NAVAL POSTGRADUATE SCHOOL

MONTEREY, CALIFORNIA

THESIS

UNITED STATES COUNTERTERRORISM STRATEGY IN THE TRANS-SAHARA AND THE RISE OF SALAFI-JIHADISM IN THE SAHEL

by

David M. Andre

September 2015

Thesis Advisor: Robert E. Looney
Co-Advisor: Tristan J. Mabry

Approved for public release; distribution is unlimited

THIS PAGE INTENTIONALLY LEFT BLANK

REPORT DOCUMENTATION PAGE		*Form Approved OMB No. 0704–0188*
Public reporting burden for this collection of information is estimated to average 1 hour per response, including the time for reviewing instruction, searching existing data sources, gathering and maintaining the data needed, and completing and reviewing the collection of information. Send comments regarding this burden estimate or any other aspect of this collection of information, including suggestions for reducing this burden, to Washington headquarters Services, Directorate for Information Operations and Reports, 1215 Jefferson Davis Highway, Suite 1204, Arlington, VA 22202-4302, and to the Office of Management and Budget, Paperwork Reduction Project (0704-0188) Washington, DC 20503.		

1. AGENCY USE ONLY *(Leave blank)*	2. REPORT DATE September 2015	3. REPORT TYPE AND DATES COVERED Master's Thesis
4. TITLE AND SUBTITLE UNITED STATES COUNTERTERRORISM STRATEGY IN THE TRANS- SAHARA AND THE RISE OF SALAFI- JIHADISM IN THE SAHEL		**5. FUNDING NUMBERS**
6. AUTHOR(S) Andre, David M.		

7. PERFORMING ORGANIZATION NAME(S) AND ADDRESS(ES)
    Naval Postgraduate School
    Monterey, CA 93943-5000
		8. PERFORMING ORGANIZATION REPORT NUMBER

9. SPONSORING /MONITORING AGENCY NAME(S) AND ADDRESS(ES) N/A		**10. SPONSORING/MONITORING AGENCY REPORT NUMBER**
11. SUPPLEMENTARY NOTES The views expressed in this thesis are those of the author and do not reflect the official policy or position of the Department of Defense or the U.S. Government. IRB Protocol number ____N/A____.		
12a. DISTRIBUTION / AVAILABILITY STATEMENT Approved for public release; distribution is unlimited		**12b. DISTRIBUTION CODE**

13. ABSTRACT (maximum 200 words)

   In the wake of the September 11, 2001, terrorist attacks, it became apparent to U.S. foreign policy makers that Northwest Africa was more than just a humanitarian concern. This realization led to the establishment of a multi-pronged, multi-year counterterrorism strategy in the Trans-Sahara region that incorporated diplomacy, development, and defense. Despite these unprecedented efforts, the Sahel sub-region has witnessed a steady rise in the presence of Salafi-Jihadist organizations since 2003. Furthermore, the states in the region remain incapable of defending against these organizations without significant outside assistance. This thesis examines the efficacy of U.S. counterterrorism strategy in the region vis-à-vis African states' capacity to explain the persisting Salafi-Jihadist organizations in the region. Exploring Salafi-Jihadism's ideological, doctrinal, and historical aspects illustrates that these organizations have limited interest in political solutions. The thesis uses Nigeria, Mali, and Mauritania as three case studies to examine the period between 2001 and 2014 to demonstrate how Salafi-Jihadism's components have successfully exploited these states' limited capacity, thereby undermining U.S. counterterrorism efforts. The thesis concludes by considering the impacts that these conclusions will have on future counterterrorism initiatives.

14. SUBJECT TERMS Salafi-Jihadism, Sahel, Trans-Sahara, Boko Haram, Nigeria, MUJAO, Mali, AQIM, Mauritania, counterterrorism, terrorism, Ansar-al Dine			**15. NUMBER OF PAGES** 121
			16. PRICE CODE
17. SECURITY CLASSIFICATION OF REPORT Unclassified	**18. SECURITY CLASSIFICATION OF THIS PAGE** Unclassified	**19. SECURITY CLASSIFICATION OF ABSTRACT** Unclassified	**20. LIMITATION OF ABSTRACT** UU

THIS PAGE INTENTIONALLY LEFT BLANK

UNITED STATES COUNTERTERRORISM STRATEGY IN THE TRANS-SAHARA AND THE RISE OF SALAFI- JIHADISM IN THE SAHEL

David M. Andre
Lieutenant, United States Navy
B.A., West Chester University, 2000

Submitted in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the degree of

MASTER OF ARTS IN SECURITY STUDIES
(MIDDLE EAST, SOUTH ASIA, SUB-SAHARAN AFRICA)

from the

NAVAL POSTGRADUATE SCHOOL
September 2015

Author: David M. Andre

Approved by: Robert E. Looney
                 Thesis Advisor

                 Tristan J. Mabry
                 Co-Advisor

                 Mohammed Hafez
                 Chair, Department of National Security Affairs

iii

THIS PAGE INTENTIONALLY LEFT BLANK

ABSTRACT

In the wake of the September 11, 2001, terrorist attacks, it became apparent to U.S. foreign policy makers that Northwest Africa was more than just a humanitarian concern. This realization led to the establishment of a multi-pronged, multi-year counterterrorism strategy in the Trans-Sahara region that incorporated diplomacy, development, and defense. Despite these unprecedented efforts, the Sahel sub-region has witnessed a steady rise in the presence of Salafi-Jihadist organizations since 2003. Furthermore, the states in the region remain incapable of defending against these organizations without significant outside assistance. This thesis examines the efficacy of U.S. counterterrorism strategy in the region vis-à-vis African states' capacity to explain the persisting Salafi-Jihadist organizations in the region. Exploring Salafi-Jihadism's ideological, doctrinal, and historical aspects illustrates that these organizations have limited interest in political solutions. The thesis uses Nigeria, Mali, and Mauritania as three case studies to examine the period between 2001 and 2014 to demonstrate how Salafi-Jihadism's components have successfully exploited these states' limited capacity, thereby undermining U.S. counterterrorism efforts. The thesis concludes by considering the impacts that these conclusions will have on future counterterrorism initiatives.

THIS PAGE INTENTIONALLY LEFT BLANK

TABLE OF CONTENTS

THIS PAGE INTENTIONALLY LEFT BLANK

LIST OF FIGURES

THIS PAGE INTENTIONALLY LEFT BLANK

LIST OF ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

AFRICOM	United States Africa Command
AQIM	Al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb
DOD	Department of Defense
DOS	Department of State
ECOWAS	Economic Community of West African States
EU	European Union
EUCOM	United States European Command
GAO	Government Accountability Office
GTI	Global Terrorism Index
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
ISIS	Islamic State of Iraq and Syria
ISR	Intelligence, Surveillance, and Reconnaissance
MINUSMA	U.N. Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali
MNLA	National Movement for the Liberation of Azawad
MUJAO	Movement for Oneness and Jihad in West Africa
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
OEF-TS	Operation Enduring Freedom-Trans Sahara
PSI	Pan-Sahel Initiative
TSCTI	Trans-Sahara Counterterrorism Initiative
TSCTP	Trans-Sahara Counterterrorism Partnership
TSC	Theater Security Cooperation
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
VEO	Violent Extremist Organization

THIS PAGE INTENTIONALLY LEFT BLANK

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

THIS PAGE INTENTIONALLY LEFT BLANK

I.   INTRODUCTION

After more than a decade of counterterrorism efforts in the Trans-Saharan regions of the Maghreb and the Sahel, the efficacy of U.S. policy in the region has never been more debatable. Al Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM) continues to pose a significant regional threat, Boko Haram's increasingly violent tactics threaten to destabilize Nigeria, and groups like the Movement for Oneness and Jihad in West Africa (MUJAO) and Ansar-al Dine exploit the weakened Malian state and operate with impunity throughout the region. Porous borders, weak and ineffectual governments, and socioeconomically disenfranchised populations make the Sahel provide an ideal breeding ground for these violent extremist organizations to flourish. The notion that terrorism needs to be stopped at its root is not unique, nor very controversial; however, the discussion of how and where to spend counterterrorism funds remains a hotly debated topic. This is particularly salient in Sub-Saharan Africa, where, according to the most recent Global Terrorism Index, more than 80% of terrorism is religiously motivated.[1] There is ample literature that discusses and analyzes the design, scope, and intent of counterterrorism efforts in the Trans-Sahara region. Despite identifying the need to address the underlying causes that promote terrorism, the current counterterrorism strategy allocates few resources to developmental goals. The limited scope of the strategy, coupled with the nature of religiously motivated violent extremism, speaks to the need to develop regional security cooperation measures and bilateral programs designed to act as bulwarks against violent extremist ideologies and strengthen the region's weak governments.

The debate over ties with the larger global jihadi ambitions of Al-Qaeda notwithstanding, violent extremist groups represent a significant security challenge to Sahelian countries—specifically, the Salafi-Jihadist groups that employ violent means to achieve their objectives. The threat that these groups pose to the U.S. interests is explicitly mentioned in numerous policy documents from the *National Security Strategy*

---

[1] National Consortium for the Study of Terrorism and Responses to Terrorism, University of Maryland, accessed October 19, 2014, http://www.visionofhumanity.org/sites/default/files/Global%20Terrorism%20Index%20Report%202014_1.pdf.

of the United States 2010 to the *Quadrennial Defense Review 2014.*[2] Furthermore, the application of U.S. counterterrorism spending and the design of counterterrorism policies have implications for beyond the Trans-Sahara region. With the rise of ISIS in Syria and Iraq, the continued commitments in Afghanistan, and the counterterrorism efforts in the Horn of Africa, the manner in which the United States confronts terrorism is critical to its long-term success. As the United States struggles with continued budget deficits and openly "rebalancing" to the Pacific, it is crucial for policymakers to understand why current counterterrorism strategies have not defeated the jihadists in the Sahara and the Sahel, and how to align future strategies.[3]

A.   LITERATURE REVIEW

In the aftermath of the September 11th terrorist attacks, U.S. foreign policy in Africa re-aligned to support the Global War on Terror with counterterrorism as the cornerstone. This realignment led to an unprecedented interest in the Sahel and Maghreb regions of Northwest Africa because of the belief that terrorists would exploit the large ungoverned spaces, disenfranchised populations, and insular governments. To fortify the region against these extremist forces, the U.S. government developed a strategy that incorporates aspects of diplomacy, development, and defense. As a collaborative effort, the Department of Defense, the Department of State, and the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), along with other governmental agencies, seek to apply a whole-of-government approach to countering terrorism and violent extremism. The notion that countries that have strong governments, secure borders, socioeconomic equality, and regional bonds, are less susceptible to infiltration underscores the current counterterrorism strategy. Despite the multi-year, multi-agency effort, the Sahel appears

---

[2] Whitehouse, *National Security Strategy of the United States 2010.* Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 2010, 7, https://www.whitehouse.gov/sites/default/files/rss_viewer/national_security_strategy.pdf; U.S. Department of Defense, *Quadrennial Defense Review 2014.* Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 2014, 5, http://archive.defense.gov/pubs/2014_Quadrennial_Defense_Review.pdf.

[3] Seth G. Jones, *A Persistent Threat: The Evolution of al Qa'ida and Other Salafi Jihadists* (Santa Monica, CA: RAND Corporation, 2014), 55. http://www.rand.org/content/dam/rand/pubs/research_reports/RR600/RR637/RAND_RR637.pdf.

no stronger or less susceptible to terrorism than it did a decade earlier. The 2012 coup d'état in Mali and subsequent unrest in the north, the continued rise of Boko Haram in Nigeria, and the persistence of AQIM in the region highlight that counterterrorism efforts have achieved remarkably little when applied against religiously motivated violent extremism.

Two themes characterize the problem addressed in this thesis: U.S. counterterrorism spending in the Trans-Sahara region and the rise of Salafi-Jihadism in Northwest Africa. Much of the existing literature that analyzes the effectiveness of U.S. counterterrorism spending centers on the broad theme of balancing funding for militarization and modernization. The general debate surrounds the question of whether to fund military solutions to attack the symptoms of terrorism or fund developmental solutions that address the root causes of terrorism.[4] The theme that underscores much of this literature is that the Department of Defense-centered approach to countering terrorism is insufficient in the Sub-Saharan Africa context and needs adjustment. Budget reports from the Government Accountably Office (GAO) released in 2008 and 2014 confirm the disparity in spending that exists between the agencies.[5] A number of authors establish the theoretical framework for countering terrorism that discusses the important ways in which governments can interact with their citizenry to avert terrorism. A main theme discussed throughout the literature is the different levels at which a state can counter terrorism: the level of *symptoms*, the level of *relationships,* and the level of *deep-*

---

[4] Lesley Anne Warner, The Trans Sahara Counter Terrorism Partnership: Building Partner Capacity to Counter Terrorism and Violent Extremism (Alexandria, VA: Center for Naval Analysis, 2014), 56-7. http://www.cna.org/sites/default/files/research/CRM-2014-U-007203-Final.pdf; Lilianne Kennedy-Boudali, "The Trans-Sahara Counterterrorism Partnership*." The Combating Terrorism Center: United States Military Academy West Point,* 2007; Donovan C. Chau, "U.S. Counterterrorism in Sub-Saharan Africa: Understanding Costs, Cultures, and Conflicts," *Strategic Studies Institute* (September 2008): 6-7. http://www.strategicstudiesinstitute.army.mil/pdffiles/PUB821.pdf.

[5] Charles M. Johnson Jr., *Actions Needed to Enhance Implementation of Trans-Sahara Counterterrorism Partnership* (GAO-08-860) (Washington, DC: Government Accountability Office, 2008), 1, http://www.gao.gov/assets/280/279056.pdf.

rooted causes of the fractured relationships that have given rise to the symptoms.[6] The notion that a holistic approach that coordinates military measures with nonmilitary measures is grounded in the belief that counterterrorism strategies need to cultivate a sustainable approach that incorporates economic, social, and political elements. Many have suggested that this involves an evolution of how the U.S. employs foreign aid in Africa in the post-9/11 environment and how we can avoid military dominated solutions.[7] The overall argument put forth is that increased education indirectly deters terrorism by raising human capital, in turn, allowing a government to allot more resources directly toward counterterrorism efforts.

Despite these accepted arguments, the strategy of development over defense is not accepted by everyone; some suggest that addressing the root causes of terrorism is too time consuming and that weak states need to act quickly to defeat terrorism, or they risk crumbling. Critiques of the development-first approach stress that prioritizing military measures is critical to successfully countering terrorism because of the time-sensitive nature of most terrorist operations.[8] Furthermore, there are some, like the current Global Terrorism Index (GTI), that purport that there is no link between socioeconomic ills and terrorism, instead suggesting that the main drivers of terrorism are the perceived illegitimacy of the state and corruption.

---

[6] Dennis J.D. Sandole, "The 'New' Terrorism: Causes, Conditions and Conflict Resolution." Vienna Journal in Peace Research, no.121 (December 2004): 43-56; Rohan Gunaratna, "Combating Al-Qaida and Associated Groups." in How States Fight Terrorism: Policy Dynamics in the West, edited by Doron Zimmerman and Andreas Wenger, 175-203. Colorado: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 2007; Audrey Kurth Cronin, "Behind the Curve: Globalization and International Terrorism." In Contending with Terrorism: Roots, Strategies, and Responses, edited by Michael E. Brown, 28-56. Cambridge: MIT Press, 2010.

[7] William F.S. Miles, "Deploying Development to Counter Terrorism: Post-9/11 Transformation of U.S. Foreign Aid to Africa." African Studies Review 55, No. 03 (October 2013): 27–60. DOI: http://dx.doi.org/10.1017/S0002020600007198; Subhayu Bandyopadhyay, Todd Sandler, and Javed Younas, "Foreign Aid as Counterterrorism Policy." Oxford Economic Papers 63, no.3 (2011): 423-447. doi: 10.1093/oep/gpq030.

[8] Thomas Dempsey, "Counterterrorism in African Failed States: Challenges and Potential Solutions." Strategic Studies Institute (April 2006): 6-7. http://www.strategicstudiesinstitute.army.mil/pubs/display.cfm?pubID=649; Marc Sageman, "Fighting the Right War." Paper presented at the National Defense University 2006 Joint Operations Symposium, Washington, D.C., March 2006. http://www.artisresearch.com/articles/Sageman_Fighting_the_Right_War.pdf.

There is also a small body of literature within the militarization versus modernization debate that specifically examines the compatibility of U.S. counterterrorism strategies vis-à-vis Islamic fundamentalism. Considering that a vast number of terrorist organizations operating in the Trans-Sahara are religiously motivated underscores the importance of the topic. The general argument put forth is that, since Islamic radicalism exploits disenfranchised populations *and* feeds on religious identity, it presents a different threat than secular terrorism, and therefore requires a different strategy—one that relies on non-coercive means.[9] While making a case against that is similar to the case made by those who oppose military led solutions, the logic differs slightly from that employed in the militarization debate. In these papers, the suggestion that military measures are inappropriate rests on the assumption that violent measures will weaken the legitimacy of the state. Throughout all this literature, the importance of competent governments employing non-military, non-violent measures in their counterterrorism strategies stands as a critical component to countering Jihadist ideologies.

A second theme throughout the literature suggests that U.S. counterterrorism policies—military or developmental—are significantly impacted by the recipient state's internal functions. In this twofold argument, issues like limited government capacity, endemic state corruption, and state legitimacy provide arguments that strengthen violent ideologies.[10] At the same time, these problems undermine the United States' ability to develop strong, lasting partnerships that are critical for sustainable counterterrorism

---

[9] Ömer Taspınar, "Fighting Radicalism, not 'Terrorism': Root Causes of an International Actor Redefined," SAIS Review vol. XXIX, no.2 (Summer-Fall 2009): 75-86. http://www.brookings.edu/~/media/research/files/articles/2009/9/summer%20fall%20radicalism%20taspinar/summer_fall_radicalism_taspinar.pdf; Jones, *A Persistent Threat: The Evolution of al Qa'ida and Other Salafi Jihadists*; Yonah Alexander, "Maghreb & Sahel: Addressing the Rising Threat from al-Qaeda & other Terrorists in North & West/Central Africa." International Center for Terrorism Studies at the Potomac Institute for Policy Studies, (January 2010): 1-80, http://www.potomacinstitute.org/attachments/525_Maghreb%20Terrorism%20report.pdf; Eli Berman, *Radical, Religious, and Violent: The New Economics of Terrorism.* Cambridge: MIT Press, 2009.

[10] "Terrorists Exploiting Gaps in State Capacity to Implement Counter-Terrorism Measures, Security Council Told in Briefings by Sanctions Committee Chairs," United Nations, May 10, 2012. http://www.un.org/press/en/2012/sc10642.doc.htm; Cullen S. Hendrix and Joseph K. Young, State Capacity and Terrorism: A Two- Dimensional Approach, *Security Studies*, 23:2, 329-363, doi: 10.1080/09636412.2014.905358.

strategies. In 2004, then-U.S. Coordinator for Counterterrorism Ambassador Cofer Black, noted that "the struggle against terrorism is also in part the struggle for a better society" and that "anti-corruption efforts are as essential to the struggle against terrorism as the struggle against poverty."[11] This sentiment is found in a number of papers and books written since then, which suggests that weak states, poor institutions, and ineffective governments prevent counterterrorism policies' effective implementation.[12] In a more cynical line of reasoning, others suggest that state governments have little incentive to stop terrorism because they benefit from counterterrorism aid more than they would benefit from the eradication of terrorism.[13] Furthermore, some suggest that U.S. counterterrorism funding negatively affects weak states' ability to counter terrorism because it compels states to comply with Western policies.[14] This compliance can lead to the state being perceived as illegitimate—a main tenet of Islamic radicals. Indeed, some suggest that Muslims in the region harbor an increasingly strong resentment toward their states, which results from the states perceived compliance with Western allies seen as anti-Muslim.[15] In the end, the policy prescriptions in this literature are similar to those in the militarization debate—counterterrorism strategies need stable and secure African states to succeed.

