Pre-Incident Indicators of Terrorist Attacks: Weak Economies and Fragile Political Infrastructures Bring Rise to Terrorist Organizations and Global Networks

Chantel Carter

School of Graduate and Continuing Studies in Diplomacy

Norwich University

Northfield, VT 05663 – 0367

Chantel.B.Carter@gmail.com

Abstract

States and regions that suffer from porous borders, poverty, government corruption, fragile economies, and social fragmentation are vulnerable terrorist safe havens. Failing states have an environment conducive to terrorist activity. Regions like the Horn of Africa and the Arabian Peninsula suffer from porous borders, corruption, and fragile economies that permit terrorists to create strategic regional networks. Specifically, Somalia, a collapsed state, is a vital terrorist transport station in the Horn of Africa while Yemen, a failing state, has become the base for Al Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula.

Keywords: Yemen, Horn of Africa, Somalia, Al-Shabaab, Al Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula (AQAP), Transitional Federal Government (TFG)

The Spread of Terrorism

Terrorism has been a tactical method used to invoke fear amongst different governments to promote political change. Many terrorist groups target economic and political infrastructures to weaken the government; as a result weak and fragile political and economic infrastructures are increasingly vulnerable to extremism and terrorism. Therefore, regions such as the Arabian Peninsula and the Horn of Africa have seen an increase in deliberate terrorist activity. According to terrorism expert Bruce Hoffman, terrorism is the threat or use of violence to achieve a political gain (Hoffman, 2006). Moreover, terrorist attacks are not random. Attacks are strategically planned and time sensitive. For example, the September 11th attack in the United States, when two planes crashed into the World Trade Center, was deliberate and specific to a larger plan. Al Qaeda members killed Northern Alliance opposition leader Ahmad Massoud the night before the planes crashed into the towers. According to Bruce Reidel, these attacks were interdependent; the killing of Ahmad Massoud gave less leverage to the Americans when they chose to surge into Afghanistan in retaliation (Reidel, 2008). Furthermore, the September 11th attacks illustrated the importance of globalization.

The phenomenon of international terrorism is simple: Al Qaeda can train in Afghanistan and facilitate attacks on U.S. soil. Furthermore, globalization has increased cooperation amongst terrorist organizations while developing technology that has improved terrorist capabilities. For example, Omar al Farooq Abdulmutallab, the 2009 Christmas bomber on flight 253 to Detroit, was dressed with a bomb manufactured by the Al Qaeda franchise in the Arabian Peninsula

(AQAP). The bomb device was not detected by various airport security stations (Riedel, "Al Qaeda's Yemen Connection America and Global Islamic Jihad", 2012). Abdulmutallab, a Nigerian man, admitted to the authorities that he received terrorist training in Yemen after his attempt to blow up the aircraft foiled.

International terrorism has manifested with the help of globalization. Terrorist networks are complex and flexible. Terrorist organizations around the world have intertwined with each other for political reasons, ideological reasons, technological reasons, and even geographical reasons. Many terrorist organizations increase networks in regions that are plagued with porous borders, lax border control, fragile economies, fragmented political and social culture, corrupt political officials, and subpar law enforcement. According to the political science research of David Laitin and James Fearon, economic and politically weak governments with no centralization are attractive to insurgencies (Jones, 2010). Therefore, law and policing in these states are ineffective. Regions like the Arabian Peninsula and the Horn of Africa have seen an increase in terrorist activity and transnational crimes due to inadequate governance, corruption, porous borders, fragile economies, and social strife. Terrorists find this environment conducive to recruitment, thus recruiting isolated individuals and gaining popular support. Moreover, terrorist organizations can conduct lucrative activities that can go undetected due to the lack of government stability and inadequate counter terrorism policies.

