United States Counterterrorism Strategies and Al-Shabaab Terrorism in Somalia: Explaining the Gaps and Critical Junctures

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Abstract

The aftermath of the September, 11 2001 (9/11) terrorist attacks in the United States (U.S.) has led to renewed war on terrorism by the U.S. across the globe. This study assessed the efficacy of U.S. post 9/11 counterterrorism strategies in Somalia. Case study research design was adopted while documentary approach was adopted to obtain secondary data on U.S. counterterrorism and Al-Shabaab terrorism in Somalia. U.S. post 9/11 intervention in Somalia is guided by its policy of pre-emption which aims at dislodging terrorist organisations and regimes supporting them across the globe. The study contends that prioritization of kinetic warfare by the U.S. and pursuit of national interest by some U.S. allies under the guise of dislodging perceived terrorist groups in Somalia created conditions for the emergence and resilience of Al-Shabaab terrorism. This study pursues the thesis that Al-Shabaab is a product of U.S post 9/11 intervention in Somalia. The experience of Somalia shows that military interventions by external actors without providing platform to build inclusive national government in failed and fragile states would only result in sustained violent extremism.

Introduction

Conflict is an intrinsic part of human existence and can degenerate to violence if the incompatible interests of parties to the conflict are not resolved productively. Accordingly, terrorism is a form of violent conflict in which the perpetrators employ violence or threat of such to pursue predetermined multi-dimensional goals which may be political, ideological or socio-economic (Imobighe, 2007; Imobighe, 2009).

Terrorist organisations have proliferated across Africa with Al-Shabaab being a notorious terrorist group which gained infamy since its emergence in 2006 and successful orchestration of coordinated terrorist attacks across East Africa, including the 2010 bombing of two restaurants in Kampala, Uganda, the September, 2013 attack on the Westgate Shopping Mall in Nairobi, Kenya where 60 people were killed and more than 200 injured; the April 2015 attack on Kenyan University in Garissa in which 148 people were killed (Ploch, 2010; Wise, 2011; Weber, 2015). Al-Shabaab is ranked as one of the four deadliest terrorist groups in the world and was responsible for 578 terrorism deaths in 2019 alone (Institute for Economics & Peace, 2020).

Meanwhile, since the September, 11 2001 (9/11) terrorist attacks in the United States (U.S.), the U.S. has intensified its fight against terrorism across the globe. Generally, the post 9/11 U.S. policy on terrorism was based on the policy of pre-emption which focused on pre-emptive dismantling and rooting out terrorist entities globally. Hence, the aftermath of 9/11 terrorist attacks triggered the whole-sale adoption of the policy of pre-emption by the U.S. in the fight against global terrorism and also provided justification for U.S. unilateral invasion of regimes and countries suspected of either harbouring terrorists, amassing weapons of mass destruction or colluding with known terrorist organizations. In line with its post 9/11 war on terror, in 2002 and 2003, the U.S. released the National Security Strategy (NSS) and the National Strategy for Combating Terrorism respectively, wherein it reiterated its willingness to adopt pre-emption in the fight against terror. The U.S policy of pre-emption focus on pre-emptive dismantling and rooting out self-supporting terrorist entities across the globe. It is a set of post-Cold war military strategies aimed at enabling the U.S. to pre-empt the proliferation of Weapons of Mass Destruction (WMD) especially by rogue states across the globe. Furthermore, the 2006 National Security Strategy of the U.S. and Obama Administration's first National Security Strategy issued in 2010 stressed the strategic importance of Africa to the U.S. and need for pre-emptive counterterrorism in the continent (Ploch, 2011). In 2013 President Barak Obama issued the Presidential Policy Guidance (PPG) establishing the operating procedures for action against terrorist targets outside the U. S. and areas of active hostilities, including Somalia. The PPG further legitimized airstrikes conducted against suspected terrorists including Al-Shabaab in Somalia. In 2017, President Donald Trump further relaxed the rules for conducting airstrikes against Al-Shabaab and even approved greater authority for military operations against al-Shabaab. Hence, since 9/11 U.S. has renewed its counterterrorism strategy in Somalia anchored on the policy of pre-emption aimed at rooting out Al-Shabaab terrorism by direct intervention and providing support to Somali government and U.S. allies in East Africa.

