

A Night Devoid Of Stars

How Al-Shabaab Exemplifies the Clash of Civilizations and Uses the Failings
of Modern Liberalism to Remain In Power and Threat To Eastern Africa

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11 December 2019

What do you say when men come to your house or your school and demand that you join their army? What do you say in the face of guns and threats of mortar attacks on your family should you refuse? A young boy told Human Rights Watch that after delaying making a decision to join Al-Shabaab, he came home to find his home destroyed in a mortar attack and his mother dead¹. A man named Muhammad told a similar story of how his father and uncle were targeted for their military experience, and upon their refusal to join, he found them lying in a pool of blood after a gun fight². These are the choices that everyday civilians have to make living under Al-Shabaab, a Wahhabi Islamist terrorist group that thrives in Somalia and Kenya³. In a war that exemplifies Samuel Huntington's Clash of Civilizations theory, this modern war of terrorism is a nationalistic fight to create an Islamic state in Somalia and beyond. While largely ineffective in terms of sheer area of control in recent years, they still have large amounts of control and are very active.

The Clash of Civilizations is the theory that the primary source of conflict in the post-Cold-War world would be people's cultural and religious identities. In a shift from inter-state conflict to intra-state conflict, this theory rises from the ashes as wars become more and more focused on ethnic, gender, racial, and religious clashes between groups of people instead of nations vying for control⁴. In a new world order where liberalism rules as the guiding theory of international relations, the clash of civilizations fits into the larger Democratic Peace

¹Human Rights Watch interview, (location withheld), July 11, 2008

² Human Rights Watch interview, Nairobi, October 8, 2008.

³ "Who Are Somalia's Al-Shabab?" BBC News. BBC, December 22, 2017.

⁴ Huntington, Samuel. "The Clash of Civilizations?" *Foreign Affairs* 72, no. 3 (1993): 22.

Theory. States are hesitant to engage in traditional, pre-World War II-style warfare with other democratic states and it is here where modern terrorism thrives⁵.

One of the key tenets of liberalism is the Democratic Peace Proposition, which states that well-established liberal democracies do not go to war with each other. The implementation of liberalism, which prioritizes economic, financial and cultural interdependence between states and participation in international organizations for the sake of diplomatic cooperation, allows for international peace. Owens argues that "that liberal ideas cause liberal democracies to tend away from war with one another, and that the same ideas prod these states into war with illiberal states". Liberal institutions and ideologies work together to bring about liberal democracies, and as liberal states work towards the best interests of its citizens, they will actively avoid war, especially with other democracies. The interdependence that liberals believe is vital to international peace is seen in the Kantian Triangle⁶.

This reluctance to create war is largely linked to war with other liberal democracies, but in today's increasingly interconnected world, there is more and more reluctant even with states who are not democratic but have complicated socio-political and economic connections. As Al-Shabaab lacks the status of being a state of themselves (not that they would ever be considered democratic even if they were) and the Transitional Federal Government of Somalia is incredibly weak, any sort of direct warfare would be complicated. Al-Shabaab functions as a "network organism constituted by loose ties, political/security alliances of clans, sub-clans, sub-sub-clans, pseudo warlords and not least global politico-religious movements/networks"

⁵ Owen, John M. "How Liberalism Produces Democratic Peace." *International Security*, vol. 19, no. 2, 1994, pp. 87–125., DOI:10.2307/2539197.

⁶ Owen, John M. "How Liberalism Produces Democratic Peace." *International Security*, vol. 19, no. 2, 1994, pp. 87–125., doi:10.2307/2539197.

that is “strengthened by roomy religious beliefs and different constitutions and reconstitutions of Islam”⁷. This power structure makes it harder to wage a war against them. This war is not a traditional one with armies in line on a battlefield, or a modern one waged through technology and hegemonic power, but one between groups with decades of historical turmoil where a rise in extremist Jihadism lit the fuse of nationalism. It is hard to defeat an idea, a religion, a group of groups that can separate and conjoin again, and it here that Al-Shabaab thrives.

A Long and Complicated Road Behind...

