

AFRICA, TECHNOLOGY & THE 'WAR ON TERROR'

by
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"When people fear not death
Of what use are threats?"
- v73, Toa Te Ching

The great Western powers of the time met at Brussels and passed the Brussels convention in 1885, one of the most important documents in modern African history, according to which:

"having clearly proved that the preservation of the African populations, whose existence it is the express wish of the Powers to safeguard, is a radical impossibility if restrictive measures against the trade in firearms and ammunition are not established; the Powers decide, in so far as the present state of their frontiers permits, that the importation of firearms, and especially of rifles and improved weapons, as well as of powder, balls and cartridges, is, prohibited in the territories"

Under cover of pious rhetoric about repressing the slave trade the powers agree to embargo modern weapons and the latest technology from Africa. One of the most aggressive acts in human history is wrapped in the fig leaves of anti-slavery rhetoric. The consequences of the Brussels Convention were the numerous slaughters of Africans that heralded the 'scramble for Africa'.

"Brussels Convention is passed, prohibiting the sale of arms to Africans. The European nations also agreed not to fight among themselves or assist any African power. It is significant that not a single armed conflict occurred between any two of the European imperial powers during the era of the partition and conquest of Africa. Divided, armed with outmoded and crude weapons, without logistic support, it is not surprising that only two African states survived the imperialist onslaught (Ethiopia and Liberia, which was protected by the US)" (AfricAvenir.com) When Samoure Toure was fighting the French invaders of his country he appealed to Britain for arms and was refused assistance in accord with the terms of the Brussels Convention. In complying with the terms of an agreement notionally to reduce the slave trade Britain deliberately assisted the enslavement of an entire nation and then continent. The Brussels Convention unleashed a continent wide terror in Africa.

This wrapping up of acts of dark conspiracy and high aggression in the rhetoric of high values and for the benefit of those about to be raped and plundered is a pattern that we will see repeated in contemporary times. But before we look at contemporary issues we need to go back several centuries as the only way to put into context the issues of technology and terror as they relate to Africa is to deconstruct contemporary discussion by re-empowering a past dialogue and a dialogue with the past.

There is a direct relationship between the conquest of the New World and the era of trade in Africans as the capital generated by the conquests was the basis for the enslavement of Africans and their transportation to the New World. This conquest of the new World was achieved by deliberate biological warfare, the careful and premeditated distribution of dangerous toxins, in this case - the small pox virus. As the Borden Institute (US Army bio warfare unit at Fort Detrick) explained:

"On several occasions, smallpox has been used as a biological weapon in the New World. Pizarro is said to have presented indigenous peoples of South American with variola-contaminated clothing in the 15th century, " (Medical Aspect of Chemical and Biological Warfare ch.18). As a consequence of biowarfare and other means the Indian population in

Latin America was rapidly reduced by up to 90% and the structure of society destroyed. Not to be outdone by the Spanish, the English adopted similar tactics against the North American Indians. Lord Amherst on 16 July 1763 wrote to Col Henry Bouquet : "You will do well to try to inoculate the Indians by means of blanketts, as well as to try every other method that can serve to extirpate this execrable race. " On July 26 Bouquet replied: "all your directions will be observed." Further, as the Borden Institute adds: "In 1763, Captain Ecuyer of the Royal Americans, out of concern that an Indian attack was possible in the near future and under the pretense of friendship, deliberately distributed two variola virus-contaminated blankets and a handkerchief from a smallpox hospital to enemy Indian forces. This was followed several months later by large outbreaks of smallpox .." In both South and North America the genocidal destruction of native Indians was both a political, military and financial precondition to the establishment of African slavery and in both cases was achieved in large part by biological warfare. Even as recent as 1850's Argentina engaged in a successful genocide of its African population (which was up to 80% of the population) during a yellow fever outbreak. Descriptions of the effects of the biowar on Peruvian and other Indians convey images of endless streets full of rotting bodies. The closest modern equivalent would be images of a post nuclear holocaust. This was a human induced terror on a previously unimaginable scale.

What made this holocaust possible was a wide technological gap together with an astonishing opportunity for great wealth through plunder and theft which was then driven by internal competitive rivalry among the European powers. 1917 is an important date in African history as the Russian revolution effectively brought the Brussels Convention embargo to an end.

Let us now return to our theme - technology and the war on terror. What is technology? Merriam-Webster defines it as 'the practical application of knowledge' and in the Compact Oxford Dictionary it is "the application of scientific knowledge for practical purposes'. What then is terror? According to the Compact Oxford it is 'extreme fear' while Merriam Webster defines it as: 'a state of intense fear'. We identify 4 technologies that inspire 'extreme fear' in Africa: chemical, biological and nuclear warfare, and the misuse of electronic networks.

Chemical warfare

At the end of the Chinese civil war and the establishment of the Chinese Communist Republic elements of the defeated Kuomintang army fled southwards towards Burma. The CIA had to find an occupation for them. Drawing upon previous British ideas it started an opium business and arranged for the product to be shipped to the Mafia for distribution in Harlem and other Black areas in the US. Until such drugs began to cross over to middle class kids this epidemic was largely ignored. This was a chemical attack on the population of African descent. This was then followed by a similar chemical attack during the Iran/Contra period (see Webb, Parry) where the CIA provided drugs and protection to drug traffickers who targeted the communities of African descent in California. According to Robert Parry: "In perhaps the most stunning disclosure, Hitz published evidence that drug trafficking and money laundering tracked directly into Reagan's National Security Council where Lt. Col. Oliver L. North oversaw contra operations." The population of African descent was known to be differentially vulnerable to crack cocaine such that addiction would be more severe and devastation more thorough. A chemical attack on people of African descent launched from the most senior offices in the US.

