

Geo-political Impact of Kenya-United States of America Partnership on Counterterrorist in the Horn of Africa

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Abstract

Counterterrorism impact affects the geo-politics of a give geographical setting due to the complex interconnectedness of the globe brought about by the post-cold war global dynamics of globalization. This research paper sets to uncover the geo-political impact arising from the partnership between Kenya and the United States of America on Counterterrorism in the horn of Africa. The study adopted a qualitative approach by critically analyzing the available literature on the subject to reach a logical ending. The paper found that the geo-political impact of partnership are to a large extent on security cooperation as; Kenya-United States of America and its allies cooperation, Global-Regional Security Cooperation, Extra-Regional Organizations and Supra-National Security Cooperation, finally the geo-political impact on regional Economy. The paper concludes that the geo-political impacts of Kenya-USA partnership on counterterrorism to a larger extent are positive in that it forges partnership of security cooperation, and finally the revival of regional economy which had been affected negatively from terrorism. The research recommends that there should be a closer partnership among all states, and non-state actors to counter-terror in the globe for mutual benefit to all.

Key words: *Geo-politics, counterterrorism, partnership, impact, Horn of Africa*

1.0 Introduction

Geopolitics is the study of history, geography and culture of a people within a geographical setting (Granieri, 2015). According to Cohen (2010), geopolitics is the analysis of the interaction between, on the one hand, geographical settings and perspectives and, on the other hand, political processes. Both geographical settings and political processes are dynamic, and each influences and is influenced by the other. Geopolitics addresses the consequences of this interaction.

In line with the definition on geopolitics, a regional organization in a geographical setting strives to achieve its objectives. However with any activity that attempt creates social-economic and political instability within a member state automatically affects the entire region due to interconnectedness and the resultant spillover effect (Buzan and Weaver, 2003). In striving for this, States often project their actions against a common threat in this case terrorism through such partnerships as Kenya – US relations.

In the wake of terrorism, international development assistance has become “an instrument by which America pursued its political and security interests to defeat terrorist network” (Lind & Howell, 2010). The existence of humanitarian aid often had security undertones. For example, it became a presumed belief that several main factors affecting Islamic radicalization are under-development, poverty, and high levels of youth unemployment (Lind and Howell, 2008). Kenya in the horn of Africa possesses all of the above characteristics to a large degree. Furthermore, the effects of radical Islam were unveiled as the clear rationale behind the embassy bombings in 1998. U.S. government officials evaluated their presence in Kenya and quickly decided that a shift in policy was necessary to hopefully lessen an expansion of terrorism. This started a relationship with Kenya that arguably made it the United States’ most important African partner in the War on Terror (Carson’s, 2005).

Moreover, the area is located on the main shipping route for the transport of oil from the Persian Gulf to Europe and the United States, the Horn of Africa is considered one of the most strategically important regions in the world. In

addition, distributed throughout the region are rich deposits of untapped natural resources, including petroleum, gold, salt, hydropower and natural gas. During the Cold War and in the years since, the region and its resources have been the object of intense interest and rivalry among the world's major powers.

In recent decades, armed conflict and natural disaster, have led to the massive displacement of various population groups both within and between the countries of the Horn. This has only served to compound the problems of ethnic divisions that arose through the arbitrary creation of national boundaries by the former colonial powers of the region. In addition, the Horn of Africa: Kenya, Ethiopia, Djibouti, Somalia, Eritrea and Sudan have over the years been considered as major sources of terrorism by the Western nations (Docking, 2004).

1.2 Scope

Before settling on what is meant by the Horn of Africa, it is important for geo-political researchers to understand that the region has been defined in many shapes by organizations and institutions having interest in this part of Africa. WHO (2011) suggests that the Horn of Africa is a region faced with what has been described as the worst drought in over half a century (WHO, 2011).