Existing scholarship tends to explain U.S. counterterrorism in Somalia as a post 9/11 battle aimed at rooting out terrorism in Somalia (Mueller, 2016), while some others dismiss U.S counterterrorism in Somalia as a misguided and failed intervention (Barnes & Hassan, 2007; Elliot & Holzer, 2009; Ohls, 2009). Similarly, the causes of Somali's statelessness and rise of radical extremism have been attributed to internal factors such as the clannish nature of politics in Somalia and concomitant state failure (Hesse, 2010; Hussein, 2014). This study contributes to existing study by differentiating the various phases of U.S. interventions in Somalia since the collapse of the state of Somalia in order to provide deeper understanding of how each phase of intervention served as a critical juncture shaping emergence and sustenance of terrorism in Somalia. The study locates the critical junctures in the history of terrorism in Somalia within the motivation for and strategies adopted in the various phases of U.S interventions in the state. It does so by presenting a diachronic analysis of U.S. interventions in Somalia to demonstrate

that U.S 1993-95 direct intervention anchored on humanitarian assistance and the post-9/11 intervention anchored on counterterrorism are two critical junctures which underpin the rise of Al-Shabaab and the objectives it pursues. The study is presented in seven sections. Following this introduction is the methodology and literature showing perspectives on U.S. war on terror. The fourth section presents analysis of state failure in Somalia and U.S. pre 9/11 direct military intervention in Somalia. The fifth and sixth sections deal with U.S. post 9/11 military intervention in Somalia and its strategic response to the rise of Al-Shabaab. The last section is the concluding remarks.

Data and Methods

Case study design was adopted to guide the study. This design enables an in-depth study of a particular case in order to have deeper appreciation of a whole phenomenon or issue of interest (Yin, 2009). Thus, the use of the case study allows for discovery of complex antecedent actions and mechanisms that may produce a particular outcome (Mueller, 2016). The case study design allowed for the study of U.S. intervention in Somalia in order to provide understanding of the motivation for U.S. counterterrorism in foreign countries and factors that may shape the successes and failures of such interventions. To provide diachronic analysis of U.S. interventions in Somalia and how it shaped the dynamics of Al-Shabaab terrorism, we adopted process tracing technique (Collier, 2011). Process tracing technique involves two connected activities – description and sequence. Description involves analysis of trajectories of change and causation which provides explanation for the phenomenon under investigation, while sequence gives close attention to sequences of independent, dependent and intervening variables (Collier, 2011). Thus, process tracing technique enabled analysis of the critical junctures in the chain of events in Somalia leading to the emergence, dynamism and sustenance of Al-Shabaab.

Documentary approach was adopted to collect secondary data from credible sources including the Global Terrorism Database (GTD) which provides detailed datasets on activities of terrorist organizations across the world. Documentary approach enabled the use of data from complex antecedents that are grounded in actions and tendencies. The study is therefore a conceptual work that is both descriptive and analytical.

Perspectives on U.S. War on Terrorism in Somalia

U.S. war on terrorism in Somalia has triggered interesting debate among scholars. The debate by scholars can be distilled into two discernable schools of thought – the state failure school and the counterproductive school. Scholars within the state failure school argue that U.S. intervention in Somalia mainly results from failure of Somalia as a state due to internal factors like clannish politics within Somalia which created 'ungoverned spaces' for terrorism to thrive thereby necessitating U.S. intervention. For instance, Aronson (2013), argued persuasively that

instability in Somalia, Islamic fundamentalism and insufficient law enforcement and counterterrorism policies account for the increasing Al-Shabaab terrorist activities in East Africa despite increased U.S. counterterrorism funding to the region. Other scholars within the state failure perspective include Lind, Mutahi and Oosterom, (2015); Wise, (2011).