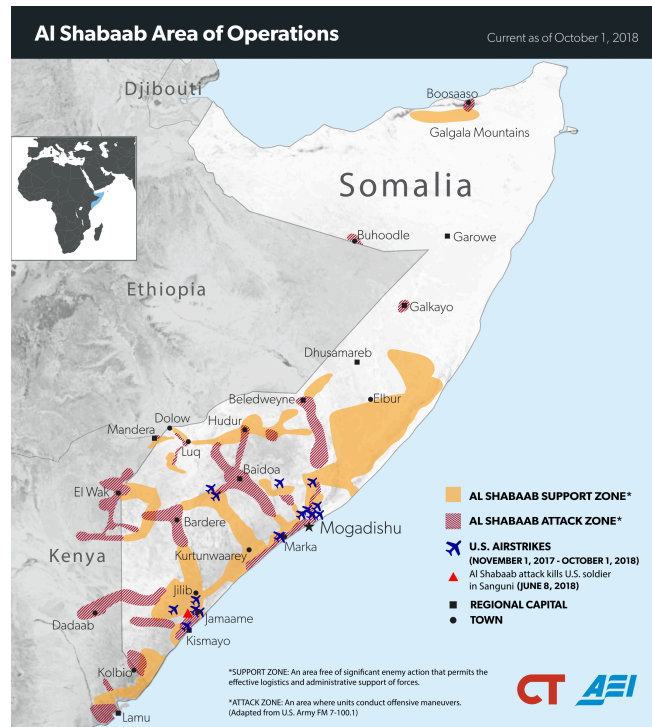
Meaning “The Youth” in arabic, Al-Shabaab originally emerged as the radical youth wing of Somalia’s Union of Islamic Court (ICU) which formed in 2000. In 2003, Al-Itihad al-Islami split over differences in goals and strategy, with the youth seeking to establish a “Greater Somalia” ruled by sharia law. As a extremist organization, Al-Shabaab advocates for Wahhabism, a largely Saudi-inspired version of Islam which imposes a strict version of Sharia in it’s controlled areas. It’s goal is to establish a fundamentalist Islamic state that would ultimately expand through the whole horn of Africa. In June of 2006, the ICU with the backing of Al-Shabaab took control of the capital of Mogadishu. The Transitional Federal Government (TFG) requested international intervention to quell the ICU and the majority-Christian nation of Ethiopia invaded in December and managed to retake the city. Al-Shabaab was then able to gain support from local Somalis and formed into a guerilla terrorist group. In response, the U.S.

⁷ Norton, Richard. "Al-Shabaab in Somalia: The History and Ideology of a Militant Islamist Group 2005-2012." *Parameters*, 2013, 145-47.

State Department labeled al-Shabaab a terrorist organization in February of 2008. In January of 2009, Ethiopian forces pulled out of Somalia and African Union Mission to Somalia (AMISOM) forces with troops from Uganda and Burundi moved in. On July 11th, 2010 during the World Cup, al-Shabaab coordinated three bombings that killed seventy-six people in sports bars in Kampala. By August, AMISOM and TFG forces managed to take control of Mogadishu and other urban centers which took significant amounts of land from al-Shabaab control. By 2012, al-Qaeda leader Ayman Al-Zawahri announced a formal alignment with al-Shabaab. In June of 2013, after a series of internal conflicts, the bloodiest purge in the organization's history took place with the estimated removal of over 200 members and leader Godane consolidated control and implemented a hardline strategy. On September 1st, 2014, a U.S. airstrike killed Ahmed Godane after months of suicide bombings by the terrorists. In an effort to expand their Islamic state into Kenya, they hijacked a bus in Kenya and massacred 28 civilians in late November, in an effort to separate "Muslims from non-Muslims by challenging the non-Somali passengers to recite the shahada, the Islamic declaration of faith". Two weeks later, they massacred another 36 non-Muslims in Kenya. In their deadliest attack to date, al-Shabaab gunmen stormed Garissa University in Kenya and killed 148 people, largely targeting Christian students. After months of bombings, the African Union began to withdraw its troops from Somalia in November of 2017 to transition duties to the Somali government. Since then, little has been done to stop the fighting and little had changed to lead to peace⁸. This war takes the clash of civilization paradigm literally, "viewing two civilizations as clashing on Somali turf"⁹.

⁸ "Al-Shabab." Counter Extremism Project. Accessed December 10, 2019.

⁹ Norton, Richard. "Al-Shabaab in Somalia: The History and Ideology of a Militant Islamist Group 2005-2012." *Parameters*, 2013, 145-47.