The Horn of Africa has been plagued with a tumultuous past consisting of poverty, failing states, and civil wars. Today, it is a breeding zone for jihadist terrorists and other extremist organizations. In particular, Somalia, a failed state, has had an increase in terrorist activity as it has become a transfer point and safe haven for terrorists affiliated with Al Qaeda. Similar to the Horn of Africa, the Arabian Peninsula is riddled with lax border control, corruption, subpar law enforcement, weak economies, and political fragmentation. The Arabian Peninsula has continued to host terrorist organizations, including Al Qaeda. Yemen, a failing state, has been the base for Al Qaeda in this region. AQAP is an active terrorist organization within the region. According to BBC news, the Al Qaeda group in the Arabian Peninsula is "the most active operational franchise" ("Al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula," 2011). It has been destroying the region's economic infrastructure by targeting regional oil plants; additionally, it has implemented attacks around the world (BBC News, "Al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula,"2011).

The Horn of Africa and the Arabian Peninsula have been on the U.S. policy radar since terrorist activities have been linked to Al Qaeda. These areas are hot zones for transnational crime. Moreover, there is a connection between Somalia and Yemen; as Somalia experts Ken Menkhaus and Christopher Boucek note, "Somalia's link to the Arabian Peninsula largely runs through Yemen…There are well-developed organized crime links between Yemen and Somalia, including human trafficking and smuggling of diesel and arms" (Menkhaus, Boucek, "Terrorism out of Somalia," Interview, 2010). This is important for Al Qaeda operatives that must transfer equipment across borders, while creating covert passage ways and safe havens. This linkage between Somalia and Yemen increases Al Qaeda's capabilities of continuing terrorist networks and initiating global attacks.

The Horn of Africa

The Horn of Africa consists of Kenya, Somalia, Eritrea, Sudan, Djibouti, and Ethiopia. Terrorism is extremely prevalent in the Horn of Africa. The region is plagued with weak governments, fragmented political culture and ideology, weak or corrupt law enforcement, porous borders, and failed states. These factors make it too easy for terrorist organizations, specifically Al Qaeda, to establish small cells, safe havens, operate illicit activities, and smuggle resources across borders. Identifying an increase in terrorist activity within the region has placed the Horn of Africa as a vulnerable region for more transnational crime. For example,

- According to regional expert, Gilbert Khadiagala, Kenya has had numerous individuals linked to Al Qaeda, who were responsible or involved in the Nairobi and Mombasa bombings. The attacks demonstrated Al Qaeda's capabilities to evade Kenyan law enforcement and transfer missiles undetected across its border (Khadiagala, 2004).

- Djibouti is a high focal point for terrorism. According to regional expert Lange Schermerhorn, the government is ill equipped to protect its borders and there has been an increase in mosques supported by Saudi Arabia (Schermerhorn, 2004). Furthermore, the growing Saudi influence in Djibouti has increased while "Saudis have been paying school girls to cover their heads" (West, 2005). This type of influence can eventually lead to radicalization, which leaves room for terrorist activity and indoctrination.

- Eritrea is a vulnerable state because it continues to have an unstable government. Therefore, it is ill equipped to punish terrorist organizations and many of its military resources are utilized in protecting its border against Ethiopia. According to West, "Eritrea is unlikely to become a regional base for terror on its own, but the domestic repression and battle with Ethiopia will open up spaces for terrorism to develop politically and as instruments of revenge" (West, 2005). Furthermore, the Eritrean Islamic Jihad Movement (EIJM) may have affiliates with Al Qaeda (Iyob, 2004).

- Countries like Ethiopia with a high population of Muslims have been the subject of attacks and radicalization. The tension between Sufi Muslims (traditionalist) and Wahhabi Muslims has intensified (West, 2005). Moreover, the social fragmentation combined with poverty establishes a perfect environment conducive to terrorism.