Conversely, the 'counterproductive' school submits that external intervention by the U.S. and its allies in Somalia failed to stabilize the state or stem the incidence of Al-Shabaab terrorism in Somalia because Al-Shabaab has continued to carryout terrorist attacks despite U.S. intervention (Weber, 2015; Barnes & Hassan, 2007; Quaranto, 2008; Aronson, 2013; Hesse, 2010; Hussein, 2014). For instance, Hussein (2014) criticized the U.S.-led counter-terrorism effort in Somalia for attempting to build the Somali National Army on the American model. This, the author argued was counter-productive given the asymmetric nature of the warfare conducted by Al-shabaab. The author further noted that Kenya's counter-terrorism strategy characterized by extrajudicial killings of clerics, raids on mosques, indiscriminate profiling of Kenyan Muslims and harassment of Somali Kenyans was counterproductive to the extent that it was radicalizing young Kenyan Muslims and enhancing Al-shabaab's recruitment drive in the region. In a seminal analysis, Menkhaus (2009) gave an interesting insight into external intervention in Somalia conflict. His argument centers on the fact that there are two major groups of external actors. On the one hand, Al-Qaeda provides support to Al-shabaab while the U.S. and its allies back the TFG. These external actors, according to him, inject arms and funds into Somalia but hardly get the result they seek thereby leading to existence of surplus external and domestic actors who can play the role of 'spoiler' in Somalia making stability difficult to attain. The problem with this school of thought is that it fails to account for factor(s) that make the U.S. interventions ineffective.

State Failure and U.S. Pre 9/11 Direct Intervention in Somalia
Following the independence of British Somaliland and Italian Somaliland, and their unification, the emergent state of Somalia experienced political instability arising from intensification of deep-seated clannish politics which characterize the Somali nation (Hesse, 2010; Hussein, 2014). Consequently, Somalia drifted from multiparty democracy to authoritarian regime following a military coup in late 1969 in which Mohamed Siad Barre took over power and established the Supreme Revolutionary Council. Although the authoritarian regime of Siad Barre was supported and armed by the Soviet Union and the United States during the Cold War, the regime could not survive the internal resistance which plunged the country into civil war in 1988 following proliferation of clan based militia groups resisting Barre's authoritarian rule. Not even the financial and military supports from the Cold War super powers could save Somalia from collapse (Ingiriis, 2020). In fact, following negative reports by various groups including Amnesty International in 1988, by 1989, the U.S and many other foreign countries distanced themselves

from Barre's regime. Bilateral aid to Somalia dropped by over 97% from $30 million to a paltry $740,000 between 1988 and 1990 (Bradbury, 1997).

Following capitulation of Barre's regime by 1990 and rejection by the opposition groups of all offers made by the regime which they considered tokenistic attempt by a dying regime to retain power, Barre exited Mogadishu on 26 January 1991 to his home town in Southwest Somalia from where he fled to Kenya in 1992 and subsequently Nigeria where he died in 1995 (Bradbury, 1997). Immediately Barre fled Mogadishu, Somalia was balkanized by different clan-based forces; the Hawiye led United Somali Congress (USC) took control of Mogadishu, while the Issaq-led Somali National Movement (SNM) seized the cities of Berbera, Hargeisa and Burco. By May 1991, the people of north-west regions of Somalia revoked the 1960 Act of Union which unified the British and Italian Somalia (Bradbury, 1997). Thus, Somalia collapsed as a state following the political vacuum created by the exit of Barre in 1991. Somalia was without central government for over a decade as several clan-based militias vied to fill the power vacuum via intense fighting (Quaranto, 2008; Hesse, 2010). The battle by clan-based militia groups to take over state power following Barre's exit led to massive destruction and carnage in Somalia including loss of lives, looting of agricultural produce, rape of women, unprecedented starvation and massive displacement of people into neighbouring countries. By the end of 1992 over 500,000 lives had been lost with an estimated two million persons displaced (Bradbury, 1997).

