowing down to the particular case of Kenya. It is done under two categories according to the objectives of the study:

1. Kenya's vulnerabilities to terror attacks
2. Strategic and policy options of neutralizing terror and insurgencies.

#### **1.7.1 Kenya's Vulnerabilities to Terror Attacks**

Galula(2006) observes that generally any insurgency relies on a cause, police and administrative weakness in the counterinsurgent camp, a not -too-hostile geographic environment and outside support in order to thrive. Insurgency is not only cheap but is also very fluid in nature as opposed to counterinsurgency which is costly and rigid. He cites the example of "the insurgent blows a bridge, so every bridge has to be guarded, throws a grenade in a movie theater forcing every person entering a public place to be searched."

It is imperative to note however that most insurgencies Galula examines are anticolonial or communist led insurgencies in places such as China, Malaya, Angola,

and Algeria. His study does not cover post -Cold War era in the Middle East and Africa where Islamic fundamentalists are bent on creating a caliphate cutting across vast geographical terrains. This study is an examination of the battle pitting al-Shabaab terror group against Kenya with key geographical spaces being contested.

Meservey grapples with al-Shabaab insurgency in Somalia and its metamorphosis from AIAI which evolved from Islamic Courts Union, its losses at the hands of Ethiopian led occupation to its current organization. He points that “Al-Shabaab is not going to stand and fight a superior force that can crush it, but will instead attack when and where it can, as opportunities arise” (Meservey, 2013, p.142).

The Westgate Mall was one such opportunity given that it was in Kenya, hardly defended at all, high profile and frequented by a lot of Westerners as well as Kenyans. In his analysis, the attack was not a tool of the weak, but a tool of the strategic. It is simply business as usual for an extraordinarily ruthless and cunning terrorist group.

Meservey does not however respond to the question as to why AMISOM coalition with a backing from 28 nation strong EU has not been able to neutralize Al-Shabaab. If it has been able to withstand the onslaught of 22,126 troops and still extends its frontiers of violence to troop contributing countries, this suggests a very strong organization and a rethink of how its opponents view it is of utmost necessity.

Botha (2014) sets out to determine what radicalized individuals identify with, and how they become radicalized. She cites marginalization, frustration and resentment towards Nairobi, the center of political power and collective punishment at the hands of Kenyan security forces as factors that predispose people to join the two organizations (Botha, 2014 p.20). Her study argues that involvement in terrorism results from gradual exposure to and socialization towards extreme behaviour and increasing legitimization of the use of violence to achieve political ends.

Botha points out that despite the fact that the two organizations, influenced by different histories, contest different areas (the MRC focuses on land issues and is a secessionist movement while Al-Shabaab stresses Islamist extremism), they seem to tap into the same frustrations and grievances to advance their objectives. To Botha, local conditions have enabled growing frustrations to become worse, enabling al-Shabaab to strengthen its grip in Kenya.

Botha does not however indicate how al-Shabaab is able to exploit these local grievances and project their jihadist ideology as a worthy cause to the maligned Muslim fraternity in former North Eastern and Coast provinces. This is what facilitates their embedment and thereby acting as a sanctuary to the terrorist at the same time being an obstacle to law enforcement agencies as discussed by Ngunyi & Katumanga (2014).

Rotberg (2005) visualizes Kenya as a battleground and cites the two Al Qaeda orchestrated attacks of the 1998 embassy bombings and the 2002 Kikambala hotel bombing. In his analysis, threats are conceptualized as external and mainly arising as a result of Kenya's porous border with Somalia and close diplomatic relations with Western powers such as US, Britain and Israel. What explains local terror cells then? His work only addresses the pull factors of terrorism and the push factors are omitted.

Carson (2005) contends that Kenya possesses more enticing terrorist targets and that finding recruits for terrorist activities is comparatively easy because of widespread alienation and resentment by Coastal Muslims. His work links the two attacks of 1998 and the 2002 Mombasa attacks together and points that Al-Qaida had used the same modus operandi in planning the Mombasa and Nairobi attacks (Carson, 2005).

Carson cites the presence of Western embassies in Nairobi, many tourists frequenting the Kenyan coast and Kenya's well developed transport and communication infrastructure. Widespread corruption, inefficiency, and sometimes sheer incompetence especially in the police force and the customs and immigration services

attract terrorists (Carson, 2005).His assessment is limited to the 1995-2005 timeframe. This study covers a different time frame and the war is no longer between AQ and the West but pits al-Shabaab against the Kenyan government in certain geospatial locations of strategic interest to both actors.

Adan (2005) examines why Kenya was attacked by Al- Qaeda (the 1998 Nairobi US Embassy bombing and the 2002 Kikambala hotel bombing in Mombasa).He also analyses the government response to the two attacks. He established that Al Qaeda agents, posing as businesspersons, Islamic preachers, NGO workers and humanitarian assistance providers infiltrated the community along the Kenyan coast prior to the attacks (Adan, 2005).

After the 2002 Kikambala bombings, the government of Kenya employed both traditional (diplomacy, information, military and economic) and non-traditional (law enforcement, intelligence and legislative) instruments of power effectively to counter the threat and adopted a counter-terrorism strategy (Adan, 2005 p.54).If Kenya's counter-terrorism strategy was sound then the response to subsequent attacks ought to have been much more efficient, this has not been the case however.

Miguta (2013) advances the argument that Al-Shabaab targets Kenya for a constant objective of driving KDF out of Somalia and in furtherance of Al Qaeda's consolidation of the caliphate. His central argument attributes the increase in terror attacks in Garissa County to the distance decay in socio-political and economic facets of life between the government and the populace.

Another factor fuelling insecurity in Garissa is the challenge of operationalizing a NSP in the absence of a written one. His study does not however consider attacks in Garissa as Al-Shabaab targeting KDF's Central Sector. This study conceives al-Shabaab attacks in places like Mandera, Lamu as a form of indirect approach aimed at KDF lines of supply.

Kenya Defense Forces launched Operation Linda Nchi as “an effort to defend the republic of Kenya against seaborne aggression” (KDF 2014 p.19). Al Shabaab they point out is a group that relies on guerilla tactics and avoids direct confrontation with regular forces. At the same time it possesses assault rifles, Rocket Propelled Grenades, anti- tank rockets, mortars (60mm), machine guns among others. This they observe makes it a formidable foe (KDF 2014).

The assumption was that Kismayu was Al-Shabaab’s main center of gravity-the economic hub that generated funds for their logistics and entry point of foreign fighters- (Ibid p.113).However these centers keep on shifting as Shabaab withdrew into the population to gain time and space for planning. This explains their success in orchestrating attacks in far flung locations inside Kenya such as Kapenguria police station attack in spite of being driven out of Kismayu.

### **1.7.2 Strategic and Policy Options of Neutralizing Terror- Insurgencies**

Neumann & Smith (2008) view terrorism as a bona fide method of distributing means to fulfill ends of policy-as a strategy. They explain its modus operandi as disorientation, target response and gaining legitimacy. Terrorism, they observe depends on influencing the psychological impact of small scale attacks. To them many campaigns of terrorism end in miscarriage when they fail to frighten. They point out that strategically only the Irguns Zvai Leumi (National Military Organization) in Israel and FLN in Algeria met their intended objectives.

To them it is a strategy of inflicting costs and its communication involves the infliction or threat of violence to indicate to the adversary that the cost of not acquiescing to political demands will outweigh the cost of concession. This leads to an escalation trap which ultimately results in their downfall. If they escalate campaigns, they face internal division, a hostile reaction from the population thereby provoking a ruthless and effective campaign of repression from the target government (Neumann & Smith, 2008).They however fail to acknowledge that the withdrawal of

US troops from Saudi Arabia after 9/11 was a strategic victory on the part of Al Qaeda.

Galula (2006 p.68-77) remarks that in any insurgency whatever the cause; there will always be an active minority for the cause, a neutral majority and an active minority against the cause. The strategic problem for the counter insurgent is “*to find the favorable minority, to organize it in order to mobilize the population against the insurgent minority*” While emphasizing the primacy of the political over the military power he observes that a revolutionary war is 20 per cent military action and 80 per cent political.

Shapiro (2007) calls for a major investment on intelligence, particularly human intelligence. He pokes holes on NSS 2000 by pointing that “*no national security policy can be better than the intelligence on which it is based*” (Shapiro, 2007 p. 71). He further observes that however imaginary its goals, Al Qaida must still make strategic decisions- rendering its leaders subject to logics of incentives. To Shapiro, the sensible approach is to avoid stimulating the supply and to limit Al Qaida’s access to resources and support.

It is imperative to shift the focus away from the content of their beliefs to the conditions that make it less likely that they will find sanctuaries and indigenous support (Shapiro, 2007 p. 124). Unlike the US which has operationalized several NSPs and Doctrines to anchor its strategy, Kenya does not have a single national security paper to rely on! Secondly vast parts of Kenya’s territory are under governed thus offering terrorists and other insurgent’s valuable sanctuaries.

Betrand (2003) contends that the war on terror poses special challenges to planners at the strategic and operational levels. It is transnational in scope and highly asymmetric; the adversary exploits vulnerabilities on the structure of modern society itself, while hidden in its seams. Third the enemy does not need to win in order to prevail. Achieving strategic victory, then, requires an indirect approach working

principally through the other instruments of national power- diplomacy, information, economic and culture-supported by carefully calibrated military operations.

This indirect approach seeks to sequester the adversary from his strategic center of gravity (COG)-the umma- rather than to destroy him militarily. He also calls for effective governance in the Arab world by the Arabs themselves. In the case of USA, the center of gravity lies elsewhere in the Arab world and other ungoverned spaces, for Kenya such under governed spaces are found within its territory thus leading to a quagmire. Both the GOK and al-Shabaab have a shared COG in the at risk population.

### **1.8 Theoretical Framework**

This study adopts the indirect approach to warfare by Sir Basil Liddell Hart. The element of the indirect approach is to discover the enemy's Achilles heel and strike it quickly in order to secure a swift and decisive victory. The key assumptions are physical and psychological dislocation. Physically dislocation emanates from forcing the enemy to change front or threatening his forces and lines of communication. Psychologically dislocation is achieved in the enemy commander's mind as a result of the physical dislocation. (Hart Liddell 1954, p337 & Barthlomees Jr, 2008 p22).

Hart conceived warfare through exploitation of movement, surprise and deception. **Movement** lies in the physical sphere and depends on a calculation of the conditions of time, topography, and transport capacity. **Surprise** involves exploiting conditions likely to affect the will of the opponent. **Deception** aims at distracting the adversary, eventually denying him freedom of action and conception, thereby misplacing his composure (Hart Liddell, 1941 p 189-190).

From the foregoing elements, Liddell Hart emphasized on fighting efficiently for self-preservation. This is central to maneuver warfare where protagonists exploit terrain as they seek strategic moments to attack. However, Hart was not applying indirect approach with respect to non-state actors like Al-Shabaab. Al-Shabaab is applying an

inverse logic of Liddell Hart by prioritizing psychological displacement to be followed by physical displacement. How should a state respond them? This gap is best explained by Thomas X. Hammes 4<sup>th</sup> Generation Warfare (4GW).

This model of Thomas X. Hammes (2004 p.40-44) is a more mental one as opposed to the indirect approach which is based on the physical terrain. In his framework the following four assumptions emerge; First no distinction between “war” and “peace,” nor “lawful” and “unlawful” activity. Secondly, concepts such as “civilian” and “military” or “combatant” and “non-combatant” have no real meaning; it is a virtual warfare targeting the entire society. Thirdly the “front” and the “rear” are the same therefore no distinction between Somalia and Kenya. Lastly, asymmetrical approaches are the default mode of combat.

In Hammes 4GW, the physical terrain is impacting on the psychological (human terrain) the focus thus is on peoples psyche. The practitioners here aren’t territorially based states but non-state actors thereby negating issues like territory gained or lost as a measure of military success. The shortcoming of this model is that it is entirely psychological but in the case of Al-Shabaab they are contesting certain geographical spaces as well. To achieve this physical displacement, the phenomenon of distance decay or ungoverned spaces is brought in.

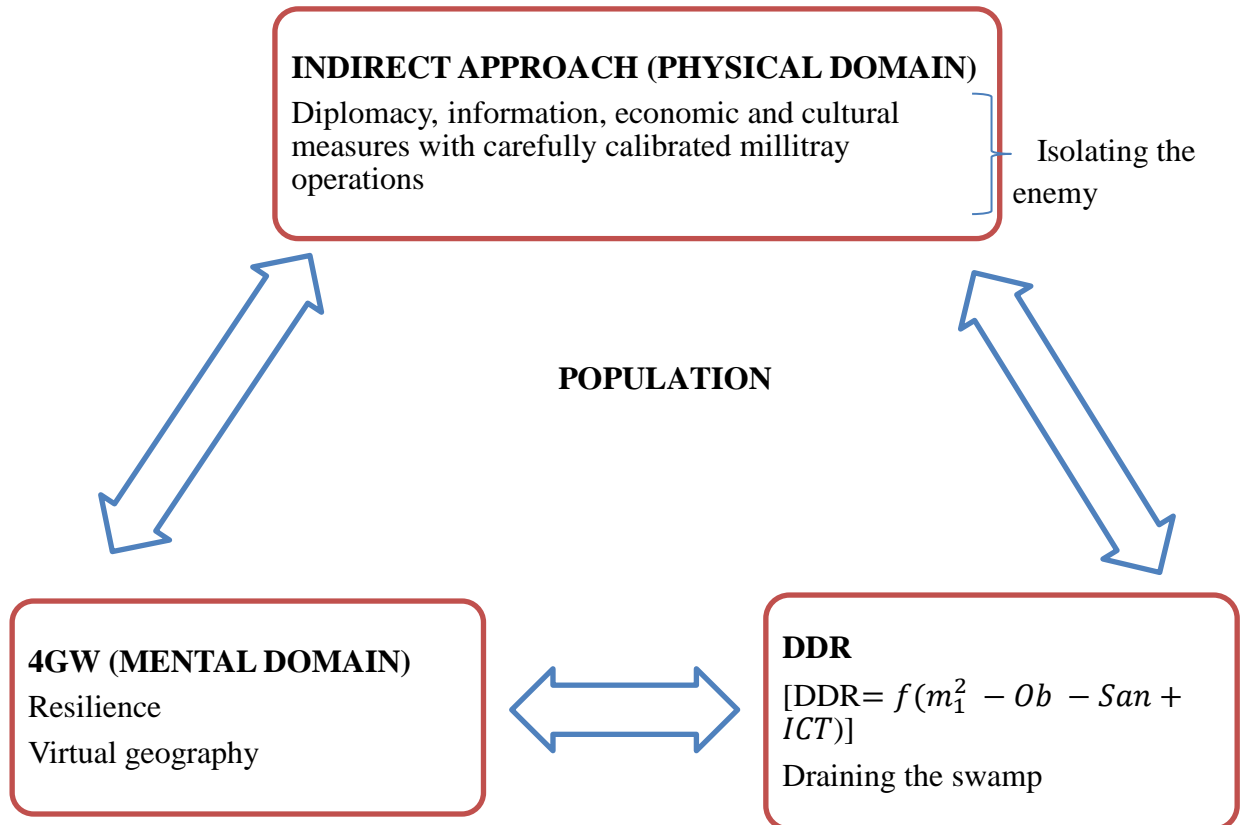
Distance decay is a felt sense of distancing between two objects in terms of space and time, the further they are the higher the felt sense of disconnect and decay (Ngunyi & Katumanga 2014). In the case of Kenya distance decay is exhibited in the form of security distance decay. It is the inability to operationalize security institutions along established principles of Mass and economy of force to space ratios.

$$DD (Fs) = M_1^2 + Ob + San - ICT.$$

Al-Shabaab take advantage of these under governed spaces to embed themselves as they plan attacks. Such spaces abound along the coast, north eastern and slum areas of Nairobi and other urban centers. The lack of penetrative government infrastructure poses obstacles. Its mediation is represented as  $[DDR = f (M_1^2 - Ob - San + ICT)]$ .



