

Peace and Security Challenges: Reflections from the East Africa Region

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Introduction

The East African region (comprising Kenya, Uganda, Tanzania, Burundi and Rwanda) has attracted increased interest in both academic and policy circles in the area of security for a long time now. Apart from Tanzania, the other four countries have at one time or another in the last four decades experienced such high levels of insecurity as to attract international attention. Until recently, Rwanda and Burundi had been embroiled in deadly civil wars, albeit intermittently, ever since their independence in the early 1960s. In Rwanda, the civil conflicts and violence climaxed to the genocide of 1994. Uganda descended into bloody civil conflicts and violence after the successful military coup by Idi Amin who ruled until 1979 when he was ousted with the assistance of the Tanzanian military. The immediate post-Amin era also witnessed coups and counter coups punctuated by guerrilla wars culminating in the Museveni take-over in 1986. The Museveni era has seen a relatively stable environment even though the armed resistance in the North by the Lord's Resistance Army has continued to poison peace and stability.

Kenya, earlier described as an "island of peace", also appeared to descend into chaos and violence from the 1990s, culminating in the infamous post-election violence of 2007-2008. Despite being relatively peaceful and stable, Tanzania has also had its share of security threatening situations. In 2001, elections in Zanzibar were followed by violence which led to some Tanzanians, especially from Zanzibar, taking refuge in Kenya. Again, in 2010,

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post-election violent protests led to loss of life and destruction of property, especially in the Arusha region.

It is, therefore, clear that all is not well with security and peace in the individual countries in the region. From a regional perspective, the East African region is facing a whole range of threats to its security. Terrorist attacks have become common place in the last two decades. Kenya, Uganda and Tanzania have all suffered several casualties in terrorist attacks in the recent past. The situation in Burundi remains volatile with armed militias occasionally attacking urban centers, including the capital city, Bujumbura. The continuing statelessness in Somalia with its associated problem of the "Al shabaab" menace is a real security threat in the EAC region. The persistent civil conflicts in neighboring Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), Central African Republic and the Sudan to the north do not bode well for East Africa's peace and security. The influx of refugees into East Africa from Somalia, DRC and Sudan should those conflicts persist is bound to complicate the security and peace situation. Proliferation of small arms, armed banditry, cross-border cattle rustling, money laundering and other criminal activities thrive best in situations of civil conflict and East Africa has been no exception. Piracy off the coast along the Indian Ocean has persisted for the last two decades or so.

The aim of this paper is twofold: (a) to diagnose the security problem in the region and (b) to suggest a policy framework that could guarantee peace and security in the region. However, before delving into these two tasks, it is important to conceptualize security and peace.

Conceptualizing Security and Peace for East Africa

It is a statement of the obvious that the effective diagnosis of the security problem and subsequent prescriptions for solutions to the security problem must be anchored on an understanding of what constitutes security and, by extension, peace. Contemporary literature has in the recent past encouraged a shift from the narrow perspectives that traditionally explained security as "an absence of war", "absence of threats", or "an absence of some sense of dangers or threats", among other definitions (Nyinguro, 1993). A "secure" and, by extension, a "peaceful" country was one in which hostilities and

violence were absent (Patel, 1992). It has now emerged that these perceptions were not only too narrow, but were superficial at best. Besides, the traditional interpretations of security were also dangerously static: whenever one talked about security, it was the security of the state that was implied (Williams, 2007). But even then, the state was deemed secure so long as it faced no threats of aggression or violence against it from neighbors or countries from afar. This view restricted "security" to military, political and diplomatic relations between states, (Williams, 2007). In countries ruled by authoritarian regimes, state security intrinsically meant security of the government and its leader. So long as the leader faced no threat of military coup, for instance, his or her country was deemed peaceful and secure.

In essence, the traditional conceptualization of security and peace as discussed above is flawed for three major reasons. First, it mostly addresses the "visible" and "overt" expressions of security while ignoring the "covert" and "invisible", yet more fundamental variables that define security. As such, security strategies or policies anchored on the traditional perspective are bound to be faulty, misdirected and, of course, counter-productive. This is because they are more likely to emphasize "stability" and "tranquility" at the expense of security itself. In addition, they are likely to focus more on "form" than on the "substance" of security (Nyinguro, 2010).

With specific reference to the East African region, it was such traditional perspectives that led to misguided conclusions in the 1960s through the 1980s that, Kenya, for instance, was an "island of peace" and a "beacon of stability" in an insecure and unstable region. Kenya had experienced no successful military takeovers apart from the brief unsuccessful coup attempt in 1982. In the same vein, between 1973 and 1993, Habyarimana's regime was lauded for having "restored" peace and stability to Rwanda. Until the electoral violence in Zanzibar, Tanzania had been hailed as the most "peaceful" and "secure" country in the region. In each of these three cases, the shortcomings of the traditional approach to security were thoroughly exposed. In April, 1994, the genocide in Rwanda claimed about 800,000 people. From the early 1990s, Kenya started to witness deadly ethnic clashes climaxing in the 2007-2008 post-election violence that claimed up to 1,300

lives and left up to 600,000 displaced (The Waki Report, 2009). In Tanzania, the violent electoral protests referred to above shook the peace and security in the mainland and the island. In all these cases, it was clear that beneath the overt sense of tranquility lay formidable but invisible and covert threats to security just waiting for triggers to explode.

Secondly, the traditional approach, as has been alluded to above, wrongly views the state as the referent for security. This is a serious shortcoming because it subordinates people's security to state security. It assumes that the state is the consumer of security policies, yet the "(state) should be viewed as a means to provide security policies" (Williams, 2007). By treating the state as the referent for security, the traditional approach risks reifying the state to the extent of sanctioning policies that could compromise people's security under the guise of "maintenance of state security". Summary detentions without trial of those who criticize presidents exemplifies such policies.

The crux of the matter is that security, properly conceptualized, should not be state-centered but people-centered. The main referent for security is the "people." It is interesting that even state officials, while pursuing security policies that undermine people's security, inadvertently acknowledge that the substance of security lies in the desire to protect human beings, their values and their ability to pursue their goals and desires, including basic needs in an enabling atmosphere. Mcsweeney (1999) underscores the human-centeredness of security when he observes, *inter alia*:

"it would be absurd to postulate a subject of security other than people...it is from the human need to protect human values that the term "security" derives its meaning... a security policy derives its legitimacy and power to mobilize resources... security must make sense at the basic level of the individual human being for it to make sense" (p.16).

