

UNIVERSITY OF NAIROBI

INSTITUTE OF DIPLOMACY AND INTERNATIONAL STUDIES (IDIS) MA

INTERNATIONAL STUDIES

**IMPACT OF EXTERNAL COUNTERTERRORISM INTERVENTIONS ON HOST
COUNTRY STABILITY: THE CASE OF SELECT US-LED INTERVENTIONS, 2001-**

2021

By

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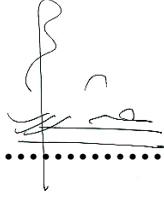
REG. NO: R50/14192/2018

**A Research Project Submitted in Partial Fulfillment for the Requirements of Degree of
Master of Arts in International Studies**

OCTOBER, 2022

DECLARATION

This research project is my original work and has not been presented for examination or degree award to any other institution or examination body.

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

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Date: 2/10/2023.....

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DEDICATION

To the author of

“The Second Message of Islam”

Whose tidings for Humanity are waiting impatiently for their dawn

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

I would like to express my sincere thanks and profound gratitude to my supervisor Dr. Mumo Nzau. His gentle and incisive supervision, and constructive guidance left a deep imprint on me. My thanks are extended to Dr. Patrick Maluki, chair of the Department of Diplomacy and International Studies; whose overall leadership allowed me and my colleagues to finish our projects and studies in reasonable time. I would also like to thank all family and staff of the Department of Diplomacy and International Studies for their help and support during the course of my studies. I genuinely appreciate the support and encouragement of my family throughout this academic endeavor.

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ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

ACSRT	African Centre for the Study and Research on Terrorism
AFRICOM	African Command
AU	African Union
CJTF-HOA	Combined Joint Task Force-Horn of Africa
CPCT	Convention on the Prevention and Combating of Terrorism
EU	European Union
ISIL	Islamic State of Iraq and Levant
ISIS	Islamic State of Iraq and Syria
NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organization
OAU	Organization of African Union
OSCE	Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe
RPAs	Remotely piloted aircrafts
SNAF	Somali National Armed Force
UN	United Nations
UNGCT	United Nations Global Counterterrorism strategy
UNSC	United Nations Security Council
VEOs	Violent extremist organizations

ABSTRACT

The US is largely viewed as the most notable superpower influencing foreign policy on critical matters of global concern such as counterterrorism. In spite of America's major role in the international politics, some countries view its dominance as interference in the world order and overstepping its mandate in influencing international systems. The general objective of the study was to examine the impact of external counterterrorism interventions on host country stability: the case of select US-led interventions, 2001-2021. The study addressed the following specific objectives: to examine the conceptual, theoretical and policy background of external counterterrorism interventions in the international system; to assess the impact of US-led counterterrorism interventions on host country stability in the Middle-East, 2001-2021 and to assess the impact of US-led counterterrorism interventions on host country stability in Africa, 2001-2021. This study was anchored on the analytical framework of the theory of imperialism. This study employed descriptive research design to answer the research objectives. The study used purposive sampling technique to sample research participants who comprised of anti-terror officers and university scholars pursuing the theme of international terrorism. Both primary and secondary data was used in the study. Relevant secondary data was accessed from past literature in journals, books and periodicals. Desktop review of various literatures was undertaken to expose any existing knowledge gaps that need to be bridged. The secondary was derived from various journals, books, periodicals and internet sources, primary data was obtained from the respondents to complement secondary information. Primary data was organized and analyzed based on major themes of the study. Analysis of primary data was carried out using thematic content analysis technique while secondary data was critically reviewed based on the major themes arising from the objectives of the study. Analyzed data was presented using narratives, with excerpts embedded on the main text where necessary. The findings of the study showed that the US has led spirited direct and indirect campaigns on the fight against international terrorism, both within and outside its borders. In this sense, many countries in Africa and the Middle East have felt the presence of the US in this fight, with mixed outcomes in terms of the benefits and disadvantages in the host countries. The analysis came to the conclusion that the US has played and will continue to play a crucial role in global counterterrorism. The collapse of international law is one of the main effects of US unilateralism. The ability of law and order to support other nations in their efforts to challenge strong and hegemonic governments is undermined by American actions to intervene in other countries in order to further its own immediate objectives. The study recommends that US need to occupy a conciliatory position rather than bulldozing the rest of the countries even as it pursues what would ordinarily be viewed as a collective global peace and safety agenda. The study also recommends that foreign policies and interventions of hegemonic states need to adjust by adopting a new approach to sovereignty in a way that embraces the rights and obligations of every single state.

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background to the Study

Globally, terrorism remains serious threat to countries' internal democracies and international relations.¹ Due to the distinctive security difficulties that terrorism creates practically everywhere in the world, the United States, along with other international players like the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), is constantly battling terrorism.. A major security concern for the entire world is the persistent and ongoing expression of violent extremism in the horn of Africa and some Asian nations.²

International relations and security experts opine that NATO, the US and other more powerful countries have been in the forefront in putting up measures for stopping increased activities and globalization of terrorism by hardcore extremist groups, like al-Qaida and the Islamic State of Iraq Syria (ISIS).³ For instance, the America's Bureau of Counterterrorism works tirelessly to champion the US national security efforts to defeat the spread of terrorism across the world.⁴ Yet, such terrorist groups as al-Qaida, ISIS, and Hezbollah and others continue to fight against what they consider America's imperialism in modern times.

¹ Chowdhury, F. (2012). "Facing the Dilemma::A Guide to United Nations Counterterrorism Activities, *International Peace Institute*, 2012.

² Siqueira, Kevin & Todd Sandler (2010). Terrorist organizations, groups, and support. *Public Choice* 142(12): 237–253.

³ Zhuang, Jun & Vicki M Bier (2007) Managing both terrorism and natural disasters: Intrinsic attacker effort and defensive tactics. *Operations Research* 55(5): 976–991.

⁴ Ibid

1.1.1 Counterterrorism in the International Arena

Globally, terrorism has become increasingly a more sophisticated phenomenon to deal with due to what has been termed as evolution of modern terrorism.⁵ Based on the wave theory, security experts argue that terrorist groups are often emerging and falling due to various dynamics cutting across geopolitical space which determine the groups' capacity to sustain their activities at any given time.⁶ This therefore implies that terrorism is inspired by social, economic, cultural and political dynamics of every country. However, due to globalization which has increased the level of interactions and interdependence among many countries in the world, international terrorism is gradually becoming too complex to be left to just a few powerful global security players like the US, NATO, the European Union (EU), or the United Nations (UN), among others.⁷ Yet, despite the existing international and regional legal instruments for counterterrorism, some countries' foreign policy and individualistic interests in international affairs often tend to cloud the possibility of having a clear common stand on how to decisively counter terrorism using multipronged approaches.⁸

1.2 Statement of the Research Problem

The US is largely viewed the most notable superpower influencing foreign policy on critical matters of global concern such as counterterrorism. In spite of America's major role in the international politics, some countries view its dominance as interference in the world order and

⁵ Ibid

⁶ Erik W. Goepner, "Evaluating the Success of the American War Against Terror," *Parameters* 46, no. 1 (Spring 2016): 107–20.

⁷ Aziz, S. (2011). Combating Spirituality or Extremism: Strict Application of Laws Prohibiting Material Support for Muslim Charities, Institute for Social Policy and Understanding, *Policy Brief #47*.

⁸ Sandler, Todd & Kevin Siqueira (2006) State terrorism: Federal oversight vs. aversion. *Canadian Journal of Economics* 50(4): 1370–1387.

overstepping its mandate in influencing international systems. The US declaration of “Global War on Terror” has remained the country’s pet subject for many years now, with some of the major players in the international scene feeling isolated. Some observers view America’s dominance and almost singular role in counterterrorism as the reason this fight has prolonged over the years.

Osama bin Laden was killed by the Obama government more than ten years ago, yet the Al-Qaeda network and the Al-Shabaab insurgency still exist. This outcome may have been in contrast with America’s expectations when it took a unilateral decision to hunt down and kill Osama as a foreseeable end to the global spread and threat of terrorism. The question then remains whether it would have been more prudent for America to build closer partnerships and consensus in its counterterrorism efforts than taking unilateral decisions. For these reasons, this study will explore the impact of external counterterrorism on host country stability, the case of select US-led interventions between 2001 and 2021.

1.3 Research Questions

The study addressed the following research questions.

- i. What is the conceptual, theoretical and policy background of external counterterrorism interventions in the international system?
- ii. What is the impact of US-led counterterrorism interventions on host country stability in the Middle-East, 2001-2021?
- iii. What is the impact of US-led counterterrorism interventions on host country stability in Africa since, 2001-2021?

1.4 Objectives of the Study

The general objective of the study was to examine the impact of external counterterrorism interventions on host country stability: a case of select US-led interventions, 2001-2021.

The study will address the following specific objectives.

- i. To examine the conceptual, theoretical and policy background of external counterterrorism interventions in the international system.
- ii. To assess the impact of US-led counterterrorism interventions on host country stability in the Middle-East, 2001-2021.
- iii. To assess the impact of US-led counterterrorism interventions on host country stability in Africa, 2001-2021.

1.5 Justification of Study

Academics, civil society, decision-makers, governments, and pertinent international organizations engaged in foreign policy and combatting international terrorism will find this study to be valuable. The findings will inform on the practical ways of external counterterrorism interventions against the backdrop of good international relations among different countries.

1.5.1 Academic Justification

The study will be important to academicians studying international conflict and terrorism, first for engineering this debate and also serving as reference material for scholars in these fields. The findings of this study may also provide new insights into the whole debate about the superpowers' role in international issues, such as terrorism and extremism. The study may also provide a platform for a refocus by scholars on various countries' roles in international matters where the

US and other developed countries often tend to overshadow other perceived weaker countries in the international stage.

1.5.2 Policy Justification

This research will greatly contribute to international policy formulation when it comes to external counterterrorism interventions. The study may also be critical for reawakening debate among the international community to advocate for inclusive international policies where all countries contribute in all critical matters that cut across borders. Evidence-based international policies are more impactful in addressing sensitive issues of common interests in the international arena. Therefore, this study will provide well-documented evidence which will help in charting policy guidelines for dealing with international terrorism.

1.6 Scope and Limitations of the Study

The scope of study was limited to conceptual, theoretical and policy background of external counterterrorism interventions, impact of US-led counterterrorism interventions on host country stability in the Middle-East (2001-2021), impact of US-led counterterrorism interventions on host country stability in Africa (2001-2021) and pertinent solutions to the challenges arising from external counterterrorism interventions in host countries. Limitations of the study may include failure to access the right data for the study. This limitation will be addressed by diligently searching for the relevant data through accredited sources, such as journals and online libraries.

1.7 Literature Review

This section focused on critical analysis of scholarly works related to external counterterrorism interventions and their impact on the stability of the host countries. Literature review will also incorporate the researcher's voice in order to give a balanced critical analysis of the existing literary works.

1.7.1 Conceptual, Theoretical, Empirical and Policy Background of External Counterterrorism Interventions in the International System

Counterterrorism in the international scene has increasingly become an important endeavour requiring concerted efforts from many different players. The long-term conflicts in and between many countries in the world in the past decades have made it necessary for all partners in the international peace to come up with reliable peace negotiation frameworks with possible lasting solutions. Iraq and other Middle Eastern nations, Afghanistan and Pakistan which have experienced protracted internal and external conflicts have also from time to time been infiltrated by international terrorism networks, thereby causing even more instability in the world order.⁹

In order to deal with international terrorism in the countries that have been hard-hit, some of the countries have turned to the military as a counterterrorism measure. On the contrary, some of the states and the civil society have advocated for what has been termed the softer approach, mostly employing preventive as opposed to reactive measures.¹⁰ However, given the complexity of

⁹Zengerle, P., & Ali, I. (2020). The United States claims there is too much violence as peace efforts in Afghanistan sputter. Reuters.