The challenge however emerges on how to operationalize this Distance Decay Reduction in the context of war as currently pitting Kenya against al-Shabaab.



The above diagram is a pictorial representation combining the three models of Indirect Approach, 4GW and Distance Decay Reduction. It not only describes and explains the frontiers of Al- Shabaab and Kenya security forces engagement but at the same time prescribes ways of containing the threat from Al-Shabaab both in the physical terrain and in the mental terrain. At the heart is gaining support of the population which forms the intangible center of gravity in such encounters.

### 1.9 Research Hypothesis

This study is focused on the following two hypotheses;

1. That the apparent success of Al-Shabaab in executing the three Kenya attacks of Westgate Mall, Mpeketoni and Mandera is a function of their ability to efficiently operationalize the strategy of indirect approach and adopt it to suit their ends.

2. That the inability of the Kenyan security agencies to thwart such attacks is a function of their alienation of the population which holds the intangible center of gravity in such engagements.

## **1.10 Methodology**

### **1.10.1 Research Design**

To respond to the tasks of this study, the researcher opted for a case study design. Influencing the decision was the need to pick out predominant attacks namely Westgate, Mpeketoni and Mandera. The questions to be answered also played a significant role in the selection of this design. It enabled intensive analysis of selected cases and also gave insight into larger cases.

### **1.10.2 Study Area and Population**

The study area encompasses entire Kenya territory as Al-Shabaab attacks resonate beyond the specific target area. Events in Somalia influence what transpires in Kenya thus a sense of spatial geography sets in. The populations of interest to this study were security personnel conversant with the security situation in Kenya. Since they are many and the researcher couldn't talk to all of them, the researcher purposively selected a small number. Organizations of interest were National Police Service, National Counter Terrorism Center (NCTC) and Anti-Terrorism Police Unit.

Primary data was collected in Nairobi City County which is Kenya's capitol and hosts NPS, ATPU and NCTC headquarters. The NCTC was selected because it is the government body mandated to coordinate counter terrorism and violent extremism in Kenya. The choice of ATPU was as a result of it being the institution mandated to investigate terrorism in Kenya.

### **1.10.3 Sample and Sampling Techniques**

This study employed purposive sampling to select five officers operating at tactical, operational and strategic levels. These were bearers of information pertinent to the study. They possess relevant information pertaining to Nairobi, Mpeketoni and Mandera attacks. It was preferred because it saves time and money and selects useful cases only.

The actual sample consisted of five interviewees. At the NPS headquarters the DIG APS was selected owing to his experience and access to the desired information. At the ATPU and NCTC the respective directors were selected for they operate at strategic levels in both organizations with requisite information pertaining to policy matters. Fourth respondent works for the NIS and sought anonymity. The fifth respondent works at the DCI and was involved in Westgate investigations. This sample size was determined via convenience method at the discretion of the researcher.

### **1.10.4 Data Collection Techniques**

The researcher used expert interview, observation and document analysis to collect both primary and secondary data. The personal interviews enabled the researcher to elicit answers pertinent to the research hypotheses, allowed for flexibility in the questioning process and had a high response rate. The full interview sessions were recorded and note taking was used to complement the same.

Observations were used to collect supplementary data for use in interpreting or qualifying findings. It was done unobtrusively by consulting public archives or simply observing security personnel at work. Document analysis helped to capture secondary data from books, journals, newspapers and other electronic materials.

### **1.10.5 Data Analysis**

Since this study is largely qualitative in nature, content analysis was adopted to analyze its data. It was done by systematically and objectively, identifying specified

characteristics of messages. Content from in-depth (expert) interviews was separated thematically.

### **1.11 Chapter Outline**

Report of this study is organized in five chapters as follows;

Chapter one outlines the problem statement, the research questions, justification of the study, literature review, the theoretical framework, hypothesis of the study, methodology. The above components of chapter one gives the background that shapes chapter two, three, four and five. Chapter two is a historical analysis of terrorist attacks in Kenya.

Chapter three responds to the first question as outlined in chapter one. Specifically why does Al-Shabaab succeed in executing attacks across Kenya? It examines institutional shortcomings and policy gaps Al-Shabaab exploits to attack Kenya. Chapter four responds to the second question, specifically why are Kenya security apparatus unable to decisively defeat al- Shabaab? Chapter five comprises of the summary and conclusion of the study. It recapitulates the objectives and hypothesis of this study. Finally it outlines policy recommendations for containing the threat of al-Shabaab in Kenya.

## **CHAPTER TWO**

### **TRACING THE ROOTS OF KENYA'S VULNERABILITY TO TERROR ATTACKS**

#### **2.0 Introduction**

In attempting to trace the origins of the intelligence systems in Kenya, Boinett observes that the existence or absence of a robust intelligence system may spell the difference between victory and defeat. He adds that fates of nations rest upon accurate and complete intelligence that serves as a guide for decision making. The information gathered by national security intelligence services (NSIS) is specifically geared to assist in government policy and decision making. "It is intended to help the government avoid strategic surprise" (Boinett, 2009 p.48).

This study seeks to weave a common thread between intelligence failure; for instance the type of leadership and their level of expertise pertaining to the nature of their duties and how this incompetence generated vulnerabilities that underpin terrorism. This is in line with Boinett's observation that whenever Kenya faced a crisis, there was a clear connection with failure of intelligence apparatus to accurately diagnose the threats.

What Boinett refers to as intelligence failure converges with what Buzan calls institutional vulnerabilities. According to Buzan, ideas of the state include its general principles such as democracy, specific doctrines and organizing ideologies. They provide coherence, purpose and definition making the state an organic entity. Institutions such as legislature, judiciary, administrative organs and laws are created to govern and make the state work. Finally the physical base comprises the population, territory and wealth contained within its borders (Buzan, 1983).

When the institutions are weak this may be reflected in terms of vulnerabilities to the physical base. This study looks at these weaknesses with respect to terrorism. Notably

the role of the state is to deny terrorists their ends by identifying and reducing vulnerabilities that act as attractive enablers. In Kenya, there exists institutional vulnerabilities like weak judicial and law enforcement, inadequate rule imposition thereby creating gaps and weakening the state (Khadiagala, 2004).

The central argument of this chapter is that the existing institutional weaknesses more so in so far as security deployment and employment vis-à-vis their mobilization, command and control and overall ability to respond to attacks acts as a force multiplier to terror attacks. The scope of the chapter runs from December 1980 to November 2011 prior to the intervention in Somalia by Kenya defense forces (KDF).

The chapter is organized into three parts; part one analyses institutional weakening and the Norfolk hotel attack of 1980. Part two is an analysis of the 1998 U.S. embassy bombing in Nairobi. It lays emphasis on infrastructure set up by Fazul, intelligence apparatus, maritime spaces and institutional penetration. Part three examines Al Qaeda operations in the 2002 Kikambala bombings and converges with Al-Shabaab's regional engagements and ends with Kenya's invasion of Somalia.

## **2.1 Institutional Weakening and The Norfolk Attack of 1980**

The mastermind of the attack, Quddura Mohamed Abdul al-Hamid used a false passport to enter the country. Afterwards he managed to set up a sophisticated time bomb and again sneaked out of Kenya in the afternoon of December 31<sup>st</sup> 1980 (Daily Nation 15<sup>th</sup> September 2013). The bomb went off during a New Year eve party killing 20 people, injuring more than 80 and leaving the hotel in ruins. The Palestinian Liberation Organization (PLO) claimed responsibility for the attack citing Kenya's role in the 1976 Entebbe raid (Sunday Nation July 3 2016 p.19).

This study draws a direct relationship between two variables; institutional weakening and the terrorist attack. Several factors help to bring this nexus. These factors take the form of politics for instance Kenya's external relations with Israel, institutional particularly weak immigration practices that enabled the terrorist to use a false

passport. The third factor that facilitated this attack was intelligence failure-the attack amounts to what Boinett termed as strategic surprise in that it caught the authorities unawares. A convergence of the above listed factors vindicates Buzan's theory of institutional weakening.

The weaknesses portrayed above can be traced way back to the planning phase of the Entebbe raid between Kenyan officials and Israeli agents. Key players were Charles Njonjo, Bruce Mackenzie and Ben Gethi. These senior officials went ahead with such a serious task without informing the President. Boinett points out that Mackenzie doubled up as a Mossad agent yet he was a member of Kenyan cabinet (Boinett, 2009).

Two conclusions can be arrived at; one important diplomatic engagement could be formalized without the President's approval. What this points to is that the officials involved were occupying their positions owing to their loyalty to the president but not fidelity to the national interest. Mackenzie's connections with Israel ought to have been exploited to pursue national interest and to beef up Kenya's intelligence capacity. Instead the officials were engaged in pursuit of their individual interests thus the national interest suffered when the Norfolk was targeted in retaliation.

The second conclusion is that important national positions were distributed on the basis of individual loyalty to the president but not on their capacity to perform. This led to weakening of institutions and increased vulnerability. The bomb mastermind managed to escape the vigilance of immigration officials both on entry and exit, this point to incompetence. Boinett's finding that between 1963-1998 the focus intelligence apparatus was on "fighting the opposition" lends credence to this argument. The attack of 1980 thus eluded them since their focus lay elsewhere.

In this period the sitting presidents "tied the intelligence services closer to the executive branch in an attempt to intimidate political rivals and to secure power"

(Boinett, 2010 p.33). To affirm his argument he cites the close association between Moi and James Kanyotu and his involvement in the Goldenberg corruption scandal. From Boinett findings it can be concluded that since the Norfolk attack took place under Kanyotu's tenure, the entire intelligence apparatus were unable to play their role effectively thereby exposing the nation to terrorist attacks. His later involvement in a corruption scandal is not only abuse of office but further highlights why key institutions were weak and unable to discharge their duties optimally. The end results of such institutional malaise were state vulnerability to attacks such as Norfolk and subsequent ones.

The above close association between Moi and Kanyotu is also pointed out by Adar, & Munyae (2001). They blame Moi for institutionalization, centralization and personalization of the presidency:

As the person in charge of internal security for fourteen years, he established a network of supporters within the ranks of the intelligence community. It was one of his counter-intelligence supporters, James Kanyotu, who telephoned him when Kenyatta died in 1978. (Adar & Munyae, 2001 p.6).

From the foregoing scenario what emerges is a picture of institutional weaknesses and neglect of what Buzan calls the physical base of the state. The institutions shifted their attention away from protecting the nation to pursuing personal and regime interests. The weaknesses were exploited PLO by to stage the Norfolk attack successfully.

Prior to the Norfolk attack there was an attempt to blow up an El Al airliner in Nairobi airport in 1976 (Daily Nation, 15<sup>th</sup> September 2013). This ought to have awakened the states intelligence and immigration dockets of the magnitude of the threat facing the nation. Sufficient measures would have been instituted and Quddura Mohamed would not have been afforded such easy time to use false documents to enter Kenyan territory, book accommodation in an Israeli owned hotel and set up his bomb before fleeing the country.



From the foregoing it is clear that state institutions were weak and mainly used to do the bidding of the elite and Moi lieutenants. The physical base was thus left exposed to various threats such as terror attacks like the Norfolk hotel bombing.

## **2.2 The Nairobi U.S. Embassy Attack of 1998**

On August 7 1998, suicide bombers detonated two truck bombs outside the US embassy in Nairobi. A total of 224 people were killed of whom 44 were American Embassy employees (12 Americans and 32 Foreign Service National employees). More than 5000 were injured (Driscoll, S. 2001). In preparation for the attack Al – Qaeda infiltrated Kenya as early as 1993 and inserted operatives such as Khalid al Fawaz, Wadih el Hage among others (United States vs. Osama et al, 2001).

The operatives “blended in” by establishing businesses and NGOs to aid their members. Some of these organizations like “Help Africa People” participated in anti-malaria program in Kenya. Another cell member, Fazul Abdullah Mohammed arrived at around 1994 and established Mercy International Relief Agency (MIRA) among other businesses in Lamu’s Faza Island (United States vs. Osama et al, 2001).

The whole operation was orchestrated by two cells. The first cell was tasked with preparation activities such as leasing houses, acquiring transportation, finances, building the explosive devices and providing operational direction and control. When all these were accomplished they evacuated the scene, for instance Sadeek Odeh left the country through Jomo Kenyatta International Airport for Pakistan en-route Afghanistan. Fazul however remained behind to direct the second cell of Mohammed al-Owhali and Jihad Ali Azzam to the embassy (Keller, 2005).

On face value the above activities portray penetration of a society by a well organized criminal network that is expected in any locality faced with insecurity. However in analyzing the events several constants peculiar to Kenya come out. Four issues are worth examining further in relation to this attack. These are intelligence failure, infrastructure, maritime spaces and institutional penetration.

Boinett while reviewing factors that necessitated the transformation from Special Branch to NSIS in 1998/1999 points out three specific issues: First was the inability to meet increased threats to security such as “failure to prevent the 1998 US embassy bombing in Nairobi”. Second was internal wrangling pitting then commissioner of police against the director of intelligence. The third was the revelation that even Moi mistrusted the Special Branch thereby creating the Liaison Department in his office (Boinett, 2010 p.38-40).

The above thus points out why in spite of the presence of these Al-Qaeda operatives in the country for long, the intelligence apparatus could not pick them out. Involvement of foreign agencies investigating the activities of El Hage, ought to have alerted the local intelligence of the potential damage terrorists posed considering the earlier Norfolk attack.

Other than sheer incompetence, the internal infighting weakened security forces and enabled al-Qaida operatives the leeway required to plan and execute the bombing. In the aftermath of the embassy bombing, institutional reforms especially of the Special Branch were deemed necessary. Boinett describes the then police force as follows;

...demoralized and undisciplined, comprised of mediocre brutes, an institution where promotion is no longer on merit and where the police code is no longer respected. It is possible that the Special Branch acted on wrong information, fabricated its own stories as well. It is possible that the Special Branch would also have had its dirty work in clandestine operations (Boinett 2009 p.41).