Thirdly, the inadequacy of the traditional paradigm further reveals itself in its overemphasis on the military, diplomatic and law and order dimensions of security. Security policymakers and agencies that use this approach often ignore, with dangerous long-term consequences, the "subtle" and "indirect"

threats to security that might emanate from quarters considered unlikely by this approach Nyinguro, 1993. Yet security is such a multidimensional phenomenon that it embraces virtually all aspects of human and social life: the economic, the social, the political and even the cultural. As the African Leadership Forum on Security, Stability, Development and Cooperation (1991) rightly observed:

“...the concept of security goes beyond military considerations. It embraces all aspects of society including economic, political and social dimensions of individual, family, community, local and national life. The security of citizens to live in peace with access to the basic necessities of life while fully participating in the affairs of his or her society in freedom and enjoying all fundamental human rights.

The multidimensional nature of security is today reflected in such terms as “ food security”, “environmental security”, “economic security”, “ political security”, “human security,” etc. Issues such as poverty, human rights, justice, equality, climate change, drought, desertification, underdevelopment, hunger and disease have become increasingly entrenched in the current literature on security. The incorporation of these issues have led to the recognition that security policies that work are those that encompass both the invisible and visible variables. As Anyang Nyong'o (1992) succinctly put it,

“Peace and security issues cannot be isolated from development issues. Peace should not be interpreted narrowly as an absence of war but should Mean also the injustices implying ‘invisible war’ which by hunger, disease and oppression cause enormous issues and damage to human life and pave way for ‘visible war.’

In essence, the contemporary perspective of security is both multidimensional and human-centered. It is multidimensional to the extent that it embraces all aspects of life – political, economic, social, and cultural – that contribute to security. It is human-centered to the extent that the essential target of security policies is the human being. The ultimate aim is to make human beings secure, that is, “safe from harm” (Nyinguro, 2010). Indeed, “the need to feel secure is a core human value and (security) is a

prerequisite for being able to live in decent life," (Griffins and O'Callaghan, 2002). A state or a region may not be said to be secure if human beings therein do not feel safe. Accordingly, "state security" essentially dovetails to "human security." Of course, this is as it should be because the state is nothing but a collection of individual human beings. The individual, therefore, represents the irreducible basic (unit) to which the concept of security can be applied and the security of individuals is irreversibly connected to that of the state (Buzan, 1991). Hence, whether one is talking about states or their incarnations, human beings, security would still be comprehensively defined as:

"freedom from danger; that is, protection from physical or direct violence; freedom from fear, a sense of safety and relative well-being in legal political, social-economic and cultural terms, a measure from structural violence...(Griffins and Berry 2002:105)

It is within this multidimensional, human-centered perspective that this paper seeks to examine the state of security and peace in East Africa with a view to suggesting a durable strategy for maintaining regional peace and security.

The State Of Security and Peace In East Africa: A Diagnosis Of The Security Problem And An Assessment Of Insecurity Levels

It has been observed elsewhere in this paper that East Africa has been experiencing and continues to experience significant levels of insecurity. It is instructive, however, to acknowledge variations that exist in the region. As observed earlier, Uganda, Rwanda and Burundi have experienced higher levels of insecurity than Kenya and Tanzania.

The nature of security challenges has varied from one country to the other. For instance, Burundi and Rwanda face more daunting challenges as they attempt post-conflict reconstructions after devastating civil wars and (in the case of Rwanda) a genocide. Despite the huge gains Uganda has scored in the security sector since 1986, Ugandan society is still relatively militarized and the debris from three decades of turmoil have not yet fully been cleared. In Kenya, security challenges emanate more from the economic and political

sectors as well as from the terrorist threat and the turmoil from its neighbor, Somalia. Internally, apart from the aftershocks of the 2007-2008 post-election violence which are being successfully fathomed, Kenya faces no serious imminent threats to security presently. Tanzania, on the other hand, has had a post- independence history devoid of life- threatening cases of insecurity and hence is more concerned with preventive and pre-emptive policies aimed at maintaining the peaceful status quo and preventing the scenarios that have emerged in its partner states in the region.

In auditing the security and peace situation in East Africa, this paper has identified several threats to security. There are political variables focusing mainly on threats to political security. There are also economic variables, especially those related to economic security. Environmental security issues are also addressed while resource-based security issues are also highlighted. Other threats to security include those related to terrorism, piracy, and the demographic challenges arising from the “youth bulge.”

Weak and Inadequate Political systems as sources of Insecurity in East Africa.

Security threats from the political sector in East Africa stem largely from the nature of political systems in the region. Despite the ongoing political reforms that started in earnest in the early 1990s when many African countries were visited by Samuel Huntington’s “Third Wave” (of democratization), East Africa’s political systems still exhibit features that make the state more of a source of insecurity than the guarantor of security. Regarding security, the story of political reforms in virtually each of the East African states has been that of very slow movement away from the traditional “statist” perspective of security. To a large extent, East African states are still being haunted by the process of political decay set in motion by decades of authoritarianism after independence (Chege, 1991, 1999).

Since independence, East Africa’s political systems, like their counterparts elsewhere in the African continent, have been characterized by an ideological vacuum, low levels of institutionalization, incongruence between political structures and culture, lack of effective internal government, authoritarian tendencies, kleptocratic leadership and governance systems that lack

accountability (Nyinguro, 1993, 2006, 2010). As a result, they are relatively vulnerable to conflicts and political violence. They lack the capacity to regulate society effectively, a factor that has easily made some of them candidates for the “failed states” status. In its 2009 “*Failed States Index*,” annual report, the *Fund for Peace*, a United States of America’s think tank observed that Kenya was “on the brink” while the other four countries were also ranked so poorly *The East African*, July 6-12, 2009. Such political systems are not only incapable of maintaining peace and security but are also threats to security in themselves given that they sustain variables that cause insecurity.

