Kenya in the Crosshairs of Global Terrorism: Fighting Terrorism at the Periphery

By Kefa M. Otiso*

Abstract
Kenya is a target of global terrorism because of a combination of geographic, regional, historical, political, economic and sociocultural factors. The direct causes of terrorist attacks in Kenya are (1) its close ties with Israel and western countries, especially the US, (2) its vibrant coastal beach tourism industry that threatens local Islamic culture and, (3) the perception that the country's predominantly Christian population is an obstacle to the Islamization of Eastern Africa. Factors that facilitate terrorist attacks in Kenya include the country's (1) coastal geographic situation and strategic location relative to Europe, Asia, and neighboring African countries, (2) porous borders due to poor policing, (3) politically unstable neighboring countries like Somalia and Sudan, (4) a relatively open and multicultural society, (5) relatively good transport and communications infrastructure and advanced regional economy, (6) relatively large Muslim population and, (7) the political and socioeconomic deprivation of the coastal population relative to the rest of the country. Terrorism in Kenya has (1) cost the country the loss of workers and family members, (2) led to a flare-up of tension between Christians and Muslims, (3) undermined the country's economy especially tourism and, (4) led to the erosion of citizens' rights and the country's sovereignty. Besides tightening security, Kenya is coping with the terrorist threat by developing anti-terrorism legislation and by spearheading efforts to resolve the Somali and Sudan political crises. The paper concludes that as long as the factors that cause and facilitate terrorism remain unchanged, Kenya will probably continue to deal with terrorist attacks.

Keywords: Terrorism, Kenya, September 11, Al Qaeda, Osama bin Laden, US Embassy bombings

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Introduction

Kenya is one of only two Sub-Saharan African countries (the other being Tanzania) to be directly targeted by the current wave of global terrorism i.e., the global use of violence to achieve certain objectives. In 1998, Kenya, along with Tanzania, suffered terrorist attacks that collectively killed over 250 people and injured nearly 5,000 others, mostly Kenyans (Muendo 2003). Then in 2002, another terrorist attack in Kenya killed 13 people and injured 80 (*Daily Nation*, November 29, 2002). This unfavorable distinction is due to a combination of geographic, regional, historical, political, economic and sociocultural factors.

The purpose of this paper is to (1) explore how global terrorism has manifested itself in Kenya, (2) outline the reasons why the country is a terrorist target, (3) examine the effects of terrorism on the country, (4) evaluate the steps that are being taken to control this phenomenon and, (5) attempt to outline the future of the country's terrorism challenge. But first is a short definition of terrorism, followed by an outline of the types and waves of terrorism, as well as the characteristics and causes of terrorism.

Definition, Types, Waves, Characteristics and Causes of Terrorism

Terrorism is a notoriously difficult concept to define because of its many forms, objectives, ambiguity, contextual fluidity, and the multiplicity of perpetrators. In a generic sense, terrorism, unlike random acts of violence, is the premeditated use of violence to achieve certain objectives. Essentially, terrorism is "intimidation through violence" (Mathewson and Steinberg, 2003:59). Terrorism can also be defined from a legal, moral and behavioral standpoint (Ruby 2002: 11-12). *Legally*, terrorism is a violation of established laws. Although this approach is popular with governments, it is scarcely universal given the wide variety of laws and governments around the world. From a *moral* standpoint, terrorist acts are *morally unjustifiable.* But since "*morally unjustifiable*" acts can vary from individual to individual, it is not surprising that terrorists and their victims have a different view of terrorist attacks.

The *behavioral* approach is more unifying since it defines terrorism "…purely by the *behaviors* involved, regardless of the laws or morality of those doing the [definition]" (ibid.). Because the approach "…permits a reliable operational definition of terrorism regardless of who measures it" (ibid.), it is preferred by many societies although some behaviorally defined terrorism acts may be morally and legally justified. This conundrum is most evident in the use of terrorism by states and in liberation struggles (Sorel 2003:367).

There are four major types of terrorism movements around the world: left-wing (leftist), right-wing (rightist), ethno-nationalist or separatist and, religious or "sacred" (Cronin 2002:39). Each of these terrorism types has a different style and mode of behavior that "…can provide insight into the likeliest manifestations of its violence and the most typical patterns of its development" (ibid.). Currently, *religious or "sacred"* terrorism, e.g., that perpetrated by Al Qaeda, dominates the global stage although all four types of terrorism are capable of unspeakable brutality. Besides being currently dominant, religious terrorism can be especially dangerous because (1) its all-encompassing struggle of good versus evil can easily engulf all of humanity especially when it is essentialized into binaries such as 'The Faithful' or 'True Followers' versus 'Infidels' or 'Apostates' in Islam (Cronin 2002:39), (2) its perpetrators can unleash unpredictable terror at the command of deities unknown to non-adherents and without regard to any earthly concerns such as people's feelings (ibid), (3) its perpetrators can act in complete disregard of existing social or secular values or laws and may in fact be interested in

replacing such values (ibid) e.g., Al Qaeda's Islamic extremists attempts to impose Sharia (Islamic) law in multi-religious or secular societies around the world (Sieff 2003: no pp), (4) its perpetrators may be motivated by grandiose apocalyptic visions and disconnect from or work to overthrow existing social order (Cronin 2002:39), (5) this form of terrorism can garner broad global appeal and support that can complicate measures to control it, not to mention that such measures may degenerate into full scale conflict, especially when viewed with apocalyptic eyes e.g., some Islamic clerics view US attempts to go after Osama bin Laden as a Christian crusade that calls for Jihad (ibid) and, (6) unlike ethno-nationalist or separatist terrorist movements, the objective of this type of terrorism is often not material gain.

The four types of terrorism mentioned above have occurred in four mutually nonexclusive historic waves (Rapoport 2001). The first wave occurred during the breakup of world empires in the 17 through 19th centuries. The second wave was associated with decolonization in the mid-1900s, while the third wave pertains to Soviet inspired "leftist anti-Westernism" in the 1950-1989 period. The fourth and current religious wave is primarily driven by the desire to overthrow western neocolonial and capitalist economic systems that are seen as corrupting influences on Islamic religion and societies and, to a smaller extent, by jealousy at the advancement of western capitalist countries relative to the socioeconomic stagnation of Islamic countries.

A number of discernible modern terrorism characteristics/trends are critical to an understanding of this phenomenon. These include (1) the proliferation of the number of terrorist actors (Mathewson and Steinberg, 2003:59-60), (2) a declining trend in the overall number of terror attacks (Cronin 2002:42-44), (3) an increase in the lethality of attacks as terrorists resort to more deadly weapons as well as the unconventional use of everyday conveniences such as passenger planes, (4) the growing victimization of Americans by terror attacks, (5) the growing incidence of religiously motivated terrorism and, (6) the globalization of terrorism (ibid).

The globalization of terrorism as well as "…a notable dispersal in the geography of terrorist acts" (Cronin 2002:44) is most worrisome because a terrorist organization from one part of the world can launch attacks in another part of the globe thereby complicating the process of identifying terrorism perpetrators. In essence, whereas terrorism in the pre-1970s period had a local origin and target, global terrorism has dispersed attackers and victims at various geographic scales. The global reach of terrorism is made possible by the explosion of modern global transport, communications, and media (Bergesen and Lizardo 2004:43, Cronin 2002:37). Global terrorism is also made possible by the rise of terrorist organizations such as Al-Qaeda that are capable of operating at the global scale much like global transnational or multinational corporations with far-flung production and distribution facilities serving global consumers. And just as global corporations form synergies that enable them to operate at a global scale so do global terrorist organizations such as Al-Qaeda.