The second constant is the infrastructure. Keller points out that Kenya’s geographic location, transport infrastructures and diplomatic association with US government made it an attractive target (Keller, 2005). Al-Qaeda found Kenya an attractive base owing to availability of infrastructures such as roads, airports and communication facilities like telephone coverage. For example the operatives were able to access chartered planes with which they traversed Wilson airport and Lu’uq in Somalia during the planning phase (DoD, HARMONY 2006).

The Jomo Kenyatta International Airport enabled the operatives such as Odeh an important artery with which to connect to other parts of the world. With weak surveillance and compromised immigration and intelligence apparatus as discussed above these facilities enabled Al Qaeda operatives the same strategic flexibility. Corruption and weak government institutions influenced al-Qaida's ability to maneuver locally. For example Fazul exploited the corrupt traffic police roadblocks to operate his clandestine fish business between Mombasa and Nairobi during their reconnaissance (Carson, 2005).

The third constant that had unique significance in this attack was the utilization of maritime spaces by Al-Qaeda. The 1996 ferry mishap in Lake Victoria was of pivotal significance in the group's exploitation of these spaces. In that incident a senior Al Qaeda operative, Abu Ubaida al Bashiri had drowned while on a reconnaissance mission between Kisumu and Bukoba (Keller, 2005).

The lake was a vital artery and was instrumental in the planning of the twin attacks that targeted the Nairobi and Dar es Salaam US embassies. The Kampala attack was foiled. After the attacks some operatives crossed into Kenya via Lake Victoria en route to Mombasa. Fazul's fishing activities in the Indian Ocean was an important link between Somalia and Lamu and instrumental in bringing in the explosives and other weaponry of the terror group.

The fourth constant in this examination is the aspect of institutional penetration. The above scenario is what Barkhan terms decline in governance. According to him fuelling this decline in governance was the economic meltdown in the 90's which at times led to protests in Kenya (Barkhan, 2011).

Al Qaeda operatives exploited the loopholes in this institutional penetration to infiltrate Kenya's society by forming the above listed non-governmental organizations (NGOs). These were used for intelligence gathering and for money laundering as they prepared the logistics of the attack. At the same time this

assistance services enabled them entrenchment and to gain acceptance in the society especially in the marginalized areas of the coast.

The fear by the Kenyan authorities of confronting and further alienating its Muslim community also contributed to this unwillingness by the state to face the challenge proactively (CIA, 2004). They comprise 10 percent of the country's population and would bear the brunt of any counterterrorism efforts since terrorist hailed from the same community. Al Qaeda exploited these gaps to set a foothold and gain recruits.

The totality of all the four factors discussed above points to distance decay. This study discusses this distance decay phenomenon in detail in its chapter four. The existence of these then points that this is a historical problem that terror groups have exploited to attack Kenya.

### **2.3 From Kikambala Bombings to KDF Incursion into Somalia**

The 2002 Kikambala attack was orchestrated by detonating explosives targeting newly arrived Israeli tourists. One of the suicide bombers blew himself up at the hotel entrance as the second drove a vehicle laden with explosives, gas canisters and fuel containers into a wall of the hotel. It claimed the lives of twelve Kenyans and four Israeli's leaving more than 80 with serious injuries (Carson, 2005).

It was well coordinated with a simultaneous surface-to-air missile attack on Israeli airliner carrying 264 passengers, which was just departing the Mombasa airport. Both missiles missed the airliner narrowly. Venzke (2003) refers to this mode of Al-Qaeda operation as a "wave attack" phenomenon predominant in the fall of 2002 and spring of 2003.

In analyzing this attack and its connection to subsequent Al-Shabaab tourist's abductions that triggered KDF intervention into Somalia in 2011, the following two issues are worth examining in depth; first is the coastline- here the maritime dynamic, absence of the state and ability of Al-Qaeda to build up on infrastructure as they

maximize on Fazul. The second is the Somali piracy where the elements of corruption, an attempt to annex geography and tourist abductions converge to force KDF to intervene militarily.

The Kenyan coastline gave the attack a distinct maritime dynamic which posed serious obstacles on security apparatus. The attacks were planned as two independent but synchronized operations. The complex operation comprised a land-based suicide operation; aviation attack (surface-to-air missiles) and sea-borne dhows for infiltration and escape. If properly executed this twin attacks would have resulted in mass casualties considering the number of passengers aboard the departing plane and the newly arrived tourists (Fighel 2011 p. 9-10).

Secondly the proximity to the Gulf of Aden states such as Yemen and Saudi Arabia coupled with close business and cultural links gives a unique relationship with events taking place there. The coastal population provides terrorists with sanctuaries from which to operate undetected and this enabled Al-Qaeda operatives like Fazul easy penetration. Kenya's coastline with its maritime dynamic thus can be argued to be hosting all the essential characteristics for a terrorist safe haven (DOD, Harmony, 2006 p.55-69).

The three Al Qaeda operatives; Omar Said Omar and Abdul Karim Fazul utilized Mombasa Polytechnic Mosque as a planning rendezvous prior to the attack (Fighel 2011). This demonstrated the absence of the state in such geographies. The Mosque, safe houses both in Mombasa and Lamu Island harbor offered concealment and facilitated the infiltration and escape of the operatives after the attacks. The absence of the state in these locations greatly impeded the security apparatus in their efforts to respond to the threats.

The third dynamic was the ability of Al-Qaeda to build up on infrastructure as they maximized on the organizational capabilities of Fazul. Part of this infrastructure were the Kenyan recruits namely Saleh Ali Nabhman, Issa Osman Issa, Abdul Malik et al.

These individuals played an active role in the 1998 US Embassy bombings in Nairobi and Dar es Salaam and the subsequent 2002 Kikambala attacks (CIA, 2004).

Part of their logistics included internet, satellite phones and cellular communications. They trusted e-mail for communicating during reconnaissance and surveillance operations in Kenya (Fighele 2011 p10). These support infrastructure (networks) were less monitored or suppressed by Kenyan security apparatus at that period of time. This affirms what Boinett termed as “lack of technical expertise and equipment” (Boinett, 2009 p.46).

The above discussed phenomena along the coast are what buoyed Al-Qaeda to perceive Kenya as a battlefield from which to launch attacks against Western targets. The coast receives large number of tourists annually amid a weak security set up compromised by untamed bribe taking (arrest and escape of Fazul on two occasions), ill policed borders and a defective investigative and prosecutorial system (Carson, 2005).

The above untamed corruption among security forces discussed by Carson above compromised Kenya’s security and gave Al-Shabaab the incentive to launch a campaign of piracy along the Indian Ocean coastline. The Kenya Defense Forces note that this piracy affected Kenya as almost 92% of its international trade by volume is carried by sea. To them “securing the maritime supply chain against disruption is a necessity if Kenya and the region is to survive” (KDF, 2014 p.19).

Reading from the KDF observations pertaining to this sea borne aggression of Al Shabaab, the terror group’s scheme to take over the whole place begins to make sense. The entire Horn of Africa was threatened by this Al-Shabaab menace considering Kenya’s strategic location in the region. The operationalization of this scheme evolved from piracy to tourist abductions along the coast and parts of north eastern as discussed below.

Al-Shabaab atrocities began on 11th of September 2011 when British tourist David Tebutt was murdered and his wife Judie Tebutt abducted (Press Association 2011, November 12). They launched a second abduction on 1st October, 2011 in an adjacent resort targeting a French tourist Miss Marie Dedieu. She died in a bungled rescue operation (Bocha, 2011). On 13th October, 2011 two Spanish aid workers Blanca Thiebaut and Montserrat Serra were abducted from Dadaab Refugee camp (Rice, 2011).

Al-Shabaab upsurge of assaults and snatching of tourists in Kenyan resorts led to the military intervention. The coast remains “a fragmented and diverse security landscape” (Lunn & Thomson, 2012 p.5-7). To avert further territorial erosion and bolster the tourism industry, Operation Linda Nchi was launched with the following three objectives: The first sought to fortify Kenya from these attacks by creating a buffer zone in the area adjacent to the Kenya-Somalia border (Zimmerman & Khatib, 2012).

Establishment of Jubaland administration would hasten this. The second was to dislodge al-Shabaab from the port city of Kismayo, their commercial hub and center of gravity. This was intended to induce financial crisis thereby leading to logistical challenges which would in turn blunt their operational efficiency against Kenya’s homeland (Downie, 2011).

The success of the first two objectives was expected to anchor the third; the broad stabilization of the region through reestablishment of the National Authority in Somalia through a federal structure. However Al –Shabaab showed more resilience and responded to the ensuing military engagement with KDF by launching devastating attacks against Kenya.

By engaging in tourist kidnappings at the coast as witnessed; the provocation aimed at inviting KDF to invade Somalia. Once there, the ensuing insurgency would exhaust and demoralize the forces as Al Shabaab intensifies attacks against their rear and lines

of supply. Al-Shabaab is still interested in the Somalia struggle (which given its irredentist claims in Kenya, Ethiopia, and Djibouti, necessarily means a regional struggle) (Meservey, 2013).

Following the intervention Al-Shabaab announced reprisal attacks in Kenya's home soil. In pursuit of this, its operatives disguised as refugees infiltrated camps in Kenya. They used the camps as bases to plan and launch attacks in Kenyan territory. The refugee camps also double as recruiting grounds for new members (Miyandazi, 2012). The next chapter is an examination of three major Al- Shabaab attacks in Kenya following the above intervention.



## **CHAPTER THREE**

### **AL-SHABAAB'S INDIRECT APPROACH AND THE THREE KENYAN ATTACKS**

#### **3.0 Introduction**

Strategy as Liddell Hart notes is “the art of distributing military means to fulfill the ends of policy”. It is concerned not merely with the movement of armies but more fundamentally with the effect of such movements. Terming it “the art of the general”, he observed that successful strategy must espouse a sound calculation and coordination of the ends and the means (Liddell Hart, 1941 p.187). Several constants can be drawn from these statements; one is the appreciation of one’s objective for which the war is being fought, two is the conception of required means and three their alignment with the objectives.

More fundamental is the application process that balances the means at one’s disposal against the ends to be achieved. This process of careful planning and assigning roles is what sums up strategy. Success here demands what Gray calls “a rotund intellect” capable of balancing the means with the ends and understanding the fact that lasting success requires the definition of an international order which erstwhile foes find tolerable (Gray, 1992 p.49-54).

Of interest is the extent to which it can be argued non-state actors such as Al-Shabaab act informed by a discernible strategy. Their apparent ability to maximize on their resources to achieve their ends point to this. Indeed Katumanga (2013) asserts this strategy. According to him through maneuver and surprise, Al-Shabaab seek to disperse the KDF while simultaneously wearing down morale of the population. Their attacks are aimed at sharpening contradictions along tribal lines as well as clan and religious divide in Kenya. They also aim to destabilize broad economic and psychological centres of gravity.

Al-Shabaab actions led the state to declare war on the group (Miyandazi, 2012). To talk of a war in this sense; we have to anticipate what Luttwak and von Clausewitz call the dialectics in strategy. Clausewitz contends that war is a continuation of political discourse by other means. Implicit in war are the elements of violence, chance and reason. Chance he equated with the phenomenon of pure luck (Clausewitz, 1976).

The convergence of chance and the fog of war (incomplete information about one's adversaries) increase the element of friction. These are circumstances such as delay, bad weather that impede optimum performance in war. In his conception the entire war environment is never perfectly predictable as the enemy is on most occasions clever and capable of daring (Clausewitz, 1976).

Luttwak on his part emphasizes on the law of the opposites or the paradoxical logic pervading strategy. He remarks that; "what works today may not work tomorrow...though if repeated it may lead to surprise after continuous failure"(Luttwak, 1987).The implications here are that an actor mediated by strategy will demonstrate this caution to constantly adjust his tactics. Notably if Al-Shabaab hopes to resist the actions of the Kenyan government forces, it is assumed they have to evolve a strategy that informs their tactics.

Three Al-Shabaab attacks in Kenya bear the above postulations out; the Westgate mall, Garissa and Mpeketoni. Their operationalization point to a wide level of planning and good execution. The apparent failure to anticipate and quickly contain the Al-Shabaab anchors the study question, why does al- Shabaab succeed in executing such attacks across Kenya? This chapter sets out to examine factors underpinning Al-Shabaab's success in executing terror attacks in Kenya.

This chapter argues that in order to successfully mount such devastating attacks like Westgate of 2013, they are relying on the strategy of indirect approach. They have carefully embraced to this strategy and readjusted it to suit their ends.

The chapter is organized around three parts. Part one is a conceptual search; it provides the broad lenses of looking at these attacks and subsequent engagements between al-Shabaab and Kenya security forces. It addresses issues as the broad strategy of Al-Shabaab, How the various battles they engage in link up in the actualization of this broad objective for instance what is the effect of these attacks?

The second part is an analysis of the three attacks as argued in the conceptual section above. It is a description of the attacks, addresses elements such as how geography and environment dictates the operational and tactical strategy of al-Shabaab, How were the Kenyan forces responding to this? How did these responses play into the hands of Al-Shabaab? What was the socio-political calculation behind the selection of victims and what effects did it achieve?

The third section is a collectivized appreciation of Al- Shabaab's grand strategy in carrying out these attacks. It contextualizes the geography running from Mandera to the coast as an attempt on the part of al-Shabaab to gain a foothold and annex such territory in their attempt at creating an Islamic caliphate.

### **3.1 Al- Shabaab Broad Strategy- A Conceptual Search**

In one of its Twitter feeds prior to Westgate attack Al-Shabaab notes that “for long we have waged war against Kenyan's in our own land. Now it is time to shift the battleground and take the war to their land” (HRW, 2016 p.14).The foregoing statement points to two things; One is the apparent visualization of how they seek to execute their war: - in other words contestations with Kenya security forces. This expansion of strategy means that the war would now evolve in two core theatres, Somalia and the new front in Kenya.

Notably this study argues that attacks in Kenya should not be seen as mere one off terrorist actions but rather what Katumanga (2013 p.27) calls a “Poly-drone” to engender strategic defeat for Kenya security forces. The operationalization of this is

structured around social, political and military targets. By stretching Kenya's forces all the way from Somalia to Kenya, Al-Shabaab is maximizing on vulnerabilities and opportunities available in time and space. They don't just attack Westgate, Garissa, Mombasa, Mandera and places like Wajir by accident(4<sup>th</sup> Expert Interview 25<sup>th</sup> Sep 2016).

The above statement is also laden with the aspect of determination and resolve of Al-Shabaab. One thus arrives at the conclusion that these atrocities in Kenya are actions of a rational actor whose strategy of indirect approach begins to unravel when all these attacks are viewed jointly. However Kenya security forces tend to look at these attacks in tactical terms thereby missing the bigger picture.

