

**NEW TRENDS IN CONTEMPORARY
INTERNATIONAL AND TRANSNATIONAL
TERRORISM AS MANIFESTED IN THE AL-
QAEDA MOVEMENT**

FRANCINA BESTER

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INTERNATIONAL AND TRANSNATIONAL
TERRORISM AS MANIFESTED IN THE AL-QAEDA
MOVEMENT**

by

FRANCINA BESTER

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Study leader : Prof M. HOUGH.

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To my study leader for his guidance.

To my employer for facilitating the sources of the study.

DEDICATION

The study is dedicated to the innocent victims of international terrorism.

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CHAPTER 1 : INTRODUCTION

1. Research Objectives

The objective of the study is to explore trends in international terrorism since the end of the Cold War, identified by some as the “new” terrorism, and to analyse these as applicable to the Al-Qaeda movement. To achieve this aim, the study focuses on aspects like the development of international terrorism, including changes in the international security environment, and a conceptual framework of terrorism. In addition, the resemblances and differences between new terrorism and traditional terrorism are investigated and the validity of new terrorism is determined according to manifestations of international terrorism from the 1960’s until 2005.

The origins and evolution of the Al-Qaeda movement, which is viewed by some as the pre-eminent manifestation of the new terrorism, are discussed. Subsequently, Al-Qaeda is analysed in terms of the following characteristics that are *inter alia* attributed to the new terrorism :

- Religious motivation.
- Transnational character and amorphous structure.
- Nature of attacks and the possibility of the use of non-conventional weapons.

Since the September 2001 attacks on the United States (US), Al-Qaeda has become a prototype of the new terrorism because it seems to embody the characteristics of this new paradigm. For the purposes of the study, Al-Qaeda is being considered as an international terrorism network, rather than a global insurgency movement. This is done because the study focuses on Al-Qaeda’s actions outside of the Muslim world where it does not enjoy more extensive

indigenous support. Consequently these actions can be considered as terror acts, rather than the actions of an insurgency movement.

The study does not focus on prevention and control mechanisms or on the prediction of future trends in international terrorism, but analyses recent manifestations in the field with the aim of clarifying existing trends. To achieve this aim, the study focuses on changes in the international security environment since the end of the Cold War, contemporary religio-political terrorism, and a conceptual framework of international terrorism as a strategy of political violence.

2. Research Problem

Currently there is a debate among terrorism specialists on whether terrorism has changed in motivation, organisation and strategy since the end of the Cold War and the demise of a bipolar international structure. This has led to the identification of a new terrorism, mainly motivated by religious extremism, which has followed the predominantly ideologically motivated terrorism of the 1970's and 1980's. Simultaneously, some analysts have argued that existing trends in international terrorism are largely a continuation of previous motivations and practices. It is this issue that forms the basis of the problem statement for purposes of the study.

The study is based on the following assumptions :

- The “new” terrorism reflects certain changes in international terrorism during the last twenty-five years but characteristics of traditional terrorism have remained valid.
- The nature and motivation of international terrorism are influenced by the circumstances of a specific historic time period.
- Al-Qaeda serves as model of characteristics viewed by some as part of “new” terrorism but retains many characteristics of traditional terrorism.

3. Literature Overview

Since the September 2001 attacks on the US, Al-Qaeda has been the subject of a growing body of literature but the quality of the content of this is mostly repetitive and often ill-informed. (Silke, 2004 : 2) Because of the clandestine nature of Al-Qaeda, the early scholarship on the movement and its leaders is often misleading. The difficulty in verifying information is compounded by the fact that the Arab press is subjected to government control, while the veracity of testimonies by captured members of Al-Qaeda can not easily be confirmed by other sources. In addition, a lack of firsthand research involving direct contact with terrorists and the absence of a widely agreed definition of terrorism, contributes to the reliance of terrorism studies on secondary resources. (Horgan, 2004 :31)

Relatively little investigation has until now been done to determine the relevance of new trends in international terrorism to the Al-Qaeda movement. In this respect two sources can be mentioned, namely a paper by Howard titled “Understanding Al Qaeda’s Application of the New Terrorism - The Key to Victory in the Current Campaign”, (Howard, 2004) and an earlier study on Al-Qaeda by Rueda titled “New Terrorism? A Case Study of Al-Qaida and the Lebanese Hezbollah”. (Rueda, 2001).

Examples of literature on the new terrorism include various publications by authors like Hoffman and Jenkins attached to the Rand Corporation but principally Countering the New Terrorism which was published in 1999. The article Postmodern Terrorism by Laqueur published in Foreign Affairs in 1996 and articles by Simon & Benjamin published in the journal Survival, were influential in promoting the concept of new terrorism. Publications by Hoffman, Inside Terrorism, and Laqueur, The New Terrorism, Fanaticism and the Arms of Mass Destruction, contributed to expand on certain ideas around the concept. While these authors are all US-based, the critique of the concept of new

terrorism is predominantly provided by non-US authors, including Duyvesteyn, Tucker, Zimmerman, and others.

4. Methodology

The study uses description, analysis and comparison as research methods. Description is used to determine the role of Al-Qaeda in the current international security environment in its apparent manifestation as prototype of new terrorism. The study also analyses the characteristics of traditional, mainly ideology-driven, terrorism and that of the “new” terrorism, as identified by some authors, and a conceptual framework relating to terrorism serves as basis for this analysis. Thirdly, a comparison is made between the elements of the new terrorism on the one hand, and the characteristics of Al-Qaeda on the other hand. The aim of the comparison is to determine the validity of certain views that there is a definite shift towards a new terrorism.

Sources used for the study include primary sources, mainly from the US Government, for example Patterns of Global Terrorism compiled by the US State Department. Resolutions adopted by the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) relating to international terrorism, are also used. The secondary sources, including books, journal articles, monographs and media articles, are analysed in order to provide a theoretical framework and description of specific terrorism incidents. It needs to be pointed out that the terrorism field is subject to the problem of uncollected data and that it is often the possible but unlikely, which is studied. (Crelinsten, 1978 : 371) Due to the clandestine nature of terrorism organisations, some information on the activities of Al-Qaeda is obviously not obtainable. Recent sources that were used include the research done by institutions investigating security matters, publications by authors who specialise in Al-Qaeda, as well as credible journalistic accounts.

5. Chapter Structure

The research is structured as follows :

Chapter 1 : Introduction.

This chapter sets out the context, research problem, assumptions, methodology and structure of the study.

Chapter 2 : Traditional and New Terrorism.

The chapter provides a conceptual overview of the development and characteristics of the new terrorism. The validity of the concept of new terrorism to further an understanding of contemporary international terrorism is investigated. The trends and principles of traditional terrorism are discussed and resemblances and differences with those trends associated with new terrorism are pointed out.

Chapter 3 : Development of International Terrorism.

Chapter three contains a historical overview of the development of international terrorism in terms of motivation, strategy and effectiveness as a technique of political violence. The effect of the end of the Cold War, globalisation, new technologies and a unipolar international structure on the development of international terrorism, are investigated.

Chapter 4 : Emergence of Al-Qaeda.

Chapter four provides an overview and analysis of the Al-Qaeda movement. This is discussed firstly in terms of its origins and aims. Secondly, the September 2001 attacks against the US and the international security consequences thereof,

are discussed briefly. Thirdly, brief case studies of other important attacks attributed to the movement, are provided.

Chapter 5 : Analysis of Al-Qaeda.

This chapter makes an analysis of the Al-Qaeda movement in terms of its religio-political motivation and pan-Islamic ideology, transnational character and loose structure, strategy in target selection, and the possibility of the use of non-conventional weapons. These aspects will be analysed and illustrated through reference to specific incidents.

Chapter 6 : Evaluation.

The final chapter provides a summary and evaluation of the study and tests the propositions made in the introduction. It determines whether the nature of international terrorism has changed as proposed by the concept of “new” terrorism or whether most characteristics of international terrorism have remained unchanged. It also draws conclusions on whether Al-Qaeda demonstrates the characteristics attributed to a “new” terrorism.

CHAPTER 2 : TRADITIONAL AND NEW TERRORISM

1. Introduction

This chapter will firstly explore the complexities surrounding the concept of terrorism and the difficulties in reaching consensus on the nature of terrorism as phenomenon. This is followed by a short overview of traditional terrorism which, for the purposes of this study, refers to terrorism during the 1960's and 1970's. This kind of terrorism was principally motivated by ideology as well as ethno-separatism.

During the 1980's a new kind of terrorism was identified by certain academics and terrorism specialists which was global in orientation and more lethal than earlier manifestations of terrorism. This new terrorism has evolved from a marked shift from the left wing, ideologically-driven terrorism towards a right wing, and religiously motivated terrorism.

The different characteristics of this presumably new kind of terrorism will be discussed. An important aspect of the new terrorism paradigm is a fear of the application of non-conventional weapons. This was largely as a result of the March 1995 attack by a Japanese religious cult using a chemical weapon on the Tokyo subway. The assumptions of a new kind of terrorism aiming to cause mass casualties, seemed to have been confirmed by the September 2001 attacks on the US.

Lastly, the differences and resemblances between traditional and new terrorism in terms of specific characteristics are explored. These characteristics of terrorist organisations include their motivation, objectives, the application of violence,

target selection, sponsorship, hybrid character, organisational structure and transnational nature.

2. Overview of the Concept of Terrorism

Despite considerable efforts to this effect, consensus on an adequate social science definition of terrorism as tactic and as doctrine is still lacking and has remained an enduring question in terrorism research. (Schmid & Jongman, 1988 : 1) Terrorism is a diverse multi-disciplinary phenomenon and its meaning can disappear among a variety of precise definitions or be covered by a too broad definition which loses all meaning

The problem of definition is mostly caused by the moral judgement which must be made when describing a person or a group as terrorists and which necessarily leads to subjectivity and politicisation of the concept. This also applies to the question whether the problem is the violence itself or its underlying causes. (Gearson, 2002 : 13) Because terrorism is primarily a political communication strategy, it is not used primarily for destruction, but as a signal to achieve a widespread psychological impact. (Hirschmann, 2000) As such it has essentially been a strategy of the weak, namely the use of violence by small groups in order to effect political or social change. (Silke, 2004 : 9)

Crenshaw points out that, even if the term is used objectively as an analytical tool, it is still difficult to find a satisfactory definition that distinguishes terrorism from other forms of violent action. The author describes terrorism as pre-eminently political and symbolic, and as “deliberate and systematic violence performed by small numbers of people with the purpose of intimidating a watching audience”. (Crenshaw, 2000 : 406) However, the author’s statement that terrorism is meant to hurt and not to destroy, is in contrast with the view of the new terrorism as also being aimed at mass destruction.

The following definitions are presented to clarify the subject :

- Terrorism is “any attack, or threat of attack, against unarmed targets, intended to influence, change, or divert major political decisions”. (Radu, 2002 : 275)
- Terrorism can be defined as “the substate application of violence or threatened violence intended to sow panic in a society, to weaken or even overthrow the incumbents, and to bring about political change”. (Laqueur, 1996 : 24)
- Terrorism is fundamentally “the use (or threatened use) of violence in order to achieve psychological effects in a particular target audience, fomenting widespread fear and intimidation”. (Roy et al, 2000 : 166)

A possible approach to solve this definition dilemma is to remove politics from the definition and place it in the realm of criminal justice and international criminal courts. (Schbley, 2003 : 106) This links to the approach of the United Nations (UN) which proposed that a workable definition could be built around defining terrorists as war criminals. Because terrorists do not act by any rules of war, they turn themselves into war criminals. (Silke, 2004 : 7, 8) Consequently the UN postulates that if war crimes such as deliberate attacks on civilians, hostage taking or killing of prisoners, are extended to peacetime, acts of terrorism can be defined as “peacetime equivalents of war crimes”. (www.undoc.org)

In addition to the above overview of the concept of terrorism, the concepts of international and transnational terrorism, as well as their linkage with domestic terrorism, will be discussed in the next chapter.

3. Traditional Terrorism

While terrorism as political instrument has been present throughout history, the 1960's and 1970's presented two kinds of groups, namely those motivated principally by an anti-capitalist ideology and those motivated by ethno-separatism

as an outgrowth of national liberation struggles. Ideological terrorists seek to change the existing political, social and economic system. They claimed to be the “vanguard of a people’s revolution” and created their own rationality which interpreted reality in terms of a revolutionary ideology. (Wilkinson, 2000 : 27) Examples of groups representing ideological terrorism were the Red Army Faction (RAF) in Germany, the Red Brigades (BR) in Italy, Direct Action (AD) in France and the Weathermen in the US. (Gearson, 2002 : 15)

Nationalist groups seek political self-determination, are able to mobilise substantial support from the population and are more capable of sustaining a protracted campaign than ideological groups. (Wilkinson, 2000 : 19) These include Basque Fatherland and Liberty (ETA) in Spain, the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) and other groups connected with the Arab-Israeli dispute, the Irish Provisional Army (IRA) in the United Kingdom (UK) and the Quebec Liberation Front (FLQ) in Canada. (Gearson, 2002 : 16)

Traditional groups operated out of defined sanctuaries or safe-havens, their operational areas were mostly predictable and the threat they posed was limited in consequences and effect. (Hirschmann, 2000) In terms of choice of weapons, traditional terrorism relied on the use of the bomb and gun as the weapons of choice. Being ideologically motivated, these groups enjoyed state sponsorship from the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR) and other Eastern European countries who strived to promote Communism during the Cold War.

Except where traditional movements escalated into an insurgency or civil war, they maintained the principle of constrained violence. They operated on the basis of the minimum force necessary and calculated that indiscriminate violence would alienate supporters and undercut their claims to legitimacy among the broader public. (Simon & Benjamin, 2000 : 66) Regarding specific tactics, the following were used: bombings, assassinations, armed assaults, kidnappings, hijackings and hostage takings. (Jenkins, 1987) During the 1970’s the seizing of

embassies was a popular tactic but this has declined as a result of more effective counter measures by governments.

The organisational structure of traditional terrorism groups has been considered to be hierarchical, with a clear command and control apparatus and therefore forming a distinct organisational entity. (Mayntz, 2004 : 11) However, it also displayed features typical of decentralised or networked organisations which facilitated *ad hoc* cooperation with ideological counterparts, for example regarding training or the procurement of weapons. Although these groups expressed the common long term aim of global revolution, they remained distinctive organisational entities.

Traditional terrorism was mostly left-wing in inspiration and it was partly considered as a response to injustice. The end of the Cold War started a process of politically marginalising these left-wing groups by removing their ideological relevance. This left a vacuum for the rise of terror motivated by different beliefs.

4. New Terrorism

The profound changes in the international political environment during the 1980's led to new perceptions of warfare and the use of violence in sub-state conflicts. This included new interpretations of the motivation and aims of terrorism as a political strategy.

4.1 Development of New Terrorism

After the end of the Cold War, there was a rediscovery of asymmetrical conflict in US military thinking. This debate in turn gave rise to the concept of "super terrorism" and the phenomenon of the "rogue state" and it was suggested that developing states and non-state groups would select asymmetric means to

attack Western interests. Assessments were made on the likely use of weapons of mass destruction (WMD) by terrorist organisations supported by the weapons programmes of rogue states. Thinking behind the asymmetrical conflict debate during the 1990's had an important influence on the debate on a new terrorism and appeared to offer proof that the threat of asymmetrical warfare from sub-state groups was real. (Gearson, 2002 : 18, 20)

The starting point of the new terrorism is identified by the majority of authors to be the 1993 World Trade Center (WTC) attack and the attacks on the Tokyo subway and in Oklahoma City two years later. (Simon & Benjamin, 2000 : 59). These events were considered as harbingers of a new and more threatening kind of terrorism, capable of producing mass casualties. At the same time the emergence of a religious, mainly Muslim, motivation during the 1980's was mentioned as an element of the new terrorism.

Ideas around the possible use of non-conventional weapons by terrorist groups were explored by various authors, including Laqueur in "The New Terrorism, Fanaticism and the Arms of Mass Destruction", who identified a new fanaticism due to the religious motivation of Islamic and rightwing extremists. The emergence of the logic of "maximal terrorism" cautioned that, even if only one such attack succeeds, the perpetrators will have created the impression that they have won and this will seriously affect the public sense of security. (Simon & Benjamin, 2000: 73)

The Rand Corporation think tank in the US played an important role in shaping a paradigm for a new kind of terrorism and Rand analysts were responsible for driving much of the academic thinking around the concept, particularly its organisational structure. (Wright, 2006 : 285)

4.2 Characteristics of New Terrorism

In the absence of consensus on the concept of terrorism, the new terrorism has equally led researchers towards divergent conclusions on its nature and meaning. (Zimmermann : 25) While the use of the concept has become commonplace among certain terrorism specialists, others have contested the idea of a new kind or super-terrorism. This has been described as more dangerous than previous forms of terrorism, as incorrigible in its beliefs and actions and as demonstrating specific characteristics which differ from that of earlier forms of terrorism.

4.2.1 Religious Motivation

Although it is not a new phenomenon, a religious imperative is an important characteristic of the new terrorism. Religiously motivated terrorism may be anti-modernist or anti-Western as in Islam, or developed as an ultra-nationalist tendency as with Jewish and Hindu groups. The far right kind, mainly manifested in the US, combines racial supremacy with far right extremism.

Juergensmeyer identified three common characteristics of religious terrorism, namely that they perceive their objective as a defense of basic identity and dignity, that losing their struggle would be unthinkable and that the struggle is in stalemate and cannot be won in real time or in real terms. (Juergensmeyer, 2000: 161-162) In addition, religiously motivated terrorists lack an earthly constituency and only feel accountable to a deity or some transcendental or mystical idea. A religious motivation makes the new terrorist groups more than an organisation. It can rather be viewed as an ideology, a set of attitudes or a belief system which is organised to function as a recruiting network.