The causes of terrorism are as varied as the motivations of the many types of terrorists that exist. Nevertheless, the key motivations of terrorism include ethnic conflict, political exclusion and the resultant insurrections, illicit drugs, environmental degradation (Silberfein, 2003:67-70), religious differences and socioeconomic exclusion or marginalization. Once started, insurrections and associated acts of terrorism can be sustained by (1) basing operations in relatively secure locales that are inaccessible to the state, (2) taking advantage of locally available resources such as minerals (e.g., in Sierra Leone) and illicit drugs (e.g., opium in Afghanistan), (3) creating a network that facilitates exchange of local resources for weapons and other basic amenities, and (4) availability of easily traversed borders and accessible ports that

facilitate contact with the outside world (ibid.70).

In the Middle East where much of the current wave of religious terrorism originates, most people are trapped in poverty and underdevelopment despite the region's oil wealth. Frustrations with the slow pace of social reforms in the region, coupled with poor governance and lack of social services, facilitates the proliferation of terrorist groups that purport to offer solutions to the poor living conditions (Cronin 2002:38). Because this "…broader enabling environment of bad governance, nonexistent social services, and poverty … punctuates much of the developing world" (ibid), anti-western terrorists have many sympathizers around the world. Moreover,

> Globalization, in forms including Westernization, secularization, democratization, consumerism, and the growth of market capitalism, represents an onslaught to less privileged people in conservative cultures repelled by the fundamental changes that these forces are bringing –or angered by the distortions and uneven distributions of benefits that result. This is especially true of the Arab World (Cronin 2002:45-46).

Because of the complex nature of the causes of terrorism, easy solutions to this challenge are nonexistent and any solution that is developed is bound to be controversial, just as disagreements exist in the very definition of terrorism. For instance, if terrorism is partly caused by unequal access to the benefits of the global economy (Cronin 2002:45-46), then solutions to terrorism would include spreading the benefits of globalization more evenly. Yet western economic powers appear unwilling to make the global economic system more inclusive (ibid). Thus, while there is an "…urgent requirement for solutions that deal both with the religious fanatics who are the terrorists and the far more politically motivated states, entities, and people who would support them because they feel powerless and left behind in a globalizing world" (ibid:38), such solutions are rare because they require substantial sociopolitical and economic changes that current terrorist source regions are unwilling to carry out. As a result, terrorism is likely to continue occupying center stage in global affairs for a while to come. Nevertheless, if the conditions that give terrorism so much power are well managed, its impact can be minimized even though it is unlikely to be completely eliminated (ibid).

Global Terrorism in Kenya

Although Kenya has experienced all four major types of terrorism – i.e., leftist, rightist, ethnonationalist, and religious (Cronin 2002:39) - the most devastating attacks have come from ethnonationalistic and religious terrorism. The manifestation of these dominant forms of terrorism in Kenya has a definite historical sequence.

Ethnonationalistic terrorism was mostly experienced in Kenya towards the end of the country's colonial rule in the 1950s when freedom movements such as Mau Mau used terror to hasten the country's independence (Edgerton 1989). The terrorist events that took place in Kenya at that time perfectly exemplify the maxim: 'one man's terrorist is another man's freedom fighter' (Sorel 2003:367). While the British sought to suppress the Mau Mau 'terrorists', natives oppressed by colonialism saw this ragtag army as freedom fighters and supported it, eventually culminating in the country's freedom from British colonial rule. The success of this bloody ethnonationalistic movement lines up with Cronin's (2002:40) characterization of such organizations' as often being (1) astoundingly violent, (2) durable, (3) able to utilize traditional

paramilitary structures and, (4) having strong support among the organizations' founders co-ethnics.

The current incidence of *religious/sacred terrorism* in Kenya is most bothersome because its perpetrators have no qualms about sacrificing civilians in the process of achieving their objectives. To this end, Al-Qaeda religious terrorist groups have subjected Kenya to devastating terrorist attacks in the last six years including (1) the August 7, 1998 bombing of the US Embassy in Nairobi which killed over 200 people (Maina, 2004) and injured thousands (Muendo 2003) and, (2) the November 28, 2002 suicide bombing of the Israeli-owned Paradise Tourist Hotel in Mombasa, Kenya, which killed 15 people and injured 80 others (*Daily Nation*, Friday, November 29, 2002). Simultaneously, there was an abortive attempt to blow up an Israeli passenger jet on take-off from Mombasa International Airport. But why is Kenya a target?

Why Kenya is a Target of Global Terrorism

Kenya is a good target of global terrorism because of a combination of geographic, regional, historical, political, economic and sociocultural factors. Some of these factors are direct justifications of attacks while others facilitate the attacks. Direct motivations of terrorism in Kenya include (1) the country's close ties with Israel and western countries, especially the US, (2) its vibrant coastal beach tourism industry that is at odds with the locally dominant Islamic religion and culture and, (3) the perception that the country's predominantly Christian population is an obstacle to the Islamization of Eastern Africa. Factors facilitating terrorist attacks in Kenya include the country's (1) coastal geographic situation and strategic location relative to Europe, Asia, and neighboring African countries, (2) porous borders, (3) unstable neighboring countries, especially Somalia and Sudan, (4) relatively open and multicultural society, (5) relatively good transport and communications infrastructure, (6) relatively advanced regional economy, (7) relatively large Muslim population and, (8) the political and socioeconomic deprivation of the coastal population relative to the rest of the country. The following is a review of the specific contribution of these factors to Kenya's terrorist threat.

Analysis of Direct Justifications of Terrorism in Kenya

Historical Ties to the West, Israel and the Middle East
Kenya's coastal region has centuries old trading relations with states in Southwest Asia and the West (Somerville 2002). Ties with the West began with the coming of the Portuguese in the late 1400s (Were and Wilson 1968) and were strengthened in the colonial and postcolonial period. Since independence the country has aligned itself with U.S., European, Israeli and other western capitalist interests. This geopolitical stance led to beneficial economic and technological aid flows that have advanced many aspects of the country's development. The close relationship between Kenya and the West, together with an abundance of tourist attractions and the country's pleasant tropical climate and alluring beaches, have made the country a major magnet for western tourists.

Kenya also has a substantial presence of "…western interests, investments, installations, diplomatic corps, and the headquarters of international agencies such as the UN" (Soke, 2003: no pp). Many western countries and corporations run their Sub-Saharan African operations from Nairobi because the country's relatively well-developed infrastructure, financial system, and strong economy facilitate such endeavors. Moreover, the country has close military relationships

with a host of western countries e.g., US, Britain, Germany, Italy, France and Israel (Somerville 2002, Harman 2002). Many of these western nations run de facto military bases in Kenya (Maina,2004). This "…the comparatively large Western presence in …[Kenya]" (Kelley 2003b: no pp) is the main attraction and target of anti-western terrorist groups such as Al Qaeda.

