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'Some more reliable than others': Image management, donor perceptions and the Global War on Terror in East African diplomacy*

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ABSTRACT

This article explores the role of perceptions in donor-African relations and the extent to which donor 'images' of African governments can be managed by these same governments to their advantage. The article focuses on donor views of 'reliability' in the Global War on Terror (GWOT) and compares differing international perceptions of Kenya and Uganda through this lens. Arguing that donors have an exaggerated sense of Ugandan 'compliance' or reliability and Kenyan unreliability in fighting terrorism, it explains this by examining the two governments' international 'image management' strategies, or lack thereof. The analysis contends that Uganda's success at promoting itself as a major donor ally in the GWOT, compared with Kenya's general reluctance to do the same, has played a significant role in building and bolstering these differing donor perceptions. This, the article suggests, raises important questions about the nature of African agency in the international system.

I N T R O D U C T I O N

Since 9/11 and George W. Bush's famous assertion that 'either you are with us, or you are with the terrorists', being seen to be 'joining' the US and other Western states in prosecuting the 'Global War on Terror' (GWOT) has become an important part of gaining or retaining Western support for many developing states. A clear definition of what being 'with us' – or 'compliance with the counter-terrorism regime' as one scholar has put it (Whitaker 2010: 640) – constitutes, however, does not appear to formally exist in the academy or in the international community. Consequently, there is considerable scope for interpretation and misconception when aid donors consider how reliable a government is in this regard. The imprecise manner in which perceptions are constructed means that donors ultimately 'select' which events or actions by a foreign government they believe to be most salient and ignore others in assessing whether or not it is 'reliable'. This can lead to stark differentiations being made which do not necessarily stand up to scrutiny.

Donor perceptions of Ugandan and Kenyan involvement in the GWOT are key examples of this process and its consequences. Though both governments have arguably cooperated extensively with donors in the GWOT, Kenya's Mwai Kibaki administration (in power since 2002 though as part of a coalition since 2008) has consistently been seen as less reliable in this regard than Uganda's Yoweri Museveni/National Resistance Movement (NRM) regime (in power since 1986). As a result, donors have treated the two governments differently.

In explaining how these perceptions have come to be constructed, however, it is important to recognise that official Western 'knowledge' about Africa is not influenced solely by donor personnel. African governments themselves, as the article will demonstrate, can adopt a variety of strategies to influence how donors view them and interpret their actions. This article will argue that the Ugandan regime has been extremely successful in using public and private diplomacy ('image management') to persuade, primarily US, donor officials to see it as a key ally in the GWOT. The Kenyan government, however, has rarely attempted to do this, to its disadvantage. Donor perceptions, therefore, are understood to be partly a product of African image management – whether well-executed or not. Such a contention has real implications for scholarly understandings of the agency of 'weak' states in the international system.

COOPERATION IN THE WAR ON TERROR: 'COMPLIANCE' WITH
THE 'COUNTER-TERRORISM REGIME' SINCE 9/11

Though the existence of a global counter-terrorism 'regime' has been explored by scholars, questions remain on how to accurately assess state 'compliance' with such a regime.[1] For scholars such as Stiles and Thayne, strict emphasis is placed upon observance of UN Security Council Resolution 1373 by states and they consider a variety of 'national characteristics' including 'domestic political culture, national interests [and] regionalism' in assessing what factors influence compliance (2006: 153–76). Whitaker suggests, however, that a broader understanding of the concept, which includes more general 'cooperation in the War on Terror', is necessary (2010: 640–51). When used together, such methodologies can produce confusingly conflicting results.

Among donors themselves compliance, or cooperation, criteria tend to be discussed in an even more general manner. In the US State Department publication *Patterns of Global Terrorism*, for example, the 'global coalition' against terrorism is stated to be fighting the war on five very broad fronts where there is considerable room for interpretational ambiguity: 'diplomatic, intelligence, law enforcement, financial and military' (Department of State (DoS) 2004: iii–xii). The purpose of this article is not to suggest a possible resolution to this conceptual problem. Its intention, rather, is to point out that such wide understandings of 'cooperation' among donors can have real consequences for governments of weak and aid-dependent states such as Uganda and Kenya.[2]

As Dunn has noted, donors form perceptions of African, and other, governments based on a 'gradual layering and connecting of events and meanings'. Importantly, however, there are few guarantees as to which 'events will be selected' in this process of 'knowledge construction' and, indeed, which version of events will be deemed as most credible by donor officials (2004: 124–25). When donors build perceptions of African cooperation in the GWOT, therefore, there remains a likelihood that they will privilege certain actions or policies over others in constructing opinions of 'reliability'. Thus donors can come to see regimes such as those in Kenya and Uganda as quite different with regard to their levels of cooperation when, in reality, the contrast is perhaps less clear.

This article will analyse how these two African governments have, or have not, played a role in influencing which issues donors 'select' in building perceptions of their reliability in the GWOT. It will also, by way

of conclusion, consider why they have taken the approaches they have. It is first necessary, however, to outline how donor views partly conflict with reality in this regard by summarising Ugandan and Kenyan cooperation in the GWOT and donor responses therein.

COMPARING UGANDAN AND KENYAN COOPERATION IN THE GWOT

Terrorism in Uganda and Kenya

Both Uganda and Kenya have been the victims of terrorist attacks since the 1990s. In Uganda's case, the primary terror threats have come from domestic rebel groups with at-best tenuous links to global networks. The most prominent of these have been the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA), a millenarian organisation which carried out a sustained campaign of violence in northern Uganda between 1987 and 2006, and the Allied Democratic Forces (ADF), a mainly Muslim union of anti-Museveni groups held responsible for a number of bombings in Kampala between 1998 and 2001 (former Ugandan Cabinet Minister 2010 int.). In July 2010, however, 76 people were killed in Kampala after *al-Shabaab*, a Somali terrorist group, carried out suicide bombings in the city in protest at Uganda's involvement in an AU peacekeeping mission in Mogadishu (AMISOM) (Dagne 2011: 2).

Terrorist attacks in Kenya have been more directly connected to *al-Qaeda*. In 1998 the group claimed responsibility for the bombing of the US Embassy in Nairobi – its first act of violence in Africa – which left over 200 people dead and thousands wounded (Whitaker 2008: 255–9). The organisation has continued to target Kenya since 9/11. In 2002, it perpetrated two attacks: the first involving the firing of SAM-7 missiles at a plane leaving Mombasa, the second the detonation of a truck bomb in the lobby of a hotel north of the city. Though the missiles overshot their target, 15 people were killed in the hotel bombing. Furthermore, in 2003 an *al-Qaeda* plot to bomb the US mission was foiled by Kenyan authorities and in 2006 'Kenya's first entirely domestic case of Muslim-based terrorism' occurred with the fire-bombing of a Nairobi radio station (Harmony Project 2007: 48–9).

Domestic cooperation

Both governments have cooperated extensively with donors in the security sector during the 2000s, actively participating in the US-funded Anti-Terrorism Assistance Program, Safe Skies Initiative and Terrorist Interdiction Program (Khadiagala 2004: 2–4; Whitaker 2010: 651–8).

