

**Relationship between Africa and International Terrorism:
Causes and Linkages**

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Introduction

The threat of transnational terrorism and Africa's relation to this threat can be divided into two components:

- i. The involvement of African nationals in acts of transnational terrorism; and
- ii. The level of threat within Africa in which African nationals under the influence of external elements or on their own, commit acts of terrorism on African soil.

The US Embassy bombings in Dar es-Salaam and Nairobi on 7 August 1998 and the 2002 Mombassa bombings are probably the best-known examples of acts of transnational terrorism on the African continent. It is however not the only examples in which the target extended beyond domestic terrorism; the list is long and extensive. Although governments and people in Africa are well aware of the devastating consequences of domestic terrorism, the role of Africa in transnational terrorism is increasingly being noticed. The following paper will examine Africans' role in transnational terrorism as well as factors that influence the transnationalization of domestic terrorism.

Terminology

Through history there has been a number of definitions of the concept terrorism, but none of them have been regarded as being the one and true description of the concept. Although beyond the focus of this paper it was felt necessary to briefly refer to the basic concepts.

Terrorism - the following definition of an act of terrorism as provided in the OAU/AU Convention on the Prevention and Combating of Terrorism (Algiers, 1999) provides the necessary framework on what an act of terrorism in the African context implies. According to Article 1 (3)(a) *“any act which is a violation of the criminal laws of a State Party and which may endanger the life, physical integrity or freedom of, or cause serious injury or death to, any person, any number or group of persons or causes or may cause damage to public or private property, natural resources, environmental or cultural heritage and is calculated or intended to:*

- (i) *intimidate, put in fear, force, coerce or induce any government, body, institution, the general public or any segment thereof, to do or abstain from doing any act, or to adopt or abandon a particular standpoint, or to act according to certain principles; or*
- (ii) *disrupt any public service, the delivery of any essential service to the public or to create a public emergency; or*
- (iii) *create general insurrection in a State”.*

Article 3 is however also worth noticing:

“Notwithstanding the provisions of Article 1, 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;

however

Political, philosophical, ideological, racial, ethnic, religious or other motives shall not be a justifiable defence against a terrorist act.”

Since neither the international community nor scholars could decide on one single definition of terrorism, all agree that targeting civilians or non-combatants cannot be

accepted. Therefore, although not regarded as yet another definition, terrorism can be referred to as: Violent acts against a civilian population by state and non-state actors irrespective of political, philosophical, ideological, racial, ethnic and religious motives.

Domestic Terrorism – Domestic terrorism occurs when the act of terrorism is confined to national boundaries and does not include targets or agents from abroad. State terrorism also forms part of domestic terrorism when state actors (police, military etc) resort to acts of terror against own nationals.

International/transnational terrorism - International terrorism comprises of acts – instigated by a third state - that have clear international consequences. These acts include incidents where terrorists cross national borders to strike foreign targets, select victims or targets because of their connections to a foreign country (for example, diplomats, local executives). International terrorism is broadly associated with the Cold War when acts of terrorism were carried out by individuals or groups controlled by a sovereign state.

According to Anderson, transnational terrorism is "*... the use, or threat of use, of anxiety — including, extra normal violence for political purposes by any individual or group, whether acting for or in opposition to established governmental authority, when such action is intended to influence the attitudes and behavior of a target group wider than the immediate victims and when, through the nationality or foreign ties of its perpetrators, through its location, through the nature of its institutional or human victims, or through the mechanics of its resolution, its ramifications transcend national boundaries*".¹ In other words, in comparison with international terrorism where state actors commit acts of terrorism, autonomous non-state actors, irrespective of support from sympathetic states, carry out acts of transnational terrorism. Terrorism is transnational through the nationality or foreign ties of its perpetrators, its location, victims, or the mechanics of its resolution and its ramifications that transcend beyond national boundaries.

Terrorism as a strategy

Notwithstanding the fact that terrorism is described as a criminal act, it can also be categorized as a strategy within asymmetric warfare. Terrorism as a strategy directed against civilians and non-combatants has had a long history in Africa. Although 9/11 had devastating consequences, campaigns of systematic terror directed against civilians in low intensity conflict areas throughout Africa should not be disregarded. But what is asymmetric warfare and how does terrorism fit into this strategy?