Some authors have argued that religiously motivated terrorism is inextricably linked to the pursuit of mass casualties because monotheistic faiths are

characterised by exclusive claims to valid identity and access to salvation. Religious terrorism has therefore been driven by an inner logic of faiths which have used political violence to further sacred causes. Religion also serves to define the causes and enemies of the violence itself. (Ranstorp, 1996 : 62) In contrast, secular terrorism may view indiscriminate violence as immoral and is more attuned to public opinion and the need to appeal to a specific audience.

4.2.2 Mass Casualty, Indiscriminate Attacks

A trend towards large-sale, indiscriminate violence started during the 1980's when huge car bombs were detonated amid a concentration of civilians. At the time Jenkins contributed this escalation to the following factors: (Jenkins, 1987)

- Experience made it easier for terrorists to kill.
- Terrorists needed to kill more people to obtain the same amount of publicity.
- Terrorists have become technically more proficient.
- Terrorist groups attracted more ruthless elements.
- Religious motivation leads to mass murder.
- State sponsorship has provided groups with resources and know-how to operate on a more lethal level.

Indiscriminate mass casualty attacks are also the result of a need to attain the same degree of media coverage previously generated by smaller attacks. (Hirschmann, 2000) The contemporary mass media frequently conveys images of terrorist activity, and spectacular attacks are therefore needed to capture broad public attention. Terrorists have also realised that soft targets involve less risk to themselves and there was a shift from the politically minded terrorist to a more vengeful, hardline fanatic. (Wilkinson, 1990 : 7-8) Furthermore, Gunaratna attributes the increased lethality of terrorism to the systematic and careful planning by groups who have become more knowledgeable and sophisticated, and who prefer to stage fewer but more efficient attacks. (Gunaratna, 2004 : 19)

4.2.3 Organisational Structure

In contrast with the hierarchical organisational structures of the 1960's and 1970's, terrorists are increasingly part of amorphous, indistinct broader movements which tend to operate on a linear basis. This has affected their operations, decision-making and targeting in allowing greater freedom and independence in tactical decisions, given the absence of an identifiable central command. (Hoffman, 2001 : 418) A less cohesive structure with diffuse membership allows for small dispersed groups who communicate, coordinate and conduct their operations through the use of modern communication media and by exploitation of the Internet. Clearly identifiable leaderships are being overtaken by loosely held together trans-national agreements between franchises and adherents are united by common experience and inspiration, rather than by personal interaction. (Crenshaw, 2000 : 411)

Analysts at the Rand Corporation, who developed theories on the organisational structure of the new terrorism groups, provided the concept of "nodes" which represent an intermediate level of leadership in flat hierarchies. The functions of these "nodes" are to serve as assembly points, to perform recruitment and to comprise the logistical managers. To serve these functions the "nodes" are forced to operate in a semi-public manner. (Wright, 2006 : 285) They furthermore proposed that a network form of organisation is a key consequence of the ongoing information revolution. The concepts of cyberwar and netwar are utilised to describe a globalised low intensity conflict where actors like terrorist organisations are not acting on behalf of states and utilise contemporary technologies for their operations. (Arquilla et al, 1999 : 39, 46)

4.2.4 Possibility of Use of Non-Conventional Weapons

The new terrorist groups are considered to actively pursue non-conventional weapons and the confirmation of possession of a WMD capacity by terrorist groups has been the constant priority of intelligence services. The new terrorist thesis holds that these groups, because of their worldview and aim of mass destruction, will have no restraint in crossing the threshold of using such weapons to perpetrate spectacular attacks. In contrast, some authors placed more emphasis on the technical and other disincentives for using these weapons. (Gurr & Cole, 2005) Although the technology to develop lower-grade WMD is theoretically within reach of a number of larger terrorist groups, terrorists have proven to be politically radical but operationally conservative, and have mostly adhered to weapons which have been successful in the past.

Regarding the application of less technical demanding chemical and biological weapons, Jenkins has pointed out that, although there were incidents where it has been used, this kind of warfare does not fit the pattern of most terrorist attacks which are intended to produce immediate dramatic effects. (Jenkins, 1987)

The debate during the 1990's about terrorism using chemical, nuclear, biological and radiological (CNBR) weapons has been different from those preceding it because of its persistence and its impact upon national security debates in many states. It was a debate led by US terrorism specialists who provided most of the alarmist rhetoric and worst-case scenario's. (Gurr & Cole, 2005 : 1) However, the debate was changed from theory to a real threat in March 1995 when the Aum Shinrikyo (Supreme Truth) religious cult attacked the Tokyo subway using sarin nerve gas, a chemical agent. The events also introduced the prospect of religious or millennium cults as terrorist actors, as opposed to movements that linked nationalism and religion, but the incident did not appear to have established a precedent. (Crenshaw, 2000 : 414)

4.2.5 Amateurs

The loose structure of contemporary terrorism movements allows for both professional, full-time terrorists and part-time amateurs. The “lone wolf” syndrome, where individuals act on their own under the influence of extremist ideologies, first developed in US far right movements. Operatives do not seek formal affiliation with a specific extremists group but act alone under the influence of radical ideologists. They keep in touch with extreme-right organisations through the Internet but their violent actions are perpetrated independently. (Whine, 2002) The perpetration of attacks by small groups of part-time terrorists developed as a result of the breakdown of traditional structures evolving into less hierarchical organisations. The conspiracy of only two persons that resulted in the Oklahoma attack in 1995 also brought to prominence the idea of “leaderless resistance”. The term, formulated by Luis Beam, lays down a strategy of violence perpetrated by autonomous leadership units. The doctrine may have inspired individuals to take action but it also allowed leaders of a movement to claim credit for the actions of individuals who adopted its propaganda. (Jenkins, 2001: 325)

4.2.6 Unclaimed Attacks

In traditional terrorism, attacks were usually preceded by the issue of a warning or followed by a *communiqué* explaining why a particular target was attacked. A characteristic of attacks during the debate on a new kind of terrorism, was an increase in the number of incidents which were neither announced nor claimed. Explanations for this phenomenon include :

- That publicity is no longer a main priority of the perpetrators and that their objectives have changed towards punishment itself. In the mind of the terrorists the act speaks for itself and the need to claim credit is not as important. (Gearson, 2002 :11)

- By maintaining their anonymity, terrorists may believe that they are able to capitalise further on the fear and alarm generated by their violent acts. (Hoffman, 2001 : 418)
- Religiously motivated terrorists are not overly concerned about winning popular support and thus do not need to justify their actions. (Crenshaw, 2000 : 411)
- The efficiency and global reach of the contemporary mass media is already covering the need for publicity of a specific attack, increasing the psychological effect when the perpetrators remain unknown.

The above characteristics indicate a shift in the application of terrorism. This shift was mainly the result of changes in the international system which created new opportunities for the use of terrorism as a technique of political violence.

5. Differences and Resemblances between Traditional and New Terrorism

The differences between traditional and new terrorism are not easily measurable or tangible, but rather represent a difference in perspective and in degree of complexity. Contrary to the traditional means-end construction of terrorism, the new organisations are considered as fanatic extremists who do not feel constrained by moral or humanitarian considerations. (Morgan, 2004) However, despite the characteristics identified as describing a new terrorism, a number of those associated with traditional terrorism have been resilient and found expression in the new terrorism. For example, the September 11 attackers did not use sophisticated weapons of mass destruction but utilised the traditional approach of careful planning, simple tactics and operational surprise. (Gearson, 2002 : 7) The resemblances between traditional and new terrorism thus represent the enduring characteristics of terrorism as a political strategy. To

clarify the subject further, the differences and resemblances are discussed in terms of the following aspects.

5.1 Motivation

Since the end of the Cold War, terrorism has been principally characterised by religious motivation, for example Muslim extremism, and by a new far right dimension or neo-facism. This is in contrast with traditional terrorism which was characterised by an ideological motivation, mainly anti-capitalist, and by separatist nationalistic movements. Although the new terrorism is predominantly religiously motivated, it still retains a political objective, as had traditional terrorism. However, this does not mean that traditional terrorism was void of religious motivation and various groups, for instance the IRA in Northern Ireland, Irgun in Israel, and EOKA (Ethniki Organosis Kypriakon Agosniston) in Cyprus, were linked to different religions. (Spencer, 2006 : 14) Religiously inspired terrorism has also existed throughout history and was at times the only acceptable justification for terrorism. (Rapoport, 1984) Furthermore, terrorism is usually motivated by an array of overlapping motivations.

5.2 Objectives

In traditional groups the ideology, aims and motivations were clear and comprehensible with a defined set of political, social and economic objectives. In contrast, the new religiously motivated groups are considered to have no discrete set of negotiable political demands and to present their goals as a reshaping of global political and military realities. The absence of a plausible political agenda relates to the absence of constraints on the application of violence. (Simon & Benjamin, 2001 : 6) Nevertheless, the long term objectives of the new terrorism groups are similar to that of the traditional groups in the sense that both seem unlikely to be attained. (Duyvesteyn, 2004 : 446) Traditional groups strived for revolutionary change while the political aim of a new terrorism group like Al-

Qaeda includes ridding Muslim countries of Western influence and to establish a caliphate stretching from North Africa to Southeast Asia.

5.3 Application of Violence

During the era of traditional terrorism, it was emphasized that terrorism is a communication strategy with political objectives and that terrorists are interested in publicity, not in killing a great number of people. (Jenkins, 1987) This view has changed with the era of the new terrorism where mass destruction has come to be considered as an important characteristic. This includes the use of advanced weaponry, for example surface-to-air missiles to target passenger airlines, and the possible use of non-conventional weapons.

The new terrorism is said to be more lethal, less discriminating in its target selection and more likely to target civilian populations. Consequently it has resulted in more casualties than the attacks perpetrated by traditional groups. New terrorism groups adhere to the principle of non-constrained violence while traditional groups usually acted with constraint in applying violence in order not to alienate current and potential supporters. They used selective attacks to discredit the targeted political authorities, to expose the impotence or brutality of law-enforcement agencies or to draw international attention to their cause. (Simon & Benjamin, 2000 : 66) However, the lethality of traditional terrorism also increased when they started to use large trucks bombs, ostensibly to ensure media attention. Increased lethality is therefore not an exclusive characteristic of new terrorism.

Regarding the question of mass casualty attacks and increased lethality of the new terrorism, Hoffman refers to the data of the Rand-St Andrews Chronology which is used as proof that terrorism became more lethal during the 1990's. At the same time he states that it is unclear "whether this development represents an enduring trend." (Hoffman, 1998 : 201) Other authors have also pointed out

that the assumptions regarding mass casualty and increased lethality remain problematic because of the small sample of attacks during the 1990's which made the data too limited to allow for significant conclusions. (Gearson, 2002 : 20)

5.4 Target Selection and Tactics

Traditional groups were numerically constrained and their operations represented discriminate acts against selective, symbolic targets. Their threat was limited in terms of consequences and effects, and terrorism was considered more as a public disturbance than a security threat. In contrast, new terrorism argues that its greater lethality is a result of indiscriminate targeting. However, the target selection of new groups has remained largely symbolic, for example the WTC in New York was selected as a symbol of capitalism and the Federal Building in Oklahoma City as a symbol of US federal power. (Duyvesteyn, 2004 : 448)

In terms of tactics, the new terrorism rather represents a change in tactics in pursuit of the same aims. Even the September 11 attacks, which caused mass casualties, used the methodology of traditional terrorism, coupled with a willingness to commit suicide. This indicates that, even during the era of new terrorism, terrorists have proven themselves to be operationally conservative, although at the same time able to innovate. (Gearson, 2002 : 23) Traditional tactical patterns of terrorist groups have also remained valid in that the attainment of surprise remains the immediate effect aimed at by both traditional and new terrorism. The non-claiming of attacks is also not new and adds to the uncertainty that attackers want to achieve, as well as to make retaliation more difficult. (Duyvesteyn, 2004 : 449)

5.5 Organisational Structure

The structure of new terrorist groups is described as being different from that of traditional groups which is more hierarchical. However, the Anarchist International active during the late nineteenth century also promoted violence perpetrated by loosely aligned unconnected cells of like-minded radicals. (Hoffman, 1998 : 19-20) Likewise, Wright observes that the nodal activity of new terrorism structures is not radically different from the type of cellular structure adopted by the Provisional IRA in the mid-1970's after the British succeeded in penetrating its traditional hierarchical structure. (Wright, 2006 : 285) The PLO and Hezbollah also operate as networks where little formal central control is being exercised. (Tucker, 2001 : 3-4)

5.6 Transnational Nature

The issue of the transnational character of new terrorism is not entirely new although it has been facilitated and highlighted by globalisation. Traditional groups maintained extensive international contacts with their sponsors and partner groups. For example, the Japanese Red Army never had a real base in Japan but carried out attacks in Israel, Singapore and the Netherlands. (Duyvesteyn, 2004 : 444) New groups like Al-Qaeda have not been completely free from national and territorial considerations in that it needed Afghanistan as an operational base. Al-Qaeda incorporates many different nationalities and represents a transnational effort to religious purification by connecting members in an "imagined community" through Islam. (Wiktorowitz, 2001 : 20). In summary it can therefore be stated that, while the transnational ideology of the new terrorism is more visible, it was not absent during the era of traditional terrorism in that revolutionary groups all adhered to a Marxist-inspired ideology aimed at changing society and fighting capitalism.

5.7 Sponsorship

During the period of traditional terrorism, groups were supported by the USSR and other East Bloc countries for ideological reasons. After the demise of communist regimes, state sponsorship of ideological groups has mostly disappeared and was replaced with the sponsorship by Islamic-orientated countries like Iran and Syria of religiously motivated groups like Hamas and Hezbollah. The US State Department also includes socialist-orientated states like Cuba and North Korea on its list of state sponsors of international terrorism. (US State Department, 2006) Cuba was included in the list in 1982 for assisting the Spanish group ETA and Colombian groups while North Korea was included in 1988 for selling weapons to terrorist groups. The difference is that contemporary terrorism groups like Al-Qaeda are largely self-financing, mainly through their involvement in criminal activities. In this respect previously ideologically motivated groups like the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC) and the National Liberation Army (ELN) in Colombia, have virtually become criminal cartels because of their involvement in narcotics trading.

6. Conclusion

Terrorism has shown new manifestations and new types of actors since the 1990's but does not demonstrate a clear distinction between old and new actors, tactics and weapons. The weapons that either the new or traditional terrorists use depends on the effect they want to achieve as part of an overall communication strategy. It was mainly the 1993 attack on the WTC, which included the attempted use of non-conventional means, and the Tokyo sarin gas attack which shaped perceptions about a new kind of terrorism threat. However, there were no subsequent attacks after these attempting to use non-conventional weapons with the aim of causing mass casualties. Although the events of September 2001 enforced the assumption of indiscriminate casualties, it did not involve the use of non-conventional weapons.

New terrorism demonstrates a tendency to exaggerate and distort the real threat of terrorism. This was mainly done by government-related institutions for budgetary purposes, rather than by terrorism specialists. They emphasised the low probability, high impact principle, namely that although the use of WMD is a low-probability event, its consequences will be so devastating that the threat should rather be taken too seriously.

Despite a focus on a new terrorism, much of contemporary terrorism is still of the familiar variety, with pragmatic and comprehensible aims. Innovation has rather been in the changing of targets as reaction to more effective preventative measures by governments by shifting attacks towards soft targets. Sufficient comparisons between traditional and contemporary forms of terrorism to determine what is new have not been made. For example, it is not clear whether the increase in fatalities is a conscious choice of terrorists or simply a by-product of more effective weaponry or techniques and a necessity to strike harder to achieve the same effect as previously. While authors appear to firmly defend the validity of a new terrorism paradigm, some simultaneously point out that traditional terrorism will continue. The differentiation between a traditional and new terrorism is therefore to some extent an artificial one, a matter of perspective and not one of the nature of terrorism as a phenomenon.

The perceived differentiation between traditional and new terrorism will be put into perspective by an overview of the historical development of terrorism as provided in the next chapter. Chapter 3 will also discuss the effects of the end of the Cold War and of the ensuing factors on the manifestation of international terrorism.

CHAPTER 3 : THE DEVELOPMENT OF INTERNATIONAL TERRORISM

1. Introduction

This chapter will firstly explore the concepts of international and transnational terrorism. It then provides a historical overview of terrorism as expression of political violence since its earlier manifestations until after the end of the Cold War. Terrorism has been a feature of political strife throughout history but has only become part of the dynamics of the international political system since the 1960's. While terrorism was previously mostly confined to domestic disputes and was often treated as a law enforcement problem, an increasing global interdependence since the 1970's has transformed it into an international security concern.

The issue of the effectiveness of terrorism as a strategy is discussed in terms of the successes it has obtained and instances are presented where it has had an important influence on international events. A more prominent role by non-state entities as international actors also facilitated the role of terrorism groups in asymmetrical conflicts, often in the form of insurgencies. The influence of the end of the Cold War on international terrorism is discussed in terms of the decrease of ideological motivation and the rise of new motivations to apply terrorism as a strategy. The relative availability of weaponry for potential use by terrorist groups is briefly discussed.

Factors which are affecting contemporary international terrorism are subsequently discussed. These include the advent of globalisation which had a profound effect in changing the international environment in which terrorist groups operate. A revolution in information dissemination, communication, the media, technology and the ease of travel, has facilitated cross-border and wider

international operations by terrorist groups. Finally, the influence of cultural differences and ideological aspects on contemporary international terrorism is discussed.

2. The Concepts of International and Transnational Terrorism

The failure to reach a universally accepted agreement on a definition of terrorism is also applicable to international terrorism. While academic definitions are often designed to fit incidents into statistical models, government definitions usually attempt to provide a politically convenient interpretation of terrorism incidents. (Badey, 1998 : 90) The most widely used definition of international terrorism is that of the US Government, namely : “The term international terrorism means terrorism involving citizens or the territory of more than one country”. (Patterns of Global Terrorism, 2003)

A distinction can be made between domestic and international terrorism where the former is confined within the borders of one country or a particular part of a country. (Wilkinson, 2000 : 19) However, contemporary groups are seldom operating only in one country or region and in practice most terrorism campaigns will cross international borders because terrorist groups seek political support, funding, weaponry or safe haven outside their own countries. (Wilkinson, 2000 : 19) It has therefore become difficult to find terrorist activity that is not internationally supported, has international repercussions, is fomented by the prevailing global circumstances or is addressed to the international community in some manner. (Kegley, 2003 : 9)

The classification of international terrorism into different forms assists in distinguishing it from domestic terrorism. In this respect the following categorization is suggested, namely : (Hough, 2004 : 5)

- As part of a broader domestic insurgency or manifesting largely as “pure” international terror ;

- Conducted by autonomous non-state actors ;
- State-sponsored terrorism conducted by people controlled by a sovereign state ;
- Conducted by a state using its own agents.