Both have established, with US support, Joint Anti-Terrorism Task Forces (JATT) to coordinate domestic security services although Kenya disbanded its version of this body in 2004 (Muhula 2007: 48–56; Lind & Howell 2008: 21). In addition, in 2004, the US funded a National Counter-Terrorism Centre in Nairobi which, according to some commentators, 'is rumoured to be under the direct operational guidance of Washington' (Lind & Howell 2008: 21). The UK has also provided an annual counter-terrorism training package to Kenyan security forces during the 2000s and Kenyan Cabinet ministers have personally attended UK-funded presentations on civilian defence against SAM-7 missile attacks (Guardian 29.7.2008; Hills 2006: 641; former UK official 2012 int.). Similarly, since 2004 US State Department personnel have worked directly with Kenyan officials in equipping and training coastal patrol units to improve security along the country's eastern coast (DoS 2006a: 10; Nairobi cable 11.6.2009).

Furthermore, both Kampala and Nairobi have frequently allowed FBI personnel to undertake counter-terrorism activities in their countries and both state's armies have held joint training exercises with their US and UK counterparts since the early 2000s (Heilman & Ndumbaro 2004: 147–8; Harmony Project 2007: 57; Muhula 2007: 55; Guardian 6.1.2004; Daily Monitor 18.7.2010). Both African governments have taken frequently strong measures in attempts to apprehend and arrest suspected terrorists (Haynes 2006: 503; New Vision 27.7.2010; New Vision 12.8.2010; Prestholdt 2011: 8–9). Both have also targeted Muslim communities specifically in these efforts: in 2002, Nairobi carried out arbitrary 'police swoops on [domestic] Muslim communities' in the aftermath of the Mombasa hotel bombing while, in 2007, also oversaw the arrest of a number of terror suspects from among Somali refugees fleeing across the Kenyan border (Khadiagala 2004: 2–4; Harmony Project 2007: 58; Lind & Howell 2008: 21–2; Whitaker 2010: 657–8). Furthermore, since the mid 1990s a considerable number of Kenyan and Ugandan Islamic NGOs suspected of having links to extremist groups have been forced to close down, sometimes, as Lind and Howell note, 'at the behest of foreign governments' (Lind & Howell 2008: 21–2; Naluswa 2004: 44–6).

While both governments hoped to pass anti-terrorism legislation following post-9/11 US pressure, only in Uganda did such a bill pass. In Kenya, the government was forced to withdraw its draconian Suppression of Terrorism bill after a number of NGOs and a parliamentary committee mounted a forceful campaign against it (Lind & Howell 2008: 23–4). A second push by the Kibaki

administration to pass a re-drafted version of the bill in 2006 was again blocked and, as of 2012, Kenya remains without a comprehensive anti-terror law (Whitaker 2008: 260). This contrasts strongly with Uganda where the 2002 Prevention of Terrorism Act (POTA) was passed 'quickly' and without controversy (Mukwaya 2004: 51–2; Pinkney 2005: 122). Both governments are also, to some degree, equally 'guilty' of non-compliance in other domestic areas. Both have been unable, for example, to effectively coordinate their various security and other law enforcement agencies for a variety of reasons including factionalism, corruption and lack of capacity (Kampala cable 11.3.2009; Nairobi cable 17.6.2005).

Regional cooperation

The Kenyan and Ugandan governments have also cooperated with donors in the building of regional security frameworks. Most notably, both have taken part in the US-funded Combined Joint Task Force–Horn of Africa which aims, according to Muhula, 'to detect, disrupt and defeat transnational terrorist groups in the region' (Muhula 2007: 49). They have also both been involved, since 2003, in the donor-funded East African Counterterrorism Initiative (Davis 2007: 148). Indeed, in 2005 Kenya received nearly 90% of total funds from this initiative while five other nations (including Uganda) shared the remainder (Prestholdt 2011: 10–11).

Both governments have also been heavily involved in attempting to resolve the ongoing crisis in Somalia, viewed as a 'terrorist haven' by donors particularly after the short-lived June 2006 takeover by the Islamist Union of Islamic Courts (former White House official int. November 2009). Since the Courts' overthrow in December 2006, an extremist off-shoot of the movement with alleged links to *al-Qaeda* (*al-Shabaab*) has continued to operate in the region to the dismay of Washington and to destabilise the Western-backed administration in Mogadishu through carrying out terrorist attacks (*BBC* 24.8.2010).

Prior to 2006, both Kampala and Nairobi were deeply engaged in regional processes aimed at restoring security to Somalia. Indeed, throughout 2004, Kenya facilitated the holding of elections for the Somali Parliament and continues to play host to most aid agencies dealing with Somalia (*Inter-Press News* 23.10.2004; *Reuters* 9.8.2010). Since Somalia's emergence in 2006, however, as a central battlefield in the GWOT, Uganda has increasingly played a more prominent role. Thus in February 2007, with strong backing donors, it became

the first state to send troops to Somalia as part of AMISOM (Dagne 2011: 12).

Kenya's role has, until 2011, been more private, however. Though it did not involve itself in AMISOM until July 2012, it has nevertheless cooperated closely with Washington behind-the-scenes since the mission's inauguration (Davis 2007: 148; *Daily Nation* 6.7.2012). Thus a number of commentators noted in 2007 how US and Kenyan troops 'set up [joint] positions [along the Kenya–Somalia border] to capture militants trying to flee [Somalia]' (*New York Times* 23.2.2007). Kenyan officials reportedly detained over one hundred such refugees as part of this operation and arranged for most to be transported to Addis Ababa, via Mogadishu, as part of a US-backed instance of 'extraordinary rendition' (Prestholdt 2011: 16–17). Furthermore, between 2009 and 2010 the Kenyan government sought US approval (which it did not receive) for its 'Jubaland Initiative' – a plan to use Kenyan-trained Somali soldiers to create a 'buffer zone inside Somalia to prevent *al-Shabaab* infiltration and incursions' into Kenya (Addis Ababa cable 2.2.2010).

Nairobi's involvement in Somalia changed dramatically in late 2011, however, with the Kenyan army invading its neighbour in order to, as internal security minister George Saitoti announced, 'pursue the enemy, who are the al-Shabaab, to wherever they will be, even in their country' (*BBC* 17.10.2011). This followed a spate of kidnappings of Western tourists in northern Kenya which Nairobi held the terrorist group responsible for (*BBC* 17.10.2011). Though Nairobi did not consult with donors prior to this intervention (Washington reportedly 'found out from the press'), its involvement has nevertheless been greeted with 'very cautious optimism' from some sections of the US government (US government official 2012 int.).

International cooperation

In the international sphere, however, the apparent contrast between Ugandan and Kenyan cooperation with donors in the GWOT has been, at times, more evident. In 2003, for example, Kampala announced its support for the US-led invasion of Iraq. This followed a Cabinet meeting where, according to one minister, Museveni had, following the 'official' US line, stressed an apparent link between the Iraqi regime, *al-Qaeda* and ADF bombings in Kampala in 2001 while making his case for supporting the war (former Uganda Cabinet Minister 2010 int.). Kenya, by contrast, refused to support the venture and a number of senior

officials publicly criticised the legality of the invasion (*Daily Nation* 23.3.2003). The two governments also took different stances on the issue of signing Article 98 agreements with the US, insisted upon by Washington from its allies to prevent US personnel abroad being extradited to the International Criminal Court. As with Iraq, Uganda supported the US in this regard, willingly signing an agreement in 2003, while Kenya did not and pointedly emphasised its aversion to doing so (Pinkney 2005: 126; Whitaker 2008: 262).

