Editorial

African perspectives on the international terrorism discourse  iv
Peter Gastrow and Annette Hübschle

Features

The T-word:
Conceptualising terrorism  2
Annette Hübschle

Terrorism, counter-terrorism and norms in Africa  19
Samuel M Makinda

Assessing the role of the African Union in preventing and combating terrorism in Africa  32
Martin Ewi and Kwesi Aning

Africa Watch

Sudan: The crisis of cohesion?  48
Mariam Bibi Jooma

Côte d’Ivoire: Marking time  51
Richard Cornwell

Trends and markers  54
Essays

Africa, root causes and the ‘war on terror’ 58
Jakkie Cilliers

Counter-terrorism in the Horn of Africa:
New security frontiers, old strategies 72
Peter Kagwanja

Terrorism in West Africa: Real, emerging or imagined threats? 87
Cyril I Obi

Commentaries

Globalisation and international terrorism 104
Mwesiga Baregu

US counter-terrorism policies in Africa
are counter to development 109
Robert Tynes

A Muslim by any other name 114
Mariam Bibi Jooma

Book Reviews

Dying to win: The strategic logic of suicide terrorism 120
Robert Pape

Blood from stones: The secret financial network of terror 123
Douglas Farah

Illicit: How smugglers, traffickers and copycats
are hijacking the global economy 127
Mosés Naím

America unbound – the Bush revolution in foreign policy 130
Ivo H Daalder & James M Lindsay
EDITORIAL

African perspectives on the international terrorism discourse

Peter Gastrow and Annette Hübschle*

Francis Fukuyama predicted the ‘end of history’ at the end of the Cold War, while Samuel Huntington warned of the imminent ‘clash of the civilisations’. Others conceived of interesting power constellations in the wake of the collapse of the Soviet Union and the former Eastern Bloc. At the dawn of the new world order in 1990 few theorists thought that the fear of terrorist attacks would dominate the security agendas of most nations for the unforeseeable future.

For Africa, the fears and responses of most developed countries towards what is known as ‘international terrorism’ have had serious repercussions for the continent’s development goals. Literature would suggest that HIV/AIDS, poverty, corruption,

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small arms proliferation, crime and post-war reconstruction are the ‘real’ challenges to human security on the continent. But foreign aid has increasingly been linked to the introduction of new and often draconian anti-terrorism measures, notably anti-terrorism laws, and not to the eradication of poverty and related development goals. International donor funds and foreign aid have been made available for law enforcement or legislative issues relating to terrorism.

Despite Africa’s growing participation in the global fight against terrorism, the post-September 11 discourse on terrorism has been overwhelmingly determined from outside Africa. African voices have only contributed on an ad hoc basis and African scholars and experts from different parts of the continent have had few occasions to share their views and assessments on these issues.

These concerns formed the focus of discussions at a two-day seminar organised by the Institute for Security Studies (ISS) in the Tanzanian capital of Dar es Salaam in March 2006. Sponsored by the Norwegian government, and entitled ‘Towards understanding terrorism in Africa’, the seminar brought together scholars and analysts from the whole continent to discuss issues such as:

- Definitions and historical interpretations of terrorism in Africa;
- The causes of terrorism in Africa;
- The consequences of tackling the causes of terrorism from a historical context;
- Whether terrorism poses a security risk to Africa;
- How to address terrorism in Africa;
- Terrorism and its manifestations in the Horn of Africa, Western, East and Southern Africa;
- Whether there is a political will to combat terrorism in Africa;
- How to counter terrorism from the African Union’s (AU) perspective;
- How to carry out threat assessments on the continent; and
- What strategies should inform an African voice in the international terrorism discourse.

Some of the discussions and contributions to the seminar have been included in this issue of the *African Security Review* (ASR). Professor Samuel Makinda provides an overview
of how terrorism and counter-terrorism measures have undermined the norms, rules and institutions that underpin security in Africa. He argues that through the use of indiscriminate violence, terrorism has maimed and killed innocent people, threatened jobs and dented democratic processes of resolving conflict in society, while military and legislative counter-terrorism measures have caused the deaths of innocent people, undermined democratic governance and eroded civil liberties. Thus, African states should devise creative and innovative approaches to combat terrorism. A sustainable counter-terrorism strategy should focus on strengthening institutions and enhancing development and social justice.

This is also one of the key issues illuminated by Martin Ewi and Dr Kwesi Aning, who provide expert analysis on the AU’s role in combating terrorism on the continent. They argue that the AU has played the role of a catalyst, a clearinghouse, and a standards setting organ for the prevention and fighting of terrorism on the continent. Since September 11 (hereafter 9/11), the main concern of the AU has been to reinforce and implement existing counter-terrorism instruments adopted at the continental level in coordination with states and regional organisations. The authors stress the role of the AU as complementary and as an interface between the continent and the international community.

Dr Cyril Obi’s essay locates the West African region in the context of the post-9/11 discourse on terrorism and counter-terrorism. He identifies the issues and challenges that flow from the integration of West Africa into hegemonic transnational and globalised security arrangements. Emerging militaristic states and the fight against terrorism seem to reinforce or – paradoxically – undermine regional and intra-national human and environmental security in one of Africa’s most troubled regions. Obi concludes that militarist and globally driven solutions may fail to address the historical, political and socio-economic roots of a possible terrorist threat in West Africa.

With similar conclusions in his essay, Dr Peter Kagwanja analyses terrorism trends in the Horn of Africa. While the US-led ‘war on terror’ dramatically changed America’s strategy towards Africa, it threw the Horn of Africa onto the centre stage of global counter-terrorism. Governments in the Horn have used the threat of terrorism for political ends, defending old security paradigms that prioritised regime stability over human security. The author examines the impact of counter-terrorism on security in the Horn of Africa. He argues for stronger coordination between national, regional and international initiatives to curb international terrorism.

Dr Jakkie Cilliers deals with the phenomenon of sub-state terrorism in Africa. He argues that incidents categorised as ‘transnational terrorism’ should be treated as insurgencies. He raises the issue of Somalia, where the Western response (‘War on Terror’) may further complicate the domestic situation. He cautions that great care should be exercised by
African states in adopting either the language or the prescribed solutions to transnational terrorism given the limited ability to implement such measures.

In this issue of the ASR, the commentaries and book reviews also deal with the subject of terrorism. Be sure to look out for the commentaries by Professor Mwesiga Baregu, Robert Tynes and Mariam Bibi Jooma, which deal with some of the emerging debates in this context.

If this ASR can make a modest contribution towards bringing the emerging African discourse on terrorism to the attention of African policy- and decision-makers, then it will go a long way towards meeting our expectations. The editors hope that readers will find this issue informative and that it will spur on more debate and greater contact and interaction between those in Africa who have an interest in addressing and understanding terrorism. Even though terrorism will remain a contested and often divisive issue, it is in the interest of all of us that African academics and researchers increasingly interact with governments and colleagues from different parts of the continent and the world.
The T-word: Conceptualising terrorism
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Assessing the role of the African Union in preventing and combating terrorism in Africa
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September 11 2001 has put the spotlight on terrorism, and it has been at the apex of the international security agenda ever since. Politicians, lawmakers, scholars and others have been debating the meaning and definition of terrorism for many years. Numerous myths and misconceptions persist on this highly debated issue. With the aid of historical case studies, this article aims to demonstrate how broad a concept terrorism has become. It focuses on its subjective and value-laden interpretation and hence the difficulty of arriving at a universally acceptable definition. The author introduces the concept of ‘colonial terror’, which depicts a distinct form of state terrorism perpetrated during the colonial and post-colonial periods. Like many before her, the author concludes that the definition and meaning of terrorism lie in the eye of the beholder.

There are two ways to approach the study of terrorism. One may adopt a literal approach, taking the topic seriously, or a propagandistic approach, construing the concept of terrorism as a weapon to be exploited in the service of some system of power. In each case it is clear how to proceed. Pursuing the literal approach, we begin by determining what constitutes terrorism. We then seek instances of the phenomenon – concentrating on major examples, if we are serious – and try to determine causes and remedies. The propagandistic approach dictates a different course. We begin with the thesis that terrorism is the responsibility of some officially designated enemy. We then designate terrorist acts as ‘terrorist’ just in the cases where they can be attributed (whether plausibly or not) to the required source; otherwise they are to be ignored, suppressed or termed ‘retaliation’ or ‘self-defence’. (Noam Chomsky)
Introduction

Following the events of 11 September 2001 (hereafter 9/11) in the United States, terrorism and its ramifications have become a hotbed of scholarly debate. The terrorist attacks of that day obliterated other terrorist incidents of the past.

Many myths were born and persist around this highly disputed concept, such as that terrorism:

■ Is a new phenomenon;
■ Is a weapon of the weak;
■ Is only perpetrated by groupings, deranged individuals or transnational networks; and
■ Is closely linked to religious ‘extremism’.

This article attempts to refute some of the myths attached to the concept. Furthermore, it aims to demonstrate, with the aid of historical examples and case studies, how broad a concept terrorism has become, focusing on its subjective and value-laden interpretation and hence the difficulty of arriving at a universally acceptable definition.

The origins of the concept

‘Terrorism’ per se is nothing new; in fact, theorists trace the origin of the concept back to the 18th century, when it was popularised during the French Revolution. According to the 1798 supplement of the Dictionnaire of the Académie Française, the words ‘terrorism’ and ‘terrorist’ stemmed from the ‘régime de la terreur’, a period in French history that followed the storming of the Bastille and the uprisings of 1789.

Initially, terrorism embraced a positive suggestion. The Jacobins had used the term ‘régime de la terreur’ in a positive sense when speaking and writing about themselves. Terrorism was designed to consolidate and firmly entrench a newly established revolutionary state by intimidating counter-revolutionaries, subversives and other dissidents regarded as ‘enemies of the people’. The Revolutionary Council (the enforcing agency) commanded wide powers of arrest and judgment which led to the demise of many ‘enemies of the people’ by means of the newly invented guillotine. Revolutionary leader Maximilien Robespierre held the view that revolution and terror had to team up in order for democracy to triumph. He declared that “terror is nothing but justice, prompt, severe and inflexible; it is therefore an emanation of virtue”.

■
The French Revolution’s terrorism had two main characteristics. The ‘régime de la terreur’ was neither random nor indiscriminate: its enforcers were highly organised, displayed a systemic approach, and their actions were deliberate. Furthermore, its goal and its very justification were the pursuit and creation of a ‘new and better society’. Terrorism was portrayed as the solution to internal anarchy and external invasion by other European monarchs.5 Arrests were made on little evidence and people were expelled from France, imprisoned and killed in the name of the revolutionary cause.

In July 1794, the Revolution ‘ate its own children’ and Robespierre and his closest associates succumbed to the guillotine. The reign of terror had come to an end. Thereafter the terminology became synonymous with the abuse of office and power.6 Terrorists were identified as any people who attempted to further their views by a system of coercive intimidation. It should be noted that in its origins, terrorism was perpetrated by the state. Once the term ‘terrorism’ had been coined, it was employed to describe a variety of acts of violence, even retrospectively. Thus, terrorism is most certainly not a new phenomenon. The overriding feature of the early incarnations of terrorism was that it entailed a gruesome act of killing that was pre-meditated and instilled fear in at least some part of the population.

Following the French Revolution, the agency of terrorism changed from a state actor to sub-national groups, and acts of terrorism took place in many places around the globe. Examples include the ritualistic killing of recently emancipated Afro-Americans by the Ku Klux Klan in the US, a sequence of political assassinations of Japanese prime ministers and government ministers during the 1920s and 1930s, and frequent political murders in India in the decade before World War I.

Early revolutionary terrorism

Until World War I, terrorism was by and large regarded as a left-wing strategy. The concept was directly linked to revolutionary change. It was perceived to be a strategy that would ultimately lead to a seizure of political power from the established regime of a state, with the aim of causing fundamental political and social change.7 This kind of terrorism was a new phenomenon and was distinct from the political assassinations that had been practised throughout history. It was distinct in terms of the roles the terrorists believed they fulfilled and the perceived significance of their actions.

Case study: Narodnaya Volya

Narodnaya Volya (The People’s Will), which has been widely described as the first terror rebel movement or the first anarchist grouping, emerged in 1879 and its offspring haunted Russia for more than thirty years. The group understood terrorism as a temporary necessity to ‘raise the consciousness of the masses’. In search of a radical transformation of society,
Narodnaya Volya selected victims for symbolic reasons, for the emotional and political responses their deaths would invoke. The doctrine of the movement involved unusual acts of violence. These were in breach of conventions regulating violence, such as the rules of war, which draw a distinction between combatants and non-combatants. The movement called itself ‘terrorist’ rather than ‘guerrilla’ precisely because guerrilla targets were military and the movement’s were not. Terror was a strategy that could command the masses’ attention, create political tensions and provoke indiscriminate government reaction.

The anarchists inspired fear in the minds of many Europeans prior to World War I. They were believed to be behind countless attempts on the lives of state leaders between the 1880s and the first decade of the 20th century. Many writers in the late 1800s provided ideological underpinnings to the anarchist movement. For the purposes of this article, it suffices to mention the key influences.

One is Gerasim Romanenenko, who emphasised that terrorism was both humanitarian and effective. It cost infinitely fewer victims than a mass struggle; in a popular uprising, ‘the people’ were killed while the real villains looked on from the sidelines. Terrorism, on the other hand, could be directed against the main culprits. To this Russian writer of the late 1800s, terrorism represented an application of modern science to the revolutionary struggle.

In spite of justifications and theories underpinning revolutionary terrorism, Marxists disapprovingly referred to it as ‘individual terror’. Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels often conflated the concept with force or violence in general. Marx stated that revolutionary terrorism was the only solution to shorten the “agonies of the old society and the birth pangs of the new”.

The debate on terrorism among Russian Marxists flared up when the Socialist Revolutionaries became involved in terrorist activities around the turn of the century. Like Marx and Engels, Lenin was rather ambivalent in his views on ‘individual terrorism’. He paid tribute to the heroism associated with it, but he rejected terrorism as practised by the Socialist Revolutionaries. Lenin observed that it had been restricted to a group of intellectuals who were removed from the working class and peasants. What he referred to as ‘old-style terror’ made organisational and political work among the people more complicated. Lenin thus defined terrorism as ‘single combat’ in contrast to mass action. Terrorist campaigns did not suit his Weltbild because the acts of individual violence “were unconnected with the mass of people”.

**Terrorism from the right**

Walter Laqueur observes that a marked change occurred in the 1920s and 1930s, when right-wing elements became the main perpetrators of terrorism. The German Freikorps
were an example of this new trend. They consisted of ex-soldiers and students claiming to defend their fatherland against foreign and domestic dangers. Among their victims were Rosa Luxemburg and Karl Liebknecht (famous for the abortive German revolution) and German Foreign Minister Walther Rathenau.

**State terrorism: Fascism, Nazism and Stalinism**

**Fascism and Nazism**

There has been much debate about whether fascism, national-socialism and Stalinism are forms of state terror. Depending on where one stands on the political spectrum, Mussolini and his regime of fascism are seen as representing either totalitarianism or a form of state terrorism. Mussolini's ascent to power was accompanied by the mobilisation and deployment of the Black Shirts, who intimidated and killed political opponents in a similar fashion to Hitler's Brown Shirts. The fascists introduced the notorious Special Tribunal for the Defence of the State, which, in the 17 years of its existence, passed 47 death sentences. Mussolini also conducted state-sponsored terrorism, supporting the right-wing Croatian Ustasha, who were fighting for the independence of their country. The most infamous operation involved the dual murder of King Alexander of Yugoslavia and the French prime minister, Louis Barthou, as they met in Marseilles in April 1934.

State terrorism became intrinsic to Fascist and Nazi governance. Executed by the ruling party of the respective country, terror was utilised to achieve total control of the country and its people. The Nazis and the Fascists thus created a system of state-sanctioned fear and coercion. For the purposes of this paper it is not necessary to dig deeper into atrocities committed by the Nazis, but the widespread prosecution of Jews, communists and other declared enemies of the state were key to ensuring submission to, and compliance with, the state.

**Stalinism**

Stalin and his regime of Great Terror denoted another form of state terrorism, which both resembled and differed from that of the Nazis. Like Hitler, the Russian dictator eliminated his political opponents and transformed the state’s police and security apparatus into organs of coercion, enforcement and repression. However, the political, social and economic climate in Russia at the time bore little semblance to that which prevailed in Germany and Italy under the Nazis and the Fascists, who had emerged victorious from a political free-for-all struggle for power. In contrast, by the mid-1930s the Russian Communist Party had been firmly entrenched in power for more than a decade. Stalin's political purges, which resulted in the death, exile and imprisonment of millions, were thus not launched in a time of war, crisis or revolution.
Case study: Zionism and the question of Palestine

The early history of the state of Israel perhaps best demonstrates the double-edged nature of the concept of terrorism, as the former terrorists became the government of the day and the rhetoric changed overnight. Underlying the Zionist ideal was the return of the Jewish Diaspora to Eretz Israel. Through the 1917 Balfour Declaration Britain committed itself to “the establishment in Palestine of a national home for the Jewish people”. By the time the implications and extent of its commitment became clear, it was too late for Britain to backtrack. Britain soon realised that Jewish security could only be achieved by either appeasing or ‘neutralising’ the Arab population. The International Zionist Organisation was committed to reliance on Britain. But following the first Arab attacks on Jewish settlements in 1920, they established a semi-open defensive force.

The assassination of Lord Moyne by the Stern Gang at the end of the World War II saw Jewish terrorist activity take off. The Zionist revisionist group was the last organisation to describe its activities as terrorist. In July 1946 the bombing of the King David Hotel in Jerusalem, where the British military headquarters was housed, was the biggest act of terror during this period. The epicentre of British rule in Palestine, including the government secretariat and the headquarters of the British military forces in Palestine and Transjordan, occupied two floors of the southern wing of the King David Hotel (beneath which the explosives were placed). Thus, the attack’s target was neither the hotel itself nor the people working or staying in it, but the government and military officers located there. Ninety-one people were killed and 45 others were injured, including Arabs, Jews and Britons. The bombing still holds an infamous distinction as one of the single most lethal terrorist incidents of the 20th century.

However, the British army declined to describe its attackers as terrorists because of the implication that its troops were frightened of them. An ongoing terrorist campaign led to the British abandoning Palestine in 1948.

Townshend remarks that this turning point in the Jewish terrorist campaign illustrates the difficulty of writing objectively about terrorism, as “even those studies that provide a clear and critical account of the Jewish terrorist campaign stop dead at the point of the British decision to withdraw from Palestine”. He furthermore points out that the subsequent campaign of the Palestinian Liberation Organisation (PLO) is incomprehensible without an understanding of the aftermath of the British withdrawal from Palestine, during which the Jewish state substantially enlarged its share of Palestine’s land area and the Palestine Arab state collapsed. Many writers categorise this ‘enlargement’ as conventional warfare.

Western (pro-Israeli) writers describe the terror tactics of the Stern Gang as guerrilla warfare aimed at liberating the country from British colonial rule. Keeping in mind that
the PLO is fighting for a similar cause, using similar tactics, it should not be surprising that they call themselves ‘liberation fighters’ rather than ‘terrorists’.

**Struggles for independence and self-determination**

Terrorism again came to be associated with revolutionary objectives in the aftermath of World War II. The Western world used the concept to refer to struggles for independence and self-determination by various nationalist/anti-colonialist groups that emerged in Asia, Africa and the Middle East during the 1940s and 1950s. This form of revolutionary terrorism was also referred to as ethno-nationalist/separatist terrorism. Kenya, Cyprus and Algeria are just a few countries that owe their independence, at least in part, to nationalist political movements that employed ‘terrorism’ against colonial powers.21

It is during this period that the phrase ‘one person’s terrorist is another person’s freedom fighter’ was coined. Many newly independent states argued that anyone or any movement that fought against colonial oppression and/or Western domination were not terrorists but should rather be described as freedom fighters. Former PLO chairperson Yassir Arafat explained this position in his address to the United Nations General Assembly in November 1974:

> The difference between the revolutionary and the terrorist lies in the reason for which each fights. For whoever stands by a just cause and fights for the freedom and liberation of his land from the invaders, the settlers and the colonialists, cannot possibly be called terrorist.22

During the 1960s and 1970s, terrorism continued to be viewed in a revolutionary context. However, the usage of the concept was expanded to include nationalist and ethnic separatist groups outside a colonial or neo-colonial framework. Groupings such as the PLO, the Québécois separatist group (*Front de Libération du Québec*), the Basque *Euskadi ta Askatasuna* (ETA, Freedom for the Basque Homeland) and the Irish Republican Army (IRA) adopted terrorism primarily as a means of drawing attention to their respective causes.

**‘Colonial terror’ in Africa**

Historical data shows that the African continent has witnessed a wide array of terror incidents, including the above-mentioned ‘revolutionary’, state-sponsored and state terrorism. Mainstream literature on terrorism in Africa identifies many of the former liberation movements who fought for independence from their colonial
masters as terrorist organisations. Some North American databases on terrorist organisations identify, to this day, the African National Congress (ANC), the Zimbabwe African National Union – Patriotic Front (ZANU-PF), the South West African People’s Organisation (SWAPO) and Frente de Libertação de Moçambique (Frelimo) as terrorist organisations.

Strangely enough, atrocities perpetrated by colonial forces in Africa and other parts of the world are often omitted in debates concerning revolutionary terrorism. Most of Africa has suffered from prolonged colonial and state-sponsored violence throughout the 20th and 21st centuries. There has been little regard for humanitarian law, and many war crimes have been committed. This author would like to introduce a new concept, which shall be termed ‘colonial terror’. This form of terrorism has historically been employed by state actors (colonial powers) to enforce their will (colonial rule) on indigenous peoples. Hence, ‘colonial terror’ should be seen as a distinct form of state terrorism, perpetrated during the colonial and post-colonial period. For the purposes of this paper, the discussion shall be limited to the African experience.

Eurocentric interpretations of colonial history in Africa depict Africans as ‘wild savages’ only waiting to be ‘brought to the light’ by Western civilisation as espoused by the colonial masters. Often those same colonial masters failed to adhere to the most basic rules of engagement. German South West Africa (now Namibia) provides a grim picture. In the 1880s, the German emperor proclaimed a ‘protectorate’ over its people. In the exercise of this ‘protection’, his representatives signed treaties with local chiefs which the Germans often failed to honour. Chiefs deviating from the ‘contract’ had their land seized by armed colonial forces. In response to the threat of their grazing land being appropriated, the Herero tribe launched a war of resistance. The German emperor retaliated by launching an attack led by Lieutenant-General von Trotha, who had a reputation for brutality. He had previously fiercely suppressed resistance to German colonisation in East Africa. In this instance, he brought an additional 10,000 colonial troops and chased the Hereros into the dry and arid Kalahari Desert. Once von Trotha had issued his infamous ‘extermination order’, German soldiers were ordered to poison the few waterholes in the area, while others set up guard posts along a 150-mile border. They were ordered to shoot any Herero trying to leave the desert. Hence the Herero uprising was stifled by shooting or enforced slow death in the desert from starvation, thirst and disease. Hereros who did not die by those means perished in labour camps. Though a controversial statistic, historians agree that most of the Herero tribe was wiped out.

Additionally, the history of Kenya provides a good illustration of the double-edged nature of the concept of terrorism. In February 2005 Kenyans who fought in the Mau Mau rebellion initiated legal proceedings against the British government for alleged human rights abuses. Their application reflected the fluidity of the concept of terrorism.
While the colonial government referred to the Mau Mau as ‘terrorists’, the Kenyan Mau Mau Trust in response referred to the British colonialists as terrorists. Appropriately, the dossier carries the title ‘Kenya: White Terror’. In the 1950s more than 200,000 Kenyan freedom fighters and their family members were detained in camps to force them to abandon their nationalist goals. The dossier goes on to catalogue instances of torture and murder perpetrated by British soldiers and locals under their command. Other documented atrocities include castration and blinding of defiant captives, as well as fatal whippings and rape by British soldiers. The report is based on more than 6,000 depositions alleging numerous cases of human rights abuse. The British, on the other hand, portrayed the Mau Mau as ‘wild savages’ who pillaged, raped and rambled around Kenya, rendering life a living nightmare for the British colonialists.\(^{24}\)

Apartheid South Africa was guilty of many instances of colonial terror. During one of the most notorious raids on the Namibian refugee camp of Kassinga in southern Angola on 4 May 1978, South African forces killed over 600 people, most of them women and children.\(^{25}\) South Africa claimed it was fighting a war against SWAPO terrorists, and the operations throughout northern Namibia and southern Angola served to root them out. SWAPO members, on the other hand, referred to themselves as liberation fighters seeking Namibian independence.

**The ‘New Left’**

A new wave of left-wing-inspired terrorism occurred in Europe in the late 1960s in the wake of the student revolt of 1968. In Germany, the *Rote Armee Fraktion* (Red Army Faction, RAF, also known as the Baader-Meinhof Group) gained notoriety. The RAF saw itself as the vanguard of exploited and oppressed peoples in developing countries. Terrorism was the only feasible strategy for weak revolutionary movements. The group attacked several banks and killed a number of bankers, industrialists and judges.\(^{26}\) A few acts of terrorism occurred during the 1980s and early 1990s, but the second and third generation of left-wing terrorists had all but disappeared by the mid-1990s.

The largely middle-class *Brigate Rosse* (Red Brigades) spearheaded Italian left-wing terrorism. The Red Brigades regarded Italy as a bourgeois dictatorship and the language of armed resistance as the only language understood by the ruling class. Within the first ten years of its existence the Red Brigades engaged in some 14,000 terrorist attacks. Attacks on journalists and union officials and the murder of Christian Democrat Prime Minister Aldo Moro alienated many of their erstwhile well-wishers. The Italian Communists showed little sympathy with the terrorists, whom they perceived as harmful to their own political prospects. Both the Italian and German terrorists received logistical help from the Soviet Union through various Eastern European countries. For example, East Germany gave shelter to some of the groupings and assisted them in other ways.\(^{27}\)
‘International terrorism’, ‘state-sponsored terrorism’ and ‘state terrorism’

The catch phrase ‘international terrorism’ was coined in the 1980s. In 1981 the American Secretary of State, Alexander Haig, accused the Soviet Union of “training, funding and equipping international terrorists”, and thus the concept of international terrorism was born. Published in 1982, Claire Sterling’s book *The terror network* epitomised the new interpretation of the concept. Sterling sketched a vast, unified global organisation not only inspired but also directly controlled by the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR). In true Thatcher-Reagan rhetoric the struggle against the ‘evil empire’ was created.

By omitting a definition of terrorism, Sterling managed to incorporate a wide range of groups and incidents in the ‘proof’ of her theory. She minimised the historical, political and doctrinal context of terrorist groups. What she described as the inherent fairness of Western societies meant that the only possible explanation for terrorist action was outside interference, that is, the Soviet Union was sponsoring terrorism in what was then referred to as the ‘Third World’.28


Case study: Airliner hijackings

In reference to Sterling’s work, many theorists agree that terrorism took on an international hue during the 1970s, when the onset of airliner hijackings internationalised the issue. The pioneers of hijackings, the PLO, were seen by their nemesis, Israel, and by several Western states as an international terrorist organisation as they were exiled from the land they claimed.

Bruce Hoffman30 dates the advent of modern, international terrorism to 22 July 1968. On that day three armed Palestinians belonging to the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP) hijacked an Israeli El Al commercial flight en route from Rome to Tel Aviv. Hijackings had occurred in the past, but in this case the Palestinians had hijacked the El Al flight for the purpose of trading the passengers they held hostage for members of their grouping imprisoned in Israel. This incident also differed from previous hijackings in that the origin or nationality of the aircraft mattered: El Al was Israel’s national airline and by extension a ‘symbol’ of the Israeli state. Also, the Israeli
government could not afford to ignore or reject the hijackers’ demands, as this could lead to the destruction of the aircraft and the deaths of all people on board. Furthermore, the combination of a bold political statement and the ‘symbolic’ targeting and crisis led to major media attention. Thus the so-called terrorists discovered that they had the power to awake the media and world opinion, especially when innocent civilians were involved.31

State terrorism in post-colonial Africa

During what is dubbed the ‘Red Terror campaign’, Ethiopian dictator Mengistu Haile Mariam gained notoriety for killing thousands during his reign of Ethiopia. Mengistu headed the junta which in a bloody coup in 1974 overthrew the government of Emperor Haile Selassie. The Dergue regime inaugurated its rule by having shot dead sixty senior officials to the emperor’s government by a firing squad. Both the emperor and the patriarch of the Orthodox Church were secretly killed. Early victims also included members of the Dergue group itself. Colonel Mengistu inaugurated his campaign of Red Terror in 1976 by throwing to the ground before an assembled crowd in the capital, Addis Ababa, bottles filled with a red substance. This was supposed to represent the blood of enemies of the revolution, so-called ‘imperialists’ and ‘counter-revolutionaries’. The campaign targeted young people and students suspected of membership of the Ethiopian People’s Revolutionary Party (EPRP). Thousands were murdered in an organised manner. Neighbourhood committees would meet to discuss how to eliminate individual suspects.32

Cold War rivalries facilitated the Dergue grip on power, as it became the main client of the Soviet bloc in Africa. A 1991 Human Rights Watch report estimates that at least half a million civilians were killed as a result of the Dergue actions. The Dergue regime was deposed in 1991.

A major point of friction relating to the definition of terrorism in the African context is whether terrorism should apply to the actions of states in the same manner that it applies to the actions of non-state actors. For the purposes of this paper, terrorism is examined from all corners and angles. Thus, human rights violations perpetrated by repressive governments in Ethiopia, Egypt, Zimbabwe and elsewhere should be considered terrorist in nature.

Right-wing terrorism

The occurrence of right-wing extremism can best be demonstrated by using the US as an example. The terrorist campaigns of the Ku Klux Klan that were mentioned earlier
indicated the long history of right-wing extremist movements in the US. Initially right-wing extremists were driven by religious and political motivations. Following the integration of Jews in American society after the turn of the 19th century, anti-Semitism became, and remained, a central motivation among right-wing groupings. There are myriad groupings and clans with slight nuances in their ideological underpinnings, but most firmly believe in the superiority of the white Aryan race and want to eliminate or influence all others. While few groups have rejected terrorism and violence in principle, few have engaged in acts of terrorism.\(^{34}\)

Over the last decade, paramilitary groups increasingly orientated towards ‘survivalism’ have mushroomed across the US, with their members receiving training in outdoor skills and guerrilla tactics. There are an estimated 800 militias in the US with a claimed membership of over five million people, but analysts consider this unrealistic and believe the number to be around 50,000. The majority belong to the so-called ‘talking’ militias, who are more concerned with opposing anti-gun legislation than with fomenting revolution. However, the ‘marching’ militias are actively involved in violent seditious activities, with the most prominent act of terror being the Timothy McVeigh\(^{35}\) bombing of the Alfred P Murrah Federal Building in Oklahoma City in April 1995.

Many militia groups’ ‘field manuals’ and other literature quote liberally from Christian scripture in support of their violent activities.\(^{36}\) *The Turner diaries* by Andrew Macdonald is the ‘bible’ for most extreme right terrorists. In fact, Timothy McVeigh closely followed the content of the book when he committed the Oklahoma City bombing. Ultra-right terrorist groups have been enlisting members for a considerable time and have also been stockpiling weapons, partly through raiding armouries and partly through legal purchases. There have been sporadic but numerous attacks.