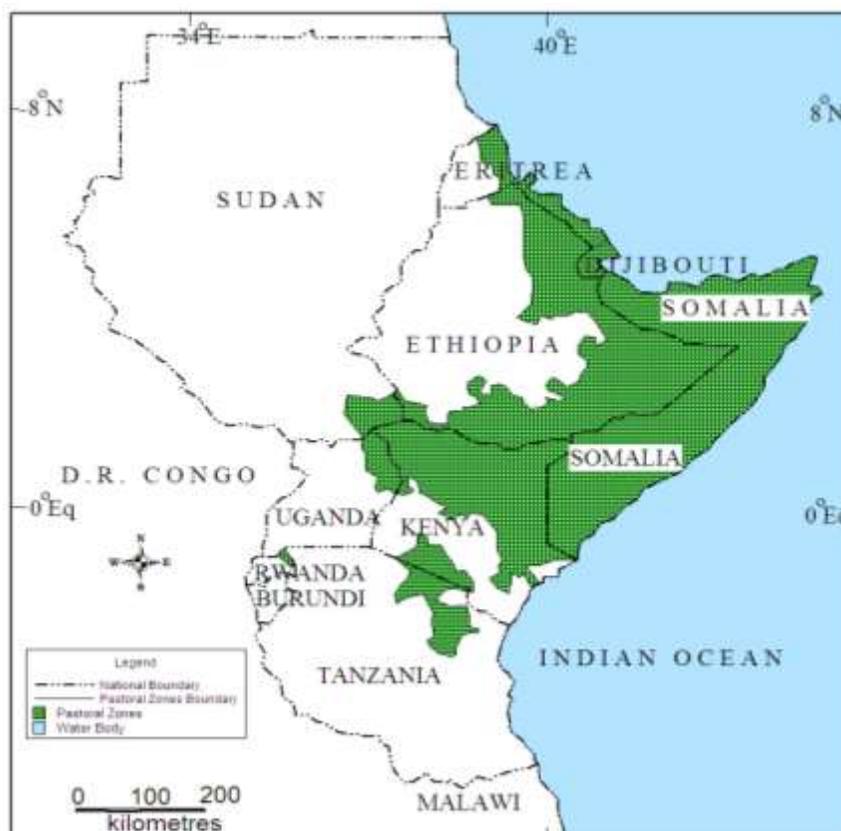


Figure 1: Map of Horn of Africa by Pastoral Zones
 Source: Moi University Geography Department GIS Lab.

This perception of Horn of Africa includes countries such as; the larger Sudan (now made of Sudan and South Sudan), Eritrea, Djibouti, Ethiopia, Somalia, Kenya, Uganda, Rwanda, Burundi, and Tanzania. In these eleven countries pastoralism spreads in diverse parts of the states; In parts of Rwanda and Burundi, distinctively in N.E. Uganda, South, North, and N.E. Kenya, Northern Tanzania, the whole Somalia and Djibouti, major parts of Eastern Ethiopia and Eritrea, and parts of the bigger Sudan.

In description, moreover, other views on HOA in recent decades look at the Horn of Africa as one of the world's most conflicted regions, experiencing over 200 armed conflicts since 1990 (Williams, 2011). As one particularly important external actor in the region, the U.S. government has for too long looked at the Horn through lenses which have emphasized regime security, counterterrorism, religious fanaticism, and tribalism. In early 2007, this prompted

one widely circulated study to conclude that, “stemming the spread of terrorism and extremist ideologies has become such an overwhelming strategic objective for Washington that it has overshadowed U.S. efforts to resolve conflicts and promote good governance; in everything but rhetoric, counterterrorism now consumes U.S. policy in the Greater Horn as totally as anticommunism did a generation ago” (Prendergast and Thomas-Jensen, 2007).