In other areas, however, Kenya has been far more cooperative with international counter-terrorism priorities – in 2007, for example, Nairobi facilitated the extraordinary rendition of suspected terrorist Mohamed Abdulmalik to US military base Guantanamo Bay at the behest of Washington (Prestholdt 2011: 17–18). The Kenyan government, along with the Ugandan, has also aligned itself closely with donor governments in international policy-making on Somalia and Eritrea (former White House official 2009 int.; Fisher 2012: 414–22). In 2009, for example, Kampala led efforts, with US and UK approval, at the UN to impose sanctions on Asmara in 2009 for its alleged support for Somali Islamist militants (*New Vision* 28.12.2009) while, in 2011, Nairobi spearheaded efforts to expand these measures (*Daily Nation* 6.12.2011).

DONOR RESPONSES TO UGANDAN AND KENYAN COOPERATION: PERCEPTIONS OF RELIABILITY AND CONSEQUENCES

In many respects, therefore, Uganda and Kenya are in possession of quite similar records of cooperation with donors over GWOT issues. In general, however, the Museveni regime has been able to 'deliver' results more comprehensively than the Kibaki government owing to the former's greater control of domestic legislative and security institutions (see below). It is clear, however, that donors (particularly the US and UK – the primary bilateral partners of both states) have drawn much starker distinctions of the two governments' reliability – perceiving Kampala as consistently reliable but Nairobi as generally disinterested and reluctant to engage. This contrast in donor perceptions can be observed from both public and private sources as will be demonstrated below.

Differing perceptions: public demonstrations

In public, senior donor officials have consistently described the Museveni regime as 'a strong ally in the war on terror' with one senior

US Pentagon official in 2007 thanking Kampala 'for [its] support and partnership' in this endeavour. In his frequent visits to Washington, Museveni has also often been personally lauded by senior policy-makers, including the US president, for his government's level of cooperation (Bush 2007). Similar sentiments have rarely been expressed by donors in relation to Kenya, however. Indeed, during Kibaki's 2003 visit to the White House, Bush suggested that Kenya was still 'finding what America has [already] found' in balancing the 'challenges of freedom' and that it should resolve to be 'persistent and courageous ... in the fight against terror' (Bush 2003). Furthermore, diplomats have been openly critical of Kenya's failure to pass counter-terrorism legislation (*IOL News* 7.9.2005).

Likewise, donors have demonstrated their contrasting views of the two governments' commitment in the issuing of travel advisories. Following the 2002 Kenya attacks, for example, both the UK and US halted flights to the country and issued harsh travel advisories warning their citizens to 'defer non-essential travel' until further notice as a result of 'terrorist threats ... aimed at Western targets' which 'the government of Kenya might not be able to prevent' (DoS 2003a, 2003b; *East African* 2.6.2003). A high-profile US presidential visit was also cancelled owing to 'worries about [the President's] safety in Kenya' (*Daily Nation* 26.12.2002). In July 2010, however, after terrorists attacked Kampala, specifically targeting Western tourists, the US simply advised its citizens in Uganda to 'maintain a high level of vigilance and take appropriate steps to increase their security awareness' (*BBC* 12.6.2010; DoS 2010b). Furthermore, less than a week after the bombings, the US attorney-general visited the city, underscoring donors' faith in the Museveni regime's competence regarding security (*Daily Monitor* 23.7.2010).

Further evidence of differing donor perceptions can be found in the contrasting profiles of Kenya and Uganda presented in official donor publications, most notably the annual US *Country Reports on Terrorism*.[3] In these Uganda is consistently praised for its 'firm stance against local and international terrorism' (DoS 2004: 11; DoS 2005: 32) and for its 'efforts to track, capture and hold individuals with suspected links to terrorist organizations' (DoS 2009: 30; DoS 2010a: 34). Kenya, however, is criticised for making 'slow' or '... no progress towards the overall strengthening of its capabilities to combat terrorism' (DoS 2004: 30; DoS 2005; DoS 2006b: 50). It is also lambasted for failing to 'engage in a national discussion to sensitize the public to terrorism issues' and for its 'uneven' cooperation as a 'partner' in the GWOT (DoS 2005).

Differing perceptions: private demonstrations

The extent to which donors have genuinely internalised these narratives, however, is most obvious from their undisclosed comments and actions. A former UK official, for example, has privately described Kenya's approach to counter-terrorism in the early 2000s as 'pretty slow . . . and uncertain', confiding that the Kibaki administration was 'pretty hard to get interested' in security matters with donors being forced to frequently 'push hard for action' (former UK official 2012 int.). Another senior donor official has, conversely, privately praised Kampala's dedication in the GWOT, arguing that 'they've stepped up and done more than anyone else [in the region]' (Western diplomat 2010 int.; USAID 2005; *New Vision* 3.3.2007). US officials have privately criticised Nairobi for being 'behind the curve' and slow to recognise the security threat posed by Islamist groups in Somalia (former White House official 2012 int.; Addis Ababa cable 2.2.2010) where they have long praised Kampala for its regional 'leadership' and 'alacrity' in focusing on the issue (former White House official 2009 int.; former senior US government official 1.2012 int.).

Donor personnel have also disclosed in interviews their 'deepening mistrust' of senior Kenyan security officials (former UK official 2012 int.) whom they have characterised as preoccupied with corruption and political intrigue (former senior US official 2.2012 int.). This contrasts strongly with the 'exceptionally good relationship' some donor officials have described between US and UK security officials and their Ugandan counterparts (former White House official 2009 int.).

In their private bilateral engagements, donors have also shown that they perceive Nairobi to be an unreliable partner. In 2005, for example, US and UK envoys led a joint demarche to the office of Kenyan security minister John Michuki where they raised 'long-term concerns' over his government's 'problems with . . . counter-terrorism effectiveness' (Nairobi cable 25.5.2005). Similarly, the following month, the US mission recommended that the US Secretary of State send a strongly worded letter to her Kenyan counterpart attacking Nairobi's 'inadequacies' in 'investigat [ing] and prosecut [ing] terrorism cases' and insisting that 'more must be done' (Nairobi cable 20.6.2005). Diplomatic demarches in Kampala, however, have invariably focused on democratisation, rather than security, concerns while high-level US–Ugandan correspondence has generally included extensive praise of the Museveni regime for its commitment to opposing terrorism (former White House official 2009 int.).

Perhaps the most convincing evidence of these contrasting donor perceptions, however, can be found in US embassy cables leaked by the *Wikileaks* organisation.[4] A large number of cables sent by the US Nairobi mission between 2005 and 2009, for example, emphasise the Kibaki administration's perceived 'serious failure to confront terrorism' (Nairobi cable 9.6.2005), its 'lackluster Counter-Terrorism perform-ance' (Nairobi cable 26.9.2005) and its 'lethargic' (Nairobi cable 9.6.2005), 'slow' (Nairobi cable 18.6.2007) and, at times, 'impossible' (Nairobi cable 20.4.2006) approach to responding to the terrorist threat. At the heart of many of these embassy dispatches, indeed, there appears to be a serious lack of trust of Kenya's commitment to improving its security. In late 2005, for example, the US envoy privately dismissed official Kenyan accounts of their 'sterling [counter-terrorism] record', denouncing their 'lack of political will' (Nairobi cable 8.12.2005) and, in 2006, bemoaned their 'multiple and unfulfilled previous pledges' in this area (Nairobi cable 12.1.2006). Nairobi's dedication to fighting terrorism was again questioned by a subsequent US ambassador in 2007, who argued that 'terrorism does not figure at all as an issue of concern' to Kenya's political leadership or its people (Nairobi cable 27.2.2007). Such complaints do not seem to have been as prominent in cables sent after 2008 suggesting that US perceptions of Kenyan cooperation have grown more positive in recent years.