---

[11] Cofer Black, Amb., "The Prevention and Combating of Terrorism in Africa" (Remarks at the Second Intergovernmental High-Level Meeting on the Prevention and Combating of Terrorism In Africa in Algiers, Algeria, October 20, 2004). http://2001-2009.state.gov/s/ct/rls/rm/2004/37230.htm.

[12] Lilanna Kenendy-Boudali, Examining U.S. Counterterrorism Priorities and Strategy Across Africa's Sahel Region. Santa Monica, CA: RAND Corporation, 2009. http://www.rand.org/content/dam/rand/pubs/testimonies/2009/RAND_CT335.pdf; Subhayu Bandyopadhyay, Todd Sandler, and Javed Younas, "Foreign Aid as Counterterrorism Policy." Oxford Economic Papers 63, no.3 (2011): 423-447. doi: 10.1093/oep/gpq030.

[13] Andrew Boutton, "U.S. Foreign Aid, Interstate Rivalry, and Incentives for Counterterrorism Cooperation." Journal of Peace Research 51, no.6 (September 2014): 742–52. doi: 10.1177/0022343314543144.; Jeremy Keenan, The Dying Sahara: U.S. Imperialism and Terror in Africa (New York: Palgrave, 2013).

[14] Beth Elise Whitaker, "Compliance Among Weak States: Africa and the Counter-Terrorism Regime." Review of International Studies 36, no.3 (July 2010): 660–62. doi:10.1017/S0260210510000641.

[15] David Dickson, "Political Islam in Sub-Saharan Africa: The Need for a New Research and Diplomatic Agenda," United States Institute of Peace 140, (May 2005): 7-9, http://www.usip.org/sites/default/files/sr140.pdf; James J.F. Forest, "Al-Qaeda's Influence in Sub-Saharan Africa: Myths, Realities and Possibilities," Perspectives on Terrorism 5, no. 3–4 (September 2011): 72, http://www.terrorismanalysts.com/pt/index.php/pot/article/view/156/309.

The state's capacity, when compared against the level of religiously motivated terrorist threats, provides a summary of the problem in the Sahel and Maghreb. In short, state capacity is limited and the terrorist threat is high. Considering the weak state capacity, the question of if bilateral U.S. counterterrorism funds can be applied effectively is a distinct theme throughout the writing.[16] While it does not specifically address Salafi-Jihadism, there is literature that provides a regional context to explain why Islamic fundamentalist groups like AQIM, Boko Haram, Ansaru, and MUJAO continue to operate freely throughout the region. The regional issues are a result of the weak governments and developmental problems discussed previously. While each group has specific objectives and employs a wide and divergent range of tactics, there is general agreement throughout the literature that terrorism and violent extremism groups co-opt regional causes and exploit the limitations of weak states. Therefore, there is a wide body of literature that treats terrorism—in this case Salafi-Jihadism—as a regional problem, requiring regional solutions.[17] This draws the conclusion that, while bi-lateral agreements are useful at times, the issues are transnational in nature and the United States should treat them as such. The global strategy of the Salafi Jihad movement stresses that regional and international collaboration is critical.[18]

B. POTENTIAL EXPLANATIONS AND HYPOTHESIS

Critiques of counterterrorism efforts all stem from the general view that counterterrorism efforts in the Trans-Sahara region have not effectively countered violent extremist ideologies in the region. Since the criticism diverges from there and divides

---

[16] *Counterterrorism and the Role of Special Operations Forces: Testimony presented before the House Foreign Affairs Committee, Subcommittee on Terrorism, Non-Proliferation, and Trade* (2014) (statement of Seth G. Jones, RAND Office of External Affairs). http://docs.house.gov/meetings/FA/FA18/20140408/102109/HHRG-113-FA18-Wstate-JonesS-20140408.pdf.

[17] Matthew Schwartz, Liat Shetret, and Alistair Millar**,** "Rethinking International Counterterrorism Assistance to the Greater Horn of Africa: Toward a Regional Risk Reduction Strategy." *Perspectives on Terrorism* 7, no. 6 (December 2013): 100-112. http://globalcenter.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/12/314-2107-2-PB.pdf; Lilianne Kennedy-Boudali, Examining U.S. Counterterrorism Priorities and Strategy Across Africa's Sahel Region. Santa Monica, CA: RAND Corporation, 2009. http://www.rand.org/content/dam/rand/pubs/testimonies/2009/RAND_CT335.pdf; Richard H. Schultz, "Global Insurgency Strategy and the Salafi Jihad Movement." INSS Occasional Paper 6, United States Air Force Academy, 2008.

[18] Jones, "A Persistent Threat: The Evolution of al Qa'ida and Other Salafi Jihadists," 1-12.

into three distinct schools of thought, explanations for the lack of effectiveness lie in the design, scope, or intent of U.S. counterterrorism strategy. As such, there are three potential answers to address why U.S. counterterrorism spending has failed to stem the tide of Salafi-Jihadism in the Trans-Sahara region. First, there are many who suggest that despite the "whole of government" design of U.S. Counterterrorism strategy in Northwest Africa, the budget is largely centered on the Department of Defense and, therefore, fails to allocate sufficient resources for socioeconomic factors like de-radicalization programs and religious education and tolerance programs. Therefore, one possible answer is that U.S. counterterrorism funding needs to be expanded to include the aforementioned programs and the execution of counterterrorism initiatives needs to incorporate USAID, the Department of State, and other U.S. government agencies that are designed to exercise "soft power." This would involve an adjustment of funding to include multi-year funding measures so that long-term sustainable development goals are designed and met.

Second, there is the notion that the capacity and stability of these states is not developed enough to receive and benefit from the counterterrorism assistance that the U.S. offers. Therefore, the scope of U.S. counterterrorism efforts is too narrow and needs to widen to first address the issues of good governance, corruption, and state legitimacy to create a sustainable impact. Considering that the countries of West Africa consistently rank as some of the most corrupt states in the world, it is clear that this issue remains unresolved.[19] The U.S. government explicitly recognizes the link between politically unstable states or ungoverned spaces and the potential rise of terrorism or violent extremism.[20] In this case, the possible answer is that U.S. counterterrorism strategy and funding needs to be expanded to incorporate programs that specifically address corruption and governance. Furthermore, U.S. government programs would need to be predicated upon the quality of the partner country's governance.

---

[19] "Corruption Perceptions Index 2013," Transparency International, August 23, 2015, http://issuu.com/transparencyinternational/docs/cpi2013_brochure_single_pages?e=2496456/5813913.

[20] Chairman Joint Chiefs of Staff, *Counterterrorism*, Joint Publication 3–26, Washington, DC: JP3 - 26, 2014, Chapter 1, http://www.dtic.mil/doctrine/new_pubs/jp3_26.pdf.

Lastly, there is the idea that more effort should be put into developing regional organizations if U.S. counterterrorism efforts are going to address the transnational nature of the Salafi-Jihadist groups that operate in the region. In addition, the regional approach alleviates many of the issues of weak state capacity and corruption addressed in the second hypothesis by directing funds to regional organizations rather than individual states. This shift requires that the design, intent, and scope of the United States' counterterrorism efforts be overhauled to interact more directly with regional and sub-regional actors to develop counterterrorism strategies that appropriately address regional concerns. Furthermore, it would require that the United States alter its funding measures to allocate for the shift to funding regional organizations vice funding individual state actors.

C. RESEARCH DESIGN

This thesis tries to offer an understanding of why U.S. counterterrorism efforts have failed to counter the Salafi-Jihadist organizations in the Trans-Sahara region of Northwest Africa. To evaluate U.S. counterterrorism spending and the rise of these organizations, I examine three case studies—Mauritania, Mali, and Nigeria—to determine why the counterterrorism funds that the United States has spent over the past decade have failed to stem the rise of Salafi-Jihadism in the Sahel. Comparing these three countries provides an interesting case study of U.S. counterterrorism spending and the outcomes. While each country has the common problem of Salafi-Jihadists with which to contend, they each present a unique example as well. Mauritania, a long-standing recipient of U.S. counterterrorism funds, has achieved moderate success in dealing with AQIM (and like-minded organizations). However, while they have significantly weakened the organization, they have failed to eradicate it and its ideology continues to motivate followers. Mali, long the example of successful reform in the region, was rapidly inundated with a Salafi-Jihadist rebellion after a coup toppled the elected government. It was only after Western intervention that the rebellion was put down. Meanwhile, Nigeria struggles with a particularly virulent re-incarnation of Boko Haram that re-emerged in 2009 when the group reorganized following the death of its leader at the hands of Nigerian officials.

I utilize government budgetary reports from the GAO, Congressional testimonies that outline the counterterrorism strategy in the Trans-Sahara region, and assessments from international organizations and domestic agencies to evaluate counterterrorism and consider if the spending is being properly allocated to support the counterterrorism strategy. In addition, the paper utilizes data from the World Bank, Stockholm International Peace Research Institute, and elsewhere to examine the capabilities and capacity of the recipient countries after the steady increase of U.S. counterterrorism spending in the Trans-Sahara region since 9/11. Data from the National Counterterrorism Center (NCTC) and elsewhere is utilized to examine the rise of violent extremism in the region. This data is applied to the theoretical and empirical works discussed in the literature review that proposes that regional solutions and developmental solutions hold the key to successful counterterrorism strategies.

D.   THESIS OVERVIEW

This thesis examines the efficacy of the United States' counterterrorism strategy in the Trans-Sahara region and assess why Salafi-Jihadist organizations continue to thrive. The thesis is broken into five chapters. The second chapter outlines the origins, ideologies, and agendas of Salafi-Jihadist organizations including AQIM, Ansaru, Boko Haram, and MUJAO, with particular attention paid to the post-9/11 timeframe. The limited scope is necessary to assess why the U.S. counterterrorism strategy in the Sahel is not affecting these particular organizations. The third chapter discusses why the current U.S. counterterrorism efforts have not addressed the root causes of Salafi-Jihadism. The fourth chapter evaluates the particular cases of Nigeria, Mali, and Mauritania where Salafi-Jihadism has had varying degrees of success over the past decade. The fifth chapter analyzes if U.S. counterterrorism efforts in the region have failed to halt the advance of Salafi-Jihadist organizations like Boko Haram, AQIM, and MUJAO. In addition, policy recommendations are made that may enhance future counterterrorism strategy in the region. The sixth and final chapter concludes with review of the major observations noted in the paper.

The major finding in this paper is that current counterterrorism policies in the Sahel lack the proper scope and design to effectively counter the unique agenda of the Salafi-Jihadist ideology. The limited and corrupt capacity of these states coupled with the military centered approach of counterterrorism operations does not properly counter the narrative of Salafi-Jihadism which views western ideals of the secular states and democracy as illegitimate and Sharia law as the only acceptable alternative. Therefore, unlike other extremist organizations and insurgencies throughout the world, Salafi-Jihadist organizations do not intend to enter into negotiations with the governments and will likely not be appeased by offers of autonomy. Despite this hard stance, there is reason to believe that a significant number of fighters and supporters are motivated primarily by opportunity rather than ideology. As such, state capacity takes in an increasingly important role in the U.S. counterterrorism strategy throughout the region. Certainly Department of Defense activities will play a crucial role in the eradication of these organizations, but the growth of state capacity remains a critical shortfall in the region preventing long-term suppression of Salafi-Jihadist organizations like Boko Haram, AQIM, and MUJAO.

THIS PAGE INTENTIONALLY LEFT BLANK

II. STRATEGIC OVERVIEW OF THE TRANS-SAHARA REGION

> Where governments are incapable of meeting their citizens' basic needs and fulfilling their responsibilities to provide security within their borders, the consequences are often global and may directly threaten the American people. To advance our common security, we must address the underlying political and economic deficits that foster instability, enable radicalization and extremism, and ultimately undermine the ability of governments to manage threats within their borders and to be our partners in addressing common challenges.
>
> —2010 National Security Strategy

This chapter provides an overview of the strategic situation in the Trans-Sahara region. Beginning with an overview of the United States' counterterrorism strategies in the region from the post-9/11 environment up to the 2015, the chapter surveys the evolution of counterterrorism initiatives from the Pan-Sahel Initiative though the Trans-Sahara Counterterrorism Partnership and the creation of United States Africa Command. Afterward, there is an overview of Salafi-Jihadism including the ideological history, agenda, and status of organizations. Lastly, there is a measurement of state capacity throughout the Trans-Saharan region. These three pillars establish the geopolitical environment that frames counterterrorism operations in the Sahel.

A. UNITED STATES COUNTERTERRORISM STRATEGY IN THE TRANS-SAHARA

In the aftermath of the September 11th terrorist attacks, U.S. national security priorities were re-aligned to support the Global War on Terror with counterterrorism as the centerpiece. This realignment led to an unprecedented interest in Africa—specifically the Trans-Sahara region of Northwest Africa—because of the belief that terrorists would exploit the large ungoverned spaces, disenfranchised populations, and insular governments to establish training camps and recruitment centers. The notion that the Trans-Sahara region comprised of the Maghreb and the Sahel was a hotbed for terrorist activity was not always a readily accepted assertion. Similarly, while the Maghreb's security implications for the United States were well established, the idea that Sahelian

countries represented a national security threat to the United States was contentious.[21] An *International Crisis Group* report from 2005 entitled *Islamist Terrorism in the Sahel: Fact or Fiction?* is representative of the period with the report suggesting that any declaration of the Sahel as the new front in the global war on terror was overstating the problem of terrorism in the region.[22] Despite these misgivings, in a prescient warning the report cautioned that "a misconceived and heavy handed approach could tip the scale the wrong way" and that "an effective counter-terrorism policy [in the Sahel] needs to address the threat in the broadest terms, with more development than military aid and greater United States-European collaboration."[23] Reports like these seemingly influenced the early development and design of the counterterrorism strategy in the Sahel.

"The Sahel, a word derived from the Arabic word 'sahil' meaning shore, is a semi-arid belt of barren, sandy and rock-strewn land which stretches 3,860km across the breadth of the African continent (see Figure 1)."[24] As a geographic region, it marks the transitional physical land between the Saharan desert to the north and the characteristically fertile lands to the south. Stretching from northern Senegal in the West to the Red Sea in the East, the region comprises southern Mauritania, central Mali, the extreme northeast of Nigeria, and large portions of Niger, Chad, and Sudan before tapering off into Ethiopia.[25] Geopolitically, it represents a cultural divide between the north and the south and is home to an estimated 100 million people, with that number expected to double in the coming decades.[26]

---

[21] David Gutelius, "U.S. Creates African Enemies Where None Were Before," *Christian Science Monitor*, July 11, 2003. http://www.csmonitor.com/2003/0711/p11s01-coop.html.

[22] International Crisis Group, "Islamist Terrorism in the Sahel: Fact or Fiction?," *Africa Report* 92 (March 2005): 19. http://www.crisisgroup.org/~/media/Files/africa/west-africa/Islamist%20Terrorism%20in%20the%20Sahel%20Fact%20or%20Fiction.pdf.

[23] Ibid.,1.

[24] "Sahel: Backgrounder of the Sahel, West Africa's Poorest Region," Integrated Regional Information Networks, June 2, 2008. http://www.irinnews.org/report/78514/sahel-backgrounder-on-the-sahel-west-africa-s-poorest-region.

[25] Encyclopedia Britannica, 15th ed., s.v. "Sahel."

[26] "Sahel: Backgrounder of the Sahel, West Africa's Poorest Region."
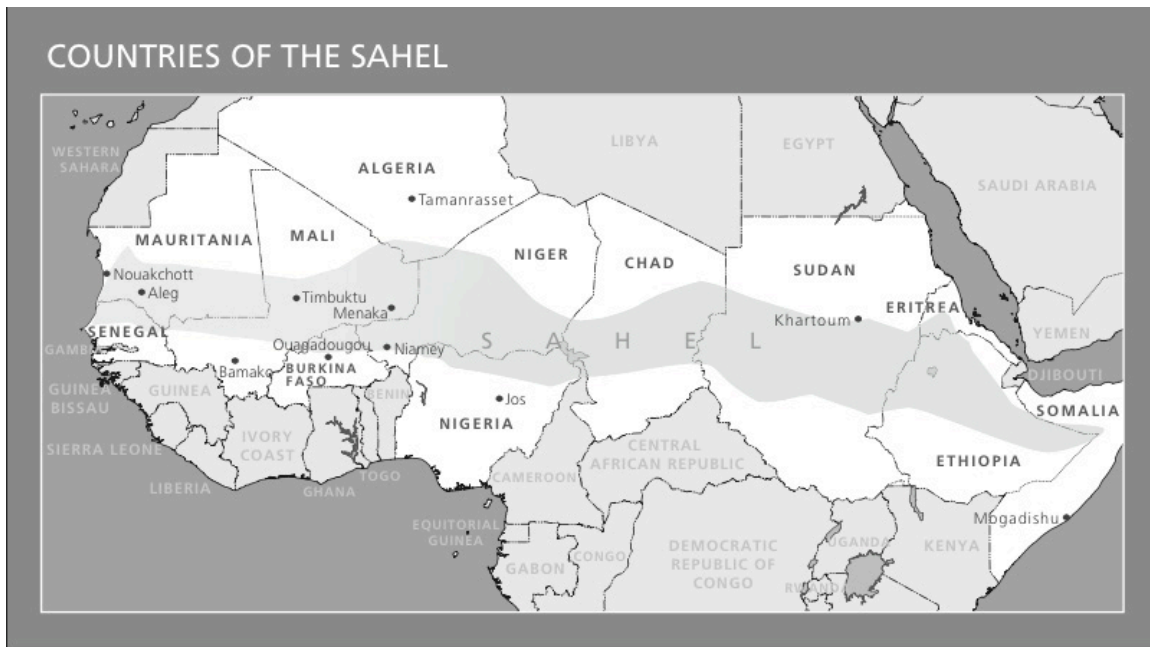
COUNTRIES OF THE SAHEL

Figure 1. Map of Sahel[27]

Underpinning the geographic and geopolitical realities in the Sahel is a catena of developmental issues—resource scarcity, poor governance, poverty, disease, and inhospitable climates—that produce chronic insecurity.[28] While there is no consensus among scholars on the question of what causes terrorism, most theories claim that economic inequality, structural injustice, and weak governments are contributing factors. Denying certain segments of society access to resources—economic, social, or political—means they are more likely to support, directly or indirectly, violent ideologies because they frequently promise access to those resources—even though, oftentimes, these promises are little more than recruitment tactics. This logic is interwoven throughout U.S. counterterrorism efforts in Africa. As it became apparent to U.S. foreign policy makers that Africa was more than just a humanitarian concern, it also became apparent that any counterterrorism strategy would need to address the underlying causes of terrorism as

27 "Sahel Region," European Union Institute for Security Studies, August 22, 2015, http://www.iss.europa.eu/uploads/media/Report_19_Sahel.pdf.

28 "Sahel: A Call of Humanitarian Aid," United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, February 20, 2015, https://docs.unocha.org/sites/dms/ROWCA/Coordination/SRP/Sahel_SRP_2015.pdf.

well as defend against its effects. It was from within this geopolitical environment that U.S. counterterrorism efforts launched in the Sahel.