Asymmetric warfare is a term that describes a violent confrontation in which two opposing forces of unequal power or capacity interact and take advantage of the strengths and weaknesses of themselves and their enemies. This interaction often involves strategies and tactics outside the bounds of conventional warfare in which the outcome of the conflict is not determined by the numerical and technological superiority. Tactical advantages such as decentralized cell structures and a smaller force that make use of hit-and-run tactics familiar in guerilla warfare (also associated with asymmetric warfare) to ‘disappear’ amongst the local population imply that the ‘playing field’ is leveled. The adoption of low-tech tactics is essentially a sign of a weaker force that incorporates initiative and uncertainty in its strategy. These two concepts contribute to the difficulty on the part of conventional forces to counter asymmetric tactics. Associated with ‘asymmetric warfare’ is the concept “Fourth Generation Warfare” that refers to conflicts in which one of the parties in the conflict is not a state. The state therefore loses its monopoly to wage war to decentralized non-state actors that do not

adhere to the rules of warfare as described in the Geneva Conventions. The role of religion and culture further imply that the theater of the conflict extends beyond a state's borders to individuals throughout the world who identify with the opposing force. Contributing to the success of non-state actors against conventional forces that are often relying on advanced technology is the manipulation of the media as part of psychological warfare. It is essential to win the "hearts and minds" of people through the selected use of information, disinformation, manipulation of the press and propaganda.

It is therefore clear that both concepts (asymmetric and fourth generation warfare) refer to transnational terrorism as we have come to know it. Traditionally asymmetric warfare could be demarcated to a specific country or sub-region in which specific government forces have been confronted with an enemy/insurgency that made use of terrorism as a tactic, with a specific outcome in mind. In contrast to domestic insurgencies, in which terrorism was used as part of its tactical arsenal, acts of transnational terrorism became part of a global insurgency. Through the transnationalization of terrorism, agents of transnational terrorism could affect the most secure and 'safe' country. A false sense of security might be the greatest mistake any country could make. In addition, states are increasingly being confronted with a situation where the divisions between combatant/insurgent/terrorist, criminal opportunist and civilians are blurred.

Underlying causes of terrorism and Africa's role in transnational terrorism

Despite the fact that world attention is fixed on transnational acts of terrorism with its dramatic and devastating consequences, the underlying causes can always be traced back to domestic grievances or circumstances. The reason: the person or cell responsible is moved to action by his or her own reality: a domestic reality. Even the grievances of Usama bin Laden and his 'coalition' started with domestic grievances: The perception that Muslim leaders are not considered to govern in accordance with the principles of Islam started with organizations such as *al-Ikwan al-Muslimin* or the Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt in 1928. Yet the strategy against transnational terrorism focuses extensively on the manifestation of terrorism in its tactical form, without addressing the underlying domestic causes.

Both internal and external factors can contribute to a state's vulnerability to terrorism: Internal factors focus on domestic conditions that may prompt terrorist activities, for example:

- Draconian or closed political systems - Democratic transition, to date, has failed to establish institutions to mediate between state and society. Restrictions on basic human rights, including freedom of expression, speech and association, contribute to frustrations and deprive people of the opportunity to change their governments democratically. None of the organisations that had been implicated in acts of terrorism in the past had recognised their governments as legitimate.
- The overall health of governments and government control over their respective territories - Weak or failed states that could provide favourable conditions for terrorists to plan, train and launch attacks. The absence of local authority not only allows use of these territories by external actors, but also permits the activities of paramilitaries in terrorising local populations. Transnational terrorists may see ungoverned parts of Africa as safe havens, or as providing them with opportunities to attack Western targets on the continent. Somalia and the Sahara were previously implicated as areas formerly used by terrorists. Associated with control over territories is the question of border control. It is an unfortunate

reality that a line on a map might not always correspond with a border that's being effectively monitored to prevent the movement of unwanted individuals. The reality is that a number of countries do not have the resources (human and technological) to prevent acts of terrorism being committed within its borders.

