

## Essentiality of critical thinking to national security

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### Abstract

In *Leviathan*, Thomas Hobbes observes that human beings are naturally self-gratifying and that for any action they undertake, it's solely on the basis of self-interest and self-serving. That humans are captives of their own desires, appetites and passions is beyond doubt; even those who donate to charity they do so because they derive pleasure and gratification. It is this glaring reality that led Thomas Hobbes to postulate what life would be like without governments, a condition he calls the state of nature. Given the nature of the human beings, he concludes that such a state would lead to "war of all against all" (*bellum omnium contra omnes*). As such, incessant fear, and danger of violent death occasioned by the prevailing state of insecurity in the state of nature cannot guarantee existence of society. In such a state of perpetual insecurity, he adds, life of human beings is solitary, poor, nasty, brutish, and short. In order to escape from the fangs of insecurity prevalent in the state of nature, humans constitute states, and form governments as sanctuaries for security, peace and mutual coexistence. As such, the principle concern of a nation is to guarantee security in all its forms to the citizens. For this to be actualized, it is often assumed that the custodians and overseers of the instruments of national security are the very best breed of society in terms of thinking, projecting, formulating policies, implementing, monitoring and evaluating programs intended to guarantee security and secure the nation; they are expected to be shrewd, cerebral and able to think critically. The validity of this assumption is anybody's guess. This article examines the concept of national security and the instrumentality of critical thinking in enhancing capacity in the execution of obligations of national security.

**Keywords:** security, nation, state, national security, critical thinking

### 1. Introduction: Why Governments are constituted

In his masterpiece - *Leviathan*, Thomas Hobbes (1588–1679) sets out his doctrine of the foundation of states and legitimate governments. From this work, the concept of social contract theory was originated and today it permeates all governments and their legitimate institutions. *Leviathan* was written during the English Civil War; and as such, much of the book is occupied with demonstrating the necessity of a strong central authority to avoid the evil of discord and civil war.

Beginning from a mechanistic understanding of human beings and the desires, appetites and passions that characterize human nature, Hobbes postulates what life would be like without governments, a condition which he calls the state of nature. In such a state, he posits, each person would have a right, or license, to everything in the world. This, he asserts, would lead to a "war of all against all" (*bellum omnium contra omnes*). The Hobbesian natural state of mankind is a depiction of a jungle-like life without a political community; a state where each one is for himself without any binding law to impede humans from harming others and perpetuating their selfish desires and passions – It's a state of want where everybody is for himself.

In such condition, there is no place for industry; because the fruit thereof is uncertain; and consequently no culture of the earth; no commodious building; no instruments of moving, and removing, such things as require much force; no knowledge of the face of the earth; no account of time; no society; and which is worst of all, there is continual fear, and danger of violent death; and the life of man in such a state is solitary, poor, nasty, brutish, and short. In a nutshell,

the society is in perpetual state of uncertainty and insecurity. (*Leviathan* XIII "Chapter XIII).

In Hobbesian natural state, people fear death, and lack both the things necessary for decent living; even the hope of being able to toil to obtain them is frustrated and diminished due to lack of guaranteed security. So in order to avoid the dangers prevalent in the state of nature, people accede to a social contract, coming together for a common good and establishing an authority (civil society) as a cushion against such dangers. According to Hobbes theory, society is a population beneath a sovereign authority, to whom all individuals cede some rights for the sake of protection. (Kahn & Kitcher 1984). According to Hobbes, the sovereign has the authority to control civil, military, judicial, and ecclesiastical powers. He is the symbol of peace, security and unity within the society. (*Leviathan* XIII "Chapter XIII, Lennox 2013).

According to Hobbes, there are three natural causes of disagreement among people which, if left untamed can cause unprecedented state of anarchy and insecurity, namely: one, competition for limited supplies of material possessions; two, distrust of one another, and; three, glory insofar as people remain hostile to preserve their powerful reputation.

As a consequence of the natural causes of quarrel among humans, Hobbes concluded that the natural condition of humans is a state of perpetual war of all against all, and in such a condition there is no civility, and everyone lives in constant fear of death.

To cushion herself from the eminent dangers inherent in the state of nature, he postulates that humans have three

motivations for ending this state of war by securing themselves under legitimate governments – a conscious realization of the need to move away from the state of nature into a civil society; the motivations include: first, the fear of death; second, the desire to have an adequate living and; third, the hope to attain this through one's labour. To this end, it's evident that states or governments are embodiments of security for the vulnerable human being.