For instance, the director of the National Counter Terrorism Center points out that Westgate encounter was a one off battle and not a war. He adds that the Kenya security forces were able to neutralize the assailants (2<sup>nd</sup> Expert Interview, 10<sup>th</sup> August 2016). What he misses is how these single encounters such as Westgate, Mpeketoni and Garissa point to the direction of Al-Shabaab conjuring up another battle front in Kenya as an extension of the Somalia theatre.

What Kenyan authorities perceive as victories owing to eventual neutralization of Al-Shabaab operatives are in reality strategic defeats. Understanding this requires an appreciation that these operatives do not set forth for these encounters with the intention of getting out alive. Their aims are broad economic, military and social objectives. These attacks are single battles that add up to the totality of Al-Shabaab's war against Kenya and its various societal pillars such as economy, social cohesion and political stability. This is indeed a war of effects as postulated by Clausewitz (1976).

A wide range of economic targets available in Kenya such as hotels and malls, a large expatriate community in the midst of a compromised security sector is the leading ingredient in attacking Kenya (Menkhaus, 2014). He also mentions the presence of al-

Hijra networks in Kenya (*Ibid* p.7).The broad strategy can therefore be argued to be based on economic weakening of Kenya by attacking its key economic pillars and psychological dislocation.

In spite of KDF engagement with Al-Shabaab both in the Somalia theatre and the domestic front since 2011, they have been unable to prevail on Al-Shabaab will power to resist which is the essence of strategy. This is a sense of defeat since the essence of warfare is to prevail on the enemy capacity to resist. Instead it has marked the sharpest rise in Kenya military expenditure. “Data indicate that there was a 22 percent year-on year budgetary increase between 2014 and 2015 alone” (The Standard, Tuesday September 20 2016).

According to Jomini battles are actual conflicts of armies contending about great questions of national policy and of strategy. He asserts that strategy directs armies to the decisive points of a zone of operations, and influences in advance the results of battles; to him tactics aided by courage, genius and fortune results in victories (Jomini, 2007).

In a sense one can argue that by Al-Shabaab successfully commissioning various tactical operatives to conduct attacks in Kenya, there must be a strategy influencing the movement of weapons from across the border, gathering intelligence, choosing targets and logistical issues like supplies. The lowest scale is what Drew & Snow (2006) term as battlefield strategy. Here the tactical operatives are inserted into various theatres such as Garissa University and Westgate mall.

Liddell Hart asserts that the strategists true aim is not about seeking battle but strategic situations so advantageous that if they do not in themselves produce the decision, their continuation by battle surely achieves the same (Hart, 1941,p. 192).Thus when Al-Shabaab launches attacks in places like Mpeketoni and manage to overrun a police station this reveals a sense of boldness and gives them a

psychological edge. This is what Liddell Hart calls strategy- the application of means to achieve an end.

Liddell Hart's order of battle can be summarized by the three maxims of "mystify, mislead and surprise". The first two constitute distraction, while surprise which is the essential cause of this intended "distraction" results into "dislocation". The loss of a commander's freedom of action is the consequence to the loss of his freedom of conception (Hart, 1941 p.195). The encounters between Kenya security apparatus fall in line to this Liddell Hart's mode of fighting which maximizes on their resources to achieve their ends.

### **3.2 A Tale of Three Attacks: Al- Shabaab's Operations in Kenya (2013- 2015)**

This section is an analysis of the three attacks in Kenya commencing with the Westgate mall attack in Nairobi, Mpeketoni / Lamu attacks of June and July 2014 and finally the two attacks in Mandera county in November and early December of 2014. The elements used to analyze the three cases include the military or political objectives sought by Al-Shabaab in each campaign, the responses to these attacks, operational strategy of al-Shabaab for instance logistical issues such as supplies and armaments, the results or consequences of these attacks and what gave the operatives tactical advantages as compared to responding security apparatus.

#### **3.2.1 Creating Decisive Conditions: The Westgate Mall as a Battle Field**

On September 21, 2013, al-Shabaab attacked Westgate Mall in Nairobi, Kenya. The four day engagement resulted in 70 deaths and more than 200 serious injuries. The dead cut across thirteen different nationalities garnering international coverage (KIFC, 2013). The four attackers (Abu baara al-Sudani, Omar Nabhan, Khuttab al-Khene and Umayr Al- Mogadishu) drove into Westgate mall in a silver Mitsubishi Lancer four door sedan, KAS 576 X armed with hand grenades and AK 47 riffles (NYPD, 2013).

Immediately after they exited their vehicle (around 1230hrs) they separated into two teams. The first team entered the mall through the main entrance and the second team entered through the rooftop parking garage which also served as the rear exit. At around 1330 hrs the four operatives joined up inside the Nakumatt supermarket store from where they continued their killings. In this operation they received guidance from a central command in Somalia (Kelly 2013 & NYPD, 2013).

Al Shabaab success at Westgate can be attributed to the following elements; communicating with Somalia via cell phones, getting their supplies in place both from the refugee camp in Daadab and at Nakumatt store. To achieve this success they needed intelligence, weapons, logistics, and supplies. The totality of all this indicates strategy. It also means they had very good logisticians, strategic thinkers and finally very good operatives.

From the timing of the attack at around mid-day, to the operative's mastery of specific layout of Westgate, the calculations of Al-Shabaab take shape. At around that hour the mall would be teeming up with a wide range of expatriates and high end targets. The large numbers inside would complicate rescue efforts for the security forces; they have a responsibility to protect lives. From the first floor store room the assailants were in command of communication and heights.

For security forces to access the first floor section, they were restricted to using the parking garage entrance on second floor or main and the art café entrance on ground floor. All these entrances were in the direct line of fire of the attackers who had the added advantage of CCTV room control at first floor. They automatically forced the responders to adopt a single file formation and this explains the high casualty numbers (6) of police and military personnel (Kelly, 2013).

The movement of these operatives is what Liddell Hart referred to as the element of deception. Al-Shabaab was fighting the war of effects. Their indirect approach was anchored on creating vulnerability because of movement as seen above. They had

thus carried out deception and achieved displacement by gaining geographical advantage. The gaps were then exposed to maximum force and this is what the four assailants were able to achieve at Westgate mall. The totality of this affirms that they had read Liddell Hart.

All the way from Mogadishu the assailants took concealment in refugee camps; here they were avoiding battles as they planned for Nairobi. This is what Liddell Hart meant by observing that the aim of strategy is not to seek battle but of strategic conditions that lead to easy victory. Al-Shabaab's bigger pie was to arrive at Westgate, kill as many people as possible, hurt the economy, and hurt the military pride at the cost of four people. In the end they gained invincibility, publicity, friction between the police and the military and ultimately more recruits.

The aspect of bringing mass of force to bear against a part of opposing army was in display at Westgate mall. They operated as a "buddy pair" and later on swarmed at the first floor Nakumatt store room. By then force to space ratios was in their favor, in effect they had massed themselves strategically and took control of the mall. This is what Jomini (2007) calls bringing mass of force to bear against part of the opposing army.

They were therefore in control of communication giving them superior battle field intelligence. Kenya security forces lacked battle field intelligence and were coming in blind, increasing their friction. Al-Shabaab had thus secured the decisive points. They gained force multipliers which was opposite and equal to what the Kenyan forces had against them. We then understand how four people could withstand the onslaught of almost 6000 opposing forces for four days. Their ideological preparation also gave them an upper hand as opposed to army and police units who responded as a call of duty (2<sup>nd</sup> Expert Interview, 10<sup>th</sup> August 2016).

The above phenomena, is the reality that bedeviled of Kenya security forces at the mall. The same is what Luttwak terms as strategy being the clash of opposites or



paradoxical logic of war (Luttwak, 1987). However it must be noted that the presence of the population inside the mall was a major hindrance on the part of Kenya security apparatus. This gave Al-Shabaab strategic psychological advantage as they were able to mass their forces without any inhibitions. On their part Kenyan forces were equally constrained by the responsibility to protect.

Al- Shabaab success at Westgate was also a factor of command and leadership superiority. Unlike the Kenyan confusion where four operatives were able to attract all instruments of power at Westgate including the Inspector General of Police at the scene, the Al –Shabaab commander though away in Somalia was able to monitor and influence events through phone (NYPD, 2013).He followed the attack real time from live television coverage giving him superior battle field intelligence. The Kenyan command was at the scene mediating tactical battles thus creating more fog in the battle.

The Westgate response “exposed a crisis of coordination, command and control magnified by sheer absence of standard operating procedures supposed to mediate military internal securitization roles”(Katumanga, 2013 p.28).He further points to the “cock up” emanating from military units un-procedural shoving aside of the GSU response team. The insistence by then Inspector General of police to be in-charge in spite of presence of superior military units and the ultimate declaration of the mall as secure by the Chief of General Staff days later all point to this lack of proper control.

The intervention of Kenya Defense Forces led to the bungling of the entire rescue operation. The expert cited the case of Garissa University attack where the elite Recce unit neutralized the assailants in record time upon arrival. He observed that “Garissa and Kapenguria police station hostage crisis displayed to KDF and all Kenyans that there exists a better trained and more efficient hostage rescue team than KDF”(First Expert Interview, 1<sup>st</sup> August 2016).

The then minister for internal security, Joseph Ole Lenku was quoted acknowledging the Westgate attack as the lowest moment of his tenure. The attack was “a shock to Kenya’s security systems and was badly handled.” In his opinion “the reason the number of terrorists in the building kept changing was because of the briefing he got” (Sunday Standard February 28<sup>th</sup> 2016 p8). It was this background of confusion and unpreparedness that perhaps led to the attack dragging on for four days leading to more casualties and giving the terrorist wider publicity.

4<sup>th</sup> Generation Warfare was exhibited in the Westgate conflict milieu when the assailants created a virtual war; merging truths with fiction of (KDF mistreating Muslims in Somalia) and stories of historic victimization narrated that today’s war becomes a continuation of a conflict of yester years (marginalization of Muslims in Kenya). It is for this reason that the attackers attempted to isolate their victims on religious backgrounds (Jayachandran, 2009).

To propel this aspect of 4GW, the Kenya and international media outlets were actively broadcasting the ongoing Westgate siege thereby complementing Al-Shabaab efforts at Twitter. Based on Shabaab twitter messages their objective comprised the goal of evoking a large media response. The US Army sums this 4<sup>th</sup> generation aspect by observing that “During the event the media fervor to cover the event, probably supported the fondest hopes of Al-Shabaab” (Kelly, 2013 p.9).

Kenya lost this virtual warfare during Westgate owing to various operational hitches. One was the interoperability of army and police radios, this gave Al Shabaab the advantage. Two was suspension of rescue activities in the night citing lack of night vision equipment. Finally the inability of KDF to match Al-Shabaab Twitter usage as witnessed in their creation of several accounts. This adept Twitter usage brought the aspect of technology impacting on strategy. Similarly we encountered geography impacting on strategy as the confined spaces guided the commissioning of only four operatives.

A major shortcoming of local security apparatus during the Westgate attack was their inability to accurately diagnose a swarm attack and efficiently respond to it. The posture displayed by Kenyan security agencies implied they confused the attack with hostage taking thereby wasting valuable time and raising the number of casualties (Moore, 2012).

In the end the four assailants killed 70 people, injured close to 200 and provoked KDF to use excessive force “high explosive anti-tank rocket possibly a RPG-7 or an 84mm Recoilless Rifle”(NYPD, 2013 p.24) leading to parts of the mall caving in. All Al-Shabaab relied on was Kenya’s operational and tactical lapses plus the inability to synchronize its instruments of power towards the attainment of strategic ends.

### **3.2.2 Al-Shabaab’s Offensive Against LAPSSET as Mirrored in Mpeketoni / Lamu Attacks of June 2014**

On 15<sup>th</sup> June 2014 Mpeketoni suffered multiple attacks when al-Shabaab pillaged government offices, security installations(police station) financial installations(equity bank) and population centers (hotels, restaurants and residential homes). Vehicles were burnt, buildings torched and 60 people, mainly non-Muslim males of up-country origins dead. Al-Shabaab claimed responsibility for the attacks citing Kenya government’s mistreatment of Muslims and KDF invasion of Somalia among other atrocities (Butime, 2014 & Anderson, 2014).

On the eve of the attack, eight gunmen commandeered two vans in Witu before storming Mpeketoni. Armed with automatic rifles, rocket propelled grenades and explosives, they overran Mpeketoni police station and replenished their weapons(3<sup>rd</sup> Expert Interview 21<sup>st</sup> September 2016). Another group dismantled the Safaricom communication mast thereby disabling the entire regions communication(Butime, 2014). Football fans gathered in various entertainment joints provided the assailants with easy targets.

The operatives went about their killing spree unchallenged; at other times even hoisting the al-Shabaab flag on vehicles and taking videos. They illuminated the areas of operation using flares and by 11:30 pm they had accomplished their mission. The first response unit led by GSU from Nyongoro arrived in Mpeketoni at 4.00am leaving the assailants to disappear into Boni forest.

### **3.2.2.1 Response by Security Agencies**

OCS Mpeketoni noted that the then GSU commandant Mr. Kitili and Arachi of AP commanded juniors not to confront the assailants (Standard on Thursday November 19 2015 p8). The police were ordered to withdraw from Boni forest granting the attackers room to escape, regroup and launch subsequent attacks as witnessed in Hindi and Gamba killings soon after.

Theoretically the revelation above points to breakdown in police standard operating procedures. We encounter the bypassing of field commanders by seniors culminating in grinding down operations therefore explaining the inability to effectively respond. Secondly the violation of police chain of command demoralized the senior officers on the ground thus denying them their freedom of conception. This is what Liddell Hart termed psychological dislocation by playing havoc with the commander's mind.

Thirdly the attacks completely caught the Kenyan security organs by surprise thus lowered their morale, sapped their aggressiveness and undermined their sense of initiative. The totality of all this events points to what Liddell Hart (1941) refers to as the strategy of indirect approach.

Delayed response was caused by the fear of ambush on security personnel "it would be so bad that a whole contingent of GSU are massacred because of responding at night...we don't do operations at night" (1<sup>st</sup> Expert Interview on 1<sup>st</sup> August 2016). The head of state was also misled to brand the attack as local political networks; the spy chief was soon replaced. Terrorists have more resolve in the battle front because they are already indoctrinated to die unlike police officers who fight with one eye on

returning back to their families alive. This is what gives them the boldness and greater resolve in their operations.

There was an imposition of curfew in Lamu from 19<sup>th</sup> July 2014 and the military in a retaliatory attack destroyed four forest camps used by the attackers. The government denied the involvement of al-Shabaab and blamed local political networks for the attack. The arrest and arraignment in court of Lamu Governor together with top business people billed as financiers of attack (Sentinel Project, July 2014 p.3). The case was ultimately dropped with the prosecution unable to sustain the evidentiary threshold.