Kenya’s descent into post- election violence in 2007/2008 was, to a large extent, attributable to lack of effective internal governance structures, especially security agencies. Measures security agencies took to control the violence seemed to just elicit more violence from the people (The Waki Report, 2009). In his report to the United nations in 2009, the United Nations Rapporteur suggested that the Kenya police and the Attorney General’s office, key institutions in the maintenance of law and order, were utterly inept and beyond repair United Nations, 2010. In particular, he accused the police of carrying out “extra-judicial” killings. As Nyinguro (2011) observes, the extra-legal methods used by police in dealing with the criminal gangs in Kenya have sometimes led to further radicalization of the youth belonging to various militias. The youth usually use the excuse of fighting “the unjust” establishment to justify their otherwise criminal activities. A weak judicial system has also undermined efforts to control criminal gangs (Nyinguro, 2011).

The poor performance of Kenya’s state structures in maintenance of peace and security is replicated in almost each of the other four countries in the region. Ugandan authorities have in the recent past been accused of heavy handedness and of using extra-legal methods in handling opposition protests, thereby radicalizing the youth even the more. In Burundi, militias still attack civilians and government officials even in the capital city, Bujumbura. In Rwanda, despite the great strides made by the post-genocide

government to improve security claims of harassment of government critics by use of unorthodox means abound.

The inability of East Africa's governments to establish law and order and to exert authority and control over territory has led to the emergence of militias that roam the country maiming, killing, raping and terrorizing ordinary people. While these militias are found in Uganda, especially in the remote districts in the north and may be found also in Tanzania, Burundi and Rwanda, Kenya stands out to be a more instructive case study in organized militias and gangs. In October, 2010, in a move that revealed the extent to which organized militias and criminal gangs had entrenched themselves in Kenya, the government gazetted 33 groups that had been banned. The government claimed that these criminal groups had been engaging in macabre killings and kidnappings, imposing illegal levies and administering oaths Daily Nation, Thursday, October 21, 2010. The Waki Commission Report on Post-Election Violence (2009) noted that most of the militias had been facilitated in the past by police and politicians, including those in the higher echelons of leadership. Quoting from an academic journal article, the Prosecutor at the International Criminal Court at The Hague, for instance, accused Uhuru Kenyatta, a prominent Kenyan politician, of being a leader of Mungiki, a militia alleged to have been involved in Kenya's post-election violence of 2007-2008.

If political systems in East Africa are generally ineffective in guaranteeing internal security they have proved to be even more inadequate in protecting citizens from external threats. The 1998 terror bomb attacks in Nairobi and Dar es Salaam exposed weaknesses in immigration policies, frequent banditry and cattle-rustling along the borders of the five countries demonstrate the failure of border control policies. The inability by Ugandan security forces to police its borders with Sudan allowed the LRA rebels to slip in and out of the country at will. Frequent clashes between Kenyan herdsmen and bandits from Ethiopia to the north inside Kenyan territory reveal Kenyans' vulnerability to external attacks from outside the region. The porosity of Rwanda's borders with both Burundi and the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) has made it possible for militias from both

countries to walk in and out of Rwanda at will. Ineffective border policing and immigration policies in the region have also created an enabling environment for transnational crimes such as drug trafficking, money laundering and human trafficking to flourish in the region.

Ethnicity as a Threat to Security and Peace in East Africa

In both academic and policy circles, there is no one major cause of conflicts and insecurity in Africa that has been so repeatedly singled out more than ethnicity. That ethnicity is a risk for conflicts in Africa is widely acknowledged (Chege, 1992, 1999; World Bank, 2000; African Development Bank (ADB), 2009). Like elsewhere in Africa, ethnicity has been a major threat to the very foundation of four of the EAC states with very negative impact on security and peace in the region. At the heart of ethnicity have been perceptions by certain ethnic communities that they have been systematically alienated from state affairs or the development process. Quite often such feelings have instigated violent conflicts and civil wars.

The 1994 genocide in Rwanda was largely at the result of the policies of previous governments going back to the colonial era. Belgian authorities had deliberately discriminated against the Hutu while preferring to work with the minority Tutsi whom they incorporated into government structures and processes. Hutu-led governments in the post-colonial era sought to exclude the Tutsi from the mainstream of national life (Kamukama, 1997). In Kenya, ethnic policies pursued by Kenyatta (1963-1979), Moi (1979-2002) and Kibaki I (2002-2007), largely contributed to the 2007-2008 post-election violence (Waki Report, 2009). Kenyatta appeared to have deliberately favored his ethnic group, the Kikuyu in the allocation and distribution of resources. Following Kenyatta *footsteps* Moi tended to similarly favor his ethnic group, the Kalenjin, with Kibaki doing the same for the Kikuyu.

Since independence in 1962, Burundi has experienced intermittent civil conflicts between the majority Hutu and minority Tutsi. The civil war of 1993 that followed the death of the first democratically elected Hutu president claimed up to 100,000 lives Kitevu and Lind, 2001. Prior to the election of president Ndadaye, a Hutu, post-colonial leaders, mainly Tutsi, had

perpetuated and perfected historical colonial policies that had favored the minority Tutsi while marginalizing majority Hutu (Kamukama, 1997).

In Uganda, the “Baganda question” has remained an important factor in the country’s political landscape. The coups and counter-coups that characterized the first three decades after independence were also motivated by ethnicity to a large extent. Political party leadership and membership have followed regional (in fact, ethnic) fault lines. The Democratic Party (DP) and the Uganda People’s Congress (UPC) have been traditionally identified with the Baganda and the Acholi and other northern ethnic groups respectively.

In Tanzania, ethnicity as a security risk factor has not been as pronounced. This has been attributed to prudent national policies pursued by the first president, Julius Nyerere (World Bank, 2000). Recent developments, especially the emergence of sectarianism in Tanzania’s multiparty politics notwithstanding, the country remain the most de-ethnicized in the region. The problem of ethnicity has not overtly manifested itself, at least for now. However, since the ingredients that turn ethnicity into a security threat are present in Tanzania, whether the country will continue to avoid the pitfalls of ethnicity shall depend on the ability of contemporary leadership to sustain the de-ethnicized policies of the past while skillfully managing sectarian conflicts that are emerging.