- Nationalist, separatist or ethnic motivations - Heterogenic countries often proved to be a target of violence (including terrorism) motivated by the need to redraw political boundaries in search of self-determination. Especially in situations where the group could be found in a specific geographic location and the current government does not represent the specific ethnic group. As a result feelings of marginalization exist that often fuel the need to establish a representative government. Traditionally these groups have clearly defined political objectives.
- Conflict over natural resources - In addition to marginalization and claims for self-determination, conflict over natural resources proved to be in itself a source of instability, that might include the use of terrorism.
- Religion - The importance of religion as a political tool is well recognised. Although religion had previously been used to justify acts of violence, its value grew as a tool in rallying support. Religion also extends beyond national borders, broadening a potential support base. Religion in combination with poor socio-economic conditions, marginalization, etc., in addition to political ideologies are traditionally the most important motivation and justification to resort to violence.
- Economic circumstances - Poverty, unemployment and the growing gap between the elite and the overwhelming majority produce people that have nothing to lose. Widespread conditions of conflict and poverty often create a breeding ground for alienation and radicalisation. However, poverty alone is not a reason for individuals to resort to terrorism.

Cases of domestic terrorism are often considered as less important and almost irrelevant in the greater scheme of things – a mistake with tremendous consequences: It contributes to double standards as well as a perception that a Westerner's life is more worth than that of an African. This perception also spilled over in the involvement of the United States in Africa in its War on Terrorism (WoT) in that the United States will only get involved when its interests are in danger or when those in power resort to the 'terrorism card' against its enemies. Two examples come to mind in the conflict between Western Sahara / Polisario Front and Morocco when both parties referred to terrorism in an attempt to harness support against the other. In another example the Traditional Federal Government of Somalia and Prime Minister Meles Zenawi from Ethiopia used the 'terrorism card' to secure assistance from the United States against the growing influence of the Islamic Courts. "Using" the United States will have negative consequences for the US foreign policy in Africa in the future. Although the WoT is portrayed as not being a war against Islam, 'fear' of an Islamic state in Somalia presents another image despite the fact that 99% of the population in Somalia are Muslims. Both prime ministers Gedi and Meles referred to the 'terrorism card' and an Islamic State not as much in fear of an escalation of acts of terrorism, but solely for political reasons and vested interests. It is almost ironic that the consequences of this strategy will lead to an increase in the threat of terrorism – playing into the hands of extremists within the Islamic Courts and the broader al-Qa'eda strategy to justify the resort to a call for international fighters and acts of terrorism against an enemy of Islam and a foreign occupying force – It can be compared with a delicate chess game between Islamist extremists who would use each and every opportunity to justify their strategy and recruit new members or secure more support against the United States as the 'champion' against terrorism. Adopting this less considered strategy will further result in moderate Muslims

moving into the camp of extremism. It is therefore feared that although the TFG and Ethiopia might have won the battle against the Islamic Courts, they will lose the war against extremists; further enhancing the perception that the United States, as an important ally of the TFG and Ethiopia acted against Islam.

On the external level, vulnerability to terrorism is *inter alia* influenced by geographic position, alliances and the question of identity. Particularly in the aftermath of 9/11, government alignment with the United States (US) in the ‘war against terrorism’ further influenced the motivation of terrorist organisations. As well as globalization, the development of especially telecommunications that, to a large extent, enable same-minded individuals to unite and conspire against common enemies. *Global Trends 2015* characterizes globalization as “...the rapid and largely unrestricted flow of information, ideas, cultural values, capital, goods and services, and people: that is, globalization”. It further states “...governments will have less and less control over flows of information, technology, diseases, migrants, arms, and financial transactions, whether licit or illicit, across their borders. Non-state actors ranging from business firms to non-profit organizations will play increasingly larger roles in both national and international affairs.... States with ineffective and incompetent governance not only will fail to benefit from globalization, but in some instances will spawn conflicts at home and abroad, ensuring an even wider gap between regional winners and losers than exists today.”ⁱⁱ It is especially here where Africa played a very important role in the transnationalization of terrorism.