In the same breath, some of the theories of international relations and security studies allude to the similar role played by states and governments all over the world. The realist theory of International Relations, for example, asserts that State power is the key, valuable and the most vital to nation's interests. (Waltz, (2008). This is so because it is only through power that States can defend themselves, whirl through transnational storms, secure their place in the international arena, and hope to survive. To realists, power is understood in a variety of ways: military prowess, economic potency, diplomatic maneuvers and ultimately the distribution of coercive material capacity as the determinant of politics in the international arena.

This view of the world and state formation rests on four assumptions: First, the principal goal of every State is its survival- capability to guard itself from external threats, invasion and occupation are the most pressing threats that any State faces. Accordingly, the anarchic nature of the international system compels each States to constantly ensure that they have sufficient power to defend themselves and advance their material interests necessary for their survival; secondly, States are rational actors; given the goal of survival, States will always act as best as they can in order to maximize their likelihood of continuing to exist; thirdly, all States possess some military capacity, and no State knows what its neighbours' precisely intend; this is premised on the knowledge that the world is dangerous and uncertain, and discreet in terms of military capacity is weapon in itself for state survival; and fourth, it's the States with most economic clout and, especially, military might that are most decisive and effectively functional in the international domains. (Mearsheimer 1994). In this regard, it's clear that international relations is essentially a story of contest between powers and survival for the fittest. Hegemony, therefore is *prima facie* to all nations. Though relevant and still powerful in the contemporary period, this view was more prevalent and unequivocally uncontestable during the pre-cold war period where actors on the international scene were predominantly states. (ibid).

**2. The Concept of Security**

We can now understand why humans constitute states, form governments and strive to have the best amidst them to drive the wheel of governance. It is also clear, that basic to the formation of governments is the need for the people to secure themselves from the dangers that prompted them to frantically exit the state of nature and cede their rights to self-protection. States or governments are institutions for guaranteeing security and sanctity of life to those who are part to the established commonwealth through a deliberate social contract. Security therefore, is a *conditio-sine-qua-non* to state establishment

As a term however, security is an elusive and often a controversial concept, and there is still no broad consensus about its meaning. Depending on peoples' ideas, culture and perceptions of reality, the term security gets a different value. This fact is supported by the important number of security definitions that have appeared, especially since the end of the Cold War, ranging from: National Security, Common Security, Collective Security, Shared Security, Human Security or Cooperative Security among many others that continue to emerge. All these makes a description of what the ideologists consider must be understood by security and, what could even be more important; how to obtain it. And in recent years, other terms have also emerged apart from the ones referred to above: Sustainable Security, as well as other hybrid concepts such as "hard power-soft power" or "smart power". (Wilkinson, 2007) [29].

In recent time however, the concept of human security has become more prevalent and emphasized. Deriving from the liberal tradition that regards humans as being generally good and capable of meaningful cooperation necessary to the promotion of positive change without necessarily resorting to war and violence- this concept advocates for the safety of the people and communities with emphasis shifting from the mere traditional security and human survival; to that of human well-being and dignity in existence. The Human Development Report (1994) which espouses the need for this focus identifies seven critical domains definitive of human security, namely: economic security; food security; health security; environmental security; personal security; community security; and, political security. And although no definite definition of human security exist, its basic tenet derives from the need to prevent violence and human suffering, development and equity, human rights, rule of law, good governance and even the traditional security. It classifies them as follows:

**Components of Human Security**

**Table 1**

Type of security	Definition	Threats
Food security	Physical and economic access to basic food	Hunger, famines and the lack of physical and economic access to basic food
Health security	Protection from diseases and unhealthy lifestyles	Inadequate health care, new and recurrent diseases including epidemics and pandemics, poor nutrition and unsafe environment, unsafe lifestyles
Economic security	An assured basic income	Poverty, unemployment, indebtedness, lack of income
Environmental security	Healthy physical environment	Environmental degradation, natural disasters, pollution and resource depletion
Personal security	Security from physical violence	From the state (torture), other states (war), groups of people (ethnic tension), individuals or gangs (crime), industrial, workplace or traffic accidents
Political security	Living in a society that honors basic human rights	Political or state repression, including torture, disappearance, human rights violations, detention and imprisonment

Community security	Safe membership in a group	From the group (oppressive practices), between groups (ethnic violence), from dominant groups (e.g. indigenous people vulnerability)
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Adopted from Source: HDR 1994 report

As a consequence of the need to refocus global security concerns, the 1994 UNDP Human Development Report (HDR) proposes that; first, increasing investing in human development, not in arms; second, engaging policy makers to address the emerging peace dividend, not military geniuses and war mongers; third, giving the United Nations a clear and explicit mandate to promote and sustain development; fourth, enlarging the concept of development cooperation so that it includes all flows, not just aid; fifth, agreeing to the principle that 20 percent of national budgets and 20 percent of foreign aid be used for human development; and, sixth, establishing an Economic Security Council to oversee the implementation of the grand plan.. (Owen, T. 2004).

