



# **NAVAL POSTGRADUATE SCHOOL**

**MONTEREY, CALIFORNIA**

## **THESIS**

**COUNTERING AL-SHABAAB: A CASE TO MINIMIZE  
TRANSNATIONAL TERRORIST THREATS AGAINST  
UGANDA**

by

Geoffrey B. Kambere

December 2011

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TERRORIST THREATS AGAINST UGANDA**

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requirements for the degree of

**MASTER OF SCIENCE IN DEFENSE ANALYSIS  
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## **ABSTRACT**

This thesis analyzes the first transnational terrorist attack by Al-Shabaab in Kampala, Uganda, on July 11, 2010. It provides a historical background of Al-Shabaab since its inception and the group's major chronological events from 2006 to 2010. The study then analyzes the factors that may have contributed to Al-Shabaab joining the transnational arena to strike hundreds of miles away from Somalia.

Among the findings of the study is that the recruitment of foreign fighters by Al-Shabaab from different parts of the world materialized into the recruitment of Ugandans who acted as a local franchised cell inside Uganda. It was that cell that was responsible for the Kampala bombings. Moreover, the local franchised cell had logistic support links with other terrorist cells outside Uganda. In addition, porous borders facilitated the perpetrators to easily enter Uganda with all the materials that were used in the bombing.

Recommendations include that, together with intensifying human intelligence among the indigenous population in Uganda, the East African Community has to establish a strong counterterrorism agency incorporating all member states for information sharing in order to thwart cross-border terror networks.

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## **LIST OF ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS**

AMISOM	African Union Mission in Somalia
ANC	African National Congress
AQAP	Al-Qaeda in the Arab Peninsula
AQI	Al-Qaeda in Iraq
ARS	Alliance for the Re-liberation of Somalia
AU	African Union
COG	Center of Gravity
CSIS	Center for Strategic and International Studies
EAC	East African Community
ENDF	Ethiopian National Defense Forces
FBI	Federal Bureau of Investigation
GIMF	Global Islamic Media Front
HOA	Horn of Africa
ICU	Islamic Courts Union
ILDMH	Ice Link Discotheque in Makindye House
IGAD	Intergovernmental Authority on Development
LeT	Lashker-e-Taiba
MYM	Mujahideen Youth Movement
TFG	Transitional Federal Government
SIM	Subscriber Identification Module
PLO	Palestine Liberation Organization
UN	United Nations
UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
UPDF	Uganda People's Defence Forces
7/11	July 11, 2010, Al-Shabaab carried out its first transnational terrorist attack in Kampala, Uganda.

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### **Disclaimer**

The views expressed in this research are solely those of the author, and they do not represent the official position of the Uganda People's Defence Forces.

### **Dedication**

To God Almighty be the glory, I would like to thank the leadership of the Uganda People's Defence Forces' for giving me this opportunity to be the first Ugandan to enroll in the master's program at the Naval Postgraduate School.

I do recognize the tireless guidance from my thesis advisor, Professor Leo Blanken, and second reader, Professor Anna Simons. I am immensely obliged to you and your efforts in making this thesis happen despite your busy schedules.

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## I. INTRODUCTION

### A. FOREIGN TERRORISTS AGAIN AFTER THREE DECADES

In 1976, Ugandans experienced an ordeal with foreign terrorists when Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) terrorists flew in with hostages aboard Air France 139 and held them for weeks at Entebbe.<sup>1</sup> The hostages, mostly Israelis, were rescued by Israel Defense Forces Commandos in a dramatic, well-executed mission that showed much competence and served as a deterring mechanism to other terrorists groups. However, after 34 years, foreign terrorists again entered Uganda, this time due to Uganda's role in Somalia.

On July 11, 2010, Al-Shabaab carried out twin suicide attacks in Kampala, Uganda against people watching a soccer match, leaving 78 people dead and 89 injured.<sup>2</sup> These were the first terrorist attacks by the group outside Somalia, qualifying Al-Shabaab as a transnational threat in the region. Since 2007, Uganda has been leading the African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM), with the assistance of Burundi. Both countries contribute a contingent force of about 9,000 troops based in Mogadishu.<sup>3</sup> As a result, Al-Shabaab has embarked on a provocative strategy of deterring countries involved in the efforts to pacify Somalia by targeting their cities to compel them to withdraw from Somalia.

Al-Shabaab feels threatened by the presence of peacekeeping forces, so it has continued to demand their complete withdrawal from Somalia. Notably, terrorist groups such as Al-Qaeda have pursued their objectives by using any tactic at any cost. Likewise, Al-Shabaab is being joined by foreign fighters from Western countries, Asia, the Middle

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<sup>1</sup> John Arquilla, *From Troy to Entebbe: Special Operations in Ancient and Modern Times* (Lanham: University Press of America, 1996), 335.

<sup>2</sup> Major-General Kale Kayihura, "Annual Crime and Traffic/Road Safety Report-2010," *Uganda Police*, 11, [http://www.upf.go.ug/Reports/Annual%20Report%202010%20Final%20\(Launch\).pdf](http://www.upf.go.ug/Reports/Annual%20Report%202010%20Final%20(Launch).pdf) (accessed June 20, 2011).

<sup>3</sup> African Union Crisis Committee, "Study Guide," *Nottingham International Model United Nations Conference 2011*, 7, <http://www.nottsmun.org/PDF/AU.pdf> (accessed November 15, 2011).

East and Africa,<sup>4</sup> so its capability to strike again cannot be underestimated. One impetus is to help facilitate the rise of an Islamic caliphate and ease pressure on them mounted by the AMISOM troops. Second, there are large numbers of Somalis living as refugees in East African countries that Al-Shabaab can recruit to its ranks. Figure 1 is a map of Somali refugees in the region as of June 2010. Therefore, Uganda currently faces both internal and external strategic challenges; hence, there is a need to coordinate regionally for this challenge.

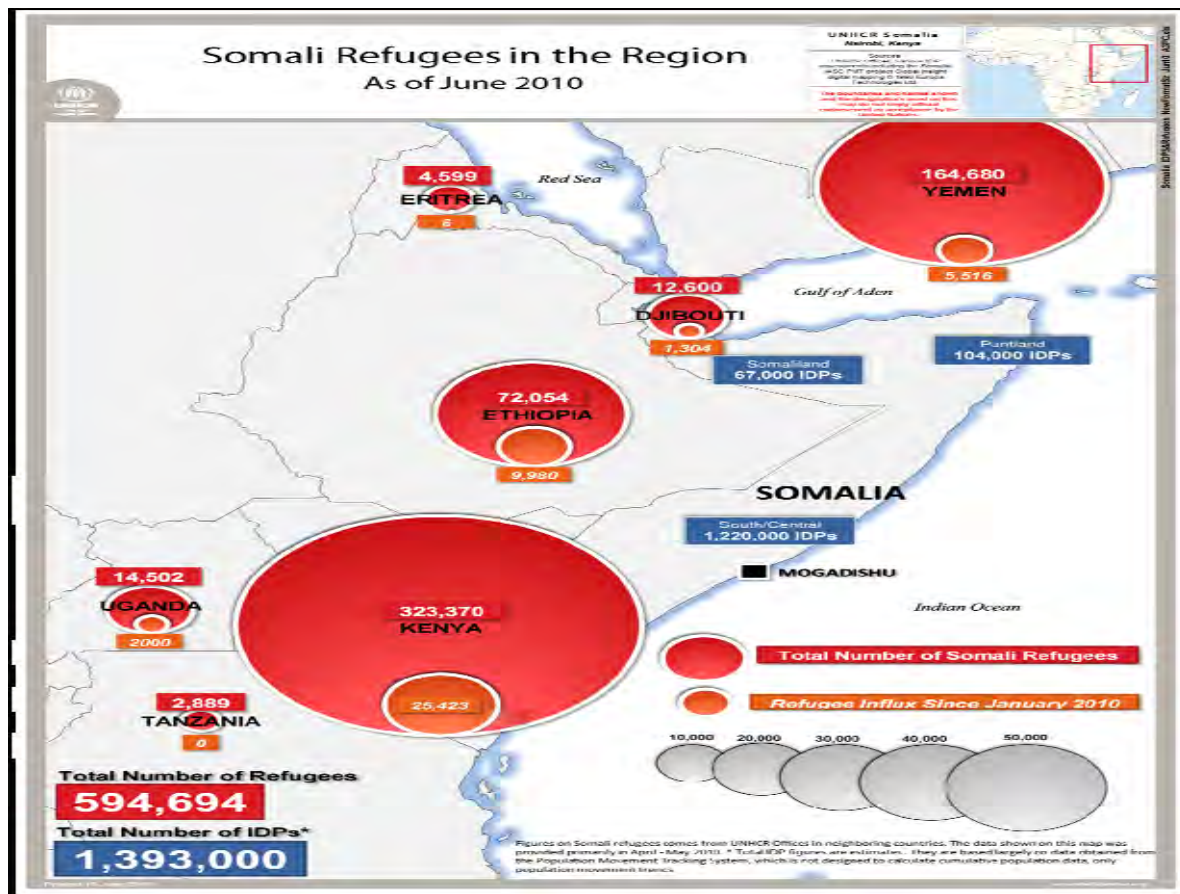


Figure 1. Map of Horn of Africa Showing Number of Refugees.<sup>5</sup>

<sup>4</sup> David Shinn, "Al Shabaab Tries to Take Control in Somalia," *Foreign Policy Institute*, November 5, 2010, <http://www.fpri.org/enotes/201011.shinn.somalia.html> (accessed December 02, 2010).

<sup>5</sup> United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), [http://www.reliefweb.int/rw/fullmaps\\_af.nsf/luFullMap/F3661AFA34291ED785257745006F424B/\\$File/map.pdf?OpenElement](http://www.reliefweb.int/rw/fullmaps_af.nsf/luFullMap/F3661AFA34291ED785257745006F424B/$File/map.pdf?OpenElement) (accessed January 4, 2011).

## **B. STATEMENT OF PURPOSE AND SCOPE**

The purpose of this thesis is to suggest a feasible solution to the current transnational threat of Al-Shabaab against Uganda. The scope of this research is to identify the factors that enabled the change in the locus of violence of Al-Shabaab from national to transnational. Consequently, the study will recommend strategies to ideally minimize the transnational threat against Uganda from Al-Shabaab.

## **C. RESEARCH QUESTION**

By looking at Al-Shabaab's evolution into a transnational threat, this research will answer the following questions: What are the contributing factors that enabled Al-Shabaab to succeed in carrying out its first transnational terrorist attack? Consequently, what courses of action should the Ugandan government and security forces consider adopting to prevent another successful attack against innocent civilians?

## **D. HISTORICAL BACKGROUND OF AL-SHABAAB**

It is important to understand the historical background of Al-Shabaab since it provides an understanding into the current status of this terrorist group.

In January 1991, after the overthrow of Dictator Siad Barre, the Somali central government collapsed, creating a political vacuum that saw the rise of many Islamic militant groups and warlords, especially in Mogadishu, Somalia.<sup>6</sup> Among the militant groups was the Al-Iltihad Al-Islami (Islamic Union), which by then had the highest number of militias and was active till the mid-90s.<sup>7</sup> In 1996, some members of these militant groups later established the Sharia Courts in Somalia.<sup>8</sup> In 2001, the U.S. government listed Al-Iltihad Al-Islami as a terrorist organization and froze all its assets

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<sup>6</sup> Ken Menkhaus, "Governance without Government in Somalia," *International Security* 31, no. 3 (Winter 2006/07): 78–81.

<sup>7</sup> Ted Dagne, "Somalia: Current Conditions and Prospects for a Lasting Peace," *The Congressional Research Service*, (December 16, 2010), 4, <https://www.hsdl.org/?view&did=12490> (accessed January 4, 2011).

<sup>8</sup> International Crisis Group, "Somalia's Islamists," *ICG Africa Report*, no. 100, (December 12, 2005), 3.

with “Executive Order 13224,” which almost led to the demise of the group.<sup>9</sup> In 2003, Al-Itihad Al-Islami held a conference in the city of Las Anod in Northern Somalia where its leadership and young members disagreed on the outcome.<sup>10</sup> The young members later formed the “Mujahideen Youth Movement” (MYM), also known as Harakat Al-Shabaab al-Mujahideen. Today, the group is famously called Al-Shabaab, a “Salafi-jihadist movement,” and is a major player and instigator in the ongoing fighting in Somalia. The top leaders of the new faction were Aden Hashi Ayro, killed in May 2008 by an American missile strike; Sheikh Mukhtar Robow Abu Mansoor, who headed Al-Shabaab from 2008 to 2009; and Sheikh Mukhtar Abu Zubayr, who led the group from 2009 to 2010.<sup>11</sup>

In 2004, Al-Shabaab emerged as the militant wing of the Islamic political power called the Islamic Courts Union (ICU).<sup>12</sup> The ICU was an alliance of Islamist groups and local Sharia Courts that united to form a rival administration against the Transitional Federal Government (TFG).<sup>13</sup> This network of Islamist militant groups eventually fought for and controlled most of Southern and Central Somalia until late 2006, when it was dismantled by the invasion of Ethiopian National Defense Forces (ENDF) in support of the TFG. As the remnants of the ICU sought refuge in Asmara, Eritrea, the leadership of Al-Shabaab reorganized the strewn militias and, thus, continued fighting ENDF. In September 2007, in order to end the antagonism of opposing factions, the ousted ICU members held a dialogue in Asmara and formed the Alliance for the Re-liberation of Somalia (ARS), which was headed by Sheikh Sharif Ahmed, the current president of

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<sup>9</sup> International Crisis Group, “Somalia’s Islamists,” 3.