The unprecedented humanitarian catastrophe witnessed in Somalia following the civil war and state collapse of the 1990s drew international attention on the need for humanitarian assistance in Somalia. As a result of international outcry of the worsening humanitarian situation in Somalia, the UN Security Council established the United Nations Operation in Somalia (UNOSOM I), to facilitate humanitarian relief. However, the poor security situation which threatened humanitarian activities of international organizations in Somalia led the Security Council to further adopt UNSC Resolution 794 on 3rd December, 1992, authorizing the creation of the Unified Task Force (UNITAF) under the command of the U.S. with the mandate to use all necessary means to establish secure environment for provision of humanitarian relief to the civilian population in the country (Margesson, et al., 2012). Consequently, in December, 1992, the Bush Administration initiated the 'Operation Restore Hope' and ordered the movement of 25,000 US troops into Somalia to enable the coordination of humanitarian relief programme.

The 'Operation Restore Hope' was an attempt to employ military force to degrade warring factions in Somalia and provide security to allow humanitarian workers distribute food to millions of Somali who were starving. This mission was aptly captured by President Bush in his letter to Boutros-Ghali which stated:

> I want to emphasize that the mission of the coalition is limited and
> specific: to create security conditions which will permit the feeding of

starving people and allow transfer of these security functions to the
UN peacekeeping force (Ohls, 2009, p. 112)

By 31 December, 1992, American forces had gained control of Mogadishu together with central and southern Somalia to support the humanitarian relief community. However, the emergence of President Clinton in 1993 led to the reformulation of US foreign policy initiative which came to be guided by the policy of "assertive multilateralism" and "enlargement and engagement" as pursued by Clinton's ambassador to the UN, Madeleine Albright. With this, the U.S influenced adoption of UNSC Resolution 814 which authorized UNISOM II and led to metamorphosis of 'Operation Restore Hope' to 'Operation Continue Hope' which simply translated to significant reduction in U.S. troops in Somalia from over 20,000 to about 4,000 supported by UNISOM II troops from 21 nations. According to (Ohls, 2009, p. 154), this action constituted "a classic mismatch between strategy and resources, wherein [U.S. through] the UN attempted to accomplish larger and more intrusive objectives...with substantially less military power." This reduction in number of troops in Somalia and the consequent mismatch between troop strength and mission of coordinating humanitarian relief programme was the beginning of failure of the U.S. to effectively coordinate the relief programme in Somalia. The consequence of this miscalculation crystallized in the calamity experienced in the first Battle of Mogadishu fought on 3 and 4 October 1993, between vastly-outnumbered forces of the U.S. supported by UNOSOM II, and Somali militiamen loyal to the self-proclaimed president-to-be Mohamed Farrah Aidid, who had support from armed civilian fighters.

The battle resulted in 18 deaths, 73 wounded, and one helicopter pilot captured among the U.S. raid party and rescue forces. At least one Pakistani soldier and one Malaysian soldier were killed as part of the rescue forces. Following this calamity, on 3 May, 1994, Washington issued Presidential Decision Directive (PDD) 25 which led to exercise of more cautious approach in committing U.S. forces to humanitarian operations, and also reduced America's direct involvement in humanitarian operations in Somalia (Ohls, 2009). Following the PDD 25, American forces withdrew from Somalia and other UN troops subsequently withdrew leaving Somalia in the hands of war lords while the humanitarian mission remained incomplete. In fact, U.S intervention in Somalia has been described as a failure and a disaster (Ohls, 2009).

Essentially, the power vacuum created by the exit of Barre, the struggle for state power by clan based militia and humanitarian crisis that engulfed Somalia in the 1990s formed a critical juncture in the history of Somalia which set the stage for U.S. first direct intervention in Somalia in the 1990s. However, the prioritization of military force over humanitarian assistance and the interference in the politics of Somali people put the U.S. and U.N forces at war with powerful Somali warlords (Bradbury, 1997). This war between Somali warlords, sudden changes in U.S. foreign policy following changes in administration brought by 1992 U.S elections and the

consequent military losses suffered by the U.S. led to abrupt exit of U.S. forces from Somalia without actualizing the set target of UNISOM II which is "political reconciliation, peace and stability through the re-establishment of national and regional political and civil administrations" (Bradbury, 1997, p. 16).