Ethnicity as a risk factor for conflicts in East Africa has been mainly perpetuated by poor leadership coupled with lack of democracy. For the first three decades of independence, countries in the region were either under military or one-party dictatorships. By their very nature, the political systems in the region could not guarantee security. (Chege (1992:17) observes that post-independence leaders nurtured ethnicity as an instrument of survival once they realized that they lacked legitimacy and ideology. In Rwanda and Burundi, it was the post-colonial regimes that fanned ethnic conflicts using them as escape routes from more pressing political challenges posed by their authoritarian tendencies.

Security Threats from Natural Resource-Based Conflicts

That there exists a strong correlation between natural resources and civil conflicts in Africa is now widely acknowledged (Diffield, 1994; Nyinguro, 2005; Tvedt, 2010; ADB, 2009; Hansen, 1987). The natural resource factor is inbuilt in African conflicts in different ways, namely, access, control, management and exploitation (Nyinguro, 2005). Insecurity in Northern Kenya emanates from the frequent conflicts between communities over resources. Competition for pasture and water points among the mainly pastoralist nomadic population often lead to violent confrontations between herdsmen who usually organize themselves along clan lines (Nyinguro, 2005). In 1997, for instance, all-out clan based resource fights erupted in Isiolo district between the Degodia clan from Wajir West and the Borana the Borana had earlier welcomed the Degodia herdsmen who came in search of water and pasture. But as these commodities became scarce, Degodia resisted calls by their hosts to leave. Similar violent conflicts are common in Garissa, Mandera, West Pokot, Baringo and several other districts in Kenya.

Disputes arising from scramble for pasture and water have also led to violent conflicts between communities living along borders. Such conflicts have been common between the Maasai living along the Kenya-Tanzania border, the Kuria of Kenya and Tanzania, the Pokot of Kenya and the Karamojong of Uganda, the Oromo of Ethiopia and Borana of Kenya., the Teso of Kenya and Uganda.

Resource-dependence has also been singled out as a major instigator of civil conflicts (Ross, 2003). It has been argued that countries that possess strategic natural resources such as oil and other minerals are more prone to violent conflicts. East African countries have not been victims of resource-dependence, at least for now, as none of them has been a major producer of the most internationally sought after strategic resources such as oil and minerals. However, with the recent discovery of oil in Uganda, the increase in the level of extraction of gold in Tanzania and the bright prospects of the ongoing exploration of oil and other minerals in Kenya, the three countries need to learn from the experiences of such countries like DRC and Nigeria with regard to the "curse" of resource dependence.

Disputes over water resources are likely to intensify in the region in the future because of the dwindling water supply in Lake Victoria, a shared fresh water lake in East Africa. Of even greater concern are the current disagreements surrounding the use of the waters of River Nile. As riparian states, all the East African countries are interested parties in the conflict over access to and use of Nile waters. They may want to use the East African community mechanisms to forge a common regional position vis-à-vis other parties outside the region, namely, Ethiopia, Sudan, and Egypt. Egypt has in the past even threatened to go to war with any country that may interfere with the flow of the Nile waters. The Nile Waters, therefore, may generate violent conflicts that might poison security in the region.

Environmental Sources of Insecurity

Among the subtle, yet formidable threats to security have been identified in the hitherto ignored sector, the environment. The correlation between environmental degradation and insecurity is no longer debatable. If the term “environment” is defined ecologically (as it should be) as “the external conditions and influences affecting the life and development of organisms (man, in our case)”, then it logically follows that any interference with it threatens the security and the very survival of the human being (Nyinguro, 1993:129). The flora, fauna and even the atmosphere in our environment are what provide the goods necessary for the realization of all the other aspects of human security, namely, economic, political, social and food security.

In East Africa, the major environmental challenges threatening sustainable development with adverse implications for security are drought, desertification, soil erosion, deforestation, marine and air pollution, water or river pollution, coral reef destruction in littoral states like Kenya and Tanzania, global warming, climate change and loss of biodiversity (UNDP, 2009; World Bank, 2010). East Africa’s vulnerability to environmental problems arises mainly from a number of factors: high dependence on biofuel for energy, over-reliance on land for food production and other development activities, and the lack of sufficient financial and technical capabilities to manage environmental challenges. Moreover, East Africa is exposed to highly variable climate changes due to its tropical weather. This presents a greater security risk especially because these countries depend

more directly on climate-sensitive natural resources for income and well-being (World Bank, 2010).

Continued degradation of the environment is also likely to create food security problems in East Africa. In Uganda, for instance, forest land has shrunk from 45% of the country's surface area in 1980 to 21% in 2000 (UN, 2007). Tanzania's annual deforestation rate has been put at 1%. The highly publicized and now internationalized case of the Mau forest complex in Kenya singularly demonstrates the grave concern being expressed about environmental threats to human security in East Africa. The Mau complex supports several rivers not only in Kenya but in the greater East African region as well.

In terms of human security, environmental degradation is a potential source of insecurity in East Africa in two significant ways. First, continued greenhouse gas emissions that result from environmental stress caused, in part, by climate change are associated with changes in rainfall patterns which will affect the availability of water and, hence, the production of food, possibly increasing food prices and the risk of famine. (UNDP, 2009). Second, environmental hazards such as the landslides (becoming increasingly common in Kenya, Uganda and Tanzania), tsunamis, floods and famine have usually produced refugees and internally displaced persons.

Terrorism as a Threat to Security in East Africa

Terrorism, especially in its international form, has emerged as one of the most intractable threats to East Africans' security (Otenyo, 2004). The region has suffered several terrorist attacks in the recent past. On August 7, 1998, the high profile international terrorist organization, Al-Qaeda, simultaneously bombed the embassies of the United States in Nairobi and Dar es Salaam killing several people and injuring many more others. In November, 2002, a hotel patronized by Israeli tourists was terror-bombed at the Kenyan coast in Mombasa. In July, 2010, About 70 Ugandans died in a terror attack in Kampala. Responsibility was claimed by the Al-Shabaab, a radical Islamist group with links to Al-Qaeda operating from Somalia. Several terror suspects have also been arrested in Tanzania, Uganda and Kenya recently. On December 3, 2010, Kenya police had to seek assistance

from the United States, Federal Bureau of Investigations (FBI) after a bomb exploded inside a government security vehicle. On 20th December, 2010, a grenade explosion occurred in a bus terminus in Nairobi killing two people and injuring another Forty-one. Investigations revealed that the attacker was about to enter a Kampala-bound bus and was carrying a Tanzanian passport, underscoring the regional character of terrorism in the region has assumed.