Right-wing terrorism is not exclusive to the North American domain; in recent years the European Union has witnessed the terrorist pendulum swinging from extreme left to far right. In the former East Germany (formerly known as the German Democratic Republic) an alarming increase in violent right-wing activities has been noted. The attacks are often aimed at foreign workers and asylum seekers. Following the discovery of more than 14 kg TNT, hand grenades and 12.3 kg of explosives in September 2003, German authorities feared the formation of a ‘Brown Army’. It is alleged that members of a Kameradschaft originating in eastern Germany were planning to blow up the Munich Jewish centre during a visit by the German president.\(^{37}\) The suspected attack would have coincided with the anniversary of the Nazis’ 1938 Kristallnacht attacks, when thousands of Jewish targets were attacked and dozens of Jews were murdered.\(^{38}\)

South Africa has its very own example of right-wing terrorism. Suffice to mention here the Boeremag and the spate of bombings that occurred in the northern and central parts of South Africa in 2002.\(^{39}\)
Terrorism inspired by religion?

Most Western theorists seem to concur that today’s terrorism is by and large linked to right-wing extremism, religious nationalism or religious extremism. The terms ‘religious terrorism’ and ‘religious-inspired terrorism’ raise critical questions, though, for example around whether one actually can measure religious motivation.

Bruce Hoffman suggests that religious terrorism has a set of core characteristics. First, it displays a transcendental function rather than a political one: it is executed in direct response to a theological demand or imperative. Second, religious terrorists tend to seek “the elimination of broadly defined categories of enemies”, ignoring the political consequences of indiscriminate killings. Hoffman also maintains that religious terrorists do not attempt to appeal to any constituency other than themselves. He argues that theories that identify religion as the sole motivation for certain acts of terror display a mono-causal fallacy.

Case study: Hezbollah

To underline the dangers associated with mono-causal fallacies, below is a short analysis of Hezbollah (the Party of God).

Western news reporting often refers to Hezbollah as a gang of terrorists driven by religious motivations. Following the 1982 Israeli invasion of Lebanon, Hezbollah became a significant force, soliciting widespread public support. The bombing of the US embassy in Beirut in April 1983, the truck bombing of the US Marine and French forces headquarters in the same year, killing more than 300 troops, as well as a spate of hostage takings, may all fit the label ‘terrorist activities’.

However, other campaigns have guerrilla-style overtones, such as attacks on the military positions of the Israeli army (IDF) and the South Lebanon Army. By the same token, if Hezbollah is described as an organisation of terrorists, then certainly the Israeli-led Sabra-Chatila massacres in 1981, the IDF’s shelling of Beirut and the ongoing attacks on Lebanon at the time of writing also constitute acts of terror.

Hezbollah’s rhetoric has not changed. It is still calling for the total destruction of Israel. What the West refers to as ‘suicide bombings’ (and what some Muslim groupings refer to as ‘martyrdom operations’) have definitely had an effect on the Western psyche and have produced some visible strategic results. For all its messianic overtones, Hezbollah is a political force engaged in a power struggle. The fusion of territorial, ethnic and sectarian impulses in the Lebanese civil war may confuse many analysts as to the real driving force behind this ‘terrorism’.
From concept to definition

The purpose of this section is to highlight the lack of a uniform interpretation of this highly disputed concept. ‘Terrorism’ is a dynamic, highly subjective and mostly Western construct. Over the years it has encompassed many different meanings.

‘Terrorism’ is a concept that traces its roots back through Western political thought. It has come to encompass myriad forms of political violence, such as assassinations, murder, hijackings, repressive government violence, bombings and many more. It has even been retrospectively applied to include acts of violence that happened as far back as the Roman Empire. The understanding of the poly-semantic concept differs, depending whether “one receives the bombs or whether one drops them”.

On a similar note it could be argued that terrorism, like beauty, is in the eye of the beholder.

In its early revolutionary context, terrorism held positive connotations. A negative underpinning emerged with the onset of various terrorist campaigns at the end of the 19th century. At that time, the concept entailed a gruesome act of killing which was pre-meditated and instilled fear in at least some part of the population. Following the French Revolution, the agency of terrorism changed from a state actor to sub-national groups. Under the Nazis and Fascists and during Stalin’s rule, terrorism was firmly placed at the doorstep of the state again, refuting theories that terrorism was only a strategy of the weak. Following World War II, struggles for national self-determination and independence added to the debate of whether there could be a ‘good’ terrorist.

This was epitomised at the height of the Cold War, when the West suggested that the Soviet Union was a state sponsor of terrorism, unmindful of the fact that its very own foreign policy mirrored a similar classification. Colonial terror entailed a distinct form of state terrorism perpetrated during the colonial and post-colonial period. Following the left-wing revolutionary terrorism of the 1970s, there has been a shift to terrorism that is, at least in part, inspired by religion. Colonial terror, state terrorism and state-sponsored terrorism certainly refute the myth that terrorism is a ‘weapon of the weak’ only.

Many more differentiations are possible, including ‘domestic’ and ‘transnational’ terrorism. In fact, some overzealous scholars suggest that environmental activists, anti-abortionists and pro-choice supporters are ‘terrorists’. This may be a case of choosing the moral high ground.

The concept of terrorism has and continues to encompass many meanings and interpretations. It would be difficult to come up with a conclusive and comprehensive interpretation of its meaning which would not offend some or other constituency. John Whitbeck perhaps best captures the difficulty of conceptualising it:
Terrorism is simply a word, a subjective epithet, not an objective reality and certainly not an excuse to suspend all the rules of international law.  

And the definition?

From conceptualisation to definition of the concept: ‘One person’s terrorist is another person’s liberation fighter’ perhaps best captures the problematic nature of the terminology in Africa. It is not surprising that this aphorism emerged within the context of liberation struggles in Southern Africa, where the colonial powers described the freedom fighters as terrorists. The question of definition becomes even more crucial an issue in the wake of the US and British declaration of a global war against terrorism and the assumption that those countries who did not join the campaign were to be considered terrorists themselves. 

But what defines these terrorists?

There certainly have been many attempts to arrive at a universal definition. Schmid and Jongman recorded 109 different definitions in a survey in the mid-1980s, but a present-day study would probably double the number. Definitions range from the highly specific to the overly general. Yet, many Western countries seem to share a common understanding of the types of activities they regard as terrorism and the types of groups and individuals to be categorised as terrorist. 

The international community has been actively seeking consensus on the definition of terrorism for many years. Thirteen separate international conventions on terrorism have been created, each covering a specific type of activity linked to terrorism. Despite UN pressure, broad ratification has been difficult to achieve. The task of creating a comprehensive, binding international convention against terrorism has proved to be a slow and tiresome process, as all fails when the question of defining terrorism is tackled. A major bone of contention is the question of whether terrorism should apply to the actions of states in the same manner that it applies to the actions of non-state actors. 

The closest to a universally accepted definition is perhaps contained in the United Nations General Assembly Resolution 54/110 of 9 December 1999, stating that terrorism comprises “criminal acts intended or calculated to provoke a state of terror in the general public, a group of persons or particular persons for political purposes”. 

Defining terrorism has been a particularly difficult task on the African continent. In fact, most legal drafters stay clear of defining terrorism but rather describe an ‘act of terror’ or ‘terrorist activity’. The 35th Ordinary Session of Heads of State and Government adopted the Organisation of African Unity Convention on the Prevention and
Combating of Terrorism (the Algiers Convention) in July 1999. What differentiates the Algiers Convention from others on terrorism is the exclusion of struggles for national self-determination from its definition.

Article 3(1) provides:

Notwithstanding the provisions of Article 1, the struggles waged by peoples in accordance with the principles of international law for their liberation or self-determination, including armed struggle against colonialism, occupation, aggression and domination by foreign forces shall not be considered as terrorist acts.51

Considering the broad nature of what ‘terrorism’ has come to include, it is hardly surprising that decision-makers have failed to come up with a generally agreed and universal definition. There seems to be at least some consensus on what forms of violence are not captured by the concept.

Perhaps the above should serve as a warning to decision-makers not to hurry any decisions pertaining to counter-terrorism strategies. How can one fight something that one struggles to define? Suffice it to say that if one is not careful, one’s own measures may be turned against oneself, as shown by the demise of the revolutionaries at the end of the French Revolution.

Notes

4 Quoted in Hoffman, ibid, p 5.
6 Hoffman, op cit, p 5.
10 Townshend, op cit, p 54.
11 Laqueur, op cit, p 62.
12 Townshend, op cit, p 54.
14 Initially Mussolini conducted state-sponsored terrorism, which involved him giving support to the right-wing Croatian Ustasha. The Ustasha were fighting for the independence of their country. Their most infamous operation involved the dual murder of King Alexander of Yugoslavia and the French prime minister, Louis Barthou, as they met in Marseilles in April 1934.
15 The question arising here is whether there is a numerical threshold for an act of violence or a repressive system to be classified as terrorist. Many theorists maintain that the Fascists created a reign of terror which undermined the parliamentary system in as early as the 1920s.
16 Hoffman, op cit, p 11.
17 Ibid.
18 Townshend, op cit, p 87.
19 Ibid.
20 Townshend, op cit, p 91.
21 Hoffman, op cit, p 11.
22 Quoted in Hoffman, op cit, pp 11-12.
25 <www.thirdworldtraveler.com/Herman%20/SATerrorism_herman.html> (21 March 2006)
29 For a full account of US interventions consult W Blum, Rogue state, Spearhead, South Africa, 2002.
30 Hoffman, op cit, Inside Terrorism, p 67.
31 Ibid, p 68.
35 Timothy McVeigh, the Oklahoma City bomber, was linked to the Michigan Militia, a 12,000-strong paramilitary survivalist organisation.
36 Hoffman, op cit [WHICH?]?, pp 110–111.
38 <news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/europe/3109966.stm> (20 September 2006)
41 Ibid, p 130.
42 Townshend, op cit, pp 98–104.
43 The US and France withdrew their troops from Lebanon following ‘suicide attacks’ on its installations in the country.
Terrorism, counter-terrorism and norms in Africa

Samuel M Makinda*

Terrorism and counter-terrorism measures have undermined the norms, rules and institutions that underpin security in Africa. Through the use of indiscriminate violence, terrorism has maimed and killed innocent people, threatened jobs and various social activities, and dented democratic processes of resolving conflict in society. Similarly, military and legislative counter-terrorism measures have caused the deaths of innocent people, undermined democratic governance and eroded civil liberties. In the face of these problems, African states need creative and innovative approaches to combat terrorism. A sustainable counter-terrorism strategy should focus on institutions, development and social justice.

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Introduction

This article stems from the recognition that since the 1990s, and especially after September 2001, terrorism has acquired great national and international significance. At the time of this writing, terrorism remained a major security issue in much of Africa. Moreover, for countries that rely on funds from foreigners to survive, terrorism has the potential to deter tourists and foreign investors.

The argument in this article is based on two main hypotheses. The first is that terrorist activities and some of the recent counter-terrorism measures have undermined the norms, rules and institutions in which African security is embedded. Indeed, unless counter-terrorism measures are planned and executed very carefully, they can have the same effect as terrorism on norms, rules and institutions. The second hypothesis is that safeguarding the security of African states and peoples requires policies that undercut the bases of terrorism and, at the same time, enhance norms, rules and institutions. In other words, the so-called war on terror should not be seen simply as a technical, management or military issue, but as a set of political, social and economic initiatives that minimise the conditions that give rise to terrorism while maximising those that strengthen norms, rules and institutions.

The rest of the article is divided into five sections. The first defines norms, rules and institutions. This is followed by an analysis of the relationship between terrorism and norms, rules and institutions. The third section argues that all security ought to be viewed as people-centred and that the distinction between ‘security’ and ‘human security’ is unsustainable. The fourth section examines how counter-terrorism measures, which are underpinned by norms, rules and institutions, could undermine the same norms and institutions. The fifth section suggests a counter-terrorism model for African states based on institutions, development and social justice.

Institutions, norms and rules

One of the propositions of this article is that terrorism threatens our way of life largely because it undermines the norms, rules and institutions in which security is embedded. Therefore, it is necessary that we start by explaining norms, rules and institutions. Different authors have interpreted institutions in various ways. For example, Robert Keohane defines institutions as “related complexes of rules and norms, identifiable in space and time”. He argues that institutions are “persistent sets of rules that constrain activity, shape expectations, and prescribe roles”. Similarly, Hedley Bull defines an institution as “a set of habits and practices shaped towards the realisation of common goals”. He views institutions as “an expression of the element of collaboration among states in discharging their political functions – and at the same time a means of sustaining
this collaboration”. According to Bull, institutions include the balance of power, international law, diplomacy, war and the managerial system of the great powers. John Mearsheimer offers a similar perspective when he claims that an institution is “a set of rules that stipulate the ways in which states should cooperate or compete with each other”. However, he differs with Bull when he argues that “[t]hese rules are typically formalised in international agreements, and are usually embodied in organisations with their own personnel and budgets”.

The above accounts interpret institutions in two senses. In the first, institutions are regarded as ‘stable sets of norms, rules, and principles’ that ‘constitute actors as knowledgeable social agents’ and ‘regulate behaviour’. Thus, several variables that underpin security, such as sovereignty, diplomacy, anarchy, self-help, international law and multilateralism, are institutions. This is consistent with Bull’s and one of Keohane’s definitions. These habits and practices have previously been described as ‘primary’ institutions. In the second sense, institutions are formal organisations like the African Union (AU) and the United Nations (UN). Mearsheimer’s definition applies to such organisations. Keohane also calls such organisations institutions. However, Bull excludes them, arguing that by institution he does “not imply an organisation or administrative machinery”. These organisations have previously been described as ‘secondary’ institutions. Primary institutions underpin secondary institutions. Thus, we attach meaning and significance to an international organisation, such as the AU, because we accept the primary institution on which it is constructed, namely multilateralism. This paper refers to primary institutions as ‘institutions’ and to secondary institutions as ‘international organisations’.

Most accounts of institutions suggest that they “are made of rules and norms”. Moreover, Martha Finnemore and Kathryn Sikkink claim that the difference between norms and institutions lies in aggregation. They argue that “the norm definition isolates single standards of behaviour, whereas institutions emphasise the way in which behavioural rules are structured together and interrelate”. So, what are norms and rules? Norms are historically contingent and shared understandings about appropriate behaviour and practices. They are “collective expectations for the proper behaviour of actors with a given identity”. Using the above definitions, it is plausible to argue that in the present world, norms include the expectation that rich countries will provide development assistance to poor African states, that international society will offer humanitarian assistance in a situation like that in Darfur, Sudan, and that states, including African countries, will help their people enjoy certain levels of freedom, education, shelter, food and affordable health.

Unlike norms, rules are prescriptive and more specific. As Bull argues, rules are “general imperative principles of conduct”. These rules “require or authorise prescribed classes of persons or groups to behave in prescribed ways”. Bull claims that these “rules
may have the status of law, of morality, of custom or etiquette, or simply of operating procedures or ‘rules of the game’.”. Similarly, Stephen Krasner defines rules as “specific prescriptions or proscriptions for actions”. It is plausible to argue that in the present world, global rules include the requirement that states adhere to the UN Charter, respect each other’s sovereignty, and undertake to treat prisoners of war humanely under the Geneva Conventions.

The claim which this article makes – that norms, rules and institutions are shared understandings – requires at least two qualifications. First, there is no unanimity in the way that international actors, including African states, interpret institutions. Instead, there is continuous contestation about the status and roles of norms, rules and institutions. Second, power and interests play an important role in generating, shaping and implementing norms, rules and institutions. While it is plausible to argue that “the meaning of power and the content of interests are largely a function of ideas”, it is the interests and preferences of great powers or hegemonic states that determine the shape of norms, rules and institutions. This implies that existing institutions may not reflect the values, preferences and standards of the African states. Even international law appears to be culturally biased. Both the structures of international law making and the content of the rules of international law privilege Westerners and reflect the interests and preferences of Western societies. As we shall see below, security is embedded in norms and institutions. Therefore, those who shape norms and institutions influence the way security is conceptualised. Indeed, without norms and institutions, there would be no sense of order, security and justice. Even the ‘war on terror’ is intelligible only because international society has constructed norms, rules and institutions.

The norms, rules and institutions that modern terrorism appears to undermine include the following: democratic procedures; human rights, including the right to life; the expectation that political disputes should be resolved peacefully; the laws of war; and the due process of the law.

**Terrorism, norms and institutions**

In general terms, terrorism can be regarded as a technique of warfare that is as old as human society. However, it is through our theoretical frameworks and other values that we make sense of its nature, causes and remedies. For example, realists view terrorism as an irresponsible use of force that must be countered by military power, and they prescribe military responses, including assassinations. However, liberals regard terrorism as a deviation from acceptable norms and prescribe the elimination of its underlying causes, such as poverty and social injustice. Constructivists, on the other hand, view terrorism as primarily an ideational phenomenon. They regard terrorists as purposive social agents that are constituted by ideas, namely their norms, beliefs, and identities.
The terrorists’ material capabilities matter because they affect the possibility of certain outcomes. However, these capabilities and outcomes are themselves circumscribed by ideas. This article contends that understanding, and effectively combating, terrorism requires these three and other theoretical perspectives.

Over the years, the term ‘terrorism’ has been used and abused by policy-makers and analysts alike. Those who seek to delegitimate the goals or tactics of their opponents often label them terrorist. It was for this reason that liberation fighters such as Nelson Mandela were considered terrorists. Like many phenomena that have a history, the meaning of terrorism cannot be fixed in time or space. It is historically contingent and may be based on political, religious, social, cultural, economic, or environmental grievances.

Paul Wilkinson defines terrorism as political violence. This is because terrorism is associated with the arbitrary use of violence. The al-Qaeda terrorists that simultaneously destroyed the US embassies in Nairobi, Kenya, and Dar es Salaam, Tanzania, in August 1998 used violence. The Nairobi attack resulted in 291 deaths, with 5,000 injured, while that in Dar es Salaam resulted in 11 deaths and 77 injuries. Militant Islamic forces used violence in Kenya again in November 2002 when they targeted the Kikambala Paradise Hotel near Mombasa. Algeria, Egypt, Morocco and Tunisia have also experienced terrorist violence in the past few years. Indeed, Egypt has continually experienced terrorist attacks from local and foreign militant groups since 1992, with the latest attack taking place in the Red Sea resort town of Dahab on 22 April 2006.

Gerard Chaliand describes terrorism as “the most violent form of psychological warfare”. This is because terrorists may seek to intimidate a people, society, state or government so that they give in to terrorists’ demands. Terrorism maims and kills innocent people, undermines certainty in social activities, destroys property and undermines the norms, rules and institutions in which security is embedded.

If terrorism undermines norms, rules and institutions, how is it constituted? At one level, terrorist groups may be sponsored by international actors in pursuit of their own selfish interests. For instance, states and non-state actors, Western and non-Western entities, have perpetrated terrorism. States may sponsor terrorism by providing money, logistical support, training, weapons and safe passage to the terrorists. Indeed, many states, including Iran, Iraq, Libya, Pakistan, the US, and the former Soviet Union, have at various times been accused of supporting terrorist organisations in Africa and elsewhere.

At another level, terrorism is constituted by ideas, culture and identity. Indeed, while it is reasonable to argue that terrorism is a threat to norms, rules and institutions, it is also possible to show that terrorism is a product of norms, rules and institutions. Terrorism is driven by the same factors that make security possible: the need for
development, health care, education, self-determination, democratic governance, human rights, emancipation, empowerment and human dignity. Terrorism may be a threat to international law and other conventions, but it is also motivated by some of the values that underpin international norms, rules and institutions.

While terrorists may appear to be bandits whose aim is to cause fear and destruction through violence, they represent the values, interests and identities of the social formations from which they emerge. This implies that, at a certain level, terrorism may be viewed as a contest between conflicting norms and institutions. A large part of the world and some Muslim governments may regard Osama bin Laden as evil, but his interpretation of the dangers that Islam faces in a globalised world resonates with various Islamic communities. Therefore, terrorists should be viewed as part of the social structures, processes and values that have created them. As it will be explained below, the most effective strategy against terrorism is for African states and other countries to devise ways of undermining the social structures, processes and values that produce terrorism. In other words, counter-terrorism should be seen as a contest of ideas.

Security, institutions and norms

Whatever the causes of terrorism in different parts of Africa, there is growing evidence that it is a major security issue which few African states can ignore. Those countries that rely on tourism as an important foreign exchange earner are likely to be targets, and this applies to the majority of African states. Those countries that host Western diplomatic missions, especially UK and US embassies, could also be targets, and again this applies to most African states. Moreover, those countries with porous borders, which is the case with almost all African states, cannot shut out terrorists or effectively monitor them once they are in the country. Thus, terrorism remains a significant security challenge for many African states. However, thinking about security in Africa has not changed. Unfortunately, as Peter Vale has observed, “old understandings reproduce past mistakes.”

How should African states and peoples view security? Security should be viewed as people-centred, and whether states achieve, undermine, or are irrelevant to security is an open question, depending on time and place. Security is the protection of the people and the preservation of their norms, rules, interests, institutions and resources, in the face of military and non-military threats. The latter may include natural disasters, ecological and environmental degradation, poverty, severe economic problems, human rights abuses and the erosion of democratic institutions. This definition includes the preservation of states and the structures, principles and institutions on which states are anchored, but only to the extent that protection of state boundaries and the governing structures and elites is not privileged over people.
Defining security as people-centred raises some questions. First, does this mean that the military should play no role in security? Second, is this people-centred security not the same thing as human security? The answer to the first question is fairly simple: military capacity is one of the important means by which people and political communities can protect themselves and their norms, rules and institutions, but it is just one of the means and is not an end. Security is the end.

Addressing the second question is more complicated. The term ‘human security’ came into vogue in 1994, but the issues that it incorporates had been canvassed under ‘security’ for decades. The United Nations Development Programme’s (UNDP) definition of human security states: “For most people today, a feeling of insecurity arises more from worries about daily life than from the dread of a cataclysmic world event. Job security, income security, health security, environmental security, security from crime, these are the emerging concerns of human security all over the world.” The Commission on Human Security defines human security as the protection of “the vital core of all human lives in ways that enhance human freedoms and human fulfilment”. It further states: “Human security means protecting fundamental freedoms – freedoms that are the essence of life.” The Commission on Human Security also states that human security entails the protection of people from critical and pervasive threats, and the use of “processes that build on people’s strengths and aspirations”. Moreover, it argues that human security “means creating political, social, environmental, economic, military and cultural systems that together give people the building blocks of survival, livelihood and dignity”.

These views resemble earlier formulations of security. For instance, in 1984 Gwyn Prins argued:

Security is produced by general social well-being. Social-well being is the sum of individual fulfilment, which depends upon the civilised arbitration of conflicts of interest in society, which in turn depends upon a just provision of goods, services and opportunities for all. Security is thus intimately bound up with another important concept ... freedom. Freedom from want, freedom of thought, freedom from fear: life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness. These are the minimum requirements of security ... So security is a state of mind, which also contains future hope.

Prins’ definition was not labelled ‘human security’ because some scholars at the time believed that the meaning of security was too narrow and needed to be expanded. Third World scholars, for instance, claimed that security in developing countries needed to be viewed in relation to efforts to meet the basic needs: food, shelter, clothing, clean water and health. For example, Al-Mashat defined security in terms of “tranquility and well-being.” Even in developed countries, some scholars argued that a proper definition of security needed to incorporate the protection of human rights.
A proponent of human security, Caroline Thomas, posits that human security “has both qualitative and quantitative aspects” and that it is “pursued for the majority of humankind as part of a collective, most commonly the household, sometimes the village or the community defined along other criteria such as religion or caste”. She argues: “At one level [human security] is about the fulfillment of basic material needs, and at another it is about the achievement of human dignity, which incorporates personal autonomy, control over one’s life, and unhindered participation in the life of the community.” Thomas observes that human security is “engaged directly with discussions of democracy at all levels, from the local to the global”. She claims that the achievement of human security goes beyond basic needs and requires emancipation from oppressive structures. Thomas’ view of human security is similar to her earlier definition of ‘Third World security’, which includes “internal security of the state through nation-building” and “secure systems of food, health, money and trade”.

The thrust of this article is in agreement with those who believe that security should deal with the concerns that the UNDP, the Commission on Human Security, Thomas and others raise. However, its criticism of the term ‘human security’ is in three parts. First, it argues that there is no need for the label ‘human security’. In this era, in which human rights and democracy have been recognised as global entitlements, no definition of security should ignore people’s needs and aspirations. Public policies, including military and security policies, are expected to be people-centred, and those that are not, should be considered misguided. Second, the idea of human security may unwittingly legitimise security that is not people-friendly. If it is acknowledged that security ought to have a human face, then the task ahead is to ensure that all security policies reflect such concerns. The discourse of human security indirectly suggests that it is legitimate to have, for example, something called military security, which may not take into account human rights and the social well-being of the people. Third, as it has already been indicated, human security is similar to the proposals for an expanded security agenda that emerged in the 1970s and 1980s. The notions of security articulated by Prins, Al-Mashat, Thomas and other scholars in the 1980s need to be intermarried with those underpinning the discourse of human security to redefine all security as people-centred.

Definitions of human security suggest that this form of security is embedded in norms and institutions. Its legitimacy derives from the fact that the issues that it canvasses – democratic governance, development, emancipation, empowerment, human rights, clean water, food, health care, job security, shelter and education – are accepted as global norms. If human security is embedded in the global normative structure, it should be seen as the only legitimate form of security. As the only legitimate form of security, it does not need to be qualified by the term ‘human’. Hence the contention that all security ought to be viewed as people-centred.

In the present era, is security enhanced or undermined by counter-terrorism measures? The next section addresses this question.
Counter-terrorism, norms and institutions

Counter-terrorism may have initially emerged as a reaction to terrorism, but it has become a continuing practice that anticipates, prevents or pre-empts terrorist activities. In principle, counter-terrorism measures are conceived within norms, rules and institutions, but, in practice, the template that African states have been required to adopt since 2001 has the potential to undermine universally accepted norms, rules and institutions.

Indeed, since the 11 September 2001 terrorist attacks on the World Trade Center in New York and the Pentagon in Washington, DC, the US and the UN, especially through the Security Council's Counter-Terrorism Committee, have initiated wide-ranging counter-terrorism measures which African states and other countries are expected to implement. Most of these measures are technical and legal in nature, and range from the tightening of financial, aviation and border controls, to the protection of critical infrastructure and communications. In their quest to suppress dissent and, in some cases legitimate political activities, various African countries have passed laws that go far beyond constraining the terrorists.

The measures that African states have taken individually to detect, deter, arrest and prosecute terrorists may be important in the short term. However, if such measures provided a lasting solution to terrorism, Israel would not be having problems with Hamas and Hezbollah. An analysis of the African landscape reveals that many states have poorly trained security and intelligence agencies, porous borders and enormous governance problems. Some of those with long coastlines on the Indian and Atlantic oceans do not even have boats to patrol their coastlines. Even if these structural and technical weaknesses were addressed, terrorism would remain unless the social, economic and political causes were eliminated.

Several African countries, from Egypt to South Africa, and from Nigeria to Kenya and Uganda, have adopted legislative anti-terrorism measures that, in varying degrees, erode human rights and civil liberties. These include Uganda's Suppression of Terrorism Act (2002), Tanzania's Anti-Terrorism Law (2003), Kenya's International Crimes Bill (2003 and 2005) and South Africa's Protection of Constitutional Democracy Against Terrorism and Related Activities Bill (2004). Kenya has also established a National Counter-Terrorism Centre, but there have been claims about a rift between the Kenyan government and its donors over the priorities of the centre. Although the South African anti-terrorism bill had been under consideration for about nine years before President Thabo Mbeki signed it into law in November 2004, it fits into the pattern of other legislative measures by African states, which were required by Security Council Resolution 1373 of September 2001. The common feature of these legislative mechanisms is that they threaten human rights, and they do so more seriously in countries that do not have human rights legislations or other human rights protective mechanisms.
Of the 52 AU member states, only 20 have established human rights commissions or similar bodies.

Amidst official claims that democratic governments cannot, and should not, give in to terrorists, several African, and non-African, governments have adopted counter-terrorism measures that show that terrorists have compelled them to undertake steps that inconvenience their own citizens. The terrorists who masterminded the events of 11 September 2001 may not have intended to cause wholesale changes in the governance structures of Western countries, let alone those of other countries, but the legislative measures adopted by various African countries suggest that these events have caused political consequences far beyond the terrorists’ dreams.

In the 1970s, Paul Wilkinson claimed that the “primary objective of counter-terrorist strategy must be the protection and maintenance of liberal democracy and the rule of law”. He posited that “this aim over-rides in importance even the objective of eliminating terrorism and political violence”. Contrary to Wilkinson’s thesis, the post-September 2001 counter-terrorism measures have undermined the norms, rules and institutions that have been threatened by terrorists.

What, then, is the way forward?

**Proposed counter-terrorism model**

This counter-terrorism model is based on four pillars: the traditional approach, institutions, development, and social justice. These options overlap and they are by no means the only ones that could be useful. Some situations may require one approach rather than the other, but whatever option is taken it is likely to have greater international legitimacy if it reflects consensus in international society and is sensitive to norms, rules and institutions.

The ‘traditional’ counter-terrorism approach relies on the use of intelligence agencies, the police and the judiciary. It does not address the root causes of terrorism. It offers only a band-aid solution, but it is less harmful than the George W Bush-generated template. In the past, this approach was effective in containing terrorism in Germany, India, Italy, the UK, and other countries, but it did not involve the erosion of civil liberties. Some scholars and policy-makers might argue that in the aftermath of the events of September 2001, the traditional approach does not work. Those who would make this point would be ignoring the fact that the terrorist attacks of 11 September 2001 were possible partly because of the failure of US intelligence agencies to share information. Unfortunately, the US and other governments over-reacted and instituted far-reaching counter-terrorism measures even before the cause of the 11 September 2001 problem had been fully investigated. The
legislative measures that have been undertaken undermine democratic governance and fundamental freedoms, and inconvenience the citizens of democratic states. The use of the traditional approach would have several advantages. First, it would demonstrate that governments have not panicked or been intimidated by the terrorists to inconvenience their own citizens. Second, it would create an atmosphere for the enhancement of democratic governance and basic freedoms while combating terrorism.

The ‘institutional’ counter-terrorism option is based on the understanding that institutions can reduce the likelihood of terrorism in various ways. First, institutions constitute the identity and regulate the behaviour of actors, including governments and terrorists. Without institutions, there would be no sense of order, security and justice.

Second, to the extent that institutions also constitute terrorism, the challenge is for policy makers to devise ways of promoting those institutions that promote human solidarity and encourage the ‘self’ to respect the ‘other’. Keohane argues that one of the functions of institutions is to limit the use of large-scale violence and “to provide a guarantee against the worst forms of abuse … so that people can use their capabilities for productive purposes”.36 Disseminating and enhancing institutions that promote human solidarity can help remould the identities of would-be terrorists and modify the behaviour that leads to terrorism. Such efforts may include providing education, showing respect for cultural, ethnic or other differences, and giving support to the struggle for self-determination and the promotion of democratic governance.