1.   Evolution of Counterterrorism Policy in the Trans-Sahara

In November 2002, the Department of State introduced the Pan-Sahel Initiative—a program designed to combat terrorism, increase border security, and promote regional cooperation in Chad, Mali, Mauritania, and Niger.[29] The Pan-Sahel Initiative superseded the piecemeal efforts that defined the United States' counterterrorism policy in Africa from the end of the Cold War until September 11, 2001.[30] While the design, scope, and intent of the program drew significant criticism, it quickly expanded as combat operations in Afghanistan began to inform policy makers and decisions regarding Islamic radicalism took on a sense of urgency.[31] In 2005, the Department of State substituted the Pan-Sahel Initiative with the more comprehensively scoped Trans-Sahara Counterterrorism Partnership (TSCTP), expanding geographically to include Algeria, Morocco, Nigeria, Senegal, and Tunisia (later adding Burkina Faso in 2009 and Cameroon in 2013).[32] Additionally, the design and intent of TSCTP expanded beyond that of PSI—that focused primarily on military-to-military assistance—to include developmental assistance and diplomatic efforts.[33] As a collaborative effort between the Department of State, the Department of Defense, and the United States Agency for International Development, TSCTP is a whole of government approach to countering terrorism and violent extremism. As an interagency effort, TSCTP endeavored "to enhance the indigenous capacities of governments in the pan-Sahel, to confront the challenge posed by terrorist organizations in the Trans-Sahara, and to facilitate

---

[29] "Pan-Sahel Initiative," United States Department of State, June 9, 2014, http://2001-2009.state.gov/s/ct/rls/other/14987.htm.

[30] International Crisis Group. *Islamist Terrorism in the Sahel: Fact or Fiction?,* 27.

[31] Stephen Ellis, "Briefing: The Pan-Sahel Initiative," *African Affairs* 103, no. 412 (July 2004): 459–464. doi:10.1093/afraf/adh067.

[32] TSCTP was initially designated as the Trans-Sahara Counterterrorism Initiative (TSCTI).

[33] Lesley Anne Warner, "America's Fight Against Terror in West Africa—and its Shortcomings," *The National Interest*, April 3, 2014. http://nationalinterest.org/commentary/catch-22-the-sahel-10176.

cooperation between those countries and U.S. partners in the Maghreb."[34] It was not too long before the scope of counterterrorism efforts expanded even further with the creation of United States Africa Command (AFRICOM) as the newest geographic combatant command.

AFRICOM, an offshoot of United States European Command (EUCOM), officially stood up in October 2008 after years of development. From inception, the command had an interagency design that reflected the dynamic environment of its geographic area of responsibility. According to the published mission statement, AFRICOM "in concert with interagency and international partners, builds defense capabilities, responds to crisis, and deters and defeats transnational threats in order to advance U.S. national interests and promote regional security, stability, and prosperity."[35] The civilian-military design allows the United States to leverage the full spectrum of government efforts—diplomacy, development, and defense—against a narrowly focused counterterrorism agenda. Furthermore, the interagency approach attempts to avoid the pitfalls often associated with the security-development nexus where security concerns subordinate developmental initiatives. With the creation of AFRICOM there was a dramatic increase in military personnel permanently assigned to support operations and embassies throughout Africa, which currently numbers over 2000 personnel.[36] Alongside these manpower increases, responsibility for TSCTP activities transferred to AFRICOM, as it became the central mechanism for the execution of the United States' counterterrorism strategy in the region.[37] These increases in military presence on the continent have persistently raised concerns that the Department of Defense will overshadow the Department of State's diplomatic efforts on the continent.[38]

---

[34] "Country Reports: Africa Overview," United States Department of State, June 11, 2014, http://www.state.gov/j/ct/rls/crt/2012/209979.htm.

[35] "What We Do," United States Africa Command, June 01, 2015, http://www.africom.mil/what-we-do.

[36] Ibid.

[37] Stephen Emerson, "Back to the Future: The Evolution of U.S. Counterterrorism Policy in Africa," *Insight on Africa* 6, no.1 (January 2014): 43–56. doi: 10.1177/0975087814532587.

[38] United States Department of State, *Embassies as Command Posts in the Anti-Terror Campaign*, Washington, D.C: Government Printing Office, 2006, http://fas.org/irp/congress/2006_rpt/embassies.pdf.

These concerns are valid, as any such imbalance would limit the breadth of counterterrorism efforts in the region thereby weakening the ability to counter violent extremism.

The need for a wide breadth for counterterrorism efforts is acknowledged throughout the 2011 National Strategy for Counterterrorism. The strategy details the variety of bilateral and multilateral programs in which the United States engages to build short and long-term partner capacity in the military, law enforcement, government, and civil society sectors. These programs support diplomatic efforts by addressing the underlying conditions that terrorism exploits, preventing terrorist activity, and enhancing partner nation stability.[39] Within the TSCTP, the Department of Defense conducts military assistance and security sector training under the designation Operation Enduring Freedom-Trans Sahara.[40] Enhancing military capacity occurs primarily through Title 22 military-to-military training and Title 10 familiarization programs like the International Military Education and Training program, which affords foreign officers the ability to train at U.S. service schools. Funding for these programs in TSCTP countries was approximately $7.5 million from 2009 through 2013 and will likely be the same in 2014 and 2015.[41] In addition to training opportunities, there are equipment sales conducted under the Global Train and Equip "1206" program that authorizes the Department of Defense to deliver equipment, supplies, or training to foreign countries in order to build their capacity to conduct counterterrorism operations. Initially allocated $200 million in 2006, later authorizations increased it to $350 million, of which TSCTP accounted for approximately 14% from 2006 until 2011.[42] Lastly, the military conducts regional exercises like FLINTLOCK and bi-lateral exercises like AFRICAN LION that focus on

---

[39] "USAID/West Africa Peace Through Development (PDEV): Program Assessment Report," United States Agency for International Development, March 2011, http://pdf.usaid.gov/pdf_docs/PDACR829.pdf; "Trans Sahara Counterterrorism Partnership Program Overview," United States Africa Command, June 01, 2015, www.africom.mil/Doc/7432.

[40] OEF-TS transitioned to Operation Juniper Shield in 2012, but OEF-TS remains common.

[41] "International Military Education and Training Account Summary," U.S. Department of State website. May 20, 2015, http://www.state.gov/t/pm/ppa/sat/c14562.htm.

[42] Nina M. Serafino, *Security Assistance Reform: "Section 1206" Background and Issues for Congress* (CRS Report No. RS22855) (Washington, DC: Congressional Research Service, 2014), 4, http://fas.org:8080/sgp/crs/natsec/RS22855.pdf.

building counterterrorism skills and interoperability in an operational environment.[43] When combined these initiatives in training and familiarization, equipment sales, and operational exercises illustrate the scope of the United States military's hard-power initiatives to counter terrorism in the Trans-Sahara region.

In addition to the traditional hard-power aspects of military training, there have been soft-power initiatives that the Department of Defense has undertaken. One such soft-power initiative that spanned agency and international partners is Operation Objective Voice.[44] A proactive effort to counter violent extremist organizations by attacking their very core—the ideology—Operation Objective Voice has been employed throughout the Sahel region since 2007. Through broadcast messages, Internet websites, social media, and Military Information Support Teams and public diplomacy officials, the operation attempts to counter extremist propaganda.[45] Primarily operating through local partners, the operation provides messages that promote tolerance, peace, and understanding in Mali and Nigeria in an attempt to leverage the elements of soft power to counter violent extremist ideologies.[46] On the one hand, programs like this demonstrate how seamlessly disparate efforts can blend; on the other hand they show the increasing presence of the military in a realm traditionally inhabited by diplomacy. Regardless of the assessment, the program's existence shows that the whole of government approach to countering terrorism in more than just rhetoric.

While Department of Defense initiatives dominate the TSCTP, USAID does operate a number of development programs in the region. One of the most notable, the Peace through Development initiative has undertaken numerous initiatives that address socioeconomic, political and cultural issues in Chad, Mali and Niger as a way to mitigate

---

[43] "What We Do," United States Africa Command, June 01, 2015, http://www.africom.mil/what-we-do.

[44] "Operation Objective Voice," Global Security, May 18, 2015, http://www.globalsecurity.org/military/ops/objective-voice.htm.

[45] Ibid.

[46] Joseph S. Nye, "Soft Power." *Foreign Policy* 80, (Autumn 1990): 153–171. http://faculty.maxwell.syr.edu/rdenever/PPA-730-27/Nye%201990.pdf.

the underlying causes of terrorism.[47] Currently, USAID has 687 active projects in Sub-Saharan Africa with 107 in the Sahelian countries of Senegal—41; Mali—61; and Nigeria—5; accounting for 15.58% of ongoing Sub-Saharan African projects.[48] These projects include specific topics like Agriculture and Food Security; Democracy, Governance, and Human Rights; and Working on Conflict and Crises, in addition to other initiatives centered on improving education, health, and the economy.[49] The volume and breadth of these initiatives are illustrative of the holistic ideology that underpins counterterrorism efforts in the Trans-Sahara, but it is equally illustrative of the lopsided nature of policy application. A chronological rendering of USAID projects further illustrates the continued evolution of policies designed to countering the underlying causes of terrorism. Looking at the decade from 1992 to 2002 there were two USAID projects in the Trans-Sahara region, both in Mali; the following seven years saw that number rise to 11 and incorporate Senegal and Nigeria.[50] After the formation of AFRICOM, the total number of projects rose to 94—nearly a nine-fold increase—but failed to expand into the remaining countries of the Trans-Sahara.[51] The disproportionate commitment to Senegal and Mali is likely more indicative of individual state capacity than any bias, but despite the motivation, it prompts questions about the regional nature of USAIDs support to the TSCTP.[52] In addition to these geographic limitations, there is a dearth of programs explicitly designed to counter violent extremist ideologies. President Obama acknowledged as much at a Countering Violent Extremism Summit in February 2015, discussing the need to focus more on prevention and to address the "ideologies, the infrastructure of extremists—the propagandists, the recruiters, the funders who radicalize

---

[47] PDEV was executed from 2008–2011; PDEV II began in 2011 and is scheduled to end in 2016.

[48] "Where We Work: Interactive Map," United States Agency for International Development, accessed May 22, 2015. http://map.usaid.gov/?l=regional&w=SUB%20SAHARAN%20AFRICA.

[49] Ibid.

[50] Ibid.

[51] Ibid.

[52] Key engagement criteria outlined in the 2011 *USAID Development Response to Violent Extremism and Insurgency Policy* specifically address host nation commitment and security of agency personnel as determining criteria.

and recruit or incite people to violence."[53] Thus, while USAID programs are characteristic of a holistic ideology of countering terrorism they are limited in scope and execution.

As the lead agency, the Department of State executes programs designed to promote "public diplomacy efforts, provide embassy security and support for TSCTP activities, and support some counterterrorism training for law enforcement officers."[54] In addition to operating under the broad umbrella of the TSCTP, the Department of State has a number of other notable programs and initiatives that complement the counterterrorism efforts of the TSCTP. Within the Department of State, the Public Diplomacy Office is the de facto lead on countering violent extremist ideologies by building up the resilience of at-risk communities.[55] In addition, the Department of State uses the Anti-Terrorism Assistance and the Nonproliferation, Antiterrorism, Demining, and Related programs to fund training and buy equipment to bolster law enforcement capacity in investigations, border and critical infrastructure security, regional coordination, and management.[56] The International Narcotics Control and Law Enforcement program strengthens the "partner nation's judicial and legislative capacity to prosecute and" imprison terrorists.[57] Restricting travel and access to resources is a joint effort between the Department of State, the Department of Justice, and the Department of Homeland Security and is evident in the Terrorist Screening and Interdiction programs conducted throughout the region.[58] Meanwhile, the Counterterrorism Finance program

---

[53] Barack Obama, "Remarks by the President in Closing of the Summit on Countering Violent Extremism" (speech, South Court Auditourium, Whitehouse, February 18, 2015). https://www.whitehouse.gov/the-press-office/2015/02/18/remarks-president-closing-summit-countering-violent-extremism.

[54] Johnson, *Actions Needed to Enhance Implementation of Trans-Sahara Counterterrorism Partnership*, 14.

[55] Jeffrey Swedberg and Steve Smith, "Trans-Sahara Counterterrorism Partnership Evaluative Study." Dexis Consulting Group (April 2014): 4.

[56] Curt Tarnoff and Alex Tiersky, *State, Foreign Operations Appropriations: A Guide to Component Accounts* (CRS Report No. R40482) (Washington, DC: Congressional Research Service, 2015), 11-12, https://www.fas.org/sgp/crs/row/R40482.pdf.

[57] "FY 2012 Program and Budget Guide: Program Overview," United States Department of State, May 21, 2015, http://www.state.gov/j/inl/rls/rpt/pbg/fy2012/185676.htm.

[58] "Terrorist Screening and Interdiction Programs," United States Department of State, May 20, 2015, http://www.state.gov/j/ct/programs/tip/.

builds legal frameworks and regulatory regimes, and establishes Financial Intelligence Units that strengthen the investigative skills of law enforcement entities and builds prosecutorial and judicial abilities.[59] This suite of programs again demonstrates the comprehensive scope of tools the United States employs against terrorism in the Trans-Saharan region. Despite the comprehensive nature of these counterterrorism programs they only show the strategic intent, to understand the level of operational execution a budget analysis is necessary.

2.   Evolution of Counterterrorism Budget in the Trans-Sahara

The budget for counterterrorism initiatives in the Trans-Sahara has grown considerably from the creation of the Pan-Sahel Initiative to today (see Figure 2). At its inception, Congress approved $6.25 million in 2004, with specific country allocations for "Mali—$3.5 million; Niger—$1.7 million; Mauritania—$500,000; and Chad—$500,000."[60] As the Pan-Sahel Initiative expanded into the TSCTP, the budget expanded significantly and from 2005 through 2008, the United States obligated $353 million, with approximately 74% of the funds still going to Chad, Mali, Mauritania, and Niger.[61] The emphasis on spending in the Sahelian countries is the result of U.S. counterterrorism policies, as well as the partner countries willingness and capability to absorb TSCTP activities. Despite being the premier counterterrorism policy tool in the region, from 2009 through 2013 the TSCTP budget shrank—primarily a reaction to the financial crisis—with the United States obligating $288 million; and while Mali, Mauritania, and Niger still received a bulk of the funds—approximately 38%—it was significantly less than the 74% received from 2004–08.[62] The proposed 2014 budget continued this trend,

---

[59] "Programs and Initiatives," United States Department of State, May 23, 2015, http://www.state.gov/j/ct/programs/index.htm#CTF.

[60] Johnson, *Actions Needed to Enhance Implementation of Trans-Sahara Counterterrorism Partnership*, 14.

[61] Ibid., 2.

[62] Charles Michael Johnson, Jr., *Report to the Committee on Foreign Relations, June 2014* (GAO-08-860) (Washington, DC: Governmnet Accountability Office), 21; Charles Michael Johnson, Jr., *U.S. Efforts in Northwest Africa Would Be Strengthened by Enhanced Program Management* (GAO-14-518) (Washington, DC: Government Accountability Office, 2014), 15, http://www.gao.gov/assets/670/664337.pdf.

requesting $45 million for TSCTP activities.[63] The increased balance of funds distributed among countries in the Sahel, Sahara, and Maghreb illustrates an increased willingness and capability of partner countries to process TSCTP activities and the widening scope of the United States' counterterrorism strategy in the region. These funds also illustrate the long-term dedication to the region as a strategic priority with almost $750 million applied throughout the region.
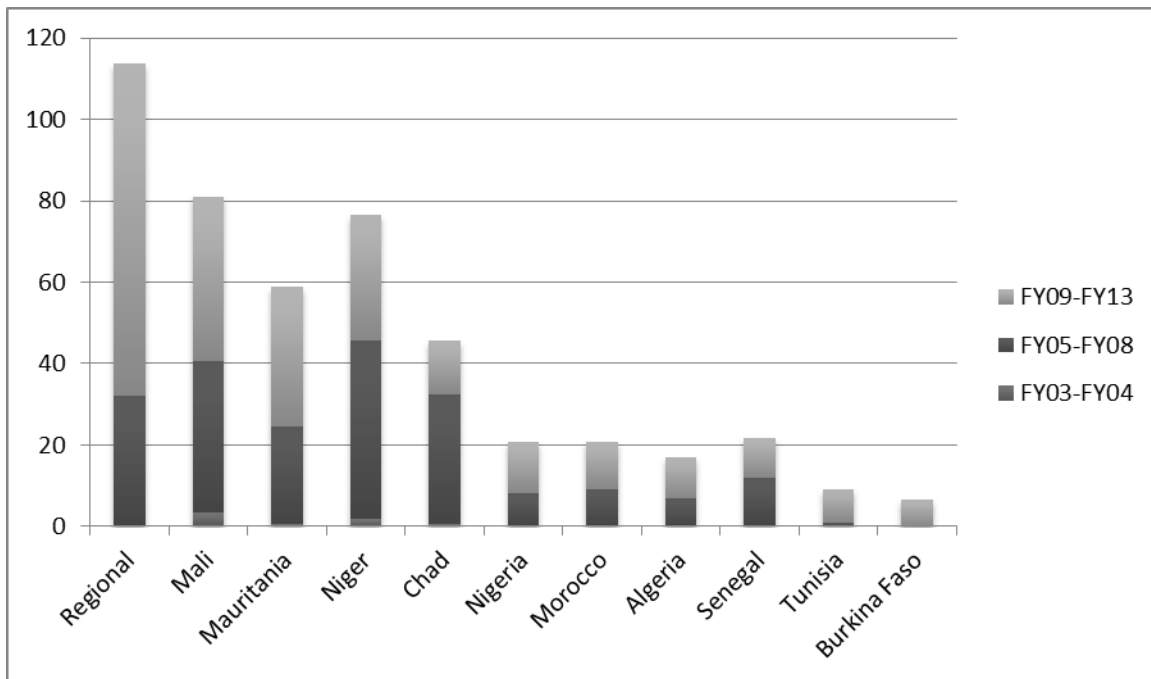
Figure 2.   Money Spent (in U.S.$ Millions) from Implementation of Pan-Sahel Initiative through the End of FY13. Burkina Faso was added to the TSTCP in 2009. Funds for Mali were suspended after the 2012 coup.

When these budgets are dissected along agency lines, it becomes apparent that Department of Defense funds are disproportionate in relation to USAID and Department of State funds, with the Department of Defense spending $256 million of the $353 million obligated from 2005–2008 and USAID and the Department of State spending $96 million during the same period. In other words, the Department of Defense spent three

---

[63] United States Department of State, *Congressional Budget Justification, Volume 2: Foreign Operations*. Washington, D.C: Government Printing Office, 2014, 359, http://www.state.gov/documents/organization/208290.pdf.

times the amount than that of the other agencies combined.[64] The budget breakdown from 2009 to 2013 shows increased parity across agencies, with the Department of State and USAID disbursing about $139 million, or 48 %, of the TSCTP funds.[65] This change corresponds to the introduction of AFRICOM, likely the result of increased fund management and interoperability of priorities across the agencies. Considering that economic growth, health, education, and good governance are the responsibility of USAID and the Department of State, correcting this imbalance toward military spending was critical for the success of the program. No matter how much money is spent training and equipping partner militaries in counterterrorism tactics, if these same societies are developmentally unstable terrorist recruitment and violent extremism will find an audience. Additionally, this data undercuts skeptics who contend that counterterrorism efforts are tantamount to the "securitization of aid," an argument that ignores that these programs are part of a broader effort to combat the underlying causes of terrorism and violent extremist ideologies.

Typically, criticism levied against United States' counterterrorism efforts arises from a concentration on the Department of Defense budget vis-à-vis the budgets of the Department of State, USAID, and other agencies. Revealingly, the Department of State's proposed 2016 budget, which also includes USAID funding, requests a significant increase in security and development activities in the Maghreb and Sahel countries to "address challenges to U.S. national security emanating" from the region.[66] Although the Congressional Budget Justification does not include country specific totals, it does show a significant increase in security and justice aid to countries in the Maghreb and Sahel from 2014 to 2016.[67] The proposed budget, together with the trend toward parity across

---

[64] Johnson Jr., *Actions Needed to Enhance Implementation of Trans-Sahara Counterterrorism Partnership*, 10.