¹⁰Alex Schmid (2006). The scope and concentration of terrorist victimization. Large-Scale Victimization as a Potential Source of Terrorist Activities, edited by Uwe Ewald and Ksenija Turkovi. Apple Press.

international terrorism phenomenon, neither of the two approaches is viewed to have succeeded exclusive of the other. While the soft or preventive approach is to a greater extent seen as having succeeded as a result of the peaceful rather than confrontational mechanisms applied, the military or hard approach is also sometimes seen as necessary where brutal force is required to rebut the enemy.¹¹

1.7.2 The Deradicalization Approach

Deradicalization remains one of the most commonly applied strategies for addressing international terrorism. In order to deradicalization approach to be successful, this must be viewed within the context of individuals associating with radicalized groups. Although the process of deradicalization may be too complex to apply, the starting point should be trying to understand what drives individuals to get radicalized and how this happens. For instance, this may have to do with family and social ties, social media and other forms of online or distant interactions.¹²

1.7.3 The United Nations' Global Framework for Counterterrorism

The United Nations (UN) is a significant international partner in counterterrorism push in the world. For decades even before the disastrous September 11 2001 terror events in America several years ago, the UN has played a leading role in galvanizing international efforts towards defeating international terrorism.¹³ Speaking with one voice, the international community has been able to unanimously condemn terrorism activities and prescribed an international legal framework for the

¹¹ M. Mashal (2019). More civilians have reportedly been killed this year by Afghan and American forces than by the Taliban. The Times of New York.

¹² Zimmer Kenyon (2009). Propaganda through action. The International Encyclopaedia of Revolution and Protest, edited by Immanuel Ness. : Blackwell, Malden.

¹³ M. Smith (2020). A Decade of Counterterrorism Strategies: Securing our Future..

states to collectively fight the threat of terrorism.¹⁴ Through the UN common security agenda, more than 16 international accords have been negotiated and signed in forums organized by the UN and other partners to address various specific issues related to international terrorism.¹⁵ The UN General Assembly established the UN Global Counterterrorism Strategy in 2006 to underline the need to combat terrorism holistically by taking proactive measures to address the problems that have the greatest potential to fuel violence.

1.7.4 Impact of US-Led Counterterrorism Interventions on Host Country Stability in Middle East

The US-led counterterrorism intervention in world has been felt in almost every country affected by the threat of terrorism. While America's interference or intervention on terrorism threats in different countries has on one hand been viewed as the right move, this has often been seen as interference in other countries' autonomy.¹⁶

1.7.5 US Policy and Strategy in the War against Terrorism

About two years after the 9/11 terror activities in the US, in 2003 America outlined the National Strategy to Combat Terrorism, with the main objective of stepping up the war on terror. The overriding intention was to stop terrorist attacks against the US, American citizens in the US and around the world, and protect America's interests and those of its international allies. The ultimate goal for this push was for America to ensure that terrorists and their sympathizers did not have a

¹⁴ Opcit, p. 27

¹⁵ T. Jocelyn (2020). Terrorists vowed loyalty to Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi in Sri Lanka. The Long War Journal of FDD. Terrorists in Sri Lanka remained loyal to Baghdadi,

¹⁶ John T. Nugent, "The Collapse of Turkish Hizballah as a Model for Refute Strategy", Calhoun: The NPS Institutional Archive, 2004.

hospitable environment anywhere in the world.¹⁷ As political analysts have pointed out, the 9/11 events presented a significant paradigm shift on America's approach to the war against terrorism since prior to the events domestic terrorism was the country's first priority as opposed to international terrorism.

The main aim of the US strategy was to disrupt operations of the al-Qaida and other terrorist organizations such that they would be in the short term be deterred from making more aggressive advances in their terrorist activities across different areas of the world. Despite the aggressive nature of the US's foreign policy on terrorism, following the US military action, the home countries where the interventions were launched suffered major consequences in terms of religious and ethnic conflicts, corruption, poverty, and above all social and political oppression to certain individuals and groups.¹⁸

1.7.6 US-Led War on Terrorism in the Middle East

One of the challenges face the counterterrorism strategies in the Middles East region is lack of clear common definition of what amounts to terrorist activities and offences, leaving room for some of the states to define terrorism based on what best suits their security goals and objectives. Lacking a consensus understanding of what constitutes terrorism and terrorist activity, it becomes difficult for the Middle East countries to come collaboratively address those challenges due to disparities within their respective jurisdictions. In this sense, some countries have sometimes

¹⁷ White House, "National Strategy for Combating Terrorism," (2003), p. 11; and White House, "National Strategy for Counterterrorism," (2011), p. 9.

¹⁸ Neta Crawford, " War costs to the U.S. budget through 2016: \$4.79 trillion and counting," Brown University, September 2016.

tended to target activists, dissidents, outspoken lawyers and journalists as well as perceived political opposition figures for silencing through draconian anti-terror and counterterrorism laws.¹⁹

1.7.7 Impact of America's Military Counterterrorism Strategy on Afghanistan and Iraq

Based on the existing information about the impact of US-led counterterrorism strategies in the Middle East, in order to effectively target terrorism and terror-related activities, countries in the region need to adopt clear and common definition of terrorism. Additionally, it is the responsibility of regional governments to refrain from enforcing discriminatory and state-specific anti-terror legislation that solely serve specialized interests at the expense of the overall welfare of all parties affected at any given time.²⁰ Regarding the US's role in counterterrorism in the Middle East, while repressive strategies may work in the short-term, in the long run it becomes counterproductive as many young people may turn to violent and radicalized groups as a way of registering their defiance to the perceived oppressor, epitomized by the US in this case.

1.7.8 Impact of US-Led Counterterrorism Interventions on Host Country Stability in Africa

The US has been in the forefront in countering terrorist activities across the world, with the African region not left behind in these pursuits. There are all indications that activities of terrorist groups are still common in Africa, thus calling for the US to keep on mounting counterterrorism efforts. Despite the global focus on Russian-Ukraine conflict at the moment, the US has maintained close attention on the conflicts in Africa, especially on terrorist organizations. The mission of the US's Bureau of Counterterrorism has for instance remained trying to actively develop and coordinate

¹⁹ Gavin Gibbon, *Arabian Business*, 27 October 2019; "Gulf States Data Infractions Cost \$6m Each.

²⁰ The Washington Institute, *Fikra Forum*, 11 May 2020; Saud Al-Sharafat, "Securities of the Coronavirus Crisis in Jordan: Accomplishments and Constraints.

strategies for defeating terrorism abroad and securing cooperation from counterterrorism international partners for America.

America's withdrawal of its troops from Somalia more than a year ago in what was widely seen as a change of tact in fighting terrorism across the African region has since projected America as trying to no directly interfere with the host countries' sovereignty in as far as counterterrorism activities are concerned. However, the US's new philosophy of fighting terrorism "over the horizon" has not completely kept it from interference in the host countries.²¹ Some of the terrorist groups and individuals that have handled on the African continent over time include Al-Qaida, Al-Shabaab, Boko Haram, and the Lord's Resistance Army. Therefore, US and its allies have tried to prevent and control the spread of terrorist activities for many decades now.

1.7.9 The US Military Role and Counterterrorism in Africa

The continued US military presence in Africa over the years cannot be understated. Yet, this presence has often been viewed from the perspective of peace and security efforts, with many scholars attributing the scenario to the US's efforts in securing its own interests as opposed to those of the host countries. The events of September 11 2001 terrorist attacks linked to the al-Qaida terrorist groups which were later followed with the formation of the African Command (AFRICOM) on 6th February 2007 to help cement the US military operations in Africa, the US military has often been seen as the most noticeable symbol of America's commitment to the Africa region.²² Given that America's global leadership is largely founded on its network of alliances and

²¹ Mark Bradbury, In his 2010 article Government, International terrorism, and Licensing Altruism in Somalia,

²² Ibid, p. 50

partners such as the African states, it is expected that its military presence in Africa should not in any way be viewed from a negative perspective, such as unwarranted interference in the host countries' sovereignty.

1.8 Theoretical Framework

The analytical framework of the theory of imperialism served as the foundation for this investigation. The theory of imperialism was initiated by Johan Galtung, mainly focusing on how to address the philosophical differences among states when dealing with critical social issues.²³

The theory further postulates that inequality among nations is unfriendly in all aspects of life, thereby calling for resistance of any form of injustice. Additionally, this theory offers a perspective from which to interpret the universe as being made up of what are perceived as central and distant states, with the former frequently attempting to dominate the latter. This superlative interstate connection is further understood in light of America's status as an industrialized nation and its efforts to rule the international stage in areas like counterterrorism.

This study concentrated on the effects of certain US-led initiatives from 2001 to 2021 on the stability of the host country. The theory further postulates that the center would consist of the wealth nations whereas the periphery comprised the poor or the masses.²⁴

According to the argument, the world's weaker (host) countries were destined to resist because of the imbalanced connection between America and the rest of the world when it comes to

²³ Johan Galtung (1971), *A Systemic Model of Capitalism*, Global Peace Research Institute, Oslo, University of Oslo.

²⁴ Ibid

counterterrorism. Imperialism concept therefore serves well to explain the effect of America's unilateral intervention to combat terrorism on the international political system. At best, the US would appear as being driven by the neocolonial mentality, with more powerful nations appearing to dictate or play a central role in shaping world politics. Such a connection may be traced back to the colonial era, when the majority of European nations felt compelled to expand their power in Africa in order to benefit personally at the detriment of the host nations.²⁵

1.9 Hypotheses

There is no relationship between conceptual, theoretical and policy background on external counterterrorism interventions in the international system.

- i. There is no significant impact of US-led counterterrorism interventions on host country stability in the Middle-East, 2001-2021.
- ii. There is no significant impact of US-led counterterrorism interventions on host country stability in Africa since, 2001-2021.

1.10 Methodology

The study utilized both primary and secondary data for answering the research questions. Further steps on how the study would achieve its objectives are discussed in the subsequent subsections.

²⁵ Gail Gerhart (1998) *The Emergence of an Idealism: Black Power in South Africa*. University of California Press, Berkeley.

1.10.1 Research Design

To address the research aims, this study adopted descriptive research approach.. Descriptive research design helped in analyzing independent variables without manipulating any information. The design is suitable for addressing the ‘how’, ‘when’, and ‘why’ questions and coming up with objective answers to these questions. Saunders, Lewis, and Thornhill²⁶, opine that descriptive research design enables the researcher to provide a precise account of events and the connection amid independent and the dependent variables without his/her subjective influence. The design further enables deductive analytical interpretation of relevant information for addressing the entire objectives of the research in a practical manner. Mugenda and Mugenda²⁷ further posit that descriptive research design is more relevant in a study where the researcher analyzes information irrespective of his/her personal opinion.

1.10.2 Sampling Procedure and Sample Size

Purposive sampling was utilized in the study to sample research participants who will comprise of anti-terror officers and university scholars pursuing the theme of international terrorism. Purposive sampling gave the researcher the chance to speak with people who were extremely knowledgeable about the research topic. Sample size pegged on the principle of saturation where interviews will be stopped the moment it is clear that no any further new information is coming out of the research participants.

²⁶ M. Saunders, P. Lewis, and A. Thornhill (2013). *Commercial Research Approach for Learners*, Pearson Education Limited, London.

²⁷ Mugenda and Mugenda (2003). *Research methods: quantitative and qualitative approaches*.

1.10.3 Data Collection Methods and Research Tools

The study included primary and secondary data. Journals, books, and magazines from the past were searched for relevant secondary data. Desktop review of various literatures was undertaken to expose any existing knowledge gaps that need to be bridged. This approach was suitable for document analyses and related historical records so as to appropriately answer the research questions.