The ‘development and social justice options’ are the most appropriate in Africa. Development and poverty alleviation have been part of the global normative structure since the 1940s. However, the meaning of ‘development’ has evolved. After World War II, it was associated with self-sustained economic growth and measured in GDP figures. Development also referred to attempts to redistribute resources between countries. Since the 1980s, the term development has come to refer to both qualitative and quantitative changes in a variety of areas: economic, environmental, political, cultural, social and human. At first, this effort to expand beyond economic-oriented development included provision of basic needs such as shelter, water, sanitation, education and health, which are a part of social justice. Social justice has been defined as “a morally justifiable distribution of material or social rewards, notably wealth, income and social status”.37 The expanded definition of development is reflected in the UNDP’s *Human Development Report*, which, since 1990, has listed maternal and infant mortality rates, access to health, education and safe water, as indicators of a country’s development.

Development has further expanded to include human empowerment, especially increased participation by the people in the management of their economic, political, cultural and social affairs. As Boutros-Ghali argues, development “can only succeed if it responds to the needs of the people, and if it articulates these needs into a coherent
Development includes capacity building in its broadest sense, thereby implying the introduction of new ideas, standards, institutions, norms and techniques of overcoming obstacles to human progress. It also includes democratisation, an independent judiciary and an open, responsible and accountable government. Thus, development provides the basis for security.

Moreover, development, poverty alleviation and social justice can reduce the chances of terrorism by facilitating human empowerment while at the same time eliminating the conditions that produce political discontent. As Wolfensohn says:

The international community has already acted strongly, by confronting terrorism directly and increasing security. But those actions by themselves are not enough. We will not create that better and safer world with bombs or brigades alone.39

He goes on:

We must recognise that while there is social injustice on a global scale – both between states and within them; while the fight against poverty is barely begun in too many parts of the world; while the link between progress in development and progress toward peace is not recognised – we may win a battle against terror but we will not conclude a war that will yield enduring peace.40

Poverty per se does not cause terrorism, but it could combine with other factors to ignite political violence. Wolfensohn says: “Poverty is our greatest long-term challenge ... poverty which, while it does not necessarily lead to violence ... can provide a breeding ground for the ideas and actions of those who promote conflict and terror.”41 Moreover, poverty, combined with the politics of identity, can fuel terror. People, like those who masterminded the events of 11 September 2001, do not have to come from poverty-stricken homes in order to identify with the poor. These terrorists might have been rich, but they defined their identities in terms of the aspirations of those who had been denied justice in the Middle East. Development, poverty alleviation and social justice can help people redefine their identities and refocus their interests and energies, and, thereby, reduce the chances of terrorism.

**Conclusion**

Terrorism and counter-terrorism measures have undermined the norms, rules and institutions that underpin security. Through the use of indiscriminate violence, terrorism has killed innocent people, threatened jobs and dented democratic processes of resolving
conflict in society. Similarly, military and legislative counter-terrorism measures have led to the deaths of innocent people, undermined democratic governance and eroded civil liberties. In the face of these problems, African states need a creative and innovative approach to counter-terrorism. A sustainable counter-terrorism formula should include options for undermining terrorism while enhancing the normative structure in which security is embedded. Such a counter-terrorism strategy needs to shift from the short-term emphases on political suppression and military force, to a long-term values-oriented formula that is based on institutions, development and social justice.

Notes

2 Ibid, p 384.
4 Ibid.
5 Ibid.
7 Ibid.
10 Bull, op cit, p 71
11 Makinda, op cit, p 366.
14 Ibid.
15 Bull, op cit, p 6.
16 Ibid.
17 Ibid, p 52.
19 Wendt, op cit, p 96.
Assessing the role of the African Union in preventing and combating terrorism in Africa

Martin Ewi and Kwesi Aning*

The period after 9/11 can be characterised as the terrorism moment in world history. Every actor in international relations – the state, regional, continental and international as well as civil society organisations – has been mobilised to combat what, apparently has been conceived as a common security threat to humanity. The transformation of the Organisation of African Unity (OAU) into the African Union (AU) was a divine coincidence at a time when multilateralism and international cooperation were being challenged by the threat of terrorism. In the post-9/11 period, the main concern of the Union has been to reinforce and implement existing counter-terrorism instruments adopted at the continental level in coordination with states and regional organisations. This article discusses and appraises the endeavours undertaken by the AU and its precursor organisation, the OAU, in tackling and dealing with the threat of terrorism despite limitations to its human and financial resources. In recognition of the nature of the states in Africa and the challenges facing the Union, we argue that the role of the AU remains critical in order to fill the gaps where its member states or regional mechanisms are lacking. In this regard, we stress that the role of the AU should be complementary and serve as an interface between the continent and the international community, including the United Nations.

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Introduction

Terrorism has always been a threat to security in Africa, but the serious involvement of intergovernmental organisations in efforts to address the threat is a fairly recent development. The Organisation of African Unity (OAU) was active in combating mercenarism and other problems of subversion on the continent, but it was not until the beginning of the 1990s that terrorism was actually put on the agenda of the OAU. The bombing of American embassies in Kenya and Tanzania in August 1998 and the tragic terrorist attacks on America on 11 September 2001 (or what has been captioned 9/11) were vicious illustrations of the magnitude of the threat that the continent and the world at large must face in the 21st century. The international anti-terrorism campaign that emerged in response to 9/11, and particularly the unprecedented international solidarity that ensued, brought to the fore the important role that international and regional organisations could play, as agents of inter-state cooperation and coordination of regional counter-terrorism activities.

The transformation of the OAU into the African Union (AU) in the wake of the global war on terrorism (GWOT) as declared by President George W Bush was never more timely. At that moment the world was in need of unity and solidarity. The defining characteristic of the new war on terrorism was the emergence of a Manichean view of international politics divided between ‘the Coalition of the Willing’ and ‘the Axis of Evil’ – in other words, countries and people were either against or with the terrorists. Terrorism therefore represented the first global challenge to the new AU, whose foremost objectives include the promotion of collective security and common values in Africa, as enshrined in its Constitutive Act. Like rain that spares no roof, terrorism in Africa was viewed as a threat without boundaries. As President Denis Sassou N’Guesso of Congo (Brazzaville) rightly puts it: "Faced with terrorism, we are all in the same boat and under the same threat," In this regard, the AU was, by virtue of its Constitutive Act, tasked to play a prominent and leadership role in the fight against terrorism on the continent.

A systemic viewpoint conceptualises the fight against terrorism at four levels: national, regional, international and global. The primacy of the state remains unchallenged and, indeed, central in combating terrorism at all four levels. Therefore, whatever role intergovernmental organisations play in the fight against terrorism, it is what has been relegated to them by states based on the calculus of comparative advantage.

Any intergovernmental organisation involved in the fight against terrorism in Africa must have to confront, at the practical level, the debate which emerged after 9/11 as to whether terrorism, in its current state and manifestations, constitutes a serious threat to the continent on the same scale as poverty, the health crisis and internal conflicts. Those who argue that terrorism does not constitute such a threat often claim that the ‘real’ terrorists in Africa are poverty, hunger and pandemic diseases such as HIV/AIDS, malaria and tuberculosis, which kill Africans en masse.
The essence of this article is to discuss and appraise the endeavours undertaken by the AU and its precursor organisation, the OAU, in tackling and dealing with terrorism when the issue was neither fashionable nor at the top of the political agenda of powerful states and many international organisations. Our foremost intention is to discuss some of the strengths and limitations of the AU’s capacity to deal with the threat of terrorism in Africa. In so doing, one must take into account the geo-political and economic contexts of the continent and the fact that the extent to which international organisations could act on behalf of their member states or even as autonomous entities depends on a number of factors including the level of integration and the amount of sovereignty or power that their member states are willing to yield to them.

We argue that the role of the AU is critical for preventing and combating terrorism in Africa, in order to fill the gaps where its member states or regional mechanisms are lacking. In this regard, the role of the AU should be complementary and serve as an interface between the continent and the international community, including the United Nations (UN). For the AU to perform this task efficiently it must first overcome some of its internal shortcomings and build its own financial and human resource capacities.

The AU’s fight against terrorism in Africa should not be viewed in isolation from the new strategic orientation taking place on the continent. The Constitutive Act of the AU provides a basis for preventing and combating terrorism. Article 4(o) calls for “respect for the sanctity of human life, condemnation and rejection of impunity and political assassination, acts of terrorism and subversive activities”, which is underscored in the preamble as the need to promote peace, security and stability as a prerequisite for the implementation of Africa’s development agenda. Other aspects of an emerging peace and security architecture on the continent, particularly the Peace and Security Council (PSC) of the AU, including the AU Non-Aggression and Common Defence Pact and the Common African Defence and Security Policy (CADSP), have identified terrorism as one of the common threats to Africa.

We begin with a survey of the measures adopted by the OAU prior to 9/11 and those adopted by the AU after 9/11 within the context of the GWOT. We then examine the internal AU structure responsible for combating terrorism. The article concludes with an assessment of and recommendations for strengthening the role of the AU in the prevention and combating of terrorism.

**Historical overview of the AU’s involvement in preventing and combating terrorism in Africa**

What is considered as terrorism in Africa has evolved from its permutations in the years before independence. During the struggle for independence and decolonisation,
many of the activities of the freedom fighters were labelled terrorist. This is different from what many would consider terrorism today, particularly within the context of the 1999 OAU Convention, which makes a distinction between acts of terrorism and the acts of people fighting for self-determination. Africa has long espoused the imperative to eradicate the phenomenon of terrorism. Some African states developed counter-terrorism legislations (or other measures) as far back as the 1950s. African states also took active part in the debate when the issue was first on the agenda of the UN General Assembly in 1972 and continued to play a major role in the debate. It was not until 1992, however, that these concerns began to take on concrete manifestations at the continental level. The then OAU, at its 28th Ordinary Session of the Assembly of Heads of State and Government, adopted decision AHG/Res 213 (XXVIII) on strengthening cooperation and coordination among African states to fight the phenomenon of extremism in all its forms and manifestations, particularly extremism based on religion, politics and tribalism.

An important achievement of the OAU in its early involvement in the fight against terrorism or in its general efforts aimed at promoting peace, stability, security and cooperation among its member states was the adoption of a Declaration on a Code of Conduct for Inter-African Relations, at the 30th Ordinary Session of the Assembly, held in Tunis, Tunisia, in June 1994. It denounced, among others, extremism and terrorism particularly based on political sectarianism, tribalism, ethnicity or religion as undermining the moral and human values of peoples, particularly fundamental freedoms and tolerance. Two important provisions relating to terrorism which form the nexus of Africa’s counter-terrorism regime were as follows:

We unequivocally condemn as criminal all terrorist acts, methods and practices, and resolve to step up our cooperation in order to erase this blot on the security, stability and development of our countries, which poses as much threat to us as arms racketeering and drug peddling.

Furthermore:

In this regard, we reiterate our commitment to abide by the obligation incumbent on us by virtue of international law, to refrain from organizing, instigating, facilitating, financing, encouraging or tolerating activities that are terrorist in nature or intent, and from participating in such activities in whatsoever manner, and to take necessary operational measures to ensure that Member States’ territories do not serve as training camps or indoctrination centres for terrorist elements and movements and sanctuaries for the planning and organization of terrorist and destabilization activities directed against the territorial integrity and security of Member States of their nationals.
The Declaration on the Code of Conduct, and particularly these two paragraphs, marked a turning point in responding to terrorism. It established standards and a continental agenda for preventing and combating terrorism, which was not only condemned but also criminalised in Africa. It became an offence to organise, instigate, facilitate, finance, encourage, or tolerate terrorist activities or harbour terrorist elements.

It also demonstrated early attempts at the continental level to identify and address the root causes of terrorism, providing a framework for interstate cooperation in Africa based on common standards for combating terrorism. In this regard, the declaration rejected religious and other forms of extremism and addressed specific issues relating to the promotion of human rights, equality and justice, democracy, tolerance, transparency and development.9

Towards a legislative framework

Adopting the Declaration on the Code of Conduct for Inter-African Relations should be seen as the first step in the development of an African counter-terrorism regime. Increasing terrorist activities around the world throughout the 1990s gave impetus to endeavours aimed at outlawing terrorist acts in Africa and finding the most appropriate machinery to do so. Until then, the declaration remained the foremost continental instrument for combating terrorism.10

The attacks in Kenya and Tanzania in August 1998 demonstrated the new dimension of terrorism vis-à-vis the growing trends in globalisation and innovations in science, technology and communication. It became clear that terrorism in Africa was not only dependent on internal factors, but also on the international environment: African security was also a function of global security. In view of this security paradigm and its emphasis on human security, African leaders reviewed the existing framework and adopted a more robust, proactive and binding instrument for combating terrorism. There was a general desire for a legal framework that would protect civilians against certain forms of violent offences by individuals or states, enhance state security, resolve the issue of state jurisdiction over such offences, provide a framework for extradition and interstate cooperation, as well as commit African states to common standards for preventing and combating terrorism on the continent, particularly the required legislative and executive measures to be taken at the national, regional and continental levels.

These concerns culminated in the adoption of the OAU Convention on the Prevention and Combating of Terrorism (the Algiers Convention) by the 35th Ordinary Session of Heads of State and Government held in Algiers, Algeria, in July 1999. Since much has been written on the convention and its important provisions,11 it suffices here to emphasise that it was the first continental legislative instrument on preventing and combating terrorism in Africa which provided an African definition of terrorism.12
In order to reconcile the historical ambiguities implicit in the use of the term ‘terrorism’ in Africa, it differentiated acts of terrorism from the acts committed by people in their struggle for self-determination. This was a significant achievement for a continent that had foreign control and colonialism for centuries and which was still struggling to protect the sovereignty and territorial integrity of its states. Thus the definition did not emerge from a vacuum but rather from a concrete historical context in Africa and the principles enunciated in the Charter of the OAU. Based on Africa’s unique historical experience, it was therefore necessary to separate the two concepts, not only for the sake of clarity but also for legal jurisprudence. Critical questions arising with respect to the definition relate to whether the activities of combatants including the armed forces of a state could constitute acts of terrorism and whether acts of terrorism are only committed in non-conflict areas. Although it defines terrorism, it does not define who is a ‘terrorist’ per se. If the definition were to end at Article 1 of the convention, it would be broad enough to cover acts committed in conflict and non-conflict areas. However, Article 3 prevents the application of the definition to the struggle waged by peoples in accordance with the principles of international law for their liberation or self-determination, including armed struggle against colonialism, occupation, aggression and domination by foreign forces, shall not be considered as terrorist acts. The only restriction to the definition in Article 1 is Article 3.14

The convention also identifies a number of terrorist offences and identifies areas of cooperation among member states, as well as guidelines for extradition. Indeed, as Hamid Boukrif observed, the convention was a political victory for Africa and a supplementary legal instrument for judicial and mutual cooperation, as well as a binding commitment on the part of African countries to take charge of their own security problems and to combat the phenomenon of violence and organised crime. At a time when the international community was starkly divided on the issue, the convention united African countries behind a common position for negotiating an international convention.

**Post-9/11 and the African Union’s counter-terrorism activities**

The development of the AU’s counter-terrorism activities in the post-9/11 period was shaped by a number of both continental and international events. At the international level, two significant developments merit attention. The first was the adoption on 28 September 2001 of the landmark UN Security Council Resolution 1373 based on Chapter VII of the UN Charter and the establishment of a Counter-Terrorism Committee (CTC). As part of the follow-up to that resolution the CTC convened a special meeting with international, continental and regional organisations on 6 March 2003 to define their roles and to strengthen international cooperation in the global campaign against terrorism.
One of the major concerns of the AU, particularly at the advent of the GWOT, was to protect and maintain Africa's focus on development and to reduce or prevent any adverse effect that such a war may bring to bear on African development. This was explicitly expressed at the first summit of African leaders in response to 9/11, held in Dakar (Senegal), which adopted a Declaration Against Terrorism on 17 October 2001. An extraordinary session of the Central Organ of the Mechanism for Conflict Prevention, Management and Resolution, at ministerial level, met in New York on 11 November 2001, in a follow-up to the Dakar Summit.

The first major activity undertaken by the AU in the post-9/11 period was the convening of the First High-Level Intergovernmental Meeting on the Prevention and Combating of Terrorism in Africa, in Algiers, Algeria, from 11 to 14 September 2002, in follow-up to the two preceding meetings mentioned above.

Putting in place an anti-terrorism unit

One of the initial activities of the AU Commission in response to 9/11 was to recruit an anti-terrorism officer in December 2002 to serve as a focal point within the AU Commission on counter-terrorism matters. The focal point was an initial step towards the establishment of an anti-terrorism unit within the commission that would provide technical capacity to pursue terrorism systematically.

The Protocol to the Algiers Convention

Following concerns that the convention has inherent weaknesses which could impair implementation, the Second High-Level Intergovernmental Meeting requested the AU Commission to prepare an additional protocol to the convention. The main concerns were that the convention did not provide for an implementation mechanism and adequate measures for the suppression of terrorist financing, and was insufficient in its provisions for human rights protection and the risks of terrorists acquiring weapons of mass destruction.

It was in recognition of these shortcomings of the 1999 OAU Convention that the 3rd Ordinary Session of the Assembly held in Addis Ababa in July 2004 decided unanimously to adopt the Protocol, to supplement the 1999 OAU Convention.

The Plan of Action on the Prevention and Combating of Terrorism in Africa

The purpose of the Plan of Action on the Prevention and Combating of Terrorism (the Plan of Action) was to provide a concrete expression to the commitments and obligations
of African countries, to combat terrorism and to enhance their access to appropriate counter-terrorism resources. It sought to provide robust guidelines and strategies for collective and individual state action against terrorism by incorporating continental and international standards for combating terrorism with particular attention to the provisions of Resolution 1373. The Plan of Action was conceived as a handbook or an elaborate document of strategies for African counter-terrorism endeavours. It built on the conviction that the eradication of terrorism requires joint action and a firm commitment by member states to pursue common objectives and coordination particularly in the areas of border surveillance, illicit import/export and stockpiling of arms and explosives. It also assumed that “severe conditions of poverty and deprivation experience by large sections of African population provide a fertile breeding ground for terrorist extremism”. An innovative contribution of the Plan of Action is its provision for the establishment, in Algiers, of an African Centre for the Study and Research on Terrorism (ACSRT), as discussed below.

The establishment of the African Centre for the Study and Research on Terrorism

Pursuant to paragraphs 19 to 21 of the AU Plan of Action, the AU Commission officially launched the African Centre for the Study and Research on Terrorism (ACSRT), headquartered in Algiers, Algeria, on the occasion of the Second High-Level Intergovernmental Meeting on the Prevention and Combating of Terrorism in Africa, held from 13 to 14 October 2004. The declaration adopted by the meeting underscores the significance of the ACSRT as an achievement in collective efforts in Africa to outlaw and eradicate the scourge of terrorism in Africa.

The ACSRT, established as a structure of the AU Commission and the Peace and Security Council, is the technical arm of the Union on matters relating to terrorism and the implementation of the AU counter-terrorism programme. The mandate of the Centre is to centralise information, studies of and analyses of terrorism and terrorist groups, as well as to initiate research and develop training programmes by organising training schedules, meetings and symposia with the assistance of international partners, with the view to raise maximum awareness, prevent and eliminate the threat of terrorism to the continent. As a centre of excellence, it was conceived to provide the AU with the necessary technical expertise for realising its counter-terrorism objectives, as well as translating the continental and international commitments of member states into concrete actions.

Since its inauguration in 2004 the centre has organised two meetings of focal points and is currently working on a network programme that would link all the ACSRT focal points in the 53 AU member states and regional economic committees (RECs).
Organs of the African Union responsible for preventing and combating terrorism

Terrorism is a cross-cutting issue. As such, all the agencies and organs of the AU, including the Assembly, Executive Council, and Pan-African Parliament, are expected to contribute to the efforts of the Union. The role being played by the AU in preventing and combating terrorism, as contained in the legal instruments of the Union, is divided among the Peace and Security Council (PSC), the AU Commission and the RECs.

The PSC is the supreme organ of the AU charged with the responsibility to prevent and combat terrorism in Africa. Article 7(i) of the Protocol Relating to the Establishment of the PSC gives it the power to ensure the implementation of the Algiers Convention and other relevant international, continental and regional conventions and instruments, as well as to harmonise and coordinate efforts at the regional and continental levels to combat international terrorism.

With regard to the AU Commission, Paragraph 17 of the Plan of Action and Article 5 of the Protocol specify the responsibilities of the Commission, which include, inter alia:

- The provision of technical assistance on legal and law enforcement matters, including matters related to combating the financing of terrorism;
- The preparation of model laws and guidelines to help member states to formulate legislation and related measures for preventing and combating terrorism; and
- Follow-up with member states and with regional mechanisms on the implementation of decisions taken by the PSC and other organs of the AU on terrorism-related matters.

The PSC Protocol refers to RECs as part of the overall security architecture of the AU. Article 6 of the Protocol to the Algiers Convention outlines the role of RECs in implementing the AU counter-terrorism programme. It stipulates, among other things, that RECs shall:

- Harmonise and coordinate national measures to prevent and combat terrorism in their respective regions;
- Establish modalities for information sharing; and
- Assist member states to implement regional, continental and international instruments for preventing and combating terrorism.
Assessing the role of the African Union in preventing and combating terrorism in Africa

In the period before 9/11 the OAU played a very limited role in preventing and combating terrorism. It served mainly as a political platform for expressing collective will. While the OAU was able to adopt a common legal framework for combating terrorism as embodied in the 1999 OAU Convention, it was unable to implement its decisions and instruments. It lacked a follow-up mechanism and its secretariat in Addis Ababa was given no specific role or mandate to coordinate activities of member states relating to counter-terrorism. The actions of the OAU, however, helped define the political direction of the continent on terrorism and counter-terrorism matters.

In the post-9/11 period, the AU has acted mainly as a catalyst to empower states and RECs to meet their obligations under continental and international counter-terrorism instruments. The systemic stratification of actors and the distribution of responsibilities in the GWOT compelled the AU to redefine its role and situate its activities within the global and continental realities in Africa. Consequently, the Union has increasingly seen its role as a clearinghouse for norms and standards setting for the fight against terrorism in Africa, as well as the interface between the continent and the international community. The adoption of the Plan of Action, the Protocol to the 1999 OAU Convention and a number of counter-terrorism decisions including ongoing efforts to prepare a Comprehensive African Anti-Terrorism Model Law, confirm the role of the Union as a standard setter.

Since its inception in July 2002, the central functions of the AU as far as terrorism is concerned have been to coordinate and harmonise the activities of states and of the RECs, as well as to promote interstate cooperation in Africa in the area of counter-terrorism. In performing this role the Union has been organising fora of intergovernmental experts and senior government officials, such as the serialised High-Level Intergovernmental Meeting. The Chairperson of the Commission has also utilised his regular reports to the policy organs of the AU to inform the Union on the status of terrorism in the world and in Africa in particular, and to seek policy directions for the AU counter-terrorism programme.

The establishment of the ACSRT has been the major achievement of the AU with respect to the concrete implementation of its counter-terrorism regimes. The ACSRT gives the AU a technical capacity to implement its regimes. With its research capacity, the ACSRT can be proactive in preventing terrorism in Africa.

The establishment of a committee for intelligence and security in Africa (CISSA) within the Commission to coordinate intelligence activities of member states is indicative of the progress being made to enhance cooperation and information-sharing at all levels.
Through its advocacy role, the AU also facilitates technical assistance delivery to its member states, by acting as an interface or a go-between for African states and technical assistance providers such as the UN Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), the International Monetary Fund (IMF), the Counter Terrorism Committee (CTC) and other international institutions. In this regard, almost all member states of the AU were, either directly or indirectly, part of a technical assistance delivery programme offered by these institutions between September 2001 and December 2004. Ongoing efforts within the commission to draft a Comprehensive African Anti-terrorism Model Law will further contribute to efforts to consolidate and harmonise national legislations relating to terrorism.

Challenges and shortcomings

The experience of the AU in preventing and combating terrorism in Africa has shown some limitations in its role. First, the AU is yet to overcome a legacy of the OAU, namely a tendency to adopt landmark decisions and make pronouncements without ensuring effective and appropriate follow-up. Thus, the main challenge remains the full operationalisation of the counter-terrorism instruments and relevant decisions of the AU policy organs.

The AU still lacks the capacity to develop a list of perpetrators of terrorist acts as provided for in the Plan of Action. This is compounded by the lack of a regional or continental arrest warrant which could permit the AU to investigate, arrest and detain persons accused or suspected of terrorist acts.

The AU is also unable to verify which member states are complying with or actually implementing the AU and international counter-terrorism regimes and which ones are not. Though member states are required to report to the chairperson of the commission on their activities, many are still reluctant to do so, complaining of reporting fatigue.26

The AU’s capacity to deal with human rights issues arising from states’ counter-terrorism activities has also been inadequate. Although there are some human rights provisions in the AU regimes, the Union is yet to take action to ensure compliance.27 This problem is also due to the lack of coordination between the AU Commission in Addis Ababa and the African Commission on Human and People’s Rights based in Banjul, Gambia.28 Though not explicitly concerned or mandated, the latter could contribute significantly to the prevention and combating of terrorism, particularly with respect to the protection of human rights in states’ activities.

One of the major challenges encountered by the AU in implementing its counter-terrorism agenda is the lack of adequate human and financial resources.29 While this
problem is not peculiar to counter-terrorism, it is, however, a severe stumbling-block to fully and timely realising the AU’s counter-terrorism objectives, especially if the Union is to be proactive in its response to terrorism.

Conclusion and recommendations

This article has examined the origin of the AU’s counter-terrorism policy, its main tenets and activities in the past three years as well as its achievements and shortcomings. For a young organisation faced with enormous challenges, particularly in the security sector, the achievements recorded so far are commendable. Nonetheless, much is expected from the Union, more than ever before, to fully and effectively convert into reality the commitment and ideals of its member states vis-à-vis the continental and international instruments. This remains the biggest challenge that the Union will face in the years ahead.

It would be premature, however, to draw any solid conclusions about the strengths and weaknesses of the AU’s role in preventing and combating terrorism. What has been provided so far in continental counter-terrorism instruments remains largely to be translated into action, and the AU is still to fully establish its own modus operandi. One thing is predictable – whatever role the AU plays in the coming years, its strength and weaknesses will be based on its resource capacity.

For the AU to play its expected role as the premier African organisation with the primary responsibility for the maintenance of peace and security, it must be able to establish adequate human and financial capacity to reach out to its member states and RECs. The AU must be well organised and build an active network of information-sharing with member states, RECs and international organisations, including the UN.

The belief that RECs are the building blocks of the AU is still far from being translated into reality. Though some progress has been made with some regions, much remains to be done to bring the RECs closer to the AU so that they can effectively be part of the continental counter-terrorism programme, particularly with respect to the role expected of them in the protocol to the 1999 OAU Convention. The programmes of the AU should directly contribute to the programmes of the RECs and vice versa, so that the activities of each complement the other’s. In this context, the counter-terrorism programmes of RECs must draw from the overall AU’s counter-terrorism programme. In particular, RECs should design programmes that contribute to, if not strengthen, the implementation of decisions and instruments adopted by the AU’s policy organs.

In the meantime the AU should focus on ensuring the effective functioning of the ACSRT and endow it with the necessary human and financial capacity. The ACSRT will
play an important role in building the capacity of the AU Commission in preventing and combating terrorism in Africa, particularly by complementing the activities of member states and RECs by providing training, dissemination of information and strategies for addressing the multifaceted problems posed by terrorism and other conventional threats to security and national defence. The finalisation and adoption of the Model Anti-terrorism Law will bring added value to AU’s efforts to harmonise member states’ anti-terrorism legislations.

A future agenda for the AU should be to develop and establish an active and updated list of terrorist acts, elements, individuals, groups or organisations and their movements in Africa. The AU should also seek to establish a continental warrant to facilitate the tracking, investigation and arrest and detention of persons suspected of terrorist acts. The AU should devise a mechanism by which to verify member states’ implementation of the continental instruments, and a mechanism or device to standardise machine-readable passports and visas in Africa. In order to draw lessons learnt and determine the best way forward, the AU should compile best practices on the prevention and combating of terrorism in Africa through reports from member states.

Notes

1 Samuel M Makinda, for example, argues that the “terrorist actions, and the various responses to them have had considerable significance for international law, democracy and human rights. In other words, the ‘war on terror’ has had a strong impact on international norms and institutions.” See S Makinda, Global governance and terrorism, Global Change, 15(1), 2003.
2 The African Union (AU) was officially launched in Durban, South Africa, in July 2002.
3 See, for example, Articles 3 and 4 of the Constitutive Act of the AU.
5 See paragraph 9(d) of the Declaration on a Common African Defence and Security Policy, adopted by the 2nd Extraordinary Session of the Assembly of the AU held in Sirte, Libya, in February 2004.
6 See, for example, E S Efrat, Terrorism in South Africa, in Y Alexander (ed), International terrorism: National, regional and global perspectives, Praeger, New York, 1976, pp 194–208. According to Efrat, “the basic trait of South African terrorist movements is that they are territory based, non-ideological (in the primary sense), and non-internationalist. Their common denominator is their aim to evict governments consisting primarily of whites of European origin and substitute themselves, that is, black Africans.” Efrat further identified the OAU based in Addis Ababa as the organisational headquarters of the South African terrorist movements (see p 194). He also identified freedom movements in the then Rhodesia and South West Africa as terrorist movements. Compare Efrat’s definition of terrorism in 1976 with the current definition of terrorism in the Algiers Convention.
7 See, for example, the Ethiopian Anti-Terrorism Law of 1954. The Penal Code No 85 of the Arab Republic of Egypt, developed in 1937, also contained anti-terrorism provisions in Articles 86–102.
8 See the Declaration on the Code of Conduct for Inter-African Relations (AHG/Decl 2 (XXX)) adopted by the 30th Ordinary Session of the Assembly of Heads of State and Government, held in Tunis, Tunisia, from 13 to 15 June 1994, paragraphs 10 and 15.
9 See paragraph 4 of the declaration.
10 It had many weaknesses as a non-binding
instrument. For example, it provided no definition of terrorism and failed to address the issue comprehensively. It also failed to provide any monitoring or implementation mechanism or punitive measures in the case of defects.


12 See Articles 1 and 3 of the OAU Convention on the Prevention and Combating of Terrorism, adopted in July 1999.

13 See 10 above. One is often confronted by the view that the definition is controversial by condoning certain forms of violence. The thinking of the drafters of the convention was that the offences committed by people fighting for liberation from colonialism or self-determination fell within the jurisdiction of international law on armed conflicts or the laws of warfare. The Geneva Convention of 1949 and its Additional Protocols of 1977 are usually cited as the legal regimes governing armed conflicts and the responsibilities of combatants.

14 The problem is that acts of terrorism, with the exception of hijacking, hostage-taking and suicide bombing, are not so unique as to be easily distinguishable from other acts of warfare. It is hoped that practice will help clarify these issues. The adoption of a UN (or international) convention on the prevention and elimination of terrorism will also help to shed light on these matters.