<sup>10</sup> Cody Curran, “Global Ambitions: An Analysis of Al-Shabaab’s Evolving Rhetoric,” *Critical Threats*, February 17, 2011, <http://www.criticalthreats.org/somalia/global-ambitions-analysis-Al-Shabaabs-evolving-rhetoric-february-17-2011> (accessed March 23, 2011).

<sup>11</sup> David Shinn, “Al Shabaab’s Foreign Threat to Somalia,” *Orbis* 55, no. 2 (April 1, 2011): 206, <http://www.proquest.com.ezproxy.members.marshallcenter.org/> (accessed April 15, 2011).

<sup>12</sup> Michael Taarnby and Lars Hallundbaeks, “Al-Shabaab, the Internationalization of Militant Islamism in Somalia and the Implications for Radicalisation Processes in Europe,” (February 26, 2010), 11–12, [http://www.justitsministeriet.dk/fileadmin/downloads/Forskning\\_og\\_dokumentation/Forskningspulje/Taarnby-rapport.pdf](http://www.justitsministeriet.dk/fileadmin/downloads/Forskning_og_dokumentation/Forskningspulje/Taarnby-rapport.pdf) (accessed December 20, 2010).

<sup>13</sup> Ibid.

Somalia.<sup>14</sup> However, Al-Shabaab boycotted the dialogue and its leadership called for attacks on the ARS, arguing that the latter had failed to adopt the norms of global jihadist ideology; hence, violent fighting ensued between the groups.<sup>15</sup> The moderate elements of the ARS finally left Eritrea and merged with the TFG in Djibouti to take part in the UN-sponsored negotiations. Some other extremists who continued the war against the TFG joined Al-Shabaab and others formed Hizbul-Islam, another Islamist organization in Somalia.<sup>16</sup> Al-Shabaab promotes an authoritarian form of “Salafi” Islam that stresses an inflexible interpretation of the Quran with an aim of overthrowing the current legitimate government and implementing Sharia law.<sup>17</sup> The group claims to be waging jihad against the “enemies of Islam.”

In February 2008, the United States and several Western governments designated Al-Shabaab as a foreign terrorist organization.<sup>18</sup> In September 2008, the group tried to join the international terror arena, and in late 2009 Al-Qaeda commanders in East Africa—like Fazul Abdullah Mohammed, involved in the 1998 U.S. Embassy bombings in Kenya and Tanzania—joined the top leaders of Al-Shabaab.<sup>19</sup> Today, Al-Shabaab is thought to be affiliated with other international terrorist organizations such as Al-Qaeda and Al-Qaeda in the Arab Peninsula (AQAP). However, the leaders of the group denied having ties to Al-Qaeda until early 2010 when they proudly declared a connection.<sup>20</sup> The

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<sup>14</sup> Daveed Gartenstein-Ross and Madeleine Gruen, “Understanding Al-Shabaab,” *Foundation for Defense Democracies*, November 04, 2009, [http://www.defenddemocracy.org/index.php?option=com\\_content&task=view&id=11787129&Itemid=326](http://www.defenddemocracy.org/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=11787129&Itemid=326) (accessed April 12, 2011).

<sup>15</sup> Dagne, “Somalia: Current Conditions and Prospects for a Lasting Peace,” 21.

<sup>16</sup> Christopher Harnisch, “The Terror Threat from Somalia: The Internationalization of Al-Shabaab,” *Critical Threats Project*, (February 12, 2010), 3, [http://www.criticalthreats.org/sites/default/files/pdf\\_upload/analysis/CTP\\_Terror\\_Threat\\_From\\_Somalia\\_Shabaab\\_Internationalization.pdf](http://www.criticalthreats.org/sites/default/files/pdf_upload/analysis/CTP_Terror_Threat_From_Somalia_Shabaab_Internationalization.pdf) (accessed April 12, 2011).

<sup>17</sup> Ibid., 14–17.

<sup>18</sup> Stephanie Hanson, “Al-Shabaab,” *Council on Foreign Relations*, August 10, 2011, <http://www.cfr.org/somalia/Al-Shabaab/p18650> (accessed August 30, 2011).

<sup>19</sup> Bill Roggio, “Suicide Bomber Detonates inside Somalia’s Presidential Compound,” *The long War Journal*, September 20, 2010, [http://www.longwarjournal.org/archives/2010/09/suicide\\_bomber\\_deton.php](http://www.longwarjournal.org/archives/2010/09/suicide_bomber_deton.php) (accessed January 28, 2011).

<sup>20</sup> Tim Lister, “Fertile Territory for Al-Shabaab in Chaos of Somalia,” *CNN*, November 01, 2011, [http://edition.cnn.com/2011/11/01/world/africa/Al-Shabaab-guide/index.html?hpt=hp\\_c2](http://edition.cnn.com/2011/11/01/world/africa/Al-Shabaab-guide/index.html?hpt=hp_c2) (accessed November 01, 2011).

estimated strength of Al-Shabaab is said to be not less than 14,000 members, including both local Somalis and foreign fighters.<sup>21</sup> The “emir” of Al-Shabaab is Sheikh Ibrahim Al-Afhani, who replaced Sheikh Mukhtar Abu Zubayr (also known as Ahmed Abdi Godane) in December 2010.<sup>22</sup>

The group funds and coordinates three types of missions. First, Al-Shabaab envisions an Islamic state in the form of a caliphate in Somalia to be achieved through Jihad against the TFG, which is seen as an ally of the Western countries.<sup>23</sup> Second, the group seeks to compel the withdrawal of AMISOM forces and international intervention from Somalia.<sup>24</sup> Finally, the group seeks the return of the “Somali-inhabited” lands of Ogaden and the North Eastern Province in neighboring Ethiopia and Kenya, respectively.<sup>25</sup>

Currently, the group is said to control most parts of Southern and Central Somalia, including a big portion of Mogadishu as shown in Figure 2, where Sharia law has been imposed. Were it not for African Union (AU) peacekeepers, Somalia’s U.N.-backed TFG, which clings tenuously to control, would have been defeated by the terrorist group.<sup>26</sup> Since its inception, the organization had limited itself to national terrorist attacks; however, due to Uganda’s and Burundi’s participation in AMISOM, Al-Shabaab

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<sup>21</sup> Dahir Alasow, “Somalia: Report on Al-Shabaab Military Force,” *Suna Times*, May 06, 2011, <http://www.sunatimes.com/view.php?id=564> (accessed November 16, 2011). Also see African Union Crisis Committee, “Study Guide,” 10. And Micha Zenko, “Somalia: Kenya’s Invasion and Objectives,” *Council on Foreign Relations*, October 27, 2011, <http://blogs.cfr.org/zenko/2011/10/27/somalia-kenyas-invasion-and-objectives/> (accessed November 16, 2011).

<sup>22</sup> Daniel Berhane, “What’s Next for Dahir Awey, Hizbul Islam?/Inside Al-Shabaab Camp,” January 15, 2011, <http://danielberhane.wordpress.com/2011/01/15/whats-next-for-dahir-aweys-hizbul-islam-inside-Al-Shabaab-camp/> (accessed on April 21, 2011).

<sup>23</sup> Abdulkadir Abdirahman, “Teenage Al-Shabaab Soldiers in Training,” *Demotix News*, October 29, 2010, <http://www.demotix.com/news/495081/teenage-Al-Shabaab-soldiers-training> (accessed 15 February 2011).

<sup>24</sup> Georg-Sebastian Holzer, “Al-Shabaab’s Regionalization Strategy,” *ISN Security Watch*, July 16, 2010, <http://www.isn.ethz.ch/isn/Current-Affairs/Security-Watch/Detail/?id=118877> (accessed December 17, 2010).

<sup>25</sup> Shinn, “Al Shabaab Tries to Take Control in Somalia.”

<sup>26</sup> ICG, “Somalia: The Transitional Government on Life Support,” *Crisis Group Africa Report*, no. 170, (February 21, 2011), 17.



seeks to conduct operations in those countries. On 7/11, Al-Shabaab carried out its first transnational terrorist attack in Kampala, Uganda.

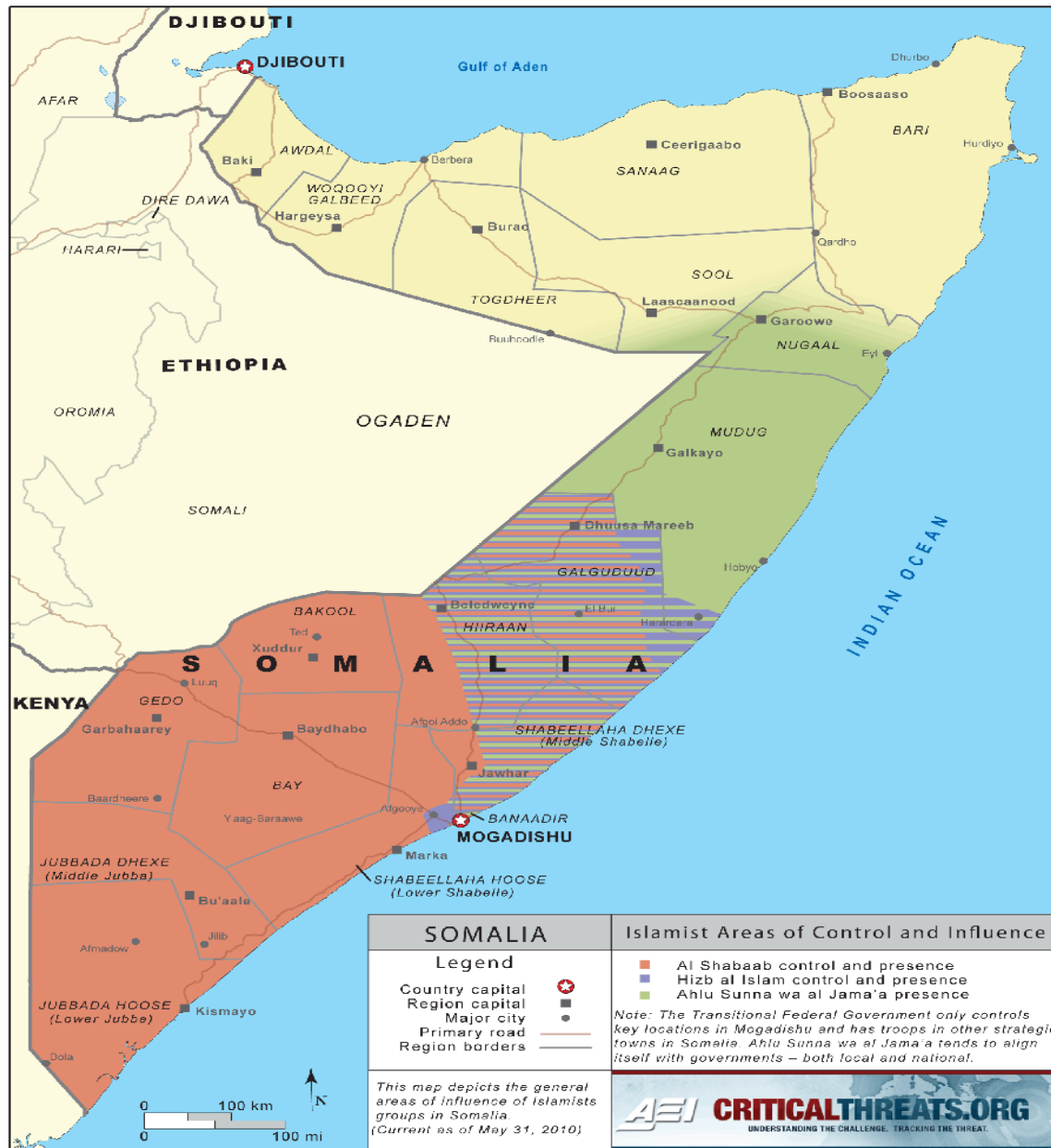


Figure 2. Map of Somalia Showing Area Controlled by Al-Shabaab.<sup>27</sup>

<sup>27</sup> Katherine Zimmerman, “Map of Islamist-Controlled and Areas in Somalia,” *Critical Threats*, May 31, 2010, <http://www.criticalthreats.org/somalia/somalia-conflict-maps-islamist-and-political> (accessed November 14, 2011).

## E. LITERATURE REVIEW

### 1. Conceptual Literature

Historically, transnational terrorist activities have been carried out by non-state actors against states in order to compel the latter to yield to the demands of the former.<sup>28</sup> This coercion mechanism has been used by terrorist groups such as Al-Qaeda to pursue its ideological objectives in accord with the 1998 fatwa by encouraging attacks directly against Americans and allies with the expectation that cumulative graphic casualties would prompt the U.S. to withdraw from the Middle East, in particular Saudi Arabia.<sup>29</sup> The change of the loci of violence from national to transnational is an expansion of the terrorists' network. As John Arquilla says, the "age of terror is driven by an organizational race to build networks."<sup>30</sup> In the literature, a number of authors have argued that this transition is not automatic, but it is enabled by several factors that are embraced by a terrorist group. These mainly include popular support, recruitment of foreign fighters, franchised cells, and porous borders. The author will explain each factor and show the effect of each in the case of Al-Shabaab.

Kristopher Robison, Edward M. Crenshaw, Craig Jenkins, and Audrey Cronin point out that a number of terrorist operations succeed because of popular support.<sup>31</sup> Cronin further argues that terrorist groups succeed in carrying out an attack in a foreign country either with "active support" or passive support" from the indigenous population.<sup>32</sup>

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<sup>28</sup> William H. McRaven, *SPEC OPS Case Studies in Special Operations Warfare: Theory and Practice* (New York: The Random House Publishing Group, 1996), 335.