While secondary was derived from different publications, including books, periodicals, maps, and websites, primary data was obtained from the respondents to complement secondary information. During data collection process, the researcher booked appointments with the research participants so that they could be interviewed during their own suitable time and in convenient venues. They were contacted prior to the time of interview so that they could be briefed about the study before they can accept to be involved. Initial contacts will be through phone calls whereas actual interviews were conducted either through electronic means such as phone calls, zoom, and Google-meet among other forums, or through face-to-face contacts. Modality for actual data collection depended on factors such as distance, availability, and/or the respondent's choice preference among others.

Through initial contacts with the respondents, the researcher understood the modality for data collection from specific respondents, and thereafter prepared for fieldwork accordingly. The researcher clearly introduced herself and fully explained the study's purpose and goals during the actual questioning procedure. The researcher emphasized confidentiality of shared information before requesting to record the interviews for back-up. It was crucial to record the interviews in

order to later transcribe, code, and organize the material for analysis and report writing. There was also note-taking to complement recording.

1.10.4 Data Analysis and Presentation

The data collected was arranged and examined in accordance with the study's main themes. Analysis of primary data was carried out using thematic content analysis technique while secondary data was critically reviewed based on the major themes arising from the objectives of the study. Analyzed data was presented using narratives, with excerpts embedded on the main text where necessary.

1.11 Chapter Outline

The research was structured into five chapters, with each chapters dwelling on a distinctive segment of the whole research process. Chapter one presented introduction to the study, including the background and an overview of the US role in counterterrorism as well as problem statement and objectives of study. The chapter also addressed study objectives, research questions, study hypotheses, and justification of the study. Additionally, the chapter captured a brief review of literatures touching on different aspects of terrorism and counterterrorism. Other areas featured in chapter one included theoretical framework, and research methodology. Research methodology was presented under the subthemes research design; data collection; and data analysis methods.

Chapter two gave an overview of conceptual, theoretical and policy background of external counterterrorism interventions in the international system. Chapter three focuses on the impact of US-led counterterrorism interventions on host country stability in the Middle-East, 2001-2021.

Chapter four dwelt on the impact of US-led counterterrorism interventions on host country stability in Africa since, 2001-2021, and offer pertinent solutions to the challenges arising from external counterterrorism interventions in host countries. Finally, chapter five provided summary, insights and advice from the study.

CHAPTER TWO

CONCEPTUAL, THEORETICAL, EMPIRICAL AND POLICY BACKGROUND OF EXTERNAL COUNTERTERRORISM INTERVENTIONS IN THE INTERNATIONAL SYSTEM

2.1 Counterterrorism: Concept and Theory

Counterterrorism in the international scene has increasingly become an important endeavour requiring concerted efforts from many different players. The long-term conflicts in and between many countries in the world in the past decades have made it necessary for all partners in the international peace to come up with reliable peace negotiation frameworks with possible lasting solutions. Iraq and other Middle Eastern nations, Afghanistan and Pakistan which have experienced protracted internal and external conflicts have also from time to time been infiltrated by international terrorism networks, thereby causing even more instability in the world order.²⁸

In order to deal with international terrorism in the countries that have been hard-hit, some of the countries have turned to the military as a counterterrorism measure. On the contrary, some of the states and the civil society have advocated for what has been termed the softer approach, mostly employing preventive as opposed to reactive measures.²⁹ However, given the complexity of international terrorism phenomenon, neither of the two approaches is viewed to have succeeded exclusive of the other. While the soft or preventive approach is to a greater extent seen as having succeeded as a result of the peaceful rather than confrontational mechanisms applied, the military

²⁸ P. Zengerle, I. Ali (2020). The United States thinks there is too much violence as peace talks in Afghanistan sputter. Reuters.

²⁹ Alex Schmid (2006). The scope and concentration of terrorist victimization. in Ksenija Turkovi and Uwe Ewald, editors. *Victimization on a Large Scale as a Potential Source of Terrorist Activities* Apple Press.

or hard approach is also sometimes seen as necessary where brutal force is required to rebut the enemy.³⁰

In the recent past, deradicalization programs have taken center stage to try to peacefully move groups and individuals away from violent extremist battlegrounds. Common elements in this strategy include potential terrorists, convicted terrorists or criminals in general, apologetic or reformed extremists, and prisoners among others. There are also the aspects of disengagement from terrorist philosophies and educating of the public on the need to shun violent terrorist activities. However, cases of reoffending often emerge, with the suspicion that recidivism by presumed deradicalized individuals may be engineered by other factors beyond the current radicalization programs.³¹

In light of various counterterrorism strategies in the international stage which have not produced definite results despite involvement of multiple partners and use of huge amount of resources, it may be imperative to relook into the whole of issue of counterterrorism interventions in the global scene. Some of the critical areas to revisit may include trying to discern the underlying challenges, lessons learnt, and possible opportunities. Integration of experiences and views of other states would be required in order to craft a broad common approach towards a possible lasting solution to international terrorism,³² but the whole question of rooting out terrorist tendencies and

³⁰ M. Mashal (2019). More civilians have reportedly been killed this year by Afghan and American forces than by the Taliban. The Times of New York.

³¹ Ibid, p. 25

³² Paul Zvonimir eparovi (2006). Large-Scale Assaultive Terror is a form of international terror” in Ksenija Turkovi and Uwe Ewald, editors. Victimization on a Large Scale as a Potential Source of Terrorist Activities Apple Press.

radicalization of individuals and groups has always remained a difficult task for countries across the world to deal with.

The terms terrorism and violent extremism are commonly used interchangeably, but the latter may have a broader connotation to include other criminal groups that might not necessarily qualify to be classified as terrorists.³³ On the other hand, deradicalization has been described as the process of disengaging an individual, willingly or unwillingly, from their extreme stances. Disengagement implies the practice of helping disassociating an individual from their extremist groups' activities without necessarily changing their extreme views. Closely associated with these two concepts, is the process of counter radicalization which is about taking measures to prevent more people or a new generation from being radicalized.³⁴ Hence, in the context of the theme of this study, a clear understanding of these intertwined concepts will help in contextualizing the discussion based on various themes involved.

2.2 The Deradicalization Approach

Deradicalization remains one of the most commonly applied strategies for addressing international terrorism. In order to deradicalization approach to be successful, this must be viewed within the context of individuals associating with radicalized groups. Although the process of deradicalization may be too complex to apply, the starting point should be trying to understand

³³ Ibid, p. 26

³⁴ Ksenija Turkovi (2006). What Forensics Can Contribute to the War on Terrorism in Ksenija Turkovi and Uwe Ewald, editors. *Victimization on a Mass Scale as a Potential Source of Terrorist Activities* Apple Press

what drives individuals to get radicalized and how this happens. For instance, this may have to do with family and social ties, social media and other forms of online or distant interactions.³⁵

While it is true that the increasing use of the internet for communication has today revolutionized the art of communication and introduced new twists in the manner in which information is used, it is evident that the internet is today playing a central role in the spread of radicalization among different groups and individuals across the world.³⁶ Easier movement of information and spread of propaganda through social media is used to reach a wider audience of potential criminals who have had no prior experience with terrorist groups. This mode of communication and spread of information is also making it easier for terror organizations to access potential terrorist recruits through enticements propagated using social media and other digital platforms for quicker financial transactions.

Studies also indicate that majority of terrorist incidences are often linked to radicalization through remote means where the internet is at the center of remote radicalization process.³⁷ For instance, the July 2005 bombings in London were traced to prior virtual radicalization of the terrorists through the internet. The trend of 'self-recruitment' of terrorists has made it necessary for many government authorities and nongovernmental players to relook closely at the role of the internet in terrorism and counterterrorism. Amongst the most severe threats to and from terrorism is

³⁵ Zimmer, Kenyon (2009). "Propaganda by the Deed." In Immanuel Ness ed. *The International Encyclopaedia of Revolution and Protest*. Malden: Blackwell.

³⁶ Fidler, David P. (2016). "Cyberspace, Terrorism and International Law." *Journal of Conflict and Security Law*, vol. 21, issue. 3, pp. 475-493.

³⁷ *Ibid*, p. 27

disruptor of peace, security and stability of many countries in the world. As a significant contributor to violation of human rights and social order in society, acts of terrorism go beyond any particular race, nationality, or religion. Hence, the process of counterterrorism should be considered from a holistic perspective.³⁸

The need for an inclusive approach to counterterrorism further calls for addressing of terrorism in all its manifestations by the United Nations and other world bodies. At the same time, other social, economic, and political factors must also be considered. The Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) is one of the most serious organizations dealing with terrorism at the international level. Supported by the United Nations Global Counterterrorism Strategy (UNGCT), the OSCE strives to promote cooperation and coordination among national authorities, state organs, international and regional peace and security players, and encourage public-private partnerships between government and private organizations, the media and civil society community.³⁹

Some of the counterterrorism approaches employed by the OSCE include helping to institute a legal framework for addressing terrorism and enhance global legal partnerships and cooperation in terrorist-related criminal matters. Also, the organization has been in the forefront in controlling violent extremism and radicalization through a multidimensional approach. Another proactive counterterrorism measure employed by OSCE is averting and subduing the financing of terrorism, and countering widespread use of the internet for communicating and propagating terrorist

³⁸ Fleming, Marie (2008). "Propaganda by the deed: Terrorism and anarchist theory in late nineteenth century Europe." *Terrorism*, vol. 4, issue 1-4, pp. 1-23

³⁹ *Ibid*, p. 28 -

propaganda.⁴⁰ Encouraging of dialogue and collaboration and different government and nongovernmental institutions on counterterrorism efforts has also been instrumental in deradicalization. Some of notable cases of public-private partnership the OSCE has employed for a long time include working closely with the business community, civil society organizations, and media.

Security analysts have also attributed to OSCE the counterterrorism efforts of strengthening implementation of the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) resolutions on dealing with proliferation of weapons of mass destruction. Similar efforts had been directed by the organization towards strengthening of travel security mechanisms for rooting out terror suspects moving across countries with the intention of carrying out terror activities.⁴¹ In collaboration with other like-minded international security bodies, the OSCE has also actively tried to promote and protect the human rights and fundamental freedoms within the realm of counterterrorism endeavours. Despite the efforts by then OSCE and other partners in the counterterrorism efforts globally, the fight still remains far from over.

2.3 The United Nations' Global Framework for Counterterrorism

The United Nations (UN) is a significant international partner in counterterrorism push in the world. For decades even before the disastrous September 11 2001 terror events in America several years ago, the UN has played a leading role in galvanizing international efforts towards defeating

⁴⁰ Gary LaFree, Laura Dugan, Nancy A. Morris (2010). Cross-national trends of terrorism: contrasting trajectory for all, attributable, and lethal attacks, 1970–2006 622-649. *British Journal of Criminology*, vol. 50, no. 4.

⁴¹ Tom, Parker, and Nick Sitter (2016). It's Not Waves, It's Strains: The Mightiest Warriors of Terrorist. 197–216 in *Terrorism and Political Violence*, volume 28, issue 2.

international terrorism.⁴² Speaking with one voice, the global community was able to universally denounce terrorism-related activities and establish a global legal structure for states to use to combat the militancy.⁴³ Through the UN common security agenda, more than 16 international accords have been negotiated and signed in forums organized by the UN and other partners to address various specific issues related to international terrorism.⁴⁴ This framework addresses important concerns such as hijacking of aircraft and hostage-taking, terror financing, labeling of munitions, and the threat of nuclear terrorism. However, the big question still remains whether these specific strategies have yielded positive outcomes in the fight against international terrorism.