- Sudan can be the alleged gateway state that promoted and increased the jihad crusade in the Horn of Africa. According to region experts John Prendergast and Philip Roessler, Sudan is the only sub-Saharan African government on the U.S. State Sponsors of Terrorism List (Prendergast, Roessler, 2004). The National Islamic Front (NIF) seized power of Sudan

in 1989 and aligned itself with implementing strict Islamic Law, while providing safe havens to terrorist organizations and assisting in terrorist acts (Dagne, 2010). Furthermore, many analysts believe that Osama Bin Laden spent five years in Sudan creating the foundation for Al Qaeda (Dagne, 2010). According to a Congressional testimony by Ted Dagne of the Congressional Research Service, " The penetration by Al Qaeda into East Africa is directly tied to NIF's early years of support to international terrorist organizations" (Dagne,2010).

Somalia, like its neighbors, has porous borders, a fragile economy, and a fragmented political and social culture. These factors have played a specific role in promoting terrorism within the Horn of Africa. Somalia is an important part of the terrorist network in the Horn of Africa because it lacks a centralized government. The intensified fragmentation of political and social groups has established new terrorist organizations such as Al Shaabab that have links to Al Qaeda. Moreover, Somalia's geographic location serves as a transit point to the Arabian Peninsula. These factors make Somalia far more vulnerable to future terrorist activities and an international hub for international terrorists.

Case Study: Somalia

Somalia is an ideal terrorist safe haven because it lacks a centralized government; it has had 14 different types of governments from 1991 to 2010 (Cohen, 2010). It also lacks a secure border that has been an important transfer point for terrorist shipments. According to Somalia expert Ken Menkhaus, Somalia has served as a transit point, moving supplies and materials through to Kenya- an attractive terrorist target (Menkhaus, 2004). Furthermore, terrorist recruitment has increased amongst the young and the poor. Militant groups quickly formed to create dracaena law and order.

In the early 1990s Islamic courts began to form as a local government enforced by their own militia, specifically the militant Islamic organization, *Al Ittihad Al Islamiya (Al Ittihad)* (Ploch, 2010). Al Ittihad was a group of Somali militants that aided in the defeat against the Soviets in Afghanistan (Ploch, 2010). The organization suffered from internal fragmentation due to different objectives and ideology, but many group members had ties to Al Qaeda. According to Lauren Ploch an analyst in African Affairs, in 1993 Al Ittihad received training and logistical support from Al Qaeda (Ploch, 2010). In 2006, young members of Al Ittihad formed the Islamic Courts Union, but the members intensely disagreed on further objectives and goals that young leaders formed *Al –Shabaab* (Dagne, 2010).

Al –Shabaab has been the active Al Qaeda connection in the southern region of Somalia. Al Qaeda had planned to use Somalia like Afghanistan-- a base for strategic operations. However, Somalia did not seem to have the same qualities as Afghanistan; therefore, Al Qaeda commanders decided to use Somalia as a transfer point for "business" transactions, while using *Al –Shabaab* as a productive partner (Polch, 2010). Al –Shabaab's objective is to impose strict Islamic Law in Somalia. Many of its hardline leaders are affiliated with Al Qaeda, aligning themselves with the jihad crusade (Ploch, 2010). According to a 2010 Congressional Research Service report, Al Qaeda provided Al- Shabaab with training and equipment (Ploch, 2010).

Furthermore, the sophistication of Al- Shabaab's improvised explosive devices (IEDs) mirrors the technology and tactics of Al Qaeda, thus linking the two organizations. The U.S. National Counterterrorism Center (NCTC) indicated that, "Al-Shabaab has issued statements praising Usama Bin Ladin and linking Somalia to al-Qa'ida's global operations" (http://www.nctc.gov/site/groups/al_shabaab.html).

Al- Shabaab is growing rapidly with the support of Al Qaeda. Both groups have been able to maximize popular support by recruiting isolated or poor Muslims in Somalia and nearby Kenya (Ploch, 2010). Al- Shabaab has provided local services to Somalia's poor; it has repaired bridges and has enforced greater security measures in areas that it controls (Ploch, 2010). Additionally, Al- Shabaab has taken advantage of the unemployment in Somalia, while offering generous salaries with benefits to potential young fighters. Furthermore, Al- Shabaab has used Somalia's political and social divide to manipulate individuals into believing that the American anti-terrorism efforts in East Africa, specifically in Ethiopia, are based on the Western imperialist ideas to conquer Muslims (Ploch, 2010). Al- Shabaab also claims that Somalia's Transitional Federal Government (TFG) is a Western puppet government. The TFG was placed in control in 2006 after Ethiopia, backed by U.S. forces ousted the Islamic Court Union (ICU) in a day, but the TFG has been under fire while Al- Shabaab continues to keep plotting attacks (Cohen, 2010).