Only a small number of conflicts will remain domestic. In other words domestic and transnational terrorism cannot be compartmentalized. Both are equally important and often inter-related. Particularly impacting on the threat of transnational terrorism are religion - for example, the ability to recruit members of the moderate and traditional Muslim community to extremism – and governance. Although governance has a direct impact on domestic terrorism, it also indirectly influences transnational terrorism. A number of countries in Africa have used the global war on terror as an excuse to delay reforms and commit extensive human rights abuses. Through preventing democracy and democratic reforms existing divisions between those in power and ordinary citizens will increase, giving extremist movements the much needed foothold. Muslim countries are especially vulnerable, since domestic legitimacy conflicts can be incorporated in a Jihadist worldview. When freedom of expression and other civil liberties are protected, there are non-violent ways to express political and/or social frustration. If this theory is correct, terrorist attacks should increase under a repressive regime. Unfortunately civil liberty is often the first casualty in the fight against terrorism, which is ironic, considering the argument that a lack of civil liberties seems to be a main cause of terrorism around the world. In Africa, Algeria and Egypt are the best examples to explain the export of ‘domestic’ terrorism into a transnational network. The following reasons contribute to the transnationalization of domestic terrorism:

1. Globalization and the creation of a global village in which two factors are of particular importance:
 - i. Free movement and settlement of concentrations of foreigners in other countries: Although these individuals might become productive members of society they will always remain loyal to their countrymen. A distinction can be made between those individuals who previously have been members of ‘terrorist’ organizations in their respective countries of origin and have fled to the West in the search of political asylum and those who have left of their own free will in search of better opportunities. The former used liberal freedoms to further the objectives and

- activities of organizations such as the GIA and later the GSPC in Algeria in channelling funds and administer propaganda instruments such as bulletins and websites. A number of individuals within the latter might become involved in terrorism related activities within their new host country or assist upcoming causes in their respective countries of origin. Moroccan nationals responsible for the Madrid bombings and the Pakistani nationals involved in the London bombings serve as examples.
- ii. Internet: The Internet proved to be a valuable tool not only to spread radical ideals but also to recruit, communicate and train decentralized, independent cell structures throughout the world.
2. Religion provides a sense of identity or a feeling of community and belonging bridging national, racial and language differences. It is therefore to be expected that when the world is divided between “us” and “them” the possibility to remain moderate in the interpretation of one’s religion will minimize. It will benefit Jihadists if the world is divided between Christianity and Islam and the war against terrorism is synonymous with a war against Islam. In achieving this objective and to minimize the voice of moderates, mass media and the Internet is being used within the framework of Fourth Generation Warfare. In addition to a war against terrorism, African nationals and states are also in the midst of a war between extremists and moderates for the spirit of Islam.

Involvement of African nationals in transnational terrorism

Political repression and socio-economic conditions also contribute to the export of potential extremist and/or terrorist groups. For example, Egypt’s counter-terrorism strategy against domestic terrorism was successful, since terrorism virtually disappeared from Egypt until its re-emergence in 2003. However, in reality the response of the Egyptian authorities to the domestic threat of militants and extremists through its heavy-handed approach under emergency legislation led to a situation where leaders and supporters fled abroad, from where they not only supported a myriad causes, but also contributed to the establishment of transnational terror organisations. Egypt indirectly exported extremism to the rest of the world. For example, the banning of the MB facilitated the creation of MB ‘agencies’ throughout the Middle East, as well as the establishment of other organisations influenced by its policies. Members of al-Jihad and al-Gama’a al-Islamiyya fled to Pakistan, Afghanistan, Saudi Arabia and other Muslim countries to unite with other groups and stage bigger attacks on the US. One of the most prominent Egyptian nationals who influenced the development of transnational terrorism and deserves our attention was Ayman al-Zawahri, the leader of al-Jihad in Egypt who reputedly was the intellectual and ideological leader of the International Front for Jihad against Jews and Crusaders. From this alliance, formed in 1998, al-Qa’eda originated.