<sup>29</sup> Usama Bin Laden, "Jihad against Jews and Crusaders," *PBS News online*, February 23, 1998, [http://www.pbs.org/newshour/terrorism/international/fatwa\\_1998.html](http://www.pbs.org/newshour/terrorism/international/fatwa_1998.html) (accessed October 30, 2010).

<sup>30</sup> John Arquilla, "It Takes a Network: On Countering Terrorism While Reforming the Military," Testimony before the House Armed Service Subcommittee on Terrorism, Unconventional Threats and Capabilities on September 18, 2008, in *Lessons for Countering Al qa'ida and the Way Ahead* (Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, 2010), 61, <https://www.hsdl.org/?view&did=21473> (accessed January 5, 2011).

<sup>31</sup> Kristopher K. Robison, Edward M. Crenshaw, and Craig J. Jenkins, "The Ideologies of Violence: The Social Origins of Islamist and Leftist Transnational Terrorism," *Social Forces* 84, no. 4 (June 2006): 2012–2014, <http://web.ebscohost.com.libproxy.nps.edu/ehost/pdfviewer/pdfviewer?hid=7&sid=d1d6b716-e33e-4dcd-af2c-65c5ffd323bc%40sessionmgr11&vid=9> (accessed February 10, 2011). Also see Audrey Kurth Cronin, "How Al-Qaida Ends: The Decline and Demise of Terrorist Groups," *International Security* 31, no.1 (Summer 2006): 27.

<sup>32</sup> Cronin, "How Al-Qaida Ends: The Decline and Demise of Terrorist Groups," 27.

Examples of active support include hiding terrorist operatives, raising finances, and volunteering to join the terrorist group. Passive support includes actions such as unwillingness to collaborate with security institutions.<sup>33</sup> In this thesis, the author intends to find out how much support Ugandans and the Somali community/refugees in the region rendered to Al-Shabaab prior to 7/11. If the support was critical, then it would be logical for Uganda to consider courses of action that target these communities; notably, the numbers of Somalis in the region who are fleeing the fighting in their country are very large.

Andrew Philips argues that foreign fighters in a terrorist group are crucial for an attack beyond its normal boundaries.<sup>34</sup> In 2006, in the Province of Anbar, Iraq, foreign fighters were at the core of those who initially controlled the population; they worked as volunteers, undertook martyrdom operations against the U.S. and its allies, and provided financial connections on a monthly basis to the Islamic world.<sup>35</sup> In the case of Al-Qaeda in Iraq, foreign jihadists were contact points through which other terrorists would illegally enter Iraq from Syria and Jordan, using mosques and safe houses along the Euphrates river valley that allowed jihadists to move to Baghdad through Ramadi.<sup>36</sup> In November 2005, Anbar province became a command post from which Zarqawi directed jihadists to bomb US owned hotels in Amman, Jordan.<sup>37</sup> Phillips further argues that the decline of both the inflow of foreign fighters and support of the Sunni population were contributing factors to why Al-Qaeda in Iraq (AQI) lost Anbar province in 2007.<sup>38</sup> In the literature, Al-Shabaab is said to have links to foreign fighters through its leadership.

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<sup>33</sup> Cronin, "How Al-Qaida Ends: The Decline and Demise of Terrorist Groups," 27.

<sup>34</sup> Andrew Phillips, "How AQI Lost Iraq," *Australian Journal of International Affairs* 63, no.1 (March 2009): 65–66, <http://www.proquest.com.libproxy.nps.edu/> (accessed January 21, 2011).

<sup>35</sup> Frederick W. Kagan, "Al-Qaeda in Iraq- How to Understand it: How to Defeat it," *The Weekly Standard* 012, no. 48 (September 10, 2007): 3, <http://www.weeklystandard.com/Content/Public/Articles/000/000/014/043delki.asp?page=3> (accessed December 29, 2010).

<sup>36</sup> Kimberly Kagan, "The Anbar Awakening: Displacing Al-Qaeda from its Stronghold in Western Iraq," *The Institution for the Study of War and Weekly Standard*, (March 2007), 2–5, <http://www.understandingwar.org/files/reports/IraqReport03.pdf> (accessed December 29, 2010).

<sup>37</sup> Scott Macleod, "Behind the Amman Hotel Attack," *Time World*, November 10, 2005, <http://www.time.com/time/world/article/0,8599,1128209,00.html> (accessed January 23, 2011).

<sup>38</sup> Phillips, "How AQI Lost Iraq," 65.

Notably, the former leader, Ahmed Abdi Godane (Abdul Zubayr), trained in Afghanistan and fought along with the Taliban in the 1990s.<sup>39</sup> This thesis will thus explore the degree of influence of foreign fighters on Al-Shabaab.

Peter Chalk and Glenn Robinson argue that transnational terrorist attacks occur when there are “franchise” cells of one or two people in the targeted country.<sup>40</sup> One example is Morocco, where “a local cell carried out five simultaneous bombings of Western targets in Casablanca in May 2003 that left forty-five dead.”<sup>41</sup> Robinson further elaborates that such bombings are carried out by local terrorist operatives in diaspora communities. Interestingly, members of cells are immigrants who often have lived in the targeted country for many years, while other cell members are citizens by birth of the targeted nation. For instance,

The 2004 train bombings in Madrid that killed 191 people were carried out primarily by expatriate Moroccans; most of them had lived and worked in Spain for years, and the July 2005 suicide bombings in London that killed fifty-two people were perpetrated by three native-born British Muslims and a convert from Jamaica who had lived in Britain most of his life.<sup>42</sup>

Chalk, meanwhile, explains that terrorists will always take advantage of ungoverned borders. He argues that many “borders in the Eastern African corridor are porous and subject to little if any control.”<sup>43</sup> One example is the poorly secured 424-mile Kenya-Somalia border stretching to the Indian Ocean.<sup>44</sup> Chalk also highlights that in 2004 Al-Qaeda successfully penetrated into the Jebel Kurush mountain range northeast of

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<sup>39</sup> Dagne, “Somalia: Current Conditions and Prospects for a Lasting Peace,” 5.

<sup>40</sup> Glenn E. Robinson, *Jihadi Information Strategy: Sources, Opportunities, and Vulnerabilities*, in *Information Strategy and Warfare: A guide to Theory and Practice*, eds. John Arquilla and Douglas Borer (New York: Routledge, 2007), 96–98.

<sup>41</sup> Ibid.

<sup>42</sup> Peter Chalk, “Trends in Transnational Terrorism and Implications for U.S. National Security and U.S. Terrorism Risk Insurance Act,” *Studies in Conflict & Terrorism* 30, no. 9 (September 2007): 772. <http://web.ebscohost.com.libproxy.nps.edu/ehost/pdfviewer/pdfviewer?hid=14&sid=5fa70922-3f6e-484e-9cba-c4f2aec46df0%40sessionmgr15&vid=4> (accessed February 11, 2011).

<sup>43</sup> Peter Chalk, *Case Study: The East Africa Corridor, in Ungoverned Territories: Understanding and Reducing Terrorism Risks* (Santa Monica: RAND Corporation, 2007), 157, <http://site.ebrary.com/lib/nps/docDetail.action?docID=10225489> (accessed February 14, 2011).

<sup>44</sup> Jamestown Foundation Briefs, “Al-Shabaab Expands Operational Zone with Kampala Bombing- But to What End?” *Terrorism Monitor* VIII, no. 28 (July 16, 2010): 2, [http://www.jamestown.org/uploads/media/TM\\_008\\_61.pdf](http://www.jamestown.org/uploads/media/TM_008_61.pdf) (accessed January 12, 2011).

Sudan that runs parallel to the Red Sea and managed to set up training camps because of the lack of border control. Moreover, according to Chalk, the security in East African airports is weak, with no computerized networks to manage the immigration process. In this thesis, the author intends to examine the state of Uganda's border to the east with Kenya because it is likely to be a transit route for terrorists into Uganda.

Martha Crenshaw and Gabriel Weimann point out that in this era of technology many types of media are of use to terrorists, even across borders.<sup>45</sup> Internet and cell phones have eased coordination and communication. The Internet has especially been used by terrorists to recruit, fundraise, and spread radicalism. Crenshaw also argues that many bombs are remotely detonated by cell phones. Thus, access to technology can accelerate terrorist activities. According to Weimann, in January 2004:

A federal grand jury in Idaho charged a Saudi graduate student with conspiring to help terrorist organizations wage jihad by using the Internet to raise funds, field recruits, and locate prospective U.S. targets—military and civilian—in the Middle East.<sup>46</sup>

On the other hand, terrorist attacks succeed when terrorists or insurgents penetrate and conceal themselves among the indigenous population of a targeted country. This makes any countermeasures difficult because it is hard to detect and target such terrorists or insurgents. However, Gordon McCormick argues that such success is brought about by an information advantage.<sup>47</sup> McCormick, in his conceptual model known as the “Mystic Diamond,” attests that the side with the information advantage will always accomplish its mission. In this study, the author will use the “Mystic Diamond” to analyze the Kampala bombings case study to show how the terrorists’ hard information advantage accelerated the bombings, and how the Uganda government can use the model to isolate the terrorists for easy targeting and deny them information from the population.

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<sup>45</sup> Martha Crenshaw, “How Terrorism Decline,” *Terrorism and Political Violence* 3, no. 1 (Spring 1991): 73. Also see Gabriel Weimann, “How Modern Terrorism uses the Internet,” *Special Reports*, (March 2004), 5, <http://www.usip.org/files/resources/sr116.pdf> (accessed November 02, 2010).

<sup>46</sup> Weimann, “How Modern Terrorism uses the Internet,” 8.

<sup>47</sup> Gordon McCormick is a Professor at the Naval Postgraduate School, Defense Analysis Department, Monterey, California, U.S. Also see Gordon McCormick, “Mystic Diamond,” *Irregular Warfare Class Notes*, Summer Quarter, 2010.

However, not everyone agrees with such an approach. For instance, Glenn Robinson argues that repression of terrorist groups in their own territory by military force can have the effect of exporting the terrorist problem to another country. For instance, Russian military intervention in the second Chechen War seemed to increase the Chechen resistance, thus resulting in more terrorist attacks in other parts of Russia.<sup>48</sup> In contrast, Audrey Cronin argues that military repression has caused the decline and end of groups like the Shining Path of Peru in 1992.<sup>49</sup> In this study, the author will explore how each of these author's arguments, which are summarized in Table 1, apply to Al-Shabaab.

Author(s)	Variables	Accelerators	Indicators	Transnational attack
Robison K. Kristopher, Edward M. Crenshaw, Craig J. Jenkins	Popular support- both passive and active support, Repression of terrorists group in their own country		Financial support	Yes
Andrew Philips	Foreign fighters, popular support		Number of terrorist, Financial support	Yes
Robinson Glenn	Franchised cells-who are local in the targeted country, Repression of terrorist group in their own country		2 or 3 localized terrorists	Yes
Martha Crenshaw	Popular support, lack of border control	Technology, Media, Internet		Yes
Audrey Cronin	Popular support, Repression of terrorists group in their own country			Yes
Peter Chalk	Ungoverned territories, Franchised cells		Influx of foreigners	Yes
Gabriel Weimann		Technology		Yes
Gordon McCormick		Information		Yes

Table 1. Authors' Hypotheses about Transnational Terrorist Attacks.

<sup>48</sup> Robinson, *Jihadi Information Strategy: Sources, Opportunities, and Vulnerabilities*, 96.

<sup>49</sup> Cronin, "How Al-Qaida Ends: The Decline and Demise of Terrorist Groups," 30.

Worth noting is that in the literature, a number of analysts underestimated Al-Shabaab's capacity to deter international intervention by striking beyond the borders of Somalia. However, the heinous attacks of 7/11 demonstrated the group's ability to conduct transnational attacks. Therefore, in this thesis the author intends to explore this gap and find out what factors contributed to the success of Al-Shabaab.

## **2. Empirical Literature**

In an effort to identify factors that may have enabled Al-Shabaab to carry out the twin bombings on 7/11, this thesis will examine the empirical data related to the typology presented in Table 2 to test the theories of the authors in Table 1. Arguably, presence of franchise cells, porous borders, popular support in the diaspora and other opportunistic factors combined may increase the likelihood of transnational terrorist attacks. For the case of Al-Shabaab, the author will use the timeline of the group's events in Chapter II to trace and find out how the three independent variables contributed to Al-Shabaab's success on 7/11.

## **F. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK AND HYPOTHESIS**

In this research, the dependent variable is the transnational terrorist activity of Al-Shabaab. A transnational terrorist attack is when a terrorist attack is planned from one country and executed in another. The indicators of a transnational attack that will be considered are the number of terrorist operatives, financial contributions by the sympathizers, and the number of other supportive organizations in the targeted country. In the case study of Al-Shabaab's attacks on 7/11, operational effectiveness will be measured in three forms. The first measurement will be the number of operatives in Al-Shabaab. The more operatives the group has in the targeted country, the higher the probability for an attack to take place. The operatives can be used to penetrate the local population of the targeted country to specifically identify targets and later become suicide bombers as the means to achieve the end. Thus, by having an estimate of the number of Al-Shabaab operatives in Uganda, it should be possible to predict the degree of effectiveness of the terrorist group. The second measurement will be the financial support to Al-Shabaab operatives by the local population inside Uganda. The author argues that

when there are local sympathizers contributing financial aid to facilitate terrorist operatives to live anonymously in the targeted country, the terrorist attacks will more likely occur. The third measurement will be the level of active or passive support given to Al-Shabaab by other Islamist organizations in Uganda, such as sanctuaries. If there are supporting movements inside a targeted country, there are more chances for that country to suffer from transnational terrorist attacks.