In Security studies and International Relations, global or international security is principally the amalgamation of measures taken by states and international organizations, such as the United Nations, European Union, Association of Southeast Asian Nations, African Union, and others, to ensure mutual survival and safety of member states. These measures include military action and diplomatic agreements such as treaties and conventions. (Kissinger, 2014) [18]. In this regard, international and national security is invariably linked - international security is national security or state security in the global arena. What is national security?

**3. National Security**

In this article I define national security as the aggregate measures taken by the state or government to cushion itself and its people from any potential danger, aggression or threat envisioned as real or potential and which is likely to impede the rhythm of life for the nation and its people. To this end, the concept of National security covers a variety of interconnected issues that affect survival at national level. They range from the traditional or conventional modes of military power, the causes and consequences of war between states, means of production and economic strength, ethnic, religious and ideological conflicts, trade and economic conflicts, energy supplies, Science, information and technology, food as well as threats to human security; the stability of states; environmental degradation; infectious diseases; climatic change, and the activities of non-state actors among many others.

In this regard, national security transcends the conventional interpretation of security, entailing: freedom from danger or risk- natural or human made; safety from any threat-local, regional or global; freedom from care, fear, anxiety or doubt- well founded confidence; things that secure or make safe and protect; defense from any form of harm; freedom from financial care or want; and precaution taken to guard against crime, attack, sabotage, espionage, etc.

As earlier mentioned, states are instituted and governments formed with the sole purpose of meeting national values obligations; mitigating insecurity and responding to aspirations of the citizenry. The said national values are often, explicitly articulated within the constitution of each and every imaginable nation. In order to achieve the goals of national values, state institutions are established and put in hands of the very able men and women, to whom the government entrusts the mandate to execute in order to

realize the objectives of the nation. The leadership of these institutions is supposed to ensure and guarantee the functionality of the state; to secure and ensure proper utilization of state assets; commit to on-time, efficient and effective service delivery; and, front for secure, serene, motivating and friendly environment conducive for the prosperity of the nation. Bad governance occasioned by poor, myopic and unfocussed leadership negates these basic tenets and are often recipes to anarchy, violence, collapsed regimes and the suffering of the citizenry; they breed insecurity reminiscence of Hobbes natural state. Good leadership is a prerequisite to the survival of the state and the actualization of individuals' aspirations. What are the requisite qualities of good leadership for national security, and how can critical thinking enhance leadership performance in national security jurisdiction?

**a. Leadership for National Security**

The concerns of national security raised above are enormous and they need to be handled by able men and women with the ability and competence to project, evaluate, analyze, quantify, project and execute. The duty to guarantee national security is challenging, and requires commitment, zeal, selflessness, courage and ingenuity to effect. When hired, appointed, commissioned or even seconded to a national security or any state organ much is expected. Some of the initial qualities at entry point will definitely ease the probation phase, and they include: uncompromised honesty, professional etiquette and commitment to duty and service, value addition and ability to think beyond conventional level, courage to transcend all forms of manipulation, intimidation and threats. Matters of national security need to be handled by leaders that can transform institution into dependable, reliable and respected model institution; that display the highest level of insight, and have diversified ways of thinking; leaders who positively transform, motivate, inspire and set pace for others. With this understanding, we can take a trip down memory lane by subjecting ourselves to introspection, then, rationally weigh our gains, failures and limitations as executors of national policies on national security, growth and prosperity:

One, how well do you understand the concept of national security and its significance to state interests?; two, how often do you take time to ponder over what new mechanisms, technology and personnel our institutions require to be effective in service delivery and in cushioning the nation from the dangers of insecurity in all its forms?; three, how many of you reach out to motivate and assist your staff to work with zeal, affection and encourage them to discover and cultivate their inner hidden potentials in service to the nation?; four, corruption is real, and is one of the biggest threats to national security. How vocal, courageous, honest, determined and practical have you been in addressing and fighting to eliminate this vice within and beyond boundaries of the institution you serve?

Five, how often do you take interest in pursuing the best practices that can make your institution efficient and adorable?; six, how often do you encourage your staff to listen to their inner voices and to execute their duties in line to national values?; seven, how often do you encourage your

staff to partake in the contribution of positive ideas and to ask deep probing security related questions without taking offence?; eight, how well and tolerant do you positively take-in criticisms and use them as ladder to improvement without feeling debased?; nine, how many of you can claim to be committed to the ideals of your institutions and those of the government to guarantee national security?; and ten, the concept of national security permeates all faculties and organs of government operations, how versed and instrumental have you been in championing measures to cushion the state from insecurity across national divides? Catch the breath but not yet done with your introspection.