Another geopolitical factor that contributes to terrorism in Kenya is its close ties to Israel (Maina, 2004, Harman 2002), a country that Muslims around the world dislike for its persecution of Palestinians. This relationship is a major irritation to foreign and native Muslims who have repeatedly but unsuccessfully been calling for the severance of the relationship (Ali 2003). One indication of the strength of this relationship is Kenya's June 1976 decision to offer Israel crucial logistical support in its raid on Entebbe Airport in order to free Israeli hostages held there by Palestinian hijackers allied to then Ugandan dictator Idi Amin (Kyemba 1977:56, 172; Harman 2002). This assistance was later avenged in the 1980 bombing of the Israeli owned Norfolk Hotel in Nairobi, "…killing 15 and wounding more than 80…mostly… [Kenyans]" (Harman 2002: no pp). Another indication is Israel's prompt dispatch of a strong contingent of an Israeli Defense Force rescue team to Nairobi during the 1998 terrorist attacks. The Israel team was the first to arrive from abroad. Given that one of Al Qaeda's major grievances against the US is its support of Israel at the expense of Palestinians, it is not surprising that Kenya's long pro-Israel stance is viewed by Al Qaeda as evidence of Kenya's support of US policy in the Middle East. Whether right or wrong, this makes Kenya a bona fide Al-Qaeda target (Soke 2003).

The local tourism industry
Kenya's vibrant tourism industry has also contributed to the country's vulnerability to terrorist attacks. Tourism, as it is practiced in the country's coastal beaches, is at odds with the local Islamic culture and customs. For instance, Islam teaches that women should cover every part of the body except the eyes when in public and also forbids the consumption of alcohol. Yet in Kenya's coastal beach areas, women tourists walk around barely dressed and alcohol is freely served in the many bars that cater to tourists and non-Muslim Kenyans. Moreover, tourism has also contributed to the high incidence of prostitution and drug use in coastal Kenya.

In addition, the tourism industry has not really benefited local people, especially Muslims, because of three reasons. First, many of the area's tourist facilities are owned by the government and upcountry or foreign investors "… [with slight] trickle-down effect" (Eastman, 1995:176). Second, the facilities are oriented to Western tourists whereas most locals practice an "Arabized Muslim lifestyle" that is largely incompatible with the norms of Western style tourism (ibid). Lastly, many local Muslims, being schooled in *Madrasas* or Islamic schools and not in the country's western-style educational system, lack the skills (e.g., English training) that could enable them to work in the country's western-tourist dominated industry (Eastman, 1995:177).

This disjunction between tourism and the dominant local culture have created low-key anti-tourism sentiment in the coastal regions of Kenya. Although some local Muslims have for years abhorred the role of tourism in degrading their culture and morals, the government has not ameliorated or shown enough sensitivity to this issue because its hands are tied given the many economic benefits of tourism (e.g., jobs and foreign exchange) to the local economy and country at large (Maclean 2003: no pp). Nevertheless, the anti-tourism sentiment among some of Kenya's coastal Muslim residents has made it easier for groups like Al-Qaeda to infiltrate the area in the guise of providing solutions to poverty and local Islamic cultural erosion. Moreover, in targeting Kenya's tourism facilities, Al Qaeda hopes to increase its chances of intimidating prospective tourists.

Kenya in the larger Islam-Christianity contest for regional spiritual supremacy
A less well-documented, but widely acknowledged reason (albeit anecdotally) for Kenya's terrorist attacks, is its prominent role in the larger Christianity - Islam contest for spiritual supremacy in Sub-Saharan Africa. Whereas most countries in the horn of Africa have large Muslim populations, Kenya stands out with its predominantly Christian population and relatively large economy (Potter 2003). This presents a major stumbling block to Muslims who desire to play a larger role in the region's affairs by, for instance, offering Sharia (Islamic) law as solution to the region's socioeconomic challenges (IPS 2004). With this in mind, the terrorist attacks, besides mainly targeting US and Israeli interests in Kenya, were designed to strengthen the hand of Muslims in the country's national affairs, thereby aiding the cause of Islam in the country and region (Mbogo 2003).

Review of Factors that Facilitate Terrorism in Kenya

Kenya's geographic and strategic location
Kenya occupies a geographically, regionally, and internationally strategic position (Figure 1) that has enabled the country to become a regional hub of international air, road, maritime, and communications traffic from Europe, Asia, and the rest of Africa. These links make it easy for would be foreign and local terrorists to travel to, from, and within the country, to communicate easily, and to launch terrorist attacks against Kenya (Soke 2003, Cronin 2002).

Figure 1
Kenya's Global Relative Location
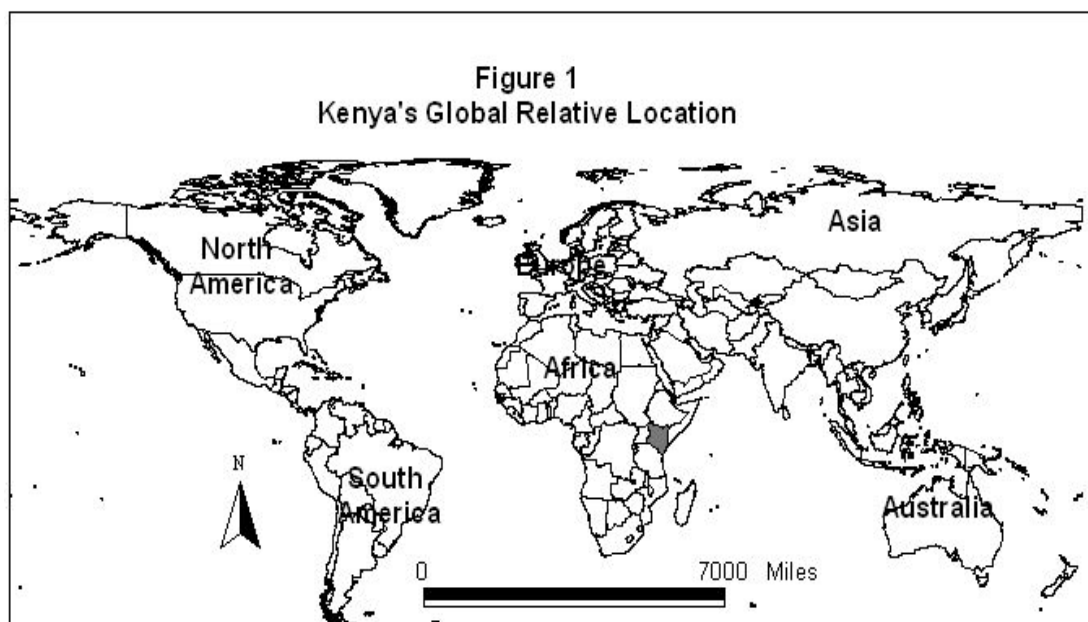
**Porous national borders with many unstable neighbors**
Kenya shares long, remote, sparsely populated, and poorly protected borders with Tanzania, Uganda, Sudan, Somalia and Ethiopia (Figure 2). All of these neighboring countries, except Tanzania, have varying degrees of political instability that undermine their ability to provide for their people's basic needs especially safety or protect their territorial integrity. Consequently,

Kenya is home to refugees from surrounding countries such as Somalia, Ethiopia and Sudan. Many of them crisscross the country's international borders at will. Moreover, Kenya's own limited financial and human resources undermine its ability to better police her borders hence the country's inability to stop weapons smuggling and would be terrorists' entry into the country (Figure 2, Soke 2003, Somerville 2002).