This thesis will specifically look at the interaction of three variables (the Somali community, porous borders, and franchised cells):

- The Somali community in the region

These are Somalis living or born in the targeted country as refugees or recent migrants. Support in the diaspora in monetary terms will be measured by financial support from the Somali community both before and after the 7/11 attacks. Secondly, diaspora support will be measured by the number of recruits joining Al-Shabaab from Somali communities in the diaspora and from Somali refugee camps, both before and after 7/11.

- Porous borders

These are territorial borders that not only allow the smuggling of devices used in terrorist attacks, but also allow the infiltration of operatives into the targeted country. This variable is signified by the number of Somalis that entered Uganda, both legally and illegally, as shown in Figure 1. Another indicator is the amount of explosives/devices being smuggled into the country.

- Franchised cells

These are two or three extremists sharing the same ideology as the terrorist group. This variable will be evaluated in terms of the number of operative cells in the targeted country. There is a high likelihood of a transnational terrorist attack taking place if operatives are in the targeted country.

Therefore, in this study the author will examine the likelihood of a transnational terrorist attack in regard to the increase in size of the Somali community, the increase in



the number of franchise cells, and the porousness of borders with Uganda. He will then determine which variable is most important. However, worth acknowledging is that there could be other variables that may have enabled Al-Shabaab to succeed on 7/11.

Typology of Transnational terrorist attack		Franchise cells			
		High		low	
		Porous borders		Porous borders	
		High	low	High	Low
Community in the Diaspora	High	High	Semi- high	Medium	Probably low
	Low	Relative high	Medium	Probably low	Low

Table 2. Typology of Transnational Terrorist Attacks.

## G. METHODOLOGY

The author intends to use qualitative theory testing techniques to determine the contributing factors that enabled Al-Shabaab to perpetrate attacks beyond the borders of Somalia for the first time. Using Al-Shabaab's timeline of events from 2006 to 2011, the author will determine which key event occurred before and after the twin bombings in Kampala on 7/11 and if there is a relationship amongst them. Since theory testing identifies the extent of conditions likely to be relevant while applying the technique of process tracing to clarify the relationship between events and timing,<sup>50</sup> the author will determine which events occurred simultaneously, or in the same timeframe, and probably affected one another. Lastly, the author will find out which key event was crucial for the transnational attack.

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<sup>50</sup> Andrew Bennett and Alexander George, *Case Studies and Theory Development in Social Sciences* (London: MIT Press, 2005), 75.

## **H. ORGANIZATION OF THE STUDY**

In this chapter, the author has proposed that the general problem faced by Uganda as part of the African Mission in Somalia is both internal and external. The author examined the theories from which hypotheses have been derived. The author has also shown the evolution of Al-Shabaab as a terrorist organization. Chapter II introduces the hypotheses and explains how each independent variable affects the dependent variable. This is where the author will reveal which variable was most important in regard to the transnational attacks on 7/11. Consequently, the author will come up with intervening strategies as a way forward to minimize the transnational threat by Al-Shabaab.

## **II. ASSESSING THE IMPACT OF VARIOUS EXPLANATIONS ON THE CASE OF AL-SHABAAB**

### **A. INTRODUCTION**

In this chapter, the author will use the theoretical arguments by the authors in Table 1 and apply them to major chronological events before and after 7/11 in order to clearly understand what variables led to the success of Al-Shabaab's first transnational attacks in Kampala, Uganda. Also, the author will provide empirical evidence from 2006 to date to support the claim made in this study and answer his thesis research question: what factors contributed to the success of the transnational activity that happened approximately 600 miles away from Somalia's nearest border?<sup>51</sup>

First, the author will explain how, prior to 7/11, Uganda's role as a key player in AMISOM was a catalyst to the events that led to the bombings in Kampala. Second, the author will show how Uganda's military presence in Somalia is perceived as a continuation of foreign military occupation, causing military repression. This will be illustrated by a series of warnings and promises of retaliation made by Al-Shabaab against what it perceived as the killing of Muslims in Mogadishu by AMISOM troops. Third, the author will show that Al-Shabaab's embrace of foreign fighters was a turning point that made their threats credible, and then provide evidence of Al-Shabaab successfully recruiting Ugandans into its rank and file. Also, the author will demonstrate how, after 7/11, the local Ugandans, as foreign fighters recruited by Al-Shabaab, were crucial in the success of an entirely transnational terrorist attack. Notably, the author will show the use of Kenya as a transit route for the potent group because it would be difficult for Uganda to minimize Al-Shabaab's transnational ability without cooperation from the Kenyan government. Furthermore, evidence will be presented for how the Uganda-Kenya border is porous when it comes to the terrorists crossing with armaments to launch an attack. Lastly, the author will show that there is no evidence that aligns the Somali

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<sup>51</sup> Christopher Harnisch, "Al Shabaab's First International Strike: Analysis of the July 11 Uganda Bombings," *Critical Threats*, July 14, 2010, <http://www.criticalthreats.org/somalia/Al-Shabaabs-first-international-strike-analysis-july-11-uganda-bombings-july-14-2010-4532> (accessed July 05, 2011).

community in Uganda with the notorious terrorist group. This chapter goes on to analyze the major event(s) and variable(s) that led to the twin bombings on 7/11.

The findings indicate that the recruitment of Ugandans was a key factor in the success of the 7/11 bombings. The originally recruited Ugandan, Issa Luyima, recruited his brothers and formed a local franchised cell in Uganda, facilitated by an Al-Shabaab cell in East Africa, and was responsible for the mayhem of 7/11. This franchised cell, organic to Al-Shabaab's Saleh Nabhan Brigade,<sup>52</sup> was a sufficient factor in the Kampala bombings. Also, members of the franchised cell were quite familiar with the city of Kampala and freely moved across the Uganda–Kenya border without detection. In addition, the cell members lived anonymously within the Uganda population until their arrest. Therefore, successful recruitment of Ugandans was a key contributor to the success of the 7/11 bombings. On the other hand, the porous border was a necessary condition for the success of the 7/11 bombings. The entire planning of the operation would be impossible for the perpetrators if they had no way to manipulate the border crossing posts and transport the required materials that were used. This makes the porous border the most important factor in the success of Al-Shabaab on 7/11, because if Al-Shabaab had failed in recruiting Ugandans, other people from the Somali community (or from some other group) would have done the job. The author will do further analysis of the findings by applying a modified “Mystic Diamond” model. Finally, to answer his second research question, the author will recommend feasible strategies derived from the model that Uganda can adopt to minimize the security dilemma before drawing overall conclusions.

## **B. BEFORE 7/11**

This period is overshadowed by the rise of Al-Shabaab, especially after the invasion of Ethiopian troops in December 2006, as noted earlier. This resulted in a

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<sup>52</sup> Saleh Nabhan Brigade was formed in Somalia by terrorists after the death of Al-Qaeda member Nabhan Saleh in 2009, who was among the masterminds of the two U.S. Embassy bombings in Nairobi and Dar es salaam in 1998. See Bill Roggio, “Uganda Attack Carried out by Shabaab Cell Named after Slain Al-Qaeda Leader,” *The Long war Journal*, July 15, 2010, [http://www.longwarjournal.org/archives/2010/07/shabaab\\_cell\\_that\\_ca.php#ixzz1IxFJKXnW](http://www.longwarjournal.org/archives/2010/07/shabaab_cell_that_ca.php#ixzz1IxFJKXnW) (accessed June 22, 2011).

complex insurgency that created preconditions which, in turn, dictated the courses of action to be taken by the international community against Al-Shabaab.<sup>53</sup> The weak TFG in the center of this episode—constrained in Baidoa, Western Somalia, in 2006, and later shifted to Mogadishu—was at high risk of collapsing in its infant stage.<sup>54</sup> The international community could not let the TFG collapse. Thus, in February 2007 under United Nations (UN) Security Resolution 1744, Uganda was tasked by the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD), a seven member state bloc (Uganda, Kenya, Tanzania, Sudan, Somalia Eritrea and Djibouti) under the authorization of the AU, to head AMISOM.<sup>55</sup> This put Uganda in the spotlight of Al-Shabaab.

### **1. Expression of Military Repression**

Uganda's intervention was a catalyst that saw Al-Shabaab start to mobilize and encourage youth from Kenya, Tanzania, and Uganda to join its established training camps.<sup>56</sup> Moreover, in 2008 Al-Shabaab initiated political strategies to gain legitimacy by engaging local clan leaders and providing essential services to locals in Southern and Central Somalia.<sup>57</sup> This is why David Shinn asserts that "Al-Shabaab filled a political vacuum and there is not yet any equivalent, opposing force to challenge its control."<sup>58</sup> During the same period, Al-Shabaab felt threatened by the presence of peacekeepers, so the group then declared attacks against "imperialists and Christian forces" threatening Somalia, namely the U.S., Ethiopia, Uganda, Burundi, and Kenya.<sup>59</sup> This was a period in

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<sup>53</sup> Bronwyn E. Bruton, "Somalia A New Approach," *Council on Foreign Relations*, Council Special Report no. 52 (March 2010), 08.

<sup>54</sup> ICG, "Somalia: The Tough Part Is Ahead," *Policy Briefing, Africa Briefing* N°.45 (January 26, 2007), 12, <http://www.crisisgroup.org/~media/Files/africa/horn-of-africa/somalia/B045%20Somalia%20The%20Tough%20Part%20Is%20Ahead.pdf> (accessed December 12, 2010).

<sup>55</sup> Dagne, "Somalia: Current Conditions and Prospects for a Lasting Peace," 8, 19.

<sup>56</sup> Ibid., 12.

<sup>57</sup> Taarnby and Hallundbaeks, "Al-Shabaab, the Internationalization of Militant Islamism in Somalia and the Implications for Radicalisation Processes in Europe," 16.

<sup>58</sup> Shinn, "Al Shabaab's Foreign Threat to Somalia," 214.

<sup>59</sup> Taarnby and Hallundbaeks, "Al-Shabaab, the Internationalization of Militant Islamism in Somalia and the Implications for Radicalisation Processes in Europe," 13.

which Al-Shabaab gained support from radicals in the diaspora to rally against Uganda because it was viewed as a one-sided peacekeeping force used for combat in favor of the TFG.<sup>60</sup>

Immediately after 7/11, Al-Shabaab accused Ugandan troops of military repression in a statement released on the Internet that read as follows:

The enmity of the crusaders [AMISOM] has reached such a level that they bombard the densely populated areas of the Muslims with approximately 300 mortars a day....families are massacred, children are orphaned, women are widowed and close to two million Muslims have been displaced.<sup>61</sup>

Also, there was criticism by international observers of the Ugandan troops' shelling of civilians in Mogadishu in reaction to the attacks launched by Al-Shabaab from within the population.<sup>62</sup>

However, the claim of military repression on its own cannot explain the timings of the 7/11 bombings. Otherwise, Ethiopia would have been struck first, being in the proximity of Somalia and believed to have aggressively clashed and removed the Islamist militants under the ICU in power in 2006. Therefore, the author argues that the intervention of Uganda, even though it was seen as military repression, was a reactant that made Al-Shabaab more aggressive. Max Fisher, a foreign affairs and national security analyst, explains that terrorist attacks by a foreign terrorist group are defensive and applied in circumstances where an insurgent is unable to challenge his adversary in combat.<sup>63</sup> In addition, insurgencies have frequently used times when there is a "foreign military" occupation in their home country to advance their ideology. For instance, in the 1960s the African National Congress (ANC) developed a military wing for the sole

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<sup>60</sup> Bruton, "Somalia A New Approach," 23.

<sup>61</sup> Will Hartely, "JTIC Country Briefing–Somalia," *Jane's Terrorism and Security Monitor*, September 01, 2010, 19, [http://jtic.janes.com.libproxy.nps.edu/janesdata/data/jtic/cb/Somalia/Somalia%20CT%20environment\\_01092010.pdf](http://jtic.janes.com.libproxy.nps.edu/janesdata/data/jtic/cb/Somalia/Somalia%20CT%20environment_01092010.pdf) (accessed June 23, 2011).

<sup>62</sup> Hartely, "JTIC Country Briefing–Somalia," 19.

<sup>63</sup> Max Fisher, "Why Al-Shabaab Would Attack in Uganda," July 12, 2010, <http://www.theatlantic.com/international/archive/2010/07/why-Al-Shabaab-would-attack-in-uganda/59551/> (accessed November 20, 2010).

purpose of violently overcoming the supremacy of white people.<sup>64</sup> Also, one of the reasons why Lashker-e-Taiba (LeT) carries out attacks against India (like that in Mumbai in 2008) is to liberate Muslims under Hindu oppression and counter the widening U.S. footprint in India.<sup>65</sup> Yet, while Hindu oppression and a widening U.S. footprint may motivate transnational attacks carried out inside India, they do not explain the factors that enable LeT to carry out attacks.

## **2. Recruitment of Foreigners Including Ugandans, 2009–2010**

In early 2009, the continued AMISOM troop support to the TFG ushered in elections in February that saw Sharif Sheik Ahmed, a former leader of ARS, elected president of Somalia.<sup>66</sup> This resulted in Al-Shabaab imposing Sharia law in most of the regions under its control and mobilizing Islamists in the diaspora to join its ranks to continue attacks against AMISOM and TFG troops.<sup>67</sup> By July 2010, twenty-six Ugandan troops had been killed in Somalia.<sup>68</sup>

In spring 2009, there was an influx of foreign fighters, also known as “Muhajirin,” from the neighboring countries of Tanzania and Kenya, and from Uganda, including Uganda’s Issa Luyima.<sup>69</sup> It was only a matter of time before foreign fighters would be used for attacks in their own countries. RAND<sup>70</sup> notes that “foreign combatants contribute to the insurgents’ goal of internationalizing their armed struggle...”<sup>71</sup> Indeed,

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<sup>64</sup> Paul Rich, Insurgency, Terrorism and the Apartheid System in South Africa, in *Terrorism in Africa*, ed. Martha Crenshaw (New York: Macmillan Publishing Company, 1994), 335–352.