The continuation of atrocities in spite of the curfew not only highlights its ineffectiveness. From the moment Mpeketoni police station is attacked the notion of force to space ratios had already collapsed. Al-Shabaab are henceforth exploiting the elements of movement and surprise as they increase vulnerabilities on part of Kenyan forces. This ability to stretch time and space indicates the level of counterintelligence superiority and better mastery of field craft on the part of Al-Shabaab.

The terrain was wide enough to allow the attackers to retreat into space and stretch time as they exhaust conventional security forces. This could be another reason the terrorist's employed a larger number of operatives in this theatre as opposed to the four they sent to Westgate mall which was a much constricted terrain. Still they were able to realize their set objectives as in the end close to one hundred lives were lost, social tensions escalated and they gain momentum.

Subsequent response came with the revocation of title deeds of 500,000 acres of land in Lamu fraudulently acquired by twenty one individual firms (Standard media at <http://www.standardmedia.co.ke/article/2000130153/uhuru-revokes-500000-acre-title-in-lamu>) The land issues reveals simmering tensions that have existed in Lamu ever since the settlement of mainly Kikuyu "outsiders" in Mpeketoni area by President Kenyatta. It is these social tensions al-Shabaab is bent on exploiting.

### **3.2.2.2 Al-Shabaab's Order of Battle and Strategic Calculations behind Mpeketoni Attacks**

Among the factors that guides choice of strategy include; nature of the threat, domestic and international politics, economics, technology, physical environment and geography. Cultural heritage, military doctrine and the elements of fog and chance also influence this strategy making process(Drew & Snow 2006).Liddell Hart emphasized avoiding battles until one achieves strategic situations so advantageous that if they do not in themselves produce the decision, their continuation by battle surely achieves the same (Hart, 1941).

In analyzing the 2014, Mpeketoni attack it can be argued that Al-Shabaab had done their reconnaissance well and they attacked an isolated police station with devastating effects. Until they arrived in Mpeketoni they were exploiting concealment under forest covers and only waging small battles to acquire more infrastructures such as vehicles. Thus they were able to mass their logistics and bring them to the battlefield successfully.

Once in Mpeketoni they exploited technology by dismantling communication infrastructure and using flares to illuminate the battlefield. This gave them battle field intelligence and impeded the response teams thus delaying government response. They further exploited local politics and cultural heritage by selectively killing non-Muslim males of up-country origins. The totality of all this affirms their strategy and mastery of terrain.

The above calculation is what threw National Intelligence Service (NIS) off their scent and led to the President attributing the attack to local political networks. Other than displaying intelligence failure the subsequent pronouncements also amount to what Liddell Hart (1967) termed psychological displacement. This might have emanated from al-Shabaab's campaign of deception and concealment thus disrupting the Kenyan command.

The dense Boni forest plus inaccessible roads and poor network coverage buoyed the assailants as they embarked on a campaign characterized by movement, surprise and maneuver warfare. They appeared intent on flanking and pulling security units out of targeted areas. This deception and movement enabled them to pillage Mpeketoni, Kibaoni, Witu and Hindi leaving more than 100 people dead, property ruined, and lifestyles altered (Daily Nation Friday July 15<sup>th</sup> 2016 p.5).

The above campaign depicted the security installations (KDF and GSU bases in Hindi, Witu and Mokowe) as impotent, rooted and immobile. It also demonstrates superior resolve on the part of the assailants and lack of synergy among the law enforcement apparatus comprising the military, intelligence, local police and even the national government representatives like the chiefs and their assistants.

By embedding themselves in Basuba ward capitalizing on impassable roads and poor mobile phone networks coverage besides its proximity to Kenya Somali border, the al-Shabaab have domesticated Mao in Lamu. They seamlessly integrated with the hunter gatherer group of minority Boni community in Lamu East. The forest provides a symbiotic relationship between the two; it is a source of livelihood to the community as well as a perfect hideout for the terrorists giving them camouflage as they transit between Kenya and neighboring Somalia (Tse-Tung, 1992).

This scenario poses dilemmas to security agencies as exhibited in the recent warning by Lamu County Commissioner to residents against collaborating with al-Shabaab. He promised a crackdown on sympathizers (Daily Nation Friday July 15<sup>th</sup> 2016 p.5). The mutating nature of this engagements points to the centrality of winning hearts and minds. Jaysh Ayman (the most violent wing of the Al-Shabaab) in Kenya is blamed for the 2014 Mpeketoni massacre as well as KDF camp raid in Baure. It has cells in Lamu county and has recently pledged allegiance to the Islamic State (Sunday Standard February 28 2016 p.8).

Lamu killings affirm Mao's observations that governments (Kenya in this case) are actually the quarter- masters of guerrillas (Tse-Tung, 1992). Al-Shabaab assailants replenished their weapons cache by overrunning Mpeketoni police station. They exploited the historical marginalization such as dominance by "upcountry settlers" and distribution of resources such as land to gain sympathy and resonate with the local community. The revocation of title deeds in Lamu confirms these fears.

Kenya launched Operation Linda Boni on September 4<sup>th</sup> 2015 to flush out al-Shabaab. It incorporates KDF, police, NIS and interior ministry. The scope covers Mpeketoni, Hindi ,Panda Nguo and Witu. In these areas terrorists invade villages and hoist flags. They also force residents into Mosques and preach radical teachings propagating bloodshed and creation of a Caliphate similar to IS in Syria (<https://tuko.co.ke/40155-nkaisery-lists-13-vilages-flush-al-shabaab.html> accessed on 29<sup>th</sup> April 2016).

What makes the situation in Lamu precarious and necessitates the above operation is best captured by the statement below:

We as Bonis were left behind (by the rest of Kenya) and so these animals took advantage of the backwardness. Here a woman gives birth on the roadside. Since Al-Shabaab came in we left our homes and slept in forests. Women spend nights in forests with children strapped on their backs. That changed after security forces moved in (Elder Kuno).

Al-Shabaab twitter declaration that they were shifting the battle field to Kenya's territory starts to make sense. Highlighted also is the extent of distance decay obtaining in Lamu. There exists both administrative and economic decay where the government fails in its responsibility of value addition to space thus gangs and Al-Shabaab fill the void and predate on citizenry left out of mainstream economic activities. That the Boni's are still living as hunters and gatherers and lack basic amenities exhibits this neglect.



Security paralysis is also apparent as the citizens were left at the mercy of Al-Shabaab militia. The terrorist found this space favorable owing to the absence of formal security apparatus and other infrastructures like schools and roads.

### **3.2.3 Al-Shabaab's Mandera Massacres on KDF's Lines of Supply and Retreat**

Al-Shabaab fighters killed their victims after seizing a bus carrying some sixty people in what they said was revenge for police raids on Mosques in the troubled port of Mombasa (Watkins, 2016). The travellers were separated by the gunmen into Muslims and non-Muslims after which the non-Muslims were forced back. The assailants tried to drive off with their victims but got stuck in the mud; executed their victims then escaped back into Somalia. In the end 28 victims were killed this time even women and children were not spared (U.S. State Dept., 2015).

Following the Mandera bus attack Kenya's Deputy President is quoted as having said "Following Mandera bus attack our security forces initiated a response. They identified, followed and struck the perpetrators of the heinous crimes" (Guardian Sunday 23 November 2014, 19:08 GMT). Either the above statement was a public relations gimmick or it indicates that Kenya does not wield monopoly of violence in its territory as witnessed in the subsequent al-Shabaab attack coming in quick succession to the one above.

In the second engagement the terrorists ambushed quarry workers sleeping at a quarry in Koromey some twenty kilometers from Mandera town. The ambush took place at 1:00 am local time. Mandera police commander (Noah Mwirenda) is quoted in the press claiming the attack to be executed in a similar fashion to the earlier bus attack:

The deceased were lined on the ground before they were shot at close range. Four bodies were beheaded while others bore bullet wounds on their heads and chests... we have not established the motive behind the latest attack"  
Mwirenda

From the above statement the following elements can be read, the police lacked any intelligence on the attack and two the response came long after the killings had taken

place. From a theoretical point of view this brings in the element of deception and surprise. Either the security agencies were outflanked by the attackers or they simply were caught unawares as a function of excellent concealment. The resultant effect is the psychological and physical dislocation. This is what gave the terrorist success in the theater of Mandera.

Al-Shabaab claimed responsibility for the attacks. Their justification was that the killings were in retaliation for the raids carried out by Kenya security forces in November on four Mosques in Mombasa. The group's spokesperson is quoted terming the Mandera quarry attack thus:

“In another successful operation carried out by the Mujahedeen, nearly 40 Kenyan crusaders met their demise,” Shebab spokesman Sheikh Ali Mohamud Rage in a statement to AFP(Daily Mail Thursday, August 4th 2016).

He further went on as follows:

“We are uncompromising in our beliefs, relentless in our pursuit, ruthless against the disbelievers and we will do whatever necessary to defend our Muslim brethren suffering from Kenya's aggression.”

What can be read from the above declarations are the following elements: there are atrocities committed by the Kenyan security agencies that the group is intent to capitalize on. Two is the continuation of warfare inside Kenya with religion as a smokescreen to gain more recruits and to facilitate embedment within the society as they await a strategic moment to arrive. This is what Liddell Hart termed the essence of strategy.

Governor Roba of Mandera is quoted in the press observing that “What prevailed in Mandera before devolution was a conspiracy between security teams and Al-Shabaab, where security forces were in control during the day but retreated to their bunkers at night” (Standard Newspaper, Wednesday March 30, 2016 p.38).Roba's statement leads to two conclusions; institutional weaknesses among law enforcement and policy

disconnect that isolates county government officials from national security issues that affect them directly.

In an interview with an intelligence officer what emerges about Mandera is a picture of turf wars, dereliction of duty and a sense of helplessness among the residents. He observes that “security officers had lost control of the town of Mandera and no patrols were ever conducted at night.” The Kenya Police and Administration Police commanders were engaged in supremacy battles with each trying to assert his authority. He further observes that Omar Jillo and Damasa locations were the entry points for the Al-Shabaab militia yet there were no police or military installations to cover them(4<sup>th</sup> Expert Interview with a NIS officer 26<sup>th</sup> September 2016).

The above affirms what the Governor alleged as true and also explains why on all the occasions Mandera town was attacked police response arrived late. The two attacks coming in quick succession and the police commander’s admission of ignorance of their motive is further proof that Al-Shabaab was aware of these institutional shortcomings. They were able to run rings around these static and compromised security apparatus and instill fear among the population.

In the wake of the attacks non-locals mainly civil servants such as teachers and medical personnel fled Mandera citing insecurity. In the absence of these personnel, service delivery ground to a halt (Daily Nation Friday January 30 2015). The broad strategic calculation of the Al-Shabaab in carrying out these attacks was thus aimed at tearing the social fabric that holds Kenya together. In essence the Kenyan state looked impotent and unable to provide key public goods to its citizens. The inability to provide security acquires a domino effect on other public goods like education and health.

Underpinning this large number of operatives is the aspect of geography. In Mandera the terrain is much larger as opposed to Westgate thereby calling for bigger numbers. In the second attack it is reported that al-Shabaab employed at least twenty (20)

operatives (Daily Mail Thursday, Aug 4th 2016). Still this larger numbers were able to meet their set objectives for in the end of the two campaigns 64 people were killed. This provoked massive relocation of non-locals from Mandera County thereby depicting the state as not in control of its territory.

The attacks echo what Mamdani terms as a triple confluence of ideological, organizational and political elements of Islamist terror. The infrastructure created by CIA in their attempt to defeat Soviet troops in Afghanistan mutated into Al-Qaeda organization in Khost tunnel complex (Mamdani, 2004). Similarly Kenya's attempt to create a friendlier Somalia administration in the name of Jubaland Project backfired and attacks against the homeland intensified following KDF invasion of Somalia (Lind *et al*, 2015).

The Mandera attacks appear to be adhering to a certain logic of these “uprooted” individuals famously termed as “returnees” or “violent extremists” facilitating operations against the homeland with catastrophic consequences (GOK&UNDP, 2015 p.4-7).

### **3.3 AL- Shabaab's Geographical Project**

The strategic objective of Al Shabaab “is to establish a Somali Caliphate of the Wahhabi Islamic sect in Somali-inhabited regions of the Horn of Africa” (KDF, 2014 p.25). The intended Caliphate cuts across Somalia, Djibouti, Kenya and Ethiopia. To achieve this it depends on militarized interventions and exploiting the ideological and religious inspiration of the Muslim population in its favour. Kenya's strategic positioning in the Horn of Africa thus explains why it has borne the greatest brunt of Al-Shabaab attacks which appear tailored towards violating its territorial integrity and crushing its economy (KDF, 2014).

The magnitude of this threat is captured in the assertion by the Ethiopian Prime Minister that “any threat to Kenya's security is a threat to the Horn of Africa...” (KDF, 2014 p.63) Considering that 92% of Kenya's trade is conducted via sea and

that its tourism sector contributes about 40% of its foreign earnings the magnitude of Al-Shabaab attacks in locations like Mpeketoni, Westgate and Mandera therefore take the shape of an existential threat to the nation. Earlier operations such as *Operation Linda Mpaka* and *Operation Mamba* which culminated into *Operation Linda Nchi* are a manifestation of this Al-Shabaab threat to Kenya's survival (KDF, 2014).

The north eastern province is a favourable Al-Shabaab space owing to the following hindrances; geography/topography, demography, infrastructure and weather. Geographically the vegetation offers concealment to terrorists and their arms. Its geopolitical positioning close to Somalia and accessibility to Middle East and Afghanistan brings the events taking place there closer home. "Infrastructure of nomadic lifestyle allows infiltration and concealment given the social distance decay" (Katumanga, 2013 p.26).

Finally he attributes this favorability to ethnic and clan structured formations. Such demographic attributes enables Al-Shabaab to exploit identity in its attempt to tilt the contradictions in their favour. An adept exploitation of the above obstacles springs up sanctuaries at economic, political and social levels owing to widespread lack of employment and rampant corruption in the society.

Mpeketoni, Hindi and Gamba towns are situated near Lamu which is of strategic importance to Kenya. By launching these attacks "the militants intend to threaten a major economic project"(Watkins E. 2016). These are the Hoima-Lamu pipeline and the LAPSSET. To anchor his argument he cites the recent decision by Uganda to choose the Hoima-Tanga route for its oil pipeline at the expense of the Kenya route. Ethiopia too opted to transport its products via the 550 kilometer pipeline from Djibouti. These setbacks he attributes to "occasional violent incursions" by Al-Shabaab in Kenya (Watkins, 2016 p.10-12).

Menkhaus observes the following in relation to Al-Shabaab's project:

The group has also exerted influence and even indirect control over critical areas in Kenya, most notably the Eastleigh neighborhood of Nairobi(a slum

heavily populated by ethnic Somalis) and the border town of Mandera (Menkhaus 2014 p.7).