But of all surrounding countries, Somalia is perhaps the most worrisome neighbor from a security standpoint. Besides sharing a 700-kilometer boundary that is hardly marked, this border area that largely consists of North Eastern Province has been a zone of conflict since the colonial period (Weiss 2004). As a result the government maintains a significant military presence in the area in order to deal with sporadic armed conflict and banditry (ibid). Moreover, since the early 1990s Somalia has been embroiled in a civil war that caused the collapse of the Somali state in 1995 resulting in the country's control by warring clan factions. The clans' conflicting interests have led to untold suffering and bloodshed, a litany of broken peace treaties, and have transformed the country into a haven of numerous extremist Islamic groups such as Al-Ittihad al-Islami (Soke 2003) and Al-Qaeda (Somerville 2002). Al-Ittihad al-Islami and Al-Qaeda have both managed to infiltrate cross-border refugee traffic and some Somali refugee camps in Kenya's North Eastern Province and have made their way into Somali dominated neighborhoods in Nairobi and Mombasa (Soke 2003: no pp). From these convenient hideouts, these terror groups have been able to map their targets and mount terror attacks.

Somalia is also a source of danger to Kenya because the "[w]eapons used in [the Mombasa] attacks were smuggled into Kenya by sea from Somalia… Some of the same components were used in the bombs that destroyed the hotel in Kikambala [Mombasa] and the U.S. embassy in Nairobi …[in 1998]" (Kelley 2003a: no pp). In sum, Somalia has become an Al-Qaeda (1) source of weaponry, (2) base of operation and attack, and (3) a convenient hideout for its attackers.

Figure 2: Kenya's Regional Location and Neighbors
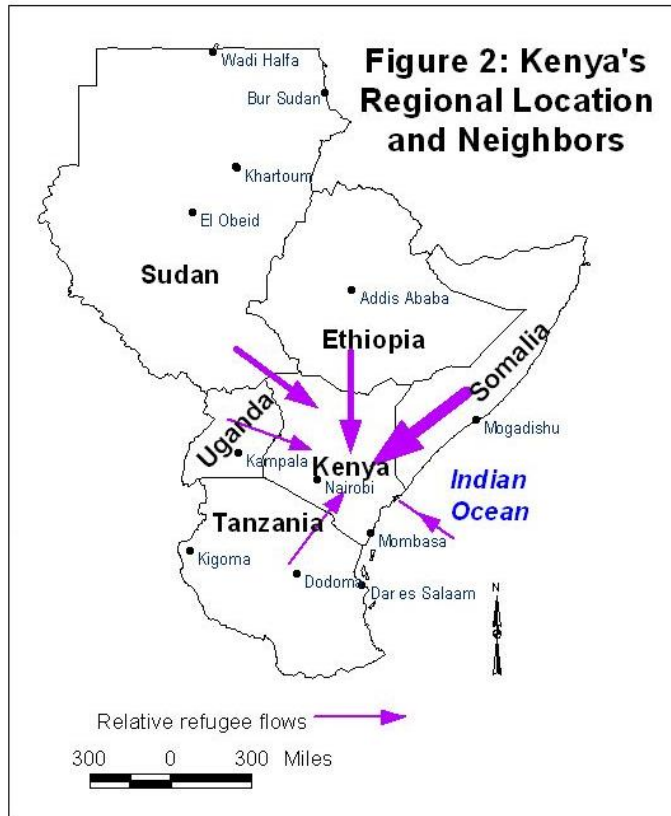
Sudan is an equally troublesome neighbor because its Islamic government has in the past supported radical groups such as the National Islamic Front and Al-Qaeda. Actually, in the early 1990s, Osama bin Laden himself lived and managed a string of businesses in the Sudan before moving to Afghanistan and setting up Al Qaeda (Shahar 1998).

Kenya's open multicultural society and lax security
The long relations between Kenya and other parts of the world have also unwittingly endangered the country by creating a very diverse culture in cities such as Nairobi and Mombasa. Specifically:

> [t]he country's open, and friendly posture coupled with lax security and immigration laws make it easier for a would be terrorist to [enter and] blend easily. Indeed the chief mastermind of August 1998 bombing, one Odeh, was able to enter the country, acquire citizenship and Kenyan passport, marry from the local community, and go on to establish a fish business that is believed he used as a cover whilst planning the embassy bombing (Soke 2003: no pp).

Moreover, poor security and high levels of corruption have compromised Kenya's security. In fact:

In the previous Moi regime, corruption and inefficiency heavily undermined the ability of the government to provide security to its people. This was due to the fact that crucial services related to security such as the police, immigration and border security (customs) were commercialized to the extent that they became goldmines for the civil servants who worked in those departments. It became very easy to slip into the country and do whatever one wanted provided you had the money to pay bribes to relevant persons" (Soke 2003: no pp).

The local Muslim population

Islam spread to the coast of East Africa shortly after its founding because Omani Arabs were already trading with the East African coast (Were and Wilson 1968). Since then, Islam has spread throughout East and Central Africa. In Kenya, Muslims now constitute between 6 and 10% of the country's 31 million people (Potter 2003, Mulama 2003), a much smaller proportion than that of surrounding countries such as Somalia, Ethiopia, Sudan, Uganda, and Tanzania. Most Kenyan Muslims live in the Coast and Northeastern Provinces and in major upcountry urban areas such as Nairobi while most Christians live in the central and western parts of the country. However, because of the dominance of Christianity in Kenya, the relatively small proportion of Christians who live in the Coast Province, outnumber Muslims. Because Kenyan Muslims are generally less fundamentalist (Potter 2003) compared to their brethren elsewhere Muslim-Christian relations in the country have been generally cordial.

Although the Kenyan Muslim population is relatively small, it is large enough to have unwittingly facilitated terrorist attacks by Muslim extremist groups such as Al-Qaeda. This is because the local Muslim population made it possible for terrorists to slip into the country unnoticed, blend in, plan, fundraise or set up cover businesses, and carry out their attacks (Soke 2003, Kelley 2003a). It also makes it easy for terrorists to slip out after the attacks. For instance, the accomplices of the Mombasa Hotel suicide bombers vanished into the local Muslim population before fleeing to Somalia two days later (Kelley 2003a). Moreover, the perpetrators knew that investigations into their crime would be complicated by the presence of a relatively large local Muslim population because any arrest and interrogation of local Muslim suspects could be easily interpreted as Muslim persecution by the country's Christian dominated government (Potter 2003, Chemchemi ya Ukweli 2000?).