Al- Shabaab has become an escalating regional and international threat. Moreover, its link with Al Qaeda and AQAP has created a terrorist critical network. The 2010 Kampala suicide bombings in Uganda that killed 70 people was led by an Al- Shabaab member that was motivated by his hatred towards the TFG and the U.S. support for the TFG (Ploch, 2010). The attack elucidated that Al- Shabaab has the capabilities of attacking targets outside Somalia, amplifying its regional and international threat. Al- Shabaab has aggressively targeted African Union (AU) and American peacekeeping units, making Somalia a deadly conflict zone (http://www.nctc.gov/site/groups/al_shabaab.html.). The 2010 *NCTC Report on Terrorism* states that between August 23rd and August 30th Al- Shabaab targeted peacekeepers and TFG members, killing 61 individuals including children, while wounding 131 individuals (NCTC, 2011). Additionally, Al- Shabaab has targeted mosques (NCTC, 2011). Subsequently, Al- Shabaab's attacks have increased global concern in the Horn of Africa. According to a 2010 Congressional Research Service report:

> "Today, Al Shabaab is considered by U.S. officials to be one of the most deadly violent extremist groups in the world, responsible in 2009 for the second-highest number of deadly attacks by Sunni extremists after the Taliban. According to some reports, the Yemen-based Al Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula (AQAP) may have shared chemical bomb-making capability with Al Shabaab" (Ploch, 2010).

Al- Shabaab will continue to be Al Qaeda's link in the Horn of Africa because Somalia's weak law enforcement, porous borders, fragmented political and social culture, and its link to the Arabian Peninsula have enabled Al Qaeda and Al Shabaab to extend their terrorist networks. Somalia, an exemplary illustration of a *failed state,* is conducive to terrorist activity. It serves as a safe haven and a transit point for Al Qaeda affiliates in the Horn of Africa. According to a

2002 International Crisis Group (ICG) report, "…dysfunctional or collapsed states are often the venue of choice for illicit networks…" (ICG, 2002).

U.S. Response in Somalia

As previously mentioned, Somalia is an ideal terrorist haven because the violence there is tolerated, while a weak government, poor population, and an unregulated border have made it continuously easy for terrorist organizations and insurgent groups to recruit individuals and travel undetected in and out of the state. In order to combat and reduce terrorist activity in the Horn of Africa, the United States must make a plan that decreases terrorist safe havens, while supporting economic and political stability.

The United States has worked closely with Ethiopia and Kenya, providing them with training and support to enhance their border security to prevent terrorist groups using Somalia as a transit point (Menkhaus, 2004). The United States has also aggressively attacked and killed Al –Shabaab leaders affiliated with Al Qaeda. According to a 2010 Congressional Research report:

- In 2007 the United States launched seven military strikes against Al Qaeda targets. The targets included training camps (Ploch, 2010).
- In 2008 the United States launched naval strikes against Al Qaeda targets that were connected to the 1998 and 2002 embassy attacks in Mombasa (Ploch, 2010).
- In late 2008 the United States targeted top Al –Shabaab officials in Somalia by a cruise missile attack (Ploch, 2010).

