An Appraisal Of Counter-Insurgency And Administrative Strategies in Somalia

By

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Abstract

This paper presents an appraisal of Counterinsurgency and Administrative Strategies in Somalia. Somalia is one of the Horn of African countries that have recorded various security threats occasioned by the proliferation of non-state armed groups. The country is presently the tent of terrorist related insurgent violence which aggravated already existing gap and Clan related identity conflicts heightened by Barr's military coup which was indulged in violent repression and gross human rights abuses. The foregoing also explains the evolution of radical Islamic groups that climaxed in the Al-Shabaab insurgency. This marked the origin of counterinsurgency by the African Union backed forces and the Somali National Army. This paper examined the nature of counterinsurgency and administrative strategies adopted in Somalia with the aim of identifying the sources of Al-Shabaab insurgency. The effectiveness of the mechanisms put in place to contain insurgency and the challenges confronting stake holders. The paper made use of qualitative data generated from primary and secondary sources including support from member states of African

Union to enable them contain the insurgent group. It was also found that internal peace building and confidence building measures would enable the government gain the support of the people. It recommended that adequate training should be given to the security operatives for effective counterinsurgency.

Keywords: Strategies, Insurgency, Africa, Somalia, Stake-holder, Muslim.

Introduction

The Federal Republic of Somalia is a country located in the Horn of Africa. It is bordered by Ethiopia to the West, Djibouti to the Northwest, the Gulf of Aden to the North, the Indian Ocean to the east, and Kenya to the Southwest, Somalia has the longest coastline on the continent's mainland and its terrain consists mainly of plateaus plains and highlands. In terms of climate, hot conditions prevail around, with periodic monsoon winds and irregular rain fall (Somalia map, 2015; Ori mogunje 2012).

Somalia has a population of around 10 million, about 85% of residents are ethnic Somalis, who have historically inhabited the Northern part of the country, ethnic minorities make up the remainder and are largely concentrated in the Southern regions. The official languages of Somalia are Somali and Arabic, both of which belong the Afro-Asiatic family. Most people in the country are Muslim, with the majority being Sunni (Maritime History of Somalia, 2012).

It is a statement of truism that for more than 2 decades, Somalia has been an example of a collapsed state in the absence of a central government. Somalia citizens therefore adopted local form of conflict resolution. Even with a government in place, it is still described as a fragile state. A few autonomous regions, including the Somaliland, Punt land and Galrnudug administrations, emerged in the North ensuring process decentralization. The early 2000s saw the creation of fledgling interim federal administration. The Transitional National Government (TNG) was established in 2000,

followed by the formation of the Transitional Federal Government (TFG, assisted by Ethiopian troops, assumed control of most of the nation's Southern conflict zones from the newly formed Islamic Courts Union (ICU) the ICU subsequently splintered into more radical groups such as Al-Shabaab, which battled the TFG and its African Union Mission to Somalia (AMISOM) allies for control of the region, with the insurgents losing most of the territory that they had seized by mid-2012. In 2011-2012 a political process providing benchmarks for the establishment of permanent democratic institutions was launched. Within this administrative frame a new provisional constitution was passed in August 2012 which reformed Somalia as a federation (cassanelli, 1982).

Following the end of the TFG's interim mandate the same month the Federal Government of Somalia, the first permanent central government in the country since the start of the civil war was formed. The nation has concurrently experienced a period of intense reconstruction, particularly in the capital Mogadishu. Through the years Somalia has maintained an informal economy based mainly on livestock, remittances and telecommunication (Somalia civil war, 1986).

Despite the multiple attempts to reconstitute a central government in Somalia the apparent speedy collapse since late 2011 of the insurgency spearheaded by the Harakat Al-Shabaab Al-Mujahideen (Movement of Warrior Youth, Al-Shabaab)-a militant Islamist movement with Al-Qaeda links-has made it fashionable within some political and military circles to cite with little nuance the "Somalia model" as a prescription for other conflicts in Africa, including the fight in Mail against Al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb and its allies. This study takes a closer look at the situation in order to draw out the real lessons from the failures and success of the counterinsurgency effort in Somalia (Somalia profile – overview-BBC News, 2015).