Al-Shabaab Area of Operations October 2018¹⁰

The Faithful Vanguard

The overall organization is based on a hierarchical structure, lead by its Emir, which today is Ahmed Umar, also known as Abu Ubaidah. Before him, Ahmed Abdi Godane ruled and experts were surprised to see how well Umar was able to keep the organization unified, as he appears to lack Godane's strategic savvy. Under him stand regional commanders who manage the different areas they have a presence in. There is also a Shura council of 10 members who

¹⁰ Barnett, James. "Al Shabaab Area of Operations: October 2018." Critical Threats, October 4, 2018.

oversee these commanders and establish the organization's policy, and under them are various junior leaders who are in charge of media, law enforcement, and military operations¹¹.

As the organization is so spread out, there are many units and groups like with any large organization. In these, Norton describes how “some leaders and units are truly local protectors while others are global religious ideologists, but there are also leaders add units that are much more opportunistic and even criminal¹²”, adding that “a constant battle exists within Al-Shabaab over ties and alliances, moralities and versions of Islam¹³”. It is these battles over ideologies that cause most of the infighting , as well as increasing clan issues.

Al-Shabaab formally pledged allegiance to al-Qaeda in 2012, but there has been links between the organizations since at least 2008. In 2010, al-Qaeda operatives moved to Somalia to train al-Shabaab fighters and have since operated closely. The Counter Extremism Project reports that “foreigners comprise over half of al-Shabaab’s executive council”¹⁴.

In one of the most conclusive papers describing the organization, titled “Understanding al-Shabaab: clan, Islam, and insurgency in Kenya”, Anderson and McKnight discuss how there are three main components that need to be considered when examining the radicalization and recruitment to jihadist terrorist organizations in eastern Africa. The first is that, among the general population in that area, there is the perception that Islam is under attack by the West. They describe how there is differences in opinion in whether it is recurrent theme or causal logic but that there is the consensus that it “applies very strongly to the Somali case, and has

¹¹ “Al-Shabab.” Counter Extremism Project. Accessed December 10, 2019.

¹² Norton, Richard. "Al-Shabaab in Somalia: The History and Ideology of a Militant Islamist Group 2005-2012." *Parameters*, 2013, 145-47.

¹³ Norton, Richard. "Al-Shabaab in Somalia: The History and Ideology of a Militant Islamist Group 2005-2012." *Parameters*, 2013, 145-47.

¹⁴ “Al-Shabab.” Counter Extremism Project. Accessed December 10, 2019.

strengthened in Kenya” due to a rise in “indiscriminate assaults against their own Somali and Muslim citizens”. Secondly, there is consensus amongst experts that “education, wealth, and degree of integration are all key factors in determining affiliations to radicalisation and global jihad” yet again there are disagreements about how much these factors influence those in eastern Africa. They question whether it is affluence or poverty that leads to the taking up of arms and whether the bastardized idea of a global jihad as a holy war is more attractive to the uneducated or the elite. Finally, there is debate as to whether recruitment to the radical cause is “driven by disposition or situational factors”. There is a lack of thoroughly investigated research into how situational factors (geographic location, neighborhood factors, the operation of kinship networks) can influence the motivations to join terrorist organizations like Al-Shabaab, and that they “appear especially significant and it is these that al-Shabaab has determinedly exploited”. The best evidence points to the idea that religious and cultural factors may not be as important in mobilisation than socio-economic disadvantage or political exclusion¹⁵.

In another enlightening study, Roland Marchal's work on eastern African jihardi movements stresses the importance of recruiting youth from the Somali population but that they avoid doctrinal teachings at an early age. Al-Shabaab recruits a lot of disaffected youth and exploits clan divisions to gain recruits by “taking the part of less sub-clans or sub-sub-clans”. He goes on to point out that these clans are also the ones who have frequently struggled to reap benefit from economic programs in Somalia's war economy. It is the marginalization and disadvantage that emerge as important elements in the relationship between clans and al-Shabaab. They are especially successful in drawing in those “who are excluded from

¹⁵ Anderson, David M, and Jacob Mcknight. "Understanding Al-Shabaab: Clan, Islam and Insurgency in Kenya." *Journal of Eastern African Studies* 9, no. 3 (2015): 536-57.

mainstream patronage and support” and “born again jihadis” who have turned to religion for a spiritual anchor¹⁶. Al-Shabaab does not generally advocate coercion in their recruitment process but has used it in times of crisis such as among Bantu communities that live in the Juba valley after they invaded Kenya¹⁷. Al-Shabaab has a flexible and responsive strategy which takes recruits from “where they can best be found and that places social and economic factors above clan and religion”¹⁸.