In addition to the distinction between domestic and international terrorism, the concept of transnational terrorism has developed as a third category, both as a new trend in terrorism and as a new perception. (Hough, 2005 : 8) Transnational terrorism has been described as referring to terrorists who “operate internationally with the express long term aim of global revolution or of establishing a revolutionary supranational world order.” (Wilkinson, 1977 : 174) Currently transnational terrorism is mainly based on decentralised local groups inspired by radical Islam and in this sense a domestic terrorism act could also be viewed as “transnational”. (Hough, 2005 : 8) While the terms international and transnational terrorism are often used interchangeably, international terrorism may also be associated with state sponsorship, while transnational terrorism is not. (Lia, 2005 : 11)

Terrorism is not an end in itself, but a means to political leverage or power and a way to hold political power. It has been expressed in different ways in different historic time periods but has never lost its essential character, namely the abuse of the innocent in the service of political power. The following section provides a short overview of the development of terrorism.

3. Historical Development of International Terrorism

The application of violence or threat of violence with the aim to bring about political change has been a feature throughout history and terrorism has appeared in various forms in different periods and societies. The political orientation of terrorist groups has also changed in different periods according to the prevailing historical, religious and cultural circumstances.

3.1 Early Manifestations of Terrorism

Historically the Sicarii and the Zealots, Jewish groups active during the Roman occupation of the Middle East in the first century, are considered to be the first terrorist movements. The Sicarii (dagger men) used short daggers to intimidate members of the Jewish community to support their intended rebellion. (Lutz, 2004 : 73) The Zealots generally targeted Romans and Greeks and their attacks occurred mostly on holy days to exploit the potential for publicity and to send a message to the Roman authorities. (Rapoport, 1984 : 670)

The Order of the Assassins was an eleventh century offshoot of the Ismailis, a Shiite Muslim sect. They were active between 1090 and 1275 in Persia, Syria and Palestine and also used the dagger as weapon. It is uncertain whether the Assassins also attacked Crusaders but their main target was Sunni Muslims who represented the ruling majority. According to Sinclair (Sinclair, 2004 : 28) the Assassins, despite religious differences, allied with the Knights Templars in attacking the Sunni rulers of Syria and other Arab states. Their main contribution to terrorism as a tactic was the strategy of disguise or deception. (Laqueur, 1999: 11)

A Hindu religious cult, the Thugs, was active in India from the seventh until the mid-nineteenth centuries. They used ritual strangling as technique and killed as many as one million people. Their intent was to terrify the victim, rather than to influence an external audience. Although the Thugs did not have a political purpose, their ability to deceive distinguished them from other Hindu criminal associations. (Rapoport, 1984 : 663) They were also the last example of purely religiously-inspired terrorism until the phenomenon re-emerged in the late twentieth century.

The Reign of Terror in France from 1792 to 1794 saw the emergence of organised state terror when the government sought out actual and suspected enemies and eliminated them. The revolutionary leaders were obsessed with the danger of treason and plots, especially from the nobility, and instilled terror in the population as a means of political control. (Lutz, 2004 : 195). The regime gave the English language the word “terrorism” and at the time it was considered to have a positive connotation.

3.2 Nineteenth and Early Twentieth Century

The age of modern terrorism began with the anarchists of the late nineteenth century who believed that the ruling class could be overthrown as a result of a spontaneous uprising by the masses. They used the term “propaganda by deed” as inspiration and believed that actions, including violent actions, could be used to mobilise the masses. The anarchists represented an international movement and frequently used the assassination of heads of state as tactic. (Lutz, 2004 : 118-119) They introduced the idea of a cell structure as mode of organisation and distributed operational manuals like the “Revolutionary Catechism” by Nechaev.

The best-known of the anarchist groups was the Russian revolutionary group Narodnaya Volya (The People’s Will) who carried out the assassination of Tsar Alexander II. (Laqueur, 1999 : 16) The movement emerged in 1879, aspired to a radical transformation of society and understood terrorism as a temporary necessity to raise the consciousness of the masses. Terror was employed with the aim of arousing latent political tension and to provoke the government to respond indiscriminately, thereby undermining its own credibility and legitimacy. The organisation did not achieve its objectives but their influence endured to generate a culture of terror for successors to implement and improve. (Rapoport, 2003 : 40)

3.3 Terrorism and Anti-Colonial Struggles

According to Rapoport (Rapoport, 2003 : 40-41) the “second wave” of international terrorism started during the 1920’s and crested in the 1960’s. This wave was stimulated by national self-determination and it receded largely as colonial powers disappeared. The era of colonial independence struggles was also when the strategy of terrorism proved more successful in comparison with other periods. It played a decisive role in persuading colonial powers like Great Britain and France to relinquish control over its colonial territories, for instance in Palestine in 1948 and Algeria in 1962. (Wilkinson, 2000 : 25) In Europe, terrorism during the 1920’s and 1930’s stemmed more from the right than from the left of the political spectrum. Rightwing groups were active in Germany, Italy, and in Eastern Europe. (Laqueur, 1999 : 21-22) Fascist parties used violence in their efforts to gain power and, after World War II, rightwing ideologies became a basis for dissident terrorism in Europe and North America. (Lutz, 2004 : 162)

The strategy of indigenous nationalistic groups to fight for independence led to the idea of the “freedom fighter” which has often been cited as the antithesis of the term “terrorist”. In developing countries these national liberation wars were considered as legitimate armed struggles and not as terrorist campaigns. However, the term “freedom fighter” has to do with ends while “terrorism” connotes the means of achieving this goal. (O’Neill, 2006 : 37) While the earlier anarchist and other terrorist groups took pride in calling themselves “terrorists”, during this period the term acquired a negative connotation and became a political liability to dissident groups. The Zionist revisionist group Lehi was the last organisation to describe the nature of its activity as “terrorism”. (Rapoport, 2003 : 41)

3.4 The 1960's until the End of the Cold War

After the appearance of various leftist dissident groups willing to use violence to achieve their goals during the 1960's and 1970's, a resurgence of terrorism activity took place. This upsurge was facilitated by a combination of historical factors, especially the US involvement in Vietnam and the 1967 Middle East War after which the PLO opted to rely on terrorism as an additional weapon in its struggle. (Lutz, 2005 : 99) There was also a shift in revolutionary thinking from rural to urban based terrorism and the emergence of small leftwing revolutionary groups in the industrialised world dedicated to counter the capitalist system through violent means. (Wilkinson, 2000 : 30) During this period symbols of Western, particularly US affluence, were the most popular targets for attacks. (Mickolus, 1980 : xix) This period, entailing the rise of ideologically and nationalistic motivated terrorism, can be ascribed to, firstly, the development of social movements aiming to achieve national self-determination or the revolutionary transformation of society, secondly, a belief that terrorism was an effective method to attain these goals, and lastly, the acquisition of resources to mount a terrorist campaign. (Wilkinson, 2000 : 30).

The international dimension of terrorism during the anarchist period was revived with the cooperation between revolutionary groups of different nationalities. The targets chosen reflected international dimensions and individuals of different nationalities cooperated during attacks. (Rapoport, 2003 : 42) Terrorism became an international security concern with frequent airline hijackings by Palestinian groups, a mobile form of the widely used barricade and hostage scenario. (Mickolus, 1980 : xxiv) The 1972 attack on Israeli participants at the Munich Olympic Games for the first time gave terrorism, and the Palestinian cause, worldwide media attention.

This period also saw the broadening of the motivational basis of international terrorism, from being principally politically motivated to obtain self determination,

towards a broader motivation including religious and economic factors. (Medd & Goldstein, 1997 : 282) It largely ended after the collapse of Communism and the end of the Cold War.

3.5 Post-Cold War Terrorism

After terrorism was mainly motivated by political motives like anarchism, nationalism and revolutionary Marxism for nearly a century, there was a resurgence of religious terrorism during the 1980's. In 1968 there were no international terrorist groups which could be defined as religiously orientated. In 1980 there were two and by 1995 these groups have increased to twenty-five. (Cronin, 2003 : 42) Although religious identity was present in earlier periods, it now took a different significance and aimed at establishing sovereign states based on religious tenets. (Rapoport, 2003 : 43) The phenomenon of religious cults using terrorist methods also appeared, for instance the Aum Shinrikyo cult in Japan.

The re-emergence of religiously inspired terrorism began after the Islamic revolution in Iran and spread beyond Islam to other religions. In India the Sikhs sought to establish a religious state in the Punjab, Jewish terrorists were active in Israel and in the US the Christian Identity movement, based on racial interpretations of the Bible, emerged. (Rapoport, 2003 : 43) The founding of Al-Qaeda, a Sunni-inspired Muslim movement, marked the rise of a transnational terrorist organisation capable of functioning at a global level.

This period is also characterised by the prevalence of suicide attacks, the opposition against globalisation by terrorist groups, and the increased involvement of terrorist groups with organized crime, especially drug trafficking. (Lutz, 2005 : 152-153) Analysts became concerned about the possible use of non-conventional weapons by terrorist groups and a perceived tendency towards indiscriminate mass casualty attacks. Together with the ostensibly greater

lethality of terrorism, culminating in the attacks of 11 September 2001, this was interpreted as characteristic of a new kind of terrorism - as discussed in Chapter 2.

The periods in the development of international terrorism as described above are overlapping and different types of terrorist groups have existed across the dates indicated as demarcating a specific period. In continuation, the following section will briefly discuss the successes obtained through terrorism, often as element of an insurgency, and the impact it has had on international relations.

4. The Effectiveness of Terrorism as Strategy

Although terrorism as a strategy has not been overly successful, its use will continue because the various causes of terrorism will not disappear or be resolved. This section provides an overview of examples where terrorism has succeeded in obtaining its strategic goals and briefly discusses the impact of terrorist movements on international relations.

4.1 Successes Obtained through Terrorism

While terrorism has remained popular throughout history, the only instances where sub-state organisations were able to obtain their long-term political goals through this strategy were during the anti-colonial struggles of the 1940's and 1950's. The three examples which are generally accepted by analysts in this respect are that of Cyprus, Algeria and Palestine. (Lutz, 2004 : 246) In Cyprus the urban terror campaign by EOKA was important in convincing the British to grant independence to its colony. In Algeria, the French were faced with a guerrilla insurgency and continued terrorist attacks. (Crenshaw, 2001) In Palestine, the British mandate was ended by the terrorist campaigns of Jewish organisations like Irgun Zvai Leumi (National Military Organisation) and Stern (Fighters for the Freedom of Israel).

Terrorism as a technique can be applied on its own or as part of a wider repertoire of armed struggle. (Wilkinson, 2000 : 1) The successes of terrorism as strategy mentioned above were obtained mainly because it was used as part of a wider military campaign, namely the insurgency type. Insurgency leaders recognised that terrorism alone would be an insufficient weapon to obtain their strategic goals and it was therefore mostly used in an auxiliary role. (Wilkinson, 2000 : 16)

While there are few cases of terrorism alone succeeding in attaining strategic aims, it often succeeds in obtaining short-term tactical objectives, for example in gaining worldwide publicity, extorting ransom payment, or obtaining the release of imprisoned companions. A protracted terrorism campaign can also endanger the security of weaker states and threaten the stability of their governments. In addition, in the cases of Sri Lanka and Colombia, terrorism has succeeded in making vast areas of state territory ungovernable. (Wilkinson, 1990 : 4-5)

4.2 The Impact of Terrorism on International Relations

Even if terrorists are illegal actors and their acts are condemned by most states, international terrorism has formed an integral part of international relations. The manifestations of terrorism are also influenced by the nature of the international system in a particular period and the domestic and foreign policies of specific states.

Terrorist organisations are transnational non-state actors in that they form linkages, operate together and have an independent impact on state policy. (Richardson, 1999 : 216) The destructive capability of contemporary terrorist networks has also empowered them and has elevated them to significant actors in the international political system. (Lia, 2005 : 2)

Although states can sponsor terrorist groups with the aim of using them as an instrument of foreign policy, the influence they have over the actions of the terrorist groups they sponsor has been exaggerated and they are rarely in a position to dictate to them. (Richardson, 1999 : 214) According to data of the US State Department on significant terrorist incidents between 1992 and 1996, only six out of 330 incidents involved proven control by state actors. Therefore the overwhelming majority of terrorism incidents are carried out by independent groups acting as non-state actors. (Badey, 1998 : 101-102)

During the era of leftwing revolutionary terrorism, charismatic personalities like Ilich Ramirez Sanchez, better known as Carlos, have also acted as international non-state actors. Currently the leader of Al-Qaeda, Osama bin Laden, plays a similar role as international non-state actor.

Terrorism is capable of having an impact on international relations beyond the purely tactical level. In the contemporary international system it constitutes one of the combatants in the pattern of various non-state conflicts involving irregular forces. (Hoffman, 1998 : 28) The most important example is that of the September 11 attacks by the Al-Qaeda organisation which has changed the manner in which the US, the sole superpower, views its national security and foreign policy objectives. Other examples include :

- The hostage-taking of the US Embassy in Iran by militant Iranian students on 4 November 1979. During the 444 days of the hostage crisis the US capacity to act on other issues in the Middle East was almost paralysed. (Carlton, 2005 : 109-118)
- The withdrawal of US forces, which formed part of a multi-national peacekeeping force, from Lebanon after the bombing on 23 October 1983 by Islamic militants which killed 241 US marines. (Carlton, 2005 : 142-143)

- The assassination of the Israeli Prime Minister, Yitzhak Rabin, which affected the outcome of the 1996 general election in Israel and therefore the course of the Middle East peace process. (Laqueur, 1999 : 47)

The potential success of terrorism as a strategy and the role of terrorist movements as non-state actors have also been influenced by the end of the Cold War. The following section will discuss this in terms of the relevant aspects.

5. The Effect of the End of the Cold War on International Terrorism

The end of the Cold War has had a major impact on the nature and rhetoric of international terrorism. The disappearance of Soviet influence on terrorist movements created a power vacuum which was filled by religiously motivated groups and ethnic movements striving for self determination. It also led to the availability of an array of weaponry and expertise which theoretically came within the reach of terrorist movements.

5.1 Diminishing of Ideological Motivation

Until 1991 the USSR and its allies were the leading state sponsors of terrorist groups active during the 1970's and 1980's. The disintegration of the USSR removed the sponsorship of Marxist-orientated groups and Communism as an ideology became discredited. Many leftwing revolutionaries lost their sense of mission and their belief in the inevitability of victory. The waning of revolutionary thinking also subverted the model of urban guerrilla warfare which served as inspiration to a generation of revolutionary terrorist groups. (Lia, 2005 : 161)

At the beginning of the 1990's there was an assumption that terrorism may diminish or cease. In contrast, the end of the Cold War created new domestic tensions and political strains which led to terrorist acts by ethnic groups and

rightwing radicals. (Harmon, 2000 : 3) In addition, a number of leftist groups in the Third World have managed to become financially self-sufficient, mainly through drug trafficking, and thereby continue their activities.

A re-assessment of the security risks facing the West at the time indicated that threats to international security were emanating from a greater number of smaller, amorphous sources, namely non-state actors involved in terrorism, organised crime and narcotics. Although these threats have existed previously, they were dominated by Cold War considerations. (Gurr & Cole, 2005 : 3) This partly explains the continuation of terrorism as tactic and strategy after the end of the Cold War.

5.2 The Rise of Ethnic and Religious Motivation

Ethnic and religious motivation of terrorism have thrived in the power vacuum that was created by the demise of Communism and which marked the end of traditionally left and right political ideologies.

Although terrorism movements seeking political power based on ethnic motivation occurred throughout the twentieth century, the removal of the bipolar conflict between the two superpowers provided a vacuum filled by new ethnic rivalries. This was most evident in the struggle between ethnic groups in the Balkans after the disintegration of Yugoslavia. Terrorism based on ethno-nationalist or separatist motivation also continued in other regions, for instance Chechnya, Kashmir, Sri Lanka, Spain, and in Turkey by Kurdish separatists. (Harmon, 2000 : 139-142)

Terrorism motivated by ethnic considerations usually has a clear political or territorial aim which may be negotiable although it may not always be justifiable. Contrary to groups which are mainly motivated by ideological or religious motives, their focus is on gains to be made within the traditional state-orientated

international system. (Cronin, 2003 : 40) The support these groups receive from their ethnic constituencies makes it possible to sustain their campaigns over lengthy periods.

In terms of religious motivation, the current threat from international terrorism emanates largely from Muslim extremism. Although it does have a religious motivation, the aims of the Muslim fundamentalist or *jihadi* movement are primarily political. It also forms part of a larger anti-modernist and anti-globalisation tendency, of tensions between rich and poor countries and between the elite and underprivileged within Muslim countries. (Cronin, 2003 : 35)

Islam revivalism began in the second half of the twentieth century as a non-violent movement to express discontent with the political, economic and social conditions in Arab states after independence. Within the Sunni branch, political Islam was overtaken by radical Islamists who propagated militancy and terrorist tactics and who became involved in various conflicts where a Muslim population resided. The most notable success of the movement was in seizing and briefly holding power in Sudan and Afghanistan. (Kepel, 2004: 362) The ideology underpinning radical Islam, as manifesting in the Al-Qaeda movement, is discussed in more detail in Chapter 5.