Following the deadly attack in East Africa in 1999 and the deteriorating security situation in Iraq, Afghanistan and related countries in the Middle East, the UN Security Council resorted to imposing sanctions on Taliban and Al-Qaeda. Additionally, the Council targeted individuals and entities linked to terror organizations and subjected them to travel bans, asset freeze, and arms embargo as the case may be.⁴⁵ It's equally crucial to remember that the aftermath of September 11 was for the Security Council to take a drastic shift on how to deal with international security. The Council became more resolute in demanding total cooperation from the UN Member States to take individual and/or collective roles in denying financial support and asylum to terrorist

⁴² Smith, M. (2020). Securing our Future: A Decade of Counter-terrorism Strategies.

⁴³ Opcit, p. 27

⁴⁴ T. Jocelyn (2020). Terrorists vowed homage to Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi in Sri Lanka. The Long War Journal of FDD. Terrorists in Sri Lanka declared loyalty to Baghdadi.

⁴⁵ Angela Scholes, Margaret A. Wilson, and Elizabeth Brocklehurst (2010). The killing and explosives activities of the ETA from 1980 and 2007: *A behavioral analysis of terrorist conduct*. 50, no. 4, pp. 690-707.

suspects. Despite these tough actions by the UN, terrorist activities persist in different parts of the world thereby causing a serious threat to international peace and security even today.⁴⁶

Subsequently, the Security Council has tended to emphasize on terrorism preventive measures, with the full realization of widespread use of the internet for the spread of terrorism activities as well as breach of peace and security globally. With the full recognition of the increasing use of online social platforms for recruitment and incitement of terrorist acts and complication this turn of events has presented in the fight against terrorism, the Council has over time fully embraced proactive rather than reactive counterterrorism measures.⁴⁷ However, for the Council's new approach to work effectively, counterterrorism measures must be implemented within the international legal and human rights obligations of every nation state. At the same time, the UN purposed to ensure that non-state actors intent to disrupt peace and security, Terrorist organizations, for example, do not have simple access to weapons of mass destruction.

The UN Global Counterterrorism Strategy was endorsed by the UN General Assembly in 2006 to emphasize the need to address terrorism in a holistic manner by proactively dealing with issues with the highest potential for causing terrorism. Some of these issues included prolonged unsettled conflicts, dehumanizing of victims, discrimination and violation of human rights and bad governance. As more comprehensive counterterrorism strategy, the UN Security Council continues to build on lived experiences by helping states to adapt to the new terrorism threats

⁴⁶ Opcit, p. 29

⁴⁷ Sergie, M., Felter, C., & Masters, J. (2020). Institute on Global Affairs. Al-Shabab.

presented by the ever-evolving technology.⁴⁸ Despite these efforts, it is clear that much work at the local, regional, and global levels need to be done. Despite ongoing differences in the degree of accomplishment, states have also made outstanding progress in the fight against terrorism. Lack of enough resources has been majorly associated with the disparities among individual states regarding the counterterrorism measures they have put in place.⁴⁹

High poverty levels among some of the countries especially in developing world have fallen short of strong and effective counterterrorism measures since most of the resources are instead directed towards the most pressing issues such as food, healthcare, and education among others (Smith, 2020). The challenges of counterterrorism also extend to rich countries thought to have many resources and skilled personnel. Despite relatively better counterterrorism measures exhibited by developed nations, it has not been easy to completely secure international borders, tighten financial control loopholes, and strengthen policing and criminal justice systems.⁵⁰ The UN also continues to face the challenge of helping countries to independently enforce antiterrorist laws, as well as apply mutual legal processes when convicting terror suspects.⁵¹

Ratifying relevant mutual conventions and implementing stronger counterterrorism laws among partner states is also another strategy applied by the UN for counterterrorism.⁵² Some of the stricter strategies have been adopted following more shrewd methodologies applied by the terrorists in the

⁴⁸ C. Thomas (2020). Background Information and U.S. Policy on Afghanistan Congressional Research Service, Washington.

⁴⁹ D. Byman, A. Amunson (2020). Carnegie, "Cybersecurity in a COVID Era."

⁵⁰ Mohamed E, Abdalla. An interview (held in Khartoum, Sudan 6th January 2022)

⁵¹ D. Byman, A. Amunson (2020). Carnegie, "Cybersecurity in a COVID Era."

⁵² United Nations. International Convention for the Suppression of the Financing of Terrorism. *Treaty Series*, vol. 2178, p. 197. International Convention for the Suppression of the Financing of Terrorism, a United Nations treaty. *Treaties Series*, volume

recent past. For instance, the 9/11 terror activities, the ‘shoe bomber’, and the ‘underwear bomber’ all necessitated the UN in collaboration with its international peace and security partners to review its security policy and procedures for possible better outcomes. The review included training of personnel and introducing superior surveillance gadgets to curtail the activities of such terrorist groups as al-Qaeda and others. New information and communication technologies continue to play a central role in making this happen. However, some of the counterterrorism approaches by the UN have been viewed by some countries as being too costly to sustainably apply.⁵³ For example, it is not always easy to maintain constant supply, repair and general maintenance of some of the new technology due to the high purchasing and spare parts costs as well as scarcity of supply.

Improved border security and enhanced trained patrol staff has also seen a number of terrorists stopped on their tracks and their impending attacks aborted due to more determined counterterrorism efforts by different integrated organizations through the UN.⁵⁴ Such approaches have further seen security agencies penetrate hideouts for the terrorists across multiple countries, as aided by better training and superior equipment, including weapons and surveillance tools. The war on terror has however not brought forth decisive end to terrorism and definite stop to the suffering of terrorist survivors, families and victims, thus projecting counterterrorism as a very complex endeavour.⁵⁵ But, it is evident that more innovative counterterrorism ways need to be embraced, such as active involvement of the local communities, the private sector, media, the civil society, and the religious community among others. There should also be emphasis on free

⁵³ Byman, D., & Amunson, A. (2020). Counterterrorism in a time of COVID. Brookings. Retrieved from

⁵⁴ Ibid, p. 332

⁵⁵ R. Pantucci (2020). Counter Terrorist Patterns and Forecasts, 12/3: 1-6. Key Questions for Counter-Terrorism Post-COVID-19

exchange of intelligence reports within local, regional and international security agencies for speeded counterterrorism actions.⁵⁶ In this sense, the broader the response mechanisms, the more effective counterterrorism strategies are expected to be.

Although the United Nations has over the last decades provided guidance on how to mitigate terrorism and radicalization activities across the globe, more support is still required for decisive win on the war against international terrorism. More comprehensive national and international strategies to balance the tough safeguards and neighborhood-based regulations founded on the principle of social and economic equity. Community-driven approach has further advantage of relatively easily thwarting and undermining propaganda mills by terrorist groups across the world.⁵⁷ The UN has also been in the forefront in helping countries to enhance their internal coordination and cooperation efforts through regional and global events involving professionals and experts in different fields.

Through bilateral and multilateral agencies, peace and security expertise is shared across many countries. The expertise include drafting national and international laws, training and inducting of Judges and attorneys, as well as connecting border posts to crucial databases for easier monitoring of terror-related activities and information. Other active support by the UN also includes offering education programs aimed at creating tolerance and enhancing governance among different communities globally.⁵⁸ In general terms, although there are still numerous challenges

⁵⁶ Ibid, p. 32

⁵⁷ R. Pantucci (2020). Counter Terrorist Patterns and Analytical, 12/3: 1-6 Big Questions for Refute Post-COVID-19

⁵⁸ Ibid, p. 33

encountering counterterrorism across different countries in the world today, the United Nations as the central player in world social, economic, peace and security debate continues to play a significant role in countering international. Unity among all key players in counterterrorism efforts is very important, and this where the UN and other partners come into the picture.

CHAPTER THREE

AN ASSESSMENT OF THE IMPACT OF US-LED COUNTERTERRORISM

INTERVENTIONS ON HOST COUNTRY STABILITY IN THE MIDDLE-EAST, 2001- 2021

3.1 Introduction

The US-led counterterrorism intervention in the world has been felt in almost every country affected by the threat of terrorism. While America's interference or intervention on terrorism threats in different countries has on one hand been viewed as the right move, this has often been seen as interference in other countries' autonomy.⁵⁹ Although there are still persistence of terror activities in Middle East and North Africa until recent past, the Global Coalition to defeat ISIS has made remarkable achievements in helping to tackle terrorism movement in the Middle East and across the world.⁶⁰ The Global Coalition, which was established by the US in 2014 to assist in tackling the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria's (ISIS) rapid spread, has made great strides in its aim to destroy ISIS in Iraq and Syria. But as of right moment, there are still active ISIS remnants in the Middle East and North Africa, outside of Iraq and Syria.

Yemen, the Arabian Peninsula, Libya, and Tunisia, among other nations throughout the Middle East and North Africa, continue to experience al-Qaida and affiliated terrorist organizations, as well as Iran's Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps-Qods Force.⁶¹ Despite the overall enormous challenges encountered in the whole question of dealing with terrorism globally, the US has

⁵⁹ John T. Nugent, "The Defeat of Turkish Hizballah as a Model for Counter-Terrorism Strategy", Calhoun, The NPS Historical Record, 2004.

⁶⁰ Ibid, p. 36

⁶¹ Matthew Levitt et al., "The Future of Regional Cooperation in the War on Terror", Potential Global Collaboration in the War Against Terror Washington Institute for Near East Policy, Policy Watch 3019, 19 September 2018.

remained relentless and passionate about helping to tame terrorism in the Middle East and regions across the world. For instance, the US has continued to actively rally European countries to repatriate their citizens accused of terror activities so that they can face the law accordingly. However, there is often lack of full cooperation by majority of the European countries despite revocation of citizenships of some of the European citizens who were suspected of having travelled to Iraq or Syria to join ISIS.

Numerous terrorist organizations, such as the Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK) and Revolutionary People's Liberation Party/Front, continue to undermine Turkish law enforcement and other security forces, thus having the leeway to spread their influence across the region and the world by extension.⁶² There are further allegations by the civil society organizations that some countries in the Middle East could be using terrorism to target religious minorities and human rights individuals and entities, thus making it almost impossible to mount effective and successful counterterrorism efforts by all serious partners involved in addressing international terrorism.⁶³ The repressive approach to counterterrorism by some countries such as China may be seen as just a strategy for mass censorship and detainment of religious and ethnic minorities, thereby deviating from genuine counterterrorism efforts.⁶⁴

⁶² Ibid, p. 36

⁶³ Thomas Warrick and Joze Paleyo, Enhancing Enforcement and Counter - terrorist Coordination In between United States and the Arab Gulf States, Nato Council. Scowcroft Middle East Security Institute, 2020, p. 1

⁶⁴ Ibid, p. 37

3.2 US Policy and Strategy in the War against Terrorism

About two years after the 9/11 terror activities in the US, in 2003 America outlined the National Strategy to Combat Terrorism, with the main objective of stepping up the war on terror. The overriding intention was to stop terrorist attacks against the US, American citizens in the US and around the world, and protect America's interests and those of its international allies. The ultimate goal for this push was for America to ensure that terrorists and their sympathizers did not have a hospitable environment anywhere in the world.⁶⁵ Political scholars have noted that the 9/11 attacks represented a fundamental paradigm shift in how America viewed the fight against terrorism because, before the attacks, domestic terrorism was the nation's top concern rather than international terrorism. Countering international terrorism seemed to take center stage after the 9/11, adopting a more assertive and wide-ranging plan as part of US national security policy, or what the Bush administration calls the "4-D strategy,"⁶⁶

The 4-D strategy's main goal in preventing terrorist attacks on the US was to dismantle the networking of terrorist organizations, deny them the opportunity to build operational infrastructure from which to introduce their bombardments, reduce their chances of coming together around a shared interest in terrorism, and safeguard the American country through assertive coping mechanisms.⁶⁷ The main aim of the US strategy was to disrupt operations of the al-Qaida and other terrorist organizations such that they would be in the short term be deterred from making more aggressive advances in their terrorist activities across different areas of the world. Despite the

⁶⁵ White House, "National Strategy for Combating Terrorism," (2003), p. 11; and White House, "National Strategy for Counterterrorism," (2011), p. 9.