[65] Johnson Jr., *U.S. Efforts in Northwest Africa Would Be Strengthened by Enhanced Program Management*, 13.

[66] Colby Goodman, "U.S. Shifts to Increase Military Aid to Maghreb and Sahel," Security Assistance Monitor, February 17, 2015, http://www.securityassistance.org/blog/us-shifts-increase-military-aid-maghreb-and-sahel.

[67] United States Department of State, *Congressional Budget Justification: Department of State, Foreign Operations and Related Programs.* Washington, D.C: Government Printing Office, 2015, 161, http://www.state.gov/documents/organization/236395.pdf.

agencies, suggests that counterterrorism policies in the region are finally realizing their whole of government agenda.

3.   Analysis of Counterterrorism Policy in the Trans-Sahara

As a multi-agency effort that spans across the Department of State, the Department of Defense, and USAID, in addition to numerous other agencies TSCTP is exceptional in the U.S. foreign policy landscape. As such, the development and execution has not been without serious issues that stem from this unique interagency effort—the most notable being the lack of a common strategy.[68] The creation of AFRICOM—itself a hybrid of diplomacy, development, and defense—saw execution authority for TSCTP activities transition from EUCOM, and implementation of counterterrorism programs increased as a result of the additional personnel. Despite AFRICOMs coordination, a 2010 review of TSCTP activities revealed that a true interagency concept had not yet emerged and that a coordinated approach to counterterrorism in the Trans-Sahara was not evident.[69] Furthermore, TSCTP operations have been subject to fluctuations in the disbursement of funds and uneven implementation of programs across the region, resulting in some nations getting more than others.[70] Although data shows countries such as Chad, Mali, Mauritania and Niger get more funding than Senegal and Nigeria, these differences are likely the result of a country's capacity or willingness to absorb training and assistance.[71] Likewise, the disparity in programs that exists between the Department of State, the Department of Defense, and USAID has as much to do with work force and capacity to execute programs as it does with budgetary variations across the agencies. For example, the Department of Defense has a permanent presence in every embassy with the Defense Attaché and Office of Security Cooperation compared to USAID, which runs projects out of regional offices. Recently, funding reflects that these disparities are fading

---

[68] Warner, The Trans Sahara Counter Terrorism Partnership, 31.

[69] Martin F. Kindl, *AFRICOM'S Role in Interagency Counterterrorism Efforts: An Assessment in 3D.* (Homeland Security Digital Library 698166). Washington, D.C: Homeland Security Digital Library, 2010. https://www.hsdl.org/?view&did=698166.

[70] Johnson, *Actions Needed to Enhance Implementation of Trans-Sahara Counterterrorism Partnership*, 11.

[71] Ibid., 2.

and the commitment to countering terrorism in the Trans-Sahara via an interagency design remains strong.

In addition to disparities in funding and execution, the TSCTP has struggled to effectively implement programs across agencies and track funds.[72] As Todd Moss writes, "the inability of the interagency to clarify objectives, deploy tools, and monitor how things are progressing is hard enough for a single sector in a single country; it's nearly impossible for a regional multi-sectorial effort like TSCTP/OEF-TS."[73] Criticisms of this kind, that address the lack of an overarching strategy, explain the uneven application of TSCTP resources that favor Department of Defense activities and the imbalance of fund distribution throughout the partner countries. To remedy these problems, Congress established the Global Security Contingency Fund to address the numerous defects that undermine interagency efforts abroad.[74] The Global Security Contingency Fund allotted $300 million toward security and counterterrorism operations—with approximately 80% allotted for the Department of Defense and 20% for the Department of State.[75] A few years later (and after the coup in Mali), the United States administration proposed an additional $5 billion—$1 billion for the Department of State and $4 billion for the Department of Defense—to be added to the Overseas Contingency Operations fund to establish a new, more flexible Counterterrorism Partnership Fund that would augment the existing authorities to establish a more effective counterterrorism approach, by developing the counterterrorism capacity of partners, mainly through "train-and-equip" activities.[76] These supplementary sources of counterterrorism funding suggest that the

---

[72] Ibid., 11.

[73] Todd Moss, "Lesson from Mali's Debacle: Time to Rethink Counterterrorism Cooperation," Center for Global Development, May 10, 2012, http://www.cgdev.org/blog/lesson-mali's-debacle-time-rethink-counterterrorism-cooperation.

[74] Nina M. Serafino, *Global Security Contingency Fund (GSCF): Summary and Issue Overview* (CRS Report No. R42641) (Washinton, DC: Congressional Research Service, 2014), 2, https://www.fas.org/sgp/crs/row/R42641.pdf.

[75] Ibid., 5.

[76] United States Department of Defense. *Fiscal Year (FY) 2015 DOD Overseas Contingency Operations (OCO) Budget Amendment Update*. Washington, D.C: Government Printing Office, 2014, 16, http://comptroller.defense.gov/Portals/45/Documents/defbudget/fy2015/amendment/FY15_OCO_Budget_Amendment_Update.pdf.

scope of operations in the region will continue, matching the growth of Islamic extremism in the region.

Lastly, despite greatly expanding in design and scope, counterterrorism efforts have evolved over the years in a vacuum with little direct interaction with regional organizations such as Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) or international organizations like the United Nations. A notable departure from this has been the cooperation between the United States and France—a long-standing actor in the region due to their colonial legacy.[77] Department of State officials understand that, while TSCTPs interagency approach to countering terrorism is crucial, there is a need to strengthen the TSCTP—through alignment with regionally involved organizations—and expand beyond the narrowly focused counterterrorism program because the current design will not remain sufficient to counter the various, and constantly evolving threats that plague the region.[78] Likewise, recent testimony before the House Committee on Foreign Affairs illustrates that Department of Defense leadership also understands the need to integrate counterterrorism activities into the larger security framework and coordinate more effectively with the international community.[79] Considering the intent of counterterrorism policy is to strengthen the region as a whole, it seems reasonable to suggest that increased alignment with regional organizations and actors will only serve to bolster the United States' efforts.

Overall, United States counterterrorism policy in the Trans-Sahara region has evolved considerably since 2002. Despite some early funding issues and programmatic limitations, the counterterrorism initiatives have grown in design, scope, and intent while remaining focused on the primary objective of countering terrorism and violent extremist

---

[77] Michael Shurkin, "France Gets Tougher on Terrorism," *World Report*, July 29, 2014. http://www.usnews.com/opinion/blogs/world-report/2014/07/29/the-us-should-cheer-frances-new-counterterroism-plan-in-africa.

[78] U.S. Department of State, *Remarks from Eighth Annual Trans-Sahara Counterterrorism Partnership Conference.* Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 2013, http://www.state.gov/p/af/rls/rm/2013/216028.htm.

[79] *Boko Haram: The Growing Threat to Schoolgirls, Nigeri*a*, and Beyond: Hearing Before the House Committee on Foreign Affairs*, (2014) (statement of Amanda Dory, Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense for African Affairs). http://docs.house.gov/meetings/FA/FA00/20140521/102242/HHRG-113-FA00-Wstate-DoryA-20140521.pdf.

ideologies vis-à-vis a whole of government approach. While success in these circumstances is hard to define, commitment is not. Available data suggests that the United States is undoubtedly committed to countering terrorism in the region by increasing the capacity of the partner nations. Furthermore, the conceptual framework of United States counterterrorism efforts in the Trans-Sahara account for the permissible environment of the Sahel and the Maghreb by acknowledging the development-defense-diplomacy nexus. Despite all of this, terrorism and the spread of violent extremist ideologies have been steadily on the rise in the Sahel and the Maghreb since 2002, calling into question the efficacy of the United States' policy.

B.   SALAFI-JIHADISM IN THE TRANS-SAHARA

Islam is unique in the religious landscape due, in large part, to the absence of secularism associated with the majority of other religions.[80] Salafi-Jihadist groups take this anti-secularism one step further, contending that the secular state causes corruption and inequality, which can only be solved through the implementation of Sharia law.[81] To understand exactly what the neologism Salafi-Jihadism means, it is crucial to understand the terminology. The Salafi strain of Islam has some specific ideological aspects that separate it from other traditions within Sunni Islam. While all Salafists seek the establishment of a theocratic state based on Islamic law, there are notable differences in their tactics. These distinctions break Salafists into three distinctive yet overlapping categories: scripturalists, whose tactical approach relies on spiritual outreach, charity, and education; political-Salafists, who promote their goals through participation in the political system; and the Salafi-Jihadists, who wage a violent fight to promote their goals.[82] This last group presents a particular concern to the Sahel because they have no intention of participating in the political process, and their fight taxes the fragile institutions of the state. The term *jihad*, perhaps one of the more misunderstood terms of

---

[80] Ernest Gellner, *Postmodernism, Reason, and Religion* (London: Routledge, 1992), 5.

[81] Michael A. Sheehan and Geoff D. Porter, "The Future Role of U.S. Counterterrorism Operations in Africa," *CTC Sentinel* 7, no.2. (February 2014): 1-4.

[82] Mohammed M. Hafez, *Suicide Bombers in Iraq: The Strategy and Ideology of Martyrdom* (Washington, D.C: United States Institute of Peace, 2007), 64.

our times, literally translates to English as "struggle," and refers to several different aspects of Muslim though that ranges from the physical to the spiritual.[83] Together these terms—Salafi and Jihad—combine to describe the specific faction within the Salafi community that, over the past fifteen years, has dominated much of the international conversation about terrorism. Although they are united to the larger Salafi community through common religious beliefs, they are separated from other factions within the community by their strict contextual reading of the Quran.[84] More than just academic, these differences can considerably affect the efficacy of the counter measures employed by the United States in the Sahel.

1. Ideological Beginnings of Salafi-Jihadism

In any revolutionary idea there are ideological, doctrinal, and historical influences that shape it; Salafi-Jihadism is no different. The first ideological influence traces back to the post-WWII timeframe and the Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt that preached how western imperialism had caused a decline in Islam and that the restoration of the caliphate was necessary to correct the situation.[85] The second major ideological influence comes from Salafism, a theological movement within Sunni Islam that is primarily concerned with purifying Islam by eradicating idolatry *(shirk)* and affirming monotheism *(tawhid)*. These two schools of thought explain the anti-Shi'ite elements of Salafi-Jihadism as well the persecution of those people participating in a democratic system.[86] They also provided the foundation of the transnational ideology of mobilizing against the near enemy of secular governments and the global enemy represented by the West. During this time, the ideology was provided a doctrinal basis by Sayyid Qutb, who wrote some of the most influential documents within radical Islam.[87] In his writings, Qutb rejected Western

---

[83] Maria Rapela Heidt, *Moral Traditions: An Introduction to World Religious Ethics* (Minnesota: Anselm Academic, 2010), 81.

[84] Quintan Wiktorowicz, "Anatomy of the Salafi Movement," *Studies in Conflict & Terrorism* 29, No.3 (August 2006): 209. doi:10.1080/10576100500497004.

[85] Cole Bunzel, "From Paper State to Caliphate: The Ideology of the Islamic State," Washington, DC: The Brookings Institute, 2015, 8.

[86] Ibid.,8-9.

[87] Schultz, "Global Insurgency Strategy and the Salafi Jihad Movement," 59-64.

culture and ideals as bankrupt, promoted Islam as superior to other social systems, and advocated that earthly sovereignty is the sole purview of God.[88] These writings combined with a strict Quranic reading provide the basis for a majority of Islamic terrorist groups operating in the Sahel.

While these doctrinal and ideological influences provide an immensely complex framework, there are five main pillars that largely define the Salafi-Jihadist movements and are readily found in the agendas of Boko Haram, Ansaru, MUJAO, Ansar-al Dine and AQIM. The first, *tawhid* (monotheism); the second pillar, *hakimiyat allah,* or God's sovereignty, means that people are incapable of determining right and wrong through reasoning. *Bida*, the third pillar, concerns a rejection of innovations to Islam and propose a fundamentalist jurisprudence, arising from the notion that the Quran, as the revelation from God is complete and requires no alterations. The fourth pillar, *takfir*, allows a Muslims to be declared outside the faith, something Salafi-Jihadists do to Muslims they perceive as having committed a transgression against Islam. This point is particularly relevant when understanding the contemporary movements in the Sahel because they provide a basis for de-legitimizing secular Muslim governments.[89] The last pillar is the notion that *jihad* is an obligation that all Muslims have to rebel against governments that are not ruling according to God's law. This last pillar presents a unique challenge to the United States' counterterrorism policies in the region because the very notion that an apostate regime like the United States funds, develops, or defends the governments automatically equates that government becoming illegitimate in the eyes of Salafi-Jihadists. These pillars provide the key to understanding the narrative of Salafi-Jihadist groups operating in the Sahel and illustrate why the mere presence of United States personnel can exacerbate a situation. Furthermore, it underscores the importance of strong states that are capable of developing a counter-narrative that can withstand attempts at de-legitimization.

---

[88] Luke Loboda, "The Though of Sayyid Qutb." Ashbrook Statesmanship Thesis, 2004. http://www.ashbrook.org/wp-content/uploads/2012/06/2004-Loboda-The-Thought-of-Sayyid-Qutb-PDF.pdf.

[89] Hafez, *Suicide Bombers in Iraq*, 64.

As religiously based extremists, Salafi-Jihadists possess a distinct role from secular terrorist groups in a number of factors. While ideology plays a central role in all terrorist organizations, the religious dimension of radical Islamist organizations imbue their ideologies with a sacrosanct quality not found in secular organizations.[90] There are a number of salient points to draw from this difference between the secular and the religious. First, these individuals believe they are carrying out a divine duty, which allows them to disregard the secular laws imposed by governments.[91] Second, their timelines take on an eschatological aspect that extends well past any western political timeframe. Third, these group's Quranic hermeneutics have led them to believe that the violence associated with terrorism has been morally sanctioned.[92] Lastly, these groups have developed a robust narrative that directly attacks the legitimacy of the state.

2. Origins of Salafi-Jihadism in the Trans-Sahara

Despite decades of development, it was not until the 1980s that the practices and goals of contemporary Salafi-Jihadism emerged and began to evolve into a global movement. Beginning with the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan in 1979, the ideological and doctrinal framework was given a practical outlet through a number of historical events that provided Salafi-Jihadists with ideological challenges and opportunities for practical training. So, while the ideology that underpins the movement dates back to the 1950s, the contemporary Salafi-Jihadists structural development traces back to the Soviet invasion and occupation of Afghanistan that ended in 1989. The end of this war brought scores of jihadi fighters back to North Africa, where their successful fight against an infidel power in a Muslim nation, coupled with their fighting acumen (gained after a decade of fighting Soviets) emboldened them and put them in direct confrontation with regional governments, most notably the government in Algeria.[93] From this struggle

---

[90] Angel Rabasa, Stacie L. Pettyjohn, Jeremy J. Ghez, and Christopher Boucek, Deradicalizing Islamist Extremist. Santa Monica, CA: RAND Corporation, 2010. http://www.rand.org/content/dam/rand/pubs/monographs/2010/RAND_MG1053.pdf.

[91] J Mark Jurgensmeyer, "Terror in the Name of God," *Current History*, 100 (November 2001): 357–359. http://www.currenthistory.com/Article.php?ID=250.

[92] Ibid., 357.

[93] Forest, "Al-Qaeda's Influence in Sub-Saharan Africa: Myths, Realities and Possibilities," 64.

came the Salafist Group for Preaching and Combat in 1998, which in 2007 would become AQIM. Shortly after rebranding, the group announced that due to their support of the apostate Algerian government France was the group's primary target. This declaration against the West was not necessarily new, but the allegiance of the group with the larger global jihadist insurgency brought with it material support and increased legitimacy in Northwest Africa.

While the strength of the relationships between AQIM, al-Qaeda, and regional groups like Boko Haram and Ansaru remain under debate, the influence of the Salafi-Jihadist ideology on the region undoubtedly traces back to these developments in Afghanistan and Northwest Africa and serves as the common denominator for many of the current groups (see figure 3). The aftermath of the September 11th attacks fit easily into the developing narrative, with the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq delivering convenient struggles for many of these Salafi-Jihadists to idealize and, in many cases, support. Despite persistent efforts by the United States government to avoid the appearances of a war against Islam, many radical Islamists viewed the engagements as just that—a war against Islam. With the opening of a de facto front in the Global War on Terror—represented by the TSCTP and OEF-TS—in the Sahel, the ideologies of the West and the Salafi-Jihadist would come into direct confrontation with one another. Later, the popular uprisings that swept across North Africa and the Middle East—loosely termed the Arab Spring—increased the reach and appeal of the Salafi-Jihadists.[94] After many of these revolutions failed to deliver any substantive changes, and others turned violent in Libya and Syria, Salafi-Jihadists in West Africa indirectly benefited by an increase in ideological struggles to champion, while directly benefiting from the increased flow of weapons flowing from Libya.[95] While many of the terrorist groups remained content to focus on the near enemy during the initial years, the 2012 coup d'état

---

[94] Haim Malka and William Lawrence, "Salafi-Jihadism's Next Generation," Center for Strategic and International Studies, October 11, 2013, http://csis.org/publication/jihadi-salafisms-next-generation.

[95] "Unsecured Libyan Stockpiles Empower Boko Haram and Destabilize African Sahel," Crimes Against Humanity Program, February 6, 2012, http://www.humanrightsfirst.org/2012/02/06/unsecured-libyan-stockpiles-empower-boko-haram-and-destabilize-african-sahel; Louis Charbonneau, "Arms From Libya Could Reach Boko Haram, al-Qaeda: UN," *Reuters*, January 26, 2012. http://www.reuters.com/article/2012/01/26/us-libya-un-arms-idUSTRE80P1QS20120126.

in Mali, the 2013 attack on the In Amenas gas plant in Eastern Algeria, and Boko Haram's professed allegiance to ISIS seem to suggest a growing international mindset within many of these groups that will threaten regions and interests outside the Sahel.
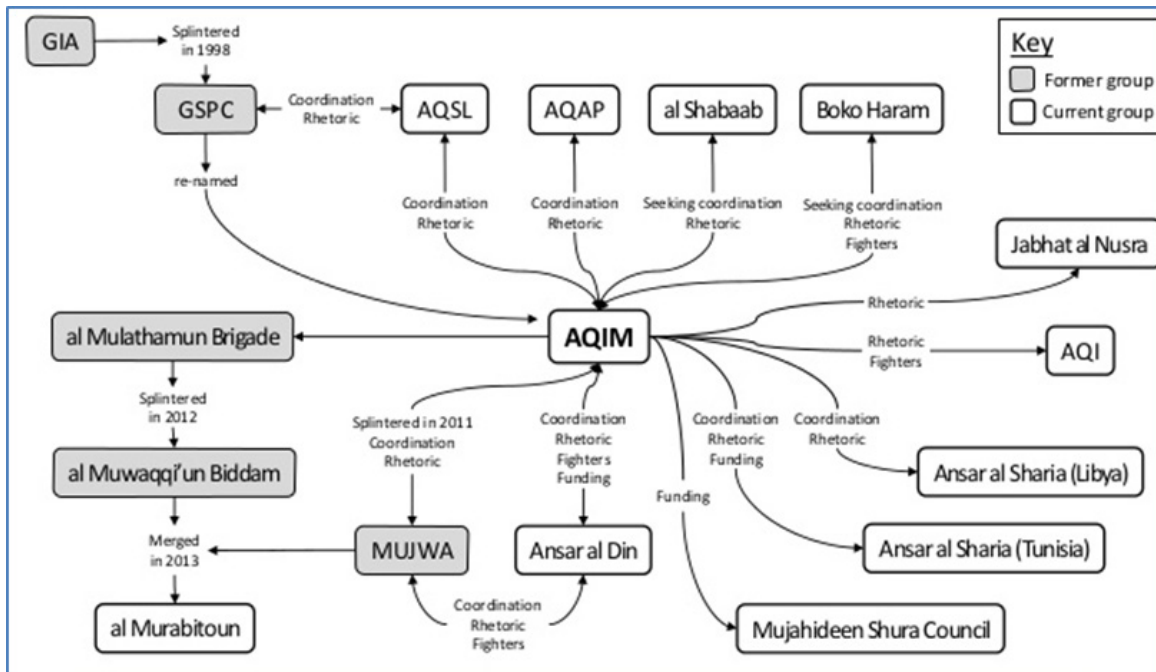

Figure 3.   The AQIM Ecosystem.[96]

Salafi-Jihadism differs from other forms of political Islam. These groups are not merely against the Christian populations and secular facets of these states, but other Muslims as well.[97] For example, the Salafists condemn Sufism, the form of Islam practiced in much of West Africa, as non-Islamic.[98] As such, Salafi-Jihadists maintain a complex and adversarial relationship with the larger Muslim community. Pejorative concepts like *bida*, *takfir*, and *jihad* that all allow for intra-Muslim condemnation certainly provides Islamic leaders with reason enough to denounce these groups.