East Africa's vulnerability to terrorism is even made more real with the presence of several organizations with suspected terror links in neighboring Horn of Africa. Apart from Al-Shabaab, Ethiopia's Ittihad al-Islamiya (AIAI), the Islamic Oromo Organization and the Islamic Liberation of Oromiya (IFLO) are also suspected to be receiving assistance from terror groups elsewhere and are in the US list of terrorist groups. Even more worrying is the increasing number of people of East African origin who are joining terrorist cells (Mbugua, 2008; Lyman and Morrison, 2004). The twin suspects in the 1998 Nairobi bombing, Fahid Mohamed Ally Msalaam and Sheikh Ahmed Salim Swedan, had grown up in Mombasa, Kenya. Studies have also shown that since 1998, Al-Qaeda has had a long-standing indigenous infrastructure in coastal Kenya and the environs of Nairobi (Lyman and Morrison, 2004).

Dysfunctional Economies as Sources of Insecurity in East Africa

Like most of their counterparts in sub-Saharan Africa, the five countries in the EAC region have entered the 21st century with weak economies. Indeed, none of them is listed among either high income or even middle-level income countries worldwide. Tanzania and Burundi are listed among the least developed. None is industrialized. Despite a relatively improved annual economic growth rates in the last ten years or so, the overall performance of the regional economies have remain unimpressive. (Nyinguro, 2005). The economies are characterized by high levels of disarticulation and imbalances. There is over-reliance on agriculture. The food supply situation is not stable with Kenya, the most developed economy, highly vulnerable to food shortage. There is more emphasis on resource extraction and production of primary commodities at the expense of industrialization. The economies are also heavily dependent on the international capitalist economy and on the industrialized economies making them dangerously vulnerable the vagaries

and uncertainties in the international economy. There is also a general lack of governance systems that can provide an enabling environment for economic growth and development.

In macro-economic terms, the statistics portray a picture of economics that can hardly ensure security at both national and regional levels. In 2008, Kenya's GD was US\$ billion 783, Rwanda's 458 US \$ billion, Tanzania's 496 US \$ billion and Uganda's Us \$453 (UNDP, 2010). employed people living on less than \$1.25 a day constituted 87.2% of the population in Burundi, 22.9% in Kenya, 90.0% in Tanzania, 79.5% in Rwanda and 55.7% in Uganda (UNDP, 2010). In 2010, the population living below the poverty line (of US\$ 1.25 per day) comprised 46.6% in Kenya, 31.1% in Uganda, 35.7% in Tanzania and 56.9% in Rwanda (UNDP, 2010).

In general terms, by failing to spur development, the economies in the region are not in a position to guarantee security. in fact, it could be argued that East Africa's economies may in themselves be threats to security. Chronic food shortages have continues to pose threats to socio- political stability in the region. Disenchantment among ordinary Ugandans due to rising food prices have recently led to violent clashes with security forces. Inadequate food availability is not only a potential source of national instability but also poses a direct threat to human security by increasing the individual's vulnerability to disease while at the same time sapping people's productivity. Statistics show that the prevalence of undernourishment and the intensity of deprivation of food among the people in east Africa are quite high. According to the 2010 Human Development Report (UNDP, 2010), the prevalence of undernourishment and intensity of food deprivation were 30% and 13% respectively in Kenya. 15% and 11% in Uganda, 35% and 16% in Tanzania, 40% and 19% in Rwanda and 13% and 21 % in Burundi.

The inequalities in income that characterized national economies at individual, household, regional and national levels are also a potential source of tensions that have often provide fertile grounds of civil wars an rebellions. For instance, in Kenya, where 80 per cent of the population live in the rural areas, the rural-urban poverty gap is a whopping 17.5% while rural food poverty incidence is 47.2% nationally (Ministry of state for planning, national

development and vision 2030, 2008). Regional inequality in Kenya's economy reveal themselves in the statistics of poverty incidences: central Kenya has only 30.4% of poverty incidence while north Kenya has a high of 73.9% by the ILO Report regional economic gaps here confirmed to widen such inequalities has sometimes acquired political and ethnic dimensions. The post-election vile in Kenya has been blamed to a greater extent on perceptions of marginalization among communities that have felt that they have lagged behind in development (The Waki Report, 2009).

High levels of unemployment among the youth whose number has been swelling in recent years may also lay grounds for civil unrest. Opiyo and Agwanda (2010) for instance, have observed that one of the dangers pose by the "youth bulge" in Kenya is the migration to urban centers by youth adults with primary and secondary school education to look for jobs. The failure to get jobs create despair and frustration leading to further radicalization of the jobless youth who are ready to engage in illegal activities including joining militia and other gangs to make ends meet" (Urda n d Hoelscher, 2009; Goldstone, 1991; Opiyo Agwanda , 2010) . That joblessness among educated youth is a potential source of insecurity has been demonstrated severally in Kenya and Uganda. Much of the violence that followed the dispute over election results in Kenya in 2007-2008 took place in the slum areas in Nairobi, Kisumu, Eldoret and Mombasa where most of the unemployed youth live. Violent protests during and after elections in Uganda were instigated by the unemployed youth. In sum, therefore, the problems that plague economies of the five EAC countries carry with them the germinating seeds for conditions that abet conflicts and eventually insecurity and violence. Indeed, to address the threats to security emanating from all the other sectors mentioned above, economic resources including financial and technological inputs are necessary. These countries often cannot effectively address security challenges

Other threats to peace and Security

In addition to the six major threats to east Africa security discussed above, there are others that, though more nuanced, pose dangers in their own right. To a large extent, however, they are indirectly or directly related to the six

major ones. These are proliferation of small arms, refugeeism and internal displacement and cattle rustling.

a) Refugeeism

Refugeeism has been a major problem in East Africa since the EAC countries gained independence in the early 1960s. Most refugees have been the products of civil wars not only in countries in the region (Rwanda, Uganda and Burundi) but also in neighbouring countries like Somalia, Sudan, Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), Central Africa Republic and Ethiopia. The challenges the refugee problem poses to peace and security in East Africa is real and cannot be ignored. Kenya currently hosts the world's largest refugees complex covering the Dadaab and Ifo camps in North Eastern Kenya. As at July, 2011 Kenya had registered 366,776 Somali refugees, still aliens have come from Ethiopia. Tanzania is still admitting refugees from great lakes region even though by January, 2011 its refugee camps already had 56,000 Burundians, 56,100 Congolese and 200 Somalis (The East African, December 5-11, 2011).