Problems

This paper appraises the nature of counterinsurgency in Somalia with the aim of identifying the sources of Al-Shabaab insurgency. The study also takes a closer look at the situation in order to draw out the real lessons from the failures and success of the counterinsurgency effort in Somalia. The effectiveness of mechanisms put in place to contain insurgency and the challenges confronting stake holders. To understand counter-insurgency, one must understand insurgency to comprehend the dynamics of revolutionary warfare. Insurgents capitalize on societal problems, often called gaps; counter-insurgency addresses closing the gaps. When the gaps are wide, they create a sea of discontent, creating the environment in which the insurgent can operate (Mackinlay, 2009).

The adoption of suicide bombing by Al-Shabaab members to target political office holders has become a perennial challenge to the operational oversight of the security sector. Somalia has become a nation where non-state armed groups operate at will. The Harakat Al-Shabaab was the militant wing of the Somali council of Islamic courts that took over most of Southern Somalia in the second half of 2006. Despite the group's defeat by Somali and Ethiopian forces in 2007, Al-Shabaab – a clan based insurgent and terrorist group – has continued its violent insurgency in Southern and central Somalia. The group has exerted temporary and, at times sustained control over strategic locations in those areas by forcibly recruiting regional clans and their militias, using guerrilla warfare and terrorist tactics against the Somali Federal Government (SFG) African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM) peace keepers, and nongovernmental aid organizations. As of 2013, however, pressure from AMISOM and Ethiopian forces had largely degraded Al-Shabaab's control, especially in Mogadishu but also in other key regions of the country and conflict among senior leaders has exacerbated fractures within the group. In 2013 Al-Shabaab rivalries culminated in a major purge of opponent of deceased group leader Ahmed Abdi Awmohamed (UN Envoy for Somalia, 2014).

Al-Shabaab is not centralized or monolithic in its agenda or goals. Its rank- and file members come from disparate clans, and the group is susceptible to clan politics, internal divisions, and shifting alliances. A notable problem is the group's affiliation with AL-Qaida which offers senior members of the group some goodwill .The merger of the two groups was publicly announced in February 2012 by the Amiri of Al-Shabaab and Ayman Al-zawahiri leader of Al-Qaida (Heavy Censorship, 2015).

Al-Shabaab has claimed responsibility for many bombings including various types of suicide attacks in Mogadishu and in central and northern Somalia, typically targeting Somali government officials, AMISOM, and perceived allies of the SFG. By implication many security forces and law makers have been killed by the group. Since 2013 Al-Shabaab has launched high profile operations in neighboring countries, the Westgate attack that killed 67 Kenyan and non-Kenyan nationals, and a siege continued at the mall for several days is just the latest of a string of Shabaab attacks in which they use "martyrdom" commands raids to strike at target locations and end with detonating explosives on their bodies. The first notable attack was in late 2010 when the group attacked hotel Muna in Mogadishu, and this happened after killing about a dozen MPs other guests, and this happened after the airport. It soon became their choice of attacking high value targets. (Nicholas, 2014).

A commando suicide attack was carried out against the current president days after he was elected in September 2012, then it was the supreme court in Mogadishu, and the UNDP building. The May 2014 attack against a restaurant in Djibouti popular with westerners.

Al-Shabaab claimed responsibility for the twin suicide bombings in Kampala, Uganda on 11 July 2010 that killed more than 70 people, as well as a June 2013 attack in Mogadishu on a United Nations compound which killed 22 people. February 2014 Al-Shabaab attack on Somalia's presidential palace villa Somalia a car bomb and armed assailants and killed 12 people nine of them militants in June 2014, an attack and siege in Mpeketoni, Kenya killed nearly 50 tourists, although there was no claim of responsibility, Al-

Shabaab was widely believed responsible. There were other high profile attacks in 2014 either ascribed to or claimed by Al-Shabaab (Somalia-The World Factbook, 2015).

In 2008, the U.S Government designated Al-Shabaab as a foreign terrorist organization under section 219 of the immigration nationality Act (as amended) and as a specially designated Global Terrorist entity under section 1 (b) of executive order 13224 (as amended) in 2012, the United States offered rewards for the capture of several Al-Shabaab leaders (UN Press release, 2015).