The withdrawal of U.S. and U.N. troops from Somalia in 1995 created the interstices exploited by the various clan-based forces to deepen the anarchy in Somalia as they struggled for power and resources. In the midst of this chaos, a union of courts emerged in 2000 to enforce law and order in accordance with Islamic principles. The courts provided security and social services and enforced her Islamic-based judgment using militias recruited from the various local clans (Barnes & Hassan 2007). The influence of the courts grew such that by 2004 the courts came together to form the Supreme Council of Islamic Courts and by 2006 the courts had become a dominant force in Mogadishu operating under the banner of Union of Islamic Courts (UIC) (Mueller, 2016). By mid-2006, the UIC was removing roadblocks, re-opening schools, air and sea ports, providing basic amenities, conducting reintegration programmes for ex-militiamen and was restoring peace to Mogadishu. The UIC won broad support from Somalis at home and abroad (Menkhaus, 2009). With this, the UIC consolidated power and controlled seven out of ten major regions in South Central Somalia (Mueller, 2016).

Beyond restoring order to Mogadishu and providing social services, the UIC resisted attempts by Ethiopia to meddle in the politics of Somalia. Consequently, Ethiopia framed the UIC as a terrorist organization and alleged that Somalia was providing safe haven for terrorist organisations (Mueller, 2016). Coincidentally, this allegation was coming at the time of U.S. renewed global war on terrorism following the 9/11 terrorist attacks on the U.S. and growing suspicion by the U.S. that Somalia was incubating terrorist organisations. In fact, in December 2001, the then US Defence Secretary, Donald Rumsfeld had alleged that Somalia was harbouring al-Qa'eda (Quaranto, 2008). These suspicions and allegations by Ethiopia and the U.S. provided the basis for U.S. direct and indirect invasion of Somalia in the aftermath of 9/11 terrorist attacks in the U.S. The next section provides analysis of how U.S. direct and indirect invasion of Somalia gave rise to emergence of Al-Shabaab.

U.S. Post-9/11 Misadventures and rise of Al-Shabaab

Following the allegations by the U.S. and Ethiopia, the U.S. commenced its post 9/11 intervention in Somalia using direct and indirect means. First, in early 2006 the US started providing funds and arms to the Alliance for the Restoration of Peace and Counter-Terrorism (ARPCT), which was capturing and killing Islamic radicals in Somalia (Mueller, 2016). The CIA was reported to have channeled between $100,000 and $150,000 per month to the militant group in 2006. Military equipment were also provided via Select Armor a private military company
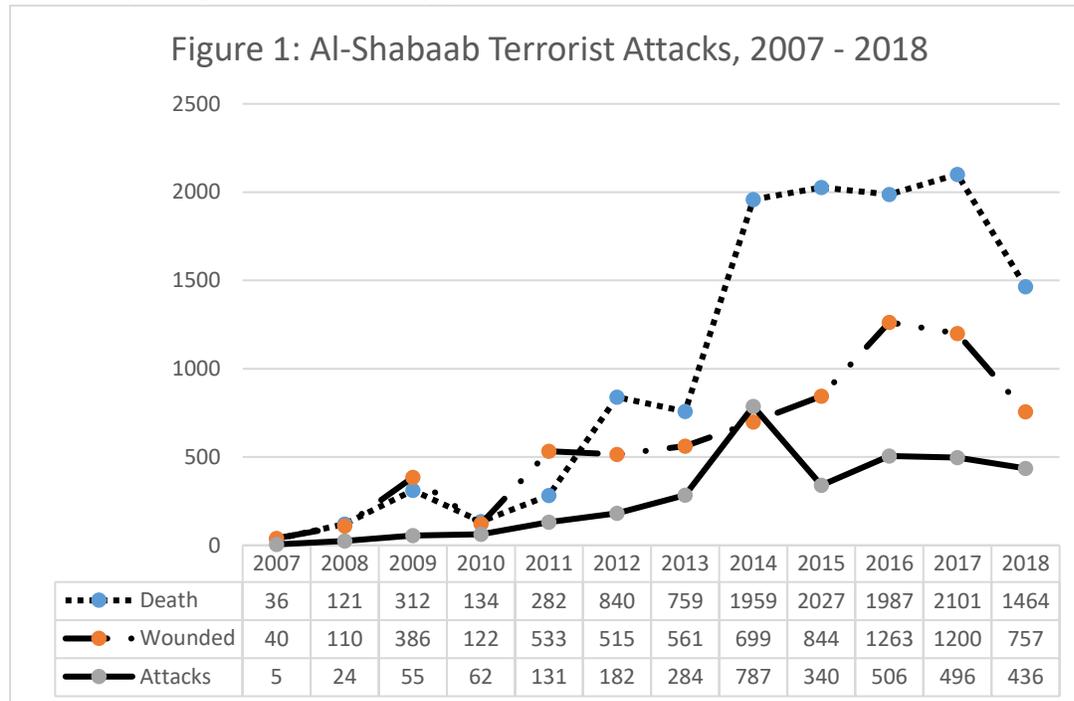
based in Virginia to the militant group to enable them produce terrorist suspects and undermine the UIC in Mogadishu (Elliot & Holzer 2009). Unfortunately, the ARPCT was overpowered by the UIC within months. After the defeat of ARPCT, the invasion of Somalia using Ethiopia as a proxy became the next option for the U.S. With the support of the U.S., in December 24, 2006, Ethiopian forces invaded Somalia and killed over 1,000 militiamen of the UIC which controlled Mogadishu thereby forcing the remaining UIC members to flee the Somali capital (Elliot & Holzer, 2009; Menkhaus, 2009).