<sup>65</sup> Tankel, “Lashkar-e-Taiba: Past Operations and Future Prospects,” *National Security Studies Program Policy Paper*, April 2011, 2.

<sup>66</sup> Curran, “Global Ambitions: An Analysis of Al-Shabaab’s Evolving Rhetoric.”

<sup>67</sup> Taarnby and Hallundbaeks, “Al-Shabaab, the Internationalization of Militant Islamism in Somalia and the Implications for Radicalisation Processes in Europe,” 17.

<sup>68</sup> Dagne, “Somalia: Current Conditions and Prospects for a Lasting Peace,” 9.

<sup>69</sup> Taarnby and Hallundbaeks, “Al-Shabaab, the Internationalization of Militant Islamism in Somalia and the Implications for Radicalisation Processes in Europe,” 26–33.

<sup>70</sup> RAND Corporation is a non-profit institution that helps improve policy and decision making through research and analysis. See “RAND Corporation,” [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/RAND\\_Corporation](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/RAND_Corporation) (accessed November 21, 2011).

<sup>71</sup> Daniel L. Byman, Peter Chalk, Bruce Hoffman, William Rosenau and David Brannan, “Assessing The Impact Of External Support,” in *Trends in Outside Support for Insurgent Movements* (Santa Monica: RAND, 2001), 96.

the presence of foreigners increased attacks against international intervention in Mogadishu. For instance, on September 17, 2009, Al-Shabaab executed a well-coordinated twin bombing of the AMISOM headquarters and the DYNCORP offices in Mogadishu.<sup>72</sup> From June 2009 to June 2010, 556 terrorist incidents were reported to have killed over 1,437 people and wounded 3,408.<sup>73</sup> Besides attacks inside Somalia, the recruitment of foreign fighters ushered in a time of transnational terrorist threats against AMISOM troop-contributing countries.

### 3. Early Warning Threats

Threats of terrorist attacks against Kampala and Bujumbura were featured in a statement of October 23, 2009, in which senior Al-Shabaab commander Shaykh Ali Mohamed Hussein stressed that “we shall make their people cry... will move our fighting to those two cities and we will destroy them.”<sup>74</sup> Likewise, on February 1, 2010, the group declared in a media release its international ambition to formally align with Al-Qaeda to wage jihad on the Horn of Africa (HOA), a campaign that would be combined with Al-Qaeda’s ideology.<sup>75</sup> There was no immediate impact as the group maintained its operational activities and political targets inside Somalia. However, on July 9, 2010, just two days prior to 7/11, Al-Shabaab “encouraged Islamist militants in Chechnya, Pakistan, Afghanistan and elsewhere to attack the diplomatic missions of Uganda and Burundi in response to their continued support for the TFG.”<sup>76</sup>

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<sup>72</sup> Taarnby and Hallundbaek, “Al-Shabaab, the Internationalization of Militant Islamism in Somalia and the Implications for Radicalisation Processes in Europe,” 19–20.

<sup>73</sup> “Somalia Overtakes Iraq, Afghanistan, Pakistan, and Columbia to Become World’s Terror Capital-Global Study,” *Maplecroft*, November 15, 2010, <http://www.maplecroft.com/about/news/terrorism.html> (accessed June 28, 2011).

<sup>74</sup> “Al Shabaab: We will Attack Uganda and Burundi,” *Newstime Africa*, October 23, 2009, <http://www.newstimeafrica.com/archives/2789> (access June 30, 2010).

<sup>75</sup> Tim Pippard, “Al-Shabab’s Agenda in the Wake of the Kampala Suicide Attacks,” *Combating Terrorism Center Sentinel* 3, no. 7 (July 2010): 4, <http://www.ctc.usma.edu/wp-content/uploads/2010/08/CTCSentinel-Vol3Iss7-art2.pdf> (accessed June 22, 2011).

<sup>76</sup> Pippard, “Al-Shabab’s Agenda in the Wake of the Kampala Suicide Attacks,” 4. Also see “Somali Islamist Leader Calls for Uganda, Burundi Embassy Attacks,” *People’s Daily Online*, July 6, 2010, <http://english.peopledaily.com.cn/90001/90777/90855/7053243.html> (accessed June 22, 2011).



After several threats, Al-Shabaab demonstrated its increasing operational reach when it carried out concurrent suicide bombings in Kampala, Uganda on 7/11. The targeted locations were the Logogo Rugby Club and an Ethiopian restaurant in Kansanga, a Kampala neighborhood as people watched a World Cup soccer final. The group also planted suicide vests that were detonated remotely.<sup>77</sup> The investigations by Ugandan authorities, with assistance from the FBI, acknowledged that evidence pointed to the Al-Shabaab terrorist organization being responsible for the bombings.<sup>78</sup> The attacks echoed an escalation of Al-Shabaab's rhetorical campaign against Uganda that had been increasingly consistent in the months prior to 7/11.

### **C. AFTER 7/11**

It was evident that Al-Shabaab had stepped onto the international operational scene in a statement it released on the Internet on July 14, 2010, that read as follows:

The bombings were carried out to avenge the actions of the Ugandan soldiers serving with AMISOM, the peacekeeping force that has prevented Al-Shabaab from overrunning Mogadishu.<sup>79</sup>

#### **1. Local Franchised and International Cells**

Events that unfolded after 7/11 clarified that a terrorist cell in East Africa planned and facilitated the 7/11 bombings, aided by local Ugandans.<sup>80</sup> As Uganda's police chief Major General Kale Kayihura asserted, "The Kampala bombings were planned jointly by Al-Shabaab and Al-Qaeda."<sup>81</sup>

On July 12, 2010, a day after the bombings, Uganda police discovered one unexploded "suicide bombing vest," wired to a mobile phone, and placed in a laptop bag

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<sup>77</sup> Jamestown Foundation Briefs, "Al-Shabaab Expands Operational Zone with Kampala Bombing-But to What End," 1.

<sup>78</sup> Pippard, "Al-Shabab's Agenda in the Wake of the Kampala Suicide Attacks," 4.

<sup>79</sup> Hartely, "JTIC Country Briefing-Somalia," 19.

<sup>80</sup> Herbert Ssempogo, "Tanzania Flies in Bomb Suspect," *The New Vision*, July 01, 2011, <http://www.newvision.co.ug/D/8/13/759085> (accessed July 02, 2011).

<sup>81</sup> Hartely, "JTIC Country Briefing-Somalia," 20.

in the Ice Link Discotheque in Makindye House (ILDMH).<sup>82</sup> The vest had the same configuration that had been found in the other two targeted locations. The vest was meant to be triggered by calling the mobile phone; however, its failure to explode after the mobile phone was called several times was a turning point in the investigations because of the undeniable technical evidence. After one month of investigation, the evidence obtained from the SIM card inside the mobile phone led to the arrest of three Ugandans, the principle perpetrators, and one Rwandan.<sup>83</sup>

On August 12, 2010, Brigadier James Mugira, the Chief of Military Intelligence, UPDF, paraded the perpetrators who acknowledged having masterminded the deadly bombings. They were:

- Mohamud Mugisha, a 24-year-old Rwandan recruited in 2008 in Nairobi, Kenya.<sup>84</sup> He was picked first to organize the attacks and sent to Uganda, but when he identified a safe house in the vicinity where Ugandan soldiers lived, Mugisha's superiors from Kenya reprimanded him for fear of jeopardizing the mission.<sup>85</sup>
- Mugisha was replaced by Issa Ahmed Luyima, a 33-year-old Ugandan who joined Al-Shabaab in 2009 with other foreigners in Baraawe, Somalia, and trained for four months.<sup>86</sup> With experience gained from fighting alongside Al-Shabaab in Mogadishu, Luyima was chosen by Hanif Jabir, a senior Al-Shabaab member, to carry out the Kampala bombings.<sup>87</sup> As Luyima attested, "I planned the attacks, received suicide bombers and harbored them, and kept the gadgets that were

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<sup>82</sup> Sudarsan Raghavan, "Ugandan Police Arrest Several in Bombings," *The Washington Post*, July 14, 2010. <http://search.proquest.com/docview/609038983?accountid=12702> (accessed July 01, 2011).

<sup>83</sup> Hartely, "JTIC Country Briefing–Somalia," 21.

<sup>84</sup> Ab-Titchaz, "How We Bombed Kampala City," *Jamii Forums*, August 14, 2010, <http://www.jamiiforums.com/international-forum/69741-how-we-bombed-kampala-city.html> (accessed August 30, 2010). Also see Hartely, "JTIC Country Briefing–Somalia," 21.

<sup>85</sup> Ab-Titchaz, "How We Bombed Kampala City."

<sup>86</sup> Robyn Dixon, "Uganda Displays Suspects in Deadly Bomb Attacks," *Los Angeles Times*, August 12, 2010, <http://articles.latimes.com/2010/aug/12/world/la-fg-uganda-attack-20100813> (accessed December 12, 2010). Also see Hartely, "JTIC Country Briefing–Somalia," 21.

<sup>87</sup> Hartely, "JTIC Country Briefing–Somalia," 21.

used."<sup>88</sup> This implies that the suicide bombers were not from the Somali community that had lived in Uganda for decades. In addition, when some of the suicide bombers abandoned the mission and went back to Somalia, Luyima recruited his 30-year old young brother, Edris Nsubuga.

- Edris Nsubuga is said to have accompanied a Somali suicide bomber to the Kyadondo Rugby Club in Lugogo, which was packed with an estimated 5,000 innocent civilians.<sup>89</sup> After the suicide bomber blew up, Nsubuga used his mobile phone remotely to trigger the second device at the same location.<sup>90</sup> The two bombs at this location accounted for the highest number of fatalities, including Nate Hern, a U.S. citizen.<sup>91</sup>
- Hassan Haruna Luyima, another Ugandan, dropped off a Kenyan suicide bomber at the Ethiopian Village restaurant in the suburb of Kansanga where the rest of the fatalities took place.<sup>92</sup> Hassan was also responsible for carrying out a fourth bombing using a suicide-bomb vest at the ILDMH, as previously mentioned. This was the vest that failed to detonate and gave up intelligence used to apprehend the culprits.<sup>93</sup>

The three Ugandans formed a local franchised cell that was facilitated by an East African cell called “Saleh Nabhan Brigade,” named after Al-Qaeda member Saleh Nabhan, who was killed by U.S. Special Forces in a raid on September 14, 2009.<sup>94</sup>

Prior to 7/11, there were obvious terrorist threats, as noted earlier, but without local Ugandans the threats were empty because at that time Al-Shabaab’s ability was

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<sup>88</sup> Hartely, “JTIC Country Briefing–Somalia,” 21

<sup>89</sup> Risdel Kasasira, “How We Bombed Kampala City,” *The Monitor*, August 13, 2010, <http://allafrica.com/stories/201008130251.html> (accessed June 26, 2011). Also see Hartely, “JTIC Country Briefing–Somalia,” 21.

<sup>90</sup> Hartely, “JTIC Country Briefing–Somalia,” 21.

<sup>91</sup> Josh Kron and Mohammed Ibrahim, “Islamists Claim Attack in Uganda,” *The New York Times*, July 12, 2010, <http://www.nytimes.com/2010/07/13/world/africa/13uganda.html> (accessed October 24, 2010).

<sup>92</sup> Herbert Ssempogo, “We Are Sorry, Say 7/11 Suicide Bombers,” *The New vision*, August 12, 2010, <http://allafrica.com/stories/201008130002.html> (accessed June 25, 2011).

<sup>93</sup> Hartely, “JTIC Country Briefing–Somalia,” 21.

<sup>94</sup> Roggio, “Uganda Attack Carried out by Shabaab Cell Named after Slain Al Qaeda Leader.”

limited. Therefore, the theoretical argument of active or passive support from the indigenous population vis a vis the success of a foreign terrorist group holds in this case. Paul Rich argues that in the 1960s the ANC succeeded because of its tactics of influence over the population in order to attain endless support from them; thus, the population was able to hide ANC operatives (who had trained outside South Africa) from countermeasures from the ruling regime.<sup>95</sup> At the peak of the apartheid violence, operatives penetrated the population to the extent of planting bombs in dust bins outside shopping malls. In addition, homegrown cells mobilized the populace to join in the struggle against the regime by that time; thus, the ANC was able to successfully continue with its terror operations. As a result, murders, car bombings, and targeted assassinations were committed for political reasons—for instance, the 1983 Church Street bombing that killed 16 civilians and wounded 130 people.<sup>96</sup> Recruitment of Ugandans was similarly crucial to the success of 7/11.

After 7/11, several Al-Shabaab facilitators and coordinators were arrested in neighboring Kenya and Tanzania. Among them was the “number two Al-Qaeda operative in East Africa, Omar Awadh Omar, a car dealer-business man”<sup>97</sup>, and al-Amin Kimathi, a “Kenyan human rights activist” who facilitated and coordinated the bombings.<sup>98</sup> Also, Hajar Seleman Nyamadondo was arrested, a 31-year-old Tanzanian who was extradited to Uganda in February 2011. As Mr. Abbas Byakagaba, the chief of Uganda’s police anti-terrorism unit explains, “he is one of the key people who smuggled the three bombs ... into Uganda.”<sup>99</sup>

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<sup>95</sup> Rich, *Insurgency, Terrorism and the Apartheid System in South Africa*, 335–337.