Objectives

The main aim of this study is to appraise the counter-insurgency strategies in Somalia. To achieve the above aim, the researcher focuses on the following specific objectives:

1. To examine the genesis of the Al-Shabaab insurgency in Somalia.
2. To evaluate whether the mechanism put in place to checkmate insurgency in the state is effective.
3. To assess operational problems recorded by security operatives.

Hypotheses

In order to achieve these objectives, the following research hypotheses were formulated:

1. The more Central Government created avenue for containing the genesis of Al-Shabaab insurgency, the more sophisticated the insurgents become.
2. There is no significant relationship between mechanism put in place to checkmate insurgency and the administrative corruption in the system.
3. The challenge of inadequate funding hampers the efforts of security operatives

in countering the insurgency in Somalia.

Theoretical Exposition

The particular theories that can sufficiently act as a guide for the analysis of issues in this paper are Counter-Insurgency theory and Crime Control theory.

(a) **Crime Control Model**

Chinese philosophy suggests that opposite forces are complementary, just like the Chinese Yin and Yang. There exists a similar type of constant tension in the U.S. criminal justice system between the crime control model and the due process model. Whether these competing models are complementary is subject to debate. Stanford Law School Professor. He proposed that there are two fundamental criminal justice models; the crime control model and the due process model.

The crime control model is considered to be a conservative approach to crime that focuses on protecting society from criminals by regulating criminal conduct and justice. Moreover, this model stresses strict and swift punishment for crimes; in return, this strict adherence benefits society by striking fear in criminals because they will be harshly punished. The crime control model also seeks to move criminal cases through the criminal system as quickly as possible. The goal of the model is to get the cases through the systems swiftly, even if that means expanding the powers of the courts. In fact, this model supports greater powers for prosecutors and the courts that are handling the cases (Schubert, 2005).

In contrast, the due process model is considered to be a liberal approach to criminal justice that favors criminal rights. This model functions under the tenet that defendants are innocent until proven guilty. The model also favors strategies that might rehabilitate offenders rather than simply punish them. The goal for this model is to get offenders

functioning back into society and out of prison, if possible. It is therefore in direct contrast to the crime control model.

Opponents to this model often argue that the due process model sets too many obstacles in the way of serving justice and punishing serious criminals.

Example of the crime control model:

When put into action, the crime control model leads to the police having increased powers, while the court system is built to move offenders through swiftly. Policy might exercise these expanded powers by handing out more search warrants or increasing their rounds of interrogations when dealing with suspects. Police officers also might be given the broad power to use more aggressive crime control strategies, such as profiling, conducting undercover sting operations, wiretapping and targeting high crime locations.

In addition, crime control model proponents advocate for a court system that manages cases in an assembly line fashion. This means that the case should move forward quickly and be dealt with in a uniform fashion. Moreover appeals should be minimized, and lengthy trials should not bog down the court system (Mackinlay, 2015).

The People's Perspectives of Crime Control Model

The laws of war prohibit the intentional targeting of civilians (Thompson, 1966). This principle, known as civilian immunity, is the cornerstone of international humanitarian law. Yet this immunity is not absolute: civilians are immune from being targeted unless and for such time as they take a direct part in hostilities. Thus, a civilian may be lawfully targeted while directly participating in hostilities. Military commanders, government officials, lawyers, humanitarians, and academics have engaged in a heated debate over how this rule should be implemented. In

their debates—primarily focused on definitions, legal obligations, and criteria for targeting—they have argued about such key questions as which activities should qualify as direct participation and when a civilian should lose and regain legal immunity from direct attack.

In all of these discussions, the views of one group have been largely absent: civilians in conflict-affected countries. For these civilians, the issues of participation and protection during war are not abstract problems, but instead are a matter of life and death. As a step toward addressing this gap in the discourse, Center for Civilians in Conflict carried out the People's Perspectives study on civilian involvement in armed conflict. This study is based on more than 250 interviews with individuals who have lived through conflict in Bosnia, Libya, Gaza, and Somalia. By shedding light on their perspectives and experiences, this study endeavors to inject civilian voices into this conversation about "the civilian"—and to ensure that this critical debate about warfare in the 21st century is inclusive of those most likely to be affected by its outcomes (Mackinlay, 2015).