On the basis of the above literature, the Wilson Centre conception of HOA is similar in characteristics to the description from figure 1. In this description, HOA is characterized by; web of conflicts, certain patterns of war, and unstable region. Some of the notable wars and conflicts seen overtime include; North-South Sudan, Intra Sudan, Intra South Sudan, Ethiopia-Eritrea, Somalia conflicts, and generally being a potent ground for terrorism. It is also noted that Prendergast and Thomas-Jensen point vividly that this region is uniquely associated with counterterrorism activities by the USA government overtime. However, from the literature, it is observed that the weakness of the US objective in the end is their non-interest in solving Somalia conflict. In this case realism has taken root in guiding their behavior in the HOA region.

The second perception of the Horn of Africa, views this region inclusive of Egypt among constant countries such as Sudan (larger Sudan), Eritrea, Djibouti, Somalia, Ethiopia, and Kenya. Also, two strategic large water features are part of this region. These are the Red Sea and Indian Ocean. The region is connected to the Middle East immediate countries of Yemen and Saudi Arabia.

1.3 Methodology

To arrive at the logical conclusion, the researcher adopted a qualitative approach by making a critical analysis of the available literature form secondary sources.

1.4 Geo-political Impact

This section endeavors to unearth the impact of terrorism which is a form of political activity that operates within existing political geographic settings with an agenda to disrupt them and impose new spatial political arrangements (Flint, 2011). The assessment of the geopolitical impact of Kenya-USA partnership on the security of the Horn of Africa is as below;

1.4.1 Security Cooperation

Security cooperation in the Horn of Africa emanating from the K-USA partnership on counterterrorism diver from security co-operations of the past used among the states in international relations to secure peace and security. For instance; *Alliances* are one of the oldest forms of international cooperation, designed for both defence and attack (typically by military means) against a common external, or even internal, threat or opponent (McGregor, 2005).

Collective security; this concept emerged in the 20th century in response to the ambivalent effects of older-style balance-of-power politics and alliances. First attempted in the framework of the League of Nations and again in the United Nations (UN), a collective security system aims to prevent or contain war by assuring a response to any act of aggression or threat to peace among its members (Keohane, 1999).

Security regime; Regimes are a common phenomenon in such non-security dimensions of international relations as the regulation of international trade and transport. They define norms—of a cooperative and generally positive nature—for states’ behaviour and often provide ways to implement, support and verify these norms. A security-related regime may cover broad prescripts for behaviour such as the non-use of force and respect for existing international borders, or may more concretely regulate certain types and uses of weapons or activities like military movements and transparency (Jervis, 1982).

A security community; has been defined as a group of states among which there is a ‘real assurance that the members of that community will not fight each other physically, but will settle their disputes in some other way’. The concept was developed by Karl Deutsch in the late 1950s to reflect the particularly far-reaching goals of post-World War II European integration, which in turn placed Europe in a larger security community of the world’s industrialized democracies. A security community implies more intense, sustained and comprehensive interaction than any of the above models (Deutsch, 1969).

The above security cooperation suffer from focusing more on state and being conventional in nature which terrorism and counterterrorism warfare is beyond. Global war on terror has posed a new security challenges that transcend

national borders and are driven by non-state actors and processes (USIP, 2006). The security cooperation in counterterrorism in this study can be grouped into the following three groups;

1.4.1.1 Kenya-USA and Allies Security Cooperation

This partnership is informed by the strategic importance of Kenya to United States of America and its allies. Kenya is a strategic partner of the United States in the implementation of counterterrorism initiatives in East Africa and the Horn of Africa.

US-Kenya cooperation in combating terrorism has included: sharing intelligence; supplying of equipment for KDF; training Kenyan security personnel in the US; and other logistic and training support (Muluvi, et al, 2015). American air strikes are also playing an increasingly important role. Between 2007 and 2014, there were several of them each year, in 2015 – 11, in 2017 – 35, and in 2019 – 59 (Felter, Masters, and Sergie, 2020). Kenya also participated in the controversial American Extraordinary Rendition (ER) program.