⁶⁶ White House, "National Strategy for Counterterrorism," (2011), pp. 15–28.

⁶⁷ Joint Staff, "Joint Publication 3-0: Joint Operations" (2011), p. GL-13.

aggressive nature of the US's foreign policy on terrorism, following the US military action, the home countries where the interventions were launched suffered major consequences in terms of religious and ethnic conflicts, corruption, poverty, and above all social and political oppression to certain individuals and groups.⁶⁸

3.3 US-Led War on Terrorism in the Middle East

The September 11 2001 terrorist attack in America heralded a new chapter in the war against terror internationally. America's launching of military counterterrorism as a result of the 9/11 episode witnessed new offensive efforts by the superpower, which has since significantly reshaped the politics of the Middle East.⁶⁹ Over time, the kind of destabilization caused in the Middle East by the America's counterterrorism strategy is becoming apparent. There has also been a clear indication that contrary to the US's anticipation, this strategy has done little to protect the United States of America against international terrorism.⁷⁰

As strongly demonstrated especially during President Donald Trump's presidency, America's push to defeat ISIS in Iraq and Syria and its associated terror network groups became more apparent than ever.⁷¹ It was also clear that America's foreign policy was increasingly dominated and informed by the war on terror, with US leaders seizing every opportunity to remind the world of America's supremacy in international politics. Although many international war pundits argue that America's war on terror has generally failed to achieve its intended outcome of protecting the

⁶⁸ Neta Crawford, "U.S. Budgetary Costs of Wars through 2016: \$4.79 Trillion and Counting," Brown University, September 2016.

⁶⁹ Opcit, p. 37

⁷⁰ European Commission, Joint Plan for a Decision Taken, JOIN(2018) 9 Complete 2018/0120(NLE), Brussels, 2019.

⁷¹ General Secretariat of the European Council, "The EU's Responses to Crime,"

US against international terrorism, America's counterterrorism strategy seems to have significantly affected the host countries in a number of ways.⁷²

America's failure in the war on terror has been attributed mainly to its exaggerated analysis of the terrorist threat facing America, which in turn led to unnecessary spending on expansive and costly global counterterrorism campaign which later turned counterproductive to the Americans. Following the US's move against international terrorism, many American citizens both inside and outside the US became the main target of terrorist attacks. Secondly, America's adoption of a very aggressive military counterterrorism strategy proved too expensive to sustain, both in terms of maintenance costs and the increased danger presented to American citizens everywhere in the world in the midst of renewed aggression from terrorist international groups.⁷³

The America's wrong notion of the indispensable nature of its military in the world geopolitics and the country's strongly showing in global events has continued to cause more harm than good for America when considering its challenges and against opportunities. Many war history scholars have observed that although terrorism is a serious security concern not only to America but to the whole world, America should not treat terrorism as if it is the country's only security threat.⁷⁴ One of the best counterterrorism approaches for the US according to those opposed to military intervention would be for America to foster stronger regional partnerships for effective control of

⁷² Ibid, p. 38

⁷³ Enhancing Legal Solutions and Criminology Capacity to Avoid and Antiterrorism, Vienna: UN Office on Drugs and Crime.

⁷⁴ Opcit, p. 39

terrorism abroad while also enhancing emphasis intelligence and law enforcement for better protection of its citizens within internal borders.⁷⁵

The 2020 Global Terrorism Index indicates that in the recent past, the Middle East and North Africa region could be experiencing reduced deaths related to terrorism. For instance, in 2019 Algeria is reported not to have recorded any terrorism-related death. Whereas this paradigm is attributed to a decrease in assaults in the North Africa and Middle East region that are directed by or linked to the Islamic State of Iraq and Levant (ISIL), America's role does not directly count here.⁷⁶ Instead, deradicalization efforts and programmes by the countries in the region are thought to have greatly contributed to this state of affairs with indications of decline in deaths and incidents related to terrorism.

Conflicts involving terrorism have a lengthy history in the Middle East and North Africa, spanning more than 3 decades and extending from Mashriq to Maghreb. War scholars attribute these battles to the retreat of Soviets from Afghanistan in 1980s, and emerging of Arab Mujahedeen which sparked a wave of radical dissenting thereby subsequently forcing anti-regime violence in a number of countries such as Libya and Algeria.⁷⁷ Middle Eastern nations, based on the Terrorism Index where the US has over time launched counterterrorism attacks continue to face various forms of suffering. Some of these include destabilized governments, high levels of poverty and economic

⁷⁵ Kal Ben Khalid, "Evolving Approaches in Algerian Security Cooperation", CTC Sentinel, Vol. 8, No. 6, 2015.

⁷⁶ Anthony H. Cordesman and Abdullah Toukan, Center for Strategic and International Studies, , The National Defence Politics of the Middle East: Relative Expenditure, Weight Sharing, and Modernity, 22 March 2017

⁷⁷ Awukki Kim and Todd Sandler, "Middle East and North Africa: Terror and Disputes," *Global Policy*, Vol. 11, No. 4, 2020, p. 424.

disparities, foreign interference, and sectarianism among others.⁷⁸ It is estimated that between 2002 and 2018, the Middle East region experienced nearly half of the terror-related incidences reported globally. In absolute numbers, these were close to 96,000 deaths, this signifying a very high social cost to the region.⁷⁹

Over time, the Middle East region has continued to witness huge social and economic costs, in terms of physical destruction of property, infrastructure, and facilities as well as the loss of human lives as a result of terrorist attacks. Studies indicate that since 2001, the economic cost of terrorism has been steadily increasing, to more than 62 billion dollars in 2016 when it recorded the highest ever.⁸⁰ In 2019, Syria recorded one of the highest economic loss to terrorism, accounting for close to 3.5% of its GDP while Iran experienced a decline in economic costs to the tune of 6.7 billion US dollars.⁸¹

Empirical research demonstrates that expenditure on military, enforcement, and security strategies and programs has the most economic effect of terrorist attacks on nations' economies. There is also the question of cyber terrorism which terrorist groups are increasingly exploiting as governments and the private sector struggle with resources enhance security structures for countering this new form of terrorism sweeping across the globe. For instance, in 2019 the Middle East is thought to

⁷⁸ Alexander R. Dawoody, *Eliminating Terrorist acts from Gulf Region: Policy and Regulatory Methods.*, Springer International, Cham, 2016

⁷⁹ Gavin Gibbon, "Arab World Data Theft Cost \$6m Each, According to New Report", *Arabian Business*, 27 October 2019,

⁸⁰ Harrison Bardwell and Mohib Iqbal, "The Economic Effect of Violence from 2000 to 2018", *Peace Economics, Peace Science and Public Policy*, Vol. 27, No. 2, 2021.

⁸¹ Security Council, *Terrorism's Toxic Effect on Exercise of Human Rights: Study of the Human Rights Council Advisory Committee*, UN Doc.

have spent the second highest amount of resources in the world to address issues on data breaches, only second to the United States of America. The region spent about 6 million dollars per every data breach, where it recorded the highest data breach incidents globally.⁸² Although it is not clear how many of the data breaches or cyber-crimes are directly related to terrorism, it is evident that most countries in the Middle East are experiencing huge losses as a result of counterterrorism programmes.⁸³

All UNSCR members are required under Resolution 1373 of the United Nations Security Council of 2001 to take aggressive measures to stop the financing of terrorist activities and to cease all forms of assistance to groups or people connected to terrorism. The resolution also compels states in the region to enhance interstate cooperation in order to effectively control and delay terrorists' movements across common borders.⁸⁴ However, all these activities about and initiatives for countering terrorism cannot be implemented without availability of enough financial resources and physical structures for these purposes. At the same time, different countries often have their individual priorities, thus making it hard to have in place common regulatory or operational frameworks for addressing terrorism.

The Middle East's terrorist methods have flaws is lack of clear common definition of what amounts to terrorist activities and offences, leaving room for some of the states to define terrorism based

⁸² "Toxic Effect of Terrorists on Enjoyment of Civil Liberties," UN Doc. A/HRC/AC/24/CRP.1, Security Council, Human Rights Council Advisory Committee, 22 January 2020

⁸³ Middle East Data Breach Costs \$6 Million Each, According to New Report, by Gavin Gibbon, published in Arabian Business on October 27, 2019.

⁸⁴ Saudi Arabia, Algeria, Morocco, and the Law Library of Congress (2015). Global Legal Study Directorate. Response to Terrorist.

on what best suits their security goals and objectives. In the absence of a clear common definition of terrorism and terrorist activities, it becomes difficult for the Middle East countries to come collaboratively address those challenges due to disparities within their respective jurisdictions. In this sense, some countries have sometimes tended to target activists, dissidents, outspoken lawyers and journalists as well as perceived political opposition figures for silencing through draconian anti-terror and counterterrorism laws.⁸⁵

3.4 Impact of America's Military Counterterrorism Strategy on Afghanistan and Iraq

The September 11 2001 terror events heralded a new paradigm shift for the US on the war against terrorism, with direct military intervention becoming the new preferred approach. As opposed to the hitherto traditional law enforcement strategy, terrorism was not henceforth going to be confronted through direct military force. Military use has historically taken two different paths: direct and indirect. Direct military use involves sending American troops into other countries to engage in combat, seize and/or defend land, and/or launch airstrikes as circumstances may require. The US's direct military participation in the war against terror is best illustrated by the invasion and subsequent occupation of Afghanistan and Iraq.⁸⁶

To enable the use of military force by a third party, indirect military intervention entails providing various forms of military support, including information, military hardware, advisory services, money, and training, among other essential assistance. An instance of indirect military engagement by the US may be the training and armament of rebel groups in Syria to combat the Islamic State.

⁸⁵ Gavin Gibbon, "Arab World Data Theft Cost \$6m Each", Arabian Business, 27 October 2019,

⁸⁶ Human Rights Council, Negative Impacts of Terror on the Enjoyment of Human Rights: Study of the Human Rights Council Advisory Committee, UN Doc.

Another illustration is how America supported the Saudi-led incursion in Yemen by selling weaponry and providing logistical support.⁸⁷ Another example is how the United States supplied weapons and logistical assistance to the Saudi-led invasion of Yemen. Other US measures include the use of trade restrictions, diplomacy, and talks, the freezing of the capital assets of terrorist organizations, and the dissemination of democracy. Afghanistan and Iraq have for instance seen America putting in political pressure and using a lot of financial resources in order to influence and shape political and social outcomes in those countries.⁸⁸

Despite the US's argument that military intervention since 2001 had the sole aim of eliminating terrorism organizations by killing terrorists, destroying their bases, and diminishing their ability to spread their activities across the world, the host countries have on the other hand suffered as result of this approach. In Afghanistan where the US used military intervention to destroy al-Qaida and punish the Taliban group for aiding the former's actions was largely viewed as panacea to the menace of terrorism, the US invasion of Afghanistan had several negative consequences. There were both direct and indirect economic losses, including those brought on by decreased foreign assets, declining tourism, decreased grain yields, and the decline of the hospitality, among other things. Heavy military presence means considerable interference in these crucial economic sectors, as the majority of the Middle Eastern countries heavily rely on tourism and foreign investment.⁸⁹

The war on terror in Afghanistan, Yemen and Iraq was a reflection of the situation during the Cold War, with increased presence of the US in the global politics, reshaping of the international law,

⁸⁷ Alexander R. Dawoody, *Obliterating Terrorist from Middle East: Policy and Administration Methods*, Springer International, Cham, 2016

⁸⁸ Ahmed A, Albagir. An interview (held in Khartoum, Sudan 6th January 2022)

⁸⁹ Micah Zenko, *Revolutionising U.S. Air Strike Rules* (New York: Council on Foreign Relations, 2013), p. 8,

violation of human rights, and interference in the governance of the host countries by the US. As the US continued enlargement of its global partnerships and increased funding on the terrorism war amidst a major shift in international diplomacy, there was a growing anti-Americanism in the Middle East as a counter strategy by the countries which were beginning to experience unprecedented pressure from the US in a counterterrorism movement which was however not in their list of priorities.