15 See Articles 4, 5 and 6 of the convention.


17 See, for example, the Dakar Declaration against Terrorism, adopted by the Summit of African Leaders, held in Dakar, Senegal, on 17 October 2001.

18 The declaration recommended to the OAU, in its paragraph 9, to convene an extraordinary summit to assess the progress made so far in Africa to combat terrorism, and to take all necessary measures to ensure that the events of 9/11 have the least possible consequences on African development, particularly the implementation of NEPAD.


23 The role being played by the AU today has been evolving from regional, continental and international fora, particularly through cooperation with the UN and other international institutions. In October 2003, the AU convened a meeting of international experts to assist the commission to prepare a roadmap for the implementation of the AU Plan of Action on the Prevention and Combating of Terrorism. That meeting made a number of recommendations for enhancing the role of the AU. It was proposed that the AU should focus more on coordination and the promotion of international cooperation in Africa.

24 The High-Level Intergovernmental Meetings began in 2002 and the last one was held in Algiers, Algeria, in October 2004. The purpose is to bring senior government officials and experts from the 53 AU member states to share experiences, best practices and challenges, as well as chart the way forward toward the implementation of the AU counter-terrorism instruments. Coordination is also achieved through the system of focal points for the African Centre for the Study and Research on Terrorism (ACSRT) who meet more regularly within the framework of the ACSRT.

25 The structure and functional modalities of the committee are still to be finalised.

26 There is a growing concern among member states about reporting fatigue as a result of increasing demand for states to submit written reports to regional, continental and international
organisations on various activities at the national level. Many states have complained that the technical expertise and time required for preparing such reports overstretched states’ capacity. There have even been suggestions that states could prepare a common report for all organisations on the same topic.

27 See, for example, the preambles to the 1999 OAU Convention and its protocol thereto; see also Article 7 of the convention and Article 3(k) of the protocol.

28 The legal responsibilities between the two commissions as far as terrorism is concerned are not clear. The Protocol and the Plan of Action confer the responsibilities for implementation on the AU Commission in Addis Ababa. But there is no mention of the Human and People’s Rights Commission, which we think does equally have a stake in the human rights issues on counter-terrorism matters. The need for the two commissions to meet and address the matter and accord some form of jurisdiction to the Human and People’s Rights Commission should be treated with urgency.

29 See, for example, the Report of the Chairperson of the AU Commission on the Implementation of the 1999 OAU Convention and the Plan of Action on the Prevention and Combating of Terrorism in Africa, AU document Mtg/HLG/Conv Terror/2(II), Original: English, submitted to the Second High-Level Meeting. With respect to human resources for example, only one person at the AU headquarters in Addis Ababa deals with terrorism matters. The issue of funding has been felt more by the ACSRT, which has been unable to carry out many of its programmes due to insufficient budget allocation. For the first two years, the centre operated on a US$2 million donated by the Algerian government, a sum which was far less than what was budgeted to jumpstart the centre.
Sudan: The crisis of cohesion?
Mariam Bibi Jooma

Côte d’Ivoire: Marking time
Richard Cornwell

Trends and markers
The history of ‘Bilad us Sudan’ or the ‘land of the blacks’, as the country was termed by medieval geographers, shares a familiar trajectory to that of other African states created without regard for existing forms of authority and ‘administration’ in the creation of colonial satellite states. Although the European conferences that saw the carving up Africa into colonies and spheres of influence may have receded into a scarcely remembered past, their impact continues to reverberate as a core challenge to stability on the continent.

That said, when it comes to post-colonial narratives of Africa, it is difficult to equate the crisis of cohesion experienced in Sudan to that of any of its continental counterparts. As seasoned analysts of the region will explain, anyone who considers himself an expert on Sudanese affairs should be regarded with caution. This is particularly because the

* Mariam Bibi Jooma is a researcher with the African Security Analysis Programme at the Institute for Security Studies.
multiple causality involved in the regional and national conflicts in Sudan requires us to constantly adjust our macro-level frameworks of analysis to accommodate changing alliances and loyalties at the level of micro-polities.

As the largest country on the continent, bordering some seven other conflict-prone states, Sudan demonstrates most acutely the challenge of building a state in the absence of a ‘nation’. Indeed, it may also be argued that the crisis of identity as manifested in the return to, or creation of, ethnic, tribal and religious affiliations is a significant consequence of economic exclusion and powerlessness that resonate at community, regional and national levels. The influence of neighbourhood discontent in the region has been both a source of diversion for the central government and a tangible contributor to the protraction of Sudan’s internal tensions. The influence of the Darfurian conflict on Chad, as well as the Eritrean connection to Sudan’s eastern region, clearly illustrates this point. Much of the recent literature on Sudan has focused on the ongoing violence in the western state of Darfur, which has often been explained using the Arab-African dichotomy. One of the major weaknesses of this narrative is the effect it has on solidifying identities that historically speaking have been fluid and are thus inadequate to explain the preoccupations of the principal role players. By confining themselves to such narrow dichotomies, observers find themselves unable to accommodate or understand the changing political landscape as events unfold.

In addition, the most recent events, from the increasing divisions in the ranks of the Darfur rebels to the rejection of a UN force, also highlight the problems inherent in deadline-driven diplomacy as currently pursued by the international community.

Sudan has provided an active historical context for competing narratives on the question of ‘identity’ and ‘nationhood’. It is virtually impossible to identify a single immutable ‘root cause’, as any conflict rarely remains stagnant, since the dynamics of war involves a constant shift in motives and ends – including the creation of war economies, for example – which may help exacerbate and prolong hostilities.

Nevertheless, it is useful to appreciate the influence of three major narratives that have informed the identification of underlying reasons for Sudan’s multiple wars. These refer to the analysis of Sudanese history from the perspective of, first, the impact of British colonialism on the creation of Khartoum elites; second, the rise of Islamism in reaction to elite driven politics and the eventual manipulation of religious ideology for self-interest; and, third, the rise of a southern based resistance movement as a response to marginalisation by the centre.

As each of these narratives resonates across the changing landscape of African political development, they speak also to the ongoing experiment with nation-building and its corollary, symbolic solidarity. The evolution of both the rebel movements of Sudan and the
Khartoum government in their ideological visions attests to this, with the southern-based Sudan People’s Liberation Movement (SPLM) moving from a socialist underpinning in response to the south’s marginalisation from socio-economic development, to a gradual identity based politics sympathetic to East African or ‘Africanist’ solidarity. Equally, the reins of power in Khartoum have been inflected by a variety of ideological positions each drawing upon the relevant trends in the global geo-political theatre. Jafaar An-Nimeiri came to power through the support of the Communist Party in the 1969 coup, which was heavily influenced by Nasser’s Free Officers’ Movement in Egypt. Later, however, he moved to institutionalising Islamic Shariah law and placed more emphasis on pan-Arabism in the face of diminishing support for his rule. He was, in turn, overthrown by a military coup in 1985.

In a similar manner, the current National Congress Party (NCP), which holds the majority share within the national government, has appropriated Islamism to legitimise its hegemony over the centre. But with the challenge to the ‘Islamist’ regime by fellow Muslims in Darfur (and the east) who, like the Justice and Equality Movement, use Islam as a rallying cause against socio-economic injustice, the NCP’s Islamist claim is now increasingly contentious. The relevance of this tension to the broader Sudanese – and indeed African – debate is that it once more underlines the problem of reifying ideology over the substance of political configurations. What are the Realpolitik interests in the country’s oil and security sector that motivate its key actors, for example? If the majority of Sudanese feel disempowered by elite politics, how is the current NCP-SPLM arrangement affecting these sentiments? These questions take on a greater urgency if we consider that national elections should be held in just less than five years. How far will the political landscape have changed by 2008? Will the SPLM and the NCP still be seen as the monolithic entities they are today? These questions are more likely to open a nuanced dialogue on what it means to be Sudanese in this fragile interim period, and far more than an exclusive focus on tribal or religious affiliation.
Côte d’Ivoire: Marking time

Richard Cornwell*

Following the application of severe pressure by the international donors on whom the Ivorian government remains so dependent for support in its efforts to reunite and rebuild a country divided effectually in two since the mutiny of 2002 and the civil war that ensued, agreement was eventually reached between Prime Minister Charles Konan Banny and President Lauren Gbagbo that the contentious processes of identification of Ivorian citizens, voter registration and disarmament should occur simultaneously.

The initial steps took the form of a modest pilot scheme carried out in seven locations. Yet, although Gbagbo agreed to these steps, he made no secret of his distrust of the rebels, saying that massive fraud would take place in those areas under their control so as to allow immigrants to obtain certificates of nationality and voting cards. As the pilot

* Richard Cornwell is a senior research fellow with the African Security Analysis Programme at the Institute for Security Studies.
scheme was about to begin, the pro-Gbagbo press mounted virulent attacks on Alassane Ouattara, leader of the opposition Rassemblement des républicains (RDR), who obviously stood to gain most from this registration exercise in the north.

Prime Minister Banny also came under heavy criticism from leading Gbagbo hardliners, who accused him of being the UN and France’s puppet. These inflammatory statements appeared to give the lie to claims that political trust had been re-established between the principal parties.

The pilot scheme was launched at seven sites, with considerable fanfare, but little administrative preparation. Official sources were reticent about the initial impact of the scheme, but anecdotal accounts spoke of an absence of public response in at least two of the sites, beyond protest demonstrations by the ‘Young Patriots’ loyal to President Gbagbo, who want the elections to be held according to the 2000 voters’ roll simply updated to include those citizens who have since come of age. This, they know, would effectively exclude the bulk of Gbagbo’s principal rivals’ supporters, whose contested claims to citizenship, denied in the census of 1998, lie at the heart of the domestic conflict.

Banny’s expressed conviction that he and President Gbagbo are working as a team in promoting the agreed twin processes of voter registration and disarmament of the rival armed groups is a polite fiction. The president and his leading supporters have made every effort to distance themselves from Banny’s attempts to provide some impetus, expressing the conviction that it is impossible to continue implementing the political components of the accords until the rebel forces have been disarmed and national authority restored over the entire country.

In the meantime progress on disarmament and demobilisation has been dilatory, which is hardly surprising given the manifest absence of mutual trust on either side of the ceasefire line.

The obstructions noted in the pilot scheme were repeated on a more violent scale once the identification process went into full swing.

On 14 July, the president of the ruling party, Pascal Affi N’Guessan, called upon young militants to halt the registration exercises by all means possible, an appeal calculated to dissuade the rebels from beginning the disarmament process. The allegation was made that the identification and registration process would be exploited by the opposition in the rebel-held north to enfranchise foreigners in that part of the country.

Two days later President Gbagbo himself delivered a vitriolic speech accusing the UN of pro-rebel bias and reminded the peacekeepers that they were in the country only at his government’s invitation. Beyond marking a singular change of presidential sentiment
since Kofi Annan’s visit on 5 July, when Gbagbo had been at pains to avoid any anti-UN demonstrations, this seemed to signal that, in the event of the elections not occurring before the end of October as planned, the president would feel himself free to continue in office regardless of the decisions of the international community.

The result of this incitement, quite predictably, was the violent attempt by the Young Patriots to prevent the registration exercise in the territory under government control. The UN Security Council issued a stern warning that steps would be taken against anyone attempting to derail the process, but the threat of sanctions probably carries little weight with those concerned.

The presidential camp might well feel that it could make some concessions at this juncture, before moving the point of contention to some other issue, or by arguing about technicalities. Whatever the case, the thrust of Banny’s initiative is in danger of being diverted, and the sense of mild optimism that was beginning to manifest itself is dissipating. Gbagbo’s party has now begun making overtures to the southern members of the opposition alliance, probably hoping to alarm them sufficiently about the handling of the registration process in the north to secure their compliance in a campaign of obstruction.

Kofi Annan has said that a UN mission will revisit Côte d’Ivoire in September, at which time a decision will be made as to whether the October elections can take place. By the time this article appears in print, it should be evident that the necessary preparations for a presidential poll are nowhere near completion, and that a free and fair election even in 2007 would be an accomplishment in itself. What the UN will then decide to do about extending the presidential term should present that body with one of its trickier problems.
### Trends and markers

List of countries which have signed, ratified/acceded to the African Union Convention on the OAU Convention on the Prevention and Combating of Terrorism at 23 June 2006

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Africa, root causes and the ‘war on terror’
Jakkie Cilliers

Counter-terrorism in the Horn of Africa: New security frontiers, old strategies
Peter Kagwanja

Terrorism in West Africa: Real, emerging or imagined threats?
Cyril I Obi
Africa, root causes and the ‘war on terror’

Jakkie Cilliers*

Africa is severely affected by sub-state terrorism – a phenomenon that is deeply rooted in the crisis facing a number of African states. While the importance of root causes in so-called sub-state terrorism is generally accepted, this issue is hotly contested internationally in debates on terrorism. In fact, both sub-state and transnational terrorism have essentially local causes and linkages, and therefore much of what is categorised as terrorism should be treated more appropriately as insurgencies. Recent events in Somalia are of particular concern, as Western responses to the war on terror may further complicate the domestic situation, with self-fulfilling results. Great care should be exercised by African states in adopting either the language of or the prescribed solutions for transnational terrorism as part of the ‘global war on terror’.

* Jakkie Cilliers is the executive director of the Institute for Security Studies.
Root causes and sub-national terrorism

Although the events of 11 September 2001 have come to be acknowledged as a watershed in the international community’s concern with the issue of terrorism, these events did not occur in isolation. They do not reflect a sudden new threat, but represent the symbolic reaffirmation of a trend that has been evident for several years. Where terror had previously been an uncomfortable adjunct to anarchism, liberation wars, counter-insurgency campaigns and the battlefields of the Cold War, the events of that day took terrorism to a new, global level. Hence the modern focus on the impact and potential threat of transnational terrorism, or, more accurately, terrorism that threatens the dominant political-economic system. This new focus was originally reflected by the security interests of the United States, but is increasingly being reflected by the interests of what is generally known as the ‘West’.

It should be obvious that Africa is the continent most affected by domestic or sub-national terrorism, if not (yet) by its transnational variant. The use of terror has been both a deliberate strategy and an unintended consequence of most liberation wars, secession movements and insurgencies. These would include the armed campaigns run by the vast majority of liberation movements that today govern many African countries – for example the Rwandan Patriotic Front, the ‘movement party’ in Uganda, the Zimbabwe African National Union – Patriotic Front, the Movimento Popular de Libertação de Angola, the Tigrayan People’s Liberation Front (the dominant party within the ruling Ethiopian People’s Revolutionary Democratic Front, EPRDF) and the Eritrean People’s Liberation Front. Most insurgent movements combine guerrilla warfare and terrorism with the ultimate objective of being able to first seize control of those population groups on the fringes of state control and eventually to encroach upon the heartland of government support itself.

While the analyses of these classic insurgency wars take cognisance of root causes and political mobilisation, this is not the case with international terrorism and so-called ‘terrorist organisations’ – where such linkages are hotly contested. Yet closer analysis would indicate that virtually all terrorist campaigns of international significance have domestic roots and are firstly fuelled and driven by domestic injustices in a particular country or region that can be accentuated and politicised. Once framed within an appropriate belief system and supported by the right leadership and organisation, an incipient insurgency may adopt terror as its major weapon, particularly if it is confronted by a strong state such as Israel or the US. Sometimes this is the result of assistance from organisations that fall under the al-Qaeda umbrella, but generally insurgency with a high terror component consists of an intricate thread of issues. In southern Afghanistan the recent escalations in violence, which saw the worst fighting since the overthrow of the Taliban, mask a very complex situation that includes considerations such as narcotics, corruption, tribal tensions, warlordism, illegal armed groups, Arabs, Iranians, and
Chechens – all of which are interrelated. Eventually the leitmotif is often simply that my enemy’s enemy is my friend – and these considerations should give cause to pause in the establishment of simplistic linkages and categories.

Sub-national or domestic terrorism is rife in Africa. This particular brand of terrorism is partly a hangover of the process of decolonisation, but is more intimately linked to the failure to effect sustained development and to consolidate accountable and effective governance. It is reflected in the public mind by the activities of the Mai Mai in the eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), the Lord’s Resistance Army (LRA) in northern Uganda, the activities of warlords in Somalia, Liberians United for Reconciliation and Peace, the Salafist Group for Preaching and Combat in Algeria, or the Revolutionary United Front in Sierra Leone. These were all movements that relied heavily, but not exclusively, on the use of extreme violence against innocent civilians in pursuit of their objectives. As a result, some analysts would classify them as essentially terrorist organisations since they have employed terror as a systematic and widespread strategy. To a lesser or greater degree, the roots of their violent campaign originate deep in inequality, identity issues, poverty and marginalisation from the political centre. No balanced account, for example, would oppose the view that the LRA benefits greatly from the exclusion of the northern Acholi tribe from profiting from Kampala’s largesse – or that the origins of the Mai Mai can largely be found in the beleaguered Kasai population’s requirements for self-defence and protection.

Tip O’Neill, long–serving Irish-American speaker of the US House of Representatives, famously remarked that ‘all politics is local’. He was not rejecting international issues, but exaggerating the point that resolving daily concerns is what makes politicians, and societies, successful. Despite the exhortations by bin Laden and others towards a global jihad we may still find that ‘all terrorism is local’ – that terrorism largely stems from local issues, whether the perpetrators want to send a message to rulers or advance nationalist, social or religious claims. The rhetoric of global terrorism is difficult to sustain and to translate into action without linkage to a specific situation such as foreign occupation or the nature of governance in a country such as Saudi Arabia. So Bin Laden may urge on his followers, real and potential, by pointing out that it is a matter of dishonour, of disgrace, that Christian Spain, a country once controlled by Muslims, today has a gross domestic product (GDP) slightly larger than all the twenty-two Arab states together: “Spain is an infidel country, but its economy is stronger than our economy because the ruler there is accountable. In our countries, there is no accountability or punishment, but there is only obedience to the rulers and prayers of long life for them.” In fact, his message reinforces the essentially domestic origins of his mission towards a global jihad – the absence of accountability, justice and equitable development in many Arab states.

Empirical support of this view was provided by Robert Pape in his analysis of suicide attacks from 1980 to 2004, when he found that 95 per cent of attacks worldwide were
motivated by resentment of the presence of foreign combat troops – hence they were primarily motivated by domestic political goals related to control over territory rather than by something intrinsic in ‘radical Islam’, as Western analysts often argue.  

Terrorism does not ignite spontaneously. Grievances exist all over the world – and require intense politicisation, leadership, organisation and resources. But we cannot ignore the so-called root causes of terrorism, which are reflected in the extent to which local people protect individuals and groups that the international community view as terrorists. Any dispassionate analysis of events in Afghanistan, Iraq, Palestine, Somalia and elsewhere indicates that these are not terrorism campaigns but insurgencies that are rooted in the protection provided by local communities in the West Bank, Gaza, South Lebanon, large sections of Syria, much of Iraq, southern Somalia, the shantytowns around Nairobi, southern Afghanistan and western Pakistan, and will require a massive effort by governments, civil society, the religious community and business to overcome. The use of terror is inevitably part of insurgency, but is in itself inadequate.

International and transnational terrorism

At the other end of the spectrum to domestic or sub-national terrorism is the scourge of international or transnational terrorism. Today, some analysts make a distinction between the two latter categories. International terrorism is used to describe those acts instigated by another state that have clear international consequences. This would include incidents where terrorists cross national borders to strike foreign targets, select victims or targets (such as diplomats or businessmen) because of their connection to a foreign country, attack aircraft on international flights, or force aircraft to fly to different destinations. According to this distinction, international terrorism was more prevalent during the Cold War since the bipolar nature of the prevailing balance of power provided a degree of protection to immediate retaliation, with countries forming part of much larger opposing alliances. Terrorism is ‘transnational’ through the nationality or foreign ties of its perpetrators, its location, its victims, and its ramifications beyond national boundaries. Most important of all, transnational terrorism is not directly linked to or instigated by a state, but thrives in the absence of effective state control over those territories where it may operate from. The best-known example is, of course, al-Qaeda.

Al-Qaeda (The Base) was never one organisation, but rather at inception a configuration of 25 affiliated organisations. In recent years this network has moved further away from central direction and planning, splintering into any number of decentralised, self-directed operations or local nodes. Some of this was a deliberate strategy to protect itself from infiltration and detection, but much of it reflected the success of the US in dealing with the network. Regime change in Afghanistan did much to disrupt the global hub of the al-Qaeda network. Today local cells appear to operate with a large
degree of operational autonomy – a move facilitated by electronic connectivity. Hence the bombings in London in July 2005 and in Egypt and Indonesia three months later appear to have been initiated by small, local groups largely operating on their own, but with assistance, encouragement and ideological support from various al-Qaeda-associated hubs. These cells are very difficult to detect in advance of an attack, even in countries with well-developed and capable law enforcement systems such as Britain. They do not operate under the control or direction of al-Qaeda, although they may have benefited directly or indirectly from al-Qaeda funding, assistance or ideological guidance.6

The obvious problem with the distinction between international and transnational terrorism is the difficulty of tracing support by governments to terrorist incidents and organisations. For example, today much effort is spent in the US and by Israel to establish a clear linkage between the attacks by Hezbollah on northern Israel and the weapons provided from Syria and Iran for this alleged purpose. Even the alleged linkages with the Soviet Union of the previous wave of anti-Western terrorists, for example the US’s Weather Underground, Germany’s Baader-Meinhof Gang, Italy’s Red Brigades and Japan’s Red Army Faction of the sixties and seventies, remain contested.

Different to the disparate but localised causes that feed into insurgency and domestic terrorism across Africa, transnational terrorism in the 21st century is interpreted through a single ideology, that of radical Islam, which is able to feed off the authoritarianism and corruption of key Arab states such as Saudi Arabia. In doing so, it interprets the global divide between the capitalist, rich Western millions and the poor, marginalised billions – particularly those in dominantly Muslim societies where the impact of globalisation demonstrates global inequality and the moral and cultural divide between Muslim and non-Muslim. As Thomas Friedman7 notes: in closed, authoritarian societies the divinely inspired text that is the Qur’an is not open to any literary criticism or creative reinterpretation. It is a sacred book to be memorised. It is not adapted to the demands and opportunities of modern life, yet provides an interpretation of the general state of impoverishment of the five per cent of the world population that are Arab and, to some extent, of the much larger portion that are Muslim. Friedman writes:

Where Islam is embedded in authoritarian societies, it tends to become the vehicle of angry protest – Egypt, Syria, Saudi Arabia, Pakistan. But where Islam is embedded in a pluralistic, democratic society – Turkey or India, for instance – those with a more progressive outlook have a chance to get a better hearing for their interpretation and a democratic forum where they can fight for their ideas on a more equal footing.8

Clearly, in dominantly Muslim countries the vast majority of moderate Muslims serve as a balance in the interpretation of religious text in an extremist fashion. Francis
Fukuyama supports this analysis by exploring the social dynamics that have exploded onto the world stage as transnational terrorism: “It would make no more sense to see contemporary radical Islamism as an inevitable outgrowth of Islam than to see fascism as somehow the culmination of a Christian European cultural tradition.”9 His view is that “radical Islam does not come out of traditional Muslim societies, but rather is a manifestation of modern identity politics, a byproduct of the modernization process itself.”10 Peter Neumann, director of the King’s College Centre for Defence Studies, puts it as follows:

Different to the USA, Europe has a large population of second- or third-generation Muslim immigrants – estimated at 15-20 million – who often find themselves torn between the traditional values of their parents (which they often resent) and the demands and promise of Western society (which they find hard to access) … [T]he presence of such a large pool of young, alienated Muslims presents Salafist jihadists with opportunities for recruitment and radicalisation which do not exist elsewhere.11

Since 9/11 radical Islamic terror cells have been uncovered in most major Western European countries, including the United Kingdom, Germany, France, Italy, Spain, the Netherlands and Belgium. While these countries are believed to be the main centres of activity, structures have also emerged in countries such as Poland, the Czech Republic and Bulgaria, not previously seen as likely bases for al-Qaeda-inspired groups.12 This analysis leads Fukuyama and others to believe that Europe is the next major battleground between radical Islamism and liberal democracy – which is amply demonstrated by the foiled attacks at Heathrow international airport in August 2006.

In the aftermath of the Bali bombings and the recent spate of bombings in Mumbai, India, others would argue that the transnational terror battleground has shifted further east. The reality is that no one is safe. Each country and region has its own unique circumstances that contribute to its vulnerability, and in certain circles in the US sub-Saharan Africa is considered one of the main future battlegrounds.

The relationship between insurgencies and transnational terror

For a long time there has been little perceived connection or relationship between these two poles, between domestic terrorism/insurgency and transnational terrorism. Yet, as indicated earlier, transnational terrorism has developed out of domestic insurgencies. This is particularly evident in northern Africa, where counter-terrorism strategies have done much to intensify an already brutal campaign and to internationalise domestic challenges.
In the ‘war against terror’, perception is as important as reality and governments manipulate the extent and impact of al-Qaeda mercilessly, often with self-fulfilling results. The most celebrated instance was, of course, the alleged link between the regime of Saddam Hussein in Iraq and Osama bin Laden. At the time of the build-up to that invasion these linkages were limited, but today, Iraq has become what Robben Island was during the liberation struggle in South Africa – a school. Transnational terrorism and terrorists have become a major export product of that beleaguered country, to the detriment of Afghanistan, peace in the Middle East and, possibly, the Horn of Africa. Many leaders, such as President Yuweri Museveni of Uganda, have tried to accentuate and emphasise the linkages between bin Laden and domestic terrorist groups such as the LRA and the West Bank Nile Front, while others such as the National Congress in Khartoum have sought to deny that it is, today, anything but a cooperating partner in the war on terror. In Mauritania the now deposed president, Maaouya Ould Sid’Ahmed Taya, arrested 21 people for their association with the Mauritanian Group for Preaching and Jihad (GMPJ) in what many describe as action against his opponents rather than al-Qaeda, to which GMPJ is allegedly affiliated.\[13\]

Today the gap between domestic and transnational terrorism appears to be shrinking in some areas as links are established (or created by leaders anxious to benefit from US support in the war on terror) between local movements and transnational terrorists. Globalisation has become an important enabling factor in the spread of transnational terrorism – although its real impact may sometimes be overemphasised. On the one side the Internet, cell phones and international travel provide a facilitating environment through which cells and units can liaise, coordinate and network. Even the lack of infrastructure and collapse of government services do not restrict the electronic connectivity that permit cells or individuals in a country such as Somalia to connect to collaborators in London or Washington. Satellite or cell phone-based Internet access does not depend upon sophisticated infrastructure on the ground. On the other hand, television and other media provide the demonstration effect through highly publicised acts such as bomb explosions and aircraft hijackings. The intimate focus on the effects of Israeli and Hezbollah terrorism in areas such as the West Bank and Gaza serves to mobilise and instigate others to do the same and also to violently protest against these Israeli excesses.

Peter Neumann argues persuasively for a balance in the view that globalisation and the Internet have spawned ‘do it yourself’ transnational terrorists:

The fact that terrorist structures are looser and based on personal relationships rather than formal hierarchies does not mean that they have become completely irrelevant. Indeed, there continues to be a strong correlation between the overall sophistication of a terrorist attack and the degree to which its perpetrators were able to capitalise on the finance,
weapons, training and skills provided through existing structures. Marc Sageman’s extensive research on al-Qaeda’s global networks demonstrates that it was essential for groups of potential recruits to know a ‘link to the jihad’ – typically someone who had gone through one of Bin Laden’s training camps in Afghanistan – in order for a fledgling cell to be integrated into the wider network. Without such access, he maintained, wannabe terrorists remained just that.¹⁴

Transnational terrorism, weak and failed states

US-based analysts contend that, in retrospect, the terrorist threats in a number of countries in the Middle East and in the Maghreb, as well as the US embassy bombings in Dar es Salaam and Nairobi, were a preview of the attacks on the Twin Towers and elsewhere on 11 September 2001. This has led to something of a revisionist history, with many now convinced that al-Qaeda’s presence in Somalia has been extensive, persistent, and more pervasive in terms of transnational terrorism and the threat that this poses to the West than originally presumed.

Although the bombings of the US embassies in Kenya and Tanzania in 1998 came as a surprise, danger signs had been evident before then, going back to the First Gulf War in 1991.¹⁵ For example, on 25 January 1991 the US State Department ordered all non-essential government personnel and the families of embassy workers to leave Tanzania because of the threat of terrorism tied to the Gulf War. Apart from the widespread use of terror by local, national and regional groups, a global campaign had been under way for several decades by the time that the attacks on the World Trade Center in 1993 and 2001, as well as on other symbolic targets in the US, would focus the world’s attention on the new threats of the post-Cold War era. These seminal events reflect public evidence of an intensifying global security problem that will demand a global response, including one from Africa and its constituent individual states. If any confirmation was needed of the centrality of the Horn of Africa in international terrorism, these were provided by the bombing of the Paradise Hotel in Mombasa in 2002, attacks on an Israeli airliner using SA-7 Strella surface-to-air missiles later that year, and an attempted attack on the US embassy in Nairobi employing light aircraft that was foiled by Kenyan authorities in 2003. While al-Qaeda was not responsible for all these incidents, al-Qaeda cells located in and operating from Somalia participated in all, and their ability to do so was facilitated by ethnic groupings that spill over poorly demarcated and porous borders. Located in a failed state, al-Qaeda cells were invisible to external security and intelligence agencies, and they could locate sophisticated weapons and globally communicate from that country with impunity. According to Thomas Dempsey, the Director of African Studies in the Department of National Security and Strategy of the US Army War College:
The case of Somalia suggests that failed states do, in fact, offer an effective venue for operations by evolving terrorist hubs. The environment in such states can provide what may be the greatest level of protection available to terrorist organizations from counterterrorism operations by military forces or law enforcement agencies. The case of Somalia also suggests that the violent and chaotic conditions within failed states may reduce dramatically the impact of local attacks by terrorist nodes, but will not preclude terrorist hubs from operating in their new, evolved mode to inspire ideologically or assist financially or materially the operations of geographically distributed nodes.16

In an earlier paper on terrorism in Africa I argued that it is often the absence of governance that provides the opportunity (or necessity) for armed organisation in much of the continent and warned about the potential that the continent has to develop into a major battleground in the war on terror. My argument, in that paper, was based on the limited ability of African countries to effect law and order and a target-rich environment that provided many opportunities to attack high-value Western targets. Recent developments in Somalia have provided that thesis with new urgency, even if it may be the heavy-handed way in which the US has sought to prosecute its war that serves as a major catalyst in this tragic development.

The Union of Islamic Courts (UIC), which now controls most of southern Somalia, is an established and accepted presence in local communities, with a demonstrated social welfare policy. They initially brought stability to Mogadishu and removed a political class of clan-based extortionists and criminal dealers in everything from drugs to people, and who have divided and ruled the country since the collapse of the central state in 1991. In doing so, the UIC aligned themselves with a popular revolt against warlords and achieved what international military interventions and peace talks have failed to accomplish in fifteen years and through a similar number of peace talks.