Cables from Kampala, however, reveal a different picture. As in their public pronouncements, donor officials privately praised the Museveni regime for 'cooperating fully in the War on Terror' and being 'highly receptive to US training and presence' (Kampala cable 23.2.2007). Ugandan security officials are also depicted as being far more committed to fighting terrorism – a 2007 cable, for example, stressed how 'Ugandan officials view their role in Somalia as long-term' (Kampala cable 18.5.2007). Likewise, a 2009 cable which highlights several areas for improvement in Uganda's security structures never-theless makes clear that 'Uganda is responsive when terrorist threats are identified' (Kampala cable 11.3.2009).

Differing perceptions and their consequences

It is apparent from a number of sources, therefore, that donors have seen Uganda as substantially more reliable than Kenya in relation to the GWOT. Critically, this dispensation has had real consequences for these two African states. Between 2002 and 2006, for example, the US suspended a number of its military assistance programmes in Kenya

owing to a perceived lack of commitment in several security-related areas (Nairobi cable 17.6.2005) and, between 2005 and 2006, the US refused to disburse US$17 million of aid as a result of Nairobi's failure to sign an Article 98 Agreement (*Daily Nation* 2.6.2005; Whitaker 2008: 262). Clearly these (relatively small) reductions had little practical impact on the Kibaki administration's finances although they clearly damaged Kenya's international reputation – as Kibaki allies bemoaned to the US envoy in July 2005 (Nairobi cable 1.7.2005). It is also worth noting that the US has been far more inclined to support ad hoc Ugandan regional missions during the 2000s than they have Kenyan missions against Somali militants. Thus Washington reportedly provided considerable assistance to Ugandan forces in pursuing the LRA during the mid 2000s (Branch 2007: 197–9) and, in 2011, sent US military advisors to further support Ugandan efforts (*Reuters* 14.10.2011). Since 2009, however, the US has consistently turned down Kenyan requests for assistance against Somali militants in its proposed and actual military interventions in that country (Addis Ababa cable 2.2.2010; US official 2012 int.).

More significantly, donors' greater support for Uganda led to that country being more favoured in overall aid disbursements than Kenya after 9/11. Until 2006, for example, US aid to Uganda remained higher than that to Kenya while Kenya only overtook Uganda in terms of total donor aid in 2010 (OECD various years). Kenya's greater success in attracting aid in the later 2000s is perhaps further evidence of that country's gradual rehabilitation in the eyes of donors following its involvement in Somalia (see above). Moreover, the UK has consistently avoided directly supporting the Kibaki government with direct budgetary support owing to concerns over corruption, especially marked in the security sector (Clay 2012 int; ODI 2005: 26). By contrast, it has enthusiastically bolstered the Museveni regime with the modality since 1998 in spite of clear evidence of high-level corruption in the Ugandan security sector since the early 2000s (Tangri & Mwenda 2003: 540–9; 2006: 119–22).

The degree to which this disparity has significantly damaged the Kibaki government is, again, open to debate. That it has, nonetheless, fared far worse in its receipt of donor assistance than might be expected is particularly apparent when one considers that Kenya's population is substantially larger than Uganda's. In addition, the US clearly views Kenya as more central to fighting the GWOT than Uganda (DoS 2001: 226) and Washington's senior Africa diplomat has made clear that 'no country between Cairo and Capetown is more important [to the US]

than Kenya' (Nairobi cable 2.6.2009). In this context, greater donor support for Uganda than for Kenya is especially surprising.

The deleterious effects on Nairobi of these contrasting donor perceptions, however, can be observed more obliquely. The cancellation of George W. Bush's planned 2003 visit to Kenya on security grounds, for example (see above) was not only humiliating for the recently installed Kibaki administration but likely damaged the country's image in the eyes of US tourists and potential investors. One former US official has noted that the cancellation led to 'unfortunate policy messaging' from Washington, particularly since Bush had been due to open the new US mission in Nairobi as a symbol of US commitment to the ongoing US–Kenyan relationship (former senior US official 2012 int.). Kenyan commentators at the time also feared that the apparent withdrawal of US confidence in the Kenyan administration's competence would further deter the Bretton Woods institutions from resuming their suspended lending programmes to the country (*Daily Nation* 26.12.2002). The fact that Bush nevertheless travelled to neighbouring Uganda represented a further embarrassment for Kibaki – Uganda had been visited by Bush's predecessor, Bill Clinton, only five years earlier.

The 2003 travel advisory crisis (see above) which came about as a result of continued US/UK doubts over Kenya's perceived willingness to face up to security challenges was nevertheless far more directly damaging for the country. In 2004, for example, the Kenya Tourist Federation estimated that, as a result of the travel advisories, the country's tourism industry lost out on an estimated US$2 million per week for several months from Western visitors and it is clear that the Kenyan economy took a long time to recover from this unexpected shock (*Standard* 16.5.2004; Barkan 2004: 97). The extent to which Kenya was singled-out by donors for its apparent failings in this regard is clear from the fact that this episode represented the first time that London had specifically instructed an airline (*British Airways*) not to fly to a particular country (Clay 2012 int.).

Finally, the consequences of differing donor perceptions can also be discerned in the more general double standards applied by Western governments to Uganda and Kenya. High-level corruption, particularly in the security sector, has been an on-going area of concern for major donors in both countries but has elicited very different responses. Thus while Kenyan ministers suspected of involvement in corruption have been subjected to spirited public criticism by Western envoys and increasingly strict international travel and visa restrictions, their counterparts in Uganda have not (*BBC News Online* 29.07.2005;

Reuters 1.11.2009). More generally, US and UK officials have been far more comfortable publicly criticising Nairobi than they have Kampala (senior US official 2012 int.).

Thus, between 2008 and 2011 several senior Ugandan ministers were formally implicated in a number of high-profile corruption scandals with no formal response from Washington (*Daily Monitor* 27.10.2010; Tangri & Mwenda 2010: 39–40; *Daily Monitor* 18.12.2011). In 2009, however, the State Department did not hesitate to ban fifteen senior Kenyan officials from entering the US in order to demonstrate displeasure at Nairobi's stalled 'fight against corruption' (Dagne 2009: 1; *Reuters* 26.10.2009, 1.11.2009). Most commentators agree that one of the primary reasons that Uganda has avoided substantial donor censure for these and other governance transgressions, in contrast to Kenya, relates to its reputation as a central donor ally in the fight against terrorism (Heilman & Ndumbaro 2004: 148–55; Tangri & Mwenda 2008: 91; DFID official 2009 int.; Fisher 2012: 408–9).

Before concluding this section it is valuable to note that donor governments are not monolithic and that donor perceptions are liable to change and evolve over time. In the case of Kenya, for example, it is important to acknowledge that donor perceptions have not been wholly constant or static since 9/11. Between *c.* 2008 and 2011, for example, US officials appear to have spoken more favourably about Nairobi's approach to security cooperation in embassy cables than previously, perhaps owing to the greater importance of Somalia in donor regional security policy or the growing prominence of other issues in donor–Kenyan dialogue following the 2007 election crisis (former White House official 2012 int.). It is also clear that throughout the 2000s US security and UK diplomatic personnel have held more critical perspectives on Kenya than their diplomatic and international development counterparts respectively. Thus the 2003 Bush visit to Nairobi was cancelled at the insistence of the US Secret Service to the protestations of embassy officials since the former held more negative assessments of Kenya's security capabilities (former senior US official 1.2012 int.).