When you leave your houses/home to go to work, what is the motivation? Service to the nation and value addition to national security or, the need to earn a living or, fear of losing the job?; twelve, what qualities do you as a leader and manager of state institution display in order to inspire, motivate and encourage your staff to embrace national security tenets? – are you a role model and pacesetter to be emulated or a dreaded despot at the workplace?; thirteen, are you cerebral, transformative, ever learning, adoptive and altering manager or routine despotic armchair boss? - Where does your value rest?; fourteen; ever since you got hired, what do you consider your greatest contribution to your institution and by extension, to enhancing national security in your respective nation?; and lastly, fifteen, how often do you engage in serious and constructive discourses with your staff both in and out of boardrooms on matters of national security, wellbeing of and growth of the nation?

These questions as many as they may seem, are significant to us if we want to improve and enhance capacity for national security, grow our national security related institutions, and improve service delivery in our respective countries. In trying to respond to some of these questions we need not to be naïve as to labour for affirmation in order to justify occupying our current positions but rather, we must be privy to the fact that we are all called upon to serve; but suffice to acknowledge that we have been short of our national expectations. Certainty compels me to believe that; were we to be subjected to a retention test with the above queries, the performance would be discouraging and at most, very frustrating.

As nations all over the world, we need to relook at our strategies, priorities and more importantly subject our ourselves to serious introspection in order to rediscover our objective goals in so far as matters of national security are concerned. We need to shift our goal posts and change our mindset; conscientiously seeking to establish when humans abrogated reason. It's only by doing so that we will awaken to the reality of how costly insecurity can be to the survival of a nation; we need to think critically and, in line with our national values, we need to effectively reassess ourselves in order to renew our vitality in efforts to securing our nations.

#### **b. Qualities of Effective Leadership for National Security**

Good leadership is a quality which, if well nurtured becomes the crucible to national security and quality of good life. There are various traits that characterized an effective good leadership; but for purposes of this article I will only mention few: honesty; integrity; confidence in reason; ability to inspire others; commitment and passion to duty, to others and to the nation; good and effective communication prowess; capability for sound decision

making and problem solving; accountability; delegation and empowerment to others; creativity and innovativeness; empathy; resilience; emotional intelligence; humility; courage; perseverance; faith-in-reason; fair-mindedness; transparent; and, visionary and purposive.

These traits can be inborn, cultivated or acquired through rigorous training and value-based education. But even if they are innate, they must be awakened through routine and conscious application. Some of the traits require resolute efforts and cognitive reflection beyond conventional levels in order to stretch them yonder. We need to transcend ourselves, awaken our inner spirit (conscience) from perpetual dogmatic slumber that is often occasioned by prejudices, biases, native egocentrism, the big-man syndrome and other vices; we need to think critically and become the society's incendiary flame of incessant reflection; frequently questioning our own ability and zeal to serve, to deliver and to propel growth and cushion nations from perpetual and potential stigma of insecurity; we need to think critically through our thoughts and deeds. What kind of thinking is critical thinking?

#### **4. Essentiality of Critical Thinking to National Security**

The world today whirls on knees following the outbreak of the dreaded COVID-19, the disease caused by the new coronavirus that is loosely and systemically traversing the globe. Although the initial alarm about the pandemic was raised by Dr. Zhang Jixian a Chinese doctor and head of the respiratory department at Hubei Provincial Hospital on December 27, 2019, the exact date of contact between the virus and the human person is not very clear. It is however speculated that the first case of the dreaded COVID-19 dates back to November 17, 2019 when a 55-year-old man from Hubei province of China was diagnosed and confirmed as the first Covid-19 casualty. (South Morning China Post). This means that by the time Dr. Zhang Jixian was raising alert about COVID-19, the virus had overstayed for more than one month, uninvited and busy accosting its unsuspecting victims. And by the time Dr. Zhang rang the cautionary bell, the virus had infected more than 180 individuals and was on the loose. It is said that Doctors may not have been aware of all of those cases at the time, but only identified those cases after going back over the records. (The South Morning Post).

At the inception, many people across the globe including the leadership of nations underplayed the devastating effects and impact of COVID-19. Many called it a China affair and disease; malingerers and ghetto hustlers called it a common flu that needs no treatment; others dismissed it as a political hoax generated by developed nations as a ploy to exploit and suck wealth from the developing nations; others opined that it's an invisible lab-born sphinxlike war monster which was destined to surpass nuclear potency but which, fortuitously broke loose; the belligerent and notoriously religious brigades welcomed and celebrated the dawning of the last day and proclaimed the end in time of the world; believers in black magic claimed the world had been bewitched by a genius and powerful demon-possessed witch; while the medics frantically warned for stringent measures and advised for strict adherence to guidelines espoused by World Health Organization (WHO). Worst of all however, was the blatant neglect, baseless political garrulous, unheeding and irrational voices from governments and the senseless, arrogant and callous



citizenry about the looming catastrophe that was slowly but rapidly engulfing the world.