Amongst the Shiite branch of Islam the 1979 Iranian Revolution led to a revival in the use of terrorism which created a challenge to US influence in the Middle East and brought Islam fundamentalism into the mainstream of the Western security debate. The subsequent sponsoring of terrorism by Iran during the 1980's and 1990's served as confirmation that Iran would attempt to export its revolution to the region and thereby threaten Western interests. (Harmon, 2000 : 117-121)

5.3 Availability of Weaponry

The dismantling of military structures in the USSR and other Warsaw Pact countries led to the availability of an array of weaponry on the international black market. (Wilkinson, 2000 : 37) Retrenched members of military and nuclear establishments of these states may have cooperated with crime syndicates in arms trafficking. Terrorism experts who place emphasis on the desire of the new kind of terrorist groups to perpetrate spectacular mass casualty attacks, argue that they could seek to obtain these weapons on the black market.

The end of the Cold War influenced the course of international terrorism and acted as catalyst in its further development. The next section will focus on specific factors which are affecting contemporary international terrorism.

6. Factors affecting Contemporary International Terrorism

Contemporary international terrorism is influenced by aspects such as globalisation, technological developments and cultural factors of which globalisation may be considered as the most important. The unprecedented threat posed by non-state actors is a reaction to globalisation but, at the same time, is also facilitated by it.

6.1 Globalisation

Globalisation has removed the traditional barriers of distance and geography; (Lia, 2005 : 1) includes the breaking up of traditional hierarchies; and represents the imposition of foreign ideals. It has enabled terrorist groups to take advantage of the ease of movement, of global communication networks and of the electronic transfer of funds. This has allowed them to open new channels and to operate simultaneously in various countries, almost in the same way as international commerce and business ventures. (Cronin, 2003 : 48)

In Muslim states, globalisation has led to an erosion of traditional values, political and economic upheaval and the accentuation of inequality. Together with a perceived threat of Western influence, this has led to a belief among Muslims that their own religious identity must be protected, which in turn has served as impetus to radical ideas and fertile recruitment ground for movements willing to use terrorist strategies. Furthermore, globalisation gave rise to new radicals who are not linked to a specific state but who belong to religious and other transnational networks. Contemporary terrorist organisations are therefore a product of globalisation and they are using its instruments to pursue their objectives. The disruptive effects of globalisation are facilitating world-wide networks which increase the possibility that transnational terrorism may emanate from distant conflicts. (Lia, 2005 : 17)

6.2 Technological Developments

The effectiveness of terrorist techniques has been constrained by the technology and weaponry available during a particular period. Since the 1980's terrorism has been influenced by new technological developments, including in the fields of mass communication, weaponry and civil aviation.

6.2.1 Role of the Media and the Internet

The mass media has always been of particular importance to terrorist organisations because of the importance of publicity and the need to attract attention to their cause. In this respect the advent of satellite television has equipped terrorists with an instrument which provides instant global coverage, thereby enabling them to magnify the element of fear and to promote awareness of their aims and demands. (Wilkinson, 2000 : 29)

The Internet has provided transnational terrorist organisations with a powerful tool by linking like-minded groups and making it easier to set up support structures among migrant communities around the world. Most terrorist groups maintain websites for propaganda purposes. These websites disseminate their ideology, charters and activities and serve to raise funds or recruit new members. E-mail correspondence is used to transmit specific instructions like directions, photographs or technical detail, to procure weapons, or for training purposes. (Wade, 2004 : 133)

6.2.2 Weapons Technology

Advances made in the weapons industry led to the development of weaponry more suitable to the specific needs of terrorist groups. For example, after the invention of dynamite provided radical groups with the means to use bombs more effectively, bombing has remained a preferred technique of terrorist groups. Afterwards the development of plastic explosives like Semtex became an effective tool of various groups. (Wilkinson, 2000 : 29) Modern electronics led to the use of remote controlled detonation and other devices benefiting dissident groups and which provided them with the potential for launching increasingly lethal attacks. (Lutz, 2005 : 18)

6.2.3 Growth of Civil Aviation

The importance of civil aviation to terrorism was amply illustrated by the effective use of airline hijackings by Palestinian groups during the 1970's and which contributed to make it the first truly international terrorist organisation. (Hoffman, 1998 : 84) Since then, globalisation has led to an increase in the volume of civil aviation which facilitated the ease of international travel. At the same time this has created numerous targets for terrorists to exploit (Wilkinson, 2000 : 29) and by the late 1990's civilian aircraft has emerged as part of terrorist armoury. Various incidents demonstrated the separate use of the elements which were

eventually used in combination in the September 11 attacks against the US when civilian aircraft were utilised as bombs. (Carlton, 2005 : 236) The success of these attacks followed after the failure of Project Bojinka which was planned by Muslim radicals in 1995 in the Philippines and which aimed to destroy eleven US passenger aircraft by using small nitro-glycerine bombs. (Reeve, 1999 : 71-93)

6.3 Cultural and Ideological Factors

Because the global integration process will continue, the potential for terrorism and other forms of violence in the international system will remain. The era of dominant leftist and rightist ideologies has been overtaken by new transnational movements that defy traditional ideological categorisation. In this respect scholars like Huntington proposed that violence in the contemporary international system can be explained in terms of a “clash of civilisations”, while Kaplan predicted a return to tribalism, disorder and anarchy. (Lia, 2005 : 160)

Huntington’s ideas are especially noteworthy in terms of religiously-motivated terrorism because the major world religions are contributing to culturally define the dominant world civilisations. For example, the Al-Qaeda movement views and promotes the struggle between Islam and the West in terms of a clash of civilisations, and militant Islam rhetoric proclaims that the value of Islam is higher than that of the Western world. (Lutz, 2004 : 73) Radical Islamic movements thus aim to exploit the historical and cultural differences between the West and the Muslim world. To achieve this aim they are exploiting the widespread hostility towards the US and its allies because of their political intervention and military actions in Muslim countries.

7. Conclusion

Although terrorism has only become an international security concern since the 1960’s, the development of the phenomenon should be considered from its

origins. While it has appeared throughout history it has not remained static. It has evolved in its application as a tactic and as a strategy while at the same time retaining some of its typical characteristics. It has also endured because its practitioners have been able to adapt to changing circumstances by identifying new targets or exploiting new vulnerabilities in existing targets.

The groups and individuals participating in terrorism are responding to the particular political and socio-economic circumstances prevailing in the international system. In a historic sense, the broader political aims of terrorist groups were aimed firstly at empires, then at colonial powers and, currently, against the US-led international system characterised by modernisation and globalisation. Much of international terrorism stems from different perceptions of history and conflicting claims on territory. This is also being compounded by cultural factors which lead to mistrust and competition and which were accentuated and brought to the foreground by the advent of globalisation.

International terrorism groups have rarely been successful in obtaining their strategic goals but have often succeeded in gaining short term tactical objectives. On a secondary level, it has influenced the conduct of foreign affairs by governments and the decisions made by multinational corporations. Despite the scant success obtained by terrorism campaigns in the past, it remains a popular strategy with groups striving to obtain specific political objectives. Terrorists may believe that it is a justified strategy, that they may be able to repeat the success of other groups, or that the immediate rewards like widespread publicity are sufficient, even if their ultimate aims may not be reached.

The changing international environment has led to the emergence of new transnational international terrorist groups with somewhat different ways of planning and action than earlier, traditional groups. By making use of the opportunities created by globalisation, terrorist movements have been able to access powerful technology, to exploit new resources, to recruit more easily and

to attack remote targets. A changing international environment has also created new controversial issues within or between states and religio-cultural groupings which in turn led to new motives for extremist behaviour.

In the next chapter the emergence of the Al-Qaeda movement as a transnational terrorist organisation will be discussed. This will demonstrate how globalisation and international terrorism have become interlinking forces which are characteristic of contemporary international security.

CHAPTER 4 : THE EMERGENCE OF AL-QAEDA

1. Introduction

The Al-Qaeda organisation became synonymous with international terrorism after it was identified as being responsible for the 9/11 attacks on the US in September 2001. This chapter firstly looks at the origins of Al-Qaeda and how it has evolved since the war in Afghanistan. The role of its leader, Osama bin Laden, is briefly mentioned and the political aims of Al-Qaeda are discussed.

Secondly, the chapter explores the terrorist attack on the US cities of New York and Washington, which took place on 11 September 2001 (the 9/11 attacks), and which catapulted Al-Qaeda into the international spotlight as an organisation with the ability to attack the only remaining superpower on home soil. The significance of the attacks is discussed, followed by an interpretation thereof from the perspective of Al-Qaeda and from a Western perspective. The international security consequences and geopolitical implications of the September 11 attacks are briefly explored.

Subsequently, the chapter provides a short analysis of other important terrorist attacks linked to Al-Qaeda, starting with the August 1998 bombings of US Embassies in East Africa. This attack is directly attributed to Al-Qaeda and took place before the destruction of its infrastructure during the military operation against it and its Taliban protectors by the US at the end of 2001. Other terrorist attacks which are linked to Al-Qaeda are discussed, namely in Bali, Indonesia, in October 2002, the Madrid train bombings of March 2004, and the London attacks of July 2005. The extent of involvement of Al-Qaeda in these attacks may vary from operation support or direction by individual Al-Qaeda operatives, to no tangible support but simply being inspired by the Al-Qaeda ideology to act

against Western targets. The chapter will conclude with a brief comment on the above-mentioned issues.

2. The Founding and Aims of Al-Qaeda

Al-Qaeda was founded as a result of the confluence of various factors, including Islamic revivalism and the proliferation of radical Muslim movements, the war in Afghanistan, the end of the Cold War, and the activities of specific individuals.

2.1 The Founding of Al-Qaeda

The origins of Al-Qaeda are to be found in the armed struggle in Afghanistan from 1979 to 1989 after the invasion by Soviet forces to support local communists. The Iranian revolution, the assassination of President Sadat in Egypt and a wave of terrorist attacks against Western targets in the Middle East, encouraged Saudi Arabia and Pakistan to devise a scheme for Muslim volunteers to fight in Afghanistan. Their aim was to divert Sunni radicals to fight against Communism and to undermine Iranian prestige in the Muslim world. (Roy, 2004 : 291) Muslim volunteers from various countries went to Afghanistan to fight on the side of the Afghan holy warriors or *mujahideen* against the “infidel” invaders. After the withdrawal of the USSR, nothing was done to disband or to monitor the militants who remained in Afghanistan, while others returned to their countries of origin to wage a holy struggle or *jihad* against secular regimes. While the military contribution of the Muslim volunteers in the fighting remains debatable, they believed that the USSR disintegrated as a consequence of the Afghan *jihad*. This contributed to encourage them to change their focus towards the US, sole remaining superpower. (Roy, 2004 : 292)

Osama bin Laden, a wealthy Saudi citizen, took part in the fighting in Afghanistan and used his personal wealth to establish training camps and an extensive social and logistical infrastructure for the *mujahideen*. In 1984 a “services office” or

Makhtab al-Khidamat (MAK) was established in Peshawar, Pakistan, by Abdallah Azzam, a Palestinian activist who believed that *jihad* must be waged for the sake of the entire *ummah* or Muslim community. The MAK had offices in the Arab world, Europe and the US. (Katzman, 2005 : 2) It facilitated the recruitment and movement of Muslim volunteers to Afghanistan and administrated the flow of funds from the Middle East. (Burke, 2004 : 73) Azzam acted as ideological mentor to bin Laden, who supported the activities of the MAK financially. (Gerges, 2005 : 134)

By 1988 the MAK had increasingly taken a role in non-military activities while bin Laden wanted to use his financial wealth for military purposes. In September 1988 he founded Al-Qaeda (The Base), a paramilitary organisation which would eventually grow into a disciplined and secretive global organisation. (Bergen, 2006 : 74-76) During the Afghan war bin Laden consciously worked to establish an independent paramilitary force which could be used after the war in other conflicts where Muslims are involved to advance his own ideological agenda. (Gerges, 2005 : 308)

In 1990 bin Laden returned to Saudi Arabia and, after the invasion of Kuwait by Iraq, he lobbied the Saudi authorities to raise a Muslim military force to fight Iraq. His offer was turned down and the arrival of US troops in Saudi Arabia was an enormous shock to him. In 1992 he went to Sudan where an Islamist regime took over power and where many veterans of the Afghan war, who faced arrest in their own countries, lived. (Burke, 2004 : 143) In Sudan he built a business empire which served as cover for Al-Qaeda training camps. After pressure by the US and Egypt, and ideological differences with the Sudanese Islamists, bin Laden returned to Afghanistan in May 1996. (Bergen, 2001 : 88, 99; and Burke, 2004 : 156) On 23 August 1996 he issued "The Declaration of Jihad on the Americans Occupying the Country of the Two Sacred Places", which was a call to take up arms against the continued military presence of the US in the Saudi Peninsula. (Bergen, 2001 : 102) On 22 February 1998 he announced the

formation of the “World Islamic Front for Jihad against the Jews and Crusaders”, an umbrella organisation of militant Muslim groups. (Burke, 2004 : 175-176) This declaration called for the killing of Americans, including civilians, and was novel for its open endorsement of indiscriminate killing. (The 9/11 Commission Report, 2004 : 48)

After the 9/11 attacks and the launching of Operation Enduring Freedom by the US in October 2001, Al-Qaeda lost its training camps in Afghanistan. This, together with intense networking with associated groups, has forced Al-Qaeda to transform from a group to a movement. (Gunaratna, 2004 : 93) Since then Al-Qaeda has mostly invested in an ideological and inspirational role, leaving its affiliated groups to carry out terrorist attacks.

2.2 Aims of Al-Qaeda

The objective of Al-Qaeda is to unite all Muslims and establish a government which follows the rule of the caliphs. (Alexander & Swetnam, 2001 : 2) To this end, state boundaries between Muslim states will be erased and eventually be replaced with a pan-Islamic caliphate throughout the world. (US Department of State, Country Reports on Terrorism, 2005 : 217) Other aims are to eliminate US and Western presence from Muslim countries; to eradicate non-Islamic rule and apply Islamic teachings to all aspects of life; to achieve true Islamic justice; and to reform the political system and purify it from corruption. This includes the “liberation” of the three holiest places of Islam, namely Mecca and Medina in Saudi Arabia and Jerusalem in Israel.

To achieve its aim of establishing a Muslim caliphate, Al-Qaeda strives to remove the governments of Muslim countries which it perceives to be heretic and corrupted by Western influence. However, the campaigns by radical organisations against the governments of Muslim countries, particularly in Egypt, were unsuccessful. For this reason bin Laden focused Al-Qaeda’s struggle

towards firstly attacking the US, the so-called far enemy. In his 23 August 1996 declaration of *jihad*, which was issued in the form of a juridical edict, bin Laden argued that the “greater enemy” must be overcome before the “lesser enemy”. (Lawrence, 2005 : 23) This change in focus was a dual purpose strategy. Firstly, it aimed to overcome past and existing divisions between radical Muslim groups and, secondly, it aimed to incorporate militant individuals and groups by exploiting the widespread resentment about Western supremacy in the Islamic world. (Burke, 2004 : 165) In addition, it can be viewed as an attempt to reinvigorate a declining *jihadi* movement after the defeat of these organisations by Muslim regimes. (Gerges, 2005 : 273)

In the short term, Al-Qaeda’s most important goal is to seize control of a state or part of a state in the Muslim world from which attacks against the West could be launched. Its deputy leader, Ayman al-Zawahiri, defines this goal as the establishment of a fundamentalist base in the heart of the Arab world. (Gerges, 2005 : 299) In the medium term, Al-Qaeda has worked out a strategy to establish an Islamic caliphate through seven phases, to be completed by 2020. This strategy is however based on religious ideas and does not take into account international political realities. (Musharbash, 2005)

In his statements, which are mostly constructed as arguments with real or imagined opponents and interlocutors (Lawrence, 2005 : xvi), bin Laden is vague about the specific aims of Al-Qaeda. This indicates that transnational *jihadis* are giving a higher priority to ridding the Muslim world of foreign forces than to the actual establishment of a caliphate. (Gerges, 2005 : 298) He does however explain why Al-Qaeda is fighting the US, namely, “because you attacked us and continue to attack us”, and he stresses the need for Muslims to unite. (Hamud, 2005 : 94, 122). According to bin Laden, Al-Qaeda also wants to entice the US into a large-scale struggle with the entire Islamic world which it eventually would not be able to control. (Bergen, 2006 : 193)

In summary, Al-Qaeda opposes all nations and institutions which are not governed in a manner consistent with its particular extremist interpretation of Islam. (Alexander & Swetnam, 2001 : 2) It also strives to pit the worldwide Muslim community against the US, the leader of the West, thereby causing a clash of religion and culture which would garner Muslim support. (Gerges, 2005 : 157) Its specific antipathy towards the US was demonstrated in the terrorist attacks that were launched on 11 September 2001 and which will be discussed in the next section.

3. An Evaluation of the 9/11 Attacks on the US

The terrorist attacks by Al-Qaeda on 11 September 2001 on the World Trade Center (WTC) in New York and the Pentagon in Washington were significant events with implications for the way in which international terrorism is perceived and for subsequent international developments. It was also a demonstration of how radical networks secured by globalisation could be used to attack symbols of Western economic and military supremacy.

3.1 The Significance of the 9/11 Attacks

The 9/1 attacks were characterised by their ambitious scope and impressive coordination, the dedication of the suicide terrorists and an unparalleled lethality. It demonstrated that ordinary means of transportation can be turned into lethal weapons in the hands of determined terrorists. It also represented the first true mass casualty terrorist attack by a non-state actor since the end of the Cold War. The impact of the attacks was compounded because until then the US was primarily concerned with terrorism as it affected its interests abroad and did not view itself as threatened within its own borders. In hindsight, it seems that terrorism experts underestimated the potential threat from radical Islam and were unable to foresee the possibility of an attack on the scale of 9/11 on US territory. Only Simon & Benjamin predicted that terrorists could attack the US homeland

and Stern warned about the export of Islamic *ihadis* to Western countries aimed at recruiting and planning terrorist attacks. (Czwaro, 2006: 672-673)

3.2 Interpretation of the 9/11 Attacks

In addition to the overall significance of the attacks, 9/11 can also be evaluated according to different perspectives, namely from the perspective of Al-Qaeda itself and from that of the Western world.