<sup>96</sup> Anisseh Van Engeland and Rachael M. Rudolph, *A Successful Turn Over*, in *Ethics and Global politics: From Terrorism to Politics* (Burlington: Ashgate Publishing Company, 2008), 20.

<sup>97</sup> “Kenyan Businessman Arrested,” *Jane’s Terrorism and Security Monitor*, October 08, 2010, [http://www4.janes.com/subscribe/jtsm/doc\\_view.jsp?K2DocKey=/content1/janesdata/mags/jtsm/history/jtsm2010/jtsm5435.htm@current&Prod\\_Name=JTSM&QueryText](http://www4.janes.com/subscribe/jtsm/doc_view.jsp?K2DocKey=/content1/janesdata/mags/jtsm/history/jtsm2010/jtsm5435.htm@current&Prod_Name=JTSM&QueryText) (accessed June 29, 2011).

<sup>98</sup> Abdikarim Buh, “Uganda Police Say They Arrested Key July 11 Terror Attack Suspect,” *Somalia online*, February 22, 2011, <http://hornofafrica-abdikarim.blogspot.com/2011/02/uganda-police-say-they-arrested-key.html> (accessed July 02, 2011).

<sup>99</sup> George Marshall Center, *PTSS Journal*, (April 14, 2011): 22. Also see Steven Candia, “Police Parades Key Terror Suspect,” *The New vision*, February 22, 2011, <http://www.newvision.co.ug/D/8/12/747339> (accessed February 23, 2011).

Lastly, 33-year-old Muhammed Ali Muhammed, was said to have facilitated and accommodated the suicide bombers in Nairobi, Kenya. His arrest was another step toward bringing the culprits to justice.<sup>100</sup> He was extradited to Uganda on July 1, 2011, after being arrested in Tanga, Tanzania, where he had fled from Kenya shortly after he learned the suicide bombers he facilitated had accomplished the mission. Apart from the Ugandans who confessed to having carried out the bombings, the arrest of Muhammed Ali Muhammed brings the total number of all the accused in connection to 7/11 to nineteen: ten Kenyans of Somali origin, four Somalis, a Tanzanian, and a Rwandan.<sup>101</sup>

*a. Kenya the Transit Route*

It is important to highlight the Kenya connection because all the perpetrators of 7/11 entered Uganda via Kenya. Kenya's proximity to Somalia has made it easier for militants to move into and from Somalia for decades. One example is in February 1993 when the first Al-Qaeda militants from Peshawar, Pakistan, went through Kenya on their way to Somalia.<sup>102</sup> Kenya is a financial conduit for the Al-Shabaab terrorist group as well, as it is reported that some members of the group have been receiving \$80,000 per month through the Eritrean Embassy in Nairobi for almost a decade.<sup>103</sup> Therefore, terrorists probably feel safe making transactions and movements through Kenya. This may be the reason why shortly after the Kampala bombings, Issa Luyima fled to Mombasa, Kenya, and later was extradited to Uganda.<sup>104</sup> According to Kenya's anti-terrorism police, Issa was harbored by Kenyan Salmin Mohammed Khamis, alleged to be an Al-Qaeda operative connected to the November 2002 Mombasa

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<sup>100</sup> Herbert Ssempogo, "Tanzania Flies in Bomb Suspect," *The New Vision*, July 01, 2011, <http://www.newvision.co.ug/D/8/13/759085> (accessed July 02, 2011).

<sup>101</sup> Ibid.

<sup>102</sup> Shinn, "Al Shabaab's Foreign Threat to Somalia," 205.

<sup>103</sup> Gabe Joselow, "All Eyes on Eritrea as Arms Shipment Reaches Al-Shabab," *Voice Of America*, November 02, 2011, <http://www.voanews.com/english/news/africa/east/All-Eyes-on-Eritrea-as-Arms-Shipment-Reaches-Al-Shabab-133079288.html> (accessed November 02, 2011).

<sup>104</sup> Jamestown Foundation Briefs, "Opposition Claims Uganda Government Manipulation Terrorist Threat," *Terrorism Monitor* IX, no. 35 (September 16, 2011): 3, [http://www.jamestown.org/uploads/media/TM\\_009\\_Issue35.pdf](http://www.jamestown.org/uploads/media/TM_009_Issue35.pdf) (accessed October 13, 2011). Also see Hartely, "JTIC Country Briefing-Somalia," 22.

attacks.<sup>105</sup> On August 11, 2010, Nicholas Kamwende acknowledged that Khamis was charged with hiding three Ugandans involved in the Kampala bombings. Not only civilians, but also Kenyan policemen, have aided Al-Shabaab militants in accomplishing their missions. After his arrest, in a press conference Issa Luyima said "Kenyan policemen, especially [those from] the Somali tribe, helped us to cross from Somalia to Kenya and from Kenya to Uganda... our bosses communicated to them and they easily let us through."<sup>106</sup> Moreover, Mugisha also revealed that when he was arrested in Kenya, one of the Al-Shabaab leaders rang a senior Kenyan police officer and the officer drove Mugisha to the Uganda–Kenya border and then assisted him in crossing to Uganda.<sup>107</sup>

## **2. Porous Border**

A porous border does not necessarily mean that there is no border control. However, as long as border posts can be manipulated by militants and bombs/bomb materials transported from one side to the other, then it can be considered porous. One of the arguments in the literature is that East African corridors are porous and subject to little control, and this has aided transnational attacks. Al-Qaeda, for instance, was present in Sudan since 2004 and moved freely across East Africa's borders until it executed the 1998 U.S. embassy bombings in Kenya and Tanzania.<sup>108</sup>

In Uganda, the concern over not enough border control is not new. In 2006, Uganda was an auspicious route for narcotics en route to Europe and Asia, with Busia said to be an entrance point from Kenya.<sup>109</sup> Likewise, the movement of arms from Somalia through Kenya was a concern, especially when these arms got into the hands of

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<sup>105</sup> Nicholas Bariyo and Sarah Childress, "Uganda Suspects Explain Details of July Attacks," *Garoweonline*, August 12, 2010, [http://www.garoweonline.com/artman2/publish/Africa\\_22/Uganda\\_suspects\\_explain\\_details\\_of\\_July\\_attacks\\_printer.shtml](http://www.garoweonline.com/artman2/publish/Africa_22/Uganda_suspects_explain_details_of_July_attacks_printer.shtml) (accessed June 29, 2011).

<sup>106</sup> Hartely, "JTIC Country Briefing–Somalia," 22.

<sup>107</sup> Ibid.

<sup>108</sup> Chalk, Case Study: The East Africa Corridor, 157.

<sup>109</sup> "Uganda," *Jane's Sentinel Security Assessment - Central Africa*, January 26, 2011, [http://www4.janes.com.ezproxy.members.marshallcenter.org/subscribe/sentinel/CAFRS\\_doc\\_view.jsp?Sent\\_Country=Uganda&Prod\\_Name=CAFRS&K2DocKey=/content1/janesdata/sent/cafrsu/ugans010.htm@current#section1](http://www4.janes.com.ezproxy.members.marshallcenter.org/subscribe/sentinel/CAFRS_doc_view.jsp?Sent_Country=Uganda&Prod_Name=CAFRS&K2DocKey=/content1/janesdata/sent/cafrsu/ugans010.htm@current#section1) (accessed March 22, 2011).

the Karamajong warriors in North-Eastern Uganda.<sup>110</sup> This is worsened by the difficulty in controlling the movement of Somalis in East Africa. As Shinn attests, “there is no capacity to track the movement in and out of the Somali Diaspora in Africa....”<sup>111</sup> In January 2007, the Kenyan government closed its part of entry with Southern Somalia to prevent Al-Shabaab militants from crossing over into Kenya.<sup>112</sup> However, this has never stopped militants from disguising themselves as refugees and crossing into Kenya. In particular, many former leaders of the ICU were seen in many places including Eastleigh, a neighborhood in Nairobi and home to many Somalis.<sup>113</sup>

Insufficient border control with no computerized networks to manage the immigration process has led to cross-border skirmishes since 7/11. Bus transport on routes between Nairobi and Kampala has proven to be one of the ways devices, materials, and Islamist militants cross over into Uganda from Kenya. For example, on December 10, 2010, bomb-making materials were seized on a Kampala-to-Nairobi bus in Uganda at the bus terminal in Kampala.<sup>114</sup> Two days later, on December 12, 2010, an explosive believed to have been planted by Al-Shabaab went off in the Kampala coach terminal in Nairobi (the bomb was intended to go off in Kampala, Uganda), killing three and injuring thirty-nine people.<sup>115</sup>

As noted, porous borders have been exploited by many terrorists to achieve their goals for a long time. For instance, during the apartheid era in the mid-1970s, the ANC had access to safe havens in Uganda, Angola, Namibia, and Mozambique (among others),

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<sup>110</sup> “Uganda.”

<sup>111</sup> Shinn, “Al Shabaab’s Foreign Threat to Somalia,” 213.

<sup>112</sup> Ahmed Roble Muhyadin, “Al-Shabaab Threats Panic Kenya as Fighting Erupts on the Somali Border,” *The Jamestown foundation Terrorism Monitor* IX, no. 11 (March 17, 2011): 3, [http://www.jamestown.org/uploads/media/TM\\_009\\_04.pdf](http://www.jamestown.org/uploads/media/TM_009_04.pdf) (accessed June 29, 2011).

<sup>113</sup> Ibid.

<sup>114</sup> Raymond Baguma, “Bomb Materials Found on Bus,” *The New Vision*, <http://www.newvision.co.ug/D/8/13/740805> (accessed December 12, 2010).

<sup>115</sup> Tabu Butagira and Betty Kyakuwa, “Terrorist Strike Kampala Bound Bus,” *The Daily Monitor*, December 12, 2010, <http://www.monitor.co.ug/News/National/-/688334/1076118/-/cjwy3az/-/index.html> (accessed December 12, 2010).

where their leaders recruited, trained, and planned for future actions.<sup>116</sup> The sabotage attacks inside South Africa against the white regime were successful because of the largely uncontrolled borders, such as the Mozambique border, which were susceptible to ANC guerrillas. This helped them to access preferred targets like the “Natal Coastal Railway, where a bomb was planted in June 1981 between Felixton and Mzingwenya, South Africa.”<sup>117</sup> The operatives used to cross easily from their sanctuaries in Angola, Mozambique, and other African nations.

Foreign jihadists have used Uganda to join Al-Shabaab in Somalia. In April 2009, Bille Ilias Mohammed, a Swede of Somali origin, first attempted to use Uganda to enter Somalia in March 2009 and later succeeded in late April 2009.<sup>118</sup> Similarly, on January 28, 2011, three Somalis were arrested trying to enter Uganda at the Busia border, namely Abudala Karim, Abed Jamar Jamal Muhammed, and Muhammed Abudinasia.<sup>119</sup> The Uganda-Kenya border will doubtless continue to be accessed by many, since the two countries are both members of the East African Community (EAC) with no visa required as long as one is a citizen of either country.

### **3. Somali Community in Uganda**

The Somali community refers to Somalis living in Uganda for many years prior to 7/11. Somalis have continued to live in Uganda since the 1980s, and have integrated into Uganda’s business forum.<sup>120</sup> For more than two decades Somali businessmen are said to have gradually risen in Uganda’s transport sector from being fuel-truck drivers (from Mombasa to Kampala) to owning their own bus transport companies and fuel stations

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<sup>116</sup> Cyprian Musoke and Catherine Bekunda, “Jacob Zuma Hails Uganda for Backing Anti-apartheid Struggle,” *BBC Monitoring Africa*, March 26 2010, <http://www.proquest.com.ezproxy.members.marshallcenter.org/> (accessed August 29, 2010).

<sup>117</sup> Rich, *Insurgency, Terrorism and the Apartheid System in South Africa*, 339.

<sup>118</sup> Jane’s Intelligence Review, “Youth Movement: Somalia’s Foreign Fighters,” *Terrorism & Insurgency* 23, no. 03 (March 2011): 14.

<sup>119</sup> Steven Candia and Robert Kintu, “Arrested Somalis on Terror List,” *The New Vision*, January 3, 2011, <http://newvision.co.ug/D/8/12/742649> (accessed January 3, 2011).

<sup>120</sup> Deborah Mulumba and Wendo M. Olema, “Policy Analysis Report: Mapping Migration in Uganda,” *ACP-EU Cooperation*, September 18, 2009, <http://www.immis.org/wp-content/uploads/2010/05/Policy-Analysis-Report-Uganda.pdf> (accessed November 29, 2011).



(among others). Today, Kisenyi (a neighborhood in Kampala) is famously known as a place for Somalis who live like ordinary Ugandans and do not depend on UNHCR.

After the overthrow of the Said Barre regime resulted in the internal displacement of two million Somalis and 800,000 refugees to neighboring countries, numerous Somalis fled to Uganda.<sup>121</sup> The UN intervention in 1992 did not stop Somalis from seeking asylum in neighboring countries or industrialized countries around the world.<sup>122</sup> Notably, with the threat of Al-Shabaab, many Somalis continued to leave their home country and sought refuge in neighboring countries. Table 3 shows the size of the refugee influx in the six months before 7/11, from January to June 2010.

Country	Refugee influx since January 2010	Total number of refugees
Djibouti	1,304	12,600
Ethiopia	9,980	72,054
Eritrea	6	4,599
Kenya	25,423	323,370
Tanzania	0	2,889
Uganda	2,000	14,502
Yemen	5,516	164,680

Table 3. Refugee Influx and Total Number of Refugees per Country in the Region.<sup>123</sup>

<sup>121</sup> Griffiths David, "Somalia," <http://www.forcedmigration.org/guides/fmo016/> (accessed December 15, 2010).