It is further claimed that the Chinese doctor who raised the flag about the COVID-19 pandemic mysteriously disappeared and later resurfaced only to die of the same virus. The Chinese government was on the receiving end, having been widely criticized over attempts to cover up the outbreak in the early weeks, lying about the exact number of infections, and orchestrating systemic crackdowns on doctors who tried to warn colleagues about a new Sars-like virus which was rapidly submerging the city of Wuhan in Hubei province. Talk of new form of blind capitalism, quest from global hegemony and bolstered retrogressive thinking! To date, COVID-19 is not only a threat to international security but it's a nightmare to national security in many countries. The lean financial and human resources at the disposal to many developing nations cannot fathom the harsh claws of COVID-19. Even developed nations are reeling in deficits and financially suffocating from the burden and the cost of taming the virus. If only nations embraced tolerance in their thinking, allowed the free flow of ideas, listened to the wisdom of experts and medics, the world would not be where it is today. The supremacy, enthusiasm and contribution of critical thinking to ameliorating the world lies in its ability to foresee, evaluate, analyses, synthesize, predict, cushion, caution, generate solutions, and trigger action. (Namwambah, 2012)<sup>[20]</sup>. Why should critical thinking be embraced in the management of nations and in enhancing national security?

We live in a world that is constantly and increasingly under siege: pressure, uncertainty, challenges, conflicting ideas and opinions continue to overwhelm us. But as managers of our nations, we are called upon to adeptly continue navigating and putting such challenges to rest. As such, our understanding of the key methods of critical thinking helps the leadership to learn how to recognize and identify problems, address the right problems, identify risks and make better and effective decisions. The lack of this leaves many hard lessons to learn and at colossal cost dotted with regrets, wishful thinking and mental agony. (Barker & Watson, 2000)<sup>[11]</sup>.

As earlier mentioned, matters of national security are hefty, demanding, challenging and often mind-boggling. Those vested with the responsibility to execute needs to exhibit exceptional abilities and acumen beyond conventional standards. They need to have the mastery of skills requisite for effective decision making, ability to promptly solve problems, intuitive decision-making knack and proactive decision dispensation, effective and decisive decision calculation, creative prowess and spontaneity in action; they need to be critical thinkers.

By critical thinking we mean the ability to use cognitive skills and strategies effectively in order to increase the probability of a desirable outcome. It is the kind of thinking that is purposeful, reasoned and goal directed; the thinking that is involved in effective problems solving, calculation of likelihoods, formulation of inferences and decisive decision making. As a way of thinking, critical thinking involves evaluating our thinking process: the reasoning that informs the conclusions we arrived at, and the kinds of factors we consider in making our decisions. (Halpern 1996, Namwambah 2012)<sup>[21]</sup>,

In matters of national security, critical thinking is concerned with capability to having faith in the supremacy of reason, honesty, integrity, fair-mindedness, courage, empathy, and open-mindedness. Critical thinking controverts emotionalism, intellectual laziness, and closed-mindedness. It entails following evidence where it leads; considering all possibilities; relying on reason rather than emotion; being precise; considering a variety of possible viewpoints and explanations; weighing the effects of motives, prejudices and biases; being concerned more with finding the truth than with being right; not rejecting unpopular views out of hand; being aware of one's own prejudices and biases, and not allowing biases to sway one's rational judgement. (Kurland 1995, Namwambah 2012). As such, the main characteristics of critical thinking include, but not limited to: asking relevant questions; recognizing and defining a problem; examining available evidence; analyzing requisite assumptions, biases and prejudices; avoiding emotional reasoning; avoiding oversimplification and considering other interpretations. (Walde 1995).

As a consequence of the above, it can be said that good thinking for national security and human development entails a combination of both critical and creative thinking skills, values, habits and motivations, all of which help to determine whether or not good thinking skills are being utilized when they are most required. Important to note is that the said thinking dispositions can be taught and learned. (Tishman & Perkins, 1995)<sup>[27]</sup>.