In effect al-Jihad illustrates the ideological evolution of Islamist extremism and the central role of Egyptian nationals in transnational terrorism. Under the leadership of Ayman al-Zawahri, al-Jihad evolved from targeting the Egyptian government it described as corrupt and un-Islamic to directing its operations against the US as part of a global jihad against the ‘Great Satan’. In another example the *Groupe Salafiste pour la Prédication et le Combat (GSPC)* or Salafist Group for Preaching and Combat in Algeria – originally a group that discriminately targeted members of the Algerian security forces openly aligned itself with al-Qa’eda. This step indicated a new phase in the threat to security in not only

Algeria, but also the region as a whole. In aligning itself with al-Qa'eda the following is self-evident:

- Commitment to al-Qa'eda's cause in current hotspots (Iraq and Afghanistan), including recruitment;
- The utilization of the GSPC's network in Europe, in particular France;
- Growing possibility of suicide operations, clearly evident in latest rhetoric on the part of the GSPC, since the latter adhere to the strategy and philosophical principles of al-Qa'eda;
- Growing influence of the GSPC in the Maghreb region despite the decline in the number of attacks in Algeria. The GSPC incorporate Algerian, Moroccan, Libyan, Tunisian and Mauritanian Jihadists and are therefore no longer an Algerian organization, but rather a trans-national terror organization.

Fear that Algerian militants might re-direct their attacks from Algerian security forces to foreign interests was realized on 10 December 2006 when armed assailants attacked a bus carrying employees of Brown & Root-Condor (BRC) who were on their way from their offices to a Sheraton Hotel in Bouchaoui, 15 kilometers west of Algiers. Attackers used an explosive device and firearms in the attack that resulted in the death of the Algerian driver and nine injuries, including one American, four Britons, one Canadian, one Lebanese employee and one Algerian. This attack serves as an example of the GSPC's renewed commitment towards a broader cause in alliance with al-Qa'eda.

In Morocco for example, unemployment, poverty and social tensions resulted in hundreds if not thousands of Moroccans to emigrate to Europe, legally or illegally, where radical Islamic elements presented a definite threat to security.ⁱⁱⁱ Most remain in Spain or France, but conditions in the ghettos are poor, especially for those without the necessary documentation enabling them to apply for employment. Disillusionment and poverty on its turn fuel bitterness. Many Moroccan immigrants, especially youths, turn to petty crime or become involved in drugs and also become the targets of Islamic extremist elements that use these conditions to their advantage in a recruitment drive for foot soldiers that have nothing to loose.

African and Asian nationals established networks in Europe and the Middle East, including Belgium, Switzerland, Turkey, Bangladesh, Romania, Yemen and Syria.^{iv} The influence of nationals of North African countries in the Madrid bombing still was reconfirmed with the implication of predominately Moroccan nationals, particularly through the Moroccan Islamic Combatant Group (MICG). Amongst those arrested was Jamal Zougam, a 30-year-old Moroccan and an alleged al-Qa'eda member. He was detained and accused of direct involvement in making the 13 bombs placed on commuter trains. Zougam also knew the person that headed the former al-Qa'eda cell in Spain, Imadeddin Barakat Yarkas, alias Abou Dahdah.^v In addition to its presence in Spain, the MICG had cells in Belgium, Britain, Canada, France and Italy. In the aftermath of the Madrid bombing, several links with London emerged. Jamal Zougam, for example travelled to London on several occasions to collect logistic help and false documents for the al-Qa'eda cell in Spain. Abu Qatada, a London-based radical cleric, whom the Spanish authorities have described as "al-Qa'eda's spiritual adviser in Europe" is currently being held at Belmarsh top security prison in southeast London under emergency terror legislation. Spanish police suspect that the command structure of al-Qa'eda in Spain comes from the followers of Abu Qatada.^{vi} In addition to the involvement of Moroccan nationals, on 6 November 2006 a court in Milan sentenced two Egyptian nationals for their involvement in the Madrid train bombings: Rabei Ousmane Sayed Ahmed, the accused mastermind of the March 2004 train bombings in