An intelligence report leaked to the press indicated Al-Shabaab's intention to "attack, kill and kidnap Kenyans in Koromey, Mandera in retaliation to the arrest of Salim (Abubakar Kitonga)." It further revealed identities of three leading Al-Shabaab operatives "inserted" in Kenya to conduct reconnaissance of the security situation in Koromey. The three; Ahmad Imani, Juma Ayub Otit and Eric Ogada, all hail from Majengo in Nairobi (Daily Nation Thursday February 5, 2015).

By leaking the report the calculation might be to communicate the government's capacity to neutralize Al-Shabaab threat. This is a form of tactical denial. Secondly the organizational capability and military wherewithal of Al-Shabaab terrorist group begins to form in the conscience of the population. They portray a well-organized and hierarchical unit with a clearly-defined grand strategy, military strategy, operational strategy and battlefield strategy.

Operation Linda Boni highlights the geographical threat. It incorporates Kenya Defense Forces (KDF)-direct combat involving aerial bombardment as infantry soldiers comb the forest, National Intelligence Service (NIS)- infiltration of villages to pick collaborators and police who interrogate arrested suspects and prosecute offenders. All these came in the wake of radicals forcing locals in villages into Mosques where they propagated bloodshed and establishment of a Caliphate similar to Islamic State (IS) in Syria (Daily Nation, November 16 2015).

A recent documentary highlighted the complexity of this battle pitting Kenya against Al-Shabaab. It revealed administrative challenges and indicates that this is going to be a long duration affair for Al-Shabaab appear firmly rooted and display a lot of resolve and imagination. The entire strategy of rollback appears destined for failure:

Some of the soldiers said that although they were winning the shooting battles, they were losing the war to Al-Shabaab because there is no clear strategy...no effort is being made to reconstruct communities in the territory they(soldiers) fought so hard to liberate out of Al-Shabaab and prevent radicalization (Daily Nation, Friday, July 15 2016 p2).

No schooling was going on in such border communities owing to lack of teachers. Al-Shabaab, is reportedly giving guns to children as young as ten and twelve years (Daily Nation, Friday, July 15 2016 p5).Elsewhere schools closed two years ago in Basuba Ward of Lamu County are yet to be reopened. The teachers service commission(TSC) refused to deploy personnel in the area citing constant raids on the villages by Al-Shabaab. The affected primary schools are Mangai, Basuba, Milimani and Mararani in Lamu East Sub-County (Daily Nation, September 13 2016 p.12).

From the foregoing this study concludes that Al-Shabaab activities in this northern region of Kenya which doubles as home to the LAPSSET corridor project is of existential magnitude to the country.

## **CHAPTER FOUR**

### **INTERNAL SECURITY PARALYSIS IN THE FACE OF AL-SHABAAB ONSLAUGHT**

#### **4.0 Introduction**

Chapter fourteen of Kenya's constitution defines national security as "protection against internal and external threats to Kenya's territorial integrity and sovereignty, its people, their rights, freedoms, property, peace, stability and prosperity, and other national interests." It also establishes the organs namely; Kenya Defense Forces (KDF), National Intelligence Service (NIS) and National Police Service (NPS), distributes functions and outlines principles under which this security ought to be provided (GOK, 2010 p.144-149).

The Kenya Police Service spokesman Charles Owino recently remarked that "in the post-Westgate mall attack, the security forces have strengthened intelligence collection and boosted the capacity of Anti-Terrorism Police Unit." He went on to say that further strategies adopted are aimed at the inter agency cooperation specifically between National Intelligence Service, Kenya Defense Forces and the police (Daily Nation Wednesday 21, 2016 p.10).

Owino's declarations confirm that as late as 2016 there was no infrastructure in place to anchor the seamless coordination of these vital security agencies as outlined by the constitution. The security laws (amendment) act of 2014 was anticipated to plug these gaps by strengthening the public order act, penal code and the criminal procedure code. It mandated the national security council to create the national counter terrorism center (NCTC) to organize these efforts by improving incident command and control protocol among others (GOK, 2014).

Even after the enactment of security laws (amendment) act of 2014 Al-Shabaab still orchestrated the Garissa university attack in April 2015. Owino's declaration of improvement in inter-agency cooperation post-Westgate also affirms that there



existed gaps and that intelligence gathering was wanting. To understand why Al-Shabaab are successful we have to look at this perspective. Given that this lack of coordination existed in the security system, we can conclude that Al-Shabaab exploited them to their advantage.

The foregoing provides this study with the entry elements of its discussion. Institutional weaknesses and lack of popular goodwill impedes Kenya's efforts against Al-Shabaab. This will help in responding to the second question; what explains the apparent inability of security organs to decisively defeat al-Shabaab? The objective is to analyze factors underlying the apparent inability of security apparatus to decisively defeat the Al-Shabaab.

In responding to the above question, this chapter looks at core elements such as institutional and policy shortcomings that impede Kenya security apparatus in the war against terrorism. Under these the study shall focus on components such as command and control, training, tactics and strategy. The second cluster of elements comprise the distance decay variable. Here the study will examine distanciation in terms of political, economic and social and seek a nexus between these elements and terror attacks in Kenya.

This chapter contends that the inability of Kenya security forces to decisively defeat the al-Shabaab operatives owes to their alienation of the population which holds the vital center of gravity in this engagement. The security apparatus as deployed in Kenya remain secluded from the society thus allowing the terrorists to exploit the void and frustrate their efforts of maintaining law and order.

The chapter is organized around two parts: part one examines the institutional crisis in the police and how they facilitate the attacks. These shortfalls are in the form of command and control, morale, logistics and coordination and supplies. Part two deals with the distance decay phenomenon at the administrative, economic and social level.

It examines how these gaps in the Kenyan set up are exploited by terrorists to attack the homeland.

#### **4.1 Institutional and Policy Shortcomings**

The success of the Westgate attack on the part of Al-Shabaab “reveals intelligence failure on the part of Kenyan security and intelligence community, not to mention the accusation of pilfering at the mall blamed on Kenyan security forces involved in dislodging the terrorist” (Onuoha, 2013 p.7). These lapses in intelligence are what facilitated the assailants from the moment they were inserted into the country from Somalia, their planning phase of the attack at the Kakuma refugee camp and eventual arrival at Westgate to carry out the attack.

Lack of concrete security intelligence to track the perpetrators of terrorist acts, together with poor government security intelligence gathering and sharing strategies hamper the war on terrorism. With regard to effective command and control. Opicho points that the “involvement of the then Inspector General of police, was a major mistake as he ought to be in the command center giving policy directions but not at the battle ground”(3rd Expert Interview 21st September 2016).

What the expert does not point out is the overall effect of the Inspector General mediating battles at the tactical level. First his presence blurred the ability of junior officers on the ground to make informed decisions and respond with speed. Second it indicated his (and the entire police) lack of appreciation of the threat he posed to the entire nation.

At that particular moment Al-Shabaab were still in total command of the mall and were strategically placed to neutralize basically all threats owing to their superior battlefield intelligence and command of heights. His presence there exposed him to danger and denied the state a major decision making avenue. This scenario indicated a crisis in command and control pervading the police.

In an interview with an officer privy to the Westgate attack investigations, it emerged that lack of DNA database for profiling upsets Kenya's efforts at forensic examinations. On most situations such expert analysis is outsourced abroad and this leads to delays in solving some cases. The source revealed that examination of the four Safaricom simcards recovered from the vehicle of attack helped in ascertaining the number of attackers and arrest of other accomplices (5<sup>th</sup> Expert Interview 30<sup>th</sup> September 2016).

Lack of interagency cooperation afflicts Kenya's internal security apparatus. An officer working with the NIS revealed to this researcher that prior to the attack the agency had given warnings of the impending attack to the police. He asserts that as early as 21 September 2012 and February 2013 the organization had warned of a "a potential attack at Westgate taking the shape of "Mumbai style attack" where operatives storm buildings using guns and grenades". More specific information he claims, were shared to the relevant security agencies on the 6<sup>th</sup> of August and on 2nd September 2013(4<sup>th</sup> Expert Interview 26<sup>th</sup> September 2016).

The attack took place in a similar manner as had been warned by NIS, even the hour of attack responds to what the spy agency had projected. This can only therefore lead to one conclusion: there was laxity on the part of police in Nairobi County especially over terror alerts.

Poor and inadequate equipment together with messy investigations put Kenya's security agencies on a back foot in most occasions (Wagner, D. 2014). The source from directorate of criminal investigations (DCI) pointed out that on January 17<sup>th</sup> 2013 an improvised explosive device exploded at Hagdera refugee camp in Daadab. The only casualties were the two suspected suicide bombers. From then onwards most government efforts were concentrated in that camp (5<sup>th</sup> Expert Interview 30<sup>th</sup> September 2016).

Later on forensic data from Westgate indicated that the attackers originated from Kakuma refugee camp and that logistical preparations were carried out in Third and

Sixth Streets of Eastleigh. If this incident (Dadaab) was fully investigated “perhaps Westgate could have been thwarted” (DCI officer, 30<sup>th</sup> September 2016).

The lack of forensic equipment comes out from the above scenario. Theoretically this Dadaab incident can be interpreted as an Al-Shabaab effort to divert attention of the Kenyan security forces. As they focused on Daadab the operatives had taken the longer route from Somalia via South Sudan and into Kakuma refugee camp. This resonates with what Liddell Hart termed deception and movement culminating into surprise and psychological dislocation. We thus begin to appreciate the strategic acumen of these Al-Shabaab planners (Hart, 1941).

The national intelligence service (NIS) informant blamed marginalization and corruption amongst government departments for being another catalyst of the Westgate mall attack. He observed that “department of immigration services, department of refugee affairs and registration of persons were all culpable for omission and commission in this attack”. The same departments victimize Kenya-Somali applicants seeking identification documents particularly in Nairobi, northeastern and coast regions of Kenya (4<sup>th</sup> Expert Interview 26<sup>th</sup> September 2016).

If the above listed government agencies performed their tasks diligently, the four assailants would have not acquired false travel and identification documents which enabled them easy transit to Nairobi. The dismissal 15 officials for abetting irregular issuance of identification and travel documents in the aftermath of Westgate attack confirms this institutional disconnect (Ombaka, 2015).

Operational effectiveness in Lamu/Mpeketoni massacres was impeded by poor interagency coordination among and within police, intelligence and military forces; limited resources; insufficient training; endemic corruption and an unclear command and control of and politicization of some terrorist incidents (US Gov. Country Report, 2014).

This unclear command and control thus made the KDF, GSU and other police units such as administration police (AP) rapid deployment unit (RDU) fail to provide mutual fire support to Mpeketoni police station which was under siege. Even after the Westgate attack the crisis of command and control and the aspect of cohesiveness demanded in joint operations were still unresolved.

Poor training, inadequate tactical appreciation and lack of a coherent strategy affect the performance of Kenya security agencies more so the police force. The November 2012, Baragoi massacre claimed the lives of 42 policemen and four reservists on a mission to restore peace among the Samburu and Turkana pastoralists. Shortly afterwards another group of policemen were brutally murdered by bandits in Kapedo area in an ambush. “These incidences have lowered the morale of foot soldiers and informs the reluctance by top commanders to order immediate response during Mpeketoni massacre in Lamu County” (4<sup>th</sup> Expert Interview 26<sup>th</sup> September 2016).

The above source adds that when laying ambushes Kenya police officers rarely “prepare the ground” sufficiently and this has necessitated the employment of Kenya defense forces (KDF) in domestic issues following the constant heavy losses suffered by the police. This scenario he suggests emboldens Al-Shabaab to conduct daring raids such as Mpeketoni, Garissa University attack and even Mandera. An attempt to attack Baure military camp in Lamu was met with maximum firepower leading to the killing of the British mastermind of Mpeketoni massacre.

A major policy shortcoming in Kenya is the lack of anticipation of security threats to its biggest infrastructural project, the Lamu Port- Southern Sudan- Ethiopia Transport Corridor (LAPSSET). The only mention of security in Kenya’s vision 2030 is the aspect of community policing how this was meant to cushion this infrastructure is omitted (GOK, 2007).

While Al-Shabaab has conducted attacks throughout the region, its primary focus has been on Kenya and areas connected with the proposed Hoima-Lamu pipeline route: in

Garissa and Lamu counties. Between October 2011 and May 2014, Kenya suffered 133 attacks by Al-Shabaab, with 39% of them targeting Garissa County (Watkins, 2016).

The centralized posting of the police, mode of accommodation along military lines and the lack of institutional imagination on the part of policy makers hampers Kenya's efforts at counterterrorism (Ngunyi & Katumanga, 2014). For instance the Kenya Wildlife Service and Kenya Forest Service personnel could fill the gaps existing in and around parks and forests. If they actively police these spaces Al-Shabaab would not have made Boni and Pandanguo forests their sanctuary from which to plan attacks and gain concealment during the Lamu attacks.

Al-Shabaab is having a field day in Kenya because of serious failures in the country's security apparatus particularly in the intelligence docket. Misiko observes that most attacks caught NIS unawares. He points that even when foreign intelligence agencies warn of imminent attacks NIS don't raise their antennae. For instance "one day prior to the Mpeketoni bloodbath, British consulate in Mombasa was closed for fear of attacks" (Misiko, 2014).

This lack of consciousness is attributed to the pursuit of personal political interests. On many occasions NIS is preoccupied with the political wellbeing of a clique of politicians thus distracting it from core duties. Kenya's intelligence gathering and analysis is not geared towards securing national interests but primarily at looking after regime survival. To substantiate this claim Ombaka points to President Kenyatta's declaration of June 5<sup>th</sup> 2014 Mpeketoni attacks as the work of political opposition engaged in "ethnic profiling" (Ombaka, 2015 p.12-13).

In Mandera, the security situation was worsened by the lack of a central command and control at the county level. This led to supremacy battles between the Administration police and their Kenya police service counterparts. The end result was the closure of Administration police posts such as Damasa, Libihiya, Hareri, Kalahiyo, Hareri Hosle, Kamor and Border Point I. He adds that "Police assign

themselves duties in the morning and they all troop to the border points. In the evening they retreat to their rooms leaving the town at the mercy of militias” (4<sup>th</sup> Expert interview 26<sup>th</sup> September 2016).

What emanates from the above is a situation of broken chain of command and control. The aspect of morale, logistics and coordination is exhibited in Mandera. The logistical challenges and low morale is responsible for slow or lack of police response on both occasions Mandera came under attack. The end result was the slaughter of 64 Kenyans and more boldness on the part of Al-Shabaab.

The second element is the aspect of corruption which affects normal service delivery leaving Mandera residents at the mercy of Al-Shabaab night raids. Thirdly if police camps could be closed for fear of attacks this then sends the signal of collapse in the force to space ratios thus emboldening Al-Shabaab to monopolize violence in Mandera theatre.