The Geneva Convention makes any child under the age of 18 forced into war a child soldier and the recruitment of such children in any capacity is a war crime¹⁹. Human Rights Watch has found that Al-Shabaab has “targeted children for recruitment, forced marriage, and rape” and has attacked schools, which is another war crime. The Transitional Federal Government signed a plan in 2012 against child recruitment but soon after reports emerged of children being sent to EU-funded training and being used as informants²⁰. Their crimes are not just limited to recruiting males to be soldiers, but have also included the kidnapping of Muslim and Christian women in Kenya and Somalia as sex slaves. They have forced them into brothels or marriages and killed those who refuse²¹.

¹⁶ Marchal, Roland. “The Rise of a Jihadi Movement in a Country at War. Harakat Al-Shabaab Al Mujahideen in Somalia.” SciencesPo SPIRE - Accueil, March 1, 2011.

¹⁷ Report of the Monitoring Group Concerning Somalia and Eritrea.” United Nations Security Council. United Nations, October 13, 2014.

¹⁸ Anderson, David M, and Jacob Mcknight. “Understanding Al-Shabaab: Clan, Islam and Insurgency in Kenya.” *Journal of Eastern African Studies* 9, no. 3 (2015): 536-57.

¹⁹ “Child Soldiers.” Child Soldiers - an overview | ScienceDirect Topics. Science Direct. Accessed December 9, 2019.

²⁰ HUMAN RIGHTS WATCH. “Somalia.” In *World Report 2013: Events of 2012*, 129-34. Bristol University Press, 2013. doi:10.2307/j.ctt1t892sk.21.

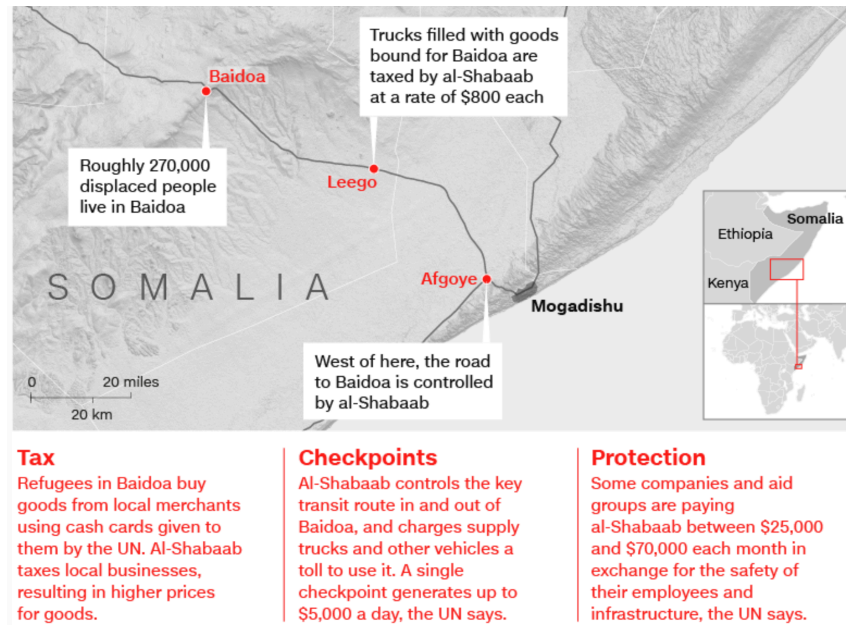
²¹ “No Place for Children: Child Recruitment, Forced Marriage, and Attacks on Schools in Somalia.” Human Rights Watch, May 4, 2016.

Money Equals Power, Power Equals Money

No organization, even a terrorist one, can function without a steady cash flow. The important question is who exactly is funding the actions of al-Shabaab and why aid organizations have to be complicit in their crimes to give any help to those suffering. A CNN investigation found that al-Shabaab “[makes] millions of dollars each year by exploiting foreign aid money sent to Somalia by the very western nations who are trying to eliminate the terror group”. A former zaqat (tax) collector who was recently captured told CNN that one of the largest sources of money for al-Shabaab was the extraction of tolls at roadblocks. Another reported that if local merchants didn’t pay, “they’re captured and killed”. The pay of zaqat is forcing thousands to flee their homes as they are stripped of their money and fear attacks everyday²². “Al-Shabaab used to demand money or children from clans: now they demand both” another told The Guardian, revealing just the level the al-Qaeda affiliate will go to secure their two most precious commodities: cash and recruits²³.