Numerous rounds of internationally sponsored peace talks eventually resulted in the establishment of a Transitional Federal Government (TFG) headed by President Abdullai Yusuf Ahmed in 2004. Abdullai Yusuf is one of the original warlords who ousted dictator Mohamed Siyad Barre and then resorted to carving out clan-based fiefdoms and brokered power through brutality, extortion and destruction. Having removed Barre, Abdullai Yusuf together with others (of whom General Muhammad Farah Aideed is the best known) proceeded to divide and ruin Mogadishu, displacing hundreds of thousands of people as they seized fertile lands, demolished infrastructure and pursued ephemeral alliances. Abdullai Yusuf and others were eventually driven from Mogadishu by yet other warlords until the latter’s defeat by the UIC on 4 June 2006. Alarmed by reports of external fighters entering Somalia to fight on the side of the Islamic Courts and their long-standing concerns about the linkages between Sheikh Hassan Dahir
Aweys—whom the US regards as a religious hardliner with connections to terrorist organisations—the Pentagon and/or CIA decided to support a group of warlords as the Alliance for Peace and Anti-Terrorism. So, in the eyes of the beleaguered inhabitants of Mogadishu, the US aligned itself with what could only be described as a group of terrorists against the only system, the Islamic Courts, that had brought a degree of relief to instability, exploitation and brutality. Commenting on these developments the UN Integrated Regional Information Network (IRIN) wrote: “Ultimately, the perceived role of the US provided a popular focus for resentment and served to strengthen the Islamic Court’s position.”

The potential impact upon the region is catastrophic, and may, if not checked, open up the Horn as the latest battleground between the US and Islam with disastrous consequences for its peoples, regional stability, democracy and the consolidation of African development, peace and security. At the time of writing the UN Security Council is circulating what could at best be described as a half-hearted resolution considering a peacekeeping mission in Somalia. Given the current events in the Middle East, inevitably the under-resourced African Union and the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD) will be left to try and pick up the pieces in what can, at best, be a stopgap peacekeeping mission in a situation where the UIC has rejected the call of the TFG for foreign troops in Somalia.

On the one side we have Ethiopia engaged in a proxy war with Eritrea and several decades of conflict between Ethiopia and Somalia over the Ogaden. On the other side, there are two Western allies, Ethiopia and Kenya—both of whom are deeply concerned about the impact of a fundamentalist Islamic regime on their own stability and the region as a whole. Squeezed between Egypt, Yemen, Eritrea and Sudan—none of which it enjoys good relations with—Ethiopia feels particularly vulnerable and as a weak state has little penchant for solutions other than military. Both sides are trying to raise the ante with Somali Prime Minister Ali Mohamed Gedi stating that “Osama bin Laden has training camps in Somalia and is intent on plunging the country into further chaos”—a claim subsequently hotly denied by the UIC.

The US has for some time been concerned about the dangers that failed states present as potential springboards for international terrorism, on the basis that organisations could avoid the reach of criminal justice systems and of military counter-terrorist forces—hence the location of the Joint Task Force Horn of Africa in neighbouring Djibouti and the launch of the East Africa Counterterrorism Initiative. US analysts quote the earlier example of Liberia and Sierra Leone and, of course today, Somalia, as classic instances.

To the US, Somalia represents a terrorist haven. Ironically, this poor lawless country may emerge as the next potential Afghanistan—not through domestic developments, but through the impact of US-led interventions and the potential that al-Qaeda could see to
establish a new home base and further stretch the ability of the international community to respond. According to Thomas Dempsey:

Various terrorist groups have operated in Somalia since it experienced state collapse in the early 1990s. The most prominent of these groups include Al-Ittihad al-Islamiyyaa (AIAI), Al-Qa’eda itself, and a small, recently emerged, extremely violent jihadist cell led by Aden Hashi ‘Ayro. AIAI seems to have acted as a terrorist hub for other groups active in Ethiopia, while the ‘Ayro group has operated as a terrorist node in the evolved two-cell network model. Al-Qa’eda has demonstrated and suspected links to AIAI and ‘Ayro, and appears to have developed Somalia as a key hub for attacks throughout East Africa.22

Further examples of the linkages between poor or absent governance and terrorism were provided in the allegations of al-Qaeda’s connections to the illegal trade in rough diamonds mined in Sierra Leone and then smuggled and sold in Liberia. These first surfaced in the public domain in November 2001 when the Washington Post carried a series of articles to this effect.23 The argument was that the trade in diamonds generated direct profits to support al-Qaeda’s activities and permitted it to launder money in a venue that made identifying and freezing al-Qaeda assets very difficult for Western counterterrorism experts. Participation in the trade also furnished al-Qaeda access to the booming illegal arms market that was associated with the illicit diamond trade and with the ongoing violent conflicts in Liberia and Sierra Leone. These reports were subsequently corroborated by several other sources, including the testimony in the trials of those responsible for the bombings of the US embassies in Kenya and Tanzania in 1998, during US congressional hearings in 2003 and, in October 2004, by the Chief Prosecutor for the Special Court for Sierra Leone.24 In this manner al-Qaeda was able to use the cover of violently chaotic conditions in these two countries to launder money and buy arms, evading the effective surveillance or sanction by the international community including US counterterrorism forces. Similar to the extent to which violence in Liberia and Sierra Leone was made possible by the global illegal arms market, various UN and other reports have documented the extent to which weapons have been flooding into Somalia in recent years. That some of these arms were destined for organisations with al-Qaeda links is self-evident.

Conclusion

International terrorism is not the most important global security challenge, although the threat of catastrophic terrorism (such as the explosion of a nuclear device in New York) would have disastrous global repercussions. A recent study by the Oxford Research Group25 makes the following trenchant point:
Contemporary threats are often interconnected ... [I]nternational terrorism or armed conflict cannot be dealt with in isolation from extreme poverty or environmental degradation. These are all global issues, which threaten human security as well as state security, and they recognize no national borders. 9/11 demonstrates in the most dramatic way that rich Western countries cannot insulate themselves from developments taking place elsewhere. Poverty is not just a development issue; HIV/AIDS is not just a disease; climate change does not just affect poor countries; terrorism does not just happen in failed states – these have security implications for every country.26

In examining these issues the authors present four groups of factors that they consider to be the root causes of conflict and insecurity today and the likely determinants of future conflict: climate change; competition over resources; marginalisation of the majority (i.e., the developing) world; and global militarisation.

This does not mean that efforts to address these ‘root causes’ will resolve the challenges presented to the international community by domestic and international terrorism. But we cannot deny the extent to which they provide a facilitating environment for the threats of terrorism, proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, failed states and organised crime. For example, efforts to engage with terrorism must address the issues of governance in a number of Arab-speaking countries such as Saudi Arabia, Iran and Syria, and African countries with substantial Muslim populations such as Sudan, Somalia, Nigeria, Algeria, Morocco, Libya and Egypt. This cannot happen by the imposition of democracy through external force of arms, or the election of governments to the liking of the US, but are prerequisites for progress in many areas, of which the war on terror is but one.

Earlier this essay argued that domestic terrorism is already endemic to Africa and that the future threat potential in the continent lies in a complex mixture and intermingling of sub-national and international terrorism. Should events in Somalia replicate those in Afghanistan, Africa may, however, come to play a central role in international terrorism through the application of a heavy-handed military response to a deep and severe political, social and developmental challenge. The motivation, means and targets all exist in that impoverished country should great care not be taken in the design and role of outside intervention forces, whether under IGAD, AU or UN auspices.

The fact that the present global preoccupation is with terrorist groups that have what US President George W Bush has termed ‘global reach’ simply reflects the dominant interests of the US. In Africa – particularly in Algeria, Sudan, Somalia, Uganda and the DRC, and previously in Sierra Leone and Liberia – terrorism has become a recurring feature of essentially local conflicts. On the one hand, the extent of the use of terror across the African conflict as a deliberate strategy renders the normal use of the term virtually meaningless. On the other hand, the danger, from the perspective of many, is
the tendency to conflate all into a global war on terrorism, often with the real intention by governments and others to use that opportunity to suppress political demands for self-determination, political engagement or recognition of certain rights. Caught in between are millions of Africans, terrorised by gangs, rebels and governments alike. Perhaps the trend towards conflating domestic terrorism with transnational terrorism is the only practical way forward, although with little comfort to many affected victims.

African governments have always faced a dilemma in balancing donor agendas, legitimate national security interests, and domestic support for democracy and human rights. The events of 11 September 2001 have shifted these balances, not always with predictable results. US and international support for tough action by African governments may result in an escalation of conflict and further polarisation where democracy is fragile and governance weak. In Africa with its disaffected millions, more so than anywhere else, security measures alone will not end the violence. If much of the focus on international terrorism in Africa is at the behest of the dominant division of international power, it has limited relevance to ordinary people. Anti-terrorism legislation forced down the throats of countries with weak or non-functioning criminal justice systems is of little more than symbolic value while African economic failure continues to erode regime legitimacy and foster an ideological vacuum and disaffection at every level amongst an increasingly youthful population.

Multiple initiatives and measures are needed to combat the terrorist threat against African nations. It is self-evident that without a functioning, nationally recognised central government, failed and weak African states provide a safe haven and facilitating environment for domestic and international terrorism alike. No military operation can make these countries safe if it is not linked to a process that is ultimately aimed at the construction of a working state with a government in control of its territory, both urban and rural, and its land, sea and aerial borders.

It is, of course, not only an issue of the ‘strength’ of the state, but also the nature of the African state that should concern us in any discussion on stability and security. It is a statement of the obvious that Africa requires governments that are not only accountable to their citizens, but are also subject to restraint and oversight by other public agencies, including civil society. Without credible systems that can effectively restrain the overwhelming power of the executive, key African regimes will remain shallow, corrupt, vulnerable to personal rule and abuse and incapable of guaranteeing basic civil liberties or providing the basis for development and stability. The systemic evidence of the dismal record of imposed macroeconomic policy restraints on African governments in the absence of ‘domestic’ agencies of restraint and accountability is beyond contestation. Imposed reform from beyond the continent, even in countries as weak as many in Africa, has proven a failure without strong domestic ownership and local agents of change within and outside government.
Notes

1 The author would like to thank Anneli Botha from the Institute for Security Studies for her comments on an earlier draft.

2 Despite the efforts by the National Party government to argue the contrary, the African National Congress did not adopt or apply an armed campaign that relied on terror to liberate South Africa. It did adopt, and put into practice, a strategy of sabotage and eventually mass mobilisation. The practice of necklace murders in the 1980s was one particularly horrifying way of making sure that potential collaborators were intimidated. But then necklace murders were not indiscriminate since the victim was suspected of being a government sympathiser and the act was not directed against innocent civilians.


4 R Pape, Dying to win: The strategic logic of suicide terrorism, as quoted by Scott Shane, Terrorism has a global impact but is often rooted in local disputes, International Herald Tribune, 17 July 2006, p 3.

5 Others have made a similar point. See, for example, M C Fowler, Amateur soldiers, global wars: Insurgency and modern conflict, Praeger Security International, Westport, 2005.


7 Friedman, op cit, p 487.

8 Ibid, p 559.


12 Ibid, p 72. Following the bomb attacks in Mumbai on 11 July 2006 there is speculation that al-Qaeda is trying to activate the large Muslim community in India against the Hindus and that the organisation may already be active in Kashmir.

13 GMPJ is linked to the hardline Algerian Salafist Group for Preaching and Combat (GSPC).

14 Neumann, op cit, p 77.

15 The 1981 bomb explosion when a terrorist linked to the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP) planted a bomb in the historical Norfolk Hotel, then owned by a Jewish family, predates even this.

16 Dempsey, op cit, pp 15-16.


18 According to IRIN these include Muse Sudi Yalahow, Muhammad Qanyare Afrah, Osman Hannan Ali ‘Atto’ and Muhammad Dhere. Somalia: The challenges of change, 6 July 2006, p 2.

19 He was subsequently elected as president of the Supreme Consultation Council of Islamic Courts in Mogadishu. He appeared on a list of ‘suspects’ as a suspected collaborator with al-Qaeda and his assets were frozen post-9/11.

20 Ibid.

21 As quoted by Zainab Osman, Bin Laden planning chaos in Somalia, IRIN, 3 July 2006. Gedi was responding, in mid-July, to an audio recording by the al-Qaeda leader that said a US-backed bid to deploying foreign troops to Somalia would be part of a crusade to crash Islamic rule. He added that the government would forcibly expel any foreigners found to have al-Qaeda ties from Somalia.

22 Dempsey, op cit, p 12.

23 D Farrah, Al-Qa’eda cash tied to diamond trade and Reports say Africans harbored Al-Qa’eda’, both in the Washington Post, 2 November 2002 and 29 December 2002 respectively.


26 Ibid, p 5.

Counter-terrorism in the Horn of Africa: New security frontiers, old strategies

Peter Kagwanja*

The US-led ‘war on terror’ dramatically changed America’s security strategy towards Africa. But more fundamentally, it threw the Horn of Africa on the centre stage of global counter-terrorism. A double-edged blade, counter-terrorism has at once catalysed peace processes and intensified insecurity, with Islamic radicalism at the core of the regional storm. Governments utilised the threat of terrorism for political ends, defending old security paradigms that prioritised regime stability over human security. Africa integrated counter-terrorism into its emerging security agenda, but insufficient funds, operational constraints and poor coordination with international initiatives have hampered meaningful progress. Washington, laudably, launched a robust counter-terrorist campaign, but its high-handed military-heavy style put fragile democracies at risk while lapses in its overall policy risk triggering proxy wars. This essay examines the impact of counter-terrorism on security in the Horn of Africa. It argues for stronger coordination between national, regional and international initiatives to curb international terrorism.

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Introduction

Terrorism has been elevated to the foremost threat to global security. The bombings of the American embassies in Kenya and Tanzania in August 1998 and the attack on the Israeli-owned Paradise Hotel in Mombasa in November 2002 confirmed the Horn of Africa as the continent’s most insecure region and a soft target of terrorism. Vulnerability to terrorism has thrust the region into the international spotlight as one of the main theatres of the global anti-terrorist campaign. But like a double-edged sword, the US’s ‘war on terror’ following 11 September 2001 is at once stemming the spread of terrorism and accentuating insecurity in the region’s volatile countries – Comoros, Djibouti, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Kenya, Somalia (including the self-declared Republic of Somaliland), Sudan, Tanzania and Uganda.

Insecurity in the Horn has deep roots in the political use of terror by state and non-state actors. As such, liberation movements, guerrillas, bandits, criminal gangs, cattle rustlers, pirates and vigilantes, as well as state terror, have long been included in the nomenclature of terrorism. But the spread of Islamic radicalism in the 1990s gave ‘terrorism’ an indelibly Muslim face in the Horn. As observed by Alex de Waal, Islamism has transformed the Horn into a veritable arena of conflict between jihadists and their enemies,1 evoking the Huntingtonian ‘clash of civilisations’ between the West and the rest in the reordering of global security and power relations.2 A medley of endemic poverty, chronic underdevelopment and a deep sense of marginalisation, in the light of the negative forces of economic globalisation, proximity to and historical linkages with the Middle East, have transformed the region into an incubator of radical Islamists ideas and local cells of international terrorist networks.3

But counter-terrorism has had a mixed impact on the security situation in the Horn. Broadly, efforts against terrorism opened new security frontiers, engendering a re-ordering of priorities and a fundamental rethinking about security in the Horn of Africa.4 The dynamics of ‘the war on terrorism’ catalysed peace deals in Somalia and Sudan, but also fostered restrictive security paradigms which have perpetuated conflicts and stoked civil wars in the region. The campaign against terrorism also gave new impetus to old security perspectives that privileged state stability, enabling regimes to instrumentally utilise terrorism for political ends. On their part, local extremist groups, redefined as ‘terrorists’, formed strategic alliances with Islamists aimed at securing aid and sanctuary and imported into the local theatres of war tactics of jihadists such as beheading victims.

Responses to terrorism by African governments threatened the stability of fragile states with hastily introduced counter-terrorist laws that threatened human rights and widened religious fissures. Disaffection with the US’s blanket definition of terrorism within Africa has resulted in poor coordination between regional and international counter-terrorist
initiatives, making counter-terrorism one of the weakest links of Africa’s peace and security agenda which has emerged in the aegis of the African Union (AU) from 2002.

In line with the increased focus on Africa in the US security strategy, the Horn was redefined as a particularly risky region that became a focus of Washington’s counter-efforts against terrorism, including the East Africa Counter-Terrorism Initiative (EACTI) and the Combined Joint Task Force – Horn of Africa (CJTF-HOA). But Washington’s high-handed approach to counter-terrorism has imperilled fragile democracies in countries like Kenya. Its recent policy lapses in backing warlords as a counter-terrorist strategy in Somalia have also escalated insecurity and heightened the risk of a full-scale war and further terrorist attacks against the neighbouring countries. This essay explores the response to terrorism at the national, regional and international levels, and assesses the impact of ‘the war on terror’ on the overall security in the Horn of Africa.

**Terrorism’s soft target**

Long before 9/11, local resistance backed by the Omani Arabs shrunk the Portuguese Indian Ocean empire (1498-1699), itself seized and sustained through terror, to modern Mozambique. As pointed out by Walter Laqueur, Mau Mau in Kenya in the 1950s was one of the many local groups that used a mix of terrorist tactics and guerrilla warfare against the British colonial power. The detention of the leaders of the Irgun and Stern Gang – two Israeli groups that used terrorism to fight for a state of Israel – in Kenya in the 1940s marked the Horn’s earliest encounter with conflict in Palestine. Ever since, terrorism in the Horn has been linked to the Arab-Israeli conflict in the Middle East.

In 1973, a shadowy Islamist organisation called Black September assassinated Cleo A Noel Jr, the US ambassador to Sudan, and his deputy chief of mission, George Curtis Moore. In a revenge attack on Kenya for allowing an Israeli rescue mission to use its facilities to foil the 1976 hijacking of an Air France plane and its 258 passengers, the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP) bombed the Jewish family-owned Norfolk Hotel in Nairobi on 31 December 1980, killing 15 people and injuring 80 others. In 1986, Libyan terrorists also severely wounded an American embassy communications technician in Khartoum in what appeared to be a revenge attack against the US bomb strikes against Libya. Analysts suspect that Islamic terrorists had a hand in the killing of 18 US army rangers in the Blackhawk Down episode in Mogadishu in 1993, prompting the US to pull out its troops from the country in March 1994.

The bombing of US embassies in Nairobi and Dar es Salaam on 7 August 1998 and the foiling of another planned attack on the US embassy in Kampala pushed the Horn to new levels of insecurity. Some 263 lives (among them 240 Kenyans, 11 Tanzanians and 12 Americans) were lost while 5,000 Kenyans and 86 Tanzanians were injured in the attacks.
Yemeni terrorists also hit the *USS Cole* just off the East African Indian Ocean seaboard in October 2000, killing 17 American sailors. At least 15 people died when suspected al-Qaeda agents bombed the Israeli-owned Paradise Hotel in Mombasa on 28 November 2002. Within minutes, terrorists using shoulder-fired SA-7 missiles narrowly missed an El Al passenger plane taking off from Mombasa airport. There have also been frequent terrorist alerts in Djibouti, Pemba, Zanzibar and the archipelagos of Comoros. These attacks put radical Islamism into sharp focus as an emerging security threat in the Horn.11

**Islamism and insecurity**

There are a number of reasons why the Horn of Africa has become a battleground for jihadists and their foes. First, the region’s geographical proximity and bonds of history with Middle East facilitated the movements of terrorist agents within and across the two regions.12 Second, countries in the region are either predominantly Muslim or have significant Muslim minorities: Comoros (98 per cent) per, Djibouti (94 per cent), Eritrea (50 per cent), Ethiopia (50 per cent), Kenya (10 per cent), Somalia (including the self-declared Republic of Somaliland, 100 per cent), Sudan, Tanzania (35 per cent) and Uganda (16 per cent).13 This exposed them to sectarian conflicts and international terrorism. Third, paradoxically, the expansion of democratic space from the 1990s emboldened activism inspired by radical Islamic ideas among disaffected Muslim minorities, particularly at the coast – forlornly described by the Kenyan scholar Ali Mazrui as a region trapped ‘between globalisation and marginalisation’.14 Fourth, a mix of widespread poverty, chronic underdevelopment and a deep sense of marginalisation, accentuated by the negative forces of economic globalisation, enabled Islamists to export their ideas and to win allies among impoverished Muslim minorities and desperate refugees.15

**Islamism in Sudan and Somalia**

In 1989, the National Islamic Front (called the National Congress Party after 1999) seized power in Sudan, marking the ascent of militant Islamism as a powerful force in the Horn of Africa. Sudan became a new epicentre of the militant Islamist world, providing shelter to Islamist fighters, including Abu Nidal, the Egyptian Islamic Jihad, *Gama’at al Islamiyya*, Hamas, Hezbollah and the Palestinian Islamic Jihad. In 1991-1996, Osama bin Laden used his base in Sudan to consolidate his networks and to support terrorist groups in Algeria, Tunisia, Egypt and other sub-Saharan countries.16 Khartoum not only provided aid and shelter to extremist groups such as the Islamic Front for the Liberation of Oromia in Ethiopia, the Eritrean Islamic Jihad, and the Ugandan Lord’s Resistance Army (LRA), but also covertly aided *Gama’at al-Islamiyya’s* abortive attempt on President Hosni Mubarak’s life in Addis Ababa in July 1995. In 1993, the US added Sudan to its list of state sponsors of terrorism while the UN Security Council placed the country on sanctions in 1996-2001. Suspecting Sudan
of sheltering the al-Qaeda agents who masterminded the 1998 bombings of its embassies in East Africa, the Clinton administration fired cruise missiles into its al-Shifa asprin factory.

However, Sudan’s Islamic government actively sought and partly obtained peace with Washington immediately after 9/11. US backing was crucial in the signing of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement (GPA) between Khartoum and the Sudan People’s Liberation Movement/Army (SPLA/M) in January 2005. But US-Sudan relations dipped following Khartoum’s proxy war in Darfur – which has killed some 200,000 and created over 2 million refugees – and its rejection of a UN peacekeeping force to replace the weaker and under-funded AU peace mission (AMIS) by October 2006.

Analysts raised alarm that the collapse of the Somali state in 1991 would enable al-Qaeda to turn the territory into its new front as a significant recruiting or training site. But Somalia merely served as a transit point to Kenya for al-Qaeda agents such as Ali Mohamed (a key figure in planning the bombing of US embassies in 1998 and the Paradise Hotel in Mombasa in 2002), Suleiman Abdullah, Wadih el-Hage (who set up al-Qaeda’s Kenyan cell) and Fuzul Abdullah Mohamed, a Comorian national who became the cell commander.17

Although Somalia did not become a sanctuary for al-Qaeda fighters driven out of Afghanistan by the US and its allies after 9/11, the spotlight has turned to local Islamists alleged to have linkages with al-Qaeda.18 The al-Ittihad al Islamiya, which emerged as the vehicle of Islamic extremism and a pan-Somali ideology, encouraged attacks on Ethiopian government targets in the 1990s and has been blamed for violent attacks on foreigners.19 In October 2003, militants killed an Italian nurse, Annalena Tonelli, and two British teachers, Richard and Enid Eyeington, followed by the killing of a Kenyan aid worker, Florence Cheruiyot, in April 2004. 20

In June 2006, the Islamists coalesced around the Union of Islamic Courts (UIC) edged closer to power when they defeated a US-backed alliance of warlords and gained control over Mogadishu. Somalia’s neighbours like Ethiopia and Kenya are bothered by the growing power of al-Ittihad’s hard-line radical Islamists and are determined not to allow the emergence of a version of the Taliban-ruled Afghanistan on their doorstops. The Somali conflict is threatening to boil over, with leaders of Somalia’s Transitional Federal Government accusing Egypt, Eritrea, Libya and Iran of supporting the Islamists, although Egypt has denied the charge.21

**Islamism in East Africa**

The spread of Islamism at the East African coast in the 1990s witnessed the rising terrorist violence. In Kenya, the government refused to register the Islamic Party of
Kenya (IPK) formed by a fiery Muslim cleric, Sheikh Khalid Balala, to articulate the grievances of Muslim minorities. IPK youths killed three police officers in protests in Mombasa. On 13 August 1997, 500 Islamic youths raided and razed the Likoni police station in Mombasa to the ground, killing six police officers and making away with 30–50 guns and 3,000–5,000 rounds of ammunition. Some 100 non-Muslims were also killed and 100,000 others displaced in Mombasa and its environs.²² In May 2003, the government announced that a key al-Qaeda member was plotting an attack on Western interests, confirming the presence of international terrorist cells with local allies.

Tanzania also experienced a surge of Islamism organised around the Baraza Kuu za Wa Islam wa Tanzania (National Association of Koran Readers in Tanzania, or Balukta), which was created in the 1980s to advance the course of Islamic militancy. Balukta forged clandestine ties with Iran and Sudan, which the government accused of giving military training to its nationals to topple the government and for fuelling riots in April 1993.²³ Militants were not only behind violent takeovers of moderate mosques in Dar es Salaam and the fire bombing of a tourist bar in Stone Town in 2002, but were also responsible for the violence that marred elections in Zanzibar in 2000 and in October 2005.²⁴ One of the pillars of Islamic militancy is cleric Sheik Ponda Isi Ponda, who founded the group Simba wa Mungu (God’s Lion), an underground organisation accused of orchestrating attacks on foreigners and moderate Tanzanian Muslims.²⁵ Al-Qaeda operatives such as Khalfan Khamis Muhammad, one of those convicted in connection with the 1998 US embassy bombings, and Qaed Sanyan al-Harithi, another al-Qaeda agent killed in Yemen in 2004, were linked to Sheik Ponda.

Islamic charities from the Gulf region have been accused of aiding radical Islamic activities and funding terrorism in the Horn. Funds from the African Muslim Agency (a Kuwaiti organisation engaged in the construction of mosques, schools and hospitals), the CIFA Development Group (a joint Tanzanian-Saudi investment venture established in 1995) and the Saudi-based petroleum company Oilcom were said to be used to purchase arms and to bribe corrupt members of the ruling Chama Cha Mapundzi party to turn a blind eye to the spread of Wahabist Islam.²⁶ The al-Haramain Islamic Foundation, the single Muslim charity which set up religious schools and social programmes for refugees in the Somali-dominated Dadaab refugee camps in northern Kenya, was also accused of sponsoring terrorist activities.²⁷ Al-Haramain worked closely with al-Itihaad cells in the camps to provide training and political education to Somali refugees along the lines of Pakistan-style madrassa classes to prepare them to ‘defend Islam and the Somali nation’.²⁸ Al-Itihaad agents exploited gaps in Kenya’s banking system and used the trust-based hawilaad or hudi banking system widely used by the Somalis in diaspora to move funds into the camps.

Islamists also supported local extremists groups. After 1993, the LRA in northern Uganda received weapons, ammunition, fuel and other essentials from Sudan’s militant Islamists. Aid to the LRA was meant to undermine Uganda backing the SPLA. In September
2000, 13 leaders and hundreds of members of Kenya’s neo-traditional Mungiki sect were converted to Islam in what analysts saw as a strategy to access assistance from Muslim charities and sanctuary from vocal Islamic clerics. But Mungiki not only rhetorically speak of creating a ‘nation guided by the Sharia’, but its militants stridently used terrorist tactics inspired by Iraqi jihadists.

National and regional responses

Governments across the Horn utilise the ‘war on terror’ to further their political ends, closing channels of peace talks to end conflicts. Ethiopia branded the Oromo Liberation Front, the Ogaden National Liberation Front and the Islamic Front for the Liberation of Oromia as ‘terrorist’ groups. Eritrea’s president, Isseyas Afewerki, also labelled his more democratically-minded former colleagues in the nationalist trenches terrorists. Similarly, Uganda’s President Yoweri Museveni branded as terrorists both the LRA and the Allied Democratic Front (ADF) – blamed for the orgy of bomb throwing in pubs, taxi parks, markets and other public spaces in 1997-1999 that killed over 50 people and injured 160. Museveni also invoked the Anti-Terrorism Act against Kizza Besigye, his worthy rival for the presidential slot during the 2006 polls, in a move aimed at weakening his bid for power. While this utilisation of terrorism blurred the line between legitimate acts of resistance and terrorism, many governments rejected to enter into peace talks as a way of resolving conflicts.

Operational and legislative responses

Governments also hastily introduced counter-terrorism legislations as curbs against terrorist incursions. In 2002, Tanzania ratified seven of the twelve international counter-terrorism instruments and passed the Prevention of Terrorism Act which criminalised support for terrorist groups operating within its territory amid fierce protests by human rights activists and opposition parties. Uganda ratified all the twelve international conventions and protocols on terrorism and enacted the Anti-Terrorism Act (formerly known as the Suppression of Terrorism Act) in May 2003. While the legislation imposed a mandatory death penalty for terrorists and potential death penalty for their sponsors and supporters, it has been accused of prioritising local rebellion over the international terrorist threat. The newly elected government of Mwai Kibaki ratified all the twelve international counter-terrorism conventions and protocols and published the Suppression of Terrorism Bill on 30 April 2003. But parliament shelved the law due to strong resistance from Muslim lobbies and human rights groups who, eager to fiercely defend their newly won civil liberties, criticised the draft bill as a breach to the Bill of Rights. However, Kenya enacted the Witness Protection Bill in September 2004 to protect witnesses in terrorist cases. Largely driven by the need to be on the right side of the Bush Administration’s ‘war on terror’, most of these laws failed to effectively
resolve the palpable tension between the values of democracy and the imperatives of counter-terrorism.\textsuperscript{35}

The initial denial based on self-perception as victims rather than hosts to terrorist that characterised Africa's initial response to terrorism has gradually given way to some bold steps to curb terrorism.\textsuperscript{36} In February 2003, Kenya formed a special counter-terrorist unit consisting of officers picked from the police force. The unit teamed up with the US Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) and Interpol to unearth and eliminate the cell set up by Osama bin Laden's secretary, Wadi el-Hage, in 1994.\textsuperscript{37} Tanzanian police also worked together with the US to arrest those responsible for the 1998 bombing in Dar es Salaam.

Kenya stationed two army battalions along the common border with Somalia from May 2003. But insufficient boats and personnel to patrol the Indian Ocean coastline and ports has given a free hand to terrorists and pirates to continue making forays into the region.\textsuperscript{38} Since 1991, Somalia has no coast guard or navy, making its coastal ports ideal entry points for al-Qaeda agents. Piracy targeting passenger and cargo vessels for ransom or loot has sharply increased from two attacks in 2004 to 35 in 2005.\textsuperscript{39} A plan to boost the capacity of the Kenya Navy to patrol the Indian Ocean coastline is yet to get off the ground.

Kenya also established an inter-ministerial task force focusing on Anti-Money Laundering and Combating the Financing of Terrorism. The task force reviewed existing legislation and recommended ways of formulating a national policy shutting down channels of financing of terrorism.\textsuperscript{40} In 2003, Kenya invoked the NGO Co-ordination Act of 1990 to deregister an array of Muslim NGOs accused of having linkages with terrorist groups. These included al-Haramain Islamic Foundation, the al-Muntada al-Islami (which funded several madrassas and health facilities at the Kenya coast), the World Assembly of Muslim Youth, the al-Ibrahim Foundation, Wakalatul-Rahmah offices, and the al-Najah Islamic Centre in northern Kenya.\textsuperscript{41} The High Court threw out petitions to reverse the decision while the government deported al-Haramain's Sudanese director, Sheikh Muawiya Hussein in January 2004.