Madrid was sentenced to 10 years in jail for membership of a terrorist organization, while Yahya Mawad Mohamed Rajeh was sentenced to five years in jail.^{vii}

The involvement of African nationals in acts of terrorism in Europe became an area of concern before 9/11. For example, the transnational influence of Algerian armed groups became clear in the 1995 bombing campaign in Paris, France. Since then Algerian nationals have been implicated in a number of planned acts of terrorism. For example, Said Arif (extradited from Syria to France) also known as Slimane Chabani or Abderrahmane, originally from Oran, Algeria had close relations with a cell of Algerians based in Frankfurt, Germany implicated in a foiled plot to plant a bomb in the bustling French holiday market in Strasbourg on New Year's Eve 2000. Arif was able to escape capture and flee to Georgia, where he collaborated with al-Qa'eda militants who later would be arrested in France on suspicions of plotting a chemical attack against Russian interests. The network was dismantled in December 2002 with the arrests of nine suspects in the Paris suburbs of La Courneuve and Romainville^{viii}. In April 2004 a Spanish judge charged four Algerian nationals and members of the GSPC^{ix} for belonging to al-Qa'eda. The four worked in support of a French cell led by Merouane Benahmed (arrested in December 2002) and received training in Afghanistan from Abu Musab al-Zarqawi. A mobile phone detonator, similar to those used in the Bali nightclub and Madrid train bombing attacks was found in their possession^x.

On 24 February 2005, Italian security forces announced that they have arrested Nadir Remli, the former head of the Armed Islamic Group (GIA) cell in London, at the Rome airport. Remli, wanted by the Algerian authorities since 1992, had British citizenship, after Britain granted him political refugee status in 1991. He was also one of the founders of the Algerian Community in Great Britain (ACB), a section of the banned Islamic Salvation Front (FIS) in Great Britain. Along with an associate, Kamredinne Kherbane (the leader of the Algerian "Afghans"), also a London resident, the Algeria government accused him of having supplied money to the GIA since 1992 by setting up a bank account at an Arab bank in London. From collecting money to the creation of the subversive GIA publication Al-Ansar, Remli, with Mohamed Dnidni, was considered one of the main officials with the GIA cell in Great Britain for five years. Despite being on a list sent by the Algerian security agencies to Interpol and the United Nations as being terrorists close to the al-Qa'eda network, British authorities did not act on the extradition request^{xi}.

In another example of African nationals' involvement in transnational terrorism, British authorities announced that the following two individuals have been identified in the attempted bombings in London on 21 July 2005: Muktar Said Ibrahim, originally from Eritrea, had attempted to detonate a bomb on a double-decker bus and Yasin Hassan Omar, an Ethiopian national (arrested in Italy), staged a failed attack on the Underground system's Northern Line. Both moved as minors with their families to the United Kingdom in 1992. This incident is the first recorded incident in which militants from East Africa played a direct role in terror cells in Europe. In comparison the role of nationals from North African countries are well recorded^{xii}.

Above mentioned only referred to a few examples. In most cases countries in Africa warned European countries of the danger in hosting suspicious individuals and even requested the extradition of those individuals before 9/11 that, unfortunately, fell on deaf ears. In allowing those individuals to situate themselves in Western countries, the latter not only contributed to the instability in their countries of origin, it also facilitated

to the establishment of cell structures in Europe and the United States that ultimately directed their attacks against their hosts.

In Africa, Algeria and Egypt are the best examples to explain the export of 'domestic' terrorism into a transnational network. According to Jane's Defence Weekly, approximately 2,800 Algerians have been trained in al-Qa'eda training camps in Afghanistan, making Algeria the third biggest contributor of foot soldiers after Saudi Arabia and Yemen.^{xiii} Despite the fact that the *Groupe Salafiste pour la Prédication et le Combat (GSPC)* or Salafist Group for Combat and Preaching openly aligned itself to al-Qa'eda since 2003, Egyptian nationals are also the third largest contributor overall to foreign fighters in Iraq after Saudi Arabia and Syria. According to a high-ranking security official in Iraq on 10 November 2006, most foreign fighters arrested the previous four months were Egyptian nationals (estimated at 150), followed by Syria and Libya (estimated at 80).^{xiv} Other examples of African involvement in Iraq include: Mohsen Khayber, aka Abdul Rahim or Abdul Majid Al-Libi, a Moroccan national wanted in connection with the Casablanca bombings in 2003, had been linked to three simultaneous car bombings in Balad that killed more than 100 people in September 2005. According to information Khayber moved to Syria early 2004 where he helped channel foreign militants from Morocco into Iraq.^{xv}