### c. Critical Thinking Skills, Dispositions and Traits for National Security

#### 1. Critical thinking Skills for National Security

In addition to the gains of access to impartial supply of knowledge, the architects and overseers of national security policies and programs also need to be exposed and trained in judicial habits of thought. They need to develop certain *skills* that will help them to transcend passivity- not to accept the creed which is dominant in their own society but rather be those visionary leaders that add value and transform the rhythm of life by ensuring that the nation is vibrant and secure. The skills here include: i) *the ability to form an opinion for oneself*, which involves being able to recognize what is intended to mislead, being capable of listening to eloquence without being carried away, and becoming adept at asking and determining if there is any reason to think that what you belief is true and good for the nation and institutions of national security; ii) *the ability to find an impartial solution*, ability to recognize and control your own biases, coming to view your own beliefs with the same objectivity with which you view the beliefs of others, judging issues on the basis of their merits, trying to ascertain the relevant facts, and exhibiting the power of weighing arguments before making decision; iii) *the ability to identify and question assumptions* – being not gullible; applying constructive doubt in order to test unexamined beliefs, and resisting the notion that some authority has captured the whole truth about the needs, dynamism and operations geared to securing the nation; knowledge that ideas work but human society is not static, and as a result, unprecedented changes can occasion new modes of thinking and change in approach and tact. (Namwambah. 2012, Sheffield 2014)<sup>[22]</sup>.

## 2. Dispositions of Critical Thinking for National Security

The mere possession of critical thinking skills is not sufficient to make one a critical thinker or an effective national security overseer, especially in the articulation, propagation, designing and executing pragmatic national security programs. There are essential critical thinking dispositions which guarantee that the imbued relevant skills are actually exercised. These dispositions can also be referred to as habits or practices to suggest the translation of skills into actual human behavior. The essential critical thinking dispositions for national security include: i) *the habit of impartial inquiry*, suggesting that we must think in a multi-faceted way and refuse to accept that one-sided opinions hold solutions to the challenges bedeviling human society; and, resist the notion that truth is a reserve for the privileged and it solely depends on time and place of their education, their social or economic backgrounds, and political connections and protection; being cognizant that biases, prejudices and native egocentricism often lurk beneath seductive and often persuasive yet superfluous and empty rhetoric; ii) *the habit of weighing evidence*, coupled with the practice of not giving full assent to propositions which there is no reason to believe as true; iii) *the habit of attempting to see things truly*, which contrasts with the practice of merely collecting whatever reinforces existing prejudice and stereotypes; and iv) *the habit of living from one's own centre*, being astute and self-directed- a certain independence in the will, intelligently motivated and constantly inspired by reason. Such habits, of course, have to be exercised intelligently devoid of emotion. (Namwambah 2012, Paul, R & Elder, L. 2013)<sup>[20, 8]</sup>

Because these dispositions are not simply automatic responses in which one has been drilled, such habits in effect reflect our willingness, or readiness to act and respond in various ways to challenges of national security. Some examples of this readiness include: i) *a readiness to admit new evidence against previous beliefs*, which involves an open-minded acceptance of whatever a critical examination has revealed and acting accordingly; ii) *a readiness to discard hypotheses which have proved inadequate*, where the critical test proves otherwise, the willingness and preparedness to abandon beliefs which once seemed promising but now ineffective; and iii) *a readiness to adapt oneself to the facts of the world*, instead of merely going along with whatever happens to be in the ascendant, which might be wrong and misleading, taking a leap to transform through creative prowess for the wellbeing of humanity. To be ready to act, or react in this modus suggests an awareness that the habits in question are appropriate and as such, principled commitment to their execution is justifiable. What these dispositions have in common is the virtue of *truthfulness* which is comprehensively emphasized within the national values, effectively and widely articulated and enshrined in constitutions of various nations. (Meissen 2010, Namwambah 2012)<sup>[21]</sup>

## 3. Traits of Critical Thinking for National Security

Beyond the skills and dispositions of critical thinking for national security, a certain set of *attitudes* ought to characterize the outlook of polished and competent executor of national security programs. This is necessarily so because the state is by definition the security and sanctity of its citizens, their property and the guarantee of good life. The

inability of a nation to guarantee protection and secure its people, their property and create an enabling environment for productivity and good living spurs discord and breeds self-destruction. By critical attitude we mean a temper of mind central to which a certain stance with respect to professional etiquette, resolve to serve and pragmatic opinions draggle; it involves: i) *a realization of human fallibility*, a sense of the uncertainty of many things commonly regarded as indubitable, bringing with it humility – being conscious of the limits of knowledge, including that of the self; including a sensitivity to circumstances in which native egocentrism is likely to function self-deceptively; being sensitive to prejudices, stereotypes and limitations of one's own viewpoint; not claiming more than what one actually knows, and owning up to what is unknown; absence of cerebral pretentiousness, boastfulness, or conceit; ii) *an open-minded outlook* with respect to our beliefs about institutions, an "inward readiness" to give weight to the other side, where every question is regarded as open and where it is recognized that what passes for a policy is sure to require correction and alteration with time; iii) *a refusal to think that our own desires and wishes provide a key to understanding our society and the world*, recognizing that what we like has no bearing whatsoever on what is and the good of the nation and its institutions; and iv) *being tentative, without falling into a lazy skepticism* (or dogmatic doubt), holding our beliefs with the degree of conviction warranted by the evidence; having a strong desire to know combined with great caution in believing that what one knows must meet the test of certainty and proof; the assurance that open-mindedness is cushioned against degenerating into being mindless and myopic. (Namwambah 2012, Paul, R & Elder, L. 2013)<sup>[22, 8]</sup>