\textbf{Counter-terrorism and Africa's security agenda: A weak link}

The emergence of a continental framework to guide Africa's response to terrorism got under way in the late 1990s. In April 1998, six African states in the League of Arab States - Algeria, Egypt, Libya, Mauritania, Morocco and Tunisia – endorsed the Arab Convention for the Suppression of Terrorism in Cairo, Egypt.

Countries from the Horn joined 46 member states of the Organisation of African Unity (OAU), which adopted the Convention on the Prevention and Combating of Terrorism
in Algiers, Algeria, in July 1999. The summit also agreed to establish an African Centre for the Study and Research on Terrorism (ACSRT).

America’s allies in Africa hastily convened a conference on terrorism in Dakar, Senegal, on 17 October 2001. The conference was attended by 27 African governments including some from the Horn. President Abdoulaye Wade, the host, viewed the conference as Africa’s chance to “team up with the world coalition against this evil”. But other leaders had more modest expectations. The summit adopted the Declaration against Terrorism, which merely reaffirmed Africa’s commitment to the 1999 Algiers Terrorism Convention. More tellingly, the declaration expressed Africa’s deep concern that the US ‘war on terror’ would “have the least possible adverse impact on the development of Africa”, particularly on its security.

A meeting on the OAU Mechanism for Conflict Prevention, Management and Resolution convened in New York on 11 November 2001 reiterated Africa’s existing commitments -including the OAU Convention’s definition of ‘terrorism’, which carefully excluded freedom fighters. This reflected Africa’s unease with America’s blanket definition of terrorism. But when it dawned on African states that America would readily use its power with full force, they immediately fell into line in cooperating with its counter-terrorism.

With the inauguration of the African Union (AU) in Durban, South Africa, in July 2002, counter-terrorism became a key agenda of Africa’s peace and security vision. Counter-terrorism also became one of the priorities in the strategic framework document of the New Partnership for Africa’s Development (NEPAD), which the AU adopted in July 2002. A high-level meeting of the AU in Algiers on 11-14 September 2002 endorsed the twelve UN instruments on terrorism and developed a plan of action on the prevention and combating of terrorism in Africa.

The AU Peace and Security Council (PSC), launched in May 2004, also sought to coordinate continental efforts in preventing and combating of international terrorism in all its aspects. Further, the Algiers convention came into force in December 2002 following ratification by 30 of the 53 AU member states, while the ACSRT itself was inaugurated in October 2004. The implementation of Africa’s counter-terrorism priorities in the Horn falls on the Inter-Governmental Authority on Development (IGAD), defined as one of the five regional pillars of the AU’s peace and security architecture. However, Africa’s counter-terrorist framework needs to be attuned to the post-9/11 security realities.

**IGAD counter-terrorism plan**

Two separate meetings tried to raise the profile of counter-terrorism among IGAD member states – Djibouti, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Kenya, Somalia, Sudan and Uganda. IGAD’s
9th summit held in Khartoum, Sudan, in January 2002 stressed the urgent need for action on counter-terrorism at the national, regional and international levels.

On 24-27 June 2003, IGAD also convened its conference on the Prevention and Combating of Terrorism, which further elaborated the AU Convention on Terrorism and adopted a six-point implementation plan. The plan set the benchmarks, standards and indicators to measure performance and compliance with regional and international obligations. These priority areas included:

- Developing a common regional policy framework rooted in the broader international strategy; measures to counter the financing of terrorism;
- Enhancing operational capacity to tighten border controls; establishment of a regional database and terrorism centre;
- Respect for human rights and the rule of law in counter-terrorism strategies; and
- Cultivation of public support for combating terrorism.

IGAD’s meeting on combating terrorism and trans-national organised crime held in Khartoum on 17-19 January 2004 resolved to institute annual workshops to enhance the capabilities of member states to combat and eliminate terrorism. But shortage of funds, weak capacity and coordination between its own policies and strategies and those of the international actors has hampered the implementation of IGAD’s ambitious counter-terrorism plan.

**International response: The US ‘war on terror’**

Africa is widely perceived as being a sideshow in the ‘war on terrorism’. But there has been a dramatic shift in US security policy towards Africa. A July 2004 report of the Africa policy advisory panel concluded that “the threat of terror to US interests in Africa is concrete, rising and discernible. The probability of another attack on Americans on African soil is high.”

The Horn of Africa has come to occupy a central place in the US war on terror. “Although we are concerned about attacks everywhere in Africa, we consider East Africa and the Horn ... to be at particular risk,” the US deputy coordinator for counter-terrorism, William Pope, told a meeting in Kampala in April 2004. The region is the focus of two of US’s counter-terrorism initiatives in Africa: the East Africa Counter-Terrorism Initiative (EACTI) and the Combined Joint Task Force – Horn of Africa (CJTF-HOA).
The Combined Joint Task Force – Horn of Africa

In October 2002, the US launched the CJTF-HOA in Djibouti. The CJTF-HOA started with some 1,800 American soldiers and civilian personnel who occupied the former French Foreign Legion facility at Camp Lemonier in Djibouti – the only American military base in Africa, which has also received Western forces from France, Germany, Italy and Spain.

The CJTF-HOA is tasked with combating terrorism in Djibouti, Ethiopia, Eritrea, Sudan, Somalia and Yemen, as well as the entire Indian Ocean coastline and the waters of the Red Sea and the Gulf of Aden. But its strategic focus stretches farther afield in the Arabian peninsula. The US Central Command also backs the CJTF-HOA to achieve its mission: detecting, disrupting and defeating transnational terrorist groups; countering the resurgence of international terrorism; and enhancing the long-term stability of the region.

The CJTF-HOA has focused on training with allied forces and the troops of Djibouti, Ethiopia and Kenya. It has also refurbished schools, clinics, provided medical services and carried out poverty alleviation projects as part of America’s grand strategy to win the hearts and minds. The task force has also established a temporary military facility outside Dire Dawa in southeastern Ethiopia to train the country’s anti-terrorist battalions.

The task force has also facilitated the sharing of intelligence with regional countries, with its commanders claiming that it had captured ‘dozens of terrorists’ and averted at least five terrorist attacks. The American military base in Djibouti indicates that the US is in the Horn for a long haul. But, paradoxically, it is a potential source of insecurity as a tempting target for al-Qaeda attacks. This places an extra burden on the US to main stricter surveillance.

The East Africa Counter-Terrorism Initiative

The unveiling of the US$100 million EACTI in June 2003 signalled the region’s centrality in the Bush administration’s counter-terrorist priorities. The bulk of this money has gone to ‘hard’ aspects of counter-terrorism, including US$50 million for security programmes administered by the US Department of Defence for military training for border control and security of the coastline, police training and aviation security capacity. Another $10 million was allocated to the Kenyan Anti-Terror Police Unit.

The State Department’s Terrorist Interdiction Programme also worked with regional governments to develop comprehensive anti-money laundering/counter-terrorist financing arrangements, including setting up a computer system in selected airports in Djibouti, Ethiopia, Kenya, Tanzania and Uganda. Only $14 million went to the ‘soft’ aspects set aside for winning hearts and minds through support for Muslim education, thus revealing the military bias in the ‘war on terror’.
Despite this, Washington has been less than satisfied with what its operatives view as a lukewarm response to the ‘war on terror’ by its African partners. In March 2004, it accused Tanzania of not setting up enough measures to deal with terrorism. The US also threatened to terminate military aid to Kenya (estimated at US$3 million per year) if it ratified the treaty for the International Criminal Court without exempting US servicemen under article 98. This hardball style has threatened the stability of emerging democracies, with some of these countries charging that aspects of the war on terror are undermining their sovereignty.

The US and its allies have issued frequent alerts against travel to the region, pushing weak economies to the ropes. The Kenyan economy lost UK£108 million in 2004 following the UK’s decision to impose travel bans on visitors to the country. Pragmatic and nuanced approaches by the US and its allies are needed to ensure that counter-terrorism does not imperil the security of its weaker African partners.

**Whither counter-terrorist policy in Somalia?**

Washington has backed a strategy of financing an alliance of warlords in Somalia to halt the growing power of hard-line jihadi Islamists in central and southern Somalia who are suspected to have al-Qaeda connections and be sheltering its agents. Between US$100,000 and US$150,000 per month went into organising and structuring militia forces aligned to the Alliance for the Restoration of Peace and Counter-terrorism (ARPCT) to fight the Union of Islamic Courts (UIC), particularly the two top leaders of *al-Ittihad Islamiya*, Hassan Dahir Aweys and Hassan Turki. But the approach has badly backfired when in June 2006 the UIC fighters crushingly defeated the warlord’s alliance and took control of Mogadishu after heavy fighting in which over 300 people were killed and some 1,700 injured.

US counter-terrorist intelligence erred by reading too much ideological import into what is essentially a localised struggle for power and prestige among rival clans in southern and central Somalia, fuelled by the failure of the Transitional Federal Government to unite all the clans. While Islamists in the Islamic Courts were emerging as a powerful force, it was not clear that they were al-Qaeda proxies. In fact, far from being an outright al-Qaeda breach-head, the UIC has in it many moderates with well-trained militias and independent sources of funding who have no ambitions of creating a version of Taliban state in Afghanistan.

The victory of the UIC has left Somalia’s Transition Federal Government (TFG) in an extremely vulnerable position, casting a dark cloud on the future of the IGAD-brokered peace deal in October 2004. It has also strengthened the hand of Islamists, heightened inter-clan feuds and the risk of the country’s return to full-scale civil war. United by a common fear of a possible rise of a Taliban-style Islamist regime on their doorsteps,
Somalia’s neighbours – particularly Ethiopia and Kenya, which have in the past suffered attacks by Somali militants – consider the UIC as a threat which must be stopped in its tracks. This has increased the threat of proxy war across the Horn.

Events in Somalia have popularised the view that the White House and Pentagon are pursuing a parallel Somalia policy into which the State Department has no input, a view given weight by the removal and transfer to Chad of the Kenya-based US official handling Somalia for the Bush administration and vocal critic of the Somalia policy, Michael Zorick.56 Prior to his transfer, Zorick had warned that payments being made to warlords were fuelling conflict in Somalia’s capital. The backfiring of the strategy has led to serious soul-searching about the direction of US counter-terrorism in the Horn.

**Conclusion: Making counter-terrorism work**

In response to the growing security threat that terrorism has posed in the Horn of Africa, African governments and regional organisations have joined the US-led ‘war on terror’. But, ideologically charged counter-terrorism is becoming a sword that cuts both ways – at once catalysing and supporting peace processes and undermining democracy and stability in weaker states. Governments are utilising terrorism to breathe new life into old security paradigms that prioritise regime survival and state security rather than human security.

While the extensive use of terrorist tactics by local extremist groups has intensified insecurity, the trend to pin the terrorist label on these groups is blurring the line between international terrorism and the parochial dynamics of localised resistance and struggles for power and prestige, thus complicating the search for peaceful solutions to conflicts. Further the present military-heavy counter-terrorist strategies have eclipsed the need for ‘soft’ options including robust poverty eradication measures to forestall the spread of Islamists ideas and terrorism. Old-style high-handed approaches associated with global actors undermine human rights and imperil weak democracies.

Coordination between national, regional and international counter-terrorist initiatives is needed to ensure that these initiatives do not undermine an already fragile security situation in the Horn of Africa. Governments in the region must re-commit themselves to counter-terrorism by strengthening counter-terrorism laws, police and intelligence, tightening border controls, coastline surveillance and anti-money laundering measures to detect, deter and diffuse terrorist threats, but strike a healthy balance between these measures and the values of democracy and human rights. Governments should also refrain from underhand manipulation of terrorism in ways that undermine peace processes.

African institutions, particularly the AU, IGAD and the Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa (COMESA), must unwaveringly pursue a counter-terrorism
campaign within the broader framework of the emerging continental peace and security agenda. They should work with international partners to boost regional abilities to deal effectively with the security threats posed by terrorism, always ensuring greater coordination between African efforts and those of international players like the US. Otherwise, the parameters of the war on terror will continue to be set by the imperatives of global insecurity with little attention to local security realities.

The US appears to be battling with internal inconsistencies and lapses in its counter-terrorist policy, especially in Somalia, sending conflicting signals to local partners and stoking the embers of internal conflicts and heightening the risk of proxy wars across the Horn. Quieter and more nuanced and pragmatic strategies are needed to effectively confront the complex threat of terrorism. Hard security approaches currently identified with Washington’s policy can only exacerbate insecurity and put Africa’s weak democracies at risk. Continued funding of existing initiatives is central to pushing back the frontiers of terrorism and regional insecurity in the Horn of Africa. But nothing short of a holistic and well-coordinated counter-terrorism policy that ties together poverty eradication, conflict resolution and peace-building strategies can successfully drain the marshes in which extremism and terrorism have thrived in the Horn of Africa.

Notes

10 Barkan, op cit, pp 87–100.
11 See De Waal, op cit.
15 De Coning, op cit, pp 20-29.
19 Ibid, p 142.
20 ICG, p 6.


23 Tanzania outlaws Muslim fundamentalist group, Reuters, 29 April 1993; Tanzania: Government orders Sudanese nationals to leave, Inter Press Service, 26 April 1993.

24 Zanzibar polls will go ahead, BBC, 28 October 2005.


27 Author’s interview with an NGO official, Dadaab Camp, Northern Kenya, August 2002.


38 Author’s participation in a meeting with Tanzania’s Department of Intelligence, 22 March 2006.


40 Author’s interview with a Kenya government official, Nairobi, May 2006.


44 See Inter-Governmental Authority on Development (IGAD), Implementation Plan of Action for Combating and Preventing Terrorism, p 3, para 2:1.


46 A de Waal & A H Abdel Salam, Africa, Islamism and America’s ‘war on terror’, in De Waal, op cit, p 239.


49 Other US counter-terrorist initiatives are: the Pan-Sahel Initiative (PSI), the West African Initiative, the Southern African Initiative and the North African Initiative.

50 Cited in D Shanin, *Fighting terrorism in East Africa and the Horn*, p 41.


52 Barkan, op cit, p 99.


54 Kagwanja & Juma, op cit.

55 Author’s interview with Somali analysts, 7–9 August 2006; Kagwanja & Juma, op cit.

56 Author’s correspondence with a Nairobi-based analyst, 30 July 2006.
Terrorism in West Africa: Real, emerging or imagined threats?

Cyril I Obi*

This essay locates the West African region in the context of the post-9/11 discourses on terrorism and counter-terrorism, particularly as it relates to the global war on terror. It identifies and analyses the issues and challenges that flow from the integration of West Africa into hegemonic transnational/globalised security arrangements, and the ways in which the emerging state (militaristic) and globalised security framework could reinforce or, paradoxically, undermine regional, intranational human and environmental security in one of Africa’s most troubled regions. It critically examines the possibility of a terrorist threat in the region and analyses the global stakes involved in integrating West Africa into the global war on terror. On this basis, it concludes that zero-sum, militarist, globally driven solutions may fail to address the historical, political, and socio-economic roots of a possible terrorist threat in West Africa.

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Introduction

Since the 9/11 terrorist attacks in the United States (US), and terrorist attacks in Africa, Europe and Asia, it has become obvious that in a globalising world, such attacks can come from anywhere, assume any form and can target Western military, strategic or economic interests and citizens (or allies) abroad. Thus, protection from terrorism involves complex operations on a global scale. This much has been the cornerstone of the defence and foreign policies of the George W Bush presidency in the US, its closest ally, the British government under Prime Minister Tony Blair, the G-8 countries, the European Union (EU), and their allies across the world.

This essay seeks to locate the West African region in the context of the construction and representation of global security, particularly as it relates to the post-9/11 global discourses on terrorism and counter-terrorism. It also identifies and analyses the critical challenges that flow from the integration of West Africa into the ‘global war on terror’, and the ways in which the emerging militarised and globalised security complex may reinforce or, paradoxically, undermine regional, intranational human and environmental security in one of Africa’s most troubled regions.

Although no terrorist strike has occurred in West Africa (unlike East and North Africa), security strategists, scholars and policymakers are concerned that, given historical and cultural factors and the political instability, poverty, socio-economic and governance crises and conflicts that have ravaged the region, it could be potentially vulnerable to terrorism. Of particular note are the ‘networked wars’ of the 1990s that ravaged Liberia and Sierra Leone and involved neighbouring states, and the outbreak of civil war in Guinea-Bissau between 1998 and 1999 and in Côte d’Ivoire in 2002.

Although peace has returned to West Africa (even as an uneasy truce holds sway in Côte d’Ivoire), it remains fragile. As Nigeria, the region’s most populous country and economic powerhouse, approaches general elections in 2007, there are also concerns that political instability largely driven by zero-sum games for power involving the manipulation of ethnic, religious and communal identities, could take a turn for the worse and threaten regional security. The escalation of violence in the Niger Delta – the main oil-producing region in Nigeria – has also attracted international attention. Attacks on oil installations and security forces, the abduction of expatriate oil workers, the stealing of oil from pipelines and the operations of militant and armed groups intent on controlling oil revenues in the region are widely seen as a threat to the West’s energy security. Thus, as one of Africa’s most unstable regions, as well as a rapidly expanding source of oil and gas for the US, and to a lesser extent, Europe and Asia (particularly China), the stakes in the security of West Africa have become very high, and the need to prevent it from becoming a site for terrorist attacks against Western interests never greater.
The concern of the US in focusing on this region is impelled by several broad considerations:

- Its openness and perceived lack of effective governance or secure borders;
- A need to integrate the region into a US-controlled global security framework;
- The region at present provides 15 per cent of US oil imports and this is expected to increase to 25 per cent within a decade;
- The possibility of recruiting locals in the ‘Muslim Belt’ to terrorist cells; and
- Opportunities to launder or move large amounts of money using the cross-border trade in ‘blood diamonds’, timber and arms, and to raise funds within the state of chaos of conflict or emerging post-conflict zones.

Critics argue that the terrorist threat in West Africa has been exaggerated to fit into Washington’s hegemonic global security agenda. It appears that the terrorist threat that has pre-occupied the attention of strategic and policy planners has been largely constructed around political/radical Islam, oil, and the stereotype of weak, failed or failing African states. Although no compelling evidence of terrorism has been found, West Africa is thus writ large in the emerging post-Cold War transnational geo-strategic and energy security calculations.

As far back as 1999, Article 3 of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) Protocol for Conflict Prevention, Management, Resolution, Peace Keeping and Security had identified the tackling of international terrorism as one of the objectives for regional cooperation.1 However, since 9/11, cooperation between the US, EU and ECOWAS (and individual member states) has grown. The concern with terrorism in West Africa has therefore been framed not only in global terms, but also as the reserve of ‘high politics’ involving the political elite, military top brass, ministers, heads of state and the regional economic organisation, ECOWAS.

Thus, to some extent the relevance of the West African connection to the war on terror transcends the concern with internal security. It also attempts to collectively address the ‘globalisation’ of the region’s security. However, in doing this much emphasis lies on the institutional and military approaches to anti-terrorist and defence arrangements, while little attention is focused on providing the national and international resources badly needed for addressing the harsh political and desperate socio-economic conditions that may provide the nourishment for dissent, violence, repression, proliferation of small arms and highly mobile youth fighters, and possibly, terror. Terrorism in West Africa therefore lies more in the realm of possibilities and/or
perceptions of potential threats in a region that is being further opened up to global influences and transnational actors.

**Terrorism: Some conceptual issues**

Terrorism is a highly contested concept. It therefore can be ‘flexibly constructed’ to suit ideological, nationalist, propagandist and political objectives. With its origins in revolutionary political violence, it is now associated with an illegal unconventional war against a society or against an established, but resented, order. Thus, while terrorism could be intended to attract attention to a cause through acts of extreme violence/threat of violence and spreading grief and fear, it could also be used as a label by status quo forces to excoriate and demonise their opponents or those struggling against domination and exploitation.

The history of modern terrorism is often traced back to the ‘Red Terror’ during the French Revolution in the 18th century, and the spread of similar tactics to the rest of Europe and then the US and Russia, often in the service of nationalist and anarchic goals. In the 20th century, terrorism became more sophisticated and spread throughout the world. In agreement with Schmid, Jongman et al, it would be apposite in our context to note that “terrorism is an anxiety-inspiring method of repeated violent action, employed by (semi) clandestine individual, groups, or state actors, for idiosyncratic, criminal, or political reasons, whereby – in contrast to assassination – the direct targets of violence are not the main targets”.

In a globalising world, ‘new’ terrorist networks have also become more sophisticated, mobile and trans-global in their operations: moving resources, conventional and unconventional weapons, recruiting operatives, planning and co-ordinating their activities within, and across national borders. Apart from the use of civilian aeroplanes in the tragic 9/11 attacks, terrorists have also used dangerous chemicals and gases (such as Sarin gas, used by Aum Shinrikyo in the Tokyo March 1995 subway attacks), suicide bombers and biological weapons such as anthrax. Increasingly they have targeted and bombed civilians – tourists, bus and train commuters, hotels/tourist resorts, public buildings and air travellers -while largely avoiding military installations and infrastructure.

At present, the discourse on global terrorism is largely framed with reference to threats posed to Western society by al-Qaeda and the groups sympathetic to it, as well as to the activities of extremist political and nationalist groups operating across the world. Yet, there is a sense in which the conceptualisation of terrorism, and by implication counter-terrorism, could become an ideological construct that is embedded in history and international politics. This is precisely the point made by Mamdani, based on his observation that the US Central Intelligence Agency (CIA), working with other foreign
agencies, provided support to al-Qaeda during the later part of the Cold War, when the latter was involved in fighting against the pro-Soviet Union regime in Afghanistan. What flows from this is that the conceptualisation of terrorism should be both nuanced and placed in context.

The current focus on West Africa is partly informed by the centrality of Africa to emerging global security discourses. Although the continent had been victim of the 1998 terrorist bombings of the US embassies in Dar es Salaam and Nairobi in which over 200 people were killed, it was not until the September 2001 attacks in the US, and in the face of the prioritisation of Africa’s oil in US strategic energy calculations, that the continent – and by extension, West Africa – became integrated into the US-led ‘global war on terror’. It is important that West Africa’s place in the emerging discourse on global terrorism should be situated within an African context that places a premium on Africa’s interests and priorities. This is pertinent partly because the current debates tend to be almost exclusively framed within Western paradigms that represent Africa as a source of threats to Western society which should be integrated into a hegemonic framework of global security. Therefore a conceptual discussion of terrorism in West Africa must include a radical analysis of the integration of the region into the global war on terror, and provide an African perspective to the emerging discourse on global security.

**West Africa in the context of the ‘global war on terror’**

“We can’t allow areas like that to be ungoverned, to become a haven for terrorists.”

The above statement, credited to the deputy commander of the US European Command (EUCOM) (that also covers Africa), encapsulates the current US perspective of its national security interest in the Saharan and Sahelian belts of West Africa. West Africa is one of the global sites for the US’s war on terror, involving both governments of the region and ECOWAS in a counter-terrorism partnership with the US and its G-8 allies. Critical to this partnership is US interest in ensuring that terrorist groups do not find sanctuary, raise funds, recruit terrorists and operate from this region. Another consideration is the need to protect vital Western and US strategic and energy security interests in the region. In this regard the US launched the Pan Sahel Initiative (PSI), aimed at training 150 soldiers each from Mali, Mauritania, Niger and Chad. These were countries believed to harbour extremist groups likely to be linked to the Salafist Group for Preaching and Combat (GSPC) in Algeria.

The PSI was followed by the Trans-Sahara Counter Terrorism Initiative (TSCTI) at an estimated cost of approximately US$120 million. Apart from building up regional defence and security capacities, the TSCTI aimed to “train additional forces, include
more countries and help foster better information sharing and operational planning between regional states, considered as important as creating new units. The TSCTI then expanded its coverage to include Algeria, Tunisia, Morocco, Senegal, Ghana and Nigeria. Its focus has been largely on training soldiers from these countries, providing military assistance in the form of both hardware and software, preventing the spread of extremist forms of Islam and securing national and regional borders. Rear Admiral Tallent, director of operations for the US European Command, said before the US House Sub-committee on International Terrorism and Non-proliferation that “we are supporting US national security in the global war on terrorism by enhancing Africa’s regional security, thus promoting an Africa that is self-sufficient and stable.”

The same thinking underlies the African Contingency Operations Training Assistance (ACOTA), which replaced the African Crises Response Initiative (ACRI). It specifically designs tailor-made programmes for individual African states (militaries) in the areas of security, humanitarian and peacekeeping operations. Such training is handled by US military and US private military/security companies and involves the use of US military technology and hardware. Part of the US policy thrust is also to build facilities and bases (airports, ports, buildings) in West Africa from which the US military can launch missions in the region. It would appear, then, that the US and West Africa share a common interest in the fight against global terror. This may be so, but it is also clear that the ‘partnership’ is an unequal one in which the US is clearly the dominant party. This raises the critical point of West African states being held captive by external security interests and projects that may undermine the long-term interests of the region and its people. However, the reality is that US-West African counter-terrorism initiatives exist and are probably here to stay. What remains is to deepen the analysis of the considerations that drive and sustain this partnership and its short- to long-term implications.

**West Africa’s fragile peace and the risk of regression to violent conflict**

The US-led counter-terrorism initiatives in West Africa are partly informed by the view that societies in conflict or just emerging from civil wars are vulnerable to infiltration or capable of harbouring transnational criminal networks and terrorists. Such views have been strengthened by the connection drawn between the illegal trade in conflict diamonds in West Africa at the peak of the civil wars in Liberia and Sierra Leone, and the funding of terrorist networks linked to al-Qaeda. According to a report on the UN-supported War Crimes Court in Sierra Leone, which quoted the head prosecutor in Freetown:

> Certainly, al-Qaeda have been here for a couple of years and they have been using diamonds to wash their money and so, yes, they certainly have a presence here. There’s specific and direct evidence to that effect.
A report in the Washington Post also noted that the former Liberian president, Charles Taylor, collaborated with al-Qaeda operatives involved in the trade in 'blood diamonds'. Taylor is at present in The Hague awaiting trial following his transfer from Sierra Leone after his arrest in Nigeria. This was after the new Liberian president, Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf, following concerted US pressure, requested his extradition to the Sierra Leonean court. Until Taylor’s trial commences, it may not be possible to evaluate the extent of al-Qaeda involvement in the Mano River area of West Africa.

Also, rebel groups reported to be operating in the northern fringes of Mauritania, Mali, Niger and Chad have been linked to possible terrorist infiltration from North Africa. Such fears have been heightened by rebel activity in Chad with occasional incursions across Nigeria’s northeastern borders, by the Darfur crisis in Sudan, and by insurgency linked to Tuareg groups in Mali and Niger. The US is determined to keep a very close watch on the region and build up the capacity of the armies and police forces in West Africa to nip terrorist threats in the bud.

The fragility of post-conflict West African states has contributed to the use of peacebuilding as part of the counter-terrorism process. So far, most of the attention and resources have gone into security sector reforms, building up military and intelligence capacities, while international interventionism in relation to post-conflict peace-building and reconstruction appears to fail to tackle the complex roots of the multiple crises rocking the region. Also, such interventionism is often strategic and vertical, excluding the grassroots and often undermining social justice, democratic consolidation, economic redistribution and growth. This suggests that the current partnerships, which hinge on the prognosis that weak or distressed states and conflict societies are vulnerable to terrorist infiltration and that states and governance should be strengthened to contain the threat, very often neglect the socio-economic and historical inequities that lie at the roots of most violent conflicts or wars.

**West Africa and global energy security**

A critical consideration underlining counter-terrorism measures in West Africa is the existence of substantial US and Western oil interests and investments in the region. The region accounts for 15 per cent of all US oil imports and it is projected that this will increase to 25 per cent by 2020. Leading US policymakers, energy and strategic analysts have emphasised the centrality of oil from West and Central Africa, dubbed the ‘New Gulf States’ in the media, to US efforts to diversify oil supplies from the Middle East and secure steady supplies of oil and gas against a background of declining domestic oil production in the US. The reasons for this lie in the proximity of Africa to US oil markets and the fact that most of the oil Africa produces is of the light, ‘sweet’ variety, with a low sulphur content that is favoured by US refineries. Also, more oil is being
discovered and produced off-shore in the Gulf of Guinea and Western oil companies have vast investments in the region that guarantee jobs and profits to shareholders. With growing domestic demand in the US – and dependence on imported oil to satisfy about half of domestic demand – it has become important to secure new sources of oil from across the world. Part of the calculus is also to diversify US dependence on oil supplies from the volatile Middle East and to pre-empt the likely strategic implications of growing Chinese demand for oil imports from African and other international producers.11

Another important consideration is the protection of offshore oil installations and international sea-lanes in West Africa from the activities of international criminal and terrorist networks. This much was confirmed recently by Admiral Henry G Ulrich, commander of the US Naval Forces in Europe and Africa, in response to reporters’ questions at a symposium in Abuja, Nigeria.12 Thus, an unfettered access to West African oil is critical to Western energy security and global power. Western oil interests are also locked into major oil-producing countries such as Nigeria, Angola, Gabon and the ‘new oil boom states’ – Chad, Equatorial Guinea, and São Tome and Principe. Since most of the oil being discovered is off-shore, it has the added advantage of being beyond the reach of protesting oil communities on land who are capable of disrupting the oil flow, as has been the case in the restive oil-rich Niger Delta in Nigeria since the early 1990s.

According to the African Oil Policy Initiative Group (AOPIG) Report, quoting the US Assistant Secretary of State, Walter Kansteiner III: “African oil is critical to us, and it will increase and become more important as we go forward.”13 Apart from guaranteeing stable supplies of oil to the expanding oil-guzzling US market, it gives the US the leeway to promote its values of free markets, regional economic growth, good governance and democracy, which would influence regional stability and peace in ways that broadly favour US hegemonic interests and security.

US oil corporations have been in the vanguard of the new scramble for West Africa’s oil. They recognise the need to compete more against their European counterparts, such as Royal Dutch Shell, Total, BP and ENI (Agip), as well as Chinese oil companies that are aggressively seeking a foothold in the region. US oil multinationals such as Exxon Mobil and Chevron Texaco have been the visible frontrunners in the quest for new oil finds in West Africa. Gary and Karl note that: “Chevron Texaco announced in 2002 that it had invested $5 billion in the past five years in African oil and would spend $20 billion more in the next five years,” and “Exxon Mobil signified its intention to spend $15 billion in Angola in the next four years, and $25 billion across Africa in the next decade.”14

In addition, both Exxon Mobil and Chevron Texaco were investing billions of dollars in Nigeria, the fifth largest exporter of oil to the US, accounting in 2002 for 600,000 barrels per day of US oil imports.15 Chevron Texaco was also involved in developing the oil and gas fields in Equatorial Guinea, while Exxon Mobil had cornered the São Tome
and Principe oil and gas fields. The 1,070 km Chad-Cameroon oil pipeline, carrying oil from the Doba oilfields in Chad for export through the Cameroon port of Kribi, is reportedly the largest single US private investment in Africa by Exxon Mobil, valued at US$3.7 billion. Other sources, however, put the investments by Exxon Mobil (which owns 40 per cent of the equity, followed by Petronas of Malaysia with 35 per cent and Chevron Texaco with 25 per cent) at US$2.2 billion. Whatever the real figures are, it shows a pronounced US oil multinational presence in Chad.

