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CANADIAN FORCES (CAF) TRAINING ASSISTANCE TO KENYA DEFENCE FORCES (KDF) ON COMMAND AT OPERATIONAL LEVEL

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AIM

1. In comparison to countries such as the US, the UK, and France, Canada's military control in Africa is relatively minimal. Nonetheless, Canadian influence on military operations in the continent cannot be overlooked, especially because the nation has trained African soldiers both in host countries and at its training centre in Kingston and the Canadian Forces College (CFC) in Toronto Ontario. This paper will highlight issues that warrant the need for joint operational level training between the CAF and KDF; additionally, the report will analyze fundamentals, functions and command of components to establish the manner in which they can be integrated in the joint operation.

INTRODUCTION

2. On its part, Kenya has maintained close military ties with first world countries, which is considered a symbiotic relationship¹. The nature of this interaction stems from the fact that the country has maintained relative political stability in relation to its neighbors, and is thus considered a reliable command center by the global community in regards to maintaining peace and fighting terrorism in the Horn of Africa. On the other hand, Kenya appreciates the military support it gains from countries such as the US because it equips its security forces with necessary tactical resources and weaponry to defend itself from foreign invaders, especially with the proliferation of extremism in Somalia that is propagated by the Al Shabaab terror group².

¹ Wayne Grigsby Jr., et al. "Globally Integrated Operations In The Horn Of Africa Through The Principles Of Mission Command. (Cover Story)." *Military Review* 95, no.5 (2015): 11

² William Patterson, "Islamic Radicalization in Kenya," *JFQ: Joint Force Quarterly* 78, (2015): 17

DISCUSSION

The Security Situation in Kenya and its Military Training Needs

3. In a 1998 interview, the now deceased Al Qaeda leader, Osama bin Laden, argued that jihad was a struggle by the Islamic World to avoid an imposition of doctrines and leaders by Zionist Jews³. This definitive explanation is an exemplar of the general motivation behind acts of terrorism around the globe. In Somalia, after the collapse of Siad Barre's government⁴, the country degenerated into anarchy with tribal leaders controlling different regions⁵. The consequent lack of a unifying authority created a political impasse that Islamist extremists exploited to impose religious values as a perceived commonality to bring together the country⁶. Consequently, these jihadists created the perception that extremism was equivalent to patriotism for the country, thus, propagating the spread of radicalization⁷.

4. Territorial boundaries, such as the one between Kenya and Somalia, are merely lines on a map, as what exists is a continuum between communities; therefore, a proliferation of radicalization among Somalia's communities was bound to spread to border regions in Kenya. This spread together with a growing need for financial resources prompted kidnapping of tourists from Kenya and hijacking of ships bound for the country's coast⁸. The boldness with which some of these attacks were conducted⁹ with and their negative implication on the Kenyan economy meant that the Al Shabaab could no longer be considered a problem localized

³ John Amble, and Alexander Meleagrou-Hitchens, "Jihadist Radicalization In East Africa: Two Case Studies," *Studies In Conflict & Terrorism* 37, no.6 (2014): 523

⁴ Scott Duffield, Andrew. "When Do Rebels Become State-Builders?: A Comparative Case Study Of Somaliland, Puntland, And South-Central Somalia." *Bildhaan, An International Journal Of Somali Studies* 13, (2013): 1

⁵ Ken Menkhaus, "Governance Without Government In Somalia," *International Security* 31, no.3 (2006): 76

⁶ Oscar Gakuo Mwangi, "State Collapse, Al-Shabaab, Islamism, and Legitimacy in Somalia," *Politics, Religion & Ideology* 13.4 (2012): 515

⁷ Richard Norton, "Al-Shabaab In Somalia: The History And Ideology Of A Militant Islamist Group 2005-2012," *Parameters: U.S. Army War College* 43, no.4 (2013): 146

⁸ "Rethink Kenya's Security Strategy." *Diplomat East Africa* 48. (2014): 3

⁹ Tara Davenport. "Legal Measures to Combat Piracy and Armed Robbery in the Horn of Africa and in Southeast Asia: A Comparison." *Studies in Conflict & Terrorism* 35.7/8 (2012): 570

to Somalia. The Kenyan Government responded to this threat by sending the KDF to Somalia in a military operation referred to as '*Linda Nchi*'¹⁰, which is Swahili for 'Protect the Country'.