3.2.1 From an Al-Qaeda Perspective

From a Western perspective the 9/11 attacks were interpreted as an act of war intended to further some kind of political objective. However, the targets were not selected by Al-Qaeda through military calculation, but because they were symbols of US economic and military power which would be recognised by Muslim populations. The purpose of the attacks was not primarily to instill fear in the American population but rather to prove to Muslims that it is able to take its struggle to US territory and succeed. (Harris, 2002) It was also not aimed at obtaining political power but to garner Muslim support for Al-Qaeda's cause.

For some time after the 9/11 attacks, bin Laden denied any involvement of Al-Qaeda, probably with the aim of preventing a US military attack on his host country Afghanistan. (Hamud, 2005 : xlviii) However, in a videotape found by the US military in November 2001, bin Laden is recorded as discussing the details and execution of the operation with some associates. (Hamud, 2005 : 74-83). Only in October 2004, in an address to Americans before the US presidential election, did he publicly admitted Al-Qaeda's responsibility for the attacks. (Bergen, 2006 : 377-378)

Until 9/11 Al-Qaeda limited its attacks to US government and military targets. A religious ruling by the imprisoned Egyptian cleric, Sheik Rahman, that it was

legally permissible to attack American civilians, was used to justify the 9/11 attacks. (Bergen, 2006 : 208) The final collapse of the WTC towers, which was not originally planned, would also be considered by Al-Qaeda as an act of divine intervention. (Harris, 2002) However, bin Laden and Zawahiri miscalculated in that they expected that attacking the US would mobilise the *ummah* against pro-Western Muslim regimes and the US. They also believed that, after US retaliation, the response of Muslims would be similar to that after the USSR invaded Afghanistan when thousands of *jihadis* and volunteers came to the aid of the Afghan *mujahideen*. (Gerges, 2005 : 187-188)

Although 9/11 demonstrated that Al-Qaeda was able to attack the US homeland, it turned out to be a disaster for the organisation because it had the unintended effect of destroying its extensive infrastructure in Afghanistan. (Bergen, 2006 : xxxiii) For this reason the attacks were criticised by some members of Al-Qaeda who concluded that it has in fact damaged their cause. It also did not lead to a ground invasion by US forces which would allow for a classic guerrilla struggle and which was what bin Laden hoped for. Instead, the US military campaign resulted in the destruction of the Al-Qaeda infrastructure. (Bergen, 2006 : 311)

3.2.2 From a Western Perspective

The 9/11 attacks were different from the previous surprise attack on the US, that of Pearl Harbor in 1941. The fact that these attacks did not come from a nation state but from a group of transnational terrorists, made it seem “in some ways more devastating”. (The 9/11 Commission Report, 2004 : 339) By attacking a powerful state, it demonstrated the feasibility of asymmetrical warfare in a new kind of global insurgency. The attacks were unorthodox and demonstrated the ability to wage war in a different way. It used the tools of globalisation and was able to easily overcome US defences which were prepared for traditional methods of attack, either by a nation state or by a traditional style terrorism bombing. (Finlan, 2006 : 150) While the attacks seemed to lack a specific

strategic goal, the emphasis was rather on its symbolic significance and the ability to cause mass casualties. Furthermore, although the attacks were insignificant in a military sense, they were of great political consequence.

The 9/11 attacks have also changed the way in which the terrorism threat was perceived. It has proven that terrorism can have a strategic impact and that an individual, in this case bin Laden, could cause changes in the foreign policy of a superpower. It further forced a re-evaluation of the profile of a suicide terrorist because most of the hijackers were well educated and from middle class backgrounds. (Mockaitis, 2003 : 34) This was as a result of the internationalisation of Islamic militants. The new generation of Al-Qaeda operatives had weak relations with their countries of origin, they only became religious after living in the West, they studied in Western countries and some were Western citizens. (Roy, 2004 : 304-312)

3.3 International Security Consequences of the 9/11 Attacks

The immediate security consequences of 9/11 included enhanced aviation security, the increased sharing of intelligence, improved border control and visa/immigration systems, and the adoption or ratification of various UN conventions on terrorism. The attacks made the countering of international terrorism the main security priority of the US and demonstrated that the US, as the only remaining superpower, was willing to act unilaterally without regard for existing international norms or conventions. Furthermore, it has initiated change in global society in that norms like containment, sovereignty or *status quo* have been discarded and replaced by terms characteristic of power politics like “regime change” or “axis of evil”. (Finlan, 2006 : 159)

The security consequences of the attacks were also reflected in the adoption of various resolutions by the UN Security Council (UNSC), ranging from condemning the attacks (Resolution 1368 - 2001) to the freezing of financial

assets of entities associated with Al-Qaeda (Resolution 1390 - 2002). The most important was Resolution 1373 - 2001, which imposed measures to ensure that any person who participates in terrorist attacks, be brought to justice. The Resolution furthermore demands the participation of all UN member states in countering terrorism and the failure to do so would be considered as a threat to international peace and security. (UN, 2001, Resolution 1373)

After the attacks the US-led so-called Global War on Terror (GWOT) led to the killing or arrest of most of the Al-Qaeda senior leadership and more than three thousand Al-Qaeda members. (US Department of State, Patterns of Global Terrorism, 2003) The GWOT also provided the US with the opportunity to reassert its power internationally and to invoke the principle of pre-emption as part of its national security strategy. (Leffler, 2003: 1052) The Bush Administration namely considers the GWOT as similar to the Cold War in endangering its national values. It is however void of the balance of power element which assumes a system of competing nation-states because the threat is emanating from a sub-state actor. (Leffler, 2003 : 1059)

In other states, 9/11 was used by governments to adopt measures against often legitimate existing and emergent nationalist groups in order to counter their actions or to destroy them. This was evident in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, Kashmir, Chechnya, the Philippines, Turkey, China and Colombia. A government only needed to label a particular group as terrorists to obtain international support to suppress it, even while violating the rights of its own citizens. (Brunn, 2004 : 12)

Although 9/11 has not caused structural changes in the international system, it served to reflect changes which have been taking place for some time in the international system. These changes are challenging existing European state centric theories and the model of international politics derived from this tradition. The 9/11 attacks by a non-state actor suggested that individual and collective

identities and affiliations need to be built into existing concepts and theories of political authority and international politics. (Mansbach, 2004 : 16-17) This links with the phenomenon of globalisation, the decline in the power of the territorial nation state and the emergence of new global actors, including terrorist groups.

While the September 11 attacks have catapulted Al-Qaeda into an important actor in the international security architecture, the movement has been linked to various other attacks of which the most important are subsequently discussed.

4. An Analysis of other Attacks related to Al-Qaeda

Al-Qaeda has been linked to several other terrorist incidents before the 9/11 attacks. These include the 26 February 1993 attack on the WTC in New York, the 25 June 1996 bombing of the Khobar Towers in Saudi Arabia and the attack on the USS Cole warship in Yemen on 12 October 2000. This section briefly analyses four subsequent terrorist attacks linked to the Al-Qaeda movement.

4.1 The East African Embassy Attacks, August 1998

The East African embassy bombings were the first major successful attack by Al-Qaeda and served as an early indication that it was able to operate across continental boundaries.

On 7 August 1998 large truck bombs were detonated within nine minutes of each other at the US Embassies in Nairobi, Kenya and Dar es Salaam, Tanzania. 212 people, including 12 American citizens, were killed and more than five thousand were injured. Claims of responsibility for the attacks were faxed from the joint Al-Qaeda-Egyptian Islamic Jihad office in Baku to the London office of the publication *Al Quds al Arabi*. (The 9/11 Commission Report, 2004 : 70) The suspects included Egyptians, a Comoran, a Palestinian, a Saudi and US citizens and their trial took place in New York in 2001. The US retaliated by launching

cruise missile attacks against Al-Qaeda bases in eastern Afghanistan, which in reality had the counterproductive effect of increasing the profile of bin Laden in the Muslim world. (Bergen, 2006 : 219)

The attacks took place on 7 August, exactly eight years after the arrival of US troops in Saudi Arabia, a particular grievance of bin Laden. (Alexander & Swetnam, 2001 : 33) The planning for the attacks started in late 1993 while bin Laden resided in neighbouring Sudan and he requested an Al-Qaeda operative to do surveillance of the US Embassy in Nairobi. The Nairobi embassy was selected because it was considered to be an easy target in that a car bomb could be parked nearby. (The 9/11 Commission Report, 2004 : 68) The purpose of the attacks included to retaliate against the US for its involvement in Somalia. (Bergen, 2006 : 143) The selection by Al-Qaeda of East Africa as area of attack followed after the spread of radical Islamic ideas from the Gulf and Egypt towards the region where more than 30 percent of the population are Muslims.

The report of the US Government on the attacks determined that there was no credible intelligence providing a warning of the bombings and that security procedures were implemented properly. However, it found that there was an institutional failure by the Department of State and its embassies to recognize threats posed by international terrorism. (US Department of State, 1998) The significance of the attacks was to signal to its enemies that Al-Qaeda was capable of launching sophisticated operations far from its base in Afghanistan. (Bergen, 2006 : 219) Except for the 9/11 attacks, it was the last major attack which was planned and executed by Al-Qaeda operatives under the direct instructions of its central leadership. It also had the unintended consequence of turning bin Laden from a marginal figure in the Muslim world into a celebrity. (Bergen, 2001 : 137) He became a symbol to Muslims as a courageous figure who stood up to the US, a world power who was intent on humiliating Muslims and their faith.

4.2 The Bali Nightclub Bombings, October 2002

The Bali attack was the most serious terrorism incident since 9/11. It was also significant in initiating a trend whereby local radicals act operationally autonomously but are inspired by the Al-Qaeda ideology.

On 12 October 2002 three bombs exploded at two nightclubs in Kuta Beach, Bali, killing 202 people, mostly Australian tourists. An international team of specialists from Indonesia, Australia, the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI), Scotland Yard, Germany and Japan, identified twelve persons involved in the attacks and most were arrested. Although the Indonesian authorities stated that there was no proven link with Al-Qaeda in the attacks, a part of the expenses of the operation was directly provided by the movement. (Wise, 2005 : 9, 11) On 1 October 2005 Bali was attacked again, this time by three suicide bombers targeting restaurants, killing 22 and injured more than 100 people. (Bonner, 2005)

Symbolically, the date chosen for the attack coincided with the anniversary of the USS Cole attack on 12 October 2000. (Gunaratna, 2002 : xix) Given the size and sophistication of the attack, it was immediately linked to Al-Qaeda, through operatives of the Southeast Asian regional radical group Jemaah Islamiah (JI). The JI has around 200 active members and aims to establish an Islamic state that integrates Malaysia, Singapore, Indonesia and the Philippines. According to a senior Al-Qaeda operative in Indonesia, the leader of the JI, Abubaker Ba'asyir, has ordered his followers to cooperate with Al-Qaeda. (Ratnesar, 2002: 33) Bali, a predominantly Hindu island, is a popular destination of Western tourists. According to the planner of the attacks, he wanted to strike soft targets where Westerners gather, partly because of his frustration over failed attempts to bomb the US Embassy in Singapore, and because of the US invasion of Afghanistan. (Murphy, 2003)

Indonesia provides conditions which allow terrorists to operate, such as a weak government, corruption, porous borders and the availability of weapons. Before the Bali incident the Indonesian government had been reluctant to act against Muslim extremists, which allowed Al-Qaeda to establish small training camps on Indonesian territory. (Smith, 2005 : 34) This followed after Al-Qaeda used the Philippines as base during the early 1990's to penetrate regional Islamic movements and to develop the JI into a pan-Asian network.

After the operational network of Al-Qaeda in Southeast Asia had been disrupted by US counter-terrorism operations following 9/11, operatives linked to the JI were forced to start acting more autonomously. The "Bali cell" consisted of around twelve local Muslim activists, some family related, and apparently formed a radical splinter group within the JI. They had no record of involvement in terrorism but received some assistance from senior militants who were trained in Afghanistan. The perpetrators came together on own initiative, chose their own target and executed the attack according to the Al-Qaeda agenda. (Burke, 2004: 265-266) The second Bali attack followed a similar pattern but followed the *modus operandi* of Palestinian militants. It represented a change in tactic to demonstrate that they have another capability and was meant to indicate that the JI was still active after the arrest of the operatives involved in the October 2002 attack. Contrary to the October 2002 attack, there was no evidence of a direct link to Al- Qaeda. (Bonner, 2005)

4.3 The Madrid Train Bombings, March 2004

The Madrid train bombings were the first successful attacks by Muslim *jihadis* in Western Europe and demonstrated an inventive operational variation.

On 11 March 2004 ten bombs exploded between 07h39 and 07h55 on four commuter trains while entering the Atocha railway station. 191 people were killed and around 1 400 injured. A number of people, who were believed to be

linked to the Moroccan Islamic Combatant Group (GICM), were arrested. The Spanish Government first attributed the attacks to the Basque separatist group ETA, even while it was evident that it lacked the logistic capability to execute such a large-scale attack.

A claim of responsibility for the attack was made by the organisation “Ansar Al-Qaeda in Europe” which stated that the attacks were a response to the cooperation of Spain with the US. (El Mundo, 14/03/04) On 3 April 2006, a group of seven people who were involved in the attack, died in a suicide bombing in Leganes, a suburb of Madrid, while the police were closing in on their apartment. The seven men were all from the Magreb and included five Moroccans, one Algerian and a Tunisian. (Alonso & Reinares, 2006 : 186) In a message a month after the attack, bin Laden stated that it was a response to the actions of Spain in Iraq, Afghanistan and Palestine. He also offered a truce to European countries if they undertook not to fight against Muslims. (El Mundo, 16/04/04)

The terrorist cell of Moroccan immigrants lived in Madrid for some years, acted autonomously and financed themselves and the attacks through drug trafficking and credit card fraud. Although the attacks were organised locally, the cell was satisfied with the fact that Al-Qaeda afterwards claimed responsibility. (Sciolino, 2004) An official report on the train bombings established that Moroccan and Algerian *jihadi* groups in Spain have started to cooperate. The main finding of the report was that the attacks were carried out by a local radical Islamic cell which was inspired but not directed by Al-Qaeda. (Rolfe, 2006) This finding corresponds with both the Bali and London incidents where local radical groups became more prominent in the planning and launching of attacks.

The attacks reconfirmed the *modus operandi* of radical Muslim groups in terms of the indiscriminate killing of civilians and in the simultaneousness of explosions to maximise the psychological impact of an attack. It however differs from previous Al-Qaeda-style attacks since the bombers were not killed during the operation;

the targets were not symbolic ones; and in the use of a high number of smaller bombs, rather than huge truck bombs. Furthermore, in contrast with the long term political aims of Al-Qaeda, it included an additional short term political goal, namely to influence the outcome of the Spanish general elections. (Burke, 2004: 271)

The timing of the attacks, three days before the Spanish general elections, demonstrated the ability of terrorists to influence the internal politics of an enemy country in that it succeeded in persuading voters that Spain was attacked because of its support for the Iraq war. (Vidino, 2006 : 297) It was also indicative of the importance of Spain to radical Islam as a place where Muslims have been humiliated when the Arabs were driven out of the Iberian Peninsula and which must be recaptured by new Muslim fighters. (Vidino, 2006 : 298) Finally, the attack served as evidence that radical cells in Western Europe could plan and execute attacks on own initiative. (Makarenko, 2006 : 18)

4.4 The London Subway Attacks, July 2005

A terrorist attack on London was anticipated for a considerable time but nevertheless came as a surprise because it involved a “homegrown” cell of Islamic radicals.

On 7 July 2005 at 08h50 three bombs exploded on trains in the London underground and a fourth at 09h47 on a bus. 52 persons were killed and more than 700 injured. The attacks took place on the first day of a summit of G-8 countries in Gleneagles, Scotland. Two groups, one called “The Secret Organisation of Al-Qaeda in Europe”, (Katzman, 2005 : 10) claimed responsibility for the attacks but neither could be authenticated. Both statements, which were posted on the Internet, mentioned the war in Iraq as the motive for the attack. On 21 July 2005 another attack by Muslim radicals on the London subway and

buses failed when the bombs did not ignite and the would-be attackers fled. (Lyall, 2005)

Eight weeks after the attacks the Al Jazeera television station broadcasted a video message by the alleged leader of the attacks stating that the London bombings were part of Al-Qaeda's global *jihad*. He was accompanied by the deputy leader of Al-Qaeda, Zawahiri, who threatened to launch further attacks. (Cowell, 2006) A report released by the British Government in May 2006 stated that the attackers were inspired by Al-Qaeda but acted on their own. Although it was "likely" that they had contact with Al-Qaeda operatives during a visit to Pakistan and may have received some operational training there, there was no evidence that Al-Qaeda planned or directed the attacks. (UK Intelligence and Security Committee, 2006 : 12)

The London attacks were the first suicide bombings in Europe by *jihadi* groups inspired by Al-Qaeda's ideology. (Wilkinson, 2006 : 184) Three of the four attackers were second-generation British citizens of Pakistani descent and visited Pakistan in 2004 where they apparently met with extremists elements. However, it remains unclear what kind of support, if any, they received from Al-Qaeda operatives. Although a terrorist attack in the UK, unrelated to the Northern Ireland issue, has been anticipated for some time, there was no warning issued or any indication that an attack was imminent.