Likewise, State Department officials serving in the mid-2000s have described Kenyan security cooperation as 'good' (former senior US official 2.2012 int.) and 'reliable' (senior US official 2012 int.) while their security counterparts have instead spoken of it as 'unreliable', 'reticent' and 'frustrating' (former White House official 2012 int.). In the UK, officials at the Department for International Development (DFID) have sometimes pushed back against the more negative assessments of Kenya being promulgated by their Foreign and

Commonwealth Office (FCO) colleagues in discussions on aid modalities and disbursements in order to protect their development portfolio in the country (Wrong 2009: 205–12). Exploring the dynamics and consequences of these intra-donor divisions is not possible within this study. It is nevertheless an important issue to acknowledge and represents an area for future research.

THE ROLE OF 'IMAGE MANAGEMENT'

It is clear, therefore, that donors have 'selected' different aspects of the two regimes' behaviour in building perceptions of Ugandan and Kenyan reliability. This has had advantageous consequences for Kampala but not for Nairobi in spite of the relative similarities in their levels of cooperation. The progression of this knowledge construction process, however, could quite easily have resulted in different 'images' of Ugandan and Kenyan reliability being formed in donor minds, thus demonstrating the artificiality and vulnerability of such narratives. Instead, for example, of seeing Kampala's two-decade long campaign to defeat the LRA as evidence of a government firmly committed to tackling terrorism, donors may alternatively have taken this as evidence of a regime unable, or unwilling, to stifle a small-scale, disorganised insurrection enjoying limited local support.

Furthermore, rather than viewing Kenya's failure to pass anti-terror legislation as an example of Nairobi's lack of commitment to fighting terrorism, donors might instead have seen it as representing a triumph of democratisation. Indeed, as Whitaker notes, the US 'supported and provided training for the development' of the same parliamentary committee system which so successfully resisted executive pressure to pass the 2003 and 2006 bills (Whitaker 2008: 260, note 17)! Why, then, was this 'victory' for Kenyan civil society and parliament over State House not seen by donors, at least in part, as a cheering example of a young democracy at work?

Understanding why such alternative 'images' have not been incorporated into donor perceptions, and why those casting Uganda as 'reliable' and Kenya as 'unreliable' have instead endured, is therefore a salient question. This article contends that a major explanation can be found in analysing the actions of the regimes themselves. For while senior donor officials may have limited personal contact with African officials themselves the sources of 'knowledge' which they consult in forming perceptions of their governments are unlikely to be as isolated from African influence. Media reports, NGO publications, diplomatic

dispatches and encounters with public relations firms all have the potential to be shaped or manipulated by savvy regime officials keen on presenting their government's actions in a particular way. These kind of 'image management' strategies can equally backfire if they are not implemented skilfully and competently.

As will be argued, Uganda has undertaken an extensive and well-executed public and private diplomacy campaign since 2001 to advance its image among donors as a major ally in the GWOT while Kenya has generally not. It has been Uganda's successful use of 'image management' (here conceptualised as a government's use of private and public diplomacy to influence another government's view of it), therefore, which has ensured that donors perceive it as more reliable than Kenya. The remainder of the article will analyse how Kampala and Nairobi have, or have not, attempted to manage their international image in relation to the GWOT.

Ugandan strategies

The Museveni government has employed a number of strategies in order to convince donors of its reliability in the GWOT. Shortly after the 9/11 attacks, for example, the Ugandan leader became the first African ruler to visit the World Trade Centre site, offering $150,000 to the victims of the tragedy (former US diplomat 2009 int.). Kampala has also augmented and developed its existing reputation among donors as a regional opponent of Islamic terrorism in its post-9/11 policies towards Eritrea and Somalia, a reputation earned during the 1990s in its proxy war against Khartoum.[5] The most significant and enduring strategy, however, has been the regime's use of domestic rebellions, primarily those of the LRA and ADF, to successfully persuade donors that Uganda is both a central player in the War and, most importantly, a committed enemy of terrorism.

In the aftermath of 9/11, this involved an international effort on the regime's part to present the rebel groups not simply as 'rebels' or 'criminals' but as 'terrorists' (Finnström 2003: 127–8; Atkinson 2010 int.). Thus prior to 9/11, Museveni would usually speak of the LRA as 'bandits' or 'ordinary lawbreakers' in contexts where donors were present (Doom & Vlassenroot 1999: 20; *Channel 4* (UK) 1997; Dolan 2009: 97; Atkinson 2010: 287–9). In a 2002 interview with *Canada TV*, however, Museveni described the victims of LRA atrocities as 'victims of Sudan-supported terrorism' while in a 2005 interview with a UN news agency he characterised LRA activity as 'terrorism' (*CTV* 30.8.2002;

IRIN 9.6.2005). The same rhetoric was used by the Ugandan leader in a 2005 speech to the US Council on Foreign Relations as it was in a 2003 open letter to media houses where the LRA were referred to as 'terrorists' on eleven occasions (Council on Foreign Relations 2005; *Daily Monitor* 14.11.2003).

In developing this narrative, the Ugandan government has been keen to stress the linkages between these groups and the GWOT more generally. Thus Museveni has often spoken in interviews with Western journalists of 'Uganda's war on terror' while his defence minister told US media organisations in a 2004 trip to Washington that 'Uganda has been a front-line state in the War on Terror for more than a decade' – both references to the LRA rebellion (*CTV* 30.8.2002; *PR Newswire* 30.9.2004). Similarly, Rosa Whitaker, CEO of a Washington lobbying firm retained by Kampala between 2003 and 2010, noted that 'Uganda is fighting its own war against terrorism' in a 2003 letter to senior US official Walter Kansteiner. This letter also set out a 'modest request' from Uganda for several million dollars worth of counter-terrorism equipment, thereby directly linking the perceived terrorism threat to the issue of donor military assistance (Whitaker Group 2003: 17–23).

Kampala has also attempted to connect the rebel groups directly to *al-Qaeda*. Thus in a 2003 speech to policy-makers at the Council on Foreign Relations, Museveni argued that both organisations 'have been trained by al-Qaeda and operated out of Sudan ... since the 1990s' (Council on Foreign Relations 2003). He also noted in 2002 that 'bin Laden ... was the one who started arming ... the ADF ... our fight is directly linked to world terrorism' while, only weeks after 9/11 itself, told journalists that *al-Qaeda*, via the ADF, had plotted to assassinate him in 1999 and that 'bin Laden took [the ADF] for terrorism training in Afghanistan ...' (*CTV* 30.8.2002; *New Vision* 17.12.2001). Furthermore, following Kampala's lead in her 2003 letter to Kansteiner, Whitaker asserted, rather equivocally, that 'I am told that the LRA ... has connections to Al-Queda [*sic*]'.

The extent to which these contentions have any basis in reality is open to question: certainly there is evidence that ADF fighters received training from bin Laden's terror network between 1996 and 1997 (Haynes 2006: 503). The same cannot be said, however, for the LRA – an organisation which, however it is to be understood, has no credible association with Islamic *jihadism*. Indeed, one leading expert on northern Uganda has argued that the only link between the two groups that he has ever been aware of is a seminary in Juba where both groups

were hosted, albeit not simultaneously, by the Sudanese government in the 1990s (Atkinson 2010 int.). It is clear, therefore, that the Ugandan regime's attempts to connect the LRA to *al-Qaeda* have been a somewhat disingenuous part of an international image management exercise.