Economic and political disenfranchisement of local coastal population

Kenya's coastal population has been marginalized politically and socio-economically since the colonial days creating an "…enabling environment of …nonexistent social services … and poverty …" (Cronin 2002:38) that facilitates terrorism (but does not necessarily cause it) by creating sympathy for terrorist causes in the local population. The spatially unequal development process initiated by the colonial government has been accentuated by independent governments with most of the investment resources being concentrated in the Central and Rift Valley provinces that have the bulk of the country's socioeconomic and political elite (Eastman, 1995; Foeken, Hoorweg and Obudho, 2000:7). As a result, the coastal region of Kenya remains comparatively underdeveloped relative to the Rift Valley and Central Province core area. Besides unfavorable colonial and postcolonial government policies, the coast region of Kenya lags behind other provinces in development because (1) it is an ecologically low potential region with few fresh water sources, (2) it has since the colonial era lacked sufficient agricultural extension services, (3) it has a shortage of agricultural labor owing to its sparse population

(Meilink 2000), (4) of insecurity especially in areas outside of the main towns of Mombasa, Malindi and Lamu and, (5) the high incidence of landlessness especially among locals (Kanyinga 1998). The region's landlessness is partly attributable to hyperinflation of land costs due to the growth of beach tourism in the area. Meilink (2000:24) has aptly described the current socioeconomic situation of the Coast region:

> Reviewing…basic household welfare indicators such as child nutrition, child mortality, educational participation, and access to safe water, leads to the conclusion that Coast Province indeed finds itself in a disadvantaged position vis-à-vis the other provinces. It has the highest percentage of stunted children, a high child mortality rate and the lowest educational enrolment rates, while in terms of supply of safe water, households at the Coast are also worse off.

The Effects of Global Terrorism in Kenya

The two terrorist attacks on Kenya in 1998 and 2002 have had many negative economic, social, political and geopolitical effects on the country. These effects include the decline of the country's tourism industry and the attendant loss of jobs and foreign exchange, growing tension between Muslims and Christians, radicalization of the country's Muslims, rising anti-western sentiments in the Muslim and general population, the passage of unpopular anti-terrorist measures that threaten Kenyans' human, civil and political rights besides eroding the country's sovereignty, and rising tension between Kenya and the West. These effects are discussed below.

Economic effects

Though widespread, the economic effects of Kenya's terrorist attacks are most noticeable in the tourism sector. The sector that represents "…15% of foreign exchange earnings and 12% of GDP, …constitutes an eighth of the economy" (Soke 2003: no pp) and "… employs some 500,000 people…" (Maclean 2003: no pp) suffered a major slump after the terrorist attacks due to lower tourist flows from key European markets and the attendant trip cancellations and drop in hotel bookings. Thus while the country received over 1 million tourists in 1997, the attacks scared away many tourists causing a 25% decline in the number of tourists in 1998 (Kenya 2002:186). In the 1999-2000 period the number of tourist arrivals rose slowly before further declines occurred following the September 2001 attacks in the US and the second terrorist attack in Kenya in 2002 (ibid).

The drop in the number of tourists to Kenya inevitably resulted in the decline of hotel bookings and occupancy (Table 1). In mid-2003, "[h]otel occupancy, normally [at] about 40 to 45 per cent at … [that] time of the year … slumped to an average of about 20 to 30 per cent in the shoreline tourist hotels…" (Maclean 2003: no pp) resulting in a substantial drop in tourism sector earnings and jobs. In mid-2003, the government estimated that "…Kenya [was] losing $14 million (about Sh1 billion) a week in tourism earnings and tax revenues due to the … [untimely] US and British warnings of a looming terrorist attack [in Kenya]" (Kelley 2003b, Figure 3). Moreover, slump in the tourism sector increased the size of the government's budget deficit and a worsened the country's balance of trade since tourism is a major source of foreign currency. "To cushion herself against these massive losses, the country sought $400 million (Sh30 billion) worth of "emergency" assistance from the US in [that year]" (Kelley 2003b).

Table 1: Hotel bed-nights by zone, 1997-2001 ('000)

Zone	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001*
Coastal-Beach	3,074.4	1,505.3	1,625.2	2,065.2	1,872.5
-Other	71.5	109.1	73.9	85.8	137.9
Coast Hinterland	59.0	43.9	48.7	76.3	56.5
Nairobi-high Class	801.5	655.6	685.5	836.1	681.3
-Other	311.8	178.0	173.2	167.2	138.2
Central	218.1	92.9	77.5	145.7	83.1
Masailand	215.0	85.2	84.3	141.5	138.3
Nyanza Basin	88.2	110.8	110.1	87.3	107.1
Western	64.3	27.3	69.2	72.4	98.8
Northern	6.5	4.9	3.4	10.3	41.2
TOTAL-OCCUPIED	**4,910.3**	**2,813.0**	**2,951.0**	**3,687.8**	**3,354.9**
TOTAL AVAILABLE	**9,516.6**	**7,975.7**	**8,711.4**	**9,382.3**	**8,327.8**
*Provisional; Table source: Kenya, Republic of (2002), *Economic Survey 2002*, Prepared by the Central Bureau of Statistics, Ministry of Finance and Planning, Nairobi: Government Printer, pp. 191					

Beyond tourism, the attacks cost the country unknown sums of money in security costs and lost economic production. These costs came at a time when the country could least afford them having gone through economic contraction for much of the 1990s. The economic contraction was precipitated by economic and political mismanagement under the Moi administration, World Bank-IMF Structural Adjustment Programs, and a serious shortage of credit occasioned by foreign donors' withholding of funds due to dissatisfaction with the country's political and economic management.

Figure 3: Effect of Travel Advisories on Kenya's Tourism Industry

Source: Editorial Cartoon, *Sunday Standard*, December 21, 2003

Sociopolitical effects
The terror attacks have also produced profound sociopolitical effects in Kenya including (1) the loss and disruption of lives, (2) growing tension between Muslims and Christians, (3) birth of a nascent Anti-Arab/Muslim rightwing movement, (4) radicalization of the country's Muslims, (5) harassment of Kenyans by the security forces, (6) further erosion of the country's sovereignty and, (7) rising anti-western sentiments. These effects are briefly examined below.

Loss and disruption of lives
Collectively, the 1998 and 2002 terrorist attacks in Kenya killed 228 people and injured 4,080 others, mostly Kenyans. Many of these victims were in the prime of their life and were, therefore, the breadwinners of untold numbers of people (Muendo 2003). In short, the country lost many workers, husbands, wives, and friends besides being saddled with the cost of taking care of the injured, maimed and orphaned. The following excerpts summarizes the human cost of the terrorist attacks:

> Pendo Masha's expression tightens and her eyes fill with tears at the mention of her dead mother, a dancer torn apart in a suicide bombing as she welcomed Israeli tourists to Kenya.

> Barefoot amid the palm trees of this coastal village, the eight-year-old child stiffens at the thought of the strangers who came and blew themselves up nine months ago, also killing at least 13 other people including her mother Kafedha.

Like most others in this huddle of huts, Pendo does not know why the bombing happened and has not heard of Osama bin Laden, whose Al Qaeda group claimed responsibility for the attack on the nearby Paradise Hotel. What she does know is that her life of hardship became even tougher without the 600 shillings ($8) a week Kafedha earned performing the traditional welcoming dance of her Giriama community for tourists" (Maclean 2003: no pp).