5. Initially, this operation had most attributes of conventional warfare, with the terror group having militants defend territories it controlled; however, after occupation of these areas by the KDF and capture of the seaport city of Kismayu, the Al Shabaab morphed from uniformed mercenaries to an enemy camouflaged among the locals. This change in tactic is considered by some as contributory to KDF's prolonged stay in Somalia, as they are now fighting an enemy that cannot be distinguished from innocent civilians. Additionally, there is a growing perception that the Kenyan military has become an occupant army and not one keen on freeing the locals from the vicious regime of extremists. Both these situations present an opportunity for Canada to offer training to the KDF, a symbiotic relationship that would empower the Kenyan army's command at operational level while expanding Canadian strategic influence in the region. Such training should commence with a drafting of the strategic objectives that the Kenyan government aims at achieving in Somalia; this document would then be a guide on what to train the local military in relation to operational implementation required to complete these goals.

A Canadian Approach on Military Command at Operational Level

6. According to Johnston, Madsen, Mitchell and Moritsugu¹¹, in the CAF, operational level commanders are responsible for translating strategic plans into operational purpose, which is further enhanced through interagency collaboration. Canada has three commands at the operational level; Canadian Joint Operations Command (CJOC), Canadian Special Operations

¹⁰ David Anderson and Jacob McKnight, "Kenya at War: Al-Shabaab and its Enemies in Eastern Africa", *African Affairs* (2014)

¹¹ Paul Johnston, Chris Madsen, Paul Mitchell, and Steven Moritsugu, "A Canadian Approach to Command at the Operational Level," *Canadian Military Journal* 14, no.4 (2014): 6

Forces Command (CANSOFCOM) and North American Aerospace Defence Command (NORAD). In addition, the CAF has three primary objectives: protecting Canada, defending North America and contributing to global peace¹². These three strategic objectives are evident in the distinctive nature of the three commands, with NORAD generally focusing on defending North America, CANSOFCOM on protecting Canada, and CJOC collaborating with global allies to ensure peace is maintained.

Operational Level Command Training Assistance to the KDF

7. There are fears that the prolonged stay of the KDF in Somalia further increases radicalization as the Al Shabaab spread the propaganda that KDF is an occupation force. Ideally, the inclusion of the KDF under AMISOM, the African command in-charge of restoring peace in Somalia should have shifted focus from the Kenyan military to other armies that are members of this command; however, this was not the case. Currently, the KDF's operational guidelines are based on information it receives from AMISOM. In contrast, operational level command training by the CAF would equip the KDF to act autonomously, especially in response to threats against it in Somalia or its territorial boundaries. If the KDF possesses an operational level doctrine, there is no literature to indicate on what tenets it is founded.

8. Hrychuk¹³ highlights the existence of a 3-D approach by Canada to war: diplomacy, development and defence. KDF could benefit from training on such a paradigm, especially because it has overemphasized on defence at the expense of the other two. At one point, the Somalia parliament voted to have the Kenyan army recalled, which is indicative of the lack of

¹² Perry, David. "A Return To Realism: Canadian Defence Policy After The Great Recession." *Defence Studies* 13, no.3 (2013): 339

¹³Heather Hrychuk, "Combating the Security Development Nexus? Lessons Learned from Afghanistan," *International Journal* 64, no.3: 825

diplomacy in the adopted operational level philosophy¹⁴. Convincing non-extremists that the army's activities in Somalia are meant to benefit them is the only way victory can be achieved by the KDF¹⁵. Moreover, the Kenyan army needs to appreciate that there will be a transition of control from it to the local security forces; subsequently, it needs to start establishing diplomatic relationships with such agencies to ensure the success of such a change.