---

[96] "The AQIM Ecosystem," The American Enterprise Institute Critical Threats Project, March 27, 2014, http://www.slideshare.net/CriticalThreats/aqim-leaders-and-their-networks.)

[97] Assaf Moghadam, "The Salafi-Jihad as a Religious Ideology," *CTC Sentinel* 1, no. 3 (February 2008): 14-16, http://ctc.usma.edu/sentinel/CTCSentinel-Vol1Iss3.pdf.

[98] Louis Brenner, *West African Sufi: The Religious Heritage and Spiritual Search of Cerno Bokar Saalif Taal* (California: University of California Press, 1984), 4.

Likewise, the violent tactics employed by many of these groups undoubtedly trouble the average Muslim faithful. Despite this evidence, Muslims remain conflicted and many remain reluctant to disavow other Muslims. To understand the complex dynamics behind this reluctance, the problem must be understood as an existential problem, not merely a political or social problem. Salafi-Jihadists draw from the same religious sources as other Muslims; they adeptly exploit and employ religious rhetoric and symbols to advance their cause. According to Assaf Moghadam of the *Combating Terrorism Center* this is the "reason that ordinary Muslims—not to speak of non-Muslims—find it particularly difficult and dangerous to challenge Salafi-Jihadists without running the risk of being accused of targeting Islam as a whole."[99] This explains how the crimes imputed to Salafi-Jihadists do not garner the level of condemnation one would expect; however, this silence does not equate to affirmation by the larger Islamic community. Many Muslims in communities throughout the Sahel where these groups operate find the violence reprehensible, but lack the resources to counter the violence on their own. The ineffectual state responses leave these Muslims stuck between a rock and a hard place, which Salafi-Jihadist groups deftly manipulate. In addition to safety concerns, many Muslims living in the Sahel lack access to reliable media outlets that can offer a reliable counter-narrative to that being pushed by the Salafi-Jihadist groups. The United States government went to great lengths to characterize the Global War on Terror and its more recent incarnations as campaigns against terrorism and violent extremist ideologies—not as a war against Islam.[100] However, this characterization likely did not reach many Muslim citizens in the Sahel due to their limited access to information and distrust of Western intentions. Conversely, the Salafi-Jihadists directly acknowledge that they are acting on behalf of Islam—a narrative that does reach the ordinary Muslim.

---

[99] Moghadam, "The Salafi-Jihad as a Religious Ideology," 17.

[100] Domenico Montanaro, Lisa Desjardins, Rachel Wellford and Simone Pathe, "Who Said It? Bush vs. Obama on Islam," *PBS News Hour,* February 19, 2015, http://www.pbs.org/newshour/updates/said-obama-vs-bush-islam/.

3. The Rise of Salafi-Jihadism in the Sahel

As mentioned previously, the history of Salafi-Jihadism is grounded in the fight against foreign non-Muslim occupiers. Initially the Soviets in Afghanistan, it later became the United States and its Western partners in the Middle East. This struggle, or jihad, against foreign non-Muslim powers was well suited to transfer to Northwest Africa, where many governments draw their design and empowerment from colonial systems. In an effort to control populations, these colonial systems exploited fissures in ethnicity and religion to divide people and keep the indigenous population weakened. Therefore, it is not surprising that the increased presence of the United States that came with the TSCTP, OEF-TS, and the creation of AFRICOM permeated radical Muslim thought in the region. This perception coupled with the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq, that were creating a number of well trained and radicalizing jihadists only served to add to the problem. Lastly, the weak and ineffectual governments that define the political landscape of the Sahel provide ample room for Salafi-Jihadists to operate and radicalize locally disenfranchised populations. Perhaps the most recent effects were the post-Qaddafi situation in Libya, were scores of fighter and countless weapons were shipped across the Trans-Sahara and elsewhere.

The United States' understanding of the threat posed by Salafi extremism in the Sahel region has evolved over the years since counterterrorism efforts began in earnest. Initially something seen as a local threat, Salafi-Jihadism began to be seen as a regional threat after a number of high-profile attacks on Western interests occurred.[101] Despite this elevation, the threat that the Salafi-Jihadists posed (along with terrorism in general) to regional stability was still underemphasized and mainly viewed as something directed at U.S. interests in the region. In 2009, Lilianne Kennedy-Boudali gave testimony before the United States Senate Committee on Foreign Relations Subcommittee on African Affairs that purported that insecurity in the Sahel was primarily the result of corruption, civil conflict, smuggling, and trafficking—not terrorism.[102] The 2010 resurgence of Boko

---

[101] Jones, "A Persistent Threat: The Evolution of al Qa'ida and Other Salafi Jihadists," 29–31.

[102] Kennedy-Boudali, "Examining U.S. Counterterrorism Priorities and Strategy Across Africa's Sahel Region," 1.

Haram and the 2012 chaos in Mali, illustrated that the threat of Salafi-Jihadism also possessed the potential for widespread destabilization. This new appreciation of the threat led to a renewed discussion of the security-development nexus that Lilianne Kennedy-Boudali mentioned when discussing insecurity in the Sahel requires a regional approach that incorporates programs designed to address the underlying causes that allow violent extremism ideologies to spread.[103]

C.   STATE CAPACITY IN THE SAHEL

United States counterterrorism efforts in the Trans-Sahara developed from the conception that weak states provide an environment amenable to the growth of terrorism. This belief is contrary to the long accepted wisdom that terrorism was a tactic reserved for the weak to use against an overwhelmingly strong state.[104] From the outset, counterterrorism initiatives intended to emphasize "the holistic nature of counterterrorism, by addressing such things as security sector reform, democratic accountability, development of public consensus, professionalism of military forces, and respect for human rights and the rule of law."[105] Understanding the limited capacity of the Sahelian states is a key element in appreciating the strategic environment of the Trans-Sahara. Given the transnational nature of many of the Salafi-Jihadist groups in the Sahel, the forthcoming analysis of state capacity will incorporate data from all eleven TSCTP countries. In doing so, a more comprehensive regional picture develops that lends itself to better comparison and shows the larger trends that impact the efficacy of United States counterterrorism initiatives.

In order to define state capacity, it is first necessary to define the state. The classical definition proposed by Max Weber deemed the state "a human community that (successfully) claims the monopoly of the legitimate use of physical force within a given

---

[103] Kennedy-Boudali, "Examining U.S. Counterterrorism Priorities and Strategy Across Africa's Sahel Region," 6.

[104] Martha Crenshaw, "The Causes of Terrorism," *Comparative Politics* 13, no.4 (July 1981): 387. doi: 10.2307/421717.

[105] International Crisis Group, *Islamist Terrorism in the Sahel: Fact or Fiction?*, 27.

territory."[106] Since Weber's definition, the view of state capacity has expanded into a multidimensional concept that includes the state's bureaucratic and administrative capacity to provide public goods; legal capacity in the form of border protection and the rule of law; infrastructural capacity to exercise control throughout the entirety of territory; and extractive capacity in the form of raising revenues.[107] As such, the United States' whole of government strategy for countering terrorism in the Trans-Sahara attempts to address directly and indirectly these various levels and their interdependence. Considering that the United States attempts to work through and with these African partners to counter violent extremism and terrorism, the limited state capacity of these countries greatly affects the efficacy of counterterrorism initiatives. A review of state capacity in the region illustrates that the Sahelian nations of the Trans-Sahara region remain weak and incapable of fulfilling many of the basic functions of a state outside the capital cities.

Research shows that state capacity in the Sahel remains problematic. Analysis of defense spending, social spending, unemployment rates, economic factors, and indices that measure human development and corruption establishes a comprehensive snapshot of the status of limited state capacity in the region. Data from the World Bank, the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute, International Institute for Strategic Studies, and other organizations show that the countries of the Sahel have seen small fluctuations in their defense expenditures since 2000.[108] Meanwhile, manpower changes were scattered, with Senegal and Nigeria registering the largest increases—21% and 51.2% respectively—and Chad, Mali, and Niger registering a decrease or no change at all. This data shows there is no correlation between United States counterterrorism

---

[106] Max Weber, "Politics as Vocation," In *Essential Readings in Comparative Politics 4th Edition*, ed. by Patrick H. O'Neil and Ronald Rogowski (New York: W.W. Norton, 2013), 40.

[107] Charles Tilly, "War Making and State Making as Organized Crime." In *Bringing the State Back In*, ed. by Peter Evans, Dietrich Rueschemeyer, and Theda Skocpol (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985), 181; Robert I. Rotberg, *When States Fail: Causes and Consequences.* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 2004.), 2; Michael Mann, "The Autonomous Power of State: Its Origins, Mechanism, and Results," in *States in History*, ed. John A. Hall (New York, N.Y. : B. Blackwell, 1986), 113; Antonia Savoia and Kunal Sen, "Measurement and Evolution of State Capacity: Exploring a Lesser Known Aspect of Governance," *Journal of Economic Surveys* 29, No. 3 (July 2015): 441–458, doi: 10.1111/joes.120654.

[108] There was an exception. Chad saw an increase in 2004, only to return to normal levels a year later.

spending in the Sahel and an increase in defense expenditures in African partners. Furthermore, average defense expenditures throughout the Sub-Saharan Africa region average 1.5% of GDP while the Middle East/North African region averages 5.3% of GDP, illustrating that all TSCTP countries—excluding Mauritania—remain well within the average for their respective regions. Similarly, data shows that the TSCTP countries averaged a 1.3% increase in manpower from the period of 2000–2012. The outliers were Senegal and Nigeria, which registered large increases in overall manpower during the period, and Mali, which saw a sharp decrease. These outliers could have political explanations, as both Senegal and Nigeria have been dealing with insurgencies and Mali experienced a coup d'état; however, that analysis exceeds the intent and scope of this paper. Lastly, any assessment of military spending must acknowledge the possibility that not all defense expenditures leave administrative traces.

Defense expenditures provide explicit information toward a country's efforts toward defense; however, the impact that an increase or decrease in defense spending has on social spending provides a more holistic understanding of a state's capacity. Without a sustained investment in social and economic development, the narrowly focused counterterrorism efforts will merely disrupt violent extremism because of a failure to address the fundamental causes that allow these extremist ideologies to flourish in the first place. Addressing effects, without redressing the causes is like playing "whack a mole"—the one holding the hammer eventually tires. As Gilles Yabi from the International Crisis Group argues, "the more young people are able to be employed the less chances there are that they can be recruited by militant groups."[109] Furthermore, a 2012 paper published by the African Center for Strategic Studies contends that poverty, unemployment, and socioeconomic deprivation are among the leading explanations for the rise of violent extremist organizations.[110] The idea that there is a social and economic side to countering terrorism, along with the military operations, certainly exists in the TSCTPs "whole of government" approach. For the purposes of this paper, social

---

[109] "Understanding the Causes of Violent Extremism in West Africa," United Nations, May 10, 2013, http://www.irinnews.org/report/98012/understanding-the-causes-of-violent-extremism-in-west-africa.

[110] Terje Østebø, "Islamic Militancy in Africa." *African Center for Strategic Studies*, no.23 (November 2012): 5. http://africacenter.org/wp-content/uploads/2012/11/AfricaBriefFinal_23.pdf.

spending is measured in terms of unemployment and annual government expenditures (total percentage of GDP) on education and health because these factors are generally considered the main drivers of social instability.

World Bank data on education shows that primary and secondary school enrollment increased in all TSCTP countries, except Nigeria, between 2004 and 2013. According to data from the World Health Organization total expenditures on health (as percentage of GDP) in 2012 compared to 2002, shows that only Chad and Mali registered decreases, while Algeria, Burkina Faso, Morocco, Nigeria, and Tunisia all registered slightly more than a 1% increase.[111] Meanwhile, unemployment remained relatively static—less than a 0.2% change—from 2000 to 2012, with the exception of Morocco, Tunisia, and Algeria all realizing a decline in unemployment, with Algeria realizing a nearly 20% decrease.[112] On the one hand, this disparate data illustrates the complex nature of society, economics, and politics, but it also highlights that investment in health and education has barely increased over the past 15 years and chronic unemployment plagues many of these countries. This explains why many of the countries continually rank low on a number of global indices.

Despite the modest increases in social expenditures, the countries of the Sahel ranked in the bottom 20% of the United Nations' most recent Human Development Index—a measure of quality of life issues like life expectancy and standard of living—with Mali, Burkina Faso, Chad, and Niger making up four of the bottom ten.[113] While these countries have all been slowly improving since the 2000 Human Development Index, the changes have not kept up with the pace of terrorism in the region. Similar data from *The Human Capital Report 2013* published by the World Economic Forum, which measures four pillars—education, health, employment, enabling environment—shows that all the TSCTP countries rank in the bottom of the index, with all but Morocco and

---

111 "Global Health Observatory Data Repository," World Health Organization, August 10, 2014, http://apps.who.int/gho/data/node.country.

112 "Unemployment, Total," World Bank, accessed August 22, 2014, http://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SL.UEM.TOTL.ZS.

113 "Human Development Index," United Nations, August 28, 2014, http://hdr.undp.org/en/content/human-development-index-hdi.

Tunisia being in the bottom 20% (Chad and Niger were not measured).[114] Again, measured against data from 2000, it is shows that the countries are making some progress, but not quickly enough to counter the powerful rise of terrorism in the region.

Considering the important role that good governance plays in strong state capacity, and the United States' counterterrorism policies, looking at the status of governance in the region provides another important dimension. The Economic Freedom rankings—a measure of freedom from corruption, financial freedom, and business freedom—show that Trans-Saharan countries routinely rank in the bottom half of countries evaluated. For example, in the 2014 rankings Burkina Faso—ranked 98—was the only Trans-Saharan country to rank in the top half. Morocco—103; Tunisia—109; Mali—122; Senegal—125; Niger—127; Nigeria—129; and Mauritania—134 all scored poorly, while Algeria—146—and Chad—167—possessed some of the poorest rankings in Africa.[115] More telling is the fact that eight countries (only Morocco and Niger were exceptions) declined from the 2009 rankings and all countries saw a decline in their scores from 2006.[116] While these results highlight the fact that economic freedom is declining within the region, it does not speak to the cause of this decline. There is, however, a correlation between the limited economic freedom and the rise of illicit economic activities, which support terrorism. As Vanda Felbab-Brown and James J.F. Forest write, "The presence of illicit economies may attract terrorists into a particular location, where they offer themselves as protectors of the population against the

---

[114] The Human Capitol Report 2013," World Economic Forum, May 12, 2013, http://reports.weforum.org/human-capital-index-2013/#section=part-2-%25e2%2580%2593-country-profiles.

[115] Terry Miller, Amb., Anthony B. Kim, and Kim R. Holmes. 2014 Index of Economic Freedom. The Heritage Foundation, Washington, D.C., 2014. http://www.heritage.org/index/pdf/2014/book/index_2014.pdf.

[116] James Gwartney and Robert Lawson, "Economic Freedom of the World: 2004 Annual Report," *Economic Freedom Network* (2004): 13-16. http://www.freetheworld.com/2004/efw2004complete.pdf; James Gwartney and Robert Lawson, "Economic Freedom of the World: 2008 Annual Report." *Economic Freedom Network* (2008): 9-13. http://www.freetheworld.com/2008/EconomicFreedomoftheWorld2008.pdf.

deficiencies of the state and the predatory behavior of criminal groups, and in return they expect to receive local support for their group."[117]

There are a number of larger trends that appear throughout the data. First, a majority of TSCTP countries have seen slight increases in their social spending over the past decade. However, these slight increases in social spending are coupled by persistently high rates of unemployment. Second, there have been no significant changes in defense spending throughout the region, suggesting that one of the basic elements of state capacity remain underdeveloped. Third, and perhaps most problematic, is the decline that these countries registered in the areas of governance and freedom. Therefore, while the United States through the TSCTP, OEF-TS, and other initiatives has dramatically increased the amount it spends on countering terrorism in the Sahel and the Maghreb region, this has not caused the African partners to follow suit. As the data shows, regional defense expenditures have not increased notably over the past fourteen years, nor has social spending decreased in any meaningful way. Limited economic freedom, widespread corruption, and poor governance still plague most countries— factors that contribute to an unstable society—and need to be addressed to avoid inequality and social grievances being exploited by violent extremism organizations and terrorists. When this low human development is coupled with high levels of violence, the states remains weak. This causes tensions within the United States' whole of government approach to countering terrorism in the region because the situation requires an emphasis on security over political goals.

The limited state capacity that defines these states presents two distinct problems for counterterrorism efforts—one internal, one external. First, there is the inability of the states to combat violent extremism and terrorism. The inability of the state to exert control over its borders makes the region highly susceptible for transnational operations like smuggling, kidnapping, and human trafficking, which finance terrorist organizations. The limited presence of rule of law makes prosecution of terrorist activity improbable;

---

[117] Vanda Felbab-Brown and James J.F. Forest, "Political Violence and the Illicit Economies of West Africa," *Terrorism and Political Violence* 24, no.5 (November 2012): 788. doi:10.1080/09546553.2011.644098.

severely curbing the effect that such punishments traditionally have on potential recruits and undermining the faith citizens have in jurisprudence. The limited extractive capacity of states to collect taxes puts limitations on social programs that may be used to improve the socio-economic situation and develop a counter-narrative to that of the violent extremists. Lastly, the political limitations associated with these weak states make the development of national agendas difficult, further limiting the ability of the federal governments to develop legitimacy in the eyes of all the citizenry. The second problem is the insular nature of many of these states. The inability or unwillingness to look past their own borders means they are often unable to absorb and benefit from all the available United States counterterrorism programs—to truly be partners. Additionally, it means they are unable to work effectively with neighbors and regional organizations. Taken together, these two limitations present a significant impediment to successfully countering terrorism in the region. The nexus between state security, transnational criminal activity, and extremist financing demands regional collaboration, requiring these states to look past their own borders and develop more comprehensive national priorities.

Rather than a tactical response to powerful states, terrorism in the Sahel exploits the weak state. Congressional leaders have expressed concern about the negative impact that weak state capacity has on counterterrorism programs in the Trans-Sahara region. Referencing an environment "in which coups, instability, and concerns about human rights abuses constitute historical and often ongoing risks" the *2014 National Defense Authorization Act* by the Committee on Armed Services United States Senate, recommended that the Department of Defense and the Department of State focus "on developing long-term regional counterterrorism capabilities."[118] In addition to criticizing the management of United States counterterrorism programs, this report demonstrates the pitfalls of policies where success is dependent upon the recipient state's capacity to translate funding and training into demonstrable changes within their military and security framework. The importance of strong states in countering terrorism cannot be overstated. Studies confirm that a society's access to resources vis-à-vis state institutions

---

[118] Committee on Armed Services United States Senate, *National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2014.* Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 2014, 195, http://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/pkg/CRPT-113srpt44/pdf/CRPT-113srpt44.pdf.

has a demonstrable impact on the severity of conflicts.[119] In cases where certain segments of society feel they have no alternative access to resources, they are likely to take up arms against the government or provide support for those fighting against the government. Terrorists and violent extremist organizations easily exploit weak or non-existing state capacity. In a 2012 *Foreign Policy* article on the ten causes for state failure, six of the ten are directly tied to weak institutions that are unable to provide public services: "lack of property rights; no law and order; a weak central government; political exploitation; forced labor; and bad public services."[120] The impact these weak states have on United States counterterrorism efforts are manifold, as planners must work around the dearth of indigenous political, social, economic, and military infrastructure to produce infrastructure capable of sustaining operations and achieving the end-state.