The operational disjuncture in Mandera results in poor sharing of intelligence or lack of action on security intelligence by various security agencies. The human rights agency points that this confusions of command structure within the National Police Service (NPS) resulted into lapses in security operation deployments especially in Mandera County. They however observe that the same disconnect afflicts the Kenya defense forces (KDF) and the national intelligence service (NIS) leading to a quagmire (KNCHR, 2014 p.30).

Underpinning this internal security paralysis is the aspect of corruption. Key departments of the interior ministry such as immigration, registration of persons, refugee affairs are deeply engaged in the vice. This resonates with Githongo’s earlier observation as captured below:

“Corruption – systemic graft – is at the heart of the state’s inability to respond to insecurity in general... National security has always been the last refuge of the corrupt in Kenya. Security sector contracts were always subject to unconstrained predatory treatment. The chickens are coming home to roost

and it hurts. Grand theft by the country's ruling elite has allowed an attitude of "if he can do it so can I" to permeate the country's lower ranking security apparatus... We are paying the price in blood."(Ombaka, 2015 p.3).

From Githongo's assertions the reasons as to why junior officers engage in bribery becomes clear. The link between this systemic corruption especially within this sensitive docket and escalation of terror attacks across Kenya is also laid bare. This scenario leaves the state badly exposed and at the mercy of terrorist whose motivation is to hemorrhage it further.

In analyzing the vulnerability of Kenya to terror attacks, Maina, (2016) advances the argument that in as much as Kenya is focusing on better equipping its police service; the lack of hardware was not the sole reason for their poor response in earlier attacks. In his analogy it is the police that are conveying the Al-Shabaab message in what he terms "terror-marketing". The threat reporting is done in a "cry-wolf manner", heightening the panic. He adds that threats are never ranked, making it difficult to ascertain the likelihood of occurrence and the veracity of their origin.

Kenya's anti-terror strategy focuses on shoring up police numbers and improving equipment. Differently put could the 30 newly acquired armoured vehicles have helped save more lives in Westgate Mall, in the Mandera bus killings or even in Garissa University College? The answer is no! Modernizing the forces is important but not an end by itself. It ought to be done as a means towards improving overall capabilities of the forces not essentially about fighting the terror threats that Kenya actually faces (Maina, 2016).

Apart from the Mpeketoni attack in Lamu and the El-Adde attack of 2016 in Somalia, Kenya does not face "battle-field" terrorism that calls for high-end armoured carriers. Al-Shabaab on its part does invest in low-cost and principally in close-contact confined environments such as Westgate mall, Garissa University and even Gikomba market. Such theatres render armoured vehicles irrelevant.



## **4.2 Distance Decay Phenomenon Compounding Kenya's Anti-Terrorism Efforts**

### **Introduction**

This framework conceives the intensity of threats to a nation to be a function of distancing at economic, political and social levels. When such scenarios prevail, the bandits, gain time and space from which they withdraw as they organize to hurt the state. Distance decay leads to expansion of bandit spaces and economy while raising the levels of insecurity for the state. As such levels of insecurity intensify, so does the power of the bandits and other non-state actors (Ngunyi & Katumanga, 2014).

The above phenomenon engenders the growth of an informal state which in turn produces three spaces; one contested spaces with shared sovereignty, two spaces where the state has abandoned its ability to demonstrate dominance over authority and three are spaces where the state retains some semblance of control. This section is an analysis of the three case studies in form of Al Shabaab's exploitation of prevailing distance decay at political/security level, economic distance decay and lastly the social distance decay.

### **4.2.1 Political and Security Distance Decay- Kenya's Contested Spaces**

The planning of Westgate attack was conducted between Kakuma refugee camp and Eastleigh Third and Sixth Street in Nairobi. The four attackers were well trained in intelligence gathering and counter intelligence with vast expertise in bomb assembling (4<sup>th</sup> & 5<sup>th</sup> Expert Interviews on 26<sup>th</sup> and 30<sup>th</sup> September 2016). What makes Kakuma such a safe sanctuary and Eastleigh a perfect Al-Shabaab logistical hub is the lack of penetrative security presence and alienation of the Kenya-Somali citizen by the state.

The police only view the two spaces as avenues of extraction and rent seeking thus they lack pertinent knowledge of what goes on therein. The Al-Shabaab operatives were thus able to conceal themselves and retreat into space and time. They were able to exploit the terrain to their advantage and have the benefit of choosing when to

strike. This space allowed them to plan the Nairobi attack and to consolidate their infrastructure in readiness for the mission.

The Westgate mall terror attack highlighted the urgency of proactive security solutions that incorporate multilayered security deployment, behaviour pattern recognition and community approach aimed at early detection of threats (Harel, 2013). Partnership between law enforcement and the private sector is an important force multiplier for dealing with the challenges of securing soft targets such as malls, schools, hospitals and other places of mass gatherings.

Kenya lacks legislations and regulations that synchronize private security providers to the state security agencies. This lack of regulation not only fuels mistrust between the two complimentary agencies but creates a distance that in this case Al-Shabaab were able to exploit to the maximum.

The Mpeketoni attacks of June 2014 was intensified by the fact the General Service Unit(GSU) camp at Nyongoro and the KDF detachments at Mokowe and Witu failed to support the Mpeketoni police station (Butime, 2014). On July 7<sup>th</sup> 2015, Al-Shabaab fighters attacked and killed 14 people in a Mandera quarry. Their residence shared close proximity to Mandera military camp. Shortly after on June 14<sup>th</sup> 2015, the Kenya military killed 11 al-Shabaab fighters after an attempted attack on a military base (Baure). At least two Kenyan soldiers were reported killed in this encounter. (Human Rights Watch, 2016).

What can be discerned from the three incidents are as follows; the force-to-space ratios of Kenyan forces is worsened by the traditional colonial deployment rationalities that are regime and elite protection centered. The focus of these military deployments in Lamu and Mandera is not the civilian protection per se otherwise they would have responded in time and prevented the atrocities. Secondly the existence of security seams within the Kenyan deployment becomes obvious. These military and

paramilitary units have abdicated the duty of security patrols outside their perimeters to the already distanced police units.

Thus such vicinities acquire insecurity levels of themselves as the nearby security installations remain confined to their core command and operational jurisdictions. Al-Shabaab owing to their counter intelligence capacity must be aware of these contested spaces and it is this that emboldens them to orchestrate such daring raids as the Mpeketoni attacks and the two Mandera massacres.

Al-Shabaab enjoy tactical advantage over Kenya security forces because they rely on “radicalized youths from the native communities who execute their terror activities and have better knowledge of terrain” (3<sup>rd</sup> Expert Interview 20<sup>th</sup> September, 2016). He further added that these Al-Shabaab surprise attacks find the government unawares always.

From the foregoing the study draws two theoretical interpretations; first the central posting of police and the format of “barracking” denies them the ability to exert their force-to-space ratios. This scenario brings us to what Ngunyi & Katumanga (2014 p.126) refer to public alienation and increased security costs. This they argue is what compounds logistics, intelligence gathering and response in strength and time. We begin to comprehend why the security response to Mpeketoni attacks of 2014 arrived almost after ten hours and why on both occasions in Mandera the police response was always after the killings had taken place.

The second conclusion this study arrives at is that following the current posting of police, they are indeed “outsiders” in the communities from which they operate. This outsider effect denies the police the ability to penetrate the community conversely granting the Al-Shabaab elements Opicho refers to as “radicalized local youths” the space and time to dominate terrain in terms of force- to space ratios.

#### **4.2.2 Economic Distance Decay and the Termite Economy of Terror in Kenya**

Prior to the Westgate mall attack there was activation of SIM cards in the Eastleigh section of Nairobi. The next space intertwined to the attack is the banking hall of Barclays Bank Queensway branch in Nairobi from where the two logisticians, Abd Kadir Muhamed and Adan Dheg withdrew the cash for purchase of assault vehicle (NYPD, 2013).

From all these spaces the government had abstained from its role of securitization, the emerging gaps are what Al-Shabaab retreated to gifting them space and time from which to plan and organize. The effect was that the vehicle facilitated mobility of four assailants to the mall; on arrival at Westgate they were facilitated by this SIM cards to communicate to their command center in Somalia. This gave them force-to-space ratios and put the state on the back foot from the moment the assault began.

The NIS source pointed out that “KRA and police officers operated illegal border posts where arms and contraband goods are smuggled into the country at a fee” (4<sup>th</sup> Expert Interview 26<sup>th</sup> September 2016). This revelation when put together with Mandera governor’s accusation that local police were colluding with sponsors of terror in Mandera then a parasitic “termite economy” begins to form (Daily Nation Wednesday 26 November 2014).

The above collusion is a form of economic distance decay which not only denies the state the much needed revenue for economic development but conversely has the net effect of threatening its survival. The net effect is the terror menace in Mandera, capital flight as witnessed by departure of non-local civil servants and quarry workers culminating into stagnation of economic growth.

The illicit relationship between KWS officers, Kenya Ports Authority (KPA) personnel and Al-Shabaab operatives was found to be fuelling terrorism in Garissa. The economic venture linking all the above protagonists was the poaching of rhinos and elephants (Miguta, 2013). The ongoing deployment of KWS rangers in anti-

terrorism operations confirms this connection. This is aggravated by the expansive scope of Boni forest which covers Garissa, Tana River and Lamu counties. The admission by Mbathi, the KWS director general that his officers are involved in anti-poaching operations is confirmation that Al-Shabaab exploits this economic resource for their logistical purposes (HRW, 2016).

#### **4.2.3 Social Distance Decay and the Somali Question**

An interview with a resident of Garissa sums up the entire social distance decay situation as follows:

This is the government disappearing our people. How can we trust them with fair investigations and trial? It is meaningless to expect anything from the police or the courts (HRW, 2016 p.25).

From the foregoing the emerging picture is that this social distancing gives the state apparatus limited social access. Two is that this lack of access to the society is what forces them to use force and to extort the population further alienating them from the society. The third observation is that this alienation disunites the security agencies from the population which Clausewitz termed as the intangible center of gravity in any military engagement (Clausewitz, 1976).

Somali Kenyans feel marginalized by the states counter-terrorist operations, such as *Operation Usalama Watch* (Security Watch). It unfairly targeted Somali Kenyans, serving as a pretext for blanket punishment and mass human rights violations, like arbitrary arrest, extortion, ill-treatment, forced relocations, and unlawful expulsion (Clark & Lekalake 2015). Here authorities reportedly arrested 4005 “Somali looking” individuals. Al-Shabaab seems adept at exploiting such grievances and projecting them as their cause (Botha, 2014 p.20-22).

The above picture begins to unravel the logic behind Al-Shabaab selective killings in most of the battlefields in Kenya. In Westgate the pretext was to kill non-Muslims who could not recite the name of Prophet Mohammed’s mother (KIFC, 2013). In the Lamu theater they selected mainly males from up-country origins and who were

Christians (Butime, 2014) and in Mandera all the victims were non-Muslim civil servants and quarry workers. By the state responding to these attacks in the fashion in which it carried out Usalama Watch it is only pushing the Somali community away from it and into the comforts of Al-Shabaab which exploits the resultant distance decay to ferment their own political objectives.

The social distancing is further compounded by the fact that most Somali Kenyans (like most Kenyans) say they do not trust the police and believe that “most” or “all” police officers are corrupt. KDF is more trusted and less likely to be perceived as corrupt as the police (Clark & Lekakale 2015 p.2). This therefore explains the inability of the same police to thwart such al-Shabaab attacks in places like Mandera.

The July 2016 Human Rights Watch (HRW) report documented 34 cases of enforced disappearance and 11 victims of extra judicial killings. Most of these atrocities are committed by security agencies engaged in counterterrorism operations in parts of Northeastern province. The report blames KDF, Kenya police, National Intelligence Service agents and Kenya Wildlife Service rangers as leading agents in these gross violations.

Following this security design and deployment framework as described by the HRW one begins to comprehend the reasons why Kenya security apparatus throw the strategic advantage to Al-Shabaab tactical operatives. These AL-Shabaab operatives at the tactical level are therefore able to assume strategic preponderance on internal security elements. This engenders the sense of entrapment Kenya finds itself in especially in localities like Mandera and Lamu.

## **CHAPTER FIVE**

### **SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

#### **5.0 Introduction**

This chapter recapitulates this study by responding to four tasks: The first task recapitulates the two objectives with the view to examining the extent to which they have been met. The second is a recapitulation of hypotheses; here an assessment of the validity or nullity of the hypotheses is done. The third task anchors the conclusion of this study in the major arguments presented. The fourth task outlines policy recommendations for containing the Al-Shabaab threat in Kenya.

#### **5.1.a Explaining Al-Shabaab's Successes**

The first objective of this study was to analyze the factors that underlie the success of the Al-Shabaab to execute three major attacks in Kenya. The attacks examined were the Westgate mall attack of September 2013, the Mpeketoni and Lamu attacks of June and July 2014 and the two attacks in Mandera County in November and December 2014. In trying to unravel the reasons behind this intensity and spike in attacks within this duration major theoretical arguments were made and various elements examined.

The major argument advanced in this study is that the success of the Al-Shabaab terror group in executing the above attacks is a function of their capacity to efficiently operationalize the strategy of indirect approach and adopt it to suit their ends. The Al-Shabaab ability to effectively manipulate field craft and terrain lends to their deception that result in displacement and gaining geographical advantage.

Major elements used to analyze this success in attacks include objectives sought in each of the campaigns, the responses to these attacks, Al-Shabaab logistical needs such as armaments, ammunitions, insertion of operatives among others. Other elements used gauge this success are the results or consequences of these attacks.

The Al-Shabaab objectives of the Westgate attack was to successfully insert the operatives, kills as many people as possible, hurt the economy and hurt the military pride at the cost of four people. They achieved this by gaining unchallenged entry, taking control of the building by occupying the strategic first floor of Nakumatt and stretching the operations for four days.

Collected data reveal that Al-Shabaab had higher resolve, better battlefield intelligence and an effective command and control based in Somalia but linked via telephone and television coverage. Their ability to provoke Kenya Defense Forces to use excessive force helped to further their economic goals as this brought down parts of the mall leading to nearly two years of lost business opportunities.

In examining the Mpeketoni attacks and other engagements in Lamu County this study looked at Al-Shabaab targeting of mainly non-Muslim males from up-country. The aim here was to exploit social and political tensions revolving around inequitable land allocation of mainly the Kikuyu settlers. The findings indicated that this targeting effectively diverted the attention of intelligence apparatus. The result was the psychological dislocation leading to the Commander in Chief misreading the intent of the attacks.

The success also emanate from the inability of Kenyan security apparatus to render mutual fire support to their counterparts in Mpeketoni, enabling the Shabaab to overrun the police station and stockpile their weapons. In the end the Lamu attacks disrupted education and the economic sectors as exhibited in the rejection of Hoima-Lamu pipeline route by Uganda in preference to the Hoima-Tanga route (Watkins, 2016).