9. As part of the CAF's operational level policy, commanders are accountable to their superiors and to the country. This requirement is derived from the understanding that accountability complements authority, and hence the two are inseparable. Arguably, the element of accountability has been lacking in operations conducted by the KDF. In 2013, the Al Shabaab took hostages in a mall within Kenya's capital city after killing several others¹⁶. The KDF was called in to neutralize the threat, but media reports indicate a fragmented operation covered in mystery. Consequently, the number of Al Shabaab terrorists involved in the attack has never been revealed, nor has the specific number of victims killed¹⁷. Operational level accountability cannot be achieved in such a mystic environment. In 2016, a KDF base was overrun by the terror group, and three weeks later the military still had not released an official report on the number of soldiers killed, taken hostage, and those missing. This incident is yet another lapse in accountability by operational level commanders within the KDF. Eventually, the army risks losing the goodwill it enjoys from Kenyans, which would have negative effects on its missions. Training by the CAF, however, would help reverse this trend through emphasizing accountability, as stipulated in this army's operational level policy.

¹⁴ "Somalia's Diplomatic Spat With Kenya." *Diplomat East Africa* 46.(2014): 28

¹⁵ D.K. Snyder and C.M. Monson, *Couple-based interventions for military and veteran families: a practitioner's guide* (New York, Guilford Press, 2012)

¹⁶ Paul Williams, "After Westgate: Opportunities And Challenges In The War Against Al-Shabaab," *International Affairs* 90, no.4 (2014): 907-923

¹⁷ Mohammed Warsama, "Playing Politics with the War on Crime," *Diplomat East Africa* 48, (2014): 10

10. The CAF's operational art recognizes war as a multifaceted event that requires different skills to emerge victorious in each component. Additionally, this doctrine highlights warfare as a period of chaotic events, but at the same time one that requires commanders to act decisively and from a point of knowledge. Commanders should thus recognize different components in the army and ensure a synergistic operation. At some points of the KDF's operations, this synergy has been lacking, for example during the 2013 mall attack. The KDF commander in-charge of the operation failed to recognize the SWAT police as a component of the army's response to attack. Subsequently, the switch from the police to the KDF did not only result in the death of one officer, but also in giving the terrorists an allowance to operate after previously being cornered by SWAT. The CAF can assist in training the KDF on synchronous operations between it and other agencies and advise the Kenyan government on development of a policy with regards to interactions between its security agencies – as policy frameworks are an essential component of operational level command. Such frameworks assist in providing strategic directions to be followed by operational level commanders.

11. According to Bilas *et al.*, joint doctrine represents a set of principles that define the employment of an army in a synchronized and coordinated action aimed at achieving common objectives¹⁸. This doctrine is based on the recognition of a need for unity and coordinated efforts between security agencies in the execution of their duties. Subsequently, operational level training by the CAF to the KDF should start by aligning the local army's primary objectives to other security apparatus in the country. Joint doctrine appreciates that achievement of security objectives in a country requires more than military instruments. Bilas *et al.* highlight that in the planning stage of a military action, joint planning is essential in

¹⁸ John Bilas *et al.*, "Targeting the JIIM Way: A More Inclusive Approach," *JFQ: Joint Force Quarterly* 73 (2014): 61

shaping the political, economic and social environment¹⁹. Furtherance, after military activities of deterring and dominating the enemy in latter stages, focus has to be reverted to other instruments of power. The CAF should focus on training the KDF on ways in which to revert such primacy from military instruments, especially in regards to the situation in Somalia. There a need for the Kenyan military to establish a transition plan as an indicator to locals that its intention was to end Al Shabaab control over the country.

12. As part of the CJOC's operational level doctrine, there is a need to develop contingencies during any military activity for purposes of force protection. In January 2016, the Al Shabaab overran a KDF camp in El Adde, Somalia. The expectation would be that when operating in a war-zone, a military should have a Quick Reaction Force (QRF) always on standby; however, the KDF reinforcements took 10-hours to get to the El Adde camp. The Kenyan commanders highlighted the presence of anti-aircraft rocket launchers as its reason for delayed response. Nonetheless, the 10-hour period was long enough for the militants to overrun the camp, and capture, torture and kill some soldiers. Ironically, some of the fleeing Kenyan soldiers reached the border before the reinforcements got to the camp. This event is an exemplar of the need for the CAF to include training on creating contingencies for all scenarios when working with the KDF. For example, such a program can delve into what operational contingencies the Kenyan command had enacted before setting up a camp deep in Somalia.