While supporting Ethiopian invasion of Somalia, U.S. officials argued that a force of that kind was necessary because of UIC's continued military expansion. Similarly, the U.S Assistant Secretary of State for African Affairs, Jendayi Frazer and Rear Admiral Richard Hunt averred that the U.S. was committed to support Ethiopian action which was likened to fight against terrorism. In fact, Frazer publicly stated that the UIC was now controlled by al-Qaeda members and that the leadership of the UIC were extremists (Quaranto, 2008). As noted by Quaranto (2008) the coincidence of the timing of Frazer's statement with the Ethiopian advance into Somalia solidified perceptions of US backing for the invasion.

On January 7, 2007, the U.S. gave further military backing to the Ethiopian invasion when U.S. AC-130 gunships began firing on remote regions in southern Somalia claiming it was targeting jihadists retreating from Mogadishu. The air strikes continued in the month of January targeting three 'high-value' al Qaeda associates accused of organizing the 1998 embassy bombings in Nairobi and Dar-es-Salaam, and the 2003 hotel and airlines attacks in Mombasa (Quaranto, 2008).

Following the invasion and occupation of Somalia by Ethiopia after decimation of the UIC, a radical group known as *Harakat al-Shabaab al Mujahidee* (Movement of the striving youth or Al-Shabaab) emerged and portrayed themselves as "remaining defenders of Somalia against foreign incursion" (Mueller, 2016, p. 9). Since 2007, Al-Shabaab has continued to attack U.S interest and allies in Somalia and across East Africa. Data from GTD as presented in Figure 1 shows that between 2007 and 2018, the group carried out 3,308 attacks in which 12,022 were killed, 7030 persons were wounded in Somalia alone. The major targets of Al-Shabaab's attacks include the military which suffered 48.5% of the total attacks, private citizens which was the target of 17.5% of the attacks and Somali national government which was the target of 15.2% of the attacks (see Table 1). As regards strategies adopted by Al-Shabaab, Table 2 shows that Al-Shabaab has remained consistent over the years as bombing/explosion has been the major strategy adopted by the group to carry out its operations. This is followed by armed assault which constituted 29.3% of total attacks by the group. Assassinations and hostage taking (kidnapping) are other

key strategies adopted by Al-Shabaab as the two strategies accounted for 10.9% and 9.0% of total attacks by the group respectively (see Table 2).