<sup>122</sup> On January 23, 1992, UN Security Council issued an arms embargo; Resolution 733(1992) on Somalia. During 1992–2002, Somalis began to seek asylum in neighboring countries and industrialized countries in the world. See "Security Council Committee Pursuant to Resolutions 751 (1992) and 1907 (2009) concerning Somalia and Eritrea," <http://www.un.org/sc/committees/751/index.shtml> (accessed January 05, 2011)

<sup>123</sup> All numbers of refugees are from Figure 1 from United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR).

The Somali influx into Uganda is relatively high for a period of six months; this implies that, on average, over 300 Somalis entered Uganda each month without Uganda's consent. Herewith is an assumption that the number of the Somali refugee influx was the same per month into Uganda during the six months. Despite the number of refugees (counted and uncounted) that may have entered Uganda, thousands more flooded into Kenya and Ethiopia, among other countries in the region, as shown in Table 3.

There is no evidence against the Somali community in Uganda for any kind of support to Al-Shabaab. However, in the wake of the 7/11 bombings, Ugandan police did arrest four Somalis who entered Uganda in connection with the bombings.<sup>124</sup> Besides that, in one of the 7/11 bombing locations—the Logogo Rugby grounds—the suicide bomber was identified as a Somali, but had just infiltrated into Uganda under the directions of Issa Luyima for the execution of the mission.<sup>125</sup>

Here, it is worth mentioning the Somali community in neighboring Kenya given the free movement of people between the two EAC state members, as noted earlier. Indeed, since 7/11 Kenyan police have arrested and extradited ten Kenyan Muslims of Somali origin who supported the Kampala bombings.<sup>126</sup>

It is reported that the Somalis in neighboring Kenya have joined the Al-Shabaab ranks.<sup>127</sup> There is a large Somali community in Eastleigh, a neighborhood in Nairobi, Kenya, where radical preachers recruit and raise funds for Al-Shabaab.<sup>128</sup> As Nicholas Kamwende, the anti-terrorism police chief of Kenya has said:

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<sup>124</sup> Ssempogo, "Tanzania Flies in Bomb Suspect."

<sup>125</sup> Hartely, JTIC Country Briefing–Somalia," 21.

<sup>126</sup> Sudarsan Raghavan, "In Kenya's Capital, Somali Immigrant Neighborhood is Incubator for Jihad," *The Washington Post*, August 22, 2010, [http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2010/08/21/AR2010082102682\\_2.html](http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2010/08/21/AR2010082102682_2.html) (accessed June 22, 2011).

<sup>127</sup> Shinn, "Al Shabaab's Foreign Threat to Somalia," 210.

<sup>128</sup> Ibid.

Eastleigh provides the best grounds for recruitment... Eastleigh is a copy of Mogadishu, said Mohamed Omar Dalha, Somalia's social affairs minister...everything that happens in Mogadishu happens in Eastleigh, except the fighting.<sup>129</sup>

It is also known that "Somali militants freely travel to Nairobi to raise funds, recruit, and treat wounded fighters, according to U.N. and Kenyan security officials."<sup>130</sup> Therefore, Uganda's strategy to minimize the Somali influx must accommodate international efforts to accurately identify the culprits.

#### **D. ANALYSIS OF THE FINDINGS**

Al-Shabaab portrayed the intervention of Ugandan troops into Somalia as a foreign military repression against Muslims in Somalia. This attracted foreign Islamists who volunteered to leave their comfort zones in the region and join Al-Shabaab. The foreign fighters were more committed to the ideological ambition of the group to operate outside Somalia. This is why, during 2009-2010, the influence of foreign fighters changed the game and started Internet threats against AMISOM troop-contributing countries. The recruitment of Ugandans was crucial to the credibility of the threats. All three apprehended Ugandans had clear information about the targets since they had resided in Kampala, so ground work was easy in terms of selecting the targets, concealing the suicide bombers, and maneuvering in order to avoid security organizations. This was like the attack on November 26, 2008, when LeT terrorists succeeded in striking in Mumbai, India, and left 172 dead and 248 people injured; operatives had done thorough ground work.<sup>131</sup> LeT had sufficient information about the targeted locations as chief terrorist Sajid Mir of LeT "had spent two years using a Pakistani-American operative named David Coleman Headley to conduct meticulous reconnaissance on Mumbai."<sup>132</sup>

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<sup>129</sup> Raghavan, "In Kenya's Capital, Somali Immigrant Neighborhood Is Incubator for Jihad."

<sup>130</sup> Ibid.

<sup>131</sup> Rahi Gaikward, "Terror Attack Death Toll 172: Health Department," *Hindu (New Delhi)*, December 01, 2008, <http://blogs.thehindu.com/delhi/?p=7619> (accessed February 13, 2011).

<sup>132</sup> Sebastian Rotella, "Mumbai: The Plot Unfolds, Lashkar Strikes and Investigators Scramble," *ProPublica*, November 13, 2010, <http://www.propublica.org/article/mumbai-attacks-david-coleman-headley-part-2> (accessed February 13, 2011).

According to eye witnesses at the Taj Mahal Palace Hotel in Mumbai, the terrorists knew even hidden doors and corners of the hotel.<sup>133</sup>

The perpetrators of 7/11 lived anonymously among fellow Ugandans without anybody suspecting them of any connection with Al-Shabaab. In addition, free movement across the border at Busia, Uganda, enabled the perpetrators to cross and transport all their necessary materials without detection. Therefore, the successful recruitment of the local Ugandan cell, supported by an international network and porous borders, were the factors that contributed to the success of the 7/11 bombings. There may be other factors that may have contributed to the success of the 7/11 bombings; however, some of the information from the Ugandan authority and FBI has remained classified.

In such transnational terrorist attacks, the movement of perpetrators and any logistical item to be used in the attack must cross borders. This is because a transnational terrorist attack is planned from one country and carried out in another country. Therefore, this makes a porous border in the case of Al-Shabaab's first transnational bombings a necessary condition. Whereas other factors, like foreign fighters and franchised cells, are also important, if they cannot infiltrate into the targeted country, then it may be difficult to carry out a transnational terrorist attack. On the other hand, if Al-Shabaab operatives can infiltrate the targeted country, they may succeed.

Al-Shabaab terrorists are not fighting for political space in Uganda, and the group is not about to wage an insurgency. However, the local cells can be tempted to build an insurgent group with time. For this reason, the successful recruitment of Ugandans who lived anonymously among the population with external logistical support should be a concern, as depicted in the "Mystic Diamond" model shown in Figure 3. The model offers a rational and complete counterinsurgent strategy for a state apparatus that has to counter terrorists that have infiltrated the population, so that the terrorists can be isolated and eliminated.

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<sup>133</sup> Gaikward, "Terror Attack Death Toll 172: Health Department."

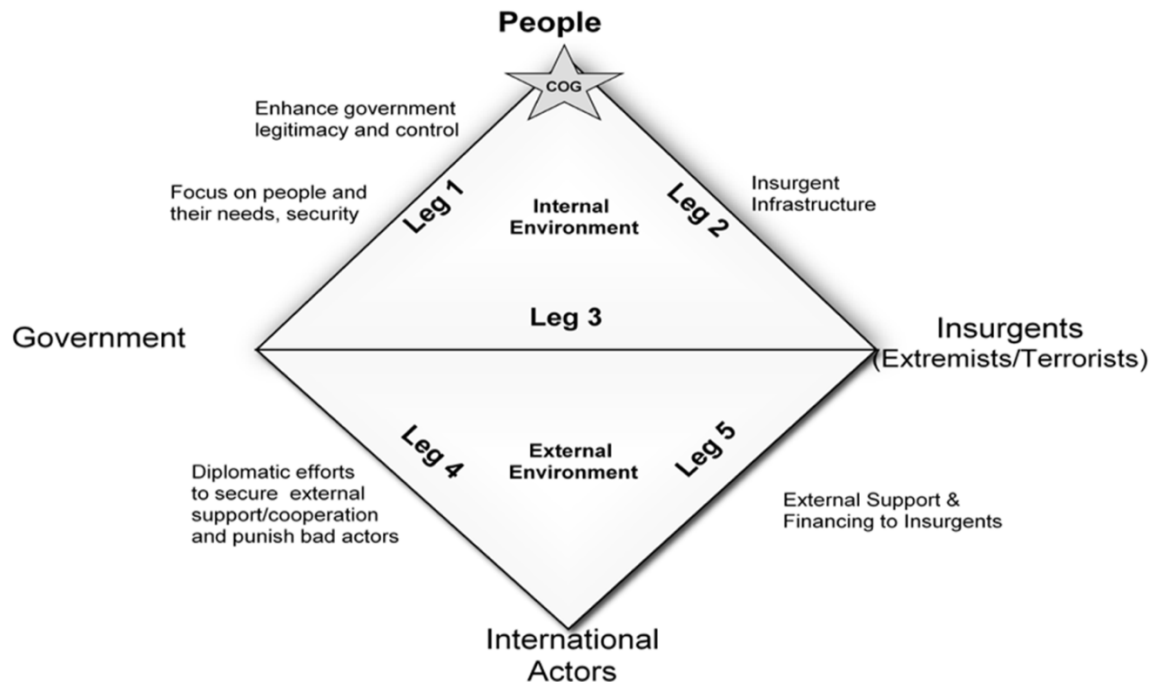


Figure 3. Gordon McCormick's "Mystic Diamond" Counterinsurgency Model.<sup>134</sup>

The "Mystic Diamond" establishes a framework that describes the interaction between state, terrorists, the local population, and international actors. Uganda can apply the model efficiently to limit Al-Shabaab's footprint in Uganda. Uganda as a state has the force advantage with the structured security apparatuses of both the army and police. Yet, the state suffers from a lack of information because it is difficult to detect terrorists implanted in the indigenous population. The terrorists have the advantage of watching any security establishment and infrastructure that may be critical targets. As noted earlier, the side with the information advantage will always be victorious.

Minimizing the threat is achieved by identifying terrorists/insurgents, and this is done by working with the population, thus creating an optimal internal environment where elements of the population will not betray their own government. The population is where the insurgency gets such logistical support as sanctuaries, finances, etc., so the

<sup>134</sup> Greg Wilson, "The Mystic Diamond: Applying the Diamond Model of Counterinsurgency in the Philippines," in *Gangs and Guerrillas: Ideas from Counterinsurgency and Counterterrorism*, Report Number NPS-06-FY2011-001, ed. Hy Rothstein and Michael Freeman (March 2011), 28, <http://edocs.nps.edu/npspubs/scholarly/TR/2011/NPS-DA-11-001.pdf> (accessed July 26, 2011).

government has to put its center of emphasis on the population in order to fight the insurgency. Once terrorists are able to infiltrate the population, then the government has to apply the strategies implied by the Mystic Diamond.

The government can apply five strategies. First, the government has to establish control over the indigenous population in order to (re)gain legitimacy and credibility. Control is defined as “the ability to see everything in one’s area of operation that might pose a threat to security and the ability to influence what is seen.”<sup>135</sup> This will enable the government to acquire vital and actionable intelligence to counter any terrorist activities. According to John Paul Vann, a military strategist:

We need intelligence from the local civilians and soldiers from the area who understand the language, customs, and the dynamics of the local situation, who can easily point out strangers in the area even though they speak the same language...<sup>136</sup>

Secondly, the government has to weaken the relationship between terrorists and the population. This will undermine any terrorist activities in the eyes of the population. The third strategy is direct confrontation with the terrorists. This can only be done when terrorist operatives are identified and only after intelligence is obtained by applying the first and second strategies. The fourth strategy is targeting the terrorists’ external support from the international community. Therefore, the government has to work hand-in-hand with relevant international actors to impose sanctions and arrest the facilitators of terrorists. The fifth strategy is for the government to build legitimacy with the international community. This will attract government aid in terms of money, experts, and other resources. The strategies should be applied sequentially in order to minimize the security threat from the terrorists or insurgents; however, strategies four and five can be simultaneously applied with the first three strategies. Also, depending on the situation,

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<sup>135</sup> Wilson, “The Mystic Diamond: Applying the Diamond Model of Counterinsurgency in the Philippines,” 29.

<sup>136</sup> Vinh Truong, “John Paul Vann & Battle of Ap-Bac,” in *Vietnam War: The New Legion, Volume 1* (British Columbia: Trafford publishing, 2010), 338.

these strategies may overlap each other. Within the country, though, it is necessary for strategies one and two to be considered first.