(b) Counter-Insurgency Theory

The third Marques of Santa Cruz de Marcenado (1684–1732) is probably the earliest author who dealt systematically in his writings with counter-insurgency. In his *Reflexiones Militares*, published between 1726 and 1730, he discussed how to spot early signs of an initial insurgency, prevent insurgencies, and counter them, if they could not be warded off. Strikingly, Santa Cruz recognized that insurgencies are usually due to real grievances: "A state rarely rises up without the fault of its governors." Consequently, he advocated clemency towards the population and good governance, to seek the people's "heart and love".

According to the U.S. Government Counter-insurgency Guide (2009), Counter-insurgency is comprehensive civilian and military efforts taken to simultaneously defeat and contain insurgency and address its root causes'". However, Counter-insurgency campaigns of duly-elected or

politically recognized governments take place during war, occupation by a foreign military or police force, and when internal conflicts that involve subversion and armed-rebellion occur. The best counterinsurgency campaigns "integrate and synchronize political, security, economic, and informational components that reinforce governmental legitimacy and effectiveness while reducing insurgent influence over the population (Mackinlay, 2015). Counter-insurgency strategies should be designed to simultaneously protect the population from insurgent violence; strengthen the legitimacy and capacity of government institutions to govern responsibly and marginalize insurgents politically, socially, and economically (U.S. Government Counterinsurgency Guide, 2009)

However, aphorism based on the writing of Mao Zedong emphasizes that "the guerrilla must swim in the people as the fish swims in the sea" Counter-insurgency is normally conducted as a combination of conventional military operations and other means, such as propaganda psy-ops, and assassinations. Counter-insurgency operations include many different facets: military, paramilitary, political, economic, psychological, and civic actions taken to defeat insurgency (Mao, 1948).

To understand counter-insurgency, one must understand insurgency to comprehend the dynamics of revolutionary warfare. Insurgents capitalize on societal problems, often called gaps; counter-insurgency addresses closing the gaps. When the gaps are wide, they create a sea of discontent, creating the environment in which the insurgent can operate (Mackinlay, 2009).

With regards to legal and ethical challenges (Hart, 2006) postulated that the law of armed conflict requires that, to use force, "combatants" must distinguish individuals presenting a threat from innocent civilians. This basic principle is accepted by all disciplined militaries. In the counterinsurgency, disciplined application of force is even more critical because enemies camouflage themselves in the civilian population, success in Somalia depends on the ability of the security personnel to treat the

civilian population with humanity and dignity, and also the readiness to defend ourselves or Somalia civilians when a threat is detected.

In a related development (Santa, 2010) is of the view that Counter-insurgency theorists have several operational strategies.

Therefore, the third Marques of Santa Cruz de Marcenado (1684–1732) is probably the earliest author who dealt systematically in his writings with counter-insurgency. In his Reflex ones Militares, published between 1726 and 1730, he discussed how to spot early signs of an incipient insurgency, prevent insurgencies, and counter them, if they could not be warded off. Strikingly, Santa Cruz recognized that insurgencies are usually due to real grievances: "A state rarely rises up without the fault of its governors." Consequently, he advocated clemency towards the population and good governance, to seek the people's "heart and love".

The majority of counter-insurgency efforts by major powers in the last century have been spectacularly unsuccessful. This may be attributed to a number of causes, first as (Hart, 2006) pointed out in the insurgency addendum to the second version of his book "Strategy: the Indirect Approach", a popular insurgency has an inherent advantage over any occupying force. He showed as a prime example the French occupation of Spain during the Napolenic war. Whenever Spanish forces managed to constitute themselves into a regular fighting force, the superior French forces beat them every time.

However, once dispersed and decentralized, the irregular nature of the rebel campaigns proved a decisive counter to French superiority on the battlefield. Napoleon's army had no means of effectively combating the rebels, and in the end their strength and morale were so sapped that when Wellington was finally able to challenge French forces in the field, the French had almost no choice but to abandon the situation. Counter-insurgency efforts may be successful, especially when the insurgents are unpopular. With reference to the Philipine-American War, the Shining

Path in Peru, and the Malayan Emercy in Lalaya have been the sites of failed insurgencies.