The London attack was characteristic of the post-9/11 strategy of Al-Qaeda which pointed to more small-scale attacks perpetrated by splinter groups. (Greenberg, 2005 : XIII) These can be a handful of individuals carrying out bombings, often suicide bombings, after manufacturing home-made bombs according to instructions obtained from the Internet. These "self-starter" cells consist of young Muslims who are radicalised by preachers at radical mosques with vague connections to Al-Qaeda. The fact that the London bombers were British citizens, middle class, educated and with good prospects, confirmed the

fear of indigenous or “homegrown” terrorism. The terrorists were immigrants who identified more with Islam than with being British and have turned to radical Islam because moderate community leaders do not represent their anger over the British government’s participation in the war in Iraq and the “war on terror”. (Vasu, 2005 : 2)

Like the Madrid bombings, the London attacks were not aimed at symbols of power but at ordinary citizens, namely at the public transport system which presents a soft target and which is difficult to secure. The attacks were both designed to cause panic in a target audience and to obtain maximum media attention. These attacks also point out the importance of Western Europe as a future theatre of operations for Al-Qaeda-affiliated groups after Muslims’ alienation from mainstream society and inherent racism have created a fertile recruiting ground for Muslim radicalism. (Leiken, 2005)

In summary, the above incidents are indicative of the functioning of Al-Qaeda since the destruction of its operational base in Afghanistan. In the Bali case Al-Qaeda utilised an established indigenous radical group to execute an attack which was apparently masterminded by an Al-Qaeda operative. (Roy, 2004 : 320) The Madrid and London attacks both demonstrated the actions of a local radical group (although non-Spanish in the Madrid case) which decided to act on behalf of Al-Qaeda without direct control by the organisation. This is indicative of the emergence of a new generation of *jihadis* driven by local agendas and where Al- Qaeda may provide strategic operational guidelines although on tactical level, local groups act independently. (Gerges, 2005 : 218)

5. Conclusion

Al-Qaeda was founded by Osama bin Laden as a paramilitary organisation ostensibly to support the Afghan *mujahideen*, but mostly to serve his own political agenda. The Afghan war and the influence of radical Egyptian *jihadis* within Al-

Qaeda led to bin Laden's increased radicalisation. After the war Al-Qaeda directed its attacks against the far enemy, namely the US. The subsequent activities of Al-Qaeda marked the beginning of the era of global, transnational terrorism and led to the questioning of previously accepted assumptions on terrorism.

The success of "spectacular" terrorist attacks like 9/11 served to mobilise popular support amongst Muslims for the *jihadi* cause. These attacks have demonstrated what can be achieved by a small group of determined Muslims willing to apply violence in attacking US interests and served as example to like-minded extremists. According to a US perspective, the 9/11 attacks have also converted Al-Qaeda into a strategic threat to US national security and an important role player in international security concerns. However, although it represented a tactical victory to Al-Qaeda, strategically it was a disaster for the organisation.

The US-led campaign in Afghanistan and the subsequent dismantling of Al-Qaeda's central command structure restricted the movement and its ability to communicate with operatives. This led to the dispersal of Al-Qaeda members and a change in operational focus towards more localised attacks as affiliated groups started to act on own initiative. The relationship between Al-Qaeda and its affiliated groups is mutually advantageous in that local groups are empowered by being linked to Al-Qaeda while they serve to prove that Al-Qaeda is still an active force.

Terrorist attacks subsequent to 9/11, none of which took place in the US, were smaller in scale, were all coordinated bomb explosions in crowded public places, and were designed to inflict as many civilian casualties as possible. The attacks reflect the progressive development towards more autonomous attacks by radical groups or a group of individuals motivated by the Al-Qaeda ideology. These terrorists share a common worldview, do their operational planning according to information available on the Internet, and need not receive direct operational

instructions from Al-Qaeda. It also proved that terrorists are able to adjust to overcome measures against them, for example by changing their tactics and target selection.

The next chapter provides an analysis of the Al-Qaeda movement in terms of various aspects that are characteristic of terrorist groups. Such analysis will assist in placing the attacks as described beforehand into perspective, as well as to further an understanding of Al-Qaeda as an organisation.

CHAPTER 5 : AN ANALYSIS OF AL-QAEDA

1. Introduction

This chapter analyses the Al-Qaeda movement by discussing different aspects which are characteristic of this particular Islamic extremist organisation. The motivation of Al-Qaeda from a religious and political viewpoint is investigated, taking into account that religion is used as a powerful mobilising factor in its striving to obtain political objectives. Related to its motivation is the ideology adhered to by the movement, namely a radical Islam or internationalist *jihadi* ideology. A short overview of the Al-Qaeda ideology and of the worldview of its leader, Osama bin Laden, is included.

The transnational and multinational character of Al-Qaeda, which is an important characteristic of the movement, is discussed in terms of its ideology, membership and operations. The organisational structure of Al-Qaeda is subsequently investigated, taking into account the evolution of its structure since the constraints placed on it by international counter-terrorism measures. Related to Al-Qaeda's structural features, is its diffuse nature and it can be considered as either an international terrorist network, an insurgency or as a radical violence-inspiring ideology.

The target selection of Al-Qaeda is briefly discussed in terms of military versus civilian targets, as well as an emphasis on economic targets. The functioning of the movement in terms of communication and propaganda is investigated, followed by a discussion of its operational planning and tactics in the execution of terrorist attacks. This includes the phenomenon of simultaneous attacks, which have become a particular hallmark of Al-Qaeda-related attacks, and the prevalence of suicide attacks. The chapter concludes with a brief overview of the

desire of Al-Qaeda to either purchase or manufacture non-conventional weapons and the possibility of the movement using these weapons.

This analysis of Al-Qaeda is aimed at identifying possible manifestations of the characteristics of the “new” terrorism as described in Chapter 2. The analysis therefore serves to support the research objective of the study, namely to establish the extent to which Al-Qaeda conforms to these characteristics.

2. Religio-Political Motivation

Al-Qaeda is a Sunni movement which practises a Salafi fundamentalist interpretation of Islam and which uses religion as motivational factor in pursuing its political objectives.

2.1 Religious Motivation

Al-Qaeda does not form part of mainstream Islam but represents a militant variation of Sunni Islam. Islam is based upon two main strains, namely Sunni and Shiite which originated after the death of the Prophet Muhammad in 632. The majority of Muslims, the Sunni, followed the elected caliphs who succeeded Muhammad, while the Shiites rejected any caliph who was not a blood relative of Muhammad. (Hamud, 2005 : xlix) Sunni radicalism is based upon the idea of armed religious struggle or *jihad* of which there are two kinds, namely the obligatory or defensive *jihad* (*faridat al-jihad*), and the offensive or preemptive *jihad* (*kifayat al-jihad*) which can only be proclaimed by a caliph. Al-Qaeda is fighting the defensive *jihad* aimed at reclaiming the lands of the caliphate from the infidels. (Nasiri, 2006 : 180)

According to an Al-Qaeda spokesman, the movement bases its operations and methods of action in accordance with their interpretation of Islamic law and uses religious arguments to justify its confidence in the ultimate victory of Islam.

(Gheith, 2002) The idea of perpetual war is also central to the worldview of *jihadis* because they believe that non-Muslims will never allow Muslims to live in peace. The result is a non-accommodative stance and the promotion of hate and hostility towards all non-Muslims. The belief that *jihad* is a standing obligation to all Muslims stems from an unconditional interpretation of Koranic verses and of the Hadith (prophet's traditions) referring to warfare and the defence of Islam. (Hassan, 2006) In contrast to the West, the idea of war on account of religion has retained a significant role in Islam and radical Muslims consider *jihad* as a unifying force in achieving their aim of a single Muslim state. (El Fadl, 2004)

Radical Islam, as adhered to by Al-Qaeda, is appealing to populations experiencing political alienation and resentment because it offers a framework for a moral critique of power. Ironically, many adherents of radical Islam lack an understanding of orthodox Islam because they developed outside of the Islamic establishment. Consequently, they rely on radical religious scholars and charismatic leaders who influence the Muslim public by focusing on social and political confrontation, rather than on religious laws. Whilst Shiite Islam is characterised by a clerical hierarchy, there is no religious hierarchy in Sunni Islam. *Jihadists* like bin Laden also believe that the Sunni clergy has been corrupted because they are government employees, and that their rulings or *fatwas* are designed to ensure consistency with government policies. (Hamud, 2005 : lxxiv)

2.2 Political Motivation

Al-Qaeda's political motivation is the establishment of a pan-Islamic state which will unite the *ummah* in a caliphate, and which will be powerful enough to prevent the West from implementing its perceived strategy to subdue Muslim countries. In reality its political motivation is rather defensive in opposing a perceived Western anti-Muslim conspiracy, conveniently omitting that the US has in the

past supported Muslims in Somalia, Bosnia, Kosovo and Chechnya. (Fukuyama, 2002: 32)

Since the withdrawal of the USSR from Afghanistan, Al-Qaeda has considered Western countries, especially the US, as the biggest danger to Islam. US foreign policy in Muslim countries is blamed as responsible for attacks on Muslim populations and for supporting Israel in its struggle with the Palestinians. The stationing of US troops in Saudi Arabia, where the holy cities of Mecca and Medina are situated, was deemed part of a “crusader” conspiracy to weaken Islam and gave Islamic extremists new reason to attack Western influence in the region. (Lawrence, 2005 : 3) Al-Qaeda furthermore considers US foreign policy as a strategy to suppress and control Muslim societies and believes that the US is making autocratic Middle East countries dependent on the continuation of US aid. (Pape, 2005 : 110)

In addition, Al-Qaeda’s struggle against Arab governments is motivated by two factors, namely firstly, that a theocracy is the only acceptable form of government for a Muslim nation. Secondly, Arab regimes are considered as enemies of Islam because their corrupt leaders are supported by Western powers. Waging a *jihad* against these secular regimes is therefore also a crusade against foreign Western influence. (Nasiri, 2006 : 181)

The religious and political motivation of Al-Qaeda is closely linked to its radical ideology and which is discussed in the next section.

3. Ideology

Radical Islam ideology, of which the *jihadi* ideology of Al-Qaeda forms part, is a diverse phenomenon, the manifestation of which was exacerbated by the advent of modernisation and globalisation.

3.1 Historical Aspects

For many centuries Islam as religion was in the forefront of human civilisation and achievement and represented the pre-eminent military and economic power. Medieval Europe was still in a sense dependent on the Islamic world but this changed with rapid advances attained during the Renaissance and Reformation. (Lewis, 2002 : 6, 7) In the meanwhile the great Islamic caliphate experienced internal decay and military defeats at the hand of Christendom, and, since the Industrial Revolution, was overtaken by Western civilisation.

In the twentieth century the Islamic world realised that, compared to the West, it has become poor, weak and ignorant. The economies of Islamic states were corrupt and in constant need of foreign aid and, politically, they were ruled by traditional autocracies or self-styled dictatorships. (Lewis, 2002:151) The blame for this situation was laid on Western imperialism through the British and French, the Jews, and eventually on the US. Blaming outside forces for the predicament of the Islamic world conveniently served the purpose of explaining persisting poverty and to justify dictatorial governance. (Lewis, 2002 : 153, 159)

The above led to a search for new ideologies which could explain the deterioration of Muslim civilisation and the resulting foreign domination. During the nineteenth century a reform movement was launched by Jamal ad-Din Al-Afghani (1839-1897) who argued that Muslim defeats at the hand of the West were due to the corruption of Islam. He diagnosed the problems of the Muslim world as theological, prescribed a religious revival and taught that political struggle and revolt were justified. (Henzel, 2005 : 71) These ideas were developed further by ideologues like Sayyid Qutb (who was executed by the Nasser regime) and Muhammed Abd al-Salam Faraj (leader of the conspiracy to assassinate Sadat) and provided the basis of the Al-Qaeda *jihadi* ideology. (Henzel, 2005 : 74)

3.2 The Al-Qaeda Ideology

Al-Qaeda's ideology is a fusion of militant Salafi-Wahhabi ideas and Egyptian Islamist currents and argues that it is an Islamic duty to remove leaders who do not properly follow or enforce Islam. These ideas were refined by Ayman al-Zawahiri, an Egyptian physician, who shaped them for use by Al-Qaeda as motivation for religiously motivated terrorism. Zawahiri was the leader of Tanzim al-Jihad, one of the oldest Egyptian *jihadist* organisations, and fled to Afghanistan where he collaborated with bin Laden. Although his aim was firstly to rebuild his own organisation, he became financially dependent on bin Laden, merged his organisation with Al-Qaeda, and became the Al-Qaeda deputy leader. (Gerges, 2005 : 119-126)

Zawahiri set out his goals and strategy in his 2001 memoir called "Knights under the Prophet's Banner" as, firstly, the achievement of ideological coherence and organisation, secondly, the struggle against existing regimes of the Muslim world, and finally, the establishment of a genuine Muslim state in the Arab world. He views the current state of *jihad* as one of worldwide revolutionary struggle in which terrorist campaigns against secular Muslim regimes must be supplemented with attacks on US and Western interests. Propaganda is just as important as military efforts and spectacular terrorist attacks against the West are considered as a means of propaganda to strengthen popular support for the *jihad*. (Henzel, 2005 : 75)

What makes Al-Qaeda's ideology unique within the wider *jihadi* movement is that it launched a deliberate campaign to shift the direction of the movement away from localism (the near enemy) towards globalism (the far enemy). (Gerges, 2005 : 118). By presenting an inevitable clash between Islam and the West as central to the idea of "genuine" Islam, in which Al-Qaeda presents itself as the threatened defenders of Islam, it succeeded in attracting sympathizers among Muslims. Its radical form of Islam is also appealing because it seems to explain

the loss of values and cultural disorientation caused by the modernisation process. (Fukuyama, 2002 : 32)

3.3 Bin Laden's Worldview

Bin Laden's extremist worldview mainly stems from the ideas of radical Islamic ideologues, his war experience in Afghanistan and his opposition to the Saudi Arabian monarchy. His views on international political issues are set out in his statements and include the following. (Hamud, 2005 : lxvi-lxxi)

- He considers the colonisation of the Middle East after World War I by Western powers as an extension of the original Crusades which began in 1095 after pope Urban II called for a holy war against Islam.
- The creation of the state of Israel was a product of Western colonialism. Bin Laden rejects recent US-led peace initiatives in the Middle East and considered the former PLO leader, Yasser Arafat, as a corrupt secular leader.
- Bin Laden views the regime in Saudi Arabia and the royal family as corrupt and apostate or *kufr*.
- He blames Western intervention in Muslim countries for the loss of thousands of Muslim lives and frequently states that the sanctions imposed on Iraq after the 1991 Gulf War were responsible for the death of more than one million Iraqi children.

In contrast with other *jihadi* leaders, bin Laden views local Muslim rulers as mere extensions of the US-Israeli alliance and he was never in favor of directly attacking pro-Western regimes. (Gerges, 2005 : 144) This partly explains why the Saudi royal family has not yet been attacked directly. He believed that extending the *jihad* globally held the promise of mobilising Muslims worldwide and of garnering public support. To bin Laden his war against the West is also a result of the humiliation the Muslim world had to endure since the British and French

divided the Ottoman Empire after the end of the First World War. (Bergen, 2006: 182) However, bin Laden is not recognised as a religious or ideological leader and *fatwas* issued by him do not carry moral weight in the Islamic world.

The ideology of Al-Qaeda is one of the elements underpinning the transnational character of the movement which is investigated in the following section.

4. Transnational Character

Al-Qaeda is the first terrorist organisation with a truly transnational character and which is not limited to a specific country or region of operation. This is evident from its ideology, the nature of its membership and from its aim of conducting a global war by striking adversaries around the world.

The transnational character of Al-Qaeda hinges on its universalistic ideology and stems from its ultimate aim to unite all Muslims in a pan-Islamic caliphate. Unlike secessionist groups, Al-Qaeda has a global goal and strategy, namely the promotion of Islamic purity and the regaining of control over territory previously ruled by Islamic rulers. A fundamentalist interpretation of a common religion is therefore used as solidifying factor against both the national and global enemy.

The transnational character of Al-Qaeda is also reflected in its membership in that it has succeeded in recruiting from dissatisfied communities throughout the Muslim world. The organisation consists both of cells of nomadic global terrorists and of a series of networks and linkages with local insurgent groups throughout the Middle East, Southeast Asia and Africa. (US Department of State, Country Reports on Terrorism, 2005 : 218) While the size of the membership of Al-Qaeda remains unknown, members are also recruited from the Muslim diaspora in Western societies. Muslims interested in taking part in *jihad* are attracted to Al-Qaeda because the organisation does not attach importance to the nationality of potential members. (Bergen, 2006 : 138) However, bin Laden has been careful

to emphasise the importance of overcoming national and regional differences within Al-Qaeda and he made a deliberate effort to recruit from the Arabian Peninsula to counter complaints about the dominance of the Egyptian contingent around him. (Gerges, 2005 : 102-103)

Operationally, many members know each other after undergoing training in camps in Afghanistan. Social affiliation with the *jihad* accomplished through friendship bonds, coupled with a progressive intensification of faith, played an important role in determining who joined Al-Qaeda. (Sageman, 2004 : 135) Al-Qaeda is also a transnational network in that it promotes and facilitates the participation of *jihadi* fighters, or so-called Muslim mercenaries, in previous or current conflicts involving Muslim populations, namely in Bosnia, Albania, Kosovo, Chechnya, Daghestan and Kashmir.

The transnational character of Al-Qaeda has a direct influence on its organisational structure and diffuse nature which are discussed in the following section.

5. Organisational Structure and Diffuse Nature

The organisational structure of Al-Qaeda has evolved considerably since it was founded. After originally functioning as a network type organisation, the constraints faced by the movement since September 2001 has forced it to adapt to a type of organisational structure that is unique and difficult to define.

5.1 Organisational Structure

The original command and control structure of Al-Qaeda consisted of a Consultation Council (*majlis al shura*) which considered and approved major policies, operations and the issuing of *fatwas*. On a secondary level it had four committees, namely a military committee which planned and approved military

matters, a finance and business committee, a religious committee which deliberated religious rulings, and a media and publicity committee. (Gunaratna, 2002 : 77) Before the destruction of its infrastructure, the organisation functioned as a structure combining elements of an intelligence service, a guerrilla force and a multinational business venture.