D.   SUMMARY

After more than a decade of counterterrorism efforts in the Trans-Saharan region, the efficacy of the United States' policies in the region remains contestable. Data shows that counterterrorism efforts have not militarized the Sahel and that, despite some programmatic challenges, the counterterrorism initiatives remain appropriately funded. Similarly, data illustrates that domestic funding for social programs has not significantly decreased over the intervening years, demonstrating the reality of the whole of government approach that the United States' counterterrorism policies rely on so heavily. Despite these positive indicators, Salafi-Jihadism has risen steadily since 2001 and constitutes a significant threat to the region. In addition, the improvement of state capacity continues to move at a sluggish pace across the region, undermining any substantive changes. These trends illustrate the sometimes-contradictory nature of political goals and security goals in the Sahel, which severely impact counterterrorism initiatives.

---

[119] Marie L. Besancon, "Relative Resources: Inequality in Ethnic Wars, Revolutions, and Genocides," *Journal of Peace Research* 42, no.4 (July 2005): 402–410. doi: 10.1177/0022343305054086.

[120] Daron Acemoglu and James Robinson, "10 Reasons Countries Fall Apart." *Foreign Policy,* Jul/Aug 2012. 88-91. http://foreignpolicy.com/2012/06/18/10-reasons-countries-fall-apart/.

THIS PAGE INTENTIONALLY LEFT BLANK

III. EVALUATION OF CASE STUDIES

This section examines three case studies of Salafi-Jihadist terrorism in the Sahel. After defining the terrorist organizations and providing an overview of their activities, each case study juxtaposes the group against the state response during the same time period. While Salafi-Jihadism threatens the entire Trans-Sahara region, it is particularly prevalent throughout the Sahel, where Boko Haram, Ansaru, MUJAO, and AQIM have exploited unstable states and exploited the ethno-national fissures to gain a foothold. Boko Haram's 2009 resurgence in Nigeria brought unprecedented levels of violence to the region, which continues unabated. Meanwhile, AQIM, Ansar Al-Dine, and MUJAO supported and exploited the Tuareg National Movement for the Liberation of Azawad (MNLA) in their quest to control Northern Mali. While a French-led intervention eventually restored order to Northern Mali, the government in Bamako continues to struggle with terrorism. In Mauritania, the only Islamist Republic in the Sahel, terrorist attacks have been less prevalent than elsewhere, but it has served as a hub for AQIM operations since the early 2000s. Each case provides a unique dimension to the terrorism problem in the Sahel and illustrates the role that the state response plays in the continued presence of the terrorist organizations.

A. BOKO HARAM AND ANSARU IN NIGERIA

Religious extremism has been on the rise in Nigeria since the 1980s; these extremist views, when politicized, lay the groundwork for groups like Boko Haram. Beginning with the Maitatsine uprisings in the early 1980s, decades of politicization and religious propaganda created an ethno-religious divide that exists in Nigeria today, which Boko Haram successfully exploits.[121] The underlying basis for this development is the socioeconomic distress that many Muslim men face and the perceived illegitimacy of the federal government.[122] Successive governments have struggled with corruption, inefficiency, and extreme poverty, all of which continue to undermine the legitimacy of

---

[121] Abimbola O. Adesoji, "Between Maitatsine and Boko Haram: Islamic Fundamentalism and the Response of the Nigerian State," *Africa Today* 57, no. 4 (Summer 2011): 101.

[122] Ibid., 106.

the government in Abuja. Perhaps most importantly, military and security forces are routinely accused of human rights abuses when dealing with suspected terrorists and the local population. Exacerbating the situation, Nigeria's position as a regional hegemon constrains its ability to recognize the need for regional cooperation regarding terrorism.

Typical of the region, Nigeria (see figure 4) was still a nascent democracy in 2002 when the United States current counterterrorism strategy went into effect. President Obasanjo, the first democratically elected president, won re-election in 2003 amidst significant ethnic and religious violence.[123] During his second term, the politico-military group Movement for the Emancipation of the Niger Delta (MEND) represented the largest terrorism threat to Nigeria — largely a result of the new oil discoveries in the Niger Delta. The group, while still in existence, ceased their terrorist activities after an amnesty program and the Nigerian government in 2009 offered monetary negotiations.[124] During this time the group that would eventually become Boko Haram remained relatively unknown. Locally known as *Jama'atul Ahlul Sunna wa Liddawati wal Jihad*, Boko Haram is a radical Islamic sect operating in northern Nigeria. Believing that "non-believers" should not rule Muslims, Boko Haram seeks to impose Sharia law on the entire country.[125] Unlike MEND and other typical nationalist organizations, Boko Haram expresses no interest in participating in the political process. Their willingness to attacks civilians—Muslims and Christians alike—provides another distinct component of Boko Haram and traces back to the Salafi-Jihadist principle of *takfir*.

---

[123] "Nigeria's 2003 Elections: The Unacknowledged Violence," Human Rights Watch, June 2004, http://www.hrw.org/reports/2004/nigeria0604/nigeria0604.pdf.

[124] Alex Thurston, "Amnesty for Boko Haram: Lessons from the Past," African Futures, May 20, 2013, http://forums.ssrc.org/african-futures/2013/05/20/amnesty-for-boko-haram-lessons-from-the-past/.

[125] Farouk Chothia, "Who are Nigeria's Boko Haram Islamists?," *BBC News*, January 21, 2015. http://www.bbc.com/news/world-africa-13809501.
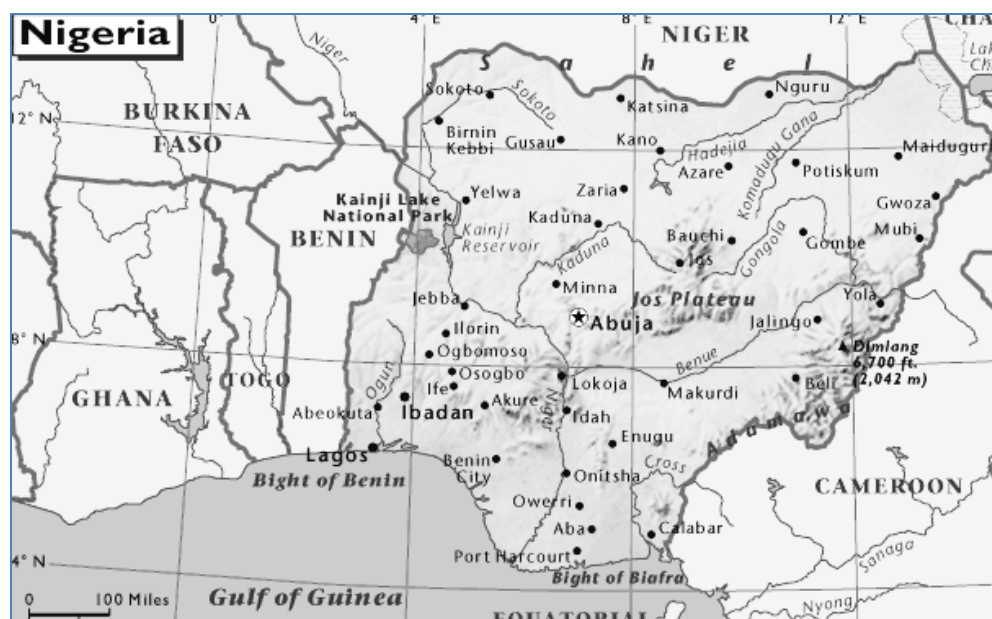
Figure 4.   Map of Nigeria.[126]

The exact origins and ideological beginnings of Boko Haram have not been clearly defined, but it is generally agreed that the group began as a non-violent religious study group.[127] The religious study group formed in Maiduguri, Nigeria, and was initially led by Mohammed Yusuf. After clashes with Nigerian security forces in 2003—which appear to have militarized Yusuf—the group remained relatively quiet, attempting only a few unsuccessful attacks on Nigerian security forces. In 2009, after numerous arrests of Yusuf in the intervening years, Nigerian security forces cracked down on the group. Fighting between Nigerian security forces and Yusuf's followers broke out in the northern provinces of Bauchi, Borno, and Yobe, which ended with the capture and extrajudicial killing of Yusuf by Nigerian security forces.[128] Afterwards, the groups

---

[126] "Map of Nigeria,"World Embassy Information, Agugust 20,2015, http://www.worldembassyinformation.com.

[127] United States House of Representatives Committee on Homeland Security Subcommittee on Counterterrorism and Intelligence, *Boko Haram: Emerging Threat to the U.S. Homeland,* Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 2011, 6, http://homeland.house.gov/sites/homeland.house.gov/files/Boko%20Haram-%20Emerging%20Threat%20to%20the%20US%20Homeland.pdf.

[128] Corina Simonelli, Michael Jensen, Alejandro Castro-Reina, Amy Pate, Scott Menner and Erin Miller, "Background Report: Boko Haram Recent Attacks," National Consortium for the Study of Terrorism and Responses to Terrorism, May 2014, 2, https://www.start.umd.edu/pubs/STARTBackgroundReport_BokoHaramRecentAttacks_May2014_0.pdf.

remained quiet for the next year, until Abubakar Shekau reemerged from prison claiming to be the new leader of the group and promising renewed attacks.[129] Further proof of the ideological and material support provided by AQIM comes in the actions of AQIM after Nigerian Security Forces killed Mohammed Yusuf and 800 of his followers in 2009. AQIM leadership offered assistance to Boko Haram to revenge the killings. In the aftermath of the killings, many of Yusuf's followers fled Nigeria, with the notable exception of Shekau, who security forces detained and imprisoned. During this time, Mamman Nur fled to East Africa were he reportedly trained with al-Shabaab in Somalia.[130] Upon returning to Nigeria, Nur masterminded the bombing of the United Nations Headquarters in Abuja on 26 August 2011.[131] Having lost the ensuing fight over leadership of Boko Haram, Nur's ideological influence ceased and he has since aligned himself with Ansaru, where his internationalist ideology and pedigree have more influence.[132] These leaders—Nur and Shekau—deftly maneuver through the fractured Nigerian political system and exploit the porous borders with Chad and Cameroon to avoid capture.

Since reemerging, Boko Haram has increasingly terrorized Nigeria, attacking Western interests and increasing ties with AQIM and other violent extremist organizations in the Trans-Sahara. From 2009–2013, the National Consortium for the Study of Terrorism and Responses to Terrorism (START) reports that Boko Haram conducted 808 attacks, resulting in 3,666 fatalities, which accounted for six percent of terrorist attacks globally.[133] According to the latest United Nations' reports, the insurgency caused more than 13,000 deaths and displaced more than 1.5 million

---

[129] Ibid., 2.

[130] Jacob Zenn, "Leadership Analysis of Boko Haram and Ansaru in Nigeria," *CTC Sentinel* 7, no.2 (February 2014): 24, https://www.ctc.usma.edu/posts/leadership-analysis-of-boko-haram-and-ansaru-in-nigeria.

[131] Ibid., 24.

[132] Jacob Zenn, "Nigerian Al-Qaedaism." Hudson Institute. March 11, 2014. http://www.hudson.org/research/10172-nigerian-al-qaedaism-.

[133] National Consortium for the Study of Terrorism and Responses to Terrorism. University of Maryland. Accessed 06 March, 2015. http://www.start.umd.edu/gtd/search/Results.aspx?search=Boko+Haram&sa.x=0&sa.y=0.

people.[134] In addition to the sheer number and volatility of these incidents, their attacks have been brutal and often directly targeted civilians. After the 2011 bombing of the United Nations Headquarters, bombings continued throughout 2012 targeting Catholic churches, civilians, and tourists. "Amid growing concern about the escalating violence," the Nigerian government "declared a state of emergency in May 2013 in the three northern states where Boko Haram is the strongest - Borno, Yobe and Adamawa."[135] In addition, a Joint Task Force was established to drive Boko Haram from the cities to limit their influence and disperse the members.[136] Throughout the re-emergence and escalation of Boko Haram, Goodluck Jonathan has been president. Elected in 2010 after serving as interim President following the death of President Yar'Adua, Goodluck Jonathan became defined by the Boko Haram insurgency.[137] His handling of the situation drew significant criticism in Nigeria and throughout the international community and further damaged the legitimacy of the state in the eyes of many northern Nigerians who bore the brunt of the violence.

In 2013, the Department of State designated Boko Haram "a terrorist organization, amid fears that it had developed links with militant groups such as" AQIM to wage a global jihad.[138] Government officials in Nigeria, who wished to delegitimize the increasing influence of Boko Haram, met this designation with hesitancy. Despite this public acknowledgement of Boko Haram's significance, the group did not truly come into worldwide prominence until it kidnapped 275 girls from a school in Borno State in April 2014. This event seemingly catapulted Boko Haram from a middling local threat to Nigeria into a globally recognized threat. International media reporting after the event

---

[134] Ibn Chambas, "Death Toll from Boko Haram Violence 'Staggering,'" United Nations Radio, January 8, 2015, http://www.unmultimedia.org/radio/english/2015/01/death-toll-from-boko-haram-violence-staggering/#.VXS2YMYTMRk.

[135] Farouk Chothia, "Profile: Who are Nigeria's Ansaru Islamists?," *BBC News*, January 21, 2015. http://www.bbc.com/news/world-africa-21510767.

[136] Jacob Zenn, "Nigeria's Civilian Joint Task Force." Council on Foreign Relations. July 18, 2013. http://blogs.cfr.org/campbell/2013/07/18/nigerias-civilian-joint-task-force/.

[137] "Acting President Goodluck Jonathan Succeeds Umaru Yar'Adua in Nigeria," *Voice of America News*, May 5, 2010, http://www.voanews.com/content/acting-president-goodluck-jonathan-succeeds-umaru-yaradua-in-nigeria-93043309/154392.html.

[138] "Terrorist Designation of Boko Haram and Ansaru," United States Department of State, November 13, 2013, http://www.state.gov/r/pa/prs/ps/2013/11/217509.htm.

skyrocketed, congressional lawmakers in the United States were prompted to offer intelligence and logistical support, and the Nigerian public began pressuring the government of Goodluck Jonathan for solutions.[139] Despite the unprecedented emphasis on countering Boko Haram, the group continued to get stronger, and launch increasingly deadlier attacks throughout the country (see Figure 5). Furthermore, the group is becoming more international, as evidenced by the August 2014 report that "Shekau declared a caliphate in areas under Boko Haram's control and praised Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi, leader of ISIS and self-declared caliph—ruler—of Muslims worldwide."[140] In 2015, the group continued to elevate its violence, and over a period of four days in early January laid siege to the town of Baga in Northeastern Nigeria. After overrunning a Nigerian army base, the group went on to kill an estimated 2,000 civilians, destroyed dozens of towns, and displace an estimated 35,000 people.[141] This level of violence against a civilian population now ranks Boko Haram as the deadliest terror group in Africa, and one of the most lethal in the world.

---

[139] "Nigeria Girls' Abduction: Protest March in Abuja," *BBC News*, April 30, 2014. http://www.bbc.com/news/world-africa-27216931.

[140] Karen L. Willoughby, "Boko Haram Trains Child Soldiers," *Christian Examiner*, Januray 28, 2015. http://www.christianexaminer.com/article/boko.haram.trains.child.soldiers/48224.htm.

[141] Thomas Fessey, "Boko Haram Attack: What Happened in Baga?," *BBC News,* February 2, 2015. http://www.bbc.com/news/world-africa-30987043.
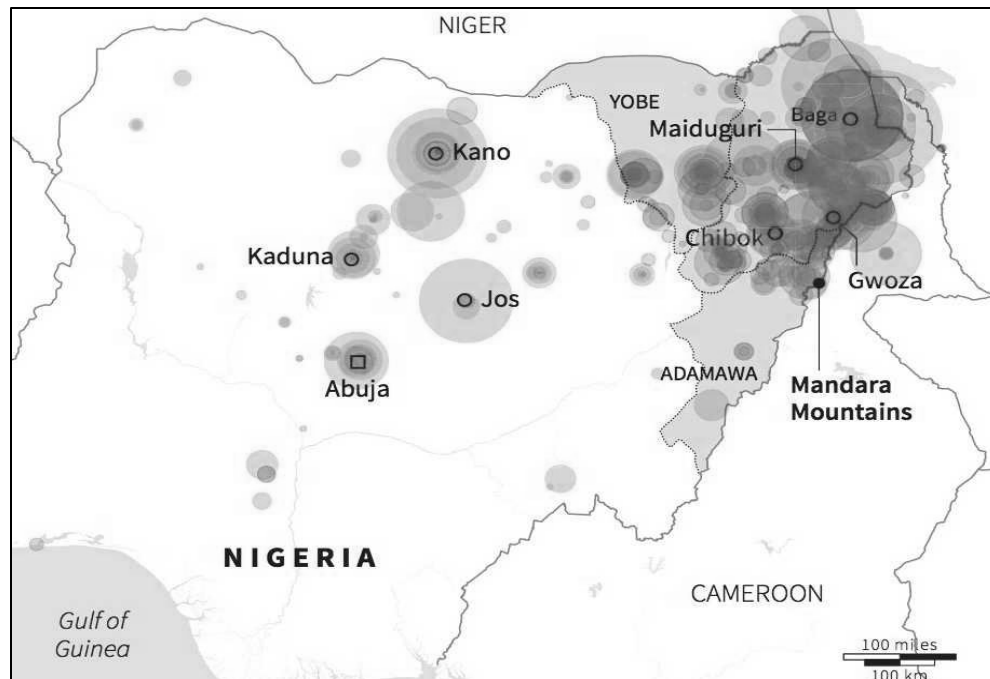
Figure 5.   Map of Boko Haram Attacks.[142]

Boko Haram, despite its loose organizational structure, does operate an estimated 200–300 training camps.[143] Offering training courses that last anywhere from two to twelve months, these camps are producing enough new radical jihadists to absorb the casualties that Boko Haram sustains through their engagements with Nigerian security forces. In addition to the ideological trappings of such an organization, there are financial incentives that tap into the socioeconomic distress that plagues much of Nigeria. Recruits received a €100 joining fee, while military action earns €1,000, and acquiring weapons garners them a €2,000 reward.[144] This suggests that Boko Haram maintains a practical outlook, understanding that not every recruit will be ideologically motivated. Furthermore, it illustrates the economic ability of Boko Haram to counter the weak and corrupt Nigerian state, where the average annual household income is $3,000 a year and

---

[142] "5 African Countries are Sending 8,700 Troops after Boko Haram," *Business Insider*, Feburary 7, 2015, http://www.businessinsider.com/afp-8700-strong-african-deployment-to-fight-boko-haram-2015-2.

[143] Oliver Guitta and Robin Simcox, "Terrorism in Nigeria: The Threat from Boko Haram and Ansaru," The Henry Jackson Society, June 9, 2014,10, http://henryjacksonsociety.org/2014/06/09/terrorism-in-nigeria-the-threat-from-boko-haram-and-ansaru/.