Since the mid-2000s, Kampala has acted to ensure that its narrative on the LRA/ADF 'terror threat' remains prominent in donor–Ugandan dialogue. Ugandan policy-makers have therefore 'pushed' the subject to the forefront of bilateral discussions with donors at every opportunity. One former diplomat notes, for example, that during a mid-2000s meeting with Museveni, the president constantly moved the conversation away from issues of democratic reform to that of the LRA threat, clearly steering the discussion away from an area of disagreement to one of supposed mutual concern (former Western diplomat 2009 int.). Likewise, a UK official has recorded how, at Kampala's insistence, the LRA became 'really the only subject' of importance debated at UK–Ugandan meetings in the later 2000s (FCO official 2009 int.). This technique has also been employed in encounters with Western journalists. During a 2003 interview with *Associated Press*, for example, Museveni continually moved the line of questioning away from his country's controversial involvement in Congo and instead stressed the link between 'fighters from the al-Qaida network' and 'rebel groups in northern Uganda'; ultimately it was this narrative which came to dominate the printed article and its headline (*Associated Press* 13.6.2003).

The Ugandan regime also successfully lobbied for the inclusion of the LRA and ADF on the State Department's Terrorist Exclusion List in 2001 and the Ugandan vice president made clear to US officials in December that year that 'We are very happy that these two have now been listed ... Uganda has been affected by terrorism for a very long time but we have fought against [it]' (*IRIN* 12.12.2001; Perrot 2010: 96). Regime officials have also continuously highlighted the rebel groups' inclusion on the list in speeches to US think tanks (Woodrow Wilson Center 2002; Council on Foreign Relations 2003). In addition, its security services have frequently made clear to Western journalists that both organisations continue to pose a real threat to Uganda in order to maintain the salience of this important narrative. Thus in 2005, following the ADF's removal from the List, Ugandan army spokesmen emphasised that the ADF 'was never annihilated and ... [was] now re-grouping' and similar rhetoric has been employed by military officials in 2010 (Sheikh 2005; Tripp 2010: 156–7; *Reuters* 28.5.2010). Most spectacularly, in 2008, Uganda's internal affairs minister announced,

without providing evidence, that the ADF ('a terrorist group linked to al-Qaeda') had planned to launch an attack during the 2007 Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting held in Kampala but had been 'neutralised' by the security forces before they could do so (*Daily Telegraph* 13.1.2008, 14.1.2008).

That donors have been strongly influenced by these image management strategies is clear. Not only have US politicians frequently referred to 'home-grown terrorism' in their comments on Uganda, so also have annual State Department *Country Reports on Terrorism* largely focused on the LRA/ADF insurgencies when profiling Uganda (DoS 2004: 11; DoS 2005: 32; Towns 2005; DoS 2006b: 57; DoS 2007; DoS 2008: 26; DoS 2009: 30; DoS 2010a: 34). What is significant, however, is the emphasis placed herein on Kampala's 'successful operations against' these groups. Indeed, at the heart of Uganda's GWOT narrative, and what differentiates it so substantially from Kenya's, is the degree to which it has described the fight against domestic terrorism as a 'war' which it is engaged in and is winning.

Thus throughout the 2000s, the Museveni government has repeatedly suggested to donors that its campaign against the LRA has come close to securing the rebel group's military defeat. In the early 2000s, Museveni gave a senior US policy-maker the impression that the rebel group were 'on the ropes' and that very little was required to 'finish them off' (former senior US official 3.2009 int.). This was also how he depicted the situation to the official's UK counterpart who recalls being told frequently by Museveni that the conflict 'would be over by the rainy season' (former senior FCO official 1.2009 int.). Indeed, on several occasions in the later 2000s, Museveni claimed in front of Western audiences that 'we have actually ended that conflict' and that 'we have defeated these terrorists...' (Council on Foreign Relations 2005; *Al-Jazeera English* 23.11.2007). These assertions have, again, all been disingenuous. The point, however, is that most donors have rarely questioned Museveni's commitment to dealing with the insurgency and this has had a major effect on how they view his regime's role in the GWOT.

Kenyan strategies

By contrast, the Kenyan government has made minimal effort to manage how its donors perceive it in relation to the GWOT. Kenyan ministers have been far more reluctant to speak to Western journalists or at Western think tanks in general and those who have have generally

avoided the issue of terrorism (*BBC* 26·7·2005; Brookings Institution 2009). During his 2003 US visit, for example, Kibaki was criticised by Kenyan journalists for being 'unwilling to engage with the [inter-national] media except in the most scripted and perfunctory manner' and the Kenyan leader has, at other times, demonstrated a similar lack of interest in establishing a dialogue with this community (*East African* 13.10.2003; *Daily Nation* 12.10.2003; Biden 2010). Successive security ministers have also refused to make themselves available for interview on trips to Washington (*Standard* 16.5.2004; *Daily Nation* 28.4.2007).

In private, the Kenyan government, unlike the Ugandan, has largely refrained from trying to promote any narrative on its reliability in the GWOT to donors and has largely engaged simply in defensive acts of 'fire-fighting'. Between 2003 and 2006, for example, Nairobi retained only one US lobbying firm (Uganda hired three during the same period): Baraka Services.[6] This firm's remit was extremely limited and non-strategic in its approach. Thus rather than attempting to more broadly convince US policy-makers of Kenya's importance in the GWOT (as Scribe Strategies, another lobbying firm, had been hired by Kampala to do in 2005), the firm was asked simply to 'negotiate with [US] officials [on] how to fulfil the conditions and lift the [2003 travel] ban' (Baraka Services 2004: 3; Scribe Strategies 2005: 3). Prestholdt draws attention to another episode of defensive Kenyan diplomacy from 2007 where a suspected terrorist, an imam, was arrested following a violent interven-tion by police in response to US criticisms of Nairobi's slow approach to counter-terrorism (Prestholdt 2011: 14–15). Though welcomed in Washington, this action again showed Kenya to be reactive rather than proactive in its fight against Islamic terrorism.

Moreover, Kenyan officials have not attempted to use meetings with donor officials as opportunities to manage how their government is seen. One former diplomat, for example, has described the Kenyan leader's demeanour in such encounters as 'comatose', noting that Kibaki would often 'fall asleep' and leave his minor aides to deal with the discussion (former senior FCO official 2.2009 int.). Consequently there has been no central 'presiding genius' of Kenyan image management policy and junior ministers, some of whom have been seen by donors as 'more capable than others' (former senior US official 2.2012 int.), have always been on the defensive when dealing with Western officials (former UK official int March 2012; Nairobi cable 19.4.2007). In 2007, for example, Kenya's internal security minister was reportedly 'asked' by Washington to travel to the US to 'inform US officials on

steps . . . [Kenya] . . . had taken to combat insecurity' (*Daily Nation* 24.4.2007). According to one former donor official, 'a few of the better ministers got on with it [engaging with the donor community], but not always in a very coordinated manner . . . Kibaki was all over the place.' (former UK official 2012 int.).

Nairobi's inadvertent depiction of itself as an administration needing to be 'led to water' on counter-terror issues has been compounded by other factors. Firstly, in his rare moments of engaging with donor officials, Kibaki has consistently presented his government as submissive, uninformed and a 'follower' in the GWOT. In 2006, for example, he told the US ambassador that 'his government knew . . . little about real political conditions in Somalia' and US officials have subsequently expressed concern over Kenya's limited understanding of Somali political dynamics (Nairobi cable 5.6.2006; US official 2012 int.). Museveni, by contrast, has convincingly presented himself as a leading expert on the country's problems in meetings with donor counterparts – 'briefing' the UK premier on the topic in 2008 (State House, Entebbe 2008) – and this has led to his being complemented by the US president for his 'good advice and . . . judgment when it comes to . . . Somalia (Bush 2007).