²² Kiley, Sam. “Funding Al-Shabaab: How Aid Money Ends up in Terrorists' Hands.” CNN. Cable News Network, February 12, 2018.

²³ Burke, Jason. “Al-Shabaab Plundering Starving Somali Villages of Cash and Children.” The Guardian. Guardian News and Media, February 21, 2018.



How al-Shabaab Profits From Foreign Aid²⁴

When al-Shabaab took control of the port city of Kismayo in 2008, they gained control of the charcoal trade which is an essential part of the Somali economy²⁵. The proceeds they receive annually from this industry alone totals an estimated \$35-50 million²⁶. Despite Kismayo no longer being under their control, the group still makes millions off of the industry. They have also reportedly received funds from Eritrea, Iran, Saudi Arabia, Syria, Qatar, and Yemen despite denials by these nations²⁷, as well as individuals attempting to fundraise from countries like Finland²⁸ and the United States²⁹.

²⁴ Kiley, Sam. "Funding Al-Shabaab: How Aid Money Ends up in Terrorists' Hands." CNN. Cable News Network, February 12, 2018.

²⁵ "Al-Shabab." Counter Extremism Project. Accessed December 10, 2019.

²⁶ Jonathan Masters and Mohammed Aly Sergie, "Al-Shabab," Council on Foreign Relations, last modified March 13, 2015,

²⁷ Holly Yan, "What is Al-Shabaab, and what does it want?" CNN, April 2, 2015

²⁸ "Finland: 4 charged with funding Somali militants," Associated Press, September 17, 2014

²⁹ "Two women convicted in US of Financing Somali Group Al-Shabab," Voice of America, October 25, 2016

Playbook of a Terrorist

As a terrorist organization, al-Shabaab's strongest weapon is their ability to utilize bombings to create fear and chaos. Soon after the war broke out in 2006, insurgents adopted hit-and-run tactics that have been a "defining feature" of the conflict, using mortar attacks or ambushes before fading back into the crowd³⁰. After repeated failures to recapture Mogadishu, they resorted to guerilla warfare against AMISOM and TFG utilizing mortar attacks and suicide bombs for the largest death counts. Working in twofold, it pulled most of its forces away from the capital and occupied the outlying districts while also exerting influence within Mogadishu and managing to execute attacks deep into the city, where they were especially accomplished with car bombs. With an inability to match AMISOM's military superiority, al-Shabaab's frontline force began to focus on launching hit-an-run style attacks on anyone working against them. It refocused on guerilla-style attacks on checkpoints and planting explosive devices in "liberated areas"³¹.

Another major part of al-Shabaab's strategy involves assassination attempts on enemy military officers, militia commanders, and Somali governmental officials. In May of 2012, they unsuccessfully tried to assassinate President Shaykh Sharif Shaykh Ahmad in Mogadishu. These

³⁰ Albin-Lackey, Chris. *"So Much to Fear": War Crimes and the Devastation of Somalia*. New York: Human Rights Watch, 2008.

³¹ Anzalone, Christopher. "Al-Shabab's Tactical and Media Strategies in the Wake of Its Battlefield Setbacks." Combating Terrorism Center at West Point. West Point, November 15, 2017.

assassination attempts, while they will not turn the tide of battle, can disrupt enemy forces and prevent easy transitions³².

Al-Shabaab also runs a strong media campaign, with a daily news report, a twitter page, and more. They have taken to looting private media stations to use their equipment to broadcast and gain supporters. Internationally, they have a single spokesman of whom their message to the world goes through. Domestically, their primary means of communication is much more focused on face-to-face rhetoric and propaganda. In many areas, civilians and children especially are required to go to lectures and sermons where leaders speak about the glory of the holy war and extremist Islamic views. Many outside broadcasts are blocked so getting unbiased information can be exceedingly difficult³³.

All sides have shown negligence when it comes to avoiding civilian casualties, with al-Shabaab using towns as human shields to avoid airstrikes. Human Rights watch found that even by 2008, all sides of the conflict had committed “serious violations of international humanitarian law” and called for those responsible to be charged with war crimes³⁴.