[144] Ibid.,10.

almost "70 % of the population lives below the poverty line."[145] In addition, these figures also speak toward state capacity, as Nigeria is now the largest economy in Africa and 24th largest economy in the world.[146] However, the $510 billion dollar economy has failed to transfer any of that wealth to the people and wealth disparity continues to separate the masses from the elite, and the northern states from the southern.

Boko Haram's organization has not been wholly embraced by all Salafi-Jihadists in Nigeria, some of who take issue with the violent tactics employed against Muslims. These differences have caused splits within the group and resulted in the January 2012 arrival of Ansaru, which announced its existence via a broadcast statement.[147] The group, whose full Arabic name is *Jama'atu Ansarul Muslimina Fi Biladis Sudan*, which loosely translates to "Vanguards for the Protection of Muslims in Black Africa," denounced Boko Haram's targeting of Muslims, stating they would only target Muslims in self-defense.[148] This tactical difference, coupled with their more international ideology is likely the result of Mohammed Nur's influence, again showing the ideological influence of AQIM. While Ansaru's international goals put them more in line with AQIM, their shared goal of overthrowing the secular government of Nigeria has seen them partner with the Malian-based MUJAO on matters of mutual interest.[149] Furthermore, many of the members appear to freely flow back to Boko Haram suggesting that the groups are willing to put tactical differences aside for the achievement of the larger goal of an Islamic caliphate.

In Ansaru's short existence they proved to be a formidable threat against local and western interests. In keeping with their more international agenda, the group kidnapped a

[145] "The World Factbook," Central Intelligence Agency, May 26, 2015, https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/ni.html.

[146] Uri Friedman, "How Nigeria became Africa's Largest Economy Overnight," *The Atlantic,* April 7, 2014. http://www.theatlantic.com/international/archive/2014/04/how-nigeria-became-africas-largest-economy-overnight/360288/.

[147] "Boko Haram: Splinter Group, Ansaru Emerges," *Vanguard*, February 1, 2012, http://www.vanguardngr.com/2012/02/boko-haram-splinter-group-ansaru-emerges/.

[148] Farouk Chothia, "Profile: Who are Nigeria's Ansaru Islamists?," *BBC*, January 21, 2015, http://www.bbc.com/news/world-africa-21510767.

[149] Jacob Zenn, "Ansaru: A Profile of Nigeria's Newest Jihadist Movement." Terrorism Monitor 11, no. 1 (January 2013): 7. http://www.jamestown.org/uploads/media/TM_011_Issue01_01.pdf.

French citizen working for an engineering company in Katsina, Nigeria, in December 2012.[150] After the attack, "Ansaru warned France that it would continue launching attacks against the French government and French citizens until France ends its ban on the Islamic veil and its 'major role' in the planned intervention in northern Mali."[151] On January 19, 2013, Ansaru claimed responsibility for an ambush on a convoy of Nigerian soldiers en route to Mali, killing two soldiers.[152] In a released statement, Ansaru claimed the troops "were aiming to demolish the Islamic Empire of Mali" and warned African countries to "stop helping Western countries fight Muslims."[153] A month later, Ansaru conducted two separate attacks, assaulting a prison and then kidnapping seven foreign engineers in the Bauchi State in northeastern Nigeria; they later announced the "seven Christian foreigners" had been executed.[154] After *Operation Serval* successfully defeated the coalition of Islamist militants in Northern Mali, it appears that Ansaru disbanded, with many members returning to Boko Haram.[155] Although verifying the membership of these groups is difficult given their cellular nature, the fluidity of membership underscores the resilience of the ideology and the desirability of working for these extremist organizations.

In an effort to develop the administrative and legal capacity of the Nigerian government, counterterrorism funding supports a variety of initiatives in Nigeria.[156] The United States established a counter terrorist financing unit, which attempts to disrupt the

---

[150] Ibid., 8.

[151] "Islamic Group Claims Responsibility for Kidnapping French Citizen," *This Day Live*, December 24, 2012. http://www.thisdaylive.com/articles/islamic-group-claims-responsibility-for-kidnapping-french-citizen/134421/.

[152] "Islamists Ansaru Claim Attack on Mali-bound Nigeria Troops," *Reuters*, January 20, 2013. http://www.reuters.com/article/2013/01/20/us-nigeria-violence-idUSBRE90J0B520130120.

[153] Ibid.

[154] Suzan Edeh, "Bauchi Deadly Kidnapping: Gaping Bullet Holes in Expatriates' Live Camp," *Vanguard*, February 23, 2013. http://www.vanguardngr.com/2013/02/bauchi-deadly-kidnapping-gaping-bullet-holes-in-expatriates-live-camp/.

[155] Jacob Zenn, "A Biography of Boko Haram and the Bay`a to al-Baghdadi," *CTC Sentinel* 8, no. 3 (March 2015): 17-19. https://www.ctc.usma.edu/v2/wp-content/uploads/2015/03/CTCSentinel-Vol8Issue322.pdf.

[156] "Boko Haram and U.S. Counterterrorism Assistance to Nigeria," United States Department of State, May 14, 2014, http://www.state.gov/r/pa/prs/ps/2014/05/226072.html; Warner, The Trans Sahara Counter Terrorism Partnership, 42.

financial resources that Boko Haram uses to support its recruitment efforts and terrorism.[157] In addition, funding has been used to train civilian agencies throughout Nigeria, like customs agents, immigration agents, and employees of the National Emergency Management Agency. Complimenting these efforts have been initiatives tailored to the training of law enforcement personnel—specifically the Nigerian Police Force—to improve law enforcement capacity to prevent, detect, and investigate terrorism threats; effectively deal with improvised explosive devices (IEDs) that are a common tactic of Boko Haram; and strengthen border security to prevent transnational criminal agents from exploiting the fluid environment of the Sahel. To develop the coercive and infrastructural capacity of the government of Nigeria, counterterrorism funding has been used for programs designed to professionalize military units that will deploy to the Northeast to counter Boko Haram.[158] The professionalization of the Nigerian Army is critical, as their extrajudicial tactics often cause deaths, providing Boko Haram with evidence of the inability of a secular government to effectively govern.[159] There are also initiatives specifically designed to address the development of the Northeast region, in an effort to counter the underlying socioeconomic issues that support and sustain terrorist recruitment.[160] All these efforts intend to disrupt terrorism at its roots, limiting Boko Haram's recruitment pool, and countering the message that Boko Haram spreads regarding the inefficacy and illegitimacy of the secular government in Abuja.

Recognizing that state legitimacy plays a crucial role in defeating the terrorist narrative, the United States, in conjunction with the government of Nigeria launched the Nigeria Regional Transition Initiative (NRTI) to "improve stability and strengthen

---

[157] "Anti-Money Laundering/Counter Terrorist Financing," United States Department of State, May 10, 2015, http://www.state.gov/j/inl/c/crime/c44634.htm.

[158] "Boko Haram and U.S. Counterterrorism Assistance to Nigeria," United States Department of State, May 14, 2014, http://www.state.gov/r/pa/prs/ps/2014/05/226072.htm.

[159] "Joint Trask Force (JTF) Nigeria," Terrorism Research and Analysis Consortium, June 1, 2015, http://www.trackingterrorism.org/group/joint-task-force-jtf-nigeria.

[160] "Fact Sheet: U.S. Efforts to Assist the Nigerian Government in its Fight Against Boko Haram," Whitehouse, White House, October 14, 2014, http://www.whitehouse.gov/the-press-office/2014/10/14/fact-sheet-us-efforts-assist-nigerian-government-its-fight-against-boko-haram.

democratic institutions in northeast Nigeria."[161] The NRTI focuses on "building the resistance of communities vulnerable to the effects of violent extremist organizations, weak governance, and insecurity through increased positive engagement between government and communities; increased access to credible information; and support to reduce youth vulnerability to violent extremist influences."[162] Despite these efforts to improve legitimacy in the North, progress remains slow. Nigeria, organized under a federal structure similar to that of the United States, remains limited by the politics and policies of the individual states. The constitutional authority vested in the states means that the federal government finds itself fighting the battle for legitimacy on two fronts: as a secular government against religious extremists and as a weak federal government against strong states. The Nigerian Governors Forum, widely regarded as the strongest political bloc in Nigeria and an oft-used scapegoat by former President Goodluck Jonathan when explaining the persistence of the Boko Haram insurgency, illustrates the power of the states.[163] These fissures make real change difficult and play easily into the narrative of Salafi-Jiahadist's who point to the states' illegitimacy and repression of Muslims.

In addition to the problems that exist within the federal government, the heavy-handed tactics employed by the Nigerian security forces have only served to exacerbate the problems underlying the Boko Haram insurgency.[164] The Department of State acknowledged as much during a question and answer session that accompanied the designation of Boko Haram as a Foreign Terrorist Organization.[165] The repercussions of such tactics date back to the extrajudicial killing of Mohammed Yusuf in 2009 and

---

[161] "Nigeria," United States Agency for International Development, July 8, 2015, 2015, http://www.usaid.gov/political-transition-initiatives/where-we-work/nigeria. https://www.whitehouse.gov/the-press-office/2014/10/14/fact-sheet-us-efforts-assist-nigerian-government-its-fight-against-boko-

[162] Ibid.

[163] "Nigerian Governors' Mafia: How Powerful?," *Daily Independent*, February 19, 2013. http://dailyindependentnig.com/2013/02/nigerian-governors-mafia-how-powerful/.

[164] "Joint Trask Force (JTF) Nigeria," Terrorism Research and Analysis Consortium.

[165] "Background Briefing on Designation of Boko Haram and Ansaru as Foreign Terrorist Organizations and as Specially Designated Global Terrorists," United States Department of State, November 13, 2013, http://www.state.gov/r/pa/prs/ps/2013/11/217532.htm.

continue to undermine the legitimacy of the state in many rural areas that rely primarily on word of mouth to receive their news. Stories like these provide Boko Haram recruiters with evidence to promote their jihad against the corrupt and secular government. Additionally, these crimes limit counterterrorism assistance from the United States because of rules that prevent the training of personnel complicit in human rights abuses.[166] Similar to the situation that results after a coup d'état, the limitations imposed on training potential human rights abusers interrupts the ability of the state to develop its capacity. Given the chaotic environment that surrounds these military operations, oftentimes entire units fall under investigation impacting more than just the individual actors.

As the regional hegemon, Nigeria, and its Boko Haram insurgency, represents a security problem for the entire region. Now the largest economy in Africa, Nigeria has only slightly increased defense expenditures over the past 14 years from 0.8% to 1.0% of the GDP, now currently standing at $2.4 billion.[167] Despite the modest increase in defense spending, Nigeria's military manpower increased more than any other country in the region, going from 106,500 in 2000 to 162,000 personnel in 2013, an increase of 52%.[168] However, the largest portion of that increase—50.7%—occurred between 2000 and 2001, before current counterterrorism initiatives were in place. Arms imports during this time comprised very few combat weapons and none were supplied by the United States.[169] This data illustrates that there has not been a significant increase in the security capacity of the state. Despite being a recipient of United States counterterrorism assistance for a decade, the government continues to be one of the most corrupt and inefficient in the region. While the recent election of President Muhammud Buhari—a popular candidate in the North—possesses the potential to stop the downward spiral, Boko Haram's activities will present a significant challenge to the new presidency.

---

[166] "Leahy Vetting: Law, Policy, Process," United States Department of State, April 15, 2015, http://www.humanrights.gov/wp-content/uploads/2011/10/leahy-vetting-law-policy-and-process.pdf.

[167] Stockholm International Peace Research Institute, SIPRI Military Expenditure Database 1988-2014, Accessed September 6, 2014. http://www.sipri.org/research/armaments/milex/milex_database.

[168] Stockholm International Peace Research Institute, SIPRI Military Expenditure Database.

[169] Ibid.

B. ANSAR AL-DINE, AQIM, AND MUJAO IN MALI

Despite the complexity of the security situation in the Sahel, recent discussions regarding the region have been dominated by the situation in Mali (see Figure 6). The 2012 coup d'état and rebellion in the North quickly became a lightning rod for criticism of United States counterterrorism efforts in the Trans-Sahara.[170] Critics who quip that the United States military is training the next coup leaders—an oft-used trope in the militarization debate—were seemingly vindicated. Similarly, the slow and ineffectual response by regional organizations showed that regional cooperation—a critical component of any counterterrorism strategy in the geographically challenging Sahel—is still a long way off. Setting these criticisms aside, the most alarming aspect of the crisis in Mali was the rapidity with which the situation in the state deteriorated. The years of relative stability belied an undercurrent of issues that played into the hands of local and regional Salafi-Jihadist organizations that had long been operating throughout the country's north. In addition, the modus vivendi that defined the disparate insurgent groups operating in the North was a stark contrast to the limited regional cooperation. Similar to the circumstances in Mauritania, there are exogenous and endogenous aspects that explain the resurgence of terrorism in Mali. In addition to the weak state, the poor socioeconomic situation, and corrupt political system, the external shock resulting from the deteriorating situation in Libya reverberated in Mali. The situation shows the precarious condition of Sahelian states and the pitfalls of counterterrorism efforts within states that lack capacity

---

[170] Mark Moyar, "How Misguided U.S. Aid Contributed to Mali's Coup," Bloomberg Review, March 11, 2013, http://www.bloombergview.com/articles/2013-03-11/how-misguided-u-s-aid-contributed-to-mali-s-coup-mark-moyar.

Figure 6.   Map of Mali.[171]

After the 2012 coup d'état, AQIM, Ansar-al Dine, and MUJAO pushed into northern Mali around the city of Gao in an attempt to exploit the weakened rule of law and disenfranchised Tuareg population. While AQIM remains a primarily Algerian organization, it has numerous ties to the larger Salafi-Jihadist problem in the Sahel. Whether providing ideological support, material support, or logistical support, the group's influence is evident throughout the Sahel. In addition, the group has been directly involved in a number of incidents in Mauritania, Mali, Niger, and Nigeria ranging from suicide bombings and armed attacks to kidnapping and ransom operations. The most demonstrable impact AQIM had outside Algeria occurred in the months after a coup d'état toppled the government in Mali. AQIM exploited the weak northern areas, allying with disenfranchised Islamic Tuareg group Ansar al-Dine and MUJAO to take control of large portions of territory. Despite the secular nature of the original revolt, AQIM and their allies maintained control of significant portions of territory in Northern Mali, instituting Sharia Law and persecuting the largely Sufi population. It took the French-led Operation Serval later in the year to halt their advances on the capital city of Bamako and push these groups out of Mali.

---

[171] "Map of Mali," World Embassy Information, August 21, 2015, http://www.worldembassyinformation.com/world-maps/maps-of-mali.html.

According to the Global Terrorism Database, there were 166 terrorist incidents in Mali from 2002–2014, with a vast majority occurring after 2011— five-fold increase in terrorist attacks when compared against the preceding twelve years.[172] In contrast to the situation in Nigeria and Mauritania where Boko Haram and AQIM dominate the terrorist landscape, the situation in Mali epitomizes the chaotic and overlapping nature of terrorism in the Sahel. As one of the original members of the Pan-Sahel Initiative, Mali, like Mauritania, has received a significant amount of U.S. counterterrorism assistance. In addition, Mali, as a democratic poster child in the region, received large amounts of humanitarian and financial aid as well.[173] Nonetheless, Mali's status as a democratic darling had inauspicious beginnings. Despite President Konaré's adherence to the term-limits imposed by the Malian constitution, the 2002 democratic election of General Amadou Toure sparked widespread calls of fraud; however, Western leaders welcomed the results.[174] While there was significant terrorist activity emanating within nearby Algeria due to the GSPC's activities, there were no terrorist activities in Mali from 2002 until 2007.[175] This lack of terrorism however, did not mean that serious fissures were not present, laying the groundwork for discontent.

During these years, Tuareg insurgents in the north who were dissatisfied with the socioeconomic situation in Northern Mali posed the main threats. In May 2007, President Toure won reelection again with serious objections from opposition groups; again the West accepted the results of an election characterized as "generally free and fair."[176] Shortly afterwards, Tuareg rebels killed ten people in Tinzaouatene in Northeastern Mali,

[172] National Consortium for the Study of Terrorism and Responses to Terrorism. University of Maryland Global Terrorism Database. Accessed May 20, 2015. http://www.start.umd.edu/gtd/search/Results.aspx?search=Mali&sa.x=0&sa.y=0.

[173] "Mali's President Touré Talks Democracy and Development at CGD," Center for Global Development, November 20, 2006, http://www.cgdev.org/blog/malis-president-touré-talks-democracy-and-development-cgd.

[174] "Interim Statement by the Cater Center on Mali's Presidential Elections," The Carter Center, May 7, 2002, http://www.cartercenter.org/news/documents/doc522.html.

[175] National Consortium for the Study of Terrorism and Responses to Terrorism. Accessed May 20, 2015.

[176] "Mali," United States Department of State, May 20, 2015, http://www.state.gov/documents/organization/160132.pdf.

which began a two-year period considered the third Tuareg rebellion.[177] Over the remaining months of 2007 and throughout 2008, there were twelve more terrorist attacks in Northern Mali, each attributed to Tuareg rebels.[178] These rebellions, while not directly linked to the rising influence of Salafi-Jihadism in the region, certainly destabilized the northern regions of Mali (see Figure 7). As the successive peace agreements that accompanied these rebellions slowly eroded the power of the central government in Mali, a security vacuum emerged, ripe for exploitation by jihadists.

After years of operating in northern Mali, the recently re-branded AQIM perpetrated its first operations in Mali in January 2009 with the kidnapping of four European tourists. The attack, initially thought to be the work of Tuareg rebels, was eventually linked to AQIM operatives.[179] The group freed three of the hostages, while executing the fourth after the British government's refusal to pay a ransom.[180] A primarily Mauritanian and Algerian group, this attack marked the beginning of expanded kidnapping-for-ransom operations perpetrated by AQIM. Later in 2009, Algeria and Mali started preparations for joint operations against AQIM elements operating near the border.[181] A handful of attacks against Malian military targets occurred throughout the year, resulting in the death of dozens of Malian soldiers.[182] Regional cooperation continued throughout the following year as Mali, Algeria, Mauritania, and Niger established a joint command to conduct operations against AQIM.[183] These initiatives produced limited results and AQIM continued to expand operations throughout the

---

[177] Stephen A. Emerson, "Desert Insurgency: Lessons From the Third Tuareg Rebellion," *Small Wars & Insurgencies* 22, no. 4 (September 2011): 669–687. doi:10.1080/09592318.2011.573406.

[178] National Consortium for the Study of Terrorism and Responses to Terrorism. Accessed May 20, 2015.

[179] Alex Thurston, "AQIM, Kidnapping, and Murder: A Brief History," *The Christian Science Monitor,* January 19, 2011. http://www.csmonitor.com/World/Africa/Africa-Monitor/2011/0119/AQIM-kidnapping-and-murder-a-brief-history.

[180] Ibid.

[181] "Algeria and Mali in Joint Operation Against al-Qaeda," *Connect Africa Blog*, May 6, 2009, https://connectafrica.wordpress.com/2009/05/06/algeria-and-mali-in-joint-operation-against-al-qaeda/.

[182] National Consortium for the Study of Terrorism and Responses to Terrorism. Accessed May 20, 2015.

[183] "Saharan States to Open Joint Military Headquarters," *BBC News*, April 21, 2010. http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/africa/8633851.stm.