Furthermore, in 2010, Kibaki meekly appealed to the visiting US vice president to 'provide leadership to forge a concerted international effort to stabilise Somalia' (Biden 2010). The deferential nature of this latter request did little to reassure donors of Nairobi's reliability as a possible major player in securing the country against terrorists and only served to confirm prejudices developed in Washington after Kenyan troops pledged to AMISOM in 2007, unlike those from Uganda, 'failed to materialise' (former senior US official 1.2009 int.). Interestingly, Museveni himself appears to have encouraged US officials to draw such unfavourable comparisons in a 2010 conversation with the US envoy to the African Union (*Daily Monitor* 10.9.2011).

Secondly, in its dealings with donor governments, Nairobi has demonstrated a surprising degree of incompetence which has also had an effect on donor perceptions. Thus, during the crisis over travel advisories, Kibaki failed to fill top diplomatic posts in both London and Washington, leaving no senior official in either city to argue Nairobi's case (*Standard* 13.7.2003). According to one European diplomat, this led to donors becoming 'rapidly disillusioned' with the Kibaki administration and concerned about its diplomatic capabilities (former FCO official 2009 int.). In addition, the Kenyan delegation travelling to Washington in 2003 lobbied the wrong section of the State Department

in their failed attempt to secure the lifting of the travel ban (*Daily Nation* 12.10.2003).

Donor officials have recalled multiple occasions when Kibaki and his team have missed significant appointments with key Western personnel including ambassadors and ministers (Clay 2012 int.; Nairobi cable 25.6.2006). Nairobi has compounded its reputation for unreliability engendered through these actions by frequently breaking pledges made to donors concerning specific counter-terrorism commitments. In 2005, for example, Kenya's foreign minister assured Washington that there was no doubt a second anti-terror bill would pass (it did not) while Kibaki told the US envoy that he would press for movement on the development of the stalled JATT but subsequently failed to do so (Nairobi cable 10.6.2005; 23.12.2005). Nairobi's confused approach to counter-terrorism was again demonstrated in early 2008 when the Kenyan delegation to IGAD and the Kenyan foreign ministry appeared to present conflicting information on the country's willingness to supply troops to the AU mission in Somalia (Nairobi cable 2.12.2008). Such mistakes have rarely been made by Uganda in its relations with donors. Indeed, Kampala's US ambassador between 1996 and 2006, Edith Ssempala, has been widely praised by donors for 'knowing her way around' the bureaucracies of Washington (former senior US official 4.2009 int.).

Nairobi's responses to US criticisms and counter-terrorism policies have also often come across as petulant or even antagonistic and this has led to the further strengthening of existing donor perceptions on the Kibaki government's unreliability. In 2003, for example, the Kenyan foreign minister put forward two veiled criticisms of donors at the UN in relation to the travel ban and the War on Iraq and repeated the former in a number of media interviews in London to the chagrin of UK officials (*Daily Nation* 3.10.2003; former UK official 2012 int.). In the same year, one minister affirmed that Nairobi would not necessarily 'give in to [donor] demands' on tackling terrorism while another attacked the travel bans as a 'gross injustice' (*Daily Nation* 23.3.2003; *Standard* 13.7.2003).

A former UK envoy notes that he was 'sent to Coventry' by Kenya's Justice Minister, a man responsible for delivering the passage of key anti-terror legislation, for six months following the travel advisory crisis (Clay 2012 int.). Kenyan officials have also bemoaned in private their apparent 'snubbing' by donors in relation to Somalia (Whitaker 2008: 263) and security cooperation more generally (Nairobi cable 1.7.2005). By comparison, not only have Ugandan officials been far more

constructive in the face of donor security criticisms, they have even readily identified in meetings with senior US diplomats 'areas where [they] need to improve [their] counter-terrorism efforts' thereby revealing themselves to be conscientious and self-critical in their approach to fighting terrorism (Kampala cable 11.3.2009). Furthermore, while Ugandan officials have publicly reprimanded donors on security matters these comments have invariably been couched in constructive language and supported by simultaneous offers of assistance to donor personnel (*Associated Press* 13.10.2004; former senior US official 1.2009 int.).

The implications of Kenya's unexpected 2011 incursion into Somalia for its international image management are yet to become clear. Certainly the initial public reaction of both Washington and Paris, whose governments Nairobi claimed had assisted the mission, was one of surprise and trepidation rather than commendation (*New York Times* 26.10.2011). As noted, donors had not in fact been informed of the mission by Nairobi in advance and US officials have privately claimed that this unpredictable Kenyan behaviour led to a 'difficult period' in US–Kenyan relations and a 'robust discussion' in the US capital on how best to respond (US official 2012 int.). Since the intervention, however, the Kenyan government appears to have become more proactive in shaping how its involvement in Somalia is understood internationally. Thus, since September 2011, Chlopak, Leonard, Schlechter and Associates – Nairobi's public relations firm in Washington since 2008 – has begun to engage with major international media houses and policy institutes over their portrayal of the issue (Chlopak, Leonard, Schlechter and Associates 2011: 16–22). Whether or not this is the start of a new chapter in Kenya's approach to international diplomacy, however, remains to be seen – US officials continue, as of mid-2012, to express 'frustration' at the mixed messages reportedly coming out of the Kenyan military on the issue (US official 2012 int.).

Where the Ugandan government, therefore, has, since 9/11, devoted considerable resources to promoting itself as a cooperative ally in the fight against terrorism, Nairobi has seemingly made little effort to do the same. Indeed, through a combination of incompetence, disinterest and lack of initiative it has failed to convince donors to see it in the same light, in spite of its substantial cooperation in the GWOT. Uganda's successful use of 'image management' strategies and Kenya's unwilling-ness or inability to employ similar tactics can therefore be seen as central explanations for why donors have held such contrasting views of these two governments and their reliability in the GWOT.

Domestic politics and international image management:
the political economy of diplomacy in Uganda and Kenya

That Kenya has failed to portray itself effectively to donors as a reliable partner in the GWOT is potentially a measure more of a *successful* image management policy than an unsuccessful one. The Kenyan government has long been nervous of the potential risk to its domestic reputation, particularly among the Kenyan Muslim community, run by appearing overly close to the US and other donors on counter-terrorism. Kenyan Muslims have increasingly interpreted US regional security policy as hostile to their community (Lind & Howell 2010: 346–7) and this has clearly made senior officials more wary of being publicly associated with the GWOT agenda. Unlike in Uganda, for example, alienating such a group could potentially imperil an administration's continued tenure given the competitive nature of Kenyan politics and the necessity of building delicate coalitions of ethnic and regional constituencies to maintain power. Muslims in Kenya's Coast Province, for example, were seen as key 'swing voters' by commentators in the lead-up to the 2007 elections (*Daily Nation* 13.09.2007).

Donors have undoubtedly been conscious of the sensitivity of this issue for their Kenyan counterparts. One former UK official notes that Kenyan political engagement over security has been 'ostrich-like' owing to the latter's fear of 'alienating Muslims' (former UK official 2012 int.). The US envoy in Nairobi privately suggested in 2005 that approaching Kenya's foreign minister directly over anti-terror legislation was not advisable since '[if such an approach were leaked] . . . it would be spun . . . as just another example of U.S. "arm-twisting"' and that this would be problematic for on-going US–Kenyan security cooperation (Nairobi cable 1.7.2005). US aid interventions in Kenya have also increasingly focused on winning the 'hearts and minds' of Kenyan Muslims (Bradbury & Kleinman 2010) and developing 'community-based' responses to tackling extremism (senior US official 2012 int.).