Another serious threat to Kenya and to some extent the US is sea piracy in the Horn of Africa. The significance of these waters results from passing strategic sea routes through which, among others, Middle East oil is transported. The Gulf of Aden which is on the way to the Mediterranean Sea is of major importance. Somali pirates attack ships to force a ransom, which can reach even tens of millions of dollars. Profits are invested, for example, in the Kenyan real estate market (Aaltola, etal, 2016). In the case of the Kenyan coast, it is particularly important to ensure access to ports, including Mombasa, which is the gateway to East African markets.

For the United States, securing sea trade routes, including oil supplies, is crucial in the context of maintaining its dominant economic position in the world. The United States played an important role in anti-piracy operations at the Horn of Africa – “Allied Provider” and “Allied Protector “ in 2008, and “Ocean Shield” between 2009 and 2016. The US Navy, after Indian Navy, was the largest contributor of ships to anti-piracy operations in the region. A serious problem in combating piracy is the lack of jurisdiction of Somali courts over detained pirates. The US and Kenya have an agreement to transfer of suspected pirates captured by the US Navy to Kenya for prosecution (Specialist in African Affairs, 2015).

The United States supports Kenya’s security sector because it treats the partner as an important stabilizing factor for the entire region. Also, The US Armed Forces use Kenyan territory as a training ground and a starting point for military missions in the region. American soldiers are stationed at the Camp Simba US naval base, due to the location commonly known as Manda Bay military base, located 450 km east of Nairobi, on the coast of the Indian Ocean. American soldiers train at the base, and they train Kenyan soldiers to fight against Somali terrorists. Base airport is used to patrol the activities of al-Shabab and carrying out bombings.

During President Barack Obama’s office, several initiatives were taken in the field of security cooperation between the US and Kenya. In April 2009, the US Department of Energy’s National Nuclear Safety Administration signed an agreement with Kenyan government for the installation of radiation detection equipment in the port of Mombasa, as well as training and technical support in this area. This made it possible to scan freight containers for nuclear materials and radioactive substances. In June 2009, the US-supported maritime center of excellence was opened at Bandari Maritime Academy in Mombasa. The center is intended for training military and civilians in the field of maritime security. The training program was developed in cooperation with the US Naval War College. In August 2009, creation of the Kenya Army Ranger Strike Force was announced with the support of the US. Kenyan soldiers recruited to this unit are trained to conduct rapid response operations, including counterterrorism (Chau, 2010).

In the same period Kenya was one of the largest recipients of US security assistance in Africa. For security purposes, it received annually around \$40 million from the US Department of Defense (DOD) and the US Department of State, but there were years with significantly higher support. For example, within “train-and-equip” counterterrorism assistance, the value of assistance in 2013 was over \$20 million, but in 2015 over \$80 million. This increase was due to the implementation of the US Administration’s new Counterterrorism Partnerships Fund (CTPF). This support was mainly intended to secure the border with Somalia and support Kenya’s military involvement in AMISOM. Kenya was largest beneficiary of the State Department Anti-Terrorism Assistance (ATA) in Africa which strengthens border and coastal protection, law enforcement, and counterterrorist capabilities. Kenyan Armed Forces also has received assistance through the State Department’s Foreign Military Financing (FMF) program and through regional programs like the Global Peacekeeping Operations Initiative (GPOI) and the Partnership for Regional East Africa Counterterrorism (PREACT). This is worth to mention that Kenyan purchases through the Foreign Military Sales (FMS) program were sizable by regional standards, and have included fighter aircraft, helicopters, and Air Force computer systems (Specialist in African Affairs, 2015).

The visits to Kenya of Secretary of State John Kerry in May 2015 and President Barack Obama in July 2015 further provided opportunities for talks on security issues. They emphasized the role of Kenya in peace process in East Africa and in antiterrorist coalition (Specialist in African Affairs, 2015, p. 1). The same year the Security Governance Initiative (SGI) was established, which supports the US in managing the security sectors of six African

countries – Kenya, Ghana, Mali, Niger, Nigeria, and Tunisia (Muluvi, et al 2015). In Kenya, SGI focuses on border management, improvement of police services, and administration of justice, as well as fighting violence extremism (Mutambo, 2020).