Bread winners were killed and others lost their ability to provide for their families and this is

what we want the Kenyan and US governments to realize, we need support to gather our

messed lives… (Muendo 2003: no pp)

Growing tension between Muslims and Christians
Kenya has enjoyed relative Muslim-Christian religious harmony for much of its history because the country's secular constitution guarantees freedom of religion and accords equal protection to adherents of the country's diverse religions (Mulama 2004). Nevertheless, the Christian majority dominates most aspects of the country's social, political and, to a lesser extent, economic life. But after the 1998 terrorist attacks by purported Islamic extremists, relations between the two groups began to sour (Kelley 1999, Potter 2003) with many Christians blaming local Muslims for abetting the attacks (Mwaura 2004). For Muslims, these accusations add insult to injury because many of them believe that they are disadvantaged in their access to jobs and other socioeconomic opportunities (ibid). Whether rightly or wrongly, Muslim perception that they are under siege is beginning to radicalize them resulting in their increasing demand for a federal system of government that could make it easier for them to introduce Sharia (Islamic) law in their regions as they have done in Northern Nigeria (Mulama 2004). Actually, Islamic law is already in use in limited cases in predominantly Muslim areas of Kenya such as Northeastern Province (Weiss 2004: 67).
      This radicalization was also evident in the country's recent constitutional review process. Because the exercise was conducted after the terrorist attacks that inevitably complicated life for Kenyan Muslims, they, like other social groups, sought to have beneficial articles, e.g., extension of Kadhis (Islamic) courts to the national level, included in the new draft constitution (Mulama 2004, National Constitutional Conference 2004). But because of the relatively tense relations between Muslims and Christians since the 1998 terror attacks, the latter opposed such provisions arguing that they make:

…Islam … the only faith explicitly mentioned in the draft, and that the provision for Muslim courts gives Islam precedence over other religions [when] [n]o faith should be seen to be superior (to) the other (ibid: 2004: no pp).

When Christian objections to the Kadhis courts were overruled largely because these courts have existed since the colonial era, one Christian leader argued:

This has created (a) way for the country to be ruled by Islam. What is it that will

prevent (the) northern, north-eastern and coastal provinces from taking advantage of Muslim law to hurt their Christian brothers? … If the government yields to this, it is selling this country into chaos and I'm not ashamed to say they will take blame for the bloodshed …Kenya risk[s] going the way of Nigeria and Sudan (ibid: 2004: no pp).

This religious rivalry, if unchecked, could spiral downwards into civil war and anarchy as has happened in Sudan following the imposition of Sharia law by General Mohamad Numeiry in the 1980s (Mulama 2003).

Muslims have also increased demands for parity in their access to national socioeconomic resources and for a federal or "*majimbo*" system of government that could guarantee the coast region greater autonomy (Kagwanja and Mutunga 2001). The demand for the creation of a national university at the coast region is also high on the Muslim agenda because "[t]he expansive Coast Province has neither a full-fledged university nor a constituent college of any of the country's six State universities" (*East African Standard*, Wednesday, March 3, 2004).

Birth of a nascent Anti-Arab/Muslim rightwing movement

The terrorist attacks have also created room for racist and xenophobic anti-Arab and anti-Islam views or "islamophobia" to begin to be more openly expressed and tolerated in Kenya (Mwaura 2004). Xenophobic rhetoric, which first surfaced in the mid-1900s at the height of the country's freedom struggle, is also informed by many indigenous Kenyans' resentment of the prominent role that foreigners and non-indigenous Kenyans, especially Asians, play in the country's economy. While much of this native Kenyan xenophobia has traditionally been mostly directed at Asian Kenyans, who acted as minority middlemen in colonial economy in the first-half on the 20th century (Gwyn 1977:114), there has been long running but muted anti-Arab sentiment among local black Kenyans especially in the coast region where most Arab Kenyan businesses are located[1]. Besides, tarnishing the local image of Islam (Mwaura 2004), the terrorist attacks rekindled the muted anti-Arab/anti-Muslim sentiment and also elevated it in the public consciousness as the following excerpt demonstrates:

> A Kenyan man stands outside the office of a Middle East airline company, gesticulating wildly and complaining loudly about "Arabs" ruining his country as three building guards gather around him. "We deserve to have our countries back -- Morocco, Somalia. Who are these Arabs anyway?" the man asks, jabbing his finger in the direction of two men in long, white robes standing in the airline company's doorway. The men ignore him, but others in the building lobby stare curiously. It's not as unusual outburst in Kenya these says [days]." (Potter 2003: no pp).

The War on Terrorism: A threat to citizens' rights and Kenya's sovereignty?

As in other countries such as the US, the "war on terrorism" has become a major threat to human, civil and political rights in Kenya as the security forces have acquired unprecedented powers and tools to combat terrorism. Since the attacks, Kenya's security forces have been

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[1] Even among Kenyan Muslims, there is a distinct racial separation between the fairer skinned Arabs and their indigenous black brethren.

accused of using heavy-handed interrogation tactics on terrorist detainees and body searches are becoming more common especially on routes to airports (Maclean 2003). Although there have been some protests against the new security measures, they have not been sustained enough to produce change. Most Kenyans appear tacitly supportive of the measures unaware that they could be victimized by them. Many have subconsciously mortgaged liberty for security.

But perhaps the most worrying new tool in the country's anti-terrorism war is the draft Suppression of Terrorism Bill that was published on April 30th, 2003. Besides defining terrorism and terrorist organizations, the bill, among other things, (1) seeks to criminalize unlawful weapons training, the leading of terrorist organizations, possession of articles of terrorism, being a member of or supporting a terrorist organization (Kenya 2003), (2) confers extra powers on police and spells out cooperative procedures to enable Kenya to work with other countries to combat terrorism, (3) provides punishment, and or life imprisonment for anyone convicted of terrorism and, (4) allows for the seizure of property acquired through terrorism (Wabala and Wandera, 2003: no pp).

However, the bill is unpopular because (1) it is widely believed to have been "…foisted on Kenya by the U.S. and British governments" (Potter 2003: no pp) thereby undermining homegrown responses to terrorism (Thuku, Agutu, Mugonyi and KNA, 2003; Otieno, 2003), (2) it appears to target certain groups of Kenyans, especially Muslims (Otieno, 2003) and is perceived to be divisive because it pits Christian supporters against its Muslim opponents (ibid.), (3) it is seen as being "draconian and oppressive" (Thuku, Agutu, Mugonyi and KNA, 2003) because it contains no remedy for those wrongly accused of terrorism –unlike the USA Patriot Act (ibid.), (4) it is seen as being unbeneficial to Kenyans even though they will bear its brunt not so much to protect them but to satisfy American and British concerns over their own security (Otieno, 2003), (5) it eases the extradition of terrorist suspects to other countries without the normal safeguards (Thuku, Agutu, Mugonyi and KNA, 2003), (6) it perpetuates neocolonialism and violates the country's sovereignty by facilitating the operation of foreign security forces – viz. American and European- in Kenya (ibid.) even though some of these foreign forces have been accused of being disrespectful of their Kenyan counterparts (Walunywa 2003: no pp), (7) it is undemocratic having been drafted with no due input from most Kenyans (ibid.), (8) it terrorizes Kenyans (Figure 4) and violates their civil and human rights by, for example,

Figure 4: Kenya's Anti-Terrorism Legislation

Source: Editorial Cartoon, *East African Standard*, July 17, 2003

allowing "…for the arrest and holding of terrorist suspects without allowing them to contact lawyers and relatives" (Thuku, Agutu, Mugonyi and KNA, 2003). Additionally, the bill has also caused angst among some Kenyans because they view it as being racist (Walunywa 2003) because of its likely violation of the rights of non-whites while protecting those of whites. In response the government denies most of these criticisms, especially charges that the bill was brought about by external pressure and that the bill is unfriendly to Kenyans, arguing instead that the bill will be "…amended to …[suit] the Kenyan situation… [and that] the views of Kenya Muslims will be catered to before …[its] enactment …" (Akolo 2003). Such government assurances are unconvincing to many Kenyans (Figure 4).