Refugeeism threatens security and peace in East Africa in several ways. First some refugees come to their host countries armed. These arms often find their ways into wrong hands in host countries, where, as the case of Kenya demonstrates, the illegal arms have been used to perpetuate criminal activities such as robberies, banditry and cattle-rustling (Nyinguro, 2011:137). Second, some refugee camps have become security risk as they have been turned into training and recruitments camps for insurgents who later cross back into their countries of origin to commit crimes, causing tension along the borders. As the case of Al-shabaab has shown, they radicalize, the youth with extremist ideas about social change. The Dadaab refugee camp has been identified by Kenyan authorities as a possible indoctrination centre for militant extremist islamist who later cross over to join the Al-shabaab militia in Somalia. Third, refugees may worsen conflict situations in their host countries by competing for scarce resources with local host communities as it is happening in northern Kenya.

b) Proliferation of illegal small arms and light weapons

Yet another security threat in the region that has increasingly become formidable in the last two decades is the spread of illegal firearms. As observed above, illegal firearms have found their way into East Africa through the influx of refugees both outside and within the region. Illegal guns used in criminal activities in East Africa, for example, have come from Ethiopia, Somalia, Sudan, and even DRC where there has been political instability for a long time now (Daily Nation, July 29, 2004). These illegal arms facilitate cattle-rustling along the borders of East African countries. The perennial cattle raids between Karamajong of Uganda and the Pokot of Kenya have often abetted by availability of small arms. The growth of armed militias in urban centers in the region has also been facilitated by easy access to these illegal arms

Strategising for Peace and Security in East Africa: Some Prescriptions

While it has been easy to diagnose the security problem in East Africa, finding the cure for insecurity remains the most urgent task. This section is, therefore, devoted to suggestions on how to make the region secure and peaceful. The “prescriptions” are informed by and founded on the multidimensional conceptualization of security and peace presented in the second part. It is also instructive that the proposed strategy for peace and security includes national, regional and global approaches in recognition of increased interdependence at regional and global levels and in cognizance of the fact that challenges to security has become more and more transnational in recent years. Hence, each component of the strategy contains national, regional and global input all at once.

Based on the state of peace and security discussed in the previous section, the strategies have been dismantled into the following parts: (a) global partnership, (b) Democratic peace (c) preventive diplomacy (d) regional initiatives (e) counter terrorist strategy and (f) economic security strategy

Global Partnership for East Africa’s Security

It is now widely acknowledged that in the contemporary world, issues of security and peace are so globalised and transnational that national and regional security policies require global inputs. It is imperative for East

African countries to individually and collectively engage global partners including the United Nations, the industrialized countries, the World Bank and the G8. Moreover, EAC countries lack the material, technological and financial resources needed to combat the security threats. They require huge financial and technological aid from the richer countries of the world, who also stand to gain from peace and security dividends in the region. The rationale for cooperation with other global partners also stems from the fact that some of the security threatening situations in the region, especially refugeeism and terrorism are, to some extent, products of policies pursued by some of the global actors. It is just logical, therefore, to expect their participation in “clearing the debris” falling from their past policies (Nyinguro, 2010).

Global actors, perhaps in recognition of the above justifications for their participation in the efforts to ensure peace and security in the region, have recently demonstrated the unwillingness to partner with countries in the region to tackle the various security threats. However for countries in the region to maximally benefit from such partnership the onus is with their individually and collectively to create the necessary frameworks for fruitful engagement with global actors, on economic security, for instance, the United Nations Development Programme has been working with individual governments in the region toward the achievement of the millennium development goals (MDGs). Whether the MDGs succeed in improving economic and human security in the region depend, however, on the commitment by the region’s governments to play their part. More urgently, however, the governments will have to redefine “development” with a view to making it more people-centered and human -focused. With respect to diseases, that threaten the very survival of the people in the region, individual countries need to mainstream themselves into the various global campaigns in the health sector, such as the global initiatives on Malaria and HIV/Aids.

On piracy of the East African coast, Kenya’s cooperation with the major powers such as Britain, Japan, The United States and Russia is already bearing fruits. However, such cooperation needs to be better structured with a sound legal framework. Kenya and Tanzania, the most affected by virtue of

being littoral states could jointly push for a new global convention on piracy that could, for instance, provide for the sharing of resources for legal action against arrested pirates. Kenya has been currently shouldering the financial burden for bringing pirates captured in Kenya's territorial waters to justice.

Global partnership is even more crucial in the fight against terrorists. Again global actors especially the United Nations, United States and other major powers including Britain, Germany, France, Japan and Russia have expressed willingness to coordinate with East African countries in the global war against terrorism. After the 1998 bombing of the embassy in Nairobi the 2002 attack on Israeli tourists in a Hotel in Mombasa, the United States has provided Kenya with training and financial assistance in its Anti-Terrorist Programmes. The United States has also committed large sums of dollars to the fight against terrorism in the Horn of Africa as a whole. In June, 2003, for instance, the US government committed US\$ 100 million for counter terrorism efforts in the Horn of Africa. Of this amount, the Kenya Anti-Terrorist police received US\$10million while US\$4million was given to Kenya to support Muslim education.