A pre-9/11 study of the organisation classified its membership into three categories, namely the leadership, members and associates. Members had to pledge an oath of allegiance or *bayat* to bin Laden himself and those who were suspected of collaborating with enemies, were killed. Associates did not need to pledge an oath and assisted the organisation by providing intelligence, funds, equipment and with recruitment. They could also be members of a different organisation supported by Al-Qaeda. Associates collaborated with Al-Qaeda on an *ad hoc* basis while maintaining autonomy from the central leadership. (Alexander & Swetnam, 2001 : 10, 20)

Prior to the US military invasion of Afghanistan and the resultant destruction of the Al-Qaeda infrastructure, it functioned as a “star” or “hub” network in which various nodes are linked independently to a central headquarters. After the loss of its territorial base, it has become more decentralised and diffused and evolved towards an “all-channel” network in which all nodes are connected to each other, creating a complex web of interconnectivity. This type of decentralised organisational form has the advantage of a leaderless structure which minimises the impact of the destruction of an individual cell on the organisation. (McAllister, 2004 : 302)

The uniqueness of Al-Qaeda as a movement has also led to the proposal of a new concept, namely that of the Dune organisation. The concept provides for the random moving of a movement between territories; the changing of the characteristics of a movement; and for decentralised networked connections with affiliated groups. In this sense Al-Qaeda creates a global effect while associating

and disassociating itself with local groups as it moves from one country to another. (Mishal & Rosenthal, 2005: 282) This approach differs from attempts to compare the Al-Qaeda organisational structure with that of a business venture and provides for the fact that terrorist organisations are firstly based on a political ideology, rather than on organisational efficiency.

5.2 Diffuse Nature

Because of its clandestine nature Al-Qaeda has been described in different terms, such as an extremist Islamic group; a global terrorist network; a dispersed and amorphous terrorist enemy; and that it functions like a cult or a business enterprise. (Raufer, 2003 : 393) The particular description of the nature of Al-Qaeda will mostly depend on the objective of the specific research.

From a Western perspective Al-Qaeda is mostly considered as an international terrorist organisation because it has become known for committing terrorist acts and because its leaders have deliberately decided to use terrorism as a rational choice to obtain specific political goals. This is also the view of the US Government which has included the organisation on its list of foreign terrorist organisations. (US Department of State, Country Reports on Terrorism, 2005 : 217)

Al-Qaeda was originally founded as a paramilitary organisation during the Afghan war and its training camps instructed both guerrilla and terrorist tactics. Members of the organisation took part in military conflicts in Bosnia, Chechnya, Kashmir, the Philippines and Somalia. Its insurgency doctrine is grounded in religious obligation and calls for a defensive *jihad* which mandates the participation of all Muslims. The doctrine aims to prolong a conflict to exhaust the patience and resources of the enemy “without fighting any real battles with him” and points out the importance of simultaneously waging a military and media campaign. (Scheuer, 2006)

Since 2002 Al-Qaeda has lost considerable ability to plan and execute its own terrorist attacks and it has become commonplace to refer to the movement as an ideology or state of mind. Although Al-Qaeda failed to mobilise the Muslim masses, as was envisioned by Zawahiri, it served to inspire like minded individuals and groups to plan and launch terrorist attacks on own initiative. In this sense Al-Qaeda has been described as a “biological entity” which is able to continuously renew itself by growing new off-shoots in response to threats and opportunities. (Raufer, 2003 : 395)

The next section provides a short overview of the target selection of Al-Qaeda as it manifested in attacks launched by the movement and its affiliated groups.

6. Target Selection

Like most terrorist groups, Al-Qaeda and its affiliated groups originally gave priority to government and military targets. As counter-terrorism measures have become more efficient, these groups have increasingly selected soft targets, including a combination of economic and civilian targets.

6.1 US Government Targets

Although Al-Qaeda accepts that it will not defeat its enemies on a military level, it attacked US military installations in Arab countries, for example the bombings that targeted US troops in Aden in December 1992, by applying the experience it gained against USSR military forces in Afghanistan. Al-Qaeda was aware of the effect of even a small-scale attack on US military forces stationed outside the country on domestic support for foreign US military campaigns. This also happened in Somalia in 1993 when Al-Qaeda associates shot down US helicopters after which the US withdrew its forces. (Venzke & Ibrahim, 2003 : 77) In addition to the 1998 attacks on US Embassies in East Africa, Al-Qaeda

attacked a US warship in the port of Aden, Yemen, in October 2000, killing seventeen US servicemen. (USS Cole Commission Report, 2001)

6.2 Civilians as Targets

Despite the prohibition of the killing of civilians by Islam, Al-Qaeda has developed arguments to justify its attacks on civilians, even if it includes fellow Muslims. It namely believes that this prohibition is not absolute and that there are conditions under which killing civilians becomes permissible. (Wiktorowitz & Kaltner, 2003 : 86) In this respect bin Laden has stated that all Americans are potential targets, simply because they pay taxes to the US government. Al-Qaeda also justifies the targeting of civilians by referring to the perceived deliberate killing of Muslim civilians by Western powers which give them the right to retaliate. (Venzke & Ibrahim, 2003 : 104-105)

6.3 Economic Targets

Before 9/11 Al-Qaeda did not seriously consider economic targets but mostly attacked US Embassies and military targets. According to bin Laden's calculation, the 9/11 attacks cost USD 500 000 to execute but it caused damage worth USD 500 billion. This led to a change in Al-Qaeda strategy towards the targeting of Western economic interests, as in Bali (tourism) and the attack on a French oil tanker in Yemen (oil industry). (Greenberg, 2005 : 7) A shift in strategy towards economic targets was confirmed by the attempted attacks against Saudi oil installations during 2004 aimed at affecting the international oil price. Previously bin Laden stated that petroleum infrastructure should not be attacked because it is a "large economic power essential for the soon to be established Islamic State". (Knights, 2006 : 9) His revised strategy was to attack targets which would cause oil prices to rise to the disadvantage of Western economies while being advantageous to the Muslim world. (Knights, 2006 : 10)

Concurrent with economic targets is the launching of attacks on Western brand names. This happened with attacks on the Marriott Hotel in Jakarta, the Sheraton in Karachi, the Hilton in Egypt and coordinated attacks on Shell gas stations in Pakistan. (Greenberg, 2005 : 7) Although the direct involvement of members of Al-Qaeda in these incidents cannot be confirmed, they were executed by militant Islamic groups, some of which have pledged loyalty to bin Laden. In relation to these attacks bin Laden mentioned “the killing of French in Karachi” in his “Call to Jihad” broadcasted on 12 November 2002 by the Al-Jazeera television station. (Hamud, 2005 : 104, 287)

6.4 Other Potential Targets

Even before the 9/11 attacks Al-Qaeda considered US domestic airports as a prime target because of the lax security measures, and which eventually contributed to the success of these attacks. During the planning of the 9/11 attacks, attacks on nuclear facilities were considered but decided against, because the airspace around it was restricted and because a nuclear facility would not have any particular symbolic value. (The 9/11 Commission Report, 2004 : 245)

Against the background of the above overview of Al-Qaeda’s target selection, its operational strategy and planning, as well as specific tactics, are subsequently discussed.

7. Operational Strategy, Planning and Tactics

Al-Qaeda’s operational strategy consists of the use of terror to cause mass casualties and material destruction in order to influence decisions made by adversary governments. To this end it maintains a propaganda campaign, uses long term planning, and employs specific tactics during terrorist attacks.

7.1 Use of Propaganda

Concurrent with its development as an organisation, Al-Qaeda has since 1994 been conducting a sophisticated public relations and media campaign to further its aims. The original structure of Al-Qaeda provided for a media and publicity office which was responsible for producing daily and weekly publications reporting on the organisation, the *jihadi* movement and other related issues. (Gunaratna, 2002: 112)

After the 9/11 attacks, Bin Laden relied on the Al Jazeera satellite television station as vehicle for broadcasting his video and audio statements. He was aware that, unlike other Arab television channels, it operated independent of government control, that his speeches would not be edited and that it would reach a wide audience. (Miles, 2005 : 133) Al-Qaeda then developed its own media production unit, *Al-Sahab* (the Clouds), which is responsible for producing audio and video messages. (Fattah, 2006) The release of statements by bin Laden or his deputy, Zawahiri, is used to communicate political messages to a global audience and to sanction, encourage and provide guidance for future terrorist operations. (Blanchard, 2005: 1) The statements also reaffirm its ideological viewpoints and aims, and serve as an attempt to prove that Al-Qaeda remains an important role player in the struggle between Islam and the West.

Video material of previous successful attacks is being distributed together with images of the suffering of Muslim civilians at the hand of Western powers. (Wilkinson, 2006 : 147) The latter serves as a powerful tool in the recruitment of new members and sympathisers for the *jihadi* cause. During 2005 Al-Qaeda also launched a broadcasting station, Voice of the Caliphate, to convey its interpretation of international events. (Wilkinson, 2006 : 148) Al-Qaeda's extensive propaganda campaign is indicative of it being a group in transition from one that once assisted holy warriors in a military campaign to one that provides ideological guidance to radical Muslims worldwide. (Fattah, 2006)

7.2 Utilisation of the Internet

After the Internet was initially condemned as a “Jewish conspiracy” by radical Muslim ideologues, it quickly became a powerful tool of *jihadist* groups. (Lia, 2006 : 14) Al-Qaeda and its affiliated organisations are using the Internet as a convenient and effective medium of communication for recruitment, training and fundraising. It provides terrorists with anonymity and also serves as a useful tool to collect detailed information on potential targets. (Thomas, 2003 : 118) The *jihadi* movement is typically organised in small geographically dispersed cells and the Internet is the ideal instrument to coordinate their activities as well as to relay instructions for operational purposes.

After the Al-Qaeda leadership went into hiding, the posting of their audio and videotapes on the Internet enabled them to continue to influence *jihadi* militants. The Internet thus serves as a multiplier tool for Al-Qaeda’s ideas. It is also believed that there is a correlation between the call for specific terrorist attacks by bin Laden and Zawahiri on these tapes and their later execution. (Bergen, 2006: 371-372) *Jihadist* websites further serve to disseminate propaganda and for proselytising and indoctrination. (Lia, 2006 : 14) Numerous self-styled *jihadist* media groups, which are ideologically linked to Al-Qaeda, operate websites which disseminate *jihadi* literature and other material and which serve to recruit sympathisers. (Lia, 2006: 19)

7.3 Operational Planning

The Al-Qaeda hardcore organisation is known for the meticulous planning of its attacks and for specific tactics which were copied by affiliated groups after Al-Qaeda was forced to decentralise its operations. Before the destruction of the Al-Qaeda logistical infrastructure, its Military Committee approved operations and provided the funds while the planning and execution of operations were left to field commanders. (Bergen, 2006 : 253) Afterwards, Al-Qaeda was forced to

decentralise and to diversify into smaller operational units in different Muslim countries. Affiliated groups in various countries, inspired by the success of previous attacks and the Al-Qaeda ideology, then started to act on own initiative without centralised clearance for the launching of attacks.

Regarding long term planning, Al-Qaeda's training material provides extensive guidance on the conduct of reconnaissance to identify potential targets which are then prioritised and placed under surveillance. To guarantee the success of an operation, Al-Qaeda usually takes between one and three years from its conception to its execution. Operatives, who are carefully selected, conduct a thorough surveillance of potential targets. The planning process reflects the Arab sense of time which is also apparent in the period of time between the issuing of a threat and a subsequent attack. (Venzke & Ibrahim, 2003 : 78, 8) In the case of the East African Embassy bombings of 1998, the buildings were surveilled as early as 1993 and some members of the Nairobi cell planning the bombings were arrested and deported in 1997. (Bergen, 2006 : 290) Regarding the planning for the 9/11 attacks, the main planner, Khalid Sheikh Mohammed, started speculating about striking the WTC as early as 1995 and the project was approved by bin Laden in March or April 1999. (The 9/11 Commission Report, 2004 : 153-154)

7.4 Operational Tactics

Al-Qaeda has various operational options and will select a tactic most appropriate to a specific target. Resorting to suicide attacks is a preferred Al-Qaeda tactic. Radical Islamic ideology considers the act of suicide to be transformed into an act of martyrdom and therefore a heroic act. The willingness to sacrifice one's life for Allah is furthermore considered as an expression of the advantage of the Muslim fighter over his opponent. Al-Qaeda has also adopted suicide as a symbol of global *jihad* and has elevated martyrdom to the status of a principle of faith. (Schweitzer, 2006 : 136) Between 1995 and 2003 Al-Qaeda

operatives executed 71 suicide missions and an investigation of these attacks demonstrated that the attackers were predominantly motivated by the US military presence in Muslim countries, rather than purely by their religious belief. (Pape, 2005 : 109, 113)

Coordinated, no-warning suicide bombing attacks, hitting several targets simultaneously, have become a hallmark of Al-Qaeda operational strategy. (Wilkinson, 2006 : 43) This technique is facilitated by the tools of globalisation like satellite technology, ease of travel, the Internet and electronic financial facilities and it is mainly employed in order to enhance the lethality and destructiveness of an attack, as well as to maximise the creation of fear.

The use of civil aircraft as a weapon in terrorist attacks is not new but, until September 2001, it was unsuccessful. For example, in 1994 Algerian Muslim fundamentalists planned to fly a passenger plane into the Eiffel Tower. In 1993 the so-called Bojinka Plot to simultaneously blow up eleven airliners over the Pacific Ocean, was thwarted. (Reeve, 1999 : 71-93) The planner of the 9/11 attacks also intended to hijack and crash ten airliners into targets in the US as a follow-up operation on the September 11 attacks. (The 9/11 Commission Report, 2004 : 154) On the other hand, Al-Qaeda rejects the traditional terrorist aircraft hijacking operations because these were aimed at negotiating the release of prisoners and not at inflicting mass casualties. The bombing of commercial airliners in flight is therefore considered a more effective strategy. (The 9/11 Commission Report, 2004: 153-154)

Al-Qaeda has used cargo ships both for generating profit and to support terrorist attacks. The material for the East African bombings in 1998 was delivered by an Al-Qaeda linked freighter and incidents were recorded where Pakistanis pretended to be crew members but were apparently planning armed attacks. The use of “flags of convenience” and the practice of constantly renaming and

repainting ships make them suitable instruments for potential use by Al-Qaeda-linked organisations. (Robinson, 2003; and Raymond, 2006 : 246)

Because of the far-reaching consequences of a nuclear or other non-conventional terrorist attack, the possible use of these weapons by Al-Qaeda is discussed separately.

8. Possibility of Use of Non-Conventional Weapons

Al-Qaeda has an absolutist ideology and belief system in which the end justifies the means. This includes the right to use non-conventional weapons because of the high number of Muslim civilians who were killed as a result of Western military interventions in the Muslim world.

The Al-Qaeda leadership has stated on a number of occasions that it is a religious duty for Muslims to acquire non-conventional weapons. In May 1998 bin Laden issued a statement entitled “The Nuclear Bomb of Islam” and declared that it is the duty of Muslims to prepare as much force as possible to attack the infidel enemy. Bin Laden has also claimed in interviews that Al-Qaeda is in possession of nuclear weapons but there is no credible evidence to support these claims. (Albright, et al, 2002 : 23)

Al-Qaeda tried to procure non-conventional weapons in Pakistan, Bulgaria and Russia, and tried to obtain enriched uranium while it was based in Sudan. It was also claimed that it cooperated with the Sudanese government to develop chemical weapons. Former Pakistani nuclear scientists met with bin Laden but did not provide Al-Qaeda with material for non-conventional weapons. However, there is reason to believe that Al-Qaeda bought radioactive waste material coming from the former Soviet Union with the intention of using it for offensive purposes. (Bergen, 2006 : 344-345)

The US military campaign in Afghanistan revealed evidence that Al-Qaeda has been attempting to develop chemical weapons and that its members were studying information on nuclear weapons. Sketches of improvised nuclear devices and other documents found in Al-Qaeda camps indicated that it was determined to get these weapons but that its manufacturing program was unsophisticated. (Frost, 2005 : 55)

Al-Qaeda cells have planned a number of unsuccessful attacks involving chemical substances or poison in Europe, for example a sarin nerve gas attack on the European Parliament, a cyanide attack on the water supply of the US Embassy in Rome and the ricin plot in London. (Wilkinson, 2003) In May 2002 a suspected Al-Qaeda operative, Jose Padilla aka Abdullah Al-Mujahir, was arrested in the US while carrying out surveillance for an attack utilising a radioactive device. (Venzke & Ibrahim, 2003 : 61) Padilla met with Khalid Sheik Mohammed, the planner of the 9/11 attacks, in Pakistan and believed that he would be able to manufacture a “dirty bomb”.

Various failed attempts by Al-Qaeda operatives to use non-conventional weapons indicate that, despite a desire to employ these weapons, it is being constrained by the technical complexities to manufacture and deploy it. It also seems that Bin Laden deliberately exaggerated Al-Qaeda’s ability in this respect, which had the unintended result of allowing the US to exaggerate the threat that Al-Qaeda poses to the international community. (Gerges, 2005 : 196-197)

9. Conclusion

Claims by Al-Qaeda that the US and the West are on an aggressive mission to subdue Muslim societies and Islam as religion, are being used as a unifying factor in providing radical Muslim groups with a common external enemy. Al-Qaeda labels its Western enemies as “crusaders” motivated by religious aims because this appeals to its own followers and sympathizers. Although religion is

an important motivational factor to spur Islamic extremists into action, it remains subjected to political goals, like enticing the West into a conflict which it eventually can not control, including by raising the cost of Western involvement in Muslim countries to unacceptable levels.

The use of violence by Al-Qaeda is a deliberate strategy aimed at removing what it consider to be apostate Muslim regimes, and to counter the perceived threat to Islam by Western powers. Radical Islam does not consider the problems of the Muslim world as a result of its failure to modernise, but rather as the inevitable result of Islam moving away from its pure, original form. In reality, the failure of Islam to modernise is because it is not merely a religion, but a body of laws governing daily life in which the concept of separation of church and state seems unrealistic.

Although the destruction of its infrastructure in Afghanistan has weakened the organisation, its transnational character and particular organisational structure has enabled Al-Qaeda to survive as a movement and to continue its global *jihad*. Al-Qaeda has also proven to be innovative in its tactics and strategy and will continue to improvise while at the same time employing tactics which were proven to be successful. Al-Qaeda has already proved that it is willing to inflict mass casualties which indicate that it will be willing to use non-conventional weapons should it succeed in purchase or manufacturing these. However, assumptions that terrorist groups like Al-Qaeda may acquire non-conventional weapons from rogue states are yet to be proven. It may also have been Western concerns about proliferation which drew the attention of Al-Qaeda to the psychological advantages of claiming the possession of non-conventional weapons.