Moreover, the United States is aiming to promote economic and political stability in Somalia. Stable governance and economic prosperity can prevent insurgencies. Therefore, the United States has aimed to improve Muslim attitudes toward the United States by implementing peace security measures and promoting social and economic developing programs supported by the United Nations and United States Agency for International Development (USAID). For example, Congress in 2009 provided USAID with $5.5 million for youth programs in Kenya and Somalia (Ploch, 2010). Furthermore, the United States has spent $385 million in the last three years supporting the African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM) (State Department spokesperson Interview, 2012). These missions have aimed to increase economic and political stability. U.S. Secretary of State Hillary Clinton stated in a CNN news brief that the United States emergency assistance to Somalia is "more than $934 million since last year" (Karimi, Basu,2012).

The United States has also addressed the violation of human rights and humanitarian issues in Somalia. In 2010 Congress passed Senate Resolution 573, a bill that pressured President Obama to create a comprehensive plan outlining the U.S. humanitarian and diplomatic processes in Somalia (Ploch, 2010). Moreover, political leaders have co-sponsored bills such as House Resolution 345 condemning Al Shabaab for its practice of child conscription in the Horn of Africa, and House Resolution 361 focusing on providing humanitarian relief efforts in Somalia regarding drought and famine (http://thomas.loc.gov/cgi-bin/thomas).

Somalia's regional security threat is also an international threat as transnational terrorists and criminals use Somalia as a safe haven. World leaders met Thursday, February 23, 2012 in London to discuss the heightened regional and global security issues that Somalia raises in the Horn of Africa (Karimi, Basu, 2012). Secretary of State Clinton, assured the global community that the United States will continue to place pressure on Al-Shabaab, while assisting Somali officials in creating jobs and providing public services for Somali citizens (Karimi, Basu, 2012). The United States needs to remain an active facilitator in weakening terrorist networks in the Horn of Africa in order to prevent future attacks on U.S. soil.

The Arabian Peninsula

Similar to the Horn of Africa, the Arabian Peninsula is plagued with porous borders, corruption, social and political fragmentation that breeds terrorism. The Arabian Peninsula consists of Kuwait, Bahrain, Qatar, the United Arab Emirates, Oman, Yemen, and Saudi Arabia. There are two main concerns in the Arabian Peninsula: 1) Saudi Arabia, a known supporter of terrorist organizations including Al Qaeda, and 2) Yemen, a failing state with an environment conducive to terrorism. In 2009 after Saudi Arabia enforced sweeping anti-terrorism policies and dismantled many Al Qaeda affiliates, a group of Yemeni and Saudi militants agreed to unite in retaliation. The group is known as Al Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula (AQAP) based out of Yemen (Rollins, 2011).

Terrorism in Yemen is escalating. Yemen has become an important safe haven for terrorists in the Arabian Peninsula, particularly Al Qaeda. It is a poor and divided state on the verge of collapsing with raising global energy concerns (Sharp, 2010). Yemen's weak economy and political fragmentation have created a breeding ground for transnational crime and terrorism (Exum, Fontaine, 2009). Regional terrorist attacks on oil plants and other energy infrastructures have crippled Yemen's economy and stability within the region, and have threatened international investment. For example, in a 2004 BBC News Brief, AQAP militants shot and killed five Western workers at a petrochemical complex in Yanbu. Additionally, the killing of more than 20 foreigners and Saudi nationals in al-Khobar expanded regional fear and raised international oil prices (BBC News, 2004).   A 2011 Congressional Research Service report:

> "Yemen's oil production drops precipitously, its population rises, its water tables drop, and its government coffers dwindle, the country only becomes more ripe for instability and extremist activity" (Rollins, 2011).

Furthermore, Yemen has had a history supporting Sunni militants. Yemen's former President Saleh had many individuals that fought against the Soviets in Afghanistan (Masters, 2011). Therefore, Saleh was criticized for aligning himself with the ideologies of Sunni Islamist militants, which explained his complacency towards regional Al Qaeda supporters (Rollins, 2011).   Additionally, Saleh's commitment to counter terrorism efforts in Yemen was questionable when prominent terrorist captives would easily escape (Masters, 2011).