This far, the security cooperation between the two states was in by and large by extension aimed at counterterrorism in the large Horn of Africa region. The geo-political impact of partnership between K-USA on security can be vividly seen in the above security cooperation.

1.4.1.2 Global-Regional Security Cooperation

All countries in the horn of Africa have been victimised by terrorist acts, whether perpetrated by and against a country's nationals for a domestic cause or focused on 'extra-national or extra-regional targets (Rosand et, al, 2012). This fact necessitates collective efforts both regionally and globally, on global front, Kenya because of its vulnerability and USA because of its interest in Kenya and the entire region have forged a partnership through the African Union Mission in Somalia. On this dimension, Africa Union AMISON has been describes as the longest, largest, most expensive, and deadliest peace operation (UNSC, 2015). African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM) operates through a complicated and extensive system of partnerships. It is a crucial example of what the UN secretary-general has called "partnership peacekeeping"—peacekeeping supported by several international organizations, individual states, private firms, and local authorities.

This security impact is one of its kinds in peace keeping where partnerships exist not only among traditional peace keeping agents "state" to include other entities. Due to the nature of terrorism warfare of non-discriminative and trans-nationalism, the convergence of geography and politics in horn of Africa led to complex interdependence partnership in peacekeeping. This led to what has come to be known as AMISON model to explain the partnership among different partners as follows:-

From the United States, AMISOM has received by far the largest slice of the African Peace Facility's funds for stipends and other forms of support. For Somalia's neighbors, AMISOM was initially a way to avoid deploying their own forces, but since December 2011, all three have contributed forces to the mission. For the United Kingdom and United States, in particular, AMISOM has been a salient example of the challenges of providing security force assistance to a peace enforcement operation. For the Somali authorities, AMISOM has been both a vital source of security and a magnet for international assistance that might have been better focused on building effective indigenous forces.

Furthermore, in 2019 Washington announced the creation of the US's first ever overseas joint terrorism task force, based in Kenya to thwart terrorism in the horn of Africa region. The \$2.5 million initiative envisages a multi-agency partnership between Kenya and the US to form the Kenyan Joint Terrorism Task Force (JTTF-K). The FBI, which along with the US State Department are key partner in the new joint task force, meant to offer valuable forensics capacity following the Westgate attack, and FBI personnel are routinely embedded in foreign embassies, and are to offer Kenya's counter-terrorism forces 'training, experience and insight' from US counterparts (Allen, 2020).

As is reported by AMISOM – AU (2015), a meeting to discuss ways of strengthening Civil- Military Cooperation (CIMIC) in Somalia between the African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM) and its partners took place in Nairobi, Kenya. The three day meeting was followed by the adoption of the Somalia Country Specific Humanitarian Guidelines by AMISOM and the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) in November. The guidelines stipulated principles and practices for AMISOM and humanitarian actors operating in the same environment. The head of AMISOM - AU emphasized the importance of CIMIC in providing opportunities for essential dialogue and interaction between civilian and military actors, as they seek to protect and promote humanitarian principles and minimize conflict.

From the above sets of complex interdependent relationships between multilateral organizations and bilateral partners has been referred to as the "AMISOM model" of partnership peacekeeping AMISOM's specific configuration of forces and mechanisms is unlikely to be repeated, in part because it is so complicated. Nevertheless, AMISOM remains the longest standing case of a peace enforcement operation built on such international partnerships (Williams, 2019).