## 5. Instrumentality of Critical Thinking to National Security

We have accentuated the need to pervade critical thinking skills, dispositions and traits in the thinking, planning, originating, piloting and executing national security programs. We have further suggested that concerns of national security are core to state formation and more importantly, central in international relations. It has been demonstrated that the origination of civil societies which today are generally referred to as nations was occasioned by human desire for security. In respect to this goal, critical thinking plays a central role in helping governments to come up with viable national security programs that are well taught out, pragmatic and requisite in meeting the obligations for the state formation.

To this end, the importance and value of critical thinking to informing policies, influencing decisions and navigating operations aimed at enhancing national security cannot be undersized. As a way of thinking, critical thinking: inculcates habits of thought- the ability to think outside the box and use reason as the basis to decision making; it encourages breadth of vision- the ability to see things from different points of view; it gives a sense of self-perspective to national security institutions' activities - the ability to examine alternatives and choose those relevant as to ensure that the mandate is met; although concerned with abstract and higher level thinking, critical thinking has immense practical value: the ability to translate ideas (theory) into practice through action; its interest and value lies in its ability in helping the national security institutions to

understand and internalize their mandate, and, by providing rational room for continuous alterations, encourages a lifelong habit of reflection on the mandate of the institutions; by opening alternative doors of approach and engagement that would otherwise be closed or overlooked.

Critical thinking immensely enriches the national security institutions; it greatly enhance the leadership analytical, critical, evaluative and interpretive abilities; it enhance the leadership ability to express themselves clearly and to formulate and respond to arguments in speech and writing effectively, especially on matters affecting security and the nation; it equips the leadership with general problem-solving skills, skills in analysing concepts, definitions, arguments and problems; it enables the national security overseers to organize ideas and issues effectively and to extract what is central to an issue from a mass of information that frequently invades policy makers and executors..

As a way of thinking, critical thinking enhances the leadership ability to question deeply their own framework of thought and its commitment to national security obligations and service to the nation; it equips the national security leadership with the ability to sympathetically and imaginatively reconstruct the strongest versions of their policy documents, periodic national security strategic plans, points of view and frameworks of thought for enhanced, effective and efficient governance and service delivery

Critical thinking inculcates the ability to reason dialectically (multi-logically) in such a way as to determine when one's own point of view is at its weakest and when an opposing point of view is at its strongest; it helps national security overseers to make fine distinctions and to find what comprehensive common grounds between opposing positions are, thereby accelerating the pace of efficiency and effectiveness for and in national security organs; it encourages the national security management to synthesize and to bring together a range of different views into one more comprehensive and coherent position; thereby easing the administrative burden and shrinking the implementation cost.

Critical thinking also improves the national security leadership communication skills, through improving their ability to present ideas in well-constructed, systematic arguments, to express what is unique about one's views, and to explain difficult material; these skills in presenting well-thought-out arguments, clear formulations, and apt examples, in turn lend to the national security fraternity constructive persuasive power; the give and take of critical thinking-based discussions improves the leadership ability to think on their feet, and to indicate why one's own views are to be preferred to others thereby encouraging lifelong teamwork habits; it aids the management in recognizing when and in what respect one's view may be incorrect, and what must be revised or discarded and what can be retained in order to find a common ground for the good of the national security institutions and the nation.

In its endeavour to clarify concepts and ideas, critical thinking lays emphasis on clarity and rigor of argument, the appropriate use of example and illustration, and sensitivity to the strengths and weaknesses of the views one is examining and those of his own, thus making ideas that determine effective execution of duty for national security more prompt, explicit and relevant

Critical thinking plays an important role in social change of institutions in any society - governments, institutions, private sector etc. are all products of a certain way of thinking; it helps the national security leadership in uncovering biases and prejudices, and effectively addressing them to the benefit of the nation; it is a path to freedom from half-truths and deceptions - it opens up the mind into seeing things from different perspectives, independently and, devoid of emotion and native biases – it awakens the mind from dogmatic slumber and incessant self-deception; and, the willingness to change our points of view as we continue to examine and re-examine ideas that may seem obvious is a major component of critical thinking; a critical thinker has the will and confidence to saying “*I don't know*”, not as an expression of ignorance, but as a means to learn from other and to build confidence within the team.