AQAP is an aggressively active group that has become a regional and international threat. Yemen's population is the poorest in the Arabian Peninsula; therefore, AQAP has been able to indoctrinate Yemen's poor youth and disgruntled citizens (Exum, Fontaine, 2009). The group is

responsible for many relentless attacks in the Arabian Peninsula. AQAP's goals and objectives align with the global jihad movement: to promote strict Islamic Law and fight the Western states that threaten Islam, specifically the United States. AQAP's main objectives are:

1. To inspire new and innovative attacks on the U.S. : The Christmas bomber, also known as the underwear bomber, Umar Farouk Abdulmutallab, a Nigerian man, received equipment and training from a camp in Yemen to blowup a U.S. flight. Although, his planned was foiled the attack demonstrates AQAP's capability and determination of conducting another attack on the U.S. Moreover, Yemen cleric Anwar Awlaki (deceased), a major official within AQAP, was able to inspire through his media lone wolves such as Major Nidal Hasan who was responsible for the Fort Hood shootings and Faisal Shahzad, the Time Square Bomber whose failed attempt was motivated by Awlaki's scriptures (Rollins, 2011). AQAP was also responsible for sending two bombs in two packages addressed to two synagogues in Chicago; the bombs were found before the packages landed in the United States (BBC News, 2004). More recently, the United States Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) in May 2012 revealed a similar underwear bomb attempt that originated from Yemen. The bomb was better equipped than the last attempt.

2. To weaken and overthrow Yemen's government: AQAP militants have attacked tourists and embassies, and have attempted to assassinate ambassadors and heads of states (Rollins, 2011). These attacks have reduced foreign investment and tourism. Attacks that specifically target Yemen's economic and energy infrastructure have increased, while AQAP attempts to overthrow the government by revealing internal corruption and instability (Rollins, 2011).

Furthermore, AQAP is affiliated with Somalia's Al –Shabaab. Strategically, Somalia aids in transporting equipment and materials into the Horn of Africa. Yemen and Somali leaders have announced that they will support each other, creating a substantial terrorist threat that connects East Africa and the Arabian Peninsula. The network is alarming and tangible. The combination can create a greater international threat and increase terrorist capabilities. Moreover, Yemen's environment continues to be conducive to terrorist activity. Yemen's instability has derailed many counter terrorism policies. Its porous borders, lax border control, poverty, and social and political fragmentation have strengthened AQAP's base in Yemen. In addition, AQAP's decentralized structure enables it to keep operations functioning when key members are caught or killed (Masters, 2011). Its resiliency, adaptability, and capability to administer critical attacks have led many officials to note AQAP as a dangerous Al Qaeda franchise. In his 2009 testimony to the Senate Armed Service Committee, General David H. Patreaus stated:

"…The inability of the Yemeni government to secure and exercise control over all of its territory offers terrorist and insurgent groups in the region, particularly Al Qaeda, a safe haven in which to plan, organize, and support

terrorist operations… Where extremist cells in Yemen grow, Yemen's strategic location would facilitate terrorist freedom of movement in the region and allow terrorist organizations to threaten Yemen's neighbors, especially Saudi Arabia and the other Gulf States. In view of this, we are expanding our security cooperation efforts with Yemen to help build the nation's security, counter- insurgency, and counter-terror capabilities" (Sharp, 2010).

To that end, Yemen still serves as a hub for AQAP. It is on the precipice of becoming a failed state; a safe haven for transnational criminal organizations affiliated with terrorism.

U.S. Response in Yemen:

Similar to the U.S. policy in the Horn of Africa, the United States should focus on diplomatic policies to strengthen Yemen's economic and political infrastructure, while aiding in counter terrorism efforts.   The United States should establish a blueprint to:

1. Eliminate AQAP leaders and hubs;
2. Enhance Yemen's economic infrastructure to avoid a collapsed state;
3. Increase Yemen's security to combat regional terrorism.

The United States should increase its drone bases. A 2011 news article in the Washington Post stated that the CIA and the U.S. Joint Special Operations Command (JSOC) have increased predator drones in search of AQAP leaders and high ranking affiliates (Miller, 2011). The increase in U.S. military and CIA drones illustrates the escalating threat of transnational terrorism in Yemen.   Now that Saleh has stepped down from power, the United States has pressed the Yemeni government to collaborate on intelligence information (Rollins, 2011).