Most Kenyans also see many of the anti-terrorism measures taken by the government of Kenya as a breach of the country's sovereignty (Thuku, Agutu, Mugonyi and KNA, 2003). In 2003, for instance, the US and Britain pressed Kenya to implement intrusive security measures before the two countries could lift their economically debilitating travel advisories against Kenya. These measures include (1) passage of an anti-Terrorism Bill (Walunywa 2003), (2) cancellation of all airport staff passes and re-issuing them after carefully screening all staff members, (3) introduction of a new electronic pass system, (4) improving airport fences and enforcing security patrol inside and outside the fences, (5) increasing Kenya's passenger screening equipment at the two international airports, (6) increasing staff manning the immigration arrival desks and, (7) deploying mobile security units at its international airports even below aircraft flight paths (Wabala and Wandera 2003). As with the anti-terrorism legislation, the Kenya government is not keen to be seen as acting at the behest of foreign countries, especially the US and the UK.

Geopolitical effects

Tension between Kenya and Western countries
Terrorism in Kenya has also produced geopolitical effects such as tension between the governments of Kenya and Western countries, especially the U.S. and U.K. The tension stems from differences in the perception of the country's terrorism risk (Figure 5), the issuance of economically harmful travel advisories on Kenya by western countries such as the U.S. and the U.K. (Figure 3, Lugaga 2003: no pp), and Kenya's inability to sustain the high cost of the war on terrorism without adequate international support. This has put Kenya in a tough position because even though "Kenya…is affluent enough by African standards to have western investments and interests…[it] is without enough money to buy worldwide security" (Jenkins 2002: no pp). As a Kenyan journalist aptly put it:

> Since the 1998 terrorist bombing and subsequent events and the travel advisory, there's a feeling that Kenya is being hit from both sides - by the terrorists because we are a friend of the US, and by the US because we're being hit by terrorists (Gaitho: 2003: no pp).

Figure 5: US, UK and Local Perception of Kenya's Terrorist Threat

Source: Editorial Cartoon, *Daily Nation*, June 24, 2003

Growing anti-western and anti-Israeli sentiment
The geopolitical tension between Kenya and her western counterparts is also manifested in the growing anti-western and anti-Israeli sentiment because Western governments have been pushing Kenya to implement unpopular anti-terrorism measures. Such negative rhetoric is especially coming from local Muslims who see themselves as the target of the anti-terrorism war

and have wasted no time coming up with their own "…three axes of evil" namely, President Bush and Prime Ministers Blair and Sharon (Potter 2003: no pp).

Another reason for rising anti-western and anti-Israeli views is the unsettling sense of insecurity among the many Kenyans that realize that the substantial presence of westerners and their investments is the main reason Kenya is a terrorist target. Indeed one captured terrorist agent recently confirmed this (Maina, 2004), leading many Kenyans to the conclusion that if westerners and Israelis left, the country would be safer (ibid). This thinking is evident in the following excerpt:

> Lamu West MP Fahim Twaha wants the Kenya Government to close down Israeli, Russian, British and American Embassies in Kenya, claiming they are a security risk. He said the closure should be done immediately to save the country's tourism sector and threats of attacks from terrorist...
> We do not need them. Let them close down and leave us alone until when the world will be at peace," said the MP through a press release. (Ali 2003: no pp).

Other Kenyans have taken a different approach to the issue and have questioned the wisdom of keeping large numbers of non-tax paying Americans in Kenya when they "…take so much more looking after" (Walshaw, 2003: no pp). These negative sentiments are partly informed by America's dreadful conduct after the 1998 US Embassy bombings in Nairobi, especially its apparent disregard for Kenyan lives and casualties during the rescue efforts although far more Kenyans than Americans were killed or injured in the bomb blast (Maina, 2004). Moreover, America's refusal to include Kenyan victims in the September 11th Victim Compensation Fund of 2001 made many Kenyans unhappy (Muendo 2003) because the fund benefited Americans who either got injured or lost loved ones in the Nairobi Embassy bombing. Although the US had its reasons for doing so, this action made many Kenyans feel "…sorely betrayed by a superpower which they once thought was a good friend" (Gacheru, 2003: no pp).

The substantial Israeli presence in Kenya is also becoming increasingly unpopular and problematic for the country from a security standpoint. This despite the fact that most Kenyans and their government, being influenced by a Christian worldview, are sympathetic to Israeli interests. Ironically, except for local Muslim opposition to Israeli presence in Kenya, it is Israel's own security measures at its Nairobi embassy, especially the frisking of citizens near the embassy that has become a major source of Kenyan discontent with the Israeli embassy and calls for its relocation to a more convenient site (*East African Standard*, Tuesday, June 29, 2004). As one Kenyan recently posed in a letter in one of the local dailies: "Why must we keep this embassy open?" (Kamau 2003: no pp). In sum, it is noteworthy that overt anti-western and anti-Israeli views were rare in Kenya prior to the terrorist attacks.

Steps to Control Terrorism in Kenya
Currently, Kenya is relying on a combination of legislative, security, social and diplomatic measures to deal with the country's terrorist threat. These measures include (1) anti-terrorist legislation, (2) beefed up security patrols by the military and police, (3) social outreach and, (4) peace talks to resolve the Somalia and Sudan crises. These measures are explored below.

Legislative action

On April 30th, 2003, Kenya published a draft Suppression of Terrorism bill to guide its future response to terrorism. Since this bill is yet to be enacted into law (Kelley and Munaita 2004), the country is using various pieces of existing laws e.g., Anti-Corruption and Economic Crimes Act, the Police Act and other elements of Kenya's criminal code to deal with its terrorism threat. The country's broad executive powers are also being extensively used for this purpose. The recent passage of the Anti-Corruption and Economic Crimes Act is especially likely to help to seal a major loophole –corruption of the police, immigration and customs agencies -- in the country's vulnerability to terrorism.

Police and military action

The country has also stepped up security measures (Maclean 2003) and its forces have even carried out daring missions that have managed to snatch some terrorist suspects from Somalia (Soke 2003). Border patrols especially along the troublesome Kenya-Somalia border (Daily Nation on the Web, Wednesday, June 25, 2003) and joint Kenya-U.S. navy patrols of Kenya's Indian Ocean territorial waters (Wabala and Wandera, 2003: no pp) have been enhanced in order to stop the infiltration of terrorists from Somalia and to "curb illegal immigration and the smuggling of narcotics and [other] contraband goods [like weapons] along the coast" (ibid: no pp). Moreover, the U.S. has also been conducting additional security patrols of Kenya's territorial waters along the Kenya-Somali coast, although these are proving to be unpopular with local residents who fear that the U.S. is slowly building a base in Kenya (Mango 2003: no pp). Such fears may be unwarranted as "Nairobi and Washington have a longstanding agreement that allows US forces to make periodic use of air and sea bases in Kenya" (Daily Nation on the Web, Monday, July 7, 2003: no pp).

