

Title:

Why We're Not Winning The "War Against Terror" III

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Summary:

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Article Body:

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All of these African countries have been involved in terrorist wars in the recent past - and some are still ongoing. They're not high profile in western media, because there are few western soldiers involved in these wars. Yet the civilian casualties are far greater in these African wars than in the middle-eastern wars.

I hope my two previous papers on the war against terror made the case for fighting terrorists in Iraq and Afghanistan. But what about these African wars against terror? Those of us with long memories shudder at being reminded of 'Black Hawk Down' during the USA's disastrous venture into Mogadishu in Somalia, East Africa in 1993; Somalia is now riddled with Al Qaeda.

But is there anything worth fighting for in Africa, apart from trying to stop

the terrible bloodshed? Well, Islam and Communist China certainly think there's something worth fighting for, because they've stepped in to replace the vacuum left by the old European influence in Africa. Roughly speaking, Islam north of the equator and China south of the equator. Before the collapse of the Soviet Union, Russia did too.

Africa is richly endowed with vast mineral resources. Everyone knows about African Diamonds and African Gold, but Africa also has the biggest reserves of uranium, platinum and many other lesser-known but vitally important strategic minerals in the world. Plus significant quantities of just about every other valuable resource, from oil and gas to coal and iron; just what China needs to feed its hunger for commodities as it builds itself into a world-beating industrial economy. China moves silently, buying-up or infiltrating strategic businesses, and leveraging political and economic influence with like-minded dictators in Southern and Central Africa. Islam is less discreet and moves with violence. The genocide in the Darfur province of the Sudan that the United Nations has been unable to stop is driven by Islamic militants, ruthlessly killing or displacing "non-believers". So there are two different agendas at work in Africa - the Chinese are securing their supplies of essential minerals and Islamists are steadily imposing their rule and religion on the African people. Both pose a serious threat to the West.

What if we do nothing? Take Zimbabwe in Southern Africa, which has made a small impact on the headlines recently, though there's not a state of war there... yet. Zimbabwe is a classic case of what happens when terrorists win a war. Comrade Robert Mugabe and his Marxist henchmen have been in power there for 27 years, since the end of the Rhodesian Civil War in 1980. They won the Civil War in Rhodesia with weapons and training from China, while the west imposed sanctions against Rhodesia to hamper the Rhodesian defence against Chinese and Soviet backed terrorists. The war lasted 15 long years, until the sanctions imposed by western nations brought Rhodesia to its knees. Britain backed Marxist Robert Mugabe to win the so-called 'democratic' elections that took place in 1980.

In the 27 years since then, tens of thousands (accurate figures are not known) have died in state-sponsored massacres of opponents to Mugabe's rule. Thousands more have died of disease and other, starvation related illnesses. Rhodesia was known as the "breadbasket of Africa" - now it has to import food. But what was once a thriving economy - despite the civil war and sanctions - has been destroyed. Inflation was last measured at over 1,700% and people are unable to buy food even if there is food in the shops, which is not very frequently because the currency is all but worthless. Having been one of the best in Africa at 67 years, life expectancy in Zimbabwe is now the worst in the world; 37 for men and 34 for women. (World Health Organisation -

<http://www.who.int/countries/zwe/en/>)

But the west is powerless to help the Zimbabwe people because the regional power, South Africa refuses to condemn Mugabe. That's not surprising. Mugabe's political party, ZANU/PF is Marxist - like the ANC party of South African President Thabo Mbeki (and Nelson Mandela) in South Africa. We know from experience that African leaders do not tolerate opposition, unless it has no chance of succeeding. If the South African powers support anyone opposing Mugabe, they'll be supporting their own opposition. Just wait until the South Africa opposition parties begin to become a threat to the ANC. They'll be crushed just as ruthlessly as Mugabe is crushing the Zimbabwean opposition - now that they represent a threat. Following a high-level mission from China, both South Africa and Zimbabwe have recently strengthened their ties with that country...

The USA and Britain (rightly) have their eyes firmly fixed on the Middle East, but can they afford to ignore what's happening in Africa?