Furthermore, steady economic aid to this region will help U.S. foreign policy with Yemen's citizens. Fighting terrorists is one part of the task, but genuinely aiding Yemen's government and gaining trust from its citizens is vital if the United States wishes to flush out AQAP operatives. In 2010, the United States provided $290 million in aid to Yemen, which covered socio-economic programs monitored by USAID and the State Department (Rollins, 2011).

Increasing Yemen's security will help establish peace and create a stable environment less conducive to terrorism. According to the U.S. State Department, in 2011 Yemen received $20 million for military financing, $1 million for military education and training, and $4.5 million in related anti-terrorism programs (U.S. State Department, Bureau of Near Eastern Affairs, 2012).

Yemen's problem will not be solved in a day and probably not in a decade. However, collaboration between the U.S. and Yemen's government to instill stable social programs will slowly deter terrorist hubs. The global community has assisted Yemen in social reform programs, but aggressive reform must first stem from Yemen's government. After Yemen's

presidential elections on February 22, 2012, the new president will need to overcome many obstacles including poverty, famine, corruption, inadequate security, and terrorists.

Conclusion

Somalia and Yemen are two examples of states that maintain an environment conducive to terrorism. Somalia has become a strategic terrorist transfer point in the Horn of Africa, while Yemen has become a base for Al Qaeda members and affiliates in the Arabian Peninsula. Their common factors include poverty, famine, corruption, porous borders, and intense political and social fragmentation. These characteristics have created an environment favorable to terrorist activity. These two countries, the poorest in their regions, have become gateways for extremism and radical insurgencies. Moreover, Somalia has been a key connector in transporting terrorist materials from the Horn of Africa to the Arabian Peninsula. The easy access to borders has expanded terrorist networks, specifically AQAP's network with Al –Shabaab. The regional network has intensified attacks targeting international interest in the Arabian Peninsula and the Horn of Africa. It has also increased the potential for terrorist attacks outside these regions, considering the Christmas Day bomber's foiled attempt to blow up an aircraft.

It is the duty of the international community to help deter these terrorist links, while implementing a comprehensive plan for social and economic reform. Social and economic reform will inevitably centralize the government and stabilize political infrastructures. According to political scientist Seth Jones, Kenya in the 1980s was able to prevent a coup attempt by having a strong government that decreased any large-scale violence (Jones, 2010).

What does the future hold for Somalia and Yemen? Based on Somalia and Yemen's rates of "improvement," it will not be surprising to see Yemen as a collapsed state in the next three years, while terrorist activity by AQAP will increase. The terrorist network will increase between Al-Shabaab and AQAP if counter terrorism procedures are not capable of severing Al-Shabaab's rigid organization. Al-Shabaab has a structure that seems to mirror Al Qaeda's decentralized hierarchy. If Al-Shabaab, a hybrid terrorist and insurgent group is capable of expanding its grip in Somalia and in the Horn of Africa, then experts may see a phenomenal merger between AQAP and Al-Shabaab creating a dangerous international threat.

References

"Al-Shabaab" National Counterterrorism Center, Viewed on February 23, 2012,
        http://www.nctc.gov/site/groups/al_shabaab.html

 "Al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula," BBC NEWS. June 14, 2011,
        Viewed on February 23, 2012

"Background Note: Yemen," U.S. Department of State. Bureau of Near Eastern Affairs.
        January 18, 2012http://www.state.gov/r/pa/ei/bgn/35836.htm#relations. Viewed on
        February 23, 2012

Cohen, Julie. "Terrorism Havens: Somalia" Council on Foreign Relations, 2010

Dagne, Ted. "The Horn of Africa: Current Conditions and U.S. Policy," Congressional Research
        Service. Testimony before the Subcommittee on Africa and Global Health, House
        Foreign Affairs Committee, June 17, 2010