Biowarfare

The Tuskegee Study, where persons of African descent were deliberately infected with syphilis and left untreated was an experiment that would not be out of place in a concentration camp or performed by

Dr Mengele. It has been said of Dr Mengele "To Mengele they were nevertheless not fellow human beings, but rather material on which to conduct his experiments" (Wikipedia) which aptly describes the attitude displayed by US institutions involved in the study. While not strictly an act of war it puts into context later allegations that Dr Gallo at Fort Detrick was involved in developing AIDS virus as targeted attack on Africans and homosexuals.

During the apartheid era South Africa worked on developing biological weapons aimed at exterminating Black people on a scale comparable with the small pox assault on native Indians.

Muwakkil reported

"Wouter Basson, the man who directed South Africa's clandestine bioweapons program, "spoke candidly [to federal officials] of global shopping sprees for pathogens and equipment, of plans for epidemics to be sown in black communities and of cigarettes and letters that were laced with anthrax." The Post said Basson "revealed the development of a novel anthrax strain unknown to the U.S. officials, a kind of 'stealth' anthrax that Basson claimed could fool tests used to detect the disease."

The top-secret program that Basson directed was called Project Coast, and it lasted from 1981 to 1993. The South African National Defense Force created it at a time when the white-minority regime was under increasing threat by indigenous black South Africans. Daan Goosen, the former director of Project Coast's biological research division, told the Post he was ordered by Basson to develop ways "to suppress population growth among blacks" and to "search for a 'black bomb,' a biological weapon that would select targets based on skin color."

Mr Steven Hatfill who worked in Rhodesia and then South Africa on such programs then went to work for US biowarfare unit at Fort Detrick establishing a direct link between both programs. Hatfill's presence at Fort Detrick is important as the US has no reluctance to use biowarfare. As reported by The Internationalist the US covert operation Operation Mongoose chemically infected cane workers in Cuba (which has a large population of African descent) in 1961-2, and in 1971 the CIA introduced African swine fever to Cuba and in the 1980's introduced a virulent strain of Dengue fever to Cuba. An ever bolder plan to incapacitate the whole state by biowarfare was later developed. "Judith Miller, who reported this plan in her book *Germs: Biological Weapons and America's Secret War* (Simon & Schuster, 2001), says that it involved a "cocktail" of two germs and a biological toxin producing extreme nausea, fevers of up to 106 degrees Fht. (close to what produces comas and death), Venezuelan equine encephalitis and Q fever. "Teams at Pine Bluff [the main U.S. chemical weapons plant] made thousands of gallons of the cocktail, enough to fill a swimming pool," Miller reports. The head of Pine Bluff argued, "We could move our forces in and take over the country and that would be it." As Leonard Horowitz, Boyd Graves and many other scholars have shown US biowar establishment was responsible for developing the aids virus targeting a continent without any form of technical defense. From an African point of view this was the ultimate weapon of terror and Africa has to fear non-state actors as well as "Goosen said he has been "visited by scores of people looking for 'stuff to kill the blacks.'" Race-specific weapons naturally are in hot demand among racists, so it's no surprise that South Africa's race-specific research is highly coveted." (Muwakkil)

NUCLEAR

South Africa had an advanced nuclear weapons program which history would suggest had secret support from elements within the US establishment. The only contemplated use of nuclear weapons on the continent of Africa was against Africans (see Barletta and Ellington).

Issues of non-proliferation:

"Let there be weapons and armour

. But let the people have no use for them" -v80, Tao Te Ching

It has been shown that the key determinant for genocidal biowarfare attack have historically been:

1. a wide technological gap implying no retaliatory capacity
2. opportunity
3. existence of scarce resources or political confrontation.

It would therefore follow for Africa the non-proliferation treaties represent a lethal replication of the conditions that led to the genocide against native Americans and invasion of Africa. Non-proliferation treaties are a form of Brussels Convention whereby poor states agree to refuse themselves arms while the US massively increases its spending on research. In order for a genocidal situation to be recreated a wide technological gap is required and that can be achieved by massive increases in spending but would be greatly assisted if the target countries could be persuaded to dismantle their facilities and promise not to engage in research. It has also been shown that such acts of high strategic aggression are usually camouflaged in high sounding rhetoric about helping those about to be raped and plundered..

Network Terror:

Here we cover three methods of terrorising using ICT networks : money transfer networks, decoding security messages, and surveillance procedures.

In the world of cryptography the US through the NSA compromised all Western producers of cryptographical machines allowing the US to read all diplomatic correspondence of both friendly and hostile governments. This program would mean that all African diplomatic communications were directly read by US authorities (Madsen). Echelon (Bamford) and more recent NSA links with phone companies would render all African electronic communications to be without privacy, and it is known that information obtained this way is often distributed and used for commercial advantage. On the basis of fighting terror the US closed down certain essential services in Somalia. As John Desio put it in Nov 2001:"As a part of the war against Osama bin Laden's terror network, two firms suspected by the United States of terrorist connections, the Somalia Internet Company and al-Barakaat, have been shut down. Somalia Internet Company is the nation's only Internet provider, and its closure has effectively shut Somalian citizens out of any Internet connection. In addition, al-Barakaat, which is essentially an informal, unregulated financial network, had been a main source of money transfers to the nation's people from out of country relatives, of which more than 80 percent relied upon to live. The closure of an Internet and financial firm have had dire effects upon the Somalian economy." From Ron Suskind we learn that the point of closing down foreign domestic money transfer networks was to force people to use Western Union or similar organisations, who had agreed to be compromised and provide any information requested