(Hart, 2006) also points to the experiences of Lawrence and the Arab Revolt during World War I as another example of the power of the rebel/insurgent. Though the Ottomans often had advantages in manpower of more than 100 to 1, the Arabs' ability to materialize out of the desert, strike, and disappear again often left the Turks reeling and paralyzed, creating an opportunity for regular British forces to sweep in and finish the Turkish forces off.

In both the preceding cases, the insurgents and rebel fighters were working in conjunction with or in a manner complementary to regular forces. Such was also the case with the French Resistance during World War II and the National Liberation Front during the Vietnam War. The strategy in these cases is for the irregular combatant to weaken and destabilize the enemy to such a degree that victory is easy or assured for the regular forces. However, in many modern rebellions, one does not see rebel fighters working in conjunction with regular forces. Rather, they are home-grown militias or imported fighters who have no unified goals or objectives save to expel the occupier.

According to Liddell Hart, there are few effective counter-measures to this strategy. So long as the insurgency maintains popular support, it will retain all of its strategic advantages of mobility, invisibility, and legitimacy in its own eyes and the eyes of the people. So long as this is the situation, an insurgency essentially cannot be defeated by regular forces.

Another option in combating an insurgency would be to make the presence of troops so pervasive that there is simply no place left for insurgents to hide, as demonstrated in Franco's conquest of Republican Spain during the Spanish Civil War or the Union occupation of Confederate States with Federal troops following the American Civil War. In each of these cases, enormous amounts of manpower were needed for an extended

period to quell resistance over almost every square kilometer of territory. In an age of ever shrinking and increasingly computerized armed forces, this option too is precluded from a modern commander's options.

Essentially, then, only one viable option remains. The key to a successful counter-insurgency is the winning-over of the occupied territories population. If that can be achieved, then the rebellion will be deprived of its supplies, shelter, and, more importantly, its moral legitimacy. Unless the hearts and minds of the public can be separated from the insurgency, the occupation is doomed to fail. In a modern representative democracy, in the face of perceived incessant losses, no conflict will be tolerated by an electorate without significant show of tangible gains.

Although the United States and its ARVN allies won several major battles with North Vietnamese forces and their allies suffering staggering losses, the cost of victory was so high in the opinion of the US public (58,193 U.S. deaths) that it came to see any further possible gains as not worth the troop losses.

As long as popular support is on their side an insurgency can hold out indefinitely consolidating its control and replenishing its ranks until their opponents simply leave, in these cases, such as the Israeli occupation of Lebanon, which ended in 2000 and the recent Iraqi insurgency the goal of the insurgent is not to defeat the occupying military force: that is almost always an impossible task given the disparity in resources. Rather they seek through a constant campaign of sneak attacks to inflict continuous casualties upon their superior enemy forces and thereby over time demoralize the occupying forces and erode political support for the occupation in the homeland of the occupying forces. It is a simple strategy of repeated pin-pricks and bleedings that, though small in proportion to the total force strength, sap the will of the occupier to continue the fight.

Galula (1964) gained his practical experience in counter-insurgency as a French Officer in the Algerian War. His theory of counterinsurgency is not primarily military, but a combination of military political and social actions under the strong control of a single authority.

Galula (1964) proposes four laws for counterinsurgency:

(i). The aim of the war is to gain the support of the population rather than control of territory.

(ii). Most of the population will be neutral in the conflict support, masses can be obtained with the help of an active friendly minority.

(iii). Support of the population may be lost. The population must be efficiently protected to allow it to cooperate without fear of retribution by the opposite party.