Figure 1: Al-Shabaab Terrorist Attacks, 2007 - 2018

	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018
Death	36	121	312	134	282	840	759	1959	2027	1987	2101	1464
Wounded	40	110	386	122	533	515	561	699	844	1263	1200	757
Attacks	5	24	55	62	131	182	284	787	340	506	496	436

Source: Calculated from Global Terrorism Database (GTD, 2020)

Table 1: Targets of Al-Shabaab Terrorist Attacks, 2007–2018

Target	Number of Attacks (%)
Military	1603(48.5%)
National Government	503(15.2%)
Private Citizens & Private Properties	579(17.5%)
Police	155(4.7%)
Businesses	128(3.9%)
NGOs	32(1.0%)
Others	308(9.2%)
Total	3308(100%)

Source: Calculated from Global Terrorism Database (GTD, 2020)

Table 2: Strategies of Al-Shabaab Terrorist Organization, 2007-2018

Strategy	Number/Percentage of total
Armed Assault	968 (29.3%)
Assassination	361(10.9%)
Bombing/Explosion	1201(36.3%)
Facility/Infrastructure Attack	55(1.7%)
Hijacking	15(0.5%)
Hostage Taking (Barricade Incident)	12(0.4%)
Hostage Taking (Kidnapping)	299(9.0%)
Unarmed Assault	8(0.2%)
Others	389(11.8%)
Total	3308(100%)

Source: Calculated from Global Terrorism Database (GTD, 2020)

Outside Somalia, the group has also been able to carry out notable well-coordinated attacks which include the 2010 Kampala bombing in which over 60 persons were killed; the September, 2013 attack on the Westgate Shopping Mall in Nairobi, Kenya where 60 people were killed and more than 200 injured; the April 2015 attack on Kenyan University in Garissa in which 148 people were killed; the 2019 suicide bombing at a police checkpoint in Darkheynley, Mogadishu in which 83 people, including 17 police officers and four foreign nationals, were killed and 148 people were injured (GTD, 2020).

U.S Response to the Rise of Al-Shabaab: A Continuation of Misadventure?

The U.S responded to the emergence of Al-Shabaab by deepening its war on terror in Somalia using various strategies which prioritized direct and proxy military interventions and air strikes. First, the U.S. has sustained its light foot print strategy which involves supporting its allies particularly Kenya and Ethiopia to fight Al-Shabaab terrorist groups in Somalia. In 2009, the East African Regional Strategic Initiative (EARSI) was established by the U.S. to foster regional counterterrorism efforts and build capacity of U.S allies in East Africa. Through the EARSI, the U.S. provided various forms of assistance which include: border security; coastal security; police training; interagency counterterrorism coordination etc. (Ploch 2010). Additionally, the Partnership for Regional East Africa Counterterrorism (PREACT), was designed in 2009 as the U.S. government initiative for long-term engagement and capacity building to combat evolving terrorist threats in East Africa. As a regional programme that serves as one part of the overall

U.S. counterterrorism assistance to East Africa, it provides counterterrorism capacity-building assistance to 12 East African countries.

Kenya is one of the highest recipients of U.S. security assistance in East Africa. The assistance from U.S prepared Kenya as a veritable proxy for invading Somalia in the guise of fighting terrorism. Through support by the U.S., Kenya was able to launch its first military offensive in Somalia code named *Operation Linda Nchi* (Protect the Country) in which 1,500 Kenya Defence Forces (KDF) carried out military offensive in parts of southern Somalia. As noted by Chau (2018, p. 225) one of the core objectives of *Operation Linda Nchi* was to remove Al-Shabaab from the southern Somali ports, including Kismayo. This particular objective was achieved when Kenya took control of the Kismayo in September, 2012. However, Kenya's invasion of Somalia has been widely criticized. Although Kenya cited self-defense as a reason for the invasion, it was reported that Kenya had since planned the invasion with U.S support prior to October 2011 and had lobbied U.S. support for the invasion since October, 2010 (Lind, Mutahi & Oosterom, 2015).