It is also obvious that for economic security to be achieved and sustained, the EAC countries will continue to require donor support. The economic reforms that have led to improvement in GDP growth levels in all the five countries in recent years have especially been made possible by the increased flow of aid from both bilateral and multilateral donors, apart from donor support, the EAC countries could also explore possibilities of securing trade concessions and special relationship arrangements with OECD countries and regional blocks in the North such as the European Union (EU). Ongoing EPA negotiations between the EU and the EAC should lead to a fruitful protocol that will enable EAC countries to benefit in real terms from their trade with the all-important EU block.

On human security, the MDGs project championed by the UNDP offers an excellent opportunity for EAC countries to collaborate with bilateral and multilateral donors to improve the poor's access to basic needs. This will reduce incidences of disease, mortality rates and other threats to human

security. Again, for the UNDP and other donors to contribute significantly to the achievement of the MDGs, governments of EAC countries need to demonstrate commitment and willingness to create enabling domestic environments for the implementation of these projects.

Food security projects also require massive funding. In Kenya, for instance, the need for irrigated agriculture to assure food security has been recognized. Irrigation projects are very expensive and require donor support. Global partnership in the areas of food security in the region is also necessary as far as the production of indigenous or local foods especially that are drought resistant such as cassava and some varieties of millet is concerned.

Democratic Path to Peace and Security

The positive relationship between democracy and peace (and security) has been established by both experience and research. Countries that are governed democratically are generally more secure and peaceful than those whose regimes are less democratic. The peace dividend inherent in democracy both nationally and internationally have inspired many international relations scholars to observe that democracies do not go to war with each other. The “Democratic Peace Proposition” sees democracy as a necessary bulwark against insecurity at the individual, state, regional level as well as international levels. In the context of this paper, then, when EAC states become fully democratic they will guarantee security within themselves and will seldom engage in violent activities in their relations with neighbors, thereby guaranteeing regional security.

Democracy has been seen as a guarantee for peace and security because of its essentials which include free and fair elections, held regularly; political pluralism, the major feature of which in multiple centers of power including civil society and political parties; respect for the rule of law and human rights; and freedom of association, among others. All countries that claim to be democratic uphold these principles and put in place institutions and structures that promote the essentials of democracy.

As has been observed above, EAC countries have been for long failed to uphold democracy’s principles and essentials, especially in the first three decades of independence. Like in the case of their counterparts elsewhere in

Africa, the 1960s 1970s and 1980s could be termed, in Anyang Nyong'o (1990) words, as the "lost decades" in terms of democratic progress. The civil wars in Rwanda, Burundi and Uganda that have in the past threatened peace and security in the region; have been attributed largely to the subversion of democratic principles by regimes in those countries. Those regimes failed to evolve democratic structures and institutions that could resolve conflicts before they erupted into violence (Khadiagala, 2002). Electoral violence that has occurred in Kenya, Tanzania and Uganda in the recent past may also be blamed on weak democracy.

Since the 1990s, however, some significant progress has been made in the democratization process in the EAC countries. Civilian rule has been sustained for some time now in Burundi, Rwanda and Uganda where military rule had been rampant in the first three decades of independence. Uganda has not experienced any military coup or any serious coup attempt since 1986. Indeed, Uganda has become a multiparty state and has held more than three elections contested for by many political parties. Rwanda has not also witnessed a coup since 1994 when Paul Kagame of Rwanda Patriotic Front (RPF) moved in after the genocide. Rwanda has also held two successful multiparty elections and may be said to be firmly on the road to full democratization. Burundi also has a civilian government installed through multiparty elections. Tanzania has witnessed democratic transitions from one president to another relatively peacefully in the last two decades of multiparty experience. The post 2007 election violence notwithstanding, Kenya appears to be firmly in the democratic reform path, especially after enacting a new constitution in 2010.

The challenge facing both the international community and the EAC states is how to ensure that the democratic transitions in these countries are sustained. Initiative should be undertaken at the national, regional and international levels to ensure proper management of the democratic transitions so that security threatening situations like the post election violence that is now taking root in the region are prevented.

Regional - Collective and Security Strategies

The significance of collective regional initiatives in confronting threats to security in the contemporary world has been acknowledged in both policy and academic circles. The imperative for regional strategies derives not only from the transnational character of today's threats to security but also from the paucity of resources needed to combat them at the national level. Some threats to peace and security in the East African region are so transnationalised in character that they can only be fought within a regional framework. Indeed, even the other threats such as electoral violence, environmental degradation, food scarcity may require regional synergies to be effectively addressed.

If regional cooperation is required to combat threats to peace and security in East Africa, it is even more urgently needed that in the fight against terrorism which is slowly engulfing the region. An effective regional counter terrorism strategy would consist of many elements (Malik, 2012). First, the five EAC states should establish a regional counter terrorism centre with experts drawn from the academia and policy circles from each state. Second, EAC states have to adopt a regional approach to capacity building in combating terrorism by availing training opportunities for personnel from intelligence, police, military and paramilitary units from partner states in each institution. Third, there should be greater inter-operability with increased liaison and coordination of counter terrorism operations. Fourth, a regional data base would form the basis for joint interrogation of terrorist leaders and key terror suspects. Fifth, a regional legal framework and mutual legal assistance are important, especially in matters related to investigations into and prevention of terrorist activities. Sixth, all the EAC states should display trust and transparency of action against terrorist sanctuaries in foreign territory and against terrorist states that sponsor terrorism.

Another security realm requiring an integrated regional approach relates to food and security. Ideally, no East African country should experience the acute food shortages that some of them, especially Kenya have often faced. This is because food production, both at large scale and small scale levels has been quite impressive over the years. Improper food and marketing policies

are largely to blame for the perennial food crises. For instance, in 2011, as Kenyans were experiencing biting hunger, Tanzanians were swimming in excess maize following bumper harvests. Amidst all this Tanzania decided to restrict maize exportation to Kenya. With effective regional strategies, it could be possible for countries with bumper harvests to come to the assistance of those that have experienced famine. The EAC could also evolve a regional Early Warning System to anticipate food shortages.