Exum, Andrew; Fontaine, Richard. "On the Knife's Edge: Yemen's Instability and the Threat to
        American Interests," Center for New American Security. 2009

Hoffman,Bruce. Inside Terrorism, Columbia University Press, 2006

House Resolution 361, http://thomas.loc.gov/cgi-bin/thomas, Viewed on February 23, 2012

Iyob, Ruth. "Shifting Terrain: Dissidence versus Terrorism in Eritrea," United States Institute of
        Peace Special Report: "Terrorism in the Horn of Africa," January 14, 2004.

Jones, Seth. In the Graveyard of Empires: America's War in Afghanistan, W.W. Norton and
        Company, 2010

Karimi, Faith; Basu, Moni. "Cameron warns global security rests on Somalia's future," CNN
        News Brief, February 23, 2012, Viewed on February 23, 2012.
        http://www.cnn.com/2012/02/22/world/africa/somalia-london-
        conference/index.html?iref=allsearch

Khadiagala, Gilbert. "Kenya: Haven or Helpless Victim of Terrorism," United States Institute
        of Peace Special Report: "Terrorism in the Horn of Africa," January 14, 2004.

Masters, Jonathan. "Al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula," Council on Foreign Relations, 2011

Menkhuas, Ken. "Terrorism in Somalia, Threat Assessment and Policy Options," United States
        Institute of Peace Special Report: "Terrorism in the Horn of Africa," January 14, 2004

Miller, Greg. "CIA to operate drones over Yemen," The Washington Post. June 14, 2011, Viewed on February 23, 2012. http://www.washingtonpost.com/national/national-security/cia-to-operate-drones-over-yemen/2011/06/13/AG7VyyTH_story.html

Ploch, Lauren. "Countering Terrorism in East Africa: The U.S. Response," Congressional Research Service. November 3, 2010

Prendergast, John; Roessler, Philip. "Can a Leopard Change Its Spots? Sudan's Evolving Relationship with Terrorism," United States Institute of Peace Special Report: "Terrorism in the Horn of Africa," January 14, 2004.

Riedel, Bruce. The Search for Al Qaeda: Its Leadership, Ideology, and Future, Brookings Institute Press, 2008

Riedel, Bruce. "Al Qaeda's Yemen Connection, America and the Global Islamic Jihad," Brookings Institute, Up Front Blog, December 30, 2009, viewed on February 23, 2012 http://www.brookings.edu/up-front/posts/2009/12/30-terrorism-yemen-riedel

Rollins, John. "Al Qaeda and Affiliates: Historical Perspective, Global Presence, and Implications for U.S. Policy" Congressional Research Service, 2011

Schermerhorn,Lange. "Djibouti: Fulcrum of the Horn," United States Institute of Peace Special Report: "Terrorism in the Horn of Africa," January 14, 2004

Sharp, James."Yemen: Background and U.S. Relations," Congressional Research Service, 2010.

Senior State Department Official Previewing Conference on Somalia: Special Briefing Office of the Spokesperson, On Plane en route to London, February 22, 2012. Interview. http://www.state.gov/r/pa/prs/ps/2012/02/184480.htm Viewed on February 23, 2012.

"Somalia: Countering Terrorism in a Failed State," International Crisis Croup, May 23, 2002

"Terrorism out of Somalia," Interview: Menkhaus, Ken; Boucek, Christopher. Carnegie Endowment for International Peace., September 23, 2010, http://carnegieendowment.org/2010/09/23/terrorism-out-of-somalia/wnc, Viewed on February 22, 2012

West, Deborah. "Combating Terrorism in The Horn of Africa and Yemen," Belfer Center for Science and International Affairs, John F. Kennedy School of Government, Harvard University, 2005

"2010 Report on Terrorism" National Counterterrorism Center, 2011 http://www.nctc.gov/witsbanner/docs/2010_report_on_terrorism.pdf. Viewed on February 22, 2012