Africa as a target of transnational terrorism

According to Rohan Gunaratna's book *Inside Al-Qa'eda*, al-Qa'eda has established links with a number of Islamic political parties, terrorist groups and key individuals in central and southern Africa. In addition to the bombings in Kenya and Tanzania, the CIA managed to thwart the bombing of the US embassy in Kampala, Uganda on 18 September 1998. Time is irrelevant in the planning of acts of transnational terrorism. In contrast to domestic terrorism where the signs are clearly visible, acts of transnational terrorism are often unexpected. The use of decentralized cell structures make it almost impossible to detect and prevent the threat especially in countries that have not previously been targets of terrorism or in a country that does not consider terrorism as a viable threat. For example, the bombings in Kenya and Tanzania had been planned since 1994, at a time when only a limited number of observers knew the name Usama bin Laden and al-Qa'eda. Capitalizing on domestic circumstances al-Qa'eda established a presence in Nairobi and Mombassa. Usama bin Laden was approached with photographs and sketches on account of his knowledge of civil engineering to identify the path of entry of the explosives van into the embassy. The operation was originally planned for 1996 but was delayed. In addition to southern and eastern Africa, Usama bin Laden also planned to make inroads into central and western Africa. Plans were set in motion for further attacks against US embassies as a means to politicise and radicalise African Muslims in the hope of provoking anti-Muslim backlashes.^{xvi}

Despite the immediate impact on security in Iraq it is also feared that a similar trend might develop as in the aftermath of the Afghanistan War against the Soviet Union that ended in 1989: Returning individuals, influenced by a new philosophy with combat experience ultimately led to the emergence of terrorism groups in all northern African countries during the early 1990s. Considering that individuals throughout Africa are eager to participate in a transnational force in conflicts from Iraq to Somalia, one can only imagine what the consequences might be on the medium to long term. Willingness to participate is however not limited to northern and eastern Africa. Although figures are

not easily available, individuals in countries, including South Africa, indicated their willingness to participate in this transnational force.

Closer to southern Africa, South Africa was also implicated in the arrest of a number of perpetrators of prominent transnational terrorism cases. First and foremost was the arrest of Khalfan Khamis Mohamed, a Tanzanian national in Cape Town in the aftermath of the August 1998 bombings in Kenya and Tanzania. In another example, Haroon Rashid Aswat stayed in Mayfair, Johannesburg for a while before he was ultimately arrested in Zambia. According to investigators Haroon Rashid Aswat 30, a British citizen, placed a number of calls to suspects responsible for the bombings on London's underground and a bus on 7 July 2005. These examples provided an additional trend – the ‘harboring’ of foreigners within the Muslim community without knowledge of their involvement in terrorism. As South Africans are traditionally open and hospitable, it is increasingly feared that ‘outsiders’ with ulterior motives might misuse this hospitality.

In addition to the use of this region as a possible safe-haven for terrorists, the involvement of African nationals in transnational terrorism is not limited to northern and eastern Africa: Dr Firoz and Zubeir Ismail were arrested after a long shoot-out with Pakistani authorities along with Ahmed Khalfan Ghailani, an alleged al-Qa’eda member in a safe-house in Pakistan in 2004. Ghailani, a Tanzanian national in US custody, was allegedly involved in the 1998 Nairobi and Dar es-Salaam embassy bombings. The two South Africans however explained that they have been hiking in Pakistan, an explanation not accepted by analysts considering the conditions and the company. Even PAGAD’s target selection in the bombing of Planet Hollywood, other US affiliated restaurants, as well as the bombing of Western Embassies serves as an indication that the threat of transnational terrorism in this part of the continent is a reality. But why would individuals affiliated with a global jihad be interested in South Africa – a country with a liberal foreign policy in which essential freedoms are well established and protected? Earlier in this discussion, while presenting the inner working of asymmetric warfare, it was mentioned that terrorists will use weaknesses to their advantage: In this case a free society in which liberal democratic principles, such as freedom of speech, association and human rights are protected. In addition, the following factors contribute to Africa’s vulnerability to transnational terrorism:

- Open borders and large illegal immigrant communities in which individuals with ulterior motives can disappear. Hospitality and a culture in which people are willing to help people in need without asking questions, might contribute to a situation where innocent people support, provide safe haven and even facilitate acts of terrorism without knowing it.
- Insufficient communication and education of the broad public on what to look out for and their role in a holistic counter-terrorism strategy enable potential terrorists to disappear under the radar. The over-sensitivity on the part of security forces to consider anything and everything relating to terrorism as top secret, exclude a valuable source of information – the broad public. Community involvement cannot be secured through legislation. Although the responsibility rests with the public to inform the police of any suspicious activity, it just cannot be done without equipping them with the knowledge and without establishing a relationship of trust.
- Growing identification with jihadists in a perceived war against Islam. Despite calls from the United States and local governments that the war against terrorism is not a war against Islam, action speaks louder than words. Islamophobia is at the

order of the day on all levels – from lower ranking officials to members of the public - due to a lack of knowledge. Africa provides the ideal recruitment conditions, which might worsen as a result of increased resentment towards US foreign policy in the Middle East. In addition to actual recruitment with the objective of being directly involved in the planning and executing of terrorist operations in Africa (or other countries), an increasing number of Africans - indirectly or in principle - support the activities of extremist groups. Although this situation can be managed, countries should be very careful in their counter-terrorism strategies not to drive moderate supporters to extremism.

In summary, the involvement of African nationals in transnational acts of terrorism is not the only threat. The evolution of al-Qa'eda's philosophy on the African continent amongst traditional domestic organizations, areas of conflict (such as Somalia) and individuals sympathetic to the message of al-Qa'eda will contribute to Africa's importance as a new battleground against terrorism: Of strategic importance will be to use domestic grievances, for example control over natural resources, such as oil in the Niger Delta and merge it with a global Jihadist philosophy to contribute to an explosive situation. On the individual level, images of suffering in the Muslim world 'at the hands of the West and its allies and the ever increasing message that the world is divided between true believers and its enemies are moving moderate Muslims into action, forcing them to decide. In a polarized world of black and white, moderate belief and co-existence disappear.

The threat of transnational terrorism is therefore no longer limited to the export of African nationals to transnational terror operations. The continent, traditionally plagued by domestic terrorism will also increasingly be confronted with transnational acts of terrorism.

Conclusion

The development of transnational terrorism should however be studied and understood in historical context. Terrorism as a successful tactic is well established. A certain inability exists to rationally acknowledge the threat of terrorism to human security, while the focus is primarily on the act, rather than to find excuses and or justify the use of the tactic contributed to a world where terror is the victor. This is particularly true in Africa where our colonial past often blurs our better judgement. Emotional excuses that "we were branded as terrorists" facilitate the formation of double standards and the threat that we might wake up too late to do what is needed in protecting ourselves against the devastating direct and indirect consequences of terrorism – domestic as well as transnational. I'm not implying that a hard-handed approach should be our shield against this threat to human security, but rather that we adopt a holistic approach starting with the root causes and addressing the linkages between domestic and transnational terrorism. Equally important will be to acknowledge that no instant solution and cure exist to prevent that it ever happen to us.

ⁱ Sean K Anderson, 'Warnings versus alarms: Terrorist threat analysis applied to the Iranian state-run media', *Studies of Conflict & Terrorism*, 21 (1998): 282.

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^{iv} *BBC Monitoring Newsfile*, Egypt: Interior Minister announces release of around 1,000 Islamic militants, 3 September 2003.

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