CHAPTER 6 : EVALUATION

1. Summary

The main objective of this study was to analyse trends in international terrorism as manifested since the end of the Cold War viewed by some as “new” terror and to determine how applicable these trends are to the Al-Qaeda movement. To this end, a number of assumptions were formulated in the Introduction and which are tested in the following section. The study made use of description, analysis and comparison as research methods and was based on primary and secondary sources. The use of primary sources was limited by the nature of the research subject, as well as by the difficulties experienced in terrorism research in general.

Chapter 2 of the study investigated the characteristics of traditional terrorism and what was identified by some authors as a “new” terrorism. Since the 1980's, authors have identified a new terrorism with specific characteristics like religious motivation, increased lethality, a loose organisational structure and a desire to use non-conventional weapons. The resemblances and differences between traditional and new terrorism were discussed. However, a closer investigation revealed that the distinction between these two forms of terrorism is mostly a question of emphasis or perspective, and that the “new” terrorism carries definite characteristics of classical terrorism.

In Chapter 3 of the study a historical overview of the development of international terrorism was provided with the aim of furthering an understanding of the evolution of the phenomenon since the end of the Cold War. This included its development in terms of motivation, strategy and effectiveness as technique of political violence. The effects of the end of the Cold War, the development of new technologies, and of a unipolar international structure on international terrorism, were discussed.

Chapter 4 of the study provided an overview of the emergence of the Al-Qaeda movement by discussing its founding, aims, and the major terrorist attacks attributed to the movement. An evaluation was made of the attacks against the US on September 11, 2001 and its consequences. These attacks made Al-Qaeda a main role player in international security affairs. Short case studies of other attacks, namely the East African Embassy attacks, the Bali bombings, the Madrid train bombings and the London subway attacks, were included. These attacks were all linked to Al-Qaeda, although it is difficult to establish the exact role that the movement played in their inspiration, planning and execution.

In Chapter 5 an analysis of the Al-Qaeda movement was made. Different aspects relating to the movement, including its motivation, ideology, transnational character, structure, target selection and operational strategy and tactics, were discussed. The aim of this analysis was to determine whether the characteristics of new terrorism, as described earlier, are applicable to this movement and whether Al-Qaeda can therefore be considered as a prototype of the new terrorism.

2. Testing of Assumptions on which the Study was based

It is necessary to evaluate the assumptions related to international terrorism and the Al-Qaeda movement as formulated in the Introduction to the study. These assumptions refer to the continued validity of the characteristics of traditional terrorism despite the identification of a new terrorism; the influence of a specific historic time period on the nature and motivation of terrorism; and whether the Al-Qaeda movement can be considered as a prototype organisation which embodies the characteristics of the new terrorism.

2.1 The Continued Validity of Traditional Terrorism

Assumption : “The new terrorism reflects the changes in international terrorism during the last twenty-five years but characteristics of traditional terrorism have remained valid”.

The end of the Cold War led to a reconsideration of the concept of security and a search for new threats after the collapse of the USSR. The terrorist incidents at the WTC in New York in 1993 and in Tokyo and Oklahoma City in 1995, in some views led to the development of a “new” terrorism paradigm which appeared to offer proof that the threat from sub-state groups in terms of asymmetrical warfare was real. (Gearson, 2002 : 18,20)

Although new actors, new technologies and new tactics have changed the nature of terrorism since the end of the Cold War, there is not sufficient empirical evidence to justify the identification of a completely “new” terrorism. The term “new” has been used more in a connotation of “threatening and dangerous” with an emphasis on the possible use of non-conventional weapons and has not been subjected to systematic scientific investigation. This is symptomatic of terrorism research in general where much of the research is prescriptive, condemnatory or narrative in nature. (Duyvesteyn, 2004 : 440-441)

While the new terrorism postulates that the end of the Cold War has intrinsically changed the phenomenon of terrorism, research has revealed that the characteristics of traditional terrorism have remained valid. This is evident for example in terms of motivation where religious motivation was identified as an important characteristic of new terrorism. However, it can be pointed out that traditional terrorism was not completely void of religious motivation. Equally, in terms of the transnational nature and organisational structure of new terrorism, it can be argued that many traditional revolutionary groups adhered to a

transnational Marxist-inspired anti-capitalist ideology and that the PLO also operated as a network without formal central control. (Tucker, 2001 : 3-4)

In summary, despite innovations in the phenomenon of terrorism since the end of the Cold War, the distinction between traditional and new terrorism is rather a matter of perspective. The enduring characteristics of terrorism, namely that it is purposeful and planned; political in aims and motives; violent or threatening the use of violence; indiscriminate in targeting; and designed to have psychological repercussions beyond the immediate target, have not essentially changed. The assumption that new terrorism reflects certain changes in terrorism during the last twenty-five years but that the characteristics of traditional terrorism have remained valid, is therefore confirmed.

2.2 The Influence of a Specific Historic Time Period on Terrorism

Assumption : “The nature and motivation of international terrorism are influenced by the circumstances of a specific historic time period.”

Terrorism is a technique that can be adapted to different circumstances and historic time periods while retaining its capacity as a force multiplier through the exploitation of fear. The development of international terrorism has demonstrated that it is being driven by a desire to change existing circumstances through the application of violence or the threat of violence. Although the motivation, strategies and tactics of terrorism have evolved, all terrorists wanted to accelerate history. Furthermore, although terrorism has remained popular throughout history, it could only obtain its long-term goals when used in an auxiliary role as part of an insurgency in certain anti-colonial struggles. (Wilkinson, 2000 : 16)

During the 1960's terrorism became part of the dynamics of the international political system when revolutionary groups from different nationalities

cooperated, reflecting state sponsorship along Cold War lines. After the end of the Cold War the ideological motivational component of international terrorism changed and was replaced by other, mostly religious, motivations.

During the 1990's terrorism became globalised, reflecting the phenomenon of globalisation which removed the traditional barriers of distance and geography. (Lia, 2005 : 1) Globalisation changed the aims and strategies of international terrorist groups, gave them access to more powerful technologies, more targets, and more exploitable sources of dissent. The tools of globalisation and the information age made terrorist groups more efficient in the execution of their activities. It has also allowed them to open new channels for transnational terrorism and to operate simultaneously in various countries. (Cronin, 2003 : 48)

International terrorism is a by-product of, and reflects, broader historical shifts in the international distribution of power in all its forms: political, economic, military, ideological and cultural. Changes in the international environment from one historic period to another have affected the phenomenon of terrorism which has reacted and adapted to the opportunities created by these changes. The assumption that the nature and motivation of international terrorism are influenced by the circumstances of a specific historic time period, can therefore be confirmed.

2.3 Al-Qaeda as a Model of New Terrorism

Assumption : “Al-Qaeda serves as a model of characteristics viewed by some as part of ‘new’ terrorism but retains many characteristics of traditional terrorism.”

Al-Qaeda serves as a model of the “new” terrorism in that it demonstrates the characteristics viewed by some as part of a new terrorism. For example, although it is not a new phenomenon, a religious imperative is an important

characteristic of the new terrorism. Al-Qaeda, like other religiously motivated terrorist groups, perceives the struggle against its enemies to be one of good versus evil, believes that it has a monopoly on truth and uses religious arguments to justify its confidence in victory. (Gheith, 2002)

While the perpetration of indiscriminate mass casualty attacks is not exclusive to new terrorism, the desire of terrorist groups to obtain and use non-conventional weapons, is. Al-Qaeda has already demonstrated its ability to perpetrate mass casualty attacks, using terrorism increasingly as an end in itself and its leaders have expressed a desire to manufacture or obtain non-conventional weapons. (Frost, 2005 : 55) Although the 9/11 attacks seemed to prove the trend of the capacity of contemporary terrorism to cause increasingly lethal attacks, it did not prove the alarmist rhetoric about the use of non-conventional weapons as was predicted in terms of the new terrorism. (Gurr & Cole, 2005 : 1) Instead, it has proved that traditional terrorism techniques, although with tactical variations, continue to be used by contemporary groups.

As was mentioned in the first assumption, a transnational character is not exclusive to new terrorism. Al-Qaeda has a transnational character because it is both a creation of globalisation and a response to it. This enables it to exploit the advantages offered by globalisation, attract the support of many different nationalities and to operate globally with little regard for national boundaries. Muslims or converts from any nationality who want to take part in *jihad*, may affiliate to the movement. (Bergen, 2006 : 138)

The original organisational structure of Al-Qaeda was that of a functionally structured group with a consultative council and committees responsible for specific tasks. (Gunaratna, 2002 : 77). It functioned as a network where nodes were linked independently to a central headquarters. In this respect it does not comply with the characteristics of new terrorism where groups do not have a clear identifiable structure and where a central command is absent. (Hoffman,

2001 : 418) After the US-led military action in Afghanistan the central command of Al-Qaeda was weakened and the movement dispersed into an atomised network.

In summary, it can be stated that, because of the changes in terrorism since the end of the Cold War, it is possible to identify new trends which were described by certain authors as part of a “new” terrorism. Although Al-Qaeda demonstrates these characteristics, it is not because they are characteristic of a “new” terrorism as such, but because terrorism as phenomenon has undergone changes as a reaction to changes in the international environment. At the same time, Al-Qaeda has retained the characteristics of traditional terrorism which defines terrorism as a phenomenon and makes it a specific form of political struggle. The assumption that Al-Qaeda serves as a model of characteristics viewed by some as part of “new” terrorism but retains many characteristics of traditional terrorism, can therefore be confirmed.

3. Conclusion

Terrorist groups do not operate independently from the international environment and are influenced by the changes in their environment. The rise of fundamentalism was a reaction to the changes following the end of the Cold War. In previous historic time periods terrorism did not constitute a serious threat to the security of states or the international system. However, because of technological developments and the availability of weaponry capable of inflicting mass casualties, it has become a technique of political violence which can potentially cause extensive harm and with negative consequences for international security.

As a method of political violence terrorism will endure because there will always be groups with grievances who are willing to apply violence to obtain political aims. Furthermore, terrorism is based upon political causes that are enduring

and as long as there are tension and conflict in the international system, it can grow on the extremes of any ideology, religion or cultural belief system.

Currently international terrorism is dominated by radical Islamic groups but this may change in future because most terrorist campaigns lost momentum and eventually ended. The motivation for new terror campaigns will be determined by shifts in international events and the changing of perceptions and values, in the same way as the rise of Islam radicalism came to the international forefront after the decline of Communism.

The Al-Qaeda movement does not represent mainstream Islam, a religion that is based on a pluralistic, multi-ethnic and moderate tradition. Al-Qaeda and its affiliated groups remain on the fringes of Muslim society, engaged in a religio-ideological struggle with traditional Sunni clergy and in a political struggle with Arab regimes which are supported by Western powers. Because religious identity overrides political values, the undemocratic nature of these regimes has been of scant importance to Al-Qaeda. They believe that the failure of modern Islam was the result of the adoption of alien ideas and practices, that globalisation has “contaminated” their culture, and that Islam is under attack from the West and must be defended through *jihad*.

Contrary to a perception in the US that it was attacked because of its democratic values, Al-Qaeda and its affiliated *jihadi* movements believe they are waging a just struggle in defence of Islam and against Western interference in Muslim countries. Al-Qaeda has succeeded in exploiting the existing anti-US sentiment in the Muslim world to advance the cause of radical Islam. In the process it is using a specific religious interpretation to counter the feelings of humiliation and uprootedness of many Muslims in their own countries or in the Muslim diaspora. Humiliation has been an enduring cause of terrorism, and to the extent that certain policies of Western countries towards the Muslim world have been

perceived as humiliating. This has encouraged the growth of radical *jihadi* movements and support for, or approval of violence.

An evaluation of Al-Qaeda indicates that it lacks a clear strategy to realise its aims and has become a movement bent on revenge with repeated calls for more violence, rather than focusing on achieving its political goals. It has failed to present a clear vision of what it wants to create, has failed to create a sustainable power base and has no viable entrenched constituency. Nevertheless, the Al-Qaeda movement is unique in that it has been able to render terrorism self-generating. Even though it has been restricted by international counter-terrorism initiatives, the forging of ties with like-minded groups throughout the world has secured the continuation of violent action by radical Muslim groups. The current and future danger of Al-Qaeda does not stem from the organisation as such but rather from the ideology it has disseminated throughout the world. This ideology is inspiring a new generation of Muslims, who feel that their identity is being threatened by forces beyond their control, to take up *jihad* against the West.

ABSTRACT

Topic : New trends in contemporary international and transnational terrorism as manifested in the Al-Qaeda movement

By : Francina Bester

Study Leader: Prof M Hough

Department : Political Sciences, University of Pretoria

Degree : Master of Security Studies

The objective of this study is to investigate trends in international terrorism since the end of the Cold War, including those identified as “new” terrorism and to determine to what extent these are applicable to the Al-Qaeda movement. To achieve this aim, the study focused on aspects such as the origin and development of new terrorism; the differences and resemblances between traditional and new terrorism; the historical development of international terrorism; the effect of the end of the Cold War on terrorism; and factors impacting on contemporary terrorism.

An analysis of the Al-Qaeda movement was done with respect to its motivation, ideology, transnational character, target selection, operational strategy and tactics, and its desire to use non-conventional weapons. The intention was to identify aspects which may indicate whether the movement serves as a model of the characteristics identified by certain authors as a new terrorism. Case studies of the most important terrorist incidents linked to Al-Qaeda, including the September 11 attacks on the US, are included.

The study demonstrates that the nature of terrorism as an instrument to obtain political objectives has evolved but, at the same time, it has retained most of its essential characteristics. An investigation of the characteristics of traditional and

new terrorism confirmed this conclusion, as well as that a differentiation between these types of terrorism is mostly a matter of perspective. Another finding of the study is that terrorist campaigns have rarely obtained their strategic goals but that it nevertheless remains a popular strategy aimed at effecting desired political change.

The study furthermore confirms that terrorist groups do not operate in a vacuum but are influenced by the existing political, socio-economic and cultural environments. As such the end of the Cold War has caused specific changes in the international system which facilitated the rise of a movement like Al-Qaeda and which enabled it to function at a global level. The usefulness of the study lies in the clarification of the concepts of traditional and new terrorism; its indication of the evolving of motivations and strategies applied by terrorist organisations; and in the findings about the current campaign of the Al-Qaeda movement.

Key Terminology

Al-Qaeda	New terrorism
Cold War	Radical Islam
International terrorism	September 11 attacks
<i>Jihadi</i> ideology	Terrorism
Muslim religion	Traditional terrorism

OPSOMMING

- Onderwerp** : Nuwe tendense in kontemporêre internasionale en transnasionale terrorisme soos gemanifesteer in die Al-Qaeda beweging
- Deur** : Francina Bester
- Studieleier** : Prof M Hough
- Departement** : Politieke Wetenskappe, Universiteit van Pretoria
- Graad** : Magister in Veiligheidstudies

Die studie het ten doel om ondersoek in te stel na tendense in internasionale terrorisme sedert die einde van die Koue Oorlog, insluitende tendense wat geïdentifiseer is as “nuwe” terrorisme, asook om te bepaal tot welke mate sodanige tendense van toepassing is op die Al-Qaeda beweging. Om hierdie doel te bereik het die studie gefokus op aspekte soos die ontstaan en ontwikkeling van nuwe terrorisme, die verskille en ooreenkomste tussen tradisionele en nuwe terrorisme, die historiese ontwikkeling van internasionale terrorisme, die effek van die einde van die Koue Oorlog op terrorisme, en die faktore wat kontemporêre terrorisme beïnvloed.

‘n Ontleding van die Al-Qaeda beweging in terme van motivering, ideologie, transnasionale karakter, teikenseleksie, operasionele strategie en taktiek, en die doelwit om nie-konvensionele wapens te gebruik, is gedoen. Die doel hiervan was om aspekte wat kan aandui of Al-Qaeda ‘n model is van die eienskappe wat deur sommige outeurs aangedui word as kenmerkend van nuwe terrorisme, te identifiseer. Gevallestudies van die belangrikste terrorisme voorvalle wat aan Al-Qaeda toegeskryf word, insluitende die 11 September aanval op die VSA, is ingesluit.

Die studie toon dat die aard van terrorisme as instrument om politieke doelwitte te bereik, verander het maar dat die inherente kenmerke daarvan terselfdertyd hoofsaaklik onveranderd gebly het. 'n Ontleding van die kenmerke van tradisionele en nuwe terrorisme bevestig hierdie gevolgtrekking, asook dat 'n onderskeid tussen hierdie tipes terrorisme eerder 'n geval van perspektief verteenwoordig. 'n Verdere bevinding van die studie is dat terrorisme selde daarin geslaag het om strategiese doelwitte te verwesenlik maar dat dit nogtans 'n voorkeur-strategie bly vir die teweegbring van politieke verandering.

Die studie bevestig dat terrorisme organisasies nie in 'n vakuum opereer nie maar beïnvloed word deur bestaande politieke, sosio-ekonomiese en kulturele omstandighede. In hierdie opsig het die einde van die Koue Oorlog bepaalde veranderings in die internasionale stelsel teweeggebring wat die opkoms van 'n beweging soos Al-Qaeda vergemaklik het en dit instaat gestel het om op globale vlak te funksioneer. Die waarde van die studie is geleë in die omskrywing van die konsepte van tradisionele en nuwe terrorisme, in die beskrywing van die ontwikkeling in motivering en strategieë wat terrorisme organisasies aanwend, en in die bevindings rakende die huidige terrorisme veldtog deur die Al-Qaeda beweging.

Sleutelterme

11 September aanval	Moslem godsdienst
Al-Qaeda	Nuwe terrorisme
Internasionale terrorisme	Radikale Islam
<i>Jihadi</i> ideologie	Terrorisme
Koue Oorlog	Tradisionele terrorisme

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