It might plausibly be argued, therefore, that the Kibaki government has attempted to publicly present itself as a reluctant donor partner in the GWOT for domestic political reasons and that donors appreciate and understand this. Nairobi has nevertheless, under this proposed dispensation, cooperated privately with donors on counter-terrorism in order to satisfy its Western partners. Though intriguing, such an interpretation is not ultimately persuasive for two reasons. First, as outlined above, it is clear that donors have perceived Kenya as unreliable in private, as well as in public, throughout the 2000s in relation to

counter-terrorism cooperation. This suggests that any active policy of Nairobi's to appear to be privately cooperating with donors while maintaining a public appearance of distance failed to convince, again raising questions about the administration's image management techniques. Second, the Kibaki government has been far less reluctant to openly target Muslims in its domestic security policies during the 2000s than this interpretation permits. These policies, as one US official records, have often been 'heavy handed' (senior US official 2012 int.) and have, as Prestholdt records, gradually fostered a 'deep sense of alienation' among Kenyan Muslims who have consistently objected to being scapegoated in proposed legislation and by police and security forces on the ground (Prestholdt 2011: 3–6; *Financial Times* 22.12.2007).

The significance of political economy to this study, however, is nevertheless worthy of further comment since it is a valuable tool for explaining why Kampala and Nairobi have adopted such different approaches to image management. It is clear, for example, that the Kibaki government has felt more constrained than the Museveni regime in fully aligning itself with international GWOT issues for fear of losing support from domestic Muslim constituencies. As noted, Kenya is a far more democratic state than Uganda and no single party has such an institutionalised grip on national power in the former as the NRM does in the latter. Consequently, Kenyan politicians have been reluctant to alienate large electoral communities such as the Muslim population in Coast Province for fear of endangering their hold on power. Furthermore, the Muslim community is far more organised in Kenya with regard to leadership and national presence than in Uganda (Haynes 2006: 497–504).

Moreover, the Kenyan and Ugandan governments have very different sociologies and this has impacted upon their capacity to promote and augment international security narratives. The Museveni regime grew out of a highly disciplined, militaristic and organised guerrilla movement and has long maintained a substantial degree of internal discipline, singularity of purpose and, above all, centralisation and personalisation of authority around Museveni himself (Ngoga 1998: 96–102). This has therefore led to the fostering of a strongly unified Ugandan foreign policy-making machine and this has enabled Kampala to 'speak with one voice' in its relations with donors. The Kibaki regime, by contrast, has always been a shifting, delicate coalition of 'non-programmatic' parties who draw their support from different ethnic or regional constituencies (Mueller 2008: 200). Internal government

discipline or cohesion has been difficult to maintain within this dispensation and policy-making has therefore involved far more compromise than in neighbouring Uganda, as many donor officials have noted (former UK official 2012 int.; Nairobi cable 20·4·2006). Designing and maintaining a unified and disciplined approach to dealing with donors, therefore, has been far more complex, from an institutional perspective, in Kenya than in Uganda, particularly since the inauguration of the 'Government of National Unity' in 2008.

Finally, Uganda, unlike Kenya, is dependent on international aid and the Museveni regime has been heavily reliant on donor support (particularly from the US and UK) to fund the national budget since long before 9/11 (OECD various years). Kampala has therefore had far greater incentive to be seen positively in Washington and London than Nairobi and this may also explain why it has been so much more enthusiastic in using image management strategies; necessity, as the saying goes, 'is the mother of invention'.

CONCLUSION

This study has argued that, since 9/11, donor countries have seen the Ugandan government as a more consistently reliable ally in the GWOT than the Kenyan government. In exploring the reasons for these differing donor perceptions, the importance of considering African 'image management' strategies – how African governments present themselves and their actions to donor officials – has been argued for. It is clear, for example, that Kampala has been far more interested in managing how its donors see it than Nairobi and has also been more adept at doing so. Through the savvy use of lobbyists, speeches and encounters with donors, the Ugandan government has successfully cast itself as a loyal donor ally in the GWOT. The Kenyan government, however, has largely eschewed such strategies and been reluctant to try to influence donor perceptions. This has meant that donors have been more inclined to focus on obvious areas of Kenyan 'non-cooperation' when developing views of the Kibaki government. In viewing these regimes differently, however, donors have come to treat them differently. Thus while Uganda has often escaped censure for domestic transgressions owing to its perceived reliability in the GWOT, Kenya has not.

This raises crucial questions on the nature of African agency in the international system and the extent to which seemingly weak states can improve their standing in donor capitals.[7] This relationship between

African security dynamics, regional diplomacy and international agency remains a crucial area for further study, particularly given the increasingly close relationship developing between the security institutions of donors and their African aid partners.

NOTES

1. A review of scholarly literature on 'compliance' can be found in Simmons (1998: 729–57).

2. Kenya has not been significantly aid-dependent since the late 1990s.

3. Prior to 2004 this publication was known as *Patterns of Global Terrorism*.

4. This article assumes these leaked documents to be genuine although their formal provenance has been neither confirmed nor denied by the US government to date. Cables are referenced according to which US embassy they originated from.

5. See Fisher (2012) for a more developed analysis of this strategy.

6. Information on lobbyists hired by both governments during this period is available at www.fara.gov.

7. The relationship between African agency and 'image management' is explored in depth in Fisher (forthcoming 2013).

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Unnamed interviews

The identities of the following are disguised to maintain the confidentiality of subjects:

Former Ugandan Cabinet minister, served at various levels including at Cabinet rank 2004–2005, Kampala, 12.2.2010.

Former UK official, involved in UK–Africa diplomacy during the early 2000s, London, 14.3.2012.

Former White House official, served in George W. Bush White House during the 2000s, Washington DC, 19.11.2009 and 11.5.2012.

Western diplomat, senior official based in Kampala in the later 2000s, Kampala, 17.2.2010.

US official, involved in Africa policy-making in Obama administration, Washington DC, 10.5.2012.

Former senior US official 1, involved in US Africa policy-making throughout George W Bush administration, Washington DC, 8.5.2012.

Former senior US official 2, involved in US–Kenyan relations during the 2000s, Washington DC, 8.5.2012.

Senior US official, involved in Africa policy-making in George W Bush and Obama administrations, Washington DC, 9.5.2012.

DFID official, senior civil servant serving in DFID during the 2000s, London, 30.3.2009.

Former US diplomat, former US diplomat serving in Uganda in the 2000s, by telephone, 12.11.2009.

Former Western official, diplomat (nationality not disclosed) serving in Uganda in the 2000s, location not disclosed, by telephone, 17.11.2009.

FCO official, civil servant working in the FCO in the later 2000s, London, 19.3.2009.

Former senior US official 3, involved in US Africa policy-making during the early 2000s, Washington DC, 10.11.2009.

Former senior FCO official 1, high-level official involved in UK–Africa policy-making during the 2000s, London, 14.10.2009.

Former senior FCO official 2, senior civil servant in the FCO during the 2000s, London, 5.5.2009.

Former FCO official, involved in UK–Africa diplomacy during the early 2000s, London, 20.7.2009.

Former senior US official 4, high-level official involved in UK–Africa policy in the 1990s, Washington DC, 11.11.2009.

Named interviews

Ronald Atkinson, Associate Professor, University of South Carolina and northern Uganda/LRA expert, Kampala, 11.2.2010.

Sir Edward Clay, UK High Commissioner to Kenya (2001–2005) and Uganda (1993–1997), London, 14.3.2012.