1.4.1.3 Extra- Regional Organizations and Supra- National Security Cooperation

The geopolitical impact on regional cooperation goes beyond the Horn of Africa region and the continental Africa but also to include extra-regional organizations and supra-national organizations. The notable of these organizations are EU and UN and are discussed below;

Since 2007, the EU has given some 1.3 billion euro to the African peace enforcement mission in Somalia. It also allocated 212 million euro in development support from 2008-2013 and pledged more than 486 million for 2014-2020, supplemented by additional bilateral aid from many European member states (Loan, 2003). In addition, Support for AMISOM, is currently costing the EU approximately 250 million euro a year, as well as resources for three Common Security and Defense Policy (CSPD) missions, the EU Naval Force (EU NAVFOR), fighting piracy; the EU Capacity Building Mission in Somalia (EUCAP Somalia), supporting maritime security; and the EUTM, are taking up most of the money member states are willing to spend on Somalia (Hogendoom, 2017).

Moreover, the EU budgeted 246 million euro (approximately 35 million per year) for the period 2014-2020 for development cooperation, including state-building, food security, education and support to civil society (EU, 2014). With the above budgetary allocations from EU to Somalia in particular meant for the support of Federal Government vividly shows the magnitude of geo-political impact of CT on extra-regional cooperation.

The United Nations which is a supra-national organization has been engaged with Somalia since 1991 to support its Government and people to advance peace and security. In 2012, UNISOM (2013) assisted Somalia during the extended transition period, when the Provisional Federal Constitution of Somalia was negotiated and agreed through a broad-based consultation process, leading to selection of a new Federal Parliament and Government, with a pledge to deliver political transformation of the country and realize the vision of a peaceful, federal Somalia.

1.4.2 Regional Economy

In order to understand the geopolitical impact of counterterrorism in the horn of Africa it is imperative to have a short glimpse of the impact of terrorism on the most conflicted part of the globe (Boutellies and Williams, 2013). Alesina et al. (2003) content that there is a correlation between political instability and Gross Domestic Product growth (GDP), as it affects all economic activities. The above factors compounded with high levels of poverty and deprivation (Soore and Oino, 2003) act as catalyzed to terrorism.

The economy of Kenya has been the largest in the East African region and third largest in Sub-Saharan Africa after South Africa and Nigeria respectively (Haradhan, 2013). With the recent discovery of oil it is likely to be an oil exporter in the near future joining Uganda and South Sudan. But even without oil discovery, the Kenyan economy stands at a very strategic location in the Eastern Africa region. It serves five landlocked countries that are relatively resource-rich (Ethiopia, South Sudan, Uganda, Rwanda, and Burundi). In addition, its comparative advantage lies in its improved port facilities, road and railway networks, and transit airports as trade routes for these five countries (Ndung'u, 2005).

With the above comparative advantages, Kenya's partnership with the United States of America on Counterterrorism automatically affects the geo-politics of the entire Horn of Africa. According to the UNDP's project on "Preventing and Responding to Violent Extremism in Africa: A Development Approach", has identified 18 focus countries in which terrorism and its consequences, including economic consequences, are most salient. The Figure below shows the total number of terrorist attacks and fatalities from terrorist attacks in Africa between 2007 and 2016, broken down by group, and emphasizes the intensity of terrorist activity in the epicenter countries, which have suffered 60 per cent of the total attacks, and 66 per cent of the total fatalities in Africa.

Table 1: The Total Number of attacks/country, Fatalities and Economic cost

country	Number of Fatalities	Number of Terrorist Attacks	Economic Cost of Terrorism (constant 2017, USD Million)
Sudan	2664	717	US\$3,807
Kenya	1426	447	US\$1,268
Somalia	4472	2152	US\$770
Uganda	1242	184	US\$410
Ethiopia	505	66	US\$281

Source: UNDP, 2019.

From the table above, 6 countries in the HOA namely; Kenya, Uganda, Somalia, Ethiopia, Sudan and South Sudan were hardly hit by terrorist attack. It is important to note that the loss of human life and the injuries sustained as a result of terrorism cause significant economic disruption. The adverse economic consequences of terrorism affect individuals and societies alike. The immediate economic costs of terrorism can be measured in terms of the value of

lives lost, the disability that results from the injuries, and the destruction of private and public property which is not captured in the table above.