13. CAF's training of the KDF will be based on the former's principal functionality framework. Under this model, operational functions comprise of primary and enabling roles. Primary functions include Command, Act and Sense, whereas enabling ones are Generate, Sustain and Shield. Individually, none of these components can work efficiently, but when integrated into a holistic system, efficiency is achieved. Nonetheless, such efficacy will be

¹⁹ *Ibid*

influenced by limitations and possibilities imposed by the surroundings within which the training and actual military action will occur. The functions of Command, Act and Sense exist in a continuous loop of activities. Outputs from the Sense component during the joint training will be assessed in execution of Command activities as the supervisor's attempt to establish the current state. Subsequently, when the current state is determined, it shall be compared to the desired one for the training program, and Command activities used to plan and direct necessary actions. On its part, the Act component will create an enabling environment for the achievement of the desired state. As part of the training, the KDF will be equipped with knowledge on the need to perform the enabling activities continuously; this approach will help the Kenyan military to maintain, defend and develop its assets and capabilities, especially in Somalia. Operational level command at the CAF appreciates the integral nature of the enabling functions in strengthening the core components of Command, Act and Sense.

**Case Studies of the CAF offering Training Assistance on Operational Level Command:
Strategic Benefits of the CAF's Training Programs for Canada**

14. A joint training program for the KDF and CAF would help Canada gain expand its scope of influence in the Eastern Africa region. Subsequently, such a program would warrant the Canadian military setting a base in Kenya, which could be used to control security assets owned by Canada in the region. The increasing global terrorism, evident in terror acts outside areas considered as radicalized, is an indicator that countries need to be proactive towards protecting their citizenry from such form of insecurity. Canada has a large Somali immigrant population that command a great influence in Somali politics and security. Therefore, Canada could benefit from joint training with the KDF by having an opportunity to gather intelligence on terror cells in Somalia, which may pose a threat within its national borders. In most

instances, terrorists that attack western countries are trained in extremist environments such as Somalia; therefore, the need to track any individual associated with such groups to deter his or her entry into Canada.

RECOMMENDATIONS

15. Determining the way forward with the joint operations between the CAF and KDF can be done through the development of a globally integrated operation that will be useful in the joint ventures. Rowlett, Young, Mangan and Townsend²⁰ indicate that the integration of the different joint forces will ensure that these groups can co-operate fluidly across the different borders. The assistance offered by the CAF to KDF will ensure that the Kenyan military will be able to overcome the challenges in its defence operations. With the combination of the various capabilities of the two countries, it will be a critical aspect that the two militaries assist in the promotion of peace in the operational areas.

CONCLUSION

16. Over the last few years, the KDF have been experiencing numerous challenges in its pursuit to safeguard the Country's National borders. The biggest threat has been from the Somali insurgent group Al-Shabaab. The joint-military training program will significantly assist KDF to protect the national boundaries and win the war on terrorism.

17. The exchange program between the CAF and the KDF will not only strengthen the relationship between Kenya and Canada, it will also assist the Kenyan Military to gain the required hands-on experience in critical areas and military procedures. The Kenyan forces will learn from their Canadian counterparts on the application of various defense concepts to thwart

²⁰ Rick Rowlett, et al., "The Way Ahead For Joint Operations And Planning Doctrine," *JFQ: Joint Force Quarterly* 77 (2015): 143

the threats caused by terrorism. KDF will learn the fundamental concept of effective communication at the battlefield or when confronted with aggressive enemies.

18. Second, the military exchange will assist KDF to learn the best and modern practices in military defense as well as how to improve on their tactics. Other critical areas the KDF stands to emulate from the Canadian army are familiarizing themselves with various equipment, target acquisition, target type, fire support and coordination measures, close-air support, and ground-to-air communication. Additionally, military exchange between Kenya and Canada will assist to prove KDFs ability to defend itself against violent and militant extremists. That will significantly improve KDF defence capacity and operational methods.

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