During the initial years of American counterterrorism efforts, hundreds of terrorist suspects were detained worldwide, the Taliban administration was overthrown, terrorist training facilities in Afghanistan were shut down, and key al-Qaida commanders were assassinated.⁹⁰ There was also increased international cooperation in counterterrorism efforts as well as enhanced feeling generally improved protection of American homeland and its key interests outside its territories. However, critics of the US's counterterrorism approach observed that the attack on al-Qaida in Afghanistan had succeeded only in scattering the terror organization and making it even harder to neutralize.⁹¹

Secondly, America's attack on Afghanistan and Iraq engendered strong anti-American feelings among the Muslim community across the world, thus amplifying the message of militant Islam which offered a platform for different terror groups to unite for what they viewed as a common course of rejecting America's expansionist attempts.⁹² America's war on global terror was also

⁹⁰ Erik W. Goepner, "Evaluation of the American War on Terror's Efficacy," *Parameters* 46, no. 1 (Spring 2016): 107–20.

⁹¹ John Mueller and Mark Stewart, "American Public Opinion Patterns: Patterns and Mysteries since 9/11," paper presented at International Studies Association, March 2016.

⁹² Harrison Bardwell and Mohib Iqbal, "The Cost To society of Terrorism from 2000 to 2018, Peace Financing, Peace Analysis, and Public Affairs, Vol. 27, No. 2, 2021.

viewed by some critics as an excuse for the country's larger geopolitical pursuit of grabbing and controlling oil reserves, and expanding its military presence in the international arena.

In Iraq, the overthrowing of Saddam Hussein in 2003 led to a civil war which erupted late in 2004. It is estimated that between 2004 and 2007, more than 200,000 Iraqi civilians had lost their lives due to the civil war, with Iraq generally experiencing its worst moment of violence and civil disobedience.⁹³ Afghanistan followed suit with similar chaos and war trajectory, which culminated into full-blown reconstituted Taliban-led insurgency against the US and its international partners.

Since the US invasion, both Afghanistan and Iraq have not been the same in terms of political and economic stability. Some analysts contend that 20 years after the September 11 2001 terrorist attacks, the war on terror is far from over, with the host countries of American intervention appearing to be counting losses even today. America's failures in Afghanistan and Iraq may obscure what the US may consider its successful multilateral counterterrorism efforts involving more than 85 countries around the globe.⁹⁴

3.5 Way Forward

Based on the existing information about the impact of US-led counterterrorism strategies in the Middle East, in order to effectively target terrorism and terror-related activities, countries in the region need to adopt clear and common definition of terrorism. It is also incumbent upon governments in the region to avoid applying selective and state-specific anti-terror laws which only serve all too often, narrow interests have been put ahead of general good affected parties at

⁹³ Opcit, p. 41

⁹⁴ Landler, Mark (2021). The War on Terror Is Still Going Strong 20 Years Later, with No End in View.

any given time.⁹⁵ Regarding the US's role in counterterrorism in the Middle East, while repressive strategies may work in the short-term, in the long run it becomes counterproductive as many young people may turn to violent and radicalized groups as a way of registering their defiance to the perceived oppressor, epitomized by the US in this case.

According to some detractors, the US strategy for combating terrorism following the 9/11 attacks opened the door for the deployment of drastic measures, such as the proclamation of states of calamities or the imposition of martial law, to deal with pressing peace and security situations. In relation to the Middle East, America's counterterrorism strategy set a bad precedent where security concerns of regimes are mostly dictated by the regimes' own survival as guided by the elite and those in power.⁹⁶ In this sense, most counterterrorism efforts are seen to be directed towards securing the interests of the state as a priority, rather than societal priorities. However, preventive and deradicalization measures should take center stage as the potential root cause of terrorism is addressed, such as high levels of poverty, marginalization, and unemployment among others.

⁹⁵ Saud Al-Sharafat will present "Bonds of the Coronavirus Crisis in Jordan: Successes and Difficulties" at the Washington Institute's Fikra Forum on May 11, 2020.

⁹⁶ Louise Fawcett, *Foreign Relations in the Gulf Region*, Oxford University Press, Oxford, 2019, p. 219.

CHAPTER FOUR

AN ASSESSMENT OF THE IMPACT OF US-LED COUNTERTERRORISM INTERVENTIONS ON HOST COUNTRY STABILITY IN AFRICA, 2001-2021

4.1 The US Counterterrorism Priorities and Consequences in Africa

A recent report by the US State Department on terrorism estimates that the size of al-Shabaab terror network could be ranging anywhere between 7,000 to more than 9,000 members across Africa. This could make the group the largest one on the continent, followed by Boko Haram mostly domiciled in West Africa where its activities are reported in Nigeria.⁹⁷ Existing data also estimates that the number of Islamist armed groups has continued to escalate, with the Maghreb (Algeria, Tunisia, Morocco, Libya, and Mauritania), Somalia, Sudan, and Kenya among other countries in the region said to be commonly hosting elements of these groups. Although the threats forced by the terrorist groups in their countries vary across different countries, it is however no secret that they pose serious security risks to the entire populace.⁹⁸ There are different factors motivating local recruitment into Islamist armed groups, including social persuasions through exploitation of the perception that certain social groups have been unfairly excluded from key political and economic opportunities.

Religious appeals and financial incentives have also played a significant role as the driving force for joining or being recruited into terrorist groups in the African region. Escalation of conflict on the continent has also exacerbated the situation, allowing Islamist groups to take advantage to recruit desperate young people into their folds. Over time, the US has applied direct indirect

⁹⁷ National Reports on Terrorists 2018, published by the State Department on November 1, 2019

⁹⁸ Brian Dodwell, Daniel Milton, and Don Rassler, National Reports on Terrorists 2018, published by the State Department on November 1, 2019

counterterrorism approaches in Africa, but with different outcomes. For instance, direct strikes in Libya and Somalia have been used by successive US administration to stem out terrorist groups and maintain peace and security in those countries.⁹⁹ There have however been reported cases of abuse of power by state actors and impunity which has ironically often tended to embolden renewed efforts for Islamist extremist recruitments in Africa.

While the United States advocates for partnership in counterterrorism processes, there priority for the partners often define the level of success of the counteracting efforts. There is also the question of limited resources for running the counterterrorism programs, both in terms of finances and the human resource capacity. It is estimated that by 2019, the US AFRICOM had at least 7,000 personnel in Africa to carry out different tasks related to counterterrorism processes.¹⁰⁰ The Islamist militants and other terrorist networks are part of conflict ecosystem in some countries in Africa, such as the Sahel region, involving different criminal actors. The Union for Support of Islam and Muslims and al-Qaida are some of these terrorist groups, with countries such as Mali and Burkina Faso said to be actively experiencing activities of the insurgencies.¹⁰¹ It is instructive to note that the security crises continue to outstrip the abilities of the US, local governments, and other local counterterrorism actors while subsequently exacerbating existing challenges in terms of development, humanitarian, and governance spheres. In early 2019 for example, Mali President Ibrahim Keita called on the UN to intervene with scaled up donor assistance following militia massacres of the country's civilians.¹⁰²

⁹⁹ Mark Bradbury (2010) Somalia's state-building, anti-terrorism efforts, and licensing of altruism.

¹⁰⁰ Ibid, p. 54

¹⁰¹ Lauren Ploch, CRS Report for Congress, RL34003, Washington, DC, July 6, 2007, p. 17 Africa Command: U.S. Strategic Interests and the Role of the U.S. Military in Africa

¹⁰² Reuters, "A greater response is essential to the growing violence in West Africa," July 10, 2019; Le Monde, "Where Will the G5 Sahel Be After the G7 Announcements?" 27 August 2019.

Radicalization and violent extremism remain one of the biggest threats to peace and security in Africa today, with several local and international terror groups thought to be harbouring East, West, and South Africa. Despite long-term intervention by the US and relevant UN bodies, the presence of the terrorist groups continues to provoke local conflicts thereby subsequently undermining the already delicate political landscape in the region. Notably, years of US-led counterterrorism efforts have not managed to completely dismantle the insurgents. The situation may call for more deliberate integrated counterterrorism strategies for sustainable peace programs and processes.¹⁰³

4.2 US Counterterrorism in Sudan

For several years, the United States has viewed the Horn of Africa as the hub of international terrorism in the region. Since the seizing of power in Sudan in 1989 by the National Islamic Front which led to emergency of an Islamic state thought to be home to radical Muslim groups, the US has continued to keep an eye on Sudan.¹⁰⁴ The open declaration in the 1990s of Sudan on the support of Osama bin Laden and the al-Qaida terrorist network has since painted Sudan as the gateway for this group's operations in the greater Horn of African region. This suspicion has continued even post the 9/11 events, but America's response to these terrorist threats has often been viewed as insufficient and unsustainable.¹⁰⁵ For instance, despite previous attempts, there is no clear and concise counterterrorism framework designed for effective analysis of terrorist threats in

¹⁰³ Ali H, Abbas. An interview (held in Khartoum, Sudan. 20th January 2022).

¹⁰⁴ Lauren Ploch, CRS Report for Congress, RL34003, Washington, DC, July 6, 2007, p. 17 Africa Command: U.S. Strategic Interests and the Role of the U.S. Military in Africa

¹⁰⁵ Ibid, p. 55

Kenya, Ethiopia, Djibouti, Somalia, Eritrea, and Sudan with the aim of offering the right response or lasting solution.

The initial America's reaction to terrorism in Sudan saw the US President Bill Clinton issue economic sanctions through executive order No. 13067 (1997) which ended up causing numerous negative effects on the Sudan economy. The sanctions which were usually renewed for years led to restriction on the movement of goods between Sudan and America.¹⁰⁶ Other repercussions included freezing of bank accounts of prominent Sudanese nationals as well as those for Sudan-owned business organizations. The ultimate effects of these sanctions had to do with collapsed economy of Sudan and high levels of suffering to the common Sudan citizens. Other specific consequences of the US economic sanctions at the wake of fighting terrorism and related crimes in Sudan and the Horn of Africa region included a claw back on the Sudan economic development as well as denying the locals the opportunity to access loans for business investments and expansion.¹⁰⁷

Over the years, the 1990s US economic sanctions on Sudan have created negative financial and business consequences on the Sudanese people, and tended to ruin the economy in general even today. The latest removal of President Omar al Bashir from power served as the proverbial last nail on the coffin regarding the near-total collapse of the Sudan economy – all thanks to the interference by the US in the name of fighting terrorism and radicalization in the Horn of Africa region. There is also evidence that the long term effects of the US economic sanctions on Sudan include interference with the country's international industrial organizations which naturally have

¹⁰⁶ Opcit, p. 55

¹⁰⁷ Ibrahim E, Abdelwahab. An interview (held in Khartoum, Sudan 4th January 2022)

the greatest potential of foreign exchange earnings, tax revenue generation for the government, employment creation for the local people, and importation of the right raw materials for the local companies.¹⁰⁸

The general watering down of import-export businesses for Sudan also meant that the multinationals' business capabilities were reduced due to high import duties of different products for industrial businesses which ultimately negatively affected pricing of important goods and services, thus generally slowing down businesses and leaving majority of the people of Sudan poorer than they would have been without the effects of the sanctions. At the same time, there was experienced destruction of the Sudan economic structure by not giving the opportunity to many worthy companies to invest in Sudan.¹⁰⁹ Instructive to note is also the fact that numerous American companies were also affected by the sanctions through financial moratoriums, including restrictions on free dollar movements across and within the Sudan borders.