Al-Shabaab's use of draconian punishment (stoning to death adulterers, cutting off the hands of thieves, killing looters), seizures, taxes and abductions go against what Ayman al-Zawahiri, who is one of the leaders of al-Qaeda, calls for their affiliates to do. al-Qaeda says that groups like al-Shabaab should build consensus and support among local communities, yet

³² Anzalone, Christopher. “Al-Shabab's Tactical and Media Strategies in the Wake of Its Battlefield Setbacks.” Combating Terrorism Center at West Point. West Point, November 15, 2017.

³³ Dickinson, Elizabeth. “Inside Al-Shabab's Media Strategy.” Foreign Policy. Foreign Policy, September 3, 2010.

³⁴ Albin-Lackey, Chris. *“So Much to Fear”: War Crimes and the Devastation of Somalia*. New York: Human Rights Watch, 2008.

the practices of al-Shabaab are very similar to those of ISIL. There are many accounts of people who actually prefer the harsh rule under Sharia law, as one farmer told the Guardian that “the Islamic court gives harsh sentences for the criminals, so everyone is scared of them. That way we are in peace under al-Shabaab. If you do not have any issue with al-Shabaab, they will leave you alone”³⁵.

In their efforts to create an Islamic State in eastern Africa, al-Shabaab has done much to create chaos and keep Somalia from forming a new successful government. However, they lack control over the capital and any overarching control. One of their largest weaknesses is the internal instability between different factions. There are disagreements in the organization about the extent of Sharia law, the role of al-Qaeda, military tactics, and power struggles amongst leaders. Despite this, their message remains clear: an Islamic state under sharia law with no foreign interference.

After Kenya’s military intervention in the south in 2012, Al-Shabaab responded with a series of sporadic, indiscriminate and strategically incoherent attacks that show a significant period of weekend in the organization. Some analysts says that the militia’s decision to align with al-Qaeda backfired as it created more tensions amongst the organization. It led to moderates uniting against the extremists and convinced Sheikh Hassan Dahir Aweys, who is the spiritual leader of Somali Islamists, to openly rebuke the al-Shabaab leadership. “The unprecedented outburst from Aweys might just mark [the point at which] the previously unified movement began to unravel,” said commentator Simon Allison at the time. “‘Wake up and open your eyes,’ Aweys said on a public radio station ... al-Shabaab’s use of violence and oppression to

³⁵ Burke, Jason. “Al-Shabaab Plundering Starving Somali Villages of Cash and Children.” The Guardian. Guardian News and Media, February 21, 2018.

ensure obedience was a tactic Aweys described as mirroring the treatment meted out by hated dictator Siad Barre. And he questioned al-Shabaab's claim to a monopoly on jihad". He has immense personal authority and identifies more of as a Somali nationalist than an jihadi zealot. These differences in religious opinions, even if both are Muslims who want foreign influences out of Somalia, point to a crack in the facade that may be a weakness to al-Shabaab. They like to claim they are the only Muslims of authority in the area, and if you are Muslim you must follow them, but men like Aweys can show people that there is a possibility of being a religious moderate and accomplishing similar goals³⁶.

And So We Beat On, Boats Beating On Against the Current, Borne Back Ceaselessly Into the Past³⁷

With an utter lack of desire to negotiate with those they consider infidels, the path to peace with Al-Shabaab is a long and arduous one. Experts expect the only way forward is to chip away at their recruits and support systems, and to do so would require a strong Somali government who can offer something better than what terrorists can. To most people, there has not been such a government in Somalia in decades.

Al-Shabaab is not a state for other nations to declare war against, but instead an organization that can web and flow in power and occupancy like water in a stream. When they were pushed out of Mogadishu in August of 2011, they rebuilt in rural towns and villages and

³⁶ Tisdall, Simon. "Al-Shabaab Shows Weakness, Not Strength in Somalia Theatre Bombing | Simon Tisdall." The Guardian. Guardian News and Media, April 4, 2012.

³⁷ FITZGERALD, F. SCOTT. *GREAT GATSBY*. Place of publication not identified: PENGUIN Books, 2019.

their authorities have remained “largely unchallenged in the south”³⁸. Recent actions have built a more extreme version of Al-Shabaab and it shows no sign of being defeated. While their goal is to establish an Islamist state in Somalia and beyond, their lack of status as their own state makes declaring war and fighting difficult. With no real government to speak of in Somalia for decades, there is little internal ability for a concrete defeat.