The total economic impact of terrorism in the African continent deduced from the table is estimated to be US \$ 103 million while its impact in the Horn of Africa is estimated at US \$ 6,536 million. While the number of fatalities stands at 10,309. This statistics compounded by the ongoing conflicts, presence of failed states, refugees influx and

YEAR	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018
Kenya	5.2	4.57	3.80	5.02	4.97	4.12	3.84	5.11
Uganda	9.36	3.84	3.59	5.17	5.19	4.78	3.13	6.30
Somalia	-----	-----	-----	3.41	3.67	2.60	5.7	7.0
Djibouti	-----	-----	-----	7.5	7.5	7.1	5.5	4.8
Eritrea	-----	7.0	3.1	5	4.8	3.8	5	13
Sudan	-3.2	-17	2	4.7	1.9	3.5	0.7	-12.7
S.Sudan	-3.2	13	3.4	-10.8	-----	-----	-----	-----
Average %	1.2	1.6	2.3	2.8	4.0	3.7	3.4	4.7

ever increasing internally displaced persons, global interests emanating from its geography tend to catalyze terrorists attacks in the horn of Africa (Bardwell, H. and Iqbal, M, 2019).

In Somalia, Kenya, the regional forces under AMISOM as counterterrorism strategy have deployed security personnel to fight al-shaabab terrorist group and assisted the Transitional Federal Government of Somalia back in track. It should be noted that since 2011 the African Union Mission for Somalia (AMISOM) and Somalia government forces have made considerable gains against Al-Shabaab, such progress in August 2011 has provided space for the conclusion of the political transition and the establishment of the new Federal Government. However, these security gains will only be sustained if effective and acceptable governance for those areas recovered from Al-Shabaab can be arranged (Williams 2012).

The economic impact of counterterrorism can be seen on the table below;

Table 1: The Economic growth of the HOA Countries in % from 2011-2018

Source: World Bank Statistics, 2019

The above statistics shows the GDP growth of the horn of Africa states in percentage (%) from 2011 when Kenya launched its first ever military incursion in Somalia to fight the al-Shabaab militia (www.theelephant.info). Americans involvement in Somalia through Ethiopian Military by provision of intelligence and airstrikes maneuvers is not new (www.aytimes.com). Commenting on the same Kenya's military spokesman, Maj. Emmanuel Chirchir said;

All of us in the field are liaising together until the al-Shabaab militias are defeated (www.theelephant.info)".

The above statistics can be summarized into two for the purposes of analysis and discussions; the most conflicted states-Sudan, Southern Sudan, and Somalia. The GDPs of these states shows an instability in growth especially for Southern Sudan which it was 13% in 2012 then 3.4 in 2013 and -10.8 and the subsequent years not captured. For Sudan, it rose from -3.2 in 2011 to 13% in 2012 then deteriorated to 3.4 and -10.8. This could be attributed to political instability rather than counterterrorism effects. Somalia's economy seems to have fairly picked from 3.14 in 2014 and slightly reduced in 2015 but later on picked indicating that counterterrorism had succeeded in reviving its economy.

On the part of the other four states; Kenya, Uganda, Djibouti and Eritrea economy seems to be fairly stable an indication that counterterrorism efforts did and still bore fruits in stabilizing the regional economy.

1.5 Conclusion

In conclusion, the geo-political impact of Kenya-United States of America partnership on counterterrorism are in the following security dimensions; On Security cooperation; Kenya-United States of America and allies cooperation, the regional and global security cooperation, and extra-regional organizations like African Union, United Nations cooperation and finally a positive impact on regional economy. All this geo-political impacts are necessitated by the united efforts to thwart terrorism menace in Kenya in particular and the entire Horn of Africa region in general.

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