The fight against terrorist groups, their networks and activities has also over time crippled the chances of expansion of the Sudan economy. This would especially be the case if considered from the perspective of flow of foreign investment and sustainable business development through expanded employment opportunities and movement of goods based on the principle of free trade. On the agricultural economic impediments, lack of access to sufficient and cheap agricultural inputs such as machines, pesticides and fertilizers would spell doom on the whole agriculture industry, thus retrogressing Sudan's economic development. Coupled up with political

¹⁰⁸ Mark Bradbury (2010) Somalia's state-building, anti-terrorism efforts, and licensing of altruism.

¹⁰⁹ Lauren Ploch, CRS Report for Congress, RL34003, Washington, DC, July 6, 2007, p. 17 Africa Command: U.S. Strategic Interests and the Role of the U.S. Military in Africa

interference and retrogressive economic policies, the US counterterrorism interference in Sudan continues to negatively affect the latter even today.¹¹⁰

Sudan's economy, like most African nation states, depends mostly on agriculture, including livestock keeping. The US sanctions on Sudan in the name of fighting insurgency has tended to ruin the country's animal market over time and interfere with its food security as an overall consequence. From a broader perspective, interference with the animal wealth creation sector can be viewed in terms restricted supply of vaccines and necessary medication, modern technology, and extension services as well as a wide range of veterinary products for the right diseases diagnoses and the ultimate sustainability of the whole animal production industry which is pivotal to the national economy of Sudan.¹¹¹ For the longest time, Sudan's economic embargo by the US has caused a slowed growth in various industries, such as the textile sector, plants oils, leather product and fertilizers. Despite the enormous market space owing to the Sudan's huge national population with unique consumption dynamics, lack of crucial inputs such as fertilizer, modern technology, and enough capital could be the greatest impediments to Sudan's economic expansion and sustainability in a situation where the US has always attempted to interfere in the name of international counterterrorism.

4.3 US Counterterrorism in Somalia

Terrorism has different social, economic, political, and psychosocial effects on the victims, both in the short and long term. In a broader sense, the negative effects of terrorism can also be

¹¹⁰ Ayman M, Ibrahim. An interview (held in Khartoum, Sudan 20th January 2022)

¹¹¹ Wukki Kim and Todd Sandler, "Arab East and North Africa: Extremism and Violence," *Global Policy*, Vol. 11, No. 4, 2020, p. 424.

devastating on private and government institutions, nation states, and national economies among other entities at different levels and scope. At individual level, some of the effects may include post-traumatic stress disorders, death of the significant others, anxiety, and depression among others. At national or societal levels, economic ruin, social and physical displacements, political instability, and strained interstate relations could be some of the common outcomes of terrorism.¹¹² Hence, in order to address the consequences of terrorism, countries and organizations tend to focus on preventive as well as recovery strategies. Since terrorism is usually a complex phenomenon, multifaceted and multipronged counterterrorism approaches are commonly employed, but with different outcomes and success rate.

Over the years, Somalia has faced a tumultuous political and social journey due to incessant insecurity issues, with a great percentage of the situation associated with local and international terrorism. More than two decades since the witnessing of the 9/11 terrorist attacks on America, the war against terror in Somalia has not completely been won. Despite America's persistent involvement in the counterterrorism efforts and processes, critics of America's actions have argued that Somalia could even be worse off today than it was several years ago before the US's interference.¹¹³ One of the outstanding consequences of America's counterterrorism actions in Somalia is the lack of or unstable government in Mogadishu due to what international political analysts have described as America's deliberate destabilization of Somalia for the former's selfish interest.¹¹⁴ The ever-present al-Qaida insurgents and Jihadi extremists in Somalia have endlessly caused the US and allies to engage in a shadowy and complex counterterrorism journey surrounded

¹¹² Crisis Group (2005). Somalia's global security: Are We Losing Minds and Souls?

¹¹³ Mark Bradbury (2010). Somalia's state-building, anti-terrorism efforts, and licensing of altruism.

¹¹⁴ Crisis Group (2005). Somalia's global security: Are We Losing Minds and Souls?

by intimidation, abductions, and assassinations of key government figures and ultimate dysfunction of the government.

Although the interference by the US in Somalia has evoked backlash from several different players in global politics, America is yet to relent. Meanwhile, Somalia continues to face the twin challenge of reconciliation of various factions and rebuilding the nation.¹¹⁵ Al-Qaida and other terrorist groups have continuously been linked to Somalia, with allegations of past attacks on US and UN peacekeepers. Somalia is also thought to be a transit zone for terrorism to other neighbouring East African countries such as Kenya. The US in partnership with other Western governments have in the past attempted to respond to terrorism threats in Somalia and its neighbouring states through establishment of counterterrorist networks where a number of them were headed by former senior government security officers. In this sense, the US has over time tried to leverage on the cooperation between security services in Somaliland and Puntland, thereby leading capturing or killing of key al-Qaida leaders.¹¹⁶

Despite the somewhat successful counterterrorism efforts by the US in Somalia, there has been general unease among the broader public, with many discounting reports by the leadership and members of the public that there are terrorists in Somalia. There are also allegations by the Somali locals that the US-led war on terrorism is an assault on Islam.¹¹⁷ Mysterious surveillance flights, abductions of civilians suspected of terrorist links, and cooperation of the US with unpopular

¹¹⁵ Wukki Kim and Todd Sandler, "Middle East and North Africa: Terrorism and Conflicts", *Global Policy*, Vol. 11, No. 4, 2020, p. 424.

¹¹⁶ Mark Bradbury (2010) Somalia's state-building, anti-terrorism efforts, and licensing of altruism..

¹¹⁷ Wukki Kim and Todd Sandler, "Crises and Violence in the Middle East and North Africa", *Global Policy*, Vol. 11, No. 4, 2020, p. 424.

faction leaders have all contributed to the growing public cynicism and resentment of the US operatives in Somalia and the entire America by extension. This means that there are little chances of successful counterterrorism efforts where there is no public support. In retaliation, many cases have been reported of militants' assassination of Somalis working for US-backed counterterrorism networks based in Mogadishu. Instances have also been reported of unfair treatment of terrorist suspects in Somalia, thus causing further tension in the country.

Since the establishment of Transitional Federal Government (TFG) in October 2004, the war between terrorists and government and international counterterrorist operatives seemed to have become more vicious than before. The scenario was likely to further relegate the country towards extremist violence, with many lives of innocent people claimed in the process. Although the TFG leadership has often blamed the killings on Islamist extremists in an attempt to earn support from the US government, some of those killings have been linked to government supporters, thereby further exposing the controversial nature of US-led counterterrorism activities in Somalia.¹¹⁸ Meanwhile, the threat of jihadi terrorism in Somalia remains real even today which has often had the potential to plunge the country into even worse political situation. The fight on terrorism in Somalia has also commonly used as a smear campaign tool, with several accusations and counteraccusations between different political factions where they attempt to link one another to terrorist allegations.¹¹⁹

¹¹⁸ Mark Bradbury (2010) Somalia's state-building, anti-terrorism efforts, and licensing of altruism..

¹¹⁹ Crises and Violence in the Middle East and North Africa Global Policy, Vol. 11, No. 4, 2020, p. 424.

At the same time, government allied political groupings have tended to use the threat of terrorism to justify deployment of regional military intervention force to Somalia, but a move that has many times not resonated very well with other political factions. The end result has been heightened suspicions and irrevocably split of the government and triggering of renewed conflict with the potential to reignite terrorism in Somalia.¹²⁰ Despite the interventions by the US and other Western allied governments on terrorism in Somalia, the jihadi terrorism continues to reign, thus calling for a more resolute approach through concerted efforts by the Somali and western governments as well as other international nongovernmental players. However, these efforts may not bear tangible fruits soon due to the already fragile peace process in Somalia occasioned by different political factions of the TFG.

¹²⁰ Thomas Warrick and Joze Paleyo, Boosting Terrorist acts and Public Safety Partnerships between U.s and the Arab Gulf States, Atlantic Council. Scowcroft Middle East Security Strategy, 2020, p. 1,

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Introduction

The main objective of study was to examine impact of external counterterrorism interventions on host country stability, with the focus on select US-led interventions from 2001-2021. The findings, conclusions, and suggestions of the study were summarized in this chapter. Specifically, the summary was based on the specific objectives of the study, which included the conceptual, theoretical and policy background of external counterterrorism interventions in the international system; the impact of US-led counterterrorism interventions on host country stability in the Middle-East; and the impact of US-led counterterrorism interventions on host country stability in Africa.

5.2 Summary of Findings

Over time, the US has led spirited direct and indirect campaigns on the fight against international terrorism, both within and outside its borders. In this sense, many countries in Africa and the Middle East have felt the presence of the US in this fight, with mixed outcomes in terms of the benefits and disadvantages in the host countries.¹²¹ The aftermaths of the US intervention in the host countries have been viewed from both negative and positive perspectives as far as international relations are concerned. For instance, some international political analysts have observed that the US intervention in the Middle East has for the most part created instability in the

¹²¹ Barkin, J.S., Cronin, B., *The States and the Society: Shifting Standards and the Limits of Ownership in Foreign Affairs.*, International Organization 48, 2009

host countries as opposed to installing stability in those countries.¹²² Some of the countries that were most negatively affected by the US intervention on war on terrorism include Iran, Syria, Yemen, Afghanistan, Sudan and Somalia.¹²³ At worst, these countries have been viewed as failed states due to the US actions, with rampant cases of massive displacements, countless refugees, loss of lives, and internally displacements among other human sufferings.

At another level, a number of countries where the US presence had largely been felt are said to have experienced slowed economic growth due to plundering or mismanagement of their resources. Such a scenario has also ended up creating high levels of unemployment and inequality. Additionally, such countries have tended to experience dysfunctional politics punctuated by authoritarian governments or regimes steeped in high levels of corruption. As opposed to making these countries secure, such scenarios have left the affected countries more vulnerable and too risky to attract foreign investors. For example, countries such as Somalia and South Sudan which have had unstable governments for years courtesy of foreign interferences have not been able to gain international confidence as save investment destinations.¹²⁴

The US counterterrorism efforts have continuously been view with a lot of suspicions by the host countries. Contrary to populist belief that the US action has been directed towards building a more just and stable world order, the contrary is thought to have been the case. Many countries which have been involved in internal conflicts have not been able to resolve those conflicts for the long

¹²² Ibid, p. 65

¹²³ Mark Bradbury (2010) State-building, Counterterrorism, and Licensing Humanitarianism in Somalia.