One of the hardships for Western nations is that it is exceedingly difficult to make a culture something it is not, and most efforts in fighting terrorism involves promoting western ideals that go can against what is required to be a modern nation, which “[are] about industrialization, urbanization, and rising levels of literacy, education, and wealth. The qualities that make a society Western, in contrast, are special: the classical legacy, Christianity, the separation of church and state, the rule of law, civil society”³⁹. This is a distinction that Somalis see very clearly and Americans not at all.

And indeed, Al-Shabaab is largely successful due to the failings of the Somalian government and Western intervention, as well as the complexities of waging war on a non-state entity. They may not have created a nation yet and may still lack control over key areas, yet they have done an important part of being a terrorist organization: they have created dissent and chaos and terror in the name of their chaos, as well as preventing any substantial legitimate government from forming that could oppose them. It is a clash of civilizations type war fighting for an Islamic state against non-believers. After milenia of warfare, democratic states are hesitant to go to full on war, aware that “the ultimate weakness of violence is that it is a

³⁸ Anderson, David M, and Jacob Mcknight. "Understanding Al-Shabaab: Clan, Islam, and Insurgency in Kenya." *Journal of Eastern African Studies* 9, no. 3 (2015): 536-57.

³⁹ Huntington, Samuel. "The Clash of Civilizations?" *Foreign Affairs* 72, no. 3 (1993): 22.

descending spiral. Returning violence with violence only multiplies violence adding deeper darkness to a night already devoid of stars"⁴⁰. Evolutions in warfare and how states interact give Al-Shabaab the opening to exist and spread with little their enemies can do to stop them. In a struggle similar to America's long and costly wars in Vietnam or Afghanistan against the Taliban, Al-Shabaab's war for an Islamic state in Somalia is one that has no clear ending. Perhaps fearing a repeat of the war in Afghanistan against Taliban, where just this week it was revealed that officials knew for years that the war was grossly mishandled and misreported, there has been little international support for throwing western forces into another seemingly endless war⁴¹.

Al-Shabaab and other terrorist organizations are a lot like hydras: cut off one head and two more grow in its place. Al-Shabaab recruits disenfranchised, marginalized youth who may not originally know who they are, but know that they don't fit into the traditional society. Huntington wrote that "we know who we are only when we know who we are not and often only when we know whom we are against" and it here that Al-Shabaab thrives⁴². They look to traditional Somali and Kenyan society and say, *'they do not represent us, they do not represent you or I'* and create a new identity for their recruits against the TFG and others. They make extremists out of moderates. They build support in anger and emotions and seize upon the disenfranchised to promote their vision of an Islamic state as the way against what they hate. Religious fanatics who are willing to kill for their god do not give in, they do not surrender, and as such, there will

⁴⁰ Martin, Jeff. "King's Words Still Inspire Nearly 50 Years after His Death." AP NEWS. Associated Press, January 14, 2018.

⁴¹ Whitlock, Craig. "U.S. Officials Failed to Devise a Clear Strategy for the War in Afghanistan, Confidential Documents Show." The Washington Post. WP Company, December 9, 2019.

⁴² Huntington, Samuel. "The Clash of Civilizations?" *Foreign Affairs* 72, no. 3 (1993): 22.

always be another ready to step up to fight and die for the cause as long as one still lives. It is here that sees this conflict in a stalemate: how do you beat an idea?

“Civil wars leave nothing but tombs,” wrote French poet Alphonse de Lamartine. The path out of war is born of sweat and grit and piles of bodies on both sides too high to keep score of anymore. It is either a war of attrition or one of mutual exhaustion. This is not a war where one nation can simply drop a nuclear weapon on another to force a surrender, this is a war for one homeland. Instead, the warring sides will have to either defeat the other or both come to the table to scrap together some sort of agreement that neither will like but will tolerate to end the bloodshed. War is just one symptom of the disease that is capitalism and until there is a strong, stable Somali government that can provide for its citizens in a way that makes them less inclined to join a terrorist organization and live under Sharia law, little can be done to truly beat an organization like Al-Shabaab. To Somalians and Kenyans and Muslims around the world who do not feel represented by their governments, extremists that offer change. Countries can fall and governments can be toppled, but a simple American-backed coup can’t destroy ideologies or religions.