Aside support to its allies in East Africa including the African Mission in Somalia (AMISOM), the United States has used drones to conduct several military strikes against suspected Al-Shabaab members in Somalia since early 2007. The U.S. is reported to have carried out nine air strikes in Somalia between 2001 and 2010, six between 2012 and 2014; 11 in 2015; and 14 in 2016 (Amnesty International, 2019). Such attacks include: January 2007 multiple air strikes against suspected terrorists and an alleged terrorist training camp in southern Somalia; June 2007 naval strikes targeting suspected Al-Shabaab foreign fighters in Puntland region of Somalia; March 2008 naval strikes targeting suspected al-Qaeda operative Saleh Ali Saleh Nabhan, wanted in connection with the 1998 embassy attacks and the 2002 attacks in Mombasa, in Southern Somalia; May 1, 2008 U.S cruise missile attack in central Somalia in which Al-Shabaab's top military commander, Aden Hashi Ayro and several senior deputies were killed; September 14, 2009, commando raid by helicopter in southern Somalia in which U.S Special Forces killed suspected al-Qaeda operative Saleh Ali Saleh Nabhan (Ploch, 2010, p.14).

In 2013 President Obama issued the 'Presidential Policy Guidance' (PPG), which established the operating procedures for action against terrorist targets outside the United States and areas of active hostilities, including Somalia. The PPG further legitimized airstrikes conducted against suspected terrorists in Somalia during Obama's administration. Following assumption of office by Donald Trump as U.S. President in 2017, there were policy changes which further relaxed the rules for conducting airstrikes against Al-Shabaab and approved greater authorities for military operations against al-Shabaab, allowing increased strikes in support of the African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM) and Somali forces. The policy changes introduced by Trump led to rise in the number of airstrikes by the U.S. military with about 34 strikes carried

out in the remaining nine months following relaxation of rules for airstrikes which declared all of southern Somalia an "area of active hostilities" (AAH). The air strikes further increased to 47 in 2018 and 24 within the first three months of 2019 (Amnesty International, 2019).

The continued direct and proxy military interventions in Somalia remain a misadventure by the U.S. given that the interventions have failed to decimate Al-Shabaab but provided opportunity for some U.S. allies to pursue their national interests under the guise of war on terror. For instance, it has been argued that *Operation Linda Nchi* did not decimate terrorists in Somalia because Kenya security forces prioritized economic interests and focused on capturing ports and trade routes into Kenya (Lind, Mutahi & Oosterom 2015; Chau 2018). Moreover, the civilian casualties arising from the continuous U.S. airstrikes in Somalia have continued to generate outrage and backlash against U.S. intervention in Somalia.

Conclusion

United States war on terror in Somalia has focused more on kinetic warfare involving the use of military force to decimate terrorist organizations particularly the Al-Shabaab. The kinetic warfare involves the support of U.S. allies in East Africa and direct airstrikes targeted against suspected terrorists. This study contends that U.S. pre 9/11 military intervention in Somalia failed to achieve the core objective of ameliorating humanitarian crisis and restoring order in Somalia thereby creating room for emergence of the UIC. The post 9/11 intervention by the U.S. in Somalia is a misadventure based on misguided intelligence aimed at pursuing the interest of U.S. allies in East Africa and legitimizing U.S. post 9/11 preemptive counterterrorism strategies. It is this second misadventure that led to the emergence and sustenance of Al-Shabaab terrorist organization for the simple reason that the sponsorship of ARPCT by the U.S., the support of Ethiopia's invasion of Somalia in 2006 and subsequent decimation of UIC created room for emergence of Al-Shabaab to champion Somali nationalism against perceived external interference in Somali national politics by the U.S. and its allies.

Moreover, the continuous use of force against Al-Shabaab and suspected terrorists without providing platforms to resolve issues surrounding inclusive national government that recognizes the clannish nature of Somali has continued to embolden resistance to U.S. and its allies in Somalia by Al-Shabaab and its supporters. The case of U.S. counterterrorism in Somalia shows that failure to address humanitarian crisis and build a government of national unity, prioritization of kinetic warfare and pursuit of national interest of external actors under the guise of dislodging perceived terrorist groups in post conflict states create conditions for rise of violent extremism and terrorism.

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