On the police side, the government has taken a number of measures aimed at strengthening the force's ability to combat terrorism. These measures include, (1) the creation of an Anti-terrorism Police Unit (Kelley 2003b), (2) the opening "…of a National Counter-Terrorism Center to "… [provide] an institutional framework to combat the [terrorist] threats" (Kelley and Munaita 2004: no pp), (3) the replacement of personnel at the top echelons of the force e.g., the appointment of an Army Brigadier to head the force and, (4) the infusion of "…$641 million over the next five years in a bid to make the unit more effective in combating crime" (ibid). Moreover, internationally renowned anti-terrorism police units such as the Scotland Yard are aiding and training their local counterparts to better combat the threat (Wabala and Wandera 2003). Additional security support for Kenya has also come from the US in the form of:

> …counter-terrorism efforts including technical collaboration in detection and disarming of bombs, protection of government leaders and hostage negotiations [and,] … $30 million worth of US counter-terrorism aid as part of a $100 million US initiative involving five East African countries (Kelley and Munaita 2004: no pp).

> Airport security has also been enhanced by the US provision of:
> …computer systems for Kenyan airports that allow each traveller's identity to be quickly checked against an updated terrorist watch-list…A US government team is also working with Kenyan authorities to develop means of blocking clandestine terrorist financing" (Kelley and Munaita 2004: no pp).

Sociopolitical solutions
The use of force in reducing Kenya's terrorism risk is complemented by sociopolitical efforts aimed at reaching out to local communities to help identify terrorists and to promote continued co-existence of Muslims and Christians in Kenya. To this end, the government has also tried to reach out to social groups (e.g., Muslims) that are apprehensive of the new anti-terrorism measures e.g., the anti–terrorism bill (Otieno 2003: no pp). Specifically, the government has reassured Muslims of its commitment to unbiased application of the law without regard to religion, and has promised to revise the draft anti-terrorism bill "…to remove religious stereotypes contained in the original draft" (Kelley and Munaita 2004: no pp). Muslim views have been also included in the recently completed draft review of the Constitution of Kenya (National Constitutional Conference 2004).

International aid donors such as the US are also boosting the war on terrorism with increased development assistance to the Muslim dominated Coastal and Northeastern regions of Kenya. Assistance in the form of the rehabilitation of clinics, construction of classrooms, bridge repairs, provision of potable water and donations of medical services, are helping to improve the quality of life in these regions (CNN, February 7, 2002). Many of these services are provided through civil action by the US military, which also gives the troops a chance to engage in dialogue with local Muslim people. As expected, there have been bumps in the delivery of such development assistance e.g., the recent Muslim rejection of a US offer to fund Islamic schools out of fear that the offer was insincere and intended to influence the schools' curriculum (The *EastAfrican*, February 24, 2004).

There are also attempts to promote inter-religious dialogue in Kenya. Although the country has seldom seen religious violence, there have been a few worrisome incidents in Wajir, Nakuru, Nyeri, Mombasa and Nairobi in recent decades. According to Chemchemi ya Ukweli (*lit*. Oasis of Truth):

> Some examples of this tension include the 1984 Wagalla massacre, which resulted in 1,600 Muslims killed after a referendum showed the population's preference to be part of Somalia. Religious animosity peaked after the August 1998 bomb-blast in the American Embassy in Nairobi. The Kenyan Muslim community was blamed and victimized. Five Muslim NGOs were de-registered. [That] same year, the Oromo Liberation Front army crossed into Kenya and killed 300 Muslims in Baggala, Northeastern Province. [In 1998] there was also a conflict in Nakuru, when an evangelist's remarks about Prophet Mohammed where reciprocated with the burning of a church and the public stripping of a Catholic nun by Muslim youth in Wajir. In 1999, policemen entered a mosque in Kwale and killed 6 Muslims. The Muslim community perceived it as an anti-Muslim act by a predominantly Christian police force (Chemchemi ya Ukweli 2000? 7-8).

To counter this alarming trend, organizations such as Chemchemi ya Ukweli have begun to offer Kenyans of various religious persuasions basic courses on peaceful conflict resolution. Some religious leaders and organizations are also taking the lead in promoting inter-religious dialogue in the country (Nyamai 2004).

Diplomatic solutions

The main diplomatic thrust of Kenya's anti-terrorism effort is the search for peace in Somalia and Sudan. This initiative is driven by the recognition that political instability in Somalia and Sudan is a major contributor to Kenya's terrorist threat. Thus, Kenya has for a long time hosted both countries' peace talks. Most recently, the Sudan peace talks were held in Naivasha while the Somali talks were initially held in Eldoret and later Nairobi. Both peace talks have made good progress lately. Sudan's peace process received a major boost recently when the warring parties signed a "… a document compiling six previously negotiated protocols into one framework agreement, at the start of the final phase of their peace talks at State House, Nairobi, … " in June 2004 (The EastAfrican, June 07 - 13, 2004: cover page). Similarly, a promising breakthrough has been achieved in the Somali peace talks (Njeru 2004). If both peace talks result in binding treaties, they could stabilize these two countries politically helping to transform them into good neighbors whose security will greatly enhance that of Kenya.

Conclusion and the future of Kenya's terrorism challenge

Kenya was thrust into the center of global terrorism in 1998 when the US embassy in Nairobi was bombed. Four years later, a bomb destroyed an Israeli hotel in Mombasa and a shoulder-launched missile was fired on an airliner full of Israeli tourists. Although, in both Al Qaeda terrorist incidents, the primary targets were Americans and Israelis, Kenyans paid the heaviest price in terms of lives lost and number of injuries, not to mention the socioeconomic disruptions occasioned by these events.

Because the factors that have contributed to terrorism in Kenya are unlikely to change in the short-term, the country will continue to be on the terrorist radar screen for a while. Thus, it is imperative for the country to maintain a high level of terrorism preparedness by enacting anti-terrorist legislation and reducing corruption especially in its security forces. Simultaneously, conditions such as iniquitous socioeconomic development within the country should be addressed in order to reduce some local Muslims' sympathy and support for would be terrorists. Kenya should also continue to support the Somali and Sudan peace talks because their success could greatly reduce the country's vulnerability to terrorism. If these countries were to become politically stable, this would deprive Al Qaeda and other terrorist organizations of easy weapons sources and convenient safe havens, thereby making it harder for them to operate in Kenya's neighborhood.

Attention should also be paid to the negative effects of the "war on terrorism" on Kenya's civil, human, and political rights. This is important because the "war on terrorism" will not be won without the cooperation of citizens. Thus, the anti-terror war should not be used as a pretext to wantonly violate the basic rights of Kenyans. In short, the "war on terrorism" should not be allowed to degenerate into a war on citizens' rights, lest success on the former be found to be hollow in the end.

Unfortunately, the religious-inspired terrorism that Kenya is dealing with right now is driven by spiritual/religious motivations with no material solutions. As a consequence, the best way for Kenya to reduce its vulnerability to this type of terrorism is by reducing immediate contributing factors while whittling down its local and regional support base. Equally important is the need to reevaluate the country's global geopolitical stance, especially the security and socioeconomic cost of its support of Western and Israeli interests. While a geopolitical realignment may not change the country's position in the larger Christianity-Islamic contest for

regional spiritual supremacy, it could put Kenya below the radar screen of religious inspired terrorist groups.

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