Other US oil interests include the West African Gas Pipeline Project (WAGP), valued at US$500 million, to transport an estimated 120 million cubic feet per day of gas to Ghana, Benin and Togo from Nigeria’s Niger Delta by 2005, over a distance of 1,033 km. According to the Energy Information Association, the oil consortium that has invested in the WAGP is led by Chevron Texaco (36.7 per cent), and includes Shell (18 per cent), the Nigerian National Petroleum Corporation (NNPC) (25 per cent), Ghana’s National Petroleum Corporation (GNPC) and Volta River Authority (VRA) (16.3 per cent), Benin’s Société Béninoise de Gaz SA (SoBeGaz) (2 per cent) and Togo’s Société Togolaise de Gaz SA (SoToGaz) (2 per cent). The WAGP is central to plans for power generation and industrialisation along the West African coastal corridor and could be extended further, possibly as far as Senegal, given the right security and economic conditions. The US, other Western countries and China also have interests in Senegal, Mauritania, Ghana, Côte d’Ivoire, Togo and Cameroon, where their oil companies are involved in the search for oil.

What flows from the foregoing is the reality that the security stakes of the US and the West are very high in West Africa. The possibility that terrorists can infiltrate oil-rich but unstable or weak states impels the urge to intervene to promote US security interests in the region. The US Navy has established a presence in the Gulf of Guinea, largely to protect international sea-lanes for transporting oil and gas, and keep a watchful eye on oil interests along the coast, particularly in the Niger Delta where ethnic minority militants have periodically attacked oil company installations and workers and disrupted the flow of oil.

Nigeria’s troubled oil-rich Niger Delta region

Since the 1990s there has been an upsurge in the agitation in Nigeria’s volatile Niger Delta. The protests in this paradoxically oil-rich but impoverished region have been largely targeted at the Nigerian federal government and the oil multinationals, which are accused of neglect, exploitation and the environmental degradation of the region. They hit the global limelight in the early 1990s when Ken Saro-Wiwa, the charismatic writer, environmental and ethnic minority rights activist, led the Movement for the Survival of Ogoni People (MOSOP) in a campaign against the Nigerian state and Shell,
the largest multinational oil operator in Nigeria. MOSOP’s demands were contained in the Ogoni Bill of Rights (OBR) in 1990 and its Addendum in 1991. The use of the OBR to make demands on the state in a non-violent manner was very much in line with a tradition borrowed from the history of the US. The key OBR demand was for the “right to control and use a fair proportion of Ogoni economic resources for Ogoni development”. Indeed, it was an attempt to (re)take control of the oil-rich land from the state-oil big business alliance.

The MOSOP campaign quickly caught on internationally and Shell came under a lot of pressure. The then Nigerian military government crushed Ogoni resistance through the repression of Ogoni protest and the trial and hanging of Saro-Wiwa and eight other MOSOP activists in November 1995. However it failed to stem the tide of protests and violence in the Niger Delta as other communities confronted oil companies and each other. At the fore were the militant Ijaw youth. The Ijaw could be found across the Niger Delta and saw themselves as the fourth largest ethnic group in Nigeria. In December 1998 the Ijaw Youth Council (IYC) released the Kaiama Declaration in which it claimed ownership of the oil in Ijawland and “advised all oil companies’ staff and contractors to withdraw from Ijaw territories by the 30th of December 1998, pending the resolution of the issue of resource ownership and control of the Ijaw area of the Niger Delta”. In response, the federal government declared a state of emergency in the region and thousands of soldiers, naval troops and anti-riot policemen were deployed to the Niger Delta to protect oil installations and investments and disperse Ijaw protesters. Many of the protesters, and those suspected of being IYC members or supporters, were arrested and some were killed.

However, other incidents deepened tensions. In May 1999 Chevron Texaco allegedly transported Nigerian military personnel in its helicopters from which they shot and killed two protesters on Chevron Texaco’s Parabe oil platform. In November of the same year federal troops razed the oil-producing town of Odi to the ground after the community had failed to produce a criminal gang suspected of murdering seven policemen. According to a report, over 2,000 inhabitants of Odi lost their lives and many more were displaced. It was clear that the operation at Odi fitted a regular pattern in which the Nigerian state deployed maximum force to deter and contain threats to oil interests and oil companies in the region.

In spite of the militarisation of the region, it has witnessed the escalation of violent conflict, particularly along communal lines. Shortly before the 2003 elections in Nigeria, there was an escalation of violence in the western Delta city of Warri, involving armed ethnic Ijaw, Urhobo and Itsekiri militia. In 2005, the military sacked Odioma, following a dispute with a neighbouring community, which also involved an oil multinational. Such military campaigns have continued to target communities in the Niger Delta perceived as threats to oil companies or suspected of harbouring armed youth militia.
The atmosphere of tension has been compounded by the massive theft and export of oil from pipelines. This illegal act, locally called ‘oil bunkering’, is believed to involve criminal gangs with connections to highly placed people and access to sophisticated ammunition. According to an estimate, Nigeria lost between US$392 and US$500 million worth of crude oil to illegal oil bunkerers in 2003. It is also believed that illegal bunkering feeds into criminality, corruption, communal violence and the proliferation of arms in the Niger Delta. Profits from this illegal trade provide resources for patrons of the youth militia (usually local politicians or notables), act as an incentive for unemployed youth to embrace a life of criminality and provide the militia groups with resources for the purchase of sophisticated arms.

In spite of heavy military presence under the framework of the Nigerian army’s Operation Restore Hope, violence and conflicts have continued and the security situation remains fragile. More recently, acts of violence by militant groups such as the Movement for the Emancipation of the Niger Delta (MEND), the Martyrs Brigade and the Niger Delta Volunteer Force (NDVF), including the widely publicised kidnapping of expatriate oil workers and attacks on oil installations, cut Nigeria’s oil production by 25 per cent or an estimated daily loss of $56.7 million in the first quarter of 2006.

It is in the light of the growing tensions in the Niger Delta – particularly the activities of the armed militant ethnic minority/community in spite of the presence of the Nigerian military – that there has been a growing demand for the increased ‘securitisation’ of the region. Such efforts have sought to link the activities of armed militia in the Niger Delta to a ‘terrorist threat’ to the US and Western oil interests. Indeed, a few Western strategists have canvassed for direct military intervention to protect their strategic energy interests in the troubled region, but the approach has remained that of providing assistance to Nigerian security forces operating in the Niger Delta.

It must be emphasised that no terrorist connection has been established in relation to the Niger Delta crises. This is mainly because the tensions and crises in the region are largely the product of a history of injustice, inequality and inequity, the legacy of military dictatorship and the militarisation of the Niger Delta, and the ways in which the globalised political economy of oil predation involving the Nigerian petro-state – its security agencies, oil multinationals and the local elite, through their politics and policies – deepen the social crises and conflicts in the region.

What is at stake is the control and (re)distribution of the benefits from oil production and sales, and how the people of the region can access a substantial part of these benefits. Admittedly most of the people are alienated and bitter and blame the federal state and oil companies for their plight. But it is perhaps more rewarding to approach the issue from the perspective of positively promoting the socio-economic conditions in the region in ways that reflect social and environmental justice, equity and dignity, rather than resort
to further securitisation that would only serve to increase tensions and steer violence in more dangerous directions.

**Militant Islam in West Africa**

West Africa has a substantial Muslim population, as high as 40 per cent in some estimates. Owing to the linkage being drawn between al-Qaeda and radical/militant forms of political Islam that are clearly anti-American/Western, many strategic thinkers and analysts are of the view that Muslims in West Africa may provide a sanctuary for terrorists. Thus, countries in the Sahelian belt that are largely Muslim, including Nigeria, with substantial Muslim populations, have been under very close watch. The focus here is on the Nigerian case. Politicised religion is a highly explosive issue in Nigeria and political elites have manipulated religious differences between a predominantly Muslim north and predominantly Christian south in the pursuit of access to power and resources in a context of socio-economic crises. The conflation of religious with ethnic identities has added an explosive element in a context where the citizenship question remains unsettled and the nation-state largely remains an unresolved question or incomplete project in the eyes of many, who then retreat into the protective shells of their various ethnic/communal (micro) identities.

Another factor in the tensions between ethno-religious groups in Nigeria is the adoption from 2000 of Sharia Islamic law by most of the states in northern Nigeria. This move, which contradicted the constitutionally declared secularity of the Nigerian state, heightened tensions between Christians living in the north and the majority Muslim northerners. It must be noted, however, that the adoption of Sharia in northern Nigeria is in part a political project that depends to a large extent on the religious faith of the Muslim majority, who are critical of decades of misrule, poverty and corrupt rulers. It is based on the calculation of the elite that it would provide renewed legitimacy for them and protect the region from opposition politics linked to the age-old fears of southern (Christian) domination. For these reasons, the Islam practised in the northern states is not radical or militant. Although militant groups exist, they are small, limiting their activities to known preachers or leaders and areas. Mostly found in cities and tapping into the grievances of the poor, unemployed and the youth, these groups have been involved in sporadic protests such as those against the US invasion of Afghanistan in 2001 and the hosting of the Miss World beauty pageant in Abuja in 2002. It is believed that Muslim students in higher institutions of learning are involved in the rather episodic upsurge in militant Islam in northern Nigeria. Although most of the religious violence has taken place in north and central Nigeria, it does not preclude the existence of violence in the south involving militant or vigilante groups like the O’Duta Peoples Congress in the west, and the Bakassi Boys and the Movement for the Sovereign State of Biafra in the east.
Most critical, however, have been the activities since late 2003 of a militant group referred to as the ‘Taliban’ in north-east Nigeria, particularly in Borno and Yobe states. This group, suspected of being affiliated to the Al Sunna Wal Jamma, has been involved in attacks on police stations and other government offices and in the murder of police officers and civilians in 2004.\textsuperscript{29} Militant Muslim university and polytechnic students reportedly formed the group that reportedly models itself after the Taliban of Afghanistan. Others believe that a fugitive Afghan Taliban leader in Nigeria established it. In September 2004, one of the group’s camps was routed in a raid by a combined team of police and the military. Located within the Sahel and the southern-most limits of the Sahara, northern Nigeria falls within the region perceived as being vulnerable to becoming a terrorist sanctuary. Also, the arming and training of militant groups in Nigeria has been traced to funding from groups in Saudi Arabia, radical Islamic countries, and to the activities of militant Islamic preachers or even members of terrorist networks operating along the trans-Sahara routes.

From the foregoing, it is not difficult to fathom why there are concerns that northern Nigeria could become an incubating site for militant Islam and possibly terrorism. However, it would appear that some of the claims about the existence of a terrorist threat are overstated. This is because Islam in northern Nigeria is largely conservative and welded into traditional structures and cultures. Militant groups are relatively few and exist on the fringes of society where they are also visible. However, the existence of deep poverty, youth unemployment and misery across the region, as well as the uneasy relations between the dominant religions and between ‘indigenes’ and ‘settlers’, needs to be attended to urgently to avert the further worsening of the crises.

**Conclusion**

This essay has perhaps raised more questions than answers. However, West Africa is being further integrated on the basis of perceived threats into a US-framed global security system in a globalising, unipolar post-Cold War world, with direct implications for the people of the region. Through this ‘partnership’ West African states have been co-opted into hegemonic external counter-terrorism discourses. In concrete terms, this implies closer military cooperation between the region and the West, but without a corresponding closing of the yawning gap between the prosperous West and the economically marginalised and impoverished West Africa. It appears that the region’s place in the post-Cold War world order remains one of continued subordination to the imperial powers in the international system. The dominant discourse plays down the contributions of hegemonic external interests in the creation of the “same” threats from which Western society seeks to protect itself, without addressing the roots of the crises in West Africa.

In reality, the roots of globalised terror lie outside Africa. Mamdani, in a rather provocative book, places the roots of political terror in the “unfinished business of the
Cold War. He argues that the transition from political Islam to terror was born out of the history of political Islam and its connections with the US Cold War strategy of rolling back communism in Afghanistan, Central America and Southern Africa. Terrorism in the post-Cold War era is globalised and targets a dominant system of global power. This raises questions about whether an all-out zero sum military victory can be won against such an adversary, or if it is more rewarding to tackle the historical and socio-economic roots of political terror.

What is most significant about the fragile conditions in West Africa and the region's vulnerability to terrorist infiltration and attacks may not be the questions of whether or not the threats are real or imagined. It lies more in the implications of zero-sum militarist top-down globally driven solutions that may fail to address the asymmetries of power, and the historical, political and social-economic roots of violent conflict and crises in the region. Such a failure would increase the probability that the war on terror in the region would miss its target and possibly end up empowering state security in ways that increasingly contradict human, environmental and social security. It could also increase the risk that governments would pander to the dictates of external constituencies and agendas that undermine local popular-democratic aspirations, and regional peace and development.

Notes

5 Ibid.
8 The Punch, New details emerge about Al Qaeda connection to W’Africa, 14 August 2004, punching.com/foreign/article02> (13 August 2005).
11 Ibid.
14 I Gary and T Karl, Bottoms of the barrel: Africa’s oil boom and the poor, Catholic Relief Services, Maryland, 2003, p 12.
16 Ibid, p 53.
17 Reuters, Chad, Cameroon lay oil pipeline foundation stones, reported in <http://forests.org/arcgive/Africa/chcamlay.htm> (14 April 2005).
Globalisation and international terrorism
Mwesiga Baregu

US counter-terrorism policies in Africa are counter to development
Robert Tynes

A Muslim by any other name
Mariam Bibi Jooma
Globalisation and international terrorism

Mwesiga Baregu*

As I settle down to write this piece a number of unsettling developments are being reported in the international press. One such report is that the latest round of negotiations in the World Trade Organisation (WTO) has all but collapsed after the failure to agree on the Doha development issues that are supposed to bring some relief to Third World countries by lowering tariffs and removing agricultural subsidies in the rich countries. That is likely to aggravate the frustrations of the Third World countries by spawning disillusionment among the political leadership and lowering the threshold for violent action particularly among the youth. Another reported development is that the Hamas government in Palestine, which has hardly had time to settle down, is heading for direct confrontation with Israel in Gaza over kidnapped Israeli soldiers. This increases the tension in the region with increased suicide bombings and possible open warfare.

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Parallel with that development is the resurgent Taliban resistance in Afghanistan and the intensifying insurgency in Iraq, both of which increase uncertainty and unpredictability in the conflicts. A possible US (nuclear?) strike on Iran is in the offing if the latter continues to defy pressures to desist from developing a nuclear weapon.

Along with these developments is the reported test of a faulty long-range missile by North Korea on the same day as the re-launching of a faulty space shuttle Discovery in the US programme to militarise space. London is observing the first anniversary of the terror attack on the underground transport network that resulted in the death of 56 people and many injuries at the time that British forces are getting steadily mired in Afghanistan. In Latin America, Venezuela, Bolivia and Cuba are joining hands in the struggle against globalisation. At the same time the world's attention is riveted on the highly terrorism guarded FIFA World Cup finals being played out in Germany and delivered live (at a cost of nearly US $100 million) to a world audience estimated at five billion viewers. While many celebrate the tournament, others fear soccer racism and 'Islamic terrorism'.

All these events have at least four aspects in common. One is that they are all reported instantly, though unevenly, to the whole world, owing to rapid advances in communication technology. This makes it possible for new awareness to emerge, alliances to form and unprecedented frontiers of wars of ideas to be opened up. The second is that this information reaches highly asymmetrical groups of people who are impacted differently by the events and the reporting about them. Some people live in areas with high concentration of resources and wealth while others (the majority) live in areas where poverty, unemployment and pestilence are the order of the day. Yet others inhabit the areas where these events are occurring. The third aspect is that, with the possible exception of the World Cup, the rest of the events involve conflicts with varying degrees of violence, either actual or potential, and serious implications for world peace and security. Finally, all these events form part of the contradictions arising from the process of globalisation as it defines and structures the beginning of the 21st century.

At the beginning of the last century, V I Lenin perceived imperialism as ‘the highest stage of capitalism’ and World War I as ‘the opening shot in the re-division of the world between the emerging monopoly trusts’. At the beginning of this century we argue that ‘globalisation is the highest stage of imperialism’ and international terrorism is the violent expression of the struggle against globalisation, particularly by the people of the Third World and their sympathisers. I agree with the sentiments expressed by the Canadian Minister of Finance in the wake of 9/11:

For the terrorists, however, the aim of their criminal act was not only the destruction of life – they were seeking to destroy our way of life.
The terrorists did not choose their targets randomly. New York’s World Trade Center stood at the heart of the international financial district. It was a symbol of accomplishment and confidence. It was targeted for that reason. The terrorists sought to cripple economic activity, to paralyze financial relations, to create new barriers between economies, countries and people.¹

In other words, to fight globalisation in a new popular war to reclaim or liberate the world for the impoverished, marginalised, excluded and humiliated.

Organisationally this is expressed by the broad coalition in the anti-globalisation and new social movements, symbolised by the World Social Forums (WSF) that have emerged in opposition to the political power of large corporations and the international financial institutions symbolised by the Davos World Economic Summits (WES). Bill Clinton described the other side of this war aptly in a speech at Yale University in the wake of 9/11, on the eve of the US bombing of Afghanistan: “I believe we are engaged in the first great struggle for the soul of the 21st century … whether positive or negative [these issues] show an astonishing increase in global interdependence.” According to him terrorism is “simply the dark side”.² It is in this sense that while globalisation facilitates global terrorism, terrorism itself is putting a break on globalisation. “Global terrorism depends on the success of globalization. In fact one may very [well] conceive of global terrorism as a facet of the global culture resulting from globalization.”³ A dialectical unity of opposing forces! For this reason Cronin contends that analysing terrorism as something separate from globalisation is misleading and potentially dangerous. Indeed, he maintains that globalisation and terrorism are intricately intertwined forces characterising international security in the 21st century.⁴

In trying to describe the essence of imperialism Lenin identified five principal defining features. We shall review and update them accordingly. In brief Lenin contended that: “Imperialism is capitalism at that stage of development at which the dominance of monopolies and finance capital is established, in which the export of capital has acquired pronounced importance, in which the division of the world among the international trusts has begun, in which the division of all territories of the globe among the biggest capitalist powers has been completed.”⁵ It is instructive that the above features identified by Lenin are even more developed under globalisation as played out not only by the United States and Europe but also by the World Bank, International Monetary Fund, World Trade Organisation, and the growing debt of the Third World. Nothing could be more true, particularly for Africa today, than when Lenin contends that the world has become divided into a handful of usurer states and a vast majority of debtor states with the military forces of the creditor states playing the role of bailiff when necessary. He attributes this to ‘imperialist parasitism’ whose modern-day manifestation is what has been described by Samir Amin as ‘tributary
militarism’ referring to the conduct of war to forcefully capture other countries’ resources as is the case in Iraq.

In the case of Africa it is important to note that apart from the very recent development in Somalia, Africa has not had incidents of what is called Islamic terrorism except, perhaps, the terror bombings in Dar es Salaam, Nairobi and Mombasa. Where incidents of terrorism have occurred, such as in the Niger Delta in Nigeria, they have arisen from the resentment against the exploitation of natural resources by foreign companies. They are the kind better known as resource terrorism or counter-terrorism. Terrorism in the sense that the indigenous people under the Movement for the Emancipation of the Niger Delta (MEND) (one of approximately 120 such groups) are organised to fight the foreign oil companies and the collaborationist Nigerian government in the inequitable exploitation of their oil wealth. They may also be identified as counter-terrorist if they are conceived as fighting a terrorist onslaught unleashed by the oil companies upon the Ijaw people. At any rate their actions have managed to take nearly 25 per cent of sweet crude out of the market since February this year.6

In his well-known book entitled *Jihad vs McWorld*, Benjamin Barber argues that globalisation and international terrorism (fundamentalism) are locked in a struggle for domination of the world. In this struggle, he avers, “both Jihad and McWorld undermine the sovereignty of a nation state, dismantling the democratic institutions that have been their finest achievement without discovering ways to extend democracy either downward to the sub-national religious or ethnic entities that now lay claim to peoples loyalty or upward to the international sector in which McWorld’s pop culture and commercial markets operate without sovereign constraints”.7 The undermining of sovereignty inevitably leads to the weakening of the state and ultimately, in the worst cases, states collapse, societies disintegrate, ethnic communities become fragmented and eventually polarised. It is this polarisation that leads to internal conflicts if it turns on the community in the form of politicised ethnicity, for example. On the other hand, if polarisation focuses on the outside world as the source the problems, this may result in international terrorism.

Globalisation also has the tendency to integrate the industrialised countries while marginalising other countries and regions, such as Africa. It also leads to the centralisation and deepening of the exploitation of the resources of marginalised areas while excluding, alienating or even discarding their people. The effects of such exclusion are well reflected in the struggles in the Niger Delta where resource terrorism has become the major weapon of the deprived people. It is thus through the marginalisation, exclusion, fragmentation and polarisation characteristics of globalisation that the link to terrorism may be found. As Joan Johnson-Feese says, globalisation does not cause terrorism – terrorism existed prior to the latest wave of globalisation. There are, however, aspects of globalisation which frustrate, anger, and/or offend individuals and groups. This anger and dissatisfaction can serve as a petri dish for the breeding of terrorism and terrorists.8
Notes


US counter-terrorism policies in Africa are counter to development

Robert Tynes*

Terrorism is the central threat to the world today. At least that’s the way the US government sees it. According to the Bush administration, the danger emanates less from superpower states and more from weak, ‘failing’ states. The logic is that autocratic governments foster, breed, and provide safe havens for terrorists – extremists who, given the chance, will harness weapons of mass destruction and attack the US. In order to quell the rise of terrorism, the US has developed a global strategy that includes promoting democracy, building alliances, encouraging ‘global economic growth’, and acting militarily.¹ Several US policies that follow from this strategy focus on Africa. It is a multi-faceted approach that includes expanding military occupation, training African police and militaries, building schools in Muslim areas, and pressing African legislatures to enact anti-terror laws.²

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Using numerous tools to stop terrorism might work in the short term because the policies address three of the four ‘major fronts’ of the problem: the capabilities of the terrorists, the intentions of the terrorists, and the defences against the terrorists. However, the fourth front – the roots of terrorism, or autocracy – appears to be receiving short shrift. In fact, the current US terrorism policies in Africa appear to be counter-productive, facilitating and/or maintaining autocratic styles of governance. Even more detrimental is the further stifling of development in Africa. Civil and political rights are being compromised. African liberty is being constricted, and democracy is being squashed.

But is US foreign policy truly to blame? It could be argued that poor economic growth is what hinders democratisation and development in African states. Lipset asserts that “the more well-to-do a nation, the greater the chances that it will sustain a democracy.” However, a statistical analyses comparing democratisation and economic variables shows that in the period 2000–2006, neither economic prosperity, nor the presence or absence of a strong middle class, is a clear indicator of democratisation for African states. So, maybe the US counter-terrorism strategy is at fault and American actions are hindering development by waging an overzealous ‘war on terror.’

This may be nothing new, though. The US has had an up and down relationship with the continent of Africa since post-World War II. During the Cold War, African states became the ideological battleground for communism and democracy. But ironically American foreign policy “often ignored principles as basic as democracy and development and focused parochially on containing the ‘red peril’ in Africa through providing military and financial assistance to often brutal and undemocratic clients like Liberia’s Samuel Doe, Zaire’s Mobutu Sese Seko, and Somalia’s Siad Barre, in exchange for political support and military bases”. When the Cold War ended, much of this support was withdrawn and it was not until the Clinton administration that the US re-engaged with Africa. The US began constructing democratising policies, but these were a failure as well, and only the effort to liberalise trade appeared somewhat helpful on the continent. Another lull occurred after Clinton’s presidency, and Africa remained on the periphery of American foreign policy until after the terrorist attacks on 11 September.

As of 2006, US foreign policy for Africa has expanded significantly to include the ‘war on terror.’ American military troops have descended upon numerous African states in the northern, eastern and western regions of the continent. Some of the early missions included an effort to train military personnel and police forces in border control in Mali, Niger, Chad and Mauritania. This US State Department policy, known as the Pan-Sahel Initiative, started in 2003 with a support fund of US$7.75 million. Significant counter-terrorism efforts are also occurring in Kenya, Djibouti, Nigeria, Tanzania, Ethiopia, Morocco, and Algeria, with countries receiving financial assistance, immigration control software and hardware to better track citizens, and general law enforcement training. Countries such as Kenya, Malawi, South Africa, Tanzania and Uganda are also being pushed by the US to institute anti-terror
 Overall, the essential aspects of US foreign policy can be characterised as the re-militarising of African states, the initiating of repressive legislation, and the presence of military troops and execution of military exercises on the African continent.

For the most part, African governments have cooperated in this ‘war on terror’. At some time or another from 2003 to 2006 every country on the continent has participated in the effort, either in discussions with US government officials, with passage of anti-terror laws, and/or through large-scale anti-terrorism operations within their country (such as Chad, Mali, Mauritania and Niger). Even long-time adversary Libya has cooperated, supplying intelligence on militant Islamic groups, even though it has been on the US State Department’s list of countries that sponsor terrorism.

Despite this apparent African ‘cooperation’, problems abound, and the Bush administration continues to be criticised for having a split focus – cultivating relationships with dictators and at the same time urging democratic reform. For example, despite the US anti-terror presence in Algeria, this North African state has continued to ignore democracy and maintain its ‘robust authoritarianism’. In Ethiopia, “[f]or more than a decade, authorities in the country’s vast Oromia region have used exaggerated concerns about armed insurgency and ‘terrorism’ to justify the torture, imprisonment and sustained harassment of their critics and even ordinary citizens”. Even though this abuse has been well documented, the US still nurtures its tight partnership with Ethiopia for the ‘war on terror’, and the US government remains the largest donor of bilateral aid to the African country. The US has yet to press Ethiopia on human rights violations, and in both Ethiopia and Eritrea, helping the US combat terror has sometimes become a rationale for African leaders to commit their own human rights abuses.

Furthermore, before 11 September, Egypt was utilising “anti-terrorism decrees and emergency rule to suppress peaceful dissidents”. It was the status quo for this North African state, and after the terrorists attack in the US, Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak appeared even more justified for having aggressive tactics, including the indiscriminate torture of citizens. He stated, “There is no doubt that the events of September 11 created a new concept of democracy that differs from the concept that Western states defended before these events, especially in regard to the freedom of the individual.” US officials were not alarmed by Mubarak’s stance, and in fact the Egyptian president was even lauded for his state’s anti-terrorist efforts. Secretary of State Colin Powell said that Mubarak’s government was “really ahead of us on this issue”. Yes, maybe ahead on terrorism, but clearly behind on democratisation.

Egypt also weakens its civil-military relationship by trying civilians in military tribunals – a practice that has occurred in Liberia, Tunisia and Uganda as well. In 2002, an editor and several reporters from a Liberian newspaper were arrested and held ‘incommunicado’. Hassan Bility, Ansumana Kamara, Abubakar Kamara, and Blama Kamara were all
accused of being part of a terrorist cell. Both the Liberian government and the courts decided that reporter Bility should be tried in a military court. In Tunisia, some civilians have been tried in military courts, thereby losing their right to appeal:

The government uses the threat of terrorism and religious extremism as a pretext to crack down on peaceful dissent. Government critics are frequently harassed or imprisoned on trumped-up charges after unfair trials. Over four hundred political prisoners remained incarcerated, nearly all of them suspected Islamicists.

Also of concern is the US strategy to install more anti-terror legislation in African states. Much of this push to legislate appears to emanate from the US enacting of the US Patriot Act. States such as Kenya, Morocco, Nigeria, South Africa, Swaziland, Tanzania, Tunisia and Uganda are either working on or have passed anti-terror related laws that have been used to squash freedom of the press, as well as dissent. Swaziland’s ‘Secrecy Act’ compels reporters to reveal their sources if related to terrorism investigations. South Africa’s Protection of Constitutional Democracy against Terrorism and Related Activities Act also requires reporters to reveal sources. After enacting a new terror law in 2003, Moroccan officials used the power of the act against the press. Managing editor of the newspaper Al Ousbane was arrested in June 2003 for printing a letter from a group claiming responsibility for three of five bombings that had recently taken place in Casablanca. Other journalists were arrested in the same year, but were eventually prosecuted under other laws. In Eritrea journalists are subject to legal persecution as well. An Eritrean ambassador defended his government’s arrests of journalists, saying that holding them but not charging them is the same practice that Western countries use for terrorists. Such direct assaults on the press continue to erode citizens’ ability to participate in the democratic process. Freedom of the press in the US is a highly protected democratic right, one that is being seriously impinged upon in African countries with the assistance of new anti-terror laws.

A final case worth noting is Somalia. US involvement there has nurtured chaos and has reinforced divisiveness. Of concern is not only the backing of warlords, but also of the lack of engagement with the transitional government. This is peculiar given that, in 2003, the US State Department commended the “ongoing work of Somali leaders and civil society representatives” for working towards peace and creating a transitional government. Paradoxically, what was most worrisome for the US ended up happening as the Islamic militia overran the warlords and gained control of Mogadishu. Fortunately, though, the CIA-led strategy was seen as a disaster by some American government officials.

Overall, it suffices to say that US counter-terrorism policies are counter to development. It is as if more manure were being applied to the fields of autocracy. Democratisation and development involve the building of a civil society. But this dimension of politics is being squashed by America’s global counter-terrorism effort. Admittedly, trying to extinguish terrorism is a difficult challenge. Nevertheless, many African states are already struggling to
democratise, and the ‘war on terror’ is becoming yet another strain on reform. US policy-makers who work on the issue of terrorism should seriously reconsider the current aggressive approach in Africa as it is obviously self-defeating. Instead, multiple, more fruitful options that focus on democratisation and the empowering of African citizens should be pursued.

Notes


5 ANOVA tests using polity scores, Freedom House scores and gross domestic product per capita and GINI coefficients were run for all African states.


9 Kraxberger, op cit, p 60.


11 T Carothers, Promoting democracy and fighting terror, Foreign Affairs, 82(1), 2003, pp 84-97.


16 Human Rights Watch, Opportunism in the face of tragedy, op cit.

17 Ibid.

18 Ibid.


21 International Federation of Journalists, op cit.

22 International PEN, op cit, p 22.

23 Human Rights Watch, Opportunism in the face of tragedy, op cit.


A Muslim by any other name

Mariam Bibi Jooma*

In an article published in the *Mail & Guardian,*1 the winner of the inaugural European Union award for literature, Ishtiyaq Shukri, offered his views on global political developments in light of the then raging ‘cartoon debate’. His perspective on ‘Fortress Europe’, the fallacy of an ideal type European or Muslim identity, and the role of literature in shaping identity has strong resonance with writers of the early post-independence era who aimed to redefine what it meant to be ‘African’. His piece reminded me of two of my favourite literary moments from so-called ‘minority’ writers who grapple with the nexus between politics and identity. The first is V S Naipaul’s unlikely protagonist, Salim, chronicled in *A bend in the river,* who moves from the east coast of Africa into the interior during the first years of power of Africa’s ‘Big Men’, paralleling his own journey of identity as an African of Arab-Indian decent. There is a moment of great

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candour when Salim explains that the first time he took note of the dhow (boats) in his hometown was after they were pictured on a postage stamp during British colonial rule in Tanzania that described the boats as ‘Arab dhows’. He explains, “It was as though in those stamps a foreigner had said, ‘this is what is most striking about this place’ without that stamp of the dhow I might have taken them for granted”. What Salim expresses is an understanding of the power of ‘cultural distance’ but also of the way in which colonialism ascribed identity to that which should not have an ‘essential identity’.