¹²⁴ Barkin, J.S., Cronin, B., The States and the Society: Shifting Standards and the Limits of Ownership in Foreign Affairs.", International Organization 48, 2009

term despite the US efforts. For instance, despite the common belief that a post-Saddam Iraq would be more stable than before, the war initiated in 2003 to bring regime change in the country has ended up dividing Iraq even more.¹²⁵ The US-led war in Iraq was also anticipated to set pace for the neighbouring countries in terms of what ideal peace meant. However, to the extent that Iraq after Saddam Hussein has not been any democratic and stable than it was during his reign, then the US intervention has not met these expectations. Indeed, political and governance analysts have observed that the post-Saddam Iraq is in worse state than the country has ever been.¹²⁶

In the Middle East, analysts have attributed ethnic, tribal and sectarian chauvinism as a consequence of external influence, including the US's actions in the host countries. Contrary to the expectations that countries such as Iraq would maintain close working relationships among different communities as a result of the US intervention in host countries, this did not happen. Instead, the Sunni, Shia or Kurd ethnic groups ended up disintegrating even more and stoking recruitment of Al-Qaida and ISIS.¹²⁷ Above all, the removal from power of the legitimate regime in 2003-2004 ignited civil war between the Shia and Sunnis communities, with the latter feeling that they had been disadvantaged following the collapse of the Saddam Hussein government. This scenario created more room for the rising of Al-Qaida in Iraq; a situation which was ostensibly supported by the Sunni ethnic community which appeared to be strongly opposed to the Shia-dominated new regime. In this sense, the consequences of US intervention in Iraq can be said to

¹²⁵ Wukki Kim and Todd Sandler, "Middle East and North Africa: Terrorism and Conflicts", *Global Policy*, Vol. 11, No. 4, 2020, p. 424,

¹²⁶ *Ibid*, P. 66

¹²⁷ Sambanis, N. and J. Schulhofer-Wohl (2005) 'Evaluating Multilateral Interventions in Civil Wars: A Comparison of UN and Non-UN Peace Operations', in D. Bourantonis, K. Ifantis and P. Tskanos (eds.), *Multilateralism and security institutions in an era of Globalization*, pp. 252–87, New York: Routledge.

have been more disruptive as opposed to consolidating and beneficial to the host country and communities.

The US conduct in world events after the 9/11 was marked by aggression in order to contain the surging terrorism tendencies globally. It was further punctuated by intolerance of any country trying to stamp its authority in as far as counterterrorism in the global stage is concerned. Due to heightened suspicion of other countries for likely subversion of the war against terror, such as Iraq which was suspected of developing, using and making available to terrorists weapons of mass destruction, the overriding motive of the US was purportedly to ensure that the post-Saddam Hussein regime in Iraq was as democratic as possible in order to set pace for other countries outside the US.¹²⁸ However, the US launch of war against Iraq despite lack of an explicit authorization from the UN Security Council and support from other key allies presupposed an authoritarian regime keen on making unilateral decisions on key world issues.¹²⁹ To this end, the role of the US outside its borders appeared to be driven by individualistic interests as opposed to democratic rule. It is on this basis that it might have become very difficult for the US to woo its western allies during its disarmament efforts in Iraq. Apparently, the US actions during the war in Iraq violated the Geneva Convention, which implied that other countries were likely to follow suit when it came to protection of the rights of civilian populations.

¹²⁸ Sambanis, N. and J. Schulhofer-Wohl (2005) 'Evaluating Multilateral Interventions in Civil Wars: A Comparison of UN and Non-UN Peace Operations', in D. Bourantonis, K. Ifantis and P. Tskanos (eds.), *Multilateralism and security institutions in an era of Globalization*, pp. 252–87, New York: Routledge.

¹²⁹ *Ibid*, p. 67

In Africa, the effects of US intervention can be exemplified in Sudan where the economic sanctions led to the country's stagnation as its economic systems were put to test. Specifically, the US-led sanctions led to slowed investment by the Sudanese people, very high interest for domestic loans, and the general interference of international financial institutions in the Sudanese economic operations.¹³⁰ Reduced external investment with multinational organizations led to strained industrial growth in Sudan, thus culminating into general poor economic performance. Besides collapsing of the Sudan economy by denying investment opportunities to many foreign companies, the US interference in Sudan has also tended to cause a lot of financial suffering to majority of the Sudanese people. The scenario has further been associated with rampant unemployment and high cost of living for the Sudanese citizens.

Another economic sector which has significantly been negatively affected by the US presence in Sudan and Somalia, among other African economies, include a collapsing or underperforming agricultural sector.¹³¹ This is because the US sanctions led to limited access to agricultural production inputs, such as machinery, seeds, and pesticides among others. This state of affairs ultimately caused food insecurity and ineffective healthcare systems which generally contributed to a very strained general populace. The economic embargo has also led to the deterioration of important economic sectors, such textile, plant oils, and leather as well as fertilizer industries. The transport sector was also affected, including the Sudanese Air Lines which underwent huge losses

¹³⁰ Sambanis, N. and J. Schulhofer-Wohl (2005) 'Evaluating Multilateral Interventions in Civil Wars: A Comparison of UN and Non-UN Peace Operations', in D. Bourantonis, K. Ifantis and P. Tskanos (eds.), *Multilateralism and security institutions in an era of Globalization*, pp. 252–87, New York: Routledge.

¹³¹ Reuters, "Greater response needed to worsening West African violence - UN head," July 10, 2019; Le Monde, "Après les annonces du G7, où va le G5 Sahel?" August 27, 2019.

in terms of hundreds of millions of dollars, especially due to inability to easily obtain spare parts from America and European countries.

5.3 Conclusion

There is no doubt that the US has played and continues to play a central role in counterterrorism in the global arena. However, its intervention in host countries in Africa and the Middle East has had mixed outcomes. As America occupies what many countries in different parts of the world view as a perfect role in world politics, its unilateral decisions on key global issues such as antiterrorism war are largely seen as travesty of justice in the host countries.

The collapse of international law is one of the main effects of US unilateralism. The ability of law and order to support other nations in their efforts to challenge strong and hegemonic governments is undermined by American actions to intervene in other countries in order to further its own immediate objectives. There is no need to be afraid of the potential strength of other nations if all parties comply by the law.

However, thanks to globalization, the era of unipolarity is nearing its end, and as a result, the world has begun to become multipolar, with many countries joining the United States as big powers. The United States is currently dedicated to an unending war and endless adventurism, at the sign of any conflict anywhere in the world. As a result, one nation no longer has the economic or military might to act as the world's police force, and attempting to do so unilaterally only helps the other superpowers, who are now better able to protect and use their resources.

Despite how severe the conditions are in the Middle East and Africa, there is a chance for cooperation to enter a new age. A new international order, a new period, free from the threat of terrorism, stronger in the pursuit of justice, and more secure in the pursuit of peace, can arise from these turbulent times. A day when all of the world's countries East and West, North and South can develop and coexist peacefully. This illusive route to human achievement has been sought after by a hundred generations.

Today, a brand-new world is attempting to emerge, one in which the rule of law triumphs over the law of the jungle. A world where nations acknowledge their mutual obligation to uphold justice and freedom. A society in which the powerful uphold the rights of the weak. This is the vision that must be communicated and comprehended. The manner that the world's leaders and thinkers approach this situation today could have long-term effects on society.¹³²

5.4 Recommendations

As the US continue to play a central role in addressing terrorism across different parts of the world, it is important not always assume to the domineering position. Furthermore, it would be imperative for the US to occupy a conciliatory position rather than bulldozing the rest of the countries even as it pursues what would ordinarily be viewed as a collective global peace and safety agenda. A more collaborative approach to terrorism war would project the US as not perpetrating hegemonic tendencies in Africa and the Middle East but as a partner in world stability. This strategy would also improve interstate trust which is very essential when it comes to the global antiterrorist war.

¹³² Richard Haass, (2017). *A World in Disarray, American Foreign Policy and the Crisis of the Old Order*, Penguin Press. New York.

Foreign policies and interventions of hegemonic states need to adjust by adopting a new approach to sovereignty in a way that embraces the rights and obligations of every single state. This will imply creating a new understating of multilateralism; one that's more flexible in structure and more open to participation than the state – dominated settlements that the world lived with for decades. Due to US led interventions to counterterrorism in the Middle East and Africa, the host countries' problems became remarkable. All these countries need reconstruction which is not a straightforward task. Defeating the threat of deleterious despotism, mutual trust at elite and mass levels, reworking a shattered architecture, and meeting the urgent needs of the most vulnerable people who are profoundly traumatized as a result of their experiences with war and instability are all necessary to put these countries back on their feet.

The reconstruction of failed states, victims of US led interventions to counterterrorism, is a task much larger than just assembling governments. States in Afghanistan, Iraq, Somalia and Sudan, for instance, ceased to exist years ago. Successive regimes depended on their survival on building powerful economic cartels and militias connected to the army and governments in place, making democracy not feasible in their post war and transitional eras.

Observers in international studies argue that developments after the events of September 11, 2001 demonstrate that U.S. interests are better served by strengthening the United Nations rather than weakening it. Some analysis suggest that even though the General Assembly may have passed resolutions that displeased the United States, but these were nonbinding and rarely affect the country ; that's why efforts should be directed towards reforming the UN system, the Security Council and the functional organizations where things really count.

Given this fact, the United Nations has become weaker as a result of the mainly successful U.S. efforts over the past two decades. The United States can thus better serve its goals by cooperating with the officials of the other people of the planet in this increasingly interdependent world, and the UN is the sole institution through which this coordination can be accomplished. A strong United Nations will be one that promotes American interests, whether goal is one of establishing a global consensus to confront terrorism or providing a vehicle to reconstruct the international order, as the events of September 11, 2001, and their aftermath, reveal.¹³³

Each civilization must consider how to respond to terrorism in the face of such risky activity by considering its own enlightened and humanitarian best interests. Each community must work to understand and address the potential reasons of what appears to be absolutely pointless bloodshed since immediate revenge will only fuel a downward cycle of mutual destruction.

Understanding a terrorist's purpose is crucial for developing a sensible and long-lasting reaction; yet, doing so should not be seen as endorsing the crime or placing the blame on the victim. The complaints made by terrorists, particularly those who identify as Muslim, who are erroneously attempting to understand Islamic precepts that are incompatible with the 21st century era, must be taken very seriously.

They need to reflect on the notion of physical 'Jihad' which is not an original concept in Islam and can best be understood in terms of spiritual and self-control rather than physical struggle against

¹³³ Buchanan, A., Keohane, R., *The Legitimacy of Global Governance Institutions*, *Ethics & International Affairs* 20:4, 2006

peoples of other faiths, and that many aspects of Shari'a (Seventh Century Islamic Law) are not the original principles or objectives of Islam and that they merely reflect a descent in accordance of the circumstances of the time and the limitations of human ability.¹³⁴

Looking at the connection between the terrorist attacks and US foreign policy from this angle makes it relevant and even important. This viewpoint is relevant to US foreign policy toward certain geographical areas, in this case the Middle East and Africa.

The attacks of September 11, 2001 starkly demonstrated the common vulnerability of everyone everywhere, including the most affluent and seemingly secure individuals and groups, underscoring the fundamental need of the rule of law as the only viable and effective response.

It is past time for more of America's allies to speak up, insist that the US's enormous power be restrained by already-existing international laws and institutions, and use that restraint to make the world a better place for everyone.

The study bears witness to the complexities that surround the issues or policies of counterterrorism and actions thereof. It could serve as a contribution to the continuous dialogue on unilateralism, international legality and cultural religious divide. It is also bound to contribute to the thinking about policy alternatives open to host countries vis a vis American hegemony and/ or interventions.

¹³⁴ Mahmoud Mohamed Taha, 1967, the Second Message of Islam, First English Edition - Syracuse University Press, New York, 1996.

In our attempts to connect the interrelated aspects of the topic, we generated a wide range of problem research areas that can be pursued in the future, for instance, the future research could venture into the mechanisms of building more effective institutional frameworks in order to open more options and alternative strategies to counterterrorism.

Research is also needed on measures and policies to make the best use of US led interventions to counterterrorism, while maintaining the coherence of the state in host countries and mitigating the negative impacts of US counterterrorism actions.

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