## 6. Recommendations and Conclusion

Thomas Hobbes doctrine of the foundation of states and legitimate governments is premised on human fear for impending dangers in the state of nature and the desire for guaranteed security. Beginning from a mechanistic understanding of human beings and the desires, passions and appetites that define human nature, Hobbes postulates what life would be like without government, a condition which he calls the state of nature. In such a state, each person would have a right, or license, to everything in the world. Given the egocentric nature of the humans, Hobbes asserts that such a situation would lead to perpetual "war of all against all" (*bellum omnium contra omnes*). It means that left on his own, and in the absence of a strong government, human beings are rapacious, selfish, savage and self-wanting. Being a state of war of all against all, state of nature therefore exposes human vulnerability to harm, suffering, insecurity and worse of all, death. As such, conditions in the state of nature compels human beings to congregate into a commonwealth as a sanctuary for peace, harmony and security. The surrender of the right to self-protection to an authority in a commonwealth means that the authority is a symbol of security, unity and universal goodness, and as such, she transcends the conventional wisdom.

In order to guarantee security and sanctity of life therefore, authority and her cohorts are expected to be men and women who commit to and believe in the supremacy of reason as the beacon determinant of national security and the good of the nation; men and women with the willingness to spend time reflecting on the ideas presented and how they affect state operation and national security; as a means to cushioning the nation from unforeseeable dangers, be individuals with the ability to evaluate and solve problems as they come; be logical and sequential in their thinking without appealing to emotion or political chest-thumping; be diligent in seeking out the truth and pursuing it to its ultimate end; eager to express their thoughts on a topic of national security without fear or favour; have the capacity to exercise the highest level of patience amidst panic and threats; seekers of alternative views on issues or topics affecting the nation and especially those to do with national security; are beyond panic and have the ability to persevere and endure with a view of attaining truth and positive results; have the courage not to despair but to pursue issues to their conclusion end; are open to new ideas that may not



necessarily agree with their previous thought on issue of national security.

Guaranteeing of national security needs shrewd and competent men and women who think critically, with ability to base their judgements on ideas and evidence; that are able to recognize errors in thought and persuasion with capacity to resist the temptation of falling prey to such seductive yet empty and misleading rhetoric; are able to recognize good arguments from bad and fallacious arguments; are readily willing to take a critical stance on issues and act without undue influence; are readily willing to accept mistakes, apologize, correct them and move on; are able to ask penetrating and thought-provoking questions in order to evaluate ideas and act on what is understood and known to be real, true and effective; are always in touch with their personal thoughts and ideas about matters of the state and national security demands; are willing to reassess their views when new or discordant evidence is introduced and evaluated to enhance capacity for national security; and, are able to see the connections between different concerns of state governance and national security, and can use knowledge from those other fields to enhance their experiences and boost their productivity in securing the nation.

As a result of the need to cushion and secure nations from the wants of unpredictable occurrences and the devastations incessantly occasioned by the angry and bleeding environment, fatally wounded by the greed of men, it's only logical that human beings reevaluate themselves, shift their goalposts and redefine their relationship with planet earth. Today, problems of climate change, environmental degradation, worldwide massive unemployment of the youth, amassing of warheads and competition between super and developed nations, toxic emission in our water basins, unprecedented corruption, emerging diseases, food insecurity in many nations, the mounting number in refugees and victims of war, and global terrorism are some of the many threats to global and nation security in many regions of the globe. One Kenyan eminent scholar Prof. Francis Imbuga could not have been far from the truth when he wrote in his masterpiece book – *Betrayal in the City*; “*We have killed our past and it's now busy killing our future*” (Imbuga, 1976)<sup>[15]</sup>

The contemporary world is experiencing unprecedented problems and challenges far beyond programs that were initially designed, especially in our colleges and professional training institutions to mitigate them. If nations of the world do not awaken to the reality of the myriad challenges facing them today, relook their intentions, priorities, strategies and programs; and hastily but rationally commence restructuring and acting, then doomsdays and much harder times awaits us. In regard to responsive educational programs for national security obligations, I recommend, at least with regard to Kenya that; one, programs in critical thinking be made mandatory to all state officers, both the serving and the incoming; two, undertaking of comprehensive baseline study to determine state officers, especially those in national security dockets ability to think critically and apply the requisite critical thinking skills to their work; three, bench-making study in other country implementing similar programs; four, developing of critical thinking training modules for state officers; five, in-service training for government training colleges tutors on critical thinking in education and

professional development; six, monitoring and evaluation on the development of critical thinking component in government and national security based colleges and training centres. The implementation of these recommendations should be systematic, gradual, need-based and in phases. We are all called upon to serve, and we have the responsibility to save the world.

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