The other is from Jamal Mahjoub’s part-Sudanese part-British protagonist, Yasin, in his acclaimed *Travelling with Djinns*, who explains: “[M]y history is not given, but has to be taken, reclaimed, piece by solitary piece, snatched from among the pillars of centuries, the shelves of ivory scholarship. My flimsy words set against those lumbering tomes bound in leather and written in blood.”

What both characters convey is the pure power of discourse. We are who we are because of *who* says what we are: a clear enough concept of sociological theory, an understanding of which, of course, formed much of the foundation for nationalist and anti-colonial strategies across the continent, including the pan-African and pan-Arab movements of the early 1960s. This is a ‘deconstruction of the ‘other’, if you will. So why is it that those nationalist or ethno-nationalist movements were unpacked for their ‘underlying’ motivations, like the call for substantive sovereignty and greater socio-economic equality, while, on the other hand, any debate that includes the word ‘Muslim’ or ‘Islam’ or ‘Arab’ takes the comfortable and bizarre form of engaging on the level of symbol rather than meaning? What constrains commentators from moving beyond the ‘us’ and ‘them’, ‘Islam versus the West’ or ‘modern versus traditional’? Or even worse, what allows analysts to categorise types of Muslims as if they resembled a paint colour spectrum from mocha moderate to furnace fundamentalist, suggesting that there is something inherently wrong with Islam? This kind of categorisation means you are safe if you have escaped the colour brush of evil Islam by being a hyphenated ‘moderate-Muslim’, but not so if you are just simply ‘Muslim’.

The rigid subscription to something like anthropological emphasis on ‘variants’ of Islam like Wahhabism or Salafism actually belie the fundamental rejection of moving beyond the labels to an understanding of structural power relationships in national discourse. Surely, one cannot really look to an explanation of terrorism in the marginalised ‘breeding grounds’ of the failed states of Somalia or Afghanistan without considering the national issues and challenges to the realisation of domestic democracy. Pascal Menoret sums up this almost obsessive need to characterise the Muslim/Arab identity as either traditional or conservative, saying that “[a] conservative Saudi thus becomes a Bedouin or an Islamist, while a modern-minded Saudi will be a nouveau riche or a globalised capitalist … [T]hese readings [show] an impossibility that Saudi’s should think of themselves as Saudi.” The notion seems to be that any protests by a group of people against socio-economic grievances is seen to be legitimate, unless this group is
made predominantly of Muslims – then they are instantly framed through the lens of ethnicity and ‘irrational’ religious sentiment calling for the obligatory abuse of the term ‘Jihad’ in any explanation of such events.

Last year’s nation-wide protests in France aptly demonstrated the need to characterise opposition as irrational, emotional or ethnic rather than address the sense of disenfranchisement from the increasing imposition of neo-liberalism and the withdrawal of the state in providing security in social services.

The protestors were ‘immigrants’ or ‘ethnic minority’ or ‘marginalised Arabs’ not simply ‘French civil opposition’.

While it would be foolish to discount the role of the symbol in organising support for a particular cause – in this case the role of ‘Islamic-speak’ for motivating horrendous violence – such an overemphasis on stereotypical discourse has entrenched the medium as the message rather than deconstructing the power relations underpinning this language. Khadija Margardie, for example, argues that instead of protesting about the occupation of Palestine or domestic abuse, Muslims chose to protest about the cartoons. The point that there are ‘bigger’ issues out there is a relevant one, but by conflating, for example, the protestors and the people responsible for the killing of a Danish Muslim woman, she ignores the impact of the symbolic association of terrorism and Islam. It is as what the University of Pretoria’s Professor Jonathan Jansen has explained recently as a form of “humiliation through non-military means”. What is being argued is not a simple and unrewarding focus on the cartoons themselves but on the rejection of an imposed ‘terrorist’ identity on civil opposition. The cartoon debate illustrates the implicit inability of commentators and politicians to engage with oppositional movements in more than symbolic terms. More importantly, those regions where the protests turned violent are also the states with the highest level of state repression of democratic debate. Seen through this paradigm, the rallying around an endogenous form of organisation in Islam is not unusual or deviant, but a product of rising inequality and the closure of civil space.

There was an interesting dichotomy of themes at play at the first public debate on the cartoons in Europe organised by the Spanish-Turkish alliance of civilisations in Helsinki on 14 March. Certainly, the comments from the Finnish Minister of Foreign Affairs, Erkki Tuomioja, showed an appreciation of the doublespeak of human rights and violence by the West in engaging with the Middle East, his arguments nevertheless remained in the realm of the need for ‘dialogue’ between the West and a perceived unengaged ‘Muslim World’. Indeed, the idea that there should be more inter-faith cooperation between communities demonstrates once again the failure to move beyond the symbolic into the substantive realpolitik that drives foreign policy. Menoret challenges these comfortable positions by asking, “Why do we deny multiple-causality to the discourse of bin Laden, when everyone agrees that behind Bush’s discourse, real political, social or economic forces are giving it life?”
But the caricatures are just a small part of a continuum that has done little to distinguish between ‘Islamism’ and ‘Islam’, where the former takes on the language of the latter without the commitment to the underlying principles. Seen in this context ‘Islamism’ is an appropriation of the language of religion for the purpose of capturing the state. In this way, Muslim opposition movements to states that have adopted ‘Islamisation’ as statecraft to entrench themselves in power are then characterised as ‘super fundamentalists’ who would be dangerous if ever they came to power themselves. This point is clearly demonstrated in the case of Algeria and now Palestine, where democratically elected parties formed out of opposition to unaccountable regimes are quickly denounced on the basis of being anti-democratic (read Islamic). It seems to me to resemble the classic ‘stability over revolution’ formula that saw the hegemony of corrupt elites in the Middle East and Africa being supported by the Western allies as long as access to resources was not disrupted in any way: a case of ‘any ideology as long as it’s capitalist’.

Certainly there are those who, as the Islamic Movement of South Africa explains, feed into the discourse of ‘us and them’ to the extent that they articulate a jingoistic expression of Islam that exiles Muslims from the rest of humanity and confines itself in an ‘ultra-Muslim laager’. But I see these individuals as the sideshow to the central issue of homogenising opposition to what are obviously corrupt and despotic regimes. In his presentation in Helsinki, Francis Burgat encapsulated this all-encompassing ‘cultural’ imposition when he explained that rather than seeing the resurgence of ‘Islamic’ discourse as a form of endogenous civil society expression, the mere fact that it is expressed in Arabic, for example, is already interpreted as the language of ‘Islam’ or as speaking ‘Muslim’ and hence, to the non-Muslim observer, the antithesis of ‘modernity’.

For those who see in modernity only the reflection of ‘Western’ values and civilisation, the idea that social justice is perhaps the highest form of ‘modernity’ is quickly lost. Importantly, the failure to acknowledge that ‘tradition’ can be imported from the outside and that Islam can stand in opposition to invented tradition, as Menoret argues, reflects the poverty of so-called expert analysis. That the Islamic values being called for by civil grassroots movements emphasise the desire to see national economic sovereignty over the vast oil resources in the Middle East, to give but one example, is the real revolutionary speak which for current emperors is too dangerous to contemplate. They would far rather that Islam be associated and marginalised by identifying it with an ahistorical discourse that centres on the amputation of limbs and the veiling of women.

**Note**

Dying to win:
The strategic logic of suicide terrorism
Robert Pape

Blood from stones:
The secret financial network of terror
Douglas Farah

Illicit:
How smugglers, traffickers and copycats are hijacking the global economy
Mosés Naím

America unbound –
the Bush revolution in foreign policy
Ivo H Daalder & James M Lindsay
Dying to win:
The strategic logic of suicide terrorism*

Robert Pape

One can imagine that the more outspoken critics of US foreign policy, such as Robert Fisk or John Pilger, may well make the claim that US foreign policy in the Persian Gulf is to blame for the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001. Indeed, many critics have pointed the finger back at the US, vilifying the administration not only for failing to prevent the attacks, but also for creating the environment in which such attacks are almost inevitable. These criticisms, coming from outspoken opponents, could easily be ignored by policymakers as anti-administration rhetoric. However, when a conservative scholar makes similar statements and presents them as the findings of rigorous and extensive empirical research, perhaps it’s time for policymakers to take note.

Taking up the challenge to explain the strategic, individual and social logic of suicide terrorism, University of Chicago political scientist Robert Pape set about analysing each

act of suicide terrorism between 1980 and 2003. The findings of Pape’s research are presented in this well-written and rigorously argued book that challenges – and proves incorrect – the assumptions most observers and television analysts repeat *ad nauseam*: that suicide terrorism is the product of Islamic fundamentalism.

Presenting ample supporting evidence, Pape convincingly argues that almost without exception suicide terrorist attacks have a specific secular and strategic goal: “to compel modern democracies to withdraw military forces from territory that the terrorists consider to be their homeland” (p 4). The author’s goal was not only to understand what motivates suicide attacks and explain the growth in the numbers of attacks, but to draw policy conclusions from his analysis. He argues that a failure by policymakers to understand the logic and motives behind attacks of this kind has resulted in policies that exacerbate the problem, stating that “the presumed connection between suicide terrorism and Islamic fundamentalism is misleading and may be encouraging domestic and foreign policies likely to worsen America’s situation and to harm many Muslims unnecessarily” (p 4).

The book provides a brief and interesting history of suicide terrorism dating back to the 11th and 12th centuries and touches on the Japanese kamikaze bombers of World War II. It was a surprise to me to learn that despite terrorism having been a feature of international politics already for many years, there is little existing research upon which to base an analysis of the growing phenomenon of suicide terrorism. Throughout the book Pape presents interesting facts about suicide terrorism that challenge conventional wisdom, for example that Islamic fundamentalism is associated with only half of the 315 suicide incidents that occurred between 1980 and 2003. He also shows, through detailed analysis of incidents, that the individuals who volunteer for suicide missions are seldom motivated by religion and come from a wide range of backgrounds. Indeed, quite often volunteers for suicide missions, such as Mohammed Atta (one of the 9/11 hijackers), do not have a long association with the organisations or causes they ultimately give their lives for. Of course, this presents intelligence agencies with an insurmountable problem in identifying potential suicide terrorists.

According to Pape, reducing the threat of suicide attacks on the US requires beefing up immigration control, improving border security and – most importantly – substantially altering US military policy in the Persian Gulf. Pape calls for a return to the policy of ‘off-shore’ balancing in the Gulf region. Recognising that the US interest in the Gulf is to ensure a continuous supply of oil, he argues that it is crucial for the US to develop alliances in the region while establishing and maintaining the ability to rapidly deploy US combat troops to the region. The key, he argues, is to withdraw all permanent ground forces as this will reduce the power of organisations such as al-Qaeda to mobilise popular support. Forcing democratisation in the region through regime change and intervening
militarily in conflicts in the region are a surefire way to ensure that suicide terrorist attacks remain a threat to the US in the future.

This book is a fascinating and informative read, not only for those interested in understanding terrorism and suicide terrorism in particular, but for any researcher. Pape's well-considered arguments, exhaustive questioning of his own logic and conclusions, as well as the manner in which he tests his hypotheses and presents his findings are informative and refreshing for any researcher whose aim is ultimately to present data to inform policy. Pape's conclusion, that “since the root cause of suicide terrorism does not lie in ideology, even among Muslims, spreading democracy across the Persian Gulf is not likely to be a panacea so long as foreign combat troops remain on the Persian Gulf”, is unlikely to influence US foreign policy, but this does not undermine its important contribution to the debate.

Chandré Gould
Blood from stones: The secret financial network of terror*

Douglas Farah

The title of Farah’s book is misleading. One would expect an in-depth and systematic analysis of the links between West Africa’s blood diamonds and international terrorist networks. In fact, the title’s ‘blood stones’ provided the first lead in a worldwide investigation of terrorist financial networks that took Farah from West Africa to the Middle East to the United States.

Farah spent a little less than two years, from March 2000 to November 2001, in West Africa where he acted as the Washington Post’s regional bureau chief. He was in West Africa when the 9/11 terrorist attacks triggered a radical change in the focus and priorities set by US intelligence services and media alike. Farah was not insensitive to this new trend and started checking rumours suggesting that radical groups from the Middle East used diamonds to fund their activities: “I thought maybe these leads would allow me

to get into the action, breaking off an unexpected though minor piece of the terrorism puzzle with an African angle” (p 56).

The role played by diamonds in West Africa’s conflicts is now a widely acknowledged fact. The Revolutionary United Front (RUF), one of Sierra Leone’s main and most violent rebel movements, and their closest ally, President Charles Taylor of Liberia, were especially eager to trade the region’s easily extractible resources for weapons and other commodities – satellite telephones, vehicles, medicine, food – needed to fuel and sustain the war effort. Al-Qaeda and other terrorist networks, on the other hand, were intricately linked to the powerful and far-reaching trade networks at the heart of the prosperity of the United Arab Emirates and Saudi Arabia. Finding weapons and other commodities dear to the West African rebels was an easy task, while West African diamonds were an untraceable high-value commodity by which terrorist monies could easily go undetected.

The link between West Africa’s rebels and the world’s most powerful terrorists thus seems logical. And the evidence provided by Farah, resting on the testimonies of RUF rebels, relatives of Charles Taylor and leaks from American and European intelligence services, seems convincing enough. It has, however, since been contested by the National Commission on Terrorist Attacks Upon the United States, also known as the 9/11 Commission, which published its final report in July 2004: “[W]e have seen no persuasive evidence that Al Qaeda funded itself by trading in African conflict diamonds” (p 171). Farah asserts in his book that these opposing conclusions are due to the US intelligence services’ determination to hide the extent of their ignorance of terrorist financial networks prior to 9/11. Sceptical minds may be tempted to wonder who, among the media or the intelligence services has the greatest interest in disguising the truth and winning the race for information.

What seems obvious, in any case, when reading Farah’s findings, is that links between West Africa’s rebel movements and international terrorism, if they ever existed, were essentially the result of the pragmatism and well-informed networks of the terrorists. There was no ideological sympathy between the two types of movements. Nor did these links go beyond financial arrangements. Farah provides no proof or hint that West African states or rebels offered any kind of refuge to international terrorists, contrary to what the lead prosecutor of the Special Court for Sierra Leone, David Crane, suggested in an interview with the author:

Charles Taylor is harboring terrorists from the Middle East, including Al Qaeda and Hezbollah, and has been for years … He is not just a regional troublemaker, he is a player in the world of terror … (p 89).

Neither does Farah successfully establish the link, suggested in the first chapter of his book, between the weakness – or ‘pre-modernity’ (p 20) – of the Liberian and Sierra
Leonean states and terrorist syndicates. Chapter 8 in fact shows that terrorist networks managed to circulate their funds in the US – not generally defined as a ‘pre-modern state’ – in a very similar fashion, using traffic in cigarettes and other petty crimes.

Much more than state weakness, terrorists were able to take advantage of all types of international money circulation arrangements. One of the major strengths of the book certainly lies in the description of these networks. *Hawalas*, the money transfer systems popular in many parts of Africa, the Middle East and Asia, and charities are favourite channels for terrorist funds. They are, in effect, extremely difficult to control or to prohibit. Entire national economies depend on the *hawalas*, which repatriate remittances sent by family members working abroad. Charities, meanwhile, are an essential part of Muslim traditions and often provide services that states have ceased – or never managed – to provide. Shutting those channels would not only be extremely difficult, it would also be detrimental to entire populations who depend on them.

The two last chapters of the book bring us back to the US and some of the most interesting issues raised in the book. They focus on the problems and dilemmas American intelligence services came up against in the ‘war on terror’. Some difficulties are essentially bureaucratic. American intelligence and security agencies have found it difficult to share information, cooperate and agree on a clear division of labour. In the absence of a clear resolution of these issues, competition still dominates and answers for much of the inconsistencies and lack of understanding of terrorist finances.

The fight against terrorism, more importantly, comes up against ethical dilemmas such as the ones pertaining to *hawalas* and charities or others linked to the definition of civil rights and individual freedom. The recent debate in the US over the National Security Agency’s telephone surveillance programme confirmed that the border between national security and civil rights was not easily defined. Farah’s book successfully hints at these questions, which suggest that the fight against terrorism requires a crucial choice between security priorities and other priorities linked to economic development or democratic liberties.

Farah provides us with an interesting introduction to terrorist financial networks. Although his book is essentially a broad, at times a bit quick and vague, description of the international tentacles of such networks, it triggers many questions relative to the feasibility of the fight against terrorism and the adequacy of the instruments used. The link established between blood diamonds and terrorist networks, which has no ideological component, is certainly less surprising and enlightening than the role played by *hawalas* and charities in terrorist finances.

Anyone with even a limited knowledge of Africa will understand that this connection between systems fully integrated into African societies and religious extremist
movements – the Muslim movements born in the Middle East as well as the kind of Christian extremism propagated by some American missionaries – is far more worrying and deserves similar scrutiny.

Marie V Gibert

Notes

1 Specialists already dismissed the belief that ‘weak states’ provided an ideal harbour for international terrorists. ‘Weak states’ often do not possess the infrastructure and security necessary for a long-term terrorist refuge. They are, at best, a temporary hideout. See K Menkhaus, Somalia: Next up in the war on terrorism, CSIS Africa Notes No 6, January 2002, <www.csis.org/component/option,com_csis_pubs/task,view/id,2139/type,3/> (15 July 2006).

2 The US in fact froze the money assets of a Somali hawala, Al-Barakaat, from November 2001 to September 2002. The move was highly criticised by experts who underlined the lack of proof linking Al-Barakaat to international terrorism, while a statement by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), in April 2002, said that the closure of Al-Barakaat had had a great humanitarian impact in Somalia.
Illicit: How smugglers, traffickers and copycats are hijacking the global economy*

Mosés Naím

Illicit has three goals: to describe the current status of organised global crime, to investigate the effectiveness of various legal and political counter-responses to this, and to issue a call for a broader awareness and more informed interaction with the phenomenon of illicit trade on the part of academics, policy professionals, and the public in general. A succession of engagingly written case studies, illustrating not only the processes of street crime and the drug trade but also (in great detail) the interaction of criminal networks with terror groups, fulfil the first goal admirably. As editor of Foreign Policy and former Minister of Trade and Industry for Venezuela, Naím's access to researchers and roleplayers in the legislative and judicial sectors of various key countries is considerable; this assists the book’s pursuit of the second goal and lends plausibility to the author’s (generally negative) assessment of these governments’ anti-crime efforts. Lastly, Illicit attempts to show how a fresh perspective on criminal networks could be

used to improve countermeasures against them. This section, however, assumes not only a great deal of political will but also the provision of certain financial and logistical means for anti-criminal efforts; this may place its prescriptions beyond the reach of those states most pressingly affected by crime-terror partnerships.

While *Illicit* clearly addresses global concerns from a Western (or Northern) perspective, it also offers many insights of particular relevance to the study of African crime and terrorism. Prominent in this regard are his depiction of organised crime groups as no longer production but distribution specialised. In other words, rather than focusing on creating and trading in a fixed commodity, criminal entrepreneurs (often members of globally distributed minority groups who are able to operate unmolested in weak state environments) now seek to distribute whatever will turn a profit – regardless of source, legality or destination. This leads to a situation in which “[shipments] of methamphetamine, bootlegged videos and night-vision military goggles often travel in the same containers and cargo holds as loads of semiconductors and frozen fish and grapefruit” (p 3).

The switch from production to distribution has had a dual effect. First, it insulates the criminal networks from many forms of supply-side intervention, because they simply change to new products when old ones become hard to safely acquire. Second, it connects each criminal network – as non-ideological and supremely globalised market players – with other networks, creating a worldwide chain of middlemen able to facilitate transactions between buyers and sellers ranging from terrorist groups to warlords. This ability, in turn, is derived from the global telecommunications revolution of the last 20 years, especially in terms of online business and service coordination. Where it once took a state sponsor to outfit a combat unit, supply dozens of fake identities, or obscure the movements of money, these projects can now be broken down into smaller tasks and distributed to specialised service providers such as offshore banks, charter companies, and commodity middlemen. Certain elements of a criminal act may even become unrecognizable as such when broken up in this fashion, as Naím’s chapter on laundering (‘The Money Washers’) elaborates.

In his elaboration of ‘bright spots’ (that is, the wealthy, stable, peaceful regions which serve as the consumers of illicit goods and services) and ‘black holes’ (that is, social spaces in which criminal networks dominate everyday life) Naím introduces another useful perspective on the fight against African crime and terrorism. His argument is that while it is easy to isolate crime-saturated areas (black spots) as the sources of global crime, equal attention should be paid to the networks’ operations in bright spots. Indeed, the terrorists and criminal networks detailed in *Illicit* can be said to exist in the interstitial spaces between black holes and bright spots (including the virtual international space of the World Wide Web) rather than in any single geographic location. Hence, no amount of increased attention paid solely to black holes will necessarily serve to disrupt these groups.
in anything but a short-term sense. Certainly, the expensive failures of continental and regional anti-drug and anti-theft measures in the SADC region of late would seem to bear out this prediction. A similar charge can be laid against the world’s largest and best-funded supply-side interdiction project: Plan Colombia, the United States’ anti-cocaine initiative.\(^2\)

*Illicit* confronts three specific illusions: that contemporary organised crime and terrorism are the same now as they have always been, that they always involve identifiably (and universally) illegal acts and commodities, and that they are furtive underground phenomena occurring ‘over there’. The book presents a range of suggestions for policymakers and implementers, ranging from moving with the technological times to switching from an inward-looking unilateral stance to a more multilateral one. These reforms call for government and civil society actors to beat the networks at their own game: becoming faster through organisational streamlining, more adept at joining the dots through better intelligence, and more distributed through effective joint policing and legislation.

Whether these are workable prescriptions for a continent struggling to achieve a stable forward momentum in terms of even the most basic service provision is doubtful. More importantly: even if *Illicit’s* lessons could be applied in the African context, the book’s own conclusion and the *Foreign Policy* article in which Naím introduced his argument\(^3\) make it clear that in his view the war on globalised crime and terror is generally being lost. If this is the case even in the bright spots, his exhortation that ideas like the ones contained in *Illicit* ‘can change the world’ for the better, offers little comfort. Notwithstanding such caveats, *Illicit* is a book well worth reading. At the very least, it will serve to shake up some of the false assumptions and myopia that currently obstruct attempts to bring the phenomenon of globalised crime under control.

*Dylan Craig*

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**Notes**


America unbound – the Bush revolution in foreign policy*

Ivo H Daalder & James M Lindsay

This great book on George W Bush, the 43rd US president, is a comprehensive revision of the original edition that the Brookings Institution Press first published in October 2003. It is well written, easily readable and succinct, provides extensive analysis and does not lose the reader in American domestic political trivia. Apart from updates to the opening and concluding chapters, the revised version has updated the discussions of the intelligence failures regarding Iraq's weapons of mass destruction and how the Bush administration (mis)handled the occupation of Iraq.

Both authors are well qualified for their task. Ivo H Daalder is a senior fellow in Foreign Policy Studies at the Brookings Institution, and James M Lindsay is Vice President, Director of Studies, and Maurice R Greenberg chair at the Council on Foreign Relations.

The core of their argument is to illustrate and explain how Bush has redefined and radicalised the pursuit of America's goals abroad. They do so by first situating US foreign policy in a historical context, doing so briefly and eloquently and dispensing with the view popular outside the US that the second Bush president is an unpleasant dunce. “It’s a singular conceit,” they write, “among academics and journalists that people who don’t speak well can’t think well – that is if they think at all” (p 20). After a brief review of the foreign policy team that tutored him on world affairs during the campaign for the 2000 presidency, the book moves rapidly to a discussion of Bush as president. Many of themes would be familiar to those that have read treatises such as that of Bob Woodward, Bush at war (Simon & Schuster, 2002). Bush sees himself as an imperial president. He appreciates listening to dissenting views to a point, admits that he needs some specialist advice (where to find Kosovo on a map), but eventually makes all key decisions himself and brooks no dissention thereafter. Neither eloquent, nor worldly, the instincts that he draws upon are deeply and reverently held. Whereas his father was often accused of lacking ‘the vision thing’, George Bush junior had great clarity on how he views the world – much of which is informed by the deep-seated reaction amongst conservative Americans to the vacillations of the Bill Clinton presidency.

Dalalder and Lindsay summarise Bush's first term in office (still the majority portion of the book, despite the update) as follows:

In his first term in office, he discarded or redefined many of the key principles governing the way the United States should act overseas. He relied on the unilateral exercise of American power rather than on international law and institutions to get his way. He championed a proactive doctrine of pre-emption and de-emphasized the reactive strategies of deterrence and containment. He promoted forceful interdiction, pre-emptive strikes, and missile defences as means to counter the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, and he downplayed America’s traditional support for treaty-based non-proliferation regimes. He preferred regime change to direct negotiations with countries and leaders that he loathed. He depended on ad hoc coalitions of the willing to gain support abroad and ignored permanent alliances. He retreated from America's decades-long policy of backing European integration and instead exploited Europe's internal divisions. And he tried to unite the great powers in the common cause of fighting terrorism and rejected a policy that sought to balance one power against another. By rewriting the rules of America's engagement in the world, the man who had been dismissed throughout his political career as a lightweight left an indelible mark on politics at home and abroad (pp 2-3).

George Bush junior has not really changed US goals, the authors argue, but his administration’s logic about how the US should act in the world rejects many of the
assumptions that had guided Washington’s approach to foreign affairs for more than a century. Whereas the policies adopted by the US have traditionally been the product of shifting power balances within a particular administration as much as by built-in ideological disposition, ideology and principle have come to dominate US international engagement after 9/11. Ideology has seldom translated well into practical politics, but al-Qaeda provided an opportunity, for which Bush had all the preconceived ideas. In the aftermath of the terror attacks on New York, Washington and elsewhere, the international community supported regime change in Afghanistan. The link between the Taliban and al-Qaeda was clear, although the blunders that accompanied execution in Afghanistan were manifest. The book then describes how Bush overreached himself after the successful campaign against the Taliban in Afghanistan to invade Iraq. US strategy was plagued by misplaced optimism regarding support from the UN Security Council (an option Bush embarked upon at the behest of Tony Blair), movement on a resolution of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict (which the US did not view as a key priority and invested little effort in), and above all, the response of the Iraqi social and political systems to foreign occupation (reflecting a massive planning failure by the White House and the Pentagon).

Commenting on his second term mid-way in 2005, the authors offer little hope for change.

The talk of Bush abandoning his revolution ultimately misunderstood the man himself … What Bush’s revolutionary nature did mean was that he was unlikely to trim his sails to please his critics. He held his convictions deeply and firmly. He intended to act on his beliefs in his second term, not apologize for them (pp 200 & 202).

Bush prefers to build his empire on what is almost unanimously outside of the US seen as bullyboy tactics, diplomatic coercion and the use of the blunt instrument of military force to deal with intractable problems such as the rise in international terrorism. Rejecting the legitimacy and much greater power that comes with working with friends and allies, Bush and his cabinet embarked upon a search for global hegemony on US terms.

His reliance on American military power proved extraordinarily effective in defeating foes, but it was far less effective in building a lasting basis for peace and prosperity … Far from demonstrating the triumph of unilateral American power, Bush’s wars demonstrated the importance of basing American foreign policy on a blend of power and cooperation (p 194).

Daalder and Lindsay characterise Bush’s foreign policy as a strain of realist thinking, best labelled hegemonist and the opposite to pragmatic options such as evidence-based policy fashionable elsewhere in the West. Like all grand delusions, its simplicity is its...
most deceptive character – the view that in an increasingly complex world there is a
single simple set of true beliefs that serves as an answer to all challenges.

Hegemonist thinking, Daalder and Lindsay explain, rests on five propositions – four of
which are familiar to the realist tradition of politics. The first is that the US lives in a
dangerous world where only the fittest survive. The second is that self-interested nation-
states are the key actors in world politics. Things have therefore not changed through
globalisation. States should seek to advance their own narrow national interests, not create
or invest in what Condoleezza Rice has termed ‘an illusory international community’. As
a result, power, particularly military power, is the ultimate currency of international
exchange. Given the first two propositions, US military power should be exercised solely
in terms of American interests. The fourth proposition is that multilateral agreements
and institutions are neither essential nor necessarily conducive to American interests. As a
result the US has a distinctly instrumentalist view of formal multilateral efforts – they are
fine as long as they serve immediate, concrete American interests. Finally, hegemonists
believe that the United States is a unique great power and that others see it as such. US
history and the vibrancy of liberty and free markets, reflected in its internal democracy,
means that the US has never aspired to empire. It has eschewed conquest and domination
over far-flung territories in the pursuit of justice, peace and prosperity.

The hegemonist argument contends that America’s immense power and the willingness
to wield it, even over the objections of others, is the key to securing America’s interests
in the world. And given the fact that America’s national interest is to foster the spread
of ‘freedom, prosperity and peace’, what is good for America is good for the world.
Hence the exercise of American power jeopardises only those threatened by the spread
of liberty and free markets. In sum, therefore, the Bush administration believes that US
domination of the world is not only in the best interests of Americans, but enhances
international security and is in all our best interests.

Daalder and Lindsay are correct on the disastrous way in which the US has embarked upon
the war on terror. They are wrong to place so much emphasis on the impact of Bush alone.
Hegemonist tendencies in the US have been evident for much of the period following the
demise of the Soviet Union and the dramatic collapse of the Berlin Wall. Their argument
is persuasive and logical, but tends to downplay the resurgence of the military-industrial
complex, the marginalisation of the State Department, Christian religious fundamentalism,
and the political impact of a commercial culture of instant gratification (short-termism)
as key factors determining US foreign policy – factors that transcend the Bush dynasty.
America’s belief in its (Christian) God-given calling to dominate the world has its roots
further back than the election of a second George Bush to the White House.

Arguably these considerations fall outside the confines of this well-written study, but
should focus the minds of international relations specialists, political scientists and
leaders concerned about the damage that the US is wreaking on an international rules-based system. This is not a trend that will end with the inevitable lacklustre finish to what, for most of the rest of the world, has become a disastrous presidency. It will end only when the untrammelled power of the US is checked and a balance of power restored. Even so, in retrospect there can have been few developments that will have as dramatic an effect upon the 21st century than the decision by the US Supreme Court to install George Bush as the 43rd US president.

In sum, this eminently readable and informative book reminds us of the fundamental truth, that power corrupts and absolute power corrupts absolutely. The revised edition went to print late in mid-2005 at a time when Bush's second term had gained sufficient momentum for the authors to venture upon the effect that international condemnation and the growing insurgency in Iraq could have on an America that had cast aside any need for partnership and international support that could constrain its freedom of action. Their view is not that Bush is in for changing. In the interim, the primary challenge of foreign policy for many Western leaders will remain to find ways of restraining a United States that is forever seeking to solve complex international problems through short-cut solutions, including the use of military force in places and in forms that are wholly inappropriate.

*Jakkie Cilliers*
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