(iv). Order enforcement should be done progressively by removing or driving away armed opponents, then gaining support of the population, and eventually strengthening positions by building infrastructure and setting long-term relationships with the population. This must be done area by area, using a pacified territory as a basis of operation to conquer a neighbouring area. Galula contends that:

"for counter-insurgency to be effective, they need to be funded according to the relative size, geography, and needs of targeted communities." If development initiatives lack sufficient financial support, they are likely to act as a double-edged sword, erroneously inflating the hopes and aspirations of local communities. When these expectations are not met, there is a high chance that social and economic policies will backfire, triggering resentment and renewed support for insurgent violence. These statements, which define a theoretical approach to insurgency in term, the counter-insurgency, illustrate an understanding of insurgency as an expression of socio-economic discontent and desperation. Impoverished

countries teeming with poorly educated, unemployed masses qualified by a widening gap between the rich and poor combined with low literacy rates are fermentation tanks for dangerous and violent militants. The low levels of economic and social development increase the appeal of political extremism and encourage political violence and instability as reported by the works of (Harrington, 2012; Benjamin, Ogunmola, Joseph & Ibrahim, (2012).

See figure 1 below for more details of Somalia Political map.

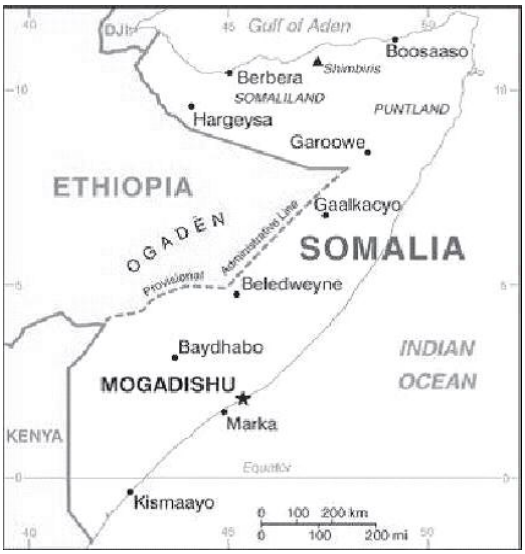


Figure 1: Political Map of Somalia

Source: Map of Somalia. U.S. State Department Map.

Conclusion

In conclusion, an attempt was made to appraise the nature of counter-insurgency adopted by the stakeholders in countering insurgency in Somalia. The paper was set on a premise of two set of theories, counter-insurgency theory as considered to be a 'comprehensive civilian and military efforts taken to simultaneously defeat and contain insurgency and address its root causes and also crime Control Model which is considered

to be a conservative approach to crime that focuses on protecting society from criminals by regulating criminal conduct and justice. Moreover, this model stresses strict and swift punishment for crimes; in return, this strict adherence benefits society by striking fear in criminals because they will be punished. The theorists are of the view that there are groups in the society that have different interests. In this regard, they believe that social arrangement will tend to benefit some groups at the expense of others

From the finding of this paper, it is concluded that the insurgency in Somalia is as a result of ineffective legitimacy and corruption by the Government of Somalia in not being able to provide the basic needs of the people.

The paper has critically appraised the study of counter-insurgency Strategies in Somalia, using some of the aims and objectives of the study to analyze the activities of Al-Shababab and the effort of security operatives in countering the Al-Shabaab insurgency in Somalia. Its findings revealed that counter-insurgency strategies in Somalia is a collective effort by international community and the citizens, reaching a compromise in the management of insurgency in several regions in Somalia.

However, there is no doubt that several studies have been undertaken in counterinsurgency strategies in Somalia. However, only a limited number of such studies have drawn attention to the effectiveness of strategies in the management of the insurgency in Somalia.

In a nutshell, the following recommendations are considered important for the improvement of counterinsurgency in Somalia.

(i) In view of the above findings of this paper, it is observed that the root cause of Al-Shabaab insurgency is as a result of inability of the Somalia to establish effective Government and as such would recommend that Government of Somalia should establish effective Government that will address the welfare of its citizens in terms of providing basic human needs.

(ii) In the light of the above research, the co-operation and effort of the masses are very important for effective counterinsurgency, therefore the

government and the security operatives should gain the support of the masses by assuring them that the Government is capable enough to deliver and also to work for their interest.

(iii) The researcher would also like to recommend that adequate training should be given to the security operatives for effective counterinsurgency.

(iv) The researcher is of the view that International Community should provide more troops and weapons for adequate security.

(v) The researcher is of the view that the global leaders should come together to curb insurgency in Somalia and other neighbouring countries.

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