The significance of region-based initiatives has not escaped the attention of EAC states as exemplified by the plethora of initiatives aimed at addressing security threats within the region. What is required now is to strengthen and embrace these initiatives to make them equal to their intended security – related tasks. The East African Police Chiefs Committee (EAPCCO) which brings together police chiefs from the EAC region and has a sub-regional bureau could be strengthened with a view to making it more effective in fighting crime in the region. The bureau is already coordinating the sharing of information and strategies on crimes such as terrorism, cattle rustling, firearms trafficking, motor vehicle, theft and financial and economic crimes (Nyinguro, 2011). There is the need to move beyond the police chiefs and to embrace the political establishments in the region. The EAC secretariat and the EAC legislature could avail a legal policy framework for a region-wide police structure with a defined mandate and mechanisms.

Another regional initiative in existence that could be exploited is that in the area of proliferation of small arms and light weapons. The Nairobi Declaration of 2000 signed by foreign ministers of the five EAC countries following the *Great Lakes Region and the Horn of Africa Conference on the Proliferation of Small Arms*. Regional workshops and meetings bringing together government agencies, academics, and non-governmental organizations have been held since. The declarations, resolutions, and initiatives resulting from these meetings have been useful in sensitizing stakeholders on the need to cooperate in the efforts to tackle the illicit arms problem (Nyinguro, 2007).

Although the Nairobi Declaration holds much promise for the control of illicit arms and trafficking in the region, it needs a regional machinery to harmonize national policies and efforts in order to mainstream them into the provisions and recommendations of various refined protocols. The provision of the declaration also requires a synchronized legislative framework in order to be realized. The declaration also needs to be domesticated within the EAC region.

On the military front, defense forces of EAC states have been cooperating though without a clear structural coordination mechanism. What exists to date is the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) on Cooperation in Defense of 2001. Within the framework of the MOU, military forces from the EAC states have been undertaking joint military exercises. However more needs to be done. The EAC states could push for the realization of the East African Stand by force which is likely to benefit from aid international organizations and major powers who have expressed interest in it.

Preventive Diplomacy: Nipping conflicts in the Bud

Preventive Diplomacy as a conflict management strategy has gained much currency in post Cold War literature on conflicts (Bryden, 2004; Stedman et al, 2002; El Amin, 2004; Khadiagala, 2002). In essence, preventive diplomacy is to conflict what preventive medicine is to disease (Nyinguro, 2001). It aims at managing and terminating the “disease” (conflict) at its early and formative stages before it spreads and becomes more lethal. Immediately the “symptoms” emerge, preventive measures are summoned to fathom them. It involves pressure from one or more countries on two or more conflicting parties within a state to embrace negotiation, mediation, adjudication and arbitration as alternatives to armed conflict. It can prevent armed conflict by forcing the parties in conflict to compromise. A third party, in this case another state, using its diplomatic resources avails its good offices to the disputants.

Preventive diplomacy is essentially a strategy in which third parties recognize a conflict before it turns violent and stops it from becoming violent. Its goal is to have the two sides to a conflict accept negotiation as the

way to resolve their differences. Preventive diplomacy is thus “the first line of defense for peace” (Nyinguro, 2001).

In the new thinking about maintenance of peace and security, preventive diplomacy is also an integral part of Early Warning Strategy (EWS). In so far as it entails the use of fact-finding missions and information gathering on political, military, social cultural and economic dimensions of crisis situations. As part of the EWS, preventive diplomacy represents the need to be alert to the danger signs of possible violence and conflict when a potential belligerent declares a goal that will be totally unacceptable to the other side. Preventive diplomacy could be employed to (a) deter the aggressor by convincing him that he will lose and (b) assist the parties and provide incentives for negotiated or diplomatic solutions (Amin, 2004).

Preventive diplomacy entails skilful blending of coercive and non-coercive instruments. The coercive instruments include the use of force, sanctions and threats if the combatants or the belligerent do not stop engaging in brinkmanship that would escalate the conflict. The non-coercive package includes inducements and rewards or the promise of both to the combatants if they are willing to settle their disputes amicably.

The EAC region is certainly ripe for preventive diplomacy. Indeed, it has been successfully applied in several instances and has assisted in ameliorating security -threatening situations. One of the recent example was the post election violence crisis in Kenya where donors and the major powers including the world’s only super power, the United States of America, forced settlement that led to the formation of the Grand Coalition government in which the two combatants, Mwai Kibaki and Raila Odinga shared power as co-Principal’s. A mix of coercive and non-coercive measures was applied. The United States warned of stern but unspecified punitive action against any one “perceived to be frustrating the peace efforts”. Other donors especially the European Union threatened to withdraw aid. But at the same time they induced the conflicting parties by promising material assistance for post -conflict reconstruction activities including resettlement of those displaced in the crisis.

The possibility of post election violence like the one seen in Kenya in 2007/2008 occurring in other EAC countries is now just too real to be ignored as witnessed in the recent elections in Uganda, Tanzania and Burundi where electoral violence occurred though not to the levels witnessed in Kenya. Indeed, even in Kenya the symptoms of electoral violence have not completely disappeared with many warning that if certain measures are not put in place, 2012 elections could trigger the same violence witnessed in 2007/2008.

Preventive diplomacy will not only be necessary to handle intra-state conflicts but also possible inter-state disputes. The Kenya-Uganda dispute over ownership of “Migingo” and other islands in the Lake Victoria may be ripe for preventive diplomacy to prevent escalation of hostilities and the future. The situation in Burundi remains volatile todate.

Conclusion

This paper in a nutshell presented a diagnosis of the security problem in the EAC region and suggested some prescriptions that should be at the core of a comprehensive peace and security strategy for the region. While some of the security threats may be country specific, most of them are experienced by all the countries in the region. Thus, each proposed strategy has both national and regional dimensions. For the region to be secure and peaceful, each country should adopt policies that address these threats while at the same time cooperating with partner states to forge a regional approach. The thrust of the discussion however, has been the need to diagnose the security problematique and proffer prescriptions within the framework that embraces the contemporary conceptualization of peace and security. The proposed strategy can only be successful if it is anchored on a conceptualization of security that recognizes all dimensions of security, namely, the economic, human, political and environmental. The state should no longer be the referent object of security. The focus must remain to be the “people” or human beings. Hence to enhance human security must be the major object of security policies.

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