In carrying out the two Mandera attacks under such quick succession, this study focused on socio- political implication of the attacks. By selecting mainly Christian civil servants and quarry workers, the terrorists aim was for the repercussions to reverberate beyond the geographical confines of the attack to further audiences. They



crippled provision of government services and stagnated economic growth. The study found out that the vegetation of Mandera offers concealment and the infrastructure of nomadic lifestyles allows the terrorists easy concealment as they stockpile weapons and insert operatives.

In all the three attacks Al-Shabaab expertly exploited Kenya's own interior lines of communications to bring in supplies and men. The operational and tactical hiccups of Kenya security agencies are fundamental towards propelling the terrorist attacks. Lack of jointness and effective command and control disadvantages the Kenya security forces. Their success is largely attributed to disharmony and lack of imagination on the part of Kenya administration and security agencies.

#### **5.1.b Impotence of Kenya Security Forces**

In its second objective this study examined the nexus between the widening gap between security apparatus and the population and their inability to weed out and neutralize Al-Shabaab operatives in the country. The assumption was that Al-Shabaab local cells are deeply embedded in the social fabric of Kenya and in order to pick them out the security agencies must be able to infiltrate such networks and gain firsthand intelligence. The second assumption is that there are institutional crisis in the police that facilitates the Al-Shabaab attacks.

Facts collected indicate there was lack of interagency cooperation, no DNA database that hinders forensic examinations, poor command and control and marginalization and corruption in immigration, refugee and registration of persons departments. These were more pronounced at Westgate mall attack. In Mpeketoni there was unclear command and control, politicization of terrorist incidents, poor training of personnel. At policy level there emerged the issue of poor strategy and lack of anticipation of threats particularly to LAPSSSET.

In Mandera data collected point to lack of effective central command as a result of supremacy battles between Administration Police Service and Kenya Police Service

bosses. The focus of Kenya policy makers is on increasing hardware and shoring up the police numbers. The distance decay phenomenon also contributes to the impotence of Kenya security apparatus. It was exhibited in all the three case studies selected as follows.

There was lack of penetrative security presence and alienation of Kenya Somalis by the state. This political security distancing is what led Kakuma and Eastleigh to become perfect logistical hubs for Al-Shabaab in the planning of Westgate. The traditional deployment of police along colonial lines also compounds force to space ratios. The rationality of this deployment rests on regime and elite protection and it was exposed in Mpeketoni and Mandera attacks.

Economically the Kenyan state had abstained from its securitization role especially in Sim card registration and more investment in investigating banking fraud and money laundering cases. These facilitated Westgate attack. In Mandera data revealed the involvement of KRA and police in operating illegal border posts where arms and contraband goods are smuggled into the country. In Lamu theatre wildlife poaching in the expansive Boni forest funds Al-Shabaab logistical activities.

The distancing at the social level emanates from marginalization of Somali Kenyans in security operations such as “Usalama Watch”. Here collected facts indicate arbitrary arrests, extortion, ill treatment and forced relocations. This happened in the aftermath of Westgate attack. Operations in Northeastern Kenya have been characterized by enforced disappearance and extra-judicial killings thereby pushing the Somali community away from the security apparatus.

## **5.2. Recapitulation of the Hypotheses**

### **5.2.1 Al-Shabaab’s Indirect Approach**

Hypothesis one holds that the success of Al-Shabaab terror group in executing the three Kenya attacks is a function of their ability to efficiently operationalize the strategy of indirect approach and adopt it to suit their ends. The assumption here is

that Al-Shabaab strategy is built around self-preservation and avoiding frontal confrontations until strategic conditions present themselves. They are waging a war of effects targeting various strategic outcomes against Kenya security apparatus.

Facts collected indicate that Al-Shabaab prioritizes attacking certain geographical locations with the intent of exhausting Kenya economically and over extending its forces with the final objective of annexing territory in pursuit of its Caliphate idea. The selection of victims is aimed at widening the social, political and religious fault lines that exist in the Kenyan society. This leads to the psychological dislocation and drains the necessary resilience and social cohesion necessary in the fight against terrorism.

#### **5.2.2. Kenya Security Forces Miss the Center of Gravity**

The second hypothesis is that the inability of Kenya security forces to decisively defeat Al-Shabaab operatives owes to their alienation of the population which holds the vital center of gravity in this engagement. The assumption here is that for Al-Shabaab to orchestrate its attacks they had to carry out extensive reconnaissance, plan for logistics and gather intelligence and counterintelligence. All the above are impossible without the cooperation, both active and passive of the locals.

Facts collected indicate the existence of gaps between security forces and local population. At one level there is the deployment which places the forces in secluded camps away from the population leading to “them versus us” situations. The other distancing is in the command structure which remains at the national level thus excluding local actors such as governors and other local officials. This creates friction and mistrust between two levels of governance that ought to enjoy complementary relations as far as security is concerned.

Other data collected indicate that systemic corruption, widespread impunity and rampant violation of fundamental human rights during security operations have pushed the at risk populations away from security agencies. The study arrived at

following conclusions; the gaps between security apparatus and the population are what Al-Shabaab exploits to get embedded into the community and orchestrate attacks and then withdraw back into space and time. Secondly security agencies are out maneuvered in so far as gaining intelligence about Al-Shabaab is concerned leaving them to adopt a reactive mode.

### **5.3 Conclusions**

Using the theory of indirect approach as postulated by Basil Liddell Hart, this study has analyzed factors underlying Al-Shabaab success in carrying out the attacks across Kenya spanning the period of 2011 to 2015. It has examined the reasons behind such intensity and the inability to thwart such attacks in spite of Operation Linda Nchi and the ongoing AMISOM deployment in Somalia.

Specifically the study has addressed two objectives; first examined factors underpinning Al-Shabaab's success in executing terror attacks in Kenya. Second objective was to examine and analyze factors underlying the apparent inability of Kenya security apparatus to decisively defeat Al-Shabaab.

The central arguments in this study are that; first the success of Al-Shabaab terror group in executing these attacks is underpinned by the group's ability to efficiently operationalize the strategy of indirect approach and adopt it to suit their ends. On the part of Kenya, long standing institutional shortfalls deny it not only the ability to accurately diagnose the strategy of Al-Shabaab but such inadequacies also hinder its ability to respond effectively in order to neutralize the attacks.

Such institutional limitations in Kenya cut across the judicial system, slack immigration department, weak intelligence apparatus, compromised law enforcement agencies such as police and military that is still not inclined to respond to fluid asymmetrical actors such as the Al-Shabaab. At policy levels there exist disharmony between pillars of economic survival and requisite security apparatus which should neutralize threats to such infrastructure.

Thus in spite of military, economic and diplomatic and informational superiority on the part of Kenya, Al-Shabaab are adept at exploiting the inability of such instruments of power to be arrayed harmoniously in pursuit of Kenya's national interest(Drew & Snow 2006). It is such pillars of Kenya's vision 2030 such as LAPSET and tourism sector that Al-Shabaab is targeting indirectly by making nuisance of law and order in places like Lamu, Mandera and Garissa. Education is important to the vision's social pillar thus by teachers fleeing north eastern and parts of coast Al-Shabaab are able to dislocate the Kenyan government and distract its mission (GOK, 2007).

The second argument of the study is that the inability of Kenyan security apparatus to decisively defeat Al-Shabaab owes to their alienation of the population. It is this that Al-Shabaab exploits. Clausewitz referred to the population as holding the "intangible centres of gravity" in any military engagement (Clausewitz, 1976).In order to prevail the security apparatus must win back this support, especially among the Muslim community inhabiting northeastern and coastal parts of Kenya.

#### **5.4 Policy Recommendations**

The Al-Shabaab threat to the nation is of existential nature, their activities in the northern and coastal parts suggest that efforts at reclaiming such spaces will be a long duration affair. What is plausible is a specially designed containment policy aimed at reversing their gains and reclaiming these spaces back. Operation Linda Nchi failed to achieve its main objectives and Kenya's proposed building of 800 kilometre wall along its border with Somalia amounts to what Watkins (2016 p.11) terms a "medieval containment strategy".

At the policy level, this study recommends that in line with the attainment of Vision 2030, security deployment and employment should be done in a synchronized manner and should take the shape of the intended transport corridor. The size of Kenya navy ought to be enlarged tremendously as most threats to Kenya emanate from the Indian Ocean sea front. Most of the infrastructural development also target the new port of

Lamu which links the hinterland to the Indian ocean. As such the navy and supporting institutions like maritime police need to be expanded to respond to threats to these strategic avenues.

The ongoing police vetting has been termed a “mockery of reforms”. The officers have perfected the art of corruption and neglecting core duties of law enforcement in line with national interest of Kenya. On display is “lethargy, deep rooted corruption and extortion cartels” (The Standard, Monday August 29 2016 p.14). The way forward lies in total transformation of the service which entails fresh recruitment and training of personnel, embedding them into the society and inculcating the sense of national interest across the ranks.

The last recommendation rests upon the aspect of shoring up resilience in the face of these attacks. As demonstrated in Chapter two and three of this study, terrorists have infiltrated the Kenyan community and established cells and networks. Eliminating these will take some time thus what is called for is normalization and limiting the impact of attacks. The state apparatus must improve their ability to respond to critical infrastructures and this should be done in an efficient manner that allows life to resume its normalcy within the shortest time possible. Incidents like closure of Westgate mall for two years and Garissa University College only embolden the terrorists.

To attain high levels of resilience involves training the public and key institutions like schools, hospitals, and emergency service providers on how to respond to attacks. On their part, hospitals especially those along highways must be facilitated to establish sufficient blood banks, the state both at national and county level should set up secure communication networks – involving roads and telephones. This would go a long way mitigating incidents such as Mpeketoni massacre of June and Mandera bus attack of November 2014.

Kimani observed that in order to contain the threat posed by radicalization which emanates from relative deprivation, the war on terror must go hand in hand with economic empowerment of the at risk population across the country. This in essence would “drain the swamp” from which Al-Shabaab gets recruits and boost the states capacity to provide security (2<sup>nd</sup> Expert Interview 10<sup>th</sup> August 2016). Opicho on his part suggested training of all police officers on counterterrorism mechanisms, equipping them with sophisticated weapons and pulling out the KDF from Somalia(3<sup>rd</sup> Expert Interview 20<sup>th</sup> September 2016).

Finally Kenya can resort to what Kroenig & Pavel term as tactical and strategic denial in order to thwart Al Shabaab. Tactical denial involves convincing them that attacks are bound to fail. This can be achieved through selective broadcasting of foiled attacks. Strategically this denial emanates from severing the link between successful terrorist operations and their intended goals (Kroenig & Pavel, 2012). For instance after the Garissa University attack, the state should have beefed up security and re-admitted more students and staff immediately instead of closing it down. Westgate operations ought not to have stalled for two years to display the levels of Kenyan resilience to Al-Shabaab.

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## APPENDIX A

### **INFORMED CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN A RESEARCH STUDY AL-SHABAAB'S INDIRECT APPROACH AND THE INTENSITY OF TERROR ATTACKS IN KENYA (2011-2015)**

#### **Dear Participant**

My name is Aldrin Olayo Felix, a student at the University of Nairobi. I kindly request you to participate in this research study titled: **AL-SHABAAB'S INDIRECT APPROACH AND THE INTENSITY OF TERROR ATTACKS IN KENYA**. This research is conducted in partial fulfillment of the requirements of a graduate student at the University of Nairobi. Please sign this letter as a confirmation of your understanding of the terms of my research, promise of confidentiality and your voluntary participation. For this project, you will be asked to participate in an interview where you will be asked questions on strategic issues and national security. This will be recorded so that the researcher can later replay and listen to all the points of discussion.

In presenting my report, there will be no disclosure of any classified or sensitive information that may jeopardize my informants. The same will be disclosed to my informants for verification of authenticity. There will be no risks apart from those experienced in everyday life. Your participation is completely voluntary and you have the option of, at all times, to withdraw from further participation with no penalties.

This project has been approved by the government of Kenya as well as the University of Nairobi. If you would like to know about this project please feel free to contact my supervisor Dr. Katumanga Musambayi at Phone number 318262 ext. 28100. For questions about the university of Nairobi's rules of research, please call Prof. Lucy Irungu, DVC Research and Procurement, extension 02 318262 ext. 0010

Sincerely

Aldrin Olayo Felix

If you are willing to participate in this study, please sign this letter as a conformation of your understanding of the terms of the research, promise of confidentiality, and your voluntary participation.

Signature.....Date.....

## **APPENDIX B**

### **QUESTIONS TO GUIDE INTERVIEWS AND DISCUSSIONS ON AL-SHABAAB'S INDIRECT APPROACH AND THE INTENSITY OF TERROR ATTACKS IN KENYA (2011-2015)**

1. Briefly explain Al-Shabaab's broad strategy in carrying out the three Kenyan attacks of Westgate mall, Lamu/Mpeketoni massacre and two Mandera massacres.
2. What in your opinion gives Al-Shabaab operatives tactical and operational advantage to exploit geography and terrain better as opposed to Kenya security apparatus?
3. Briefly explain the apparent slowness to react to attacks and the duration taken to neutralize the attackers vis-à-vis the number of attackers and the proximity to key security installations.
4. How can the government and security planners counter and effectively contain the group's activities locally and win back the cooperation and confidence of at risk population?
5. What explains the inability of Kenya's law enforcement agencies to successfully prosecute and bring to justice key terror suspects in spite of requisite legislations being in place?
6. In your opinion, are Kenya's internal security apparatus as currently deployed well positioned to interdict the threat from Al-Shabaab which seems adept at camouflage and embedment within local population?



## APPENDIX C: RESEARCH PERMIT

**CONDITIONS**

1. You must report to the County Commissioner and the County Education Officer of the area before embarking on your research. Failure to do that may lead to the cancellation of your permit.
2. Government Officers will not be interviewed without prior appointment.
3. No questionnaire will be used unless it has been approved.
4. Excavation, filming and collection of biological specimens are subject to further permission from the relevant Government Ministries.
5. You are required to submit at least two(2) hard copies and one(1) soft copy of your final report.
6. The Government of Kenya reserves the right to modify the conditions of this permit including its cancellation without notice.

**REPUBLIC OF KENYA**

**NACOSTI**

**National Commission for Science, Technology and Innovation**

**RESEARCH CLEARANCE PERMIT**

**Serial No. A-10-177**

**CONDITIONS: see back page**

**THIS IS TO CERTIFY THAT:**

**MR. FELIX ALDRIN OLAYO**

**of UNIVERSITY OF NAIROBI, 0-900**

**kiambu, has been permitted to conduct**

**research in Nairobi County**

**on the topic: AL-SHABAAB'S INDIRECT**

**APPROACH AND THE INTENSITY OF**

**TERROR ATTACKS IN KENYA (2011-2015)**

**for the period ending:**

**19th July 2017**

**Permit No. : NACOSTI/P/16/49216/12351**

**Date Of Issue : 20th July, 2016**

**Fee Received :Ksh 1000**

**Applicant's Signature**

**Director General**

**National Commission for Science, Technology & Innovation**