Applying this model to the 7/11 case study, it would yield the model shown in Figure 4. As noted earlier, the terrorists who formed the franchised cell, namely the principle perpetrators of 7/11 bombings, were local Ugandans supported by some individuals who were extradited from the East African sister states of Kenya and Tanzania. Some terrorists are probably still hiding among the population. For instance, on July 18, 2011, Ugandan police in the Arua district, Uganda, arrested Ssenkuma Issa Ali, another Ugandan said to have fought with Al-Shabaab in Doro on the Somalia-Ethiopian border for five months.<sup>137</sup>

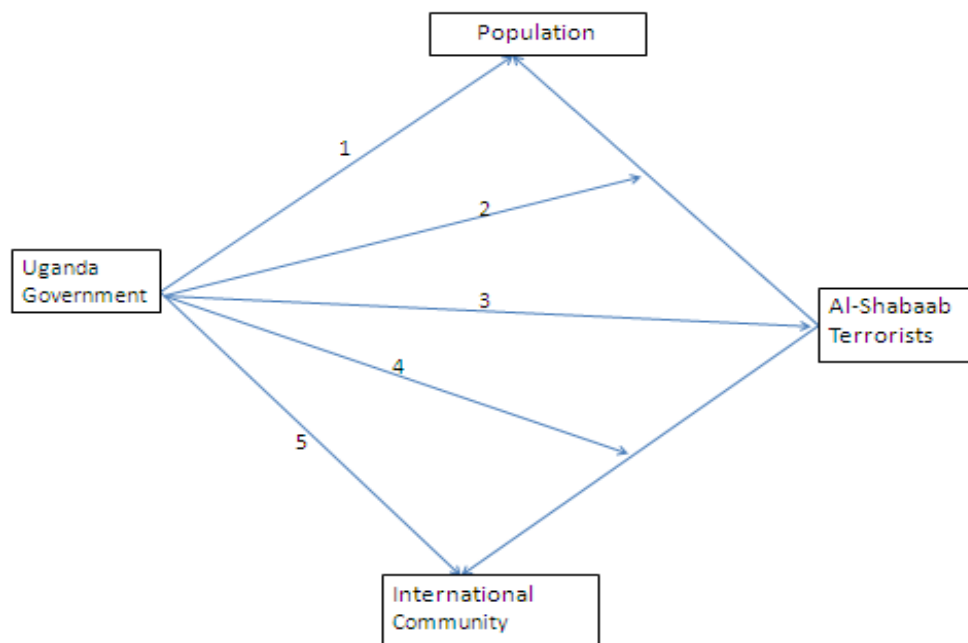


Figure 4. After Modification, the “Mystic Diamond” Depicting Uganda’s Situation.

On the left side of Figure 4 is the state (Ugandan government) currently faced with the Al-Shabaab terrorists (on the right side) who have penetrated the indigenous population. The population (at the top) represents the combination of indigenous Ugandans and Somalis who have lived in Uganda for several years. Lastly, the lower part

<sup>137</sup> Richard Drasimaku, “Police Net 19 Year Old Al-Shabaab Suspect,” *The New Vision*, July 20, 2011, <http://www.newvision.co.ug/D/8/12/760858> (accessed July 21, 2011).

of the model is the external environment that includes the external actors and sponsors for both Uganda and Al-Shabaab. The international community includes Kenya, the AU, and the UN, and in particular the U.S. as the frontier country in combating terrorism.

The strategies to be adopted are as follows. First, to identify terrorist operatives within the population, the government has to win the minds of the population. Andrew Krepinevich, Jr., in his book *The Army and Vietnam*, wrote that “winning the hearts and minds of the people is as desirable for the government as it is for the insurgent.”<sup>138</sup> This is important because if Al-Shabaab with its ideology convinces more Ugandans to want Ugandan troops withdraw from Somalia, then the probability of more transnational terrorist attacks will be high. This is because the population will provide terrorists with a stock of recruits and other forms of support. However, aligning the population with the government will assist the security apparatus with timely intelligence to foil terrorist activities. As long as the terrorists are estranged from the population, they lose their focus and are easily defeated.<sup>139</sup> In order to achieve this, the government has to engage the population, specifically the Muslim minority, in social and welfare activities.

The second strategy is not direct confrontation with the terrorists, but constraining their environment. In other words, this strategy aims to make it hard for Al-Shabaab operatives to move freely all the way from border posts into Kampala. As Krepinevich aptly points out, “If denied the ability to move quickly and easily among the population, the insurgent will become, to paraphrase Mao, like a fish out of water.”<sup>140</sup> Therefore, Uganda has to attack Al-Shabaab’s infrastructure inside Uganda by imposing sanctions on Al-Shabaab operatives and their supporting businessmen. Attaining this actionable intelligence is important. Joel Garreau, a Washington Post reporter asserts that

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<sup>138</sup> Andrew F. Krepinevich, Jr., *The Army and Vietnam* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1988), 12.

<sup>139</sup> Steven Simon, “The Price of the Surge: How U.S. Strategy is Hastening Iraq’s Demise,” *Foreign Affairs* 87, no. 3 (May 1, 2008): 57–76, <http://www.proquest.com.ezproxy.members.marshallcenter.org/> (accessed October 27, 2011).

<sup>140</sup> Krepinevich, *The Army and Vietnam*, 11.



“intelligence is crucial to analyze the network’s links so you can destroy it.”<sup>141</sup> Then, with actionable intelligence the Ugandan security apparatus can apply the third strategy of separating the terrorists from the population by arresting them and prosecuting them for terrorism.

As noted earlier in this chapter, the perpetrators of 7/11 received external support from the East African Al-Shabaab cell active mostly in Kenya. Therefore, as the fourth strategy indicates there is a need to identify the support nodes and pressurize the Kenyan government to apprehend terrorists in Kenya.

Lastly, in strategy five the international community must support Uganda to pressurize Kenya into no longer being regarded as a transit route and a safe haven where terrorists plan to carry out transnational attacks against Uganda. In addition, the Uganda government has to mobilize the international community and the U.S. in particular to step up efforts to support AMISOM in terms of logistics, finances, and modern equipment to wipe out Al-Shabaab bases in Somalia. This collective effort is needed because terrorist activities have defied the sovereignty of many nations. All five strategies can be put into practice by the government of Uganda to curtail the terrorist threats. Thus, in relation to these strategies, the author will make viable recommendations in Chapter III that Uganda can use in order to minimize the Al-Shabaab menace.

## **E. CONCLUSION**

The Ugandan troop presence in Somalia was enough to set up a platform for hostility from Al-Shabaab militants. In 2009, the withdrawal of Ethiopian troops and the election of Sheikh Ahmed Sharif as president brought about an influx of foreign fighters. The foreign fighters were more aligned with the ideology of Al-Shabaab than were local fighters, who were divided into ethnic clans. With the influence of “muhajirin”, Al-Shabaab first issued warnings in late 2009, citing military repression by AMISOM troops. However, the threats seemed hollow at the time because suspected that the group had recruited Ugandan youths into its ranks.

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<sup>141</sup> Joel Garreau, “Disconnect the Dots: May be We Can’t Cut off Terror’s Nodes,” *The Washington Post*, September 17, 2001, <http://www.seity.com/wp-content/themes/seity/pdf/disconnect%20the%20dots.pdf> (accessed July 28, 2011).

The 7/11 bombings were planned by an East African cell under the Saleh Nabhan Brigade that had successfully recruited Ugandan youths. The recruitment of the three Ugandans formed a local franchised cell, which was crucial to the success of the 7/11 bombings in Kampala. This enabled the mission to be carried out without detection or suspicion by either Ugandan security organs or the population. Notably, the support came from the few individuals from Kenya who transported operatives, accommodated the suicide bombers, and supplied all the materials that were used by Al-Shabaab to succeed in its first transnational attack. In addition, corrupt security officials in the Kenyan police assisted the Ugandan operatives in crossing the border. Herewith is an assumption that these corrupt police officers provided terrorists with “genuine” travel documents.

Likewise, a lack of control at the Ugandan–Kenya border enabled the perpetrators to easily cross and transport all the necessary materials required for the attack. Moreover, the influx of Somalis into Uganda is high, which may be a significant problem in the future should militants seek their support from Somali refugees who have settled in Uganda. Also, some indigenous Muslims have felt offended in the wake of the 7/11 bombings as all the perpetrators were Muslims. However, the main security problem rests with neighboring Kenya. Kenya has been identified as a transit route to and from Somalia, a place for recruitment and fundraising, and a sanctuary for terrorist cells as noted earlier.

Each of these factors—franchised cell, support network, and porous border—suggest that Al-Shabaab will continue to pose a great threat to Uganda. Indeed, four days after 7/11, on July 15, 2010, Al-Shabaab released audio statements on radio Mogadishu threatening further attacks against Uganda. Al-Shabaab insisted that “what has happened in Kampala was only the beginning... [we] will keep revenging what your soldiers remorselessly did to our people.”<sup>142</sup> Tim Pippard, a senior consultant in the security and military intelligence practice for IHS Jane’s, argues that Al-Shabaab will continue attracting foreign fighters and developing international cells responsible for future attacks against Ugandan targets.<sup>143</sup> Indeed, as long as Ugandan troops are still in Somalia,

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<sup>142</sup> Pippard, “Al-Shabab’s Agenda in the Wake of the Kampala Suicide Attacks,” 6.

<sup>143</sup> Ibid.

Uganda remains at risk of transnational terrorist attacks from Al-Shabaab. The bombings were a clear extension of the fighting in Mogadishu and retaliation against the deployment of Ugandan troops in Somalia. However, if the strategies derived from the Mystic Diamond model as discussed in this chapter are applied, then future execution of sporadic, high fatality attacks against Ugandans by Al-Shabaab through a neighboring country can be minimized.

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### **III. CONCLUSION, RECOMMENDATIONS AND FUTURE AREAS OF RESEARCH**

#### **A. CONCLUSION**

This thesis highlights the fact that the Al-Shabaab terrorist organization is a security threat to Uganda. Al-Shabaab's first transnational attack on 7/11 was intended to intimidate Uganda to stop its critical role with AMSIOM in support of the TFG. However, the attacks failed to achieve their objectives, as Uganda is still committed in Somalia.

Little was known about Al-Shabaab before the invasion of ENDF in December 2006 to oust the ICU. In the era between 2006 and 2008, Al-Shabaab emerged from the wings of the ICU to be the most powerful terrorist organization in Somalia, resisting international efforts to stabilize the country. The Ethiopian invasion played into the hands of Al-Shabaab, enabling it to rally support from the local populace and Islamists in the diaspora. Indeed, Rob Wise, a research assistant in the Homeland and Security and Counterterrorism program at CSIS, asserts that, Al-Shabaab's "initial period of growth, militarization, and radicalization came as a direct result of foreign intervention, specifically the Ethiopian invasion."<sup>144</sup> This laid the foundation for the working environment in which Ugandan troops would be operating.

Since 2007, Uganda's support for the weak central government (TFG) was seen by Al-Shabaab as a continuation of the foreign military invasion. The presence of foreign fighters suggested to Al-Shabaab the thought of internationalizing its ideology. Consequently, the expansion of its locus of violence from the national to transnational range exposed the organization to a high degree of competitiveness in terms of resources, support from the local populace, the diaspora, etc., thus exposing the group's vulnerabilities.

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<sup>144</sup> Rob Wise, "Al-Shabaab," *CSIS*, Case Study no. 2 (July 2011), 4, [http://csis.org/files/publication/110715\\_Wise\\_AlShabaab\\_AQAM%20Futures%20Case%20Study\\_WEB.pdf](http://csis.org/files/publication/110715_Wise_AlShabaab_AQAM%20Futures%20Case%20Study_WEB.pdf) (accessed July 19, 2011).

Even though the presence of foreign fighters was an old phenomenon, namely several decades old, it materialized into the successful recruitment of Ugandans who were the principle perpetrators of the 7/11 bombings. Indeed, the three Ugandans were supported and facilitated by an Al-Shabaab cell in East Africa. In addition, the porous border at Busia, Uganda, enabled the terrorists to manipulate the security at that particular post, as noted earlier.

It is worth emphasizing that Kenya is instrumental in this case study as it was used as a route by the perpetrators of 7/11. Indeed, Kenya is said to be a sanctuary for many foreign fighters who belong to Al-Shabaab.

There are no other transnational attacks that have taken place in Uganda, but Al-Shabaab has continued to threaten Uganda with other attacks if it does not withdraw its troops from Somalia. After 7/11, Ken Menkhaus and Christopher Boucek, experts on Somalia affairs, commented that the regional reach of Al-Shabaab is clear—it can strike throughout East Africa.<sup>145</sup>

## **B. RECOMMENDATIONS**

To minimize the transnational threat of Al-Shabaab terrorists in Uganda, it is recommended that the Ugandan government do the following:

- Sensitize the population about activities related to terrorism and delegitimize any activity connected to terrorism, as such attacks are not common to most African countries. Also, teach people how to identify unusual objects, deal with unfamiliar people, etc. In addition, broadcast information operation (IO) campaign programs on radio, television, and through newspapers and other forms of media as a way of reaching out to the community. This can be supported with strong relationships between security organs (police and military) so that people are aware of the channels in which to contact the authorities. Moreover, telephone lines in

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<sup>145</sup> Ken Menkhaus and Christopher Boucek, “Terrorism out of Somalia,” *Carnegie Endowment for International Peace*, September 23, 2010, <http://carnegieendowment.org/2010/09/23/terrorism-out-of-somalia/g7> (accessed June 28, 2011).

the form of hotlines should be set up so that someone does not have to travel a long distance in order to pass on information related to security matters. There must be an adequate, appropriate, and timely response to any action or information from the security organs, so that people are not scared away when they come up with anything to report about terrorism.

- Engage the Somali community in Uganda in social and welfare activities so that they do not feel isolated. Also, create a mechanism to interact with the Muslim minority in an atmosphere that facilitates free sharing of information, to include grievances. This will enable authorities to identify suspicious persons and be able to inform security organs.
- Provide psychological training for the security personnel manning the border posts. It takes well-trained and skilled personnel to detect criminals from their appearance, facial expression, etc. In addition, equip border posts with computerized systems that can display personal details of individuals crossing into Uganda.
- Spearhead the establishment of a regional counterterrorism agency for the East African Community, where East African countries would share intelligence in order to thwart “cross-border terror networks.”

### **C. FUTURE AREAS OF RESEARCH**

This case study of Al-Shabaab’s first transnational terrorist attack did not concentrate on the fact that the Ugandan youth who carried out the act were from the Muslim minority and, may have been motivated by religious fervor. However, there are areas of future research that could help the Ugandan government to minimize the threat caused by Islamists. Therefore, the author suggests examining the extent of radicalization within the Muslim community in Uganda for future research. This would probably enable the government to answer some key questions, like why some Ugandans would embark on a plan with foreign terrorists to murder fellow citizens.

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