Sahel.[184] As of late 2010, AQIM continued its attacks against Malian forces, kidnapping a soldier and a customs guide.[185] The inadequate responses by the states, coupled with AQIMs increased proficiency and zeal permitted the group to capitalize on the instability that the "Arab Spring" and the fall of the Qadaffi regime in Libya brought to the region.
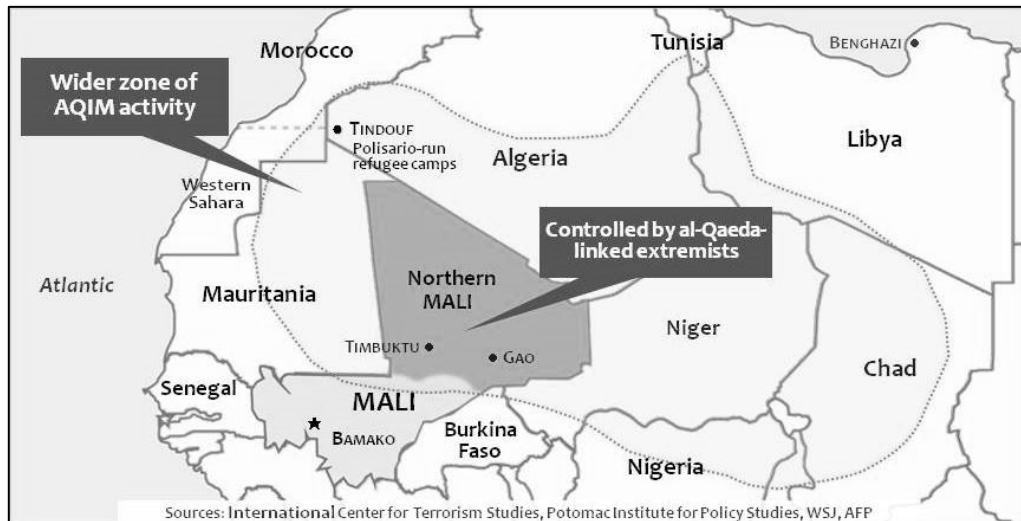

Figure 7.   Mali after 2012 Coup.[186]

As AQIM violence increased throughout the Sahel, continued discontent among the ethnic Tuareg population in the north of Mali eventually converted into a full-fledged rebellion. The National Movement for the Liberation of Azawad (MNLA), a politico-military organization, began operations in Northern Mali in November 2010 (originally as the National Movement of Azawad (MNA)). While the nationalist credentials of MNLA are debatable given their varied cultural and social history, the group does cite a general distrust in the government as their reason for proposed recognition as a separate

---

[184] Diego Guerrero Oris and Nahuel Arenas-García, "AQIM & Mauritania: Local Paradoxes, Regional Dynamics and Global Challenges." Instituto de Estudios sobre Conflcitos y Accion Humantaria. February 7, 2012. http://www.iecah.org/web/images/stories/doc_12_2012.pdf.

[185] "Al-Qaeda Kidnaps Malian Soldier, Customs Guide," *Star Africa*, August 11, 2010. http://en.starafrica.com/news/al-qaeda-kidnaps-malian-soldier-customs-guide-official-75974.html.

[186] "Map of Mali After 2012 Coup," International Center for Terrorism Studies, Potomac Institute for Policy Studies, August 20, 2015, http://www.potomacinstitute.org/academic-centers/international-center-for-terrorism-studies-icts.

entity.[187] Their detailed list of grievances all speak toward the limited state capacity and illegitimacy of the government in Bamako, with allegations of corruption, socioeconomic destabilization, and police brutality some of the more egregious; a rather damning assessment of a country that was long championed by Western countries as a democratic beacon in the Sahel. The return of Tuareg rebels from Libya in late 2011, along with the uptick in arms trafficked from Libya, provided the MNLA with significant experience and armament.[188] These linkages demonstrate the importance of regional cooperation and the dangers posed by the porous borders that define much of the Sahel.

A few months after the establishment of MNLA, leadership quarrels and ideological differences emerged resulting in the Salafi-Jihadist group Ansar al-Dine breaking away from MNLA.[189] Ansar al-Dine, which translates to "defenders of the faith," is a Tuareg-led terrorist organization that operates in Northern Mali with the expressed intent of establishing Sharia law throughout all of Mali. Led by Iyd Ag Ghaly, a prominent figure with ties to AQIM, the group originally aligned with the MNLA but extremist views eventually led to the groups becoming antagonists. Despite the antagonistic relationship, Ansar al-Dine reportedly avoids direct confrontation with MNLA to avert the bloodshed of fellow tribe and family members. While the MNLA initially worked together with the Islamist group to dispel Malian forces from the region, ideological differences eventually caused this cooperation to cease. Like MNLA, AQIM saw a splinter group emerge in 2011 because of ideological differences about criminal activities and AQIMs dedication to jihadist ideals.[190] The Movement for Unity and Jihad in West Africa (MUJOA) is an offshoot of AQIM that primarily operates in Mali, but has

---

[187] Andy Morgan, "What Do the Tuareg Want?," *Al Jazeera*, January 9, 2014. http://www.aljazeera.com/indepth/opinion/2014/01/what-do-tuareg-want-20141913923498438.html.

[188] Adam Nossiter, "Qaddafi's Weapons, Taken by Old Allies, Reinvigorate an Insurgent Army in Mali," *The New York Times*, February 5, 2012. http://www.nytimes.com/2012/02/06/world/africa/tuaregs-use-qaddafis-arms-for-rebellion-in-mali.html?_r=0.

[189] "Al-Qa'ida in the Lands of the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM)," National Counterterrorism Center, April 23, 2015, http://www.nctc.gov/site/groups/aqim.html.

[190] Andrew Lebovich, "AQIM and it's Allies in Mali," The Washington Institute, February 5, 2013, http://www.washingtoninstitute.org/policy-analysis/view/aqim-and-its-allies-in-mali.

been linked to attacks outside Mali.[191] The first attack credited to MUJAO occurred in October 2011, when they kidnapped three aid workers from a refugee camp in Tindouf, Algeria, near the confluence of Mauritania and Mali's borders. This attack (along with other suspected attacks) prompted the United States to list MUJAO as a Foreign Terrorist Organization in December 2011, citing their connection to "violent terrorist attacks and kidnappings in the region."[192]

In March 2012, Ansar al-Dine was responsible for an attack against Malian soldiers that resulted in the execution of 82 Malian soldiers. A month later MUJAO operatives kidnapped seven Algerian diplomats outside the consulate in Gao, followed a few months later by the kidnapping of a Portuguese citizen in northern Mali.[193] In addition to these attacks against Algerian government institutions, MUJAO engaged in attacks against mosques and shrines in Timbuktu, Mali, under the pretense that these mosques and shrines represent an affront to Islam (shirk).[194] These kidnappings for ransom as a terrorist tactic and funding measure link their ideological origins to AQIM. In addition to ideological links, logistical links exist. The main spokesperson for MUJAO and Ansar al-Dine, Omar Ould Hamaha, has established ties to AQIM, displaying the interconnectedness of all these groups.[195] Therefore, while these groups may not agree on tactics, they certainly exhibit a willingness to work together toward the common goal of establishing an Islamic State that operates under strict Sharia Law. In addition to showing how the Salafi-Jihadist ideology co-opts local grievances, these splits from MNLA and AQIM illustrates the difficulty in tracking down the leadership of these organizations as they constantly morph and splinter.

---

[191] "MUJAO: An al-Qaeda Offshoot Spreads its Wings," *Agence Frane-Presse*, May 23,2013, http://www.globalpost.com/dispatch/news/afp/130523/mujao-al-qaeda-offshoot-spreads-its-wings.

[192] "Terrorist Designations of the Movement for Unity and Jihad in West Africa, Hamad el Khairy, and Ahmed el Tilemsi," United States Department of State, December 7, 2012, http://www.state.gov/r/pa/prs/ps/2012/12/201660.htm.

[193] National Consortium for the Study of Terrorism and Responses to Terrorism. Accessed May 20, 2015.

[194] "Factsheet on the Movement for Unity and Jihad in West Africa," Think Security Africa, August 2012, http://thinksecurityafrica.org/wordpress/wp-content/uploads/MUJAO.pdf.

[195] Abu Ibnein, "Oumar Ould Hamaha: A Case Study of the Bridges Between Three Groups," Geneva Centre for Training and Analysis of Terrorism, January 10, 2013, http://gctat.org/fr/analysis/29-ranoc/220-oumar-ould-hamaha-a-case-study-of-the-bridges-between-three-groups.html.

In 2012, insecurity in Mali skyrocketed, along with terrorism. In the span of a few months Mali suffered a coup d'état, an ethnic insurgency, and a land grab by AQIM. Tuareg disaffection in the north — simmering for decades — capitalized on the chaotic political environment and, after the MNLA quickly dispelled Malian security forces from the North, proclaimed an independent state.[196] The coup and the subsequent MNLA declaration "laid bare deep inefficiencies and inadequacies of the state apparatus," which AQIM quickly exploited.[197] Despite ideological differences, MNLA and AQIM coordinated their operations to repel government forces from Northern Mali. Quickly overwhelmed, Malian forces lost control of two-thirds of the country within a matter of weeks. The cooperation was short lived as an Islamic coalition of AQIM, Ansar-al Dine, and MUJAO turned on MNLA, forcing them to cede large swaths of territory.[198] Subverting MNLAs goal of a sovereign and secular Azawad state, these Salafi-Jihadist groups began to establish an Islamic state under Sharia law.[199] Jihadist fighters from outside the Sahel began to flow into Mali to assist these Islamists in setting up Sharia law and battling French forces conducting *Operation Serval*.[200] While French forces easily repelled the jihadists, their initial operational successes and coordination illustrated a new dimension of terrorism in the Sahel. Likewise, the rapid implosion of Mali shocked many international observers, calling into question the efficacy of the United States' counterterrorism efforts.

After a decade of countering terrorism, by the end of 2012 there were four loosely affiliated Salafi-Jihadist terrorist organizations operating inside Mali. These groups were

---

[196] "Mali Tuareg Rebels Declare Independence in the North," *BBC News*, April 6, 2012. http://www.bbc.com/news/world-africa-17635437.

[197] Kamissa Camara, "Mali: Beacon of Democracy Gone Dark," The Fletcher Forum of World Affairs, August 2, 2012, http://www.fletcherforum.org/2012/08/02/camara/.

[198] Jason Guffey, "Northern Mali Conflict 2012," *Small Wars Journal* 10, no.7 (July 2014): 2. http://smallwarsjournal.com/jrnl/art/northern-mali-conflict-2012.

[199] Derek Henry Flood, "Between Islamization and Secession: The Contest for Northern Mali." Combatting Terrorism Center Sentinel 5, no. 7 (July 2012) : 3–5.

[200] "Al-Qaeda Sends Reinforcements to Aid Islamists in Mali," *France 24*, November 17, 2012. http://www.france24.com/en/20121117-al-qaeda-sends-reinforcements-aid-islamists-mali-alqaeda-aqim-mnla.html.

responsible for an estimated 140 terrorist attacks inside Mali between 2012 and 2014.[201] The interconnectedness of these Islamist groups results from opportunistic and resilient leadership. These groups seemingly re-brand and align as necessary, all the while maintaining an ability to launch well-organized and deadly attacks against Western interests and local governments. One of the most inexhaustible of these jihadists is Mokhtar Belmokhtar, nicknamed the "Marlboro Man" for his tobacco smuggling activities. Belmokhtar has been an active Salafi-Jihadist fighter throughout the region as a member of the GSPC—later AQIM—and eventually as the leader of the al-Mulathamun Battalion—Signed in Blood Battalion (AMB). The al-Mulathamun Battalion split from AQIM in late 2012 after Mokhtar Belmokhtar disagreed with AQIM leadership over tactics and targets that did not specifically target Western interests.[202] Quickly establishing a high operational tempo, the al-Mulathamun Battalion was responsible for the January 2013 attack on the BP-owned *In Amenas* gas facility in southeastern Algeria. The attack and the ensuing four-day siege resulted in 39 civilian deaths — including three American citizens.[203] Personal accounts from the attack illustrate that the perpetrators were specifically targeting westerners, looking for American, British, and French citizens.[204] In May 2013, the al-Mulathamun Battalion was also involved alongside MUJAO for near simultaneous suicide attacks on a military base in Agadez, Niger, and a French connected uranium mine in Arlit, Niger.[205] This apparent merger of al-Mulathamun with MUJAO to form the new al-Murabitoun terrorist group, likely the result of losses suffered after the successful *Operation Serval,* illustrates the dynamic nature of these terrorist groups. Although accounts differ on the extensiveness of this merger, the Department of State designed the group a Foreign Terrorist Organization in

[201] National Consortium for the Study of Terrorism and Responses to Terrorism. Accessed May 20, 2015.

[202] Jones, "A Persistent Threat: The Evolution of al Qa'ida and Other Salafi Jihadists," 30.

[203] Angelique Chrisafis, Julian Borger, Justin McCurry, and Terry Macalister, "Timeline of the In Amenas Siege," *The Guardian*, January 25, 2013. http://www.theguardian.com/world/2013/jan/25/in-amenas-timeline-siege-algeria.

[204] Ibid.

[205] Adam Nossiter, "Militant Says He is Behind Attack in Niger," *The New York Times*, May 14, 2013. http://www.nytimes.com/2013/05/25/world/africa/militant-says-he-is-behind-fatal-niger-attack.html?ref=world&_r=1.

December 2013.[206] Upon designating the group a Foreign Terrorist Organization, the Department of State described al-Murabitoun as "the greatest near-term threat to U.S. and international interests in the Sahel," citing its "stated intent to attack Westerners and proven ability to organize complex attacks."[207]

While these groups share ideological backgrounds, each group started with a localized grievance against a government. However, the years of fighting against Sahelian governments, U.S.- and French-led coalitions, and the rise of global Salafi-Jihadist groups likes ISIS have begun coalescing these groups. This further undermines U.S. counterterrorism efforts in the region, as the cross-border aspect of these aligned groups only widens the battlefield. As efforts to improve the regional coordination of local governments appears to be failing; just the opposite seems to be occurring across the Sahelian terrorist network as disparate organizations claim allegiance to ISIS. As recently as May 2015, reports emerged that MUJAO leader Adnan Abu Walid al Sahrawi declared allegiance to ISIS emir Abu Bakr al Baghdadi.[208] Of note, Boko Haram leader Abu-Bakr Shekau issued a similar statement of allegiance in March 2014.[209] While AQIM has not aligned with ISIS, due to the complicated and widening schism between Al-Qaeda and ISIS, the group continues to champion the same cause of establishing an Islamic caliphate.[210] Whether these alliances will continue is unknown; likewise, what tangible benefits these groups derive from such pledges of allegiance remains disputed. While these variables speak to the dynamic nature of global terrorism, one thing is certain—the Salafi-Jihadist groups in the Sahel are expanding their political platforms.

---

[206] "Signers in Blood Battalion," Terrorism Research and Analysis Consortium, June 20, 2015, http://www.trackingterrorism.org/group/signers-blood-battalion.

[207] Alexis Arieff, *Al Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM) and Al Murabitoun* (CRS Report No. IF10172) (Washington, DC: Congressional Research Service, 2015), 1, http://pennyhill.com/jmsfileseller/docs/IF10172.pdf.

[208] Rukmini Callimachi, "ISIS Releases a Recording It Says Was Made by Its Leader," *New York Times*, May 14, 2015. http://www.nytimes.com/2015/05/15/world/middleeast/isis-releases-recording-said-to-be-by-its-reclusive-leader.html?_r=0.

[209] "Boko Haram Pledges Allegiance to ISIL." *Al Jazeera*, March 8, 2015. http://www.aljazeera.com/news/2015/03/nigeria-boko-haram-pledges-allegiance-isil-150307201614660.html.

[210] James Fromson and Steve Simon, "ISIS: The Dubious Prospect of Apocalypse Now," *Survival: Global Politics and Strategy* 57, no.3 (June-July 2015): 8. https://www.iiss.org/-/media/Silos/Survival/2015/Survival-57-3/57-3-02-Fromson-and-Simon/57-3-02-Fromson-and-Simon.pdf.

Long considered an example of stability within the region, Mali is one of the longest standing recipients of U.S. counterterrorism funding in the Trans-Sahara. Prior to the coup, defense spending in Mali fluctuated little from pre-TSCTP levels, changing from 1.6% of the GDP in 2000 to 1.4% of the GDP in 2013, and now stands at $154 million.[211] However, during that same time period military manpower decreased significantly. Shortly after U.S. counterterrorism activities began in 2003 there was a 20% decrease, followed by a second, sharper decrease in 2011 from 12,00 to 7,800.[212] Taken together, these decreases represent an astounding 48% decrease — the largest in Sub-Saharan Africa.[213] The sharp decrease in military manpower is likely the result of a complex set of political and economic changes occurring in Mali at the time, but it is notable because the decrease in capacity coincided with the return of Islamic radicals from Libya and directly preceded the events that led to the coup d'état.[214] Armament imports into Mali did contain a number of combat vehicle and aircraft from European countries, with none coming from the United States.[215] As one of the United States' original counterterrorism partners, Mali has exhibited little demonstrable improvement over their military or state capacity. Assessing the root causes of Mali's collapse, a report by Netherlands Institute of International Relations also noted that Malian leadership characterized Malian ownership of counterterrorism programs as weak, noting how "local embezzlement and a lack of regional cooperation have weakened the overall results of these efforts."[216] The case illustrates the difference between short-term success and long-term success and the difficulty of institutional change.

---

[211] Stockholm International Peace Research Institute, SIPRI Military Expenditure Database.

[212] "Armed Forces Personnel – Total in Mali," Trading Economics, August 18, 2015, http://www.tradingeconomics.com/mali/armed-forces-personnel-total-wb-data.html.

[213] "Armed Forces Personnel, Total," World Bank, September 20, 2014, http://data.worldbank.org/indicator/MS.MIL.TOTL.P1.

[214] Brandon County and Brian J. Peterson, "The Malian Peasantry and the Coup: Hungry for Democracy," *African Arguments,* April 2, 2012. http://africanarguments.org/2012/04/02/hungry-for-democracy-the-malian-peasantry-and-the-coup-–-by-brandon-county-and-brian-j-peterson/.

[215] Stockholm International Peace Research Institute, SIPRI Military Expenditure Database.

[216] Grégory Chauzal and Thibault van Damme, "The Roots of Mali's Crisis: Moving Beyond the 2012 Crisis," Clingendael, Netherlands Institute of International Relations, March 2015, Chapter 1, http://www.clingendael.nl/sites/default/files/The_roots_of_Malis_conflict.pdf.

Recent events demonstrate the continued effectiveness of the numerous Salafi-Jihadist groups operating in Mali. In the beginning months of 2015, these groups "claimed responsibility for the bombing of a United Nations" convoy; a shooting that killed two European peacekeepers and three Malian officers; a deadly rocket attack in Kidal; and a thwarted attack on a military compound.[217] These attacks represent the latest in an increasingly violent northern Malian region that remains largely out of control of the central government in Bamako. While the United States' suspended non-humanitarian assistance to Mali following the 2012 coup, the suspension ended in September 2013 after successful democratic elections.[218] However, the weakened Malian state continues to struggle with absorbing the counterterrorism initiatives and turning them into palpable changes. Similar to the situation in Mauritania, the combination of security objectives and political aims comes into conflict as Mali continues to dig out of the chaos unleashed by the 2012 coup.

C.   AQIM IN MAURITANIA

In contrast to the situations in Nigeria and Mali, Mauritania (see figure 8) offers a counterterrorism success story for the region, albeit an unstable one. After years of deadly attacks perpetrated by Islamic radicals, there have not been any terrorist attacks on Mauritanian soil since December 2011.[219] As an original member of the Pan-Sahel Initiative, Mauritania has been a beneficiary of United States counterterrorism assistance since November 2002. During this time, Mauritanian governance could easily be characterized as challenging. In addition to the exogenous threat posed by Islamic

---

[217] Bate Felix, "Six U.N. Peacekeepers Wounded by Roadside Bomb in North Mali," *Reuters,* January 4, 2015. http://ca.reuters.com/article/topNews/idCAKBN0KD0DF20150104; "Bamako frappée au cœur: une première depuis l'opération Serval," *RFI*, March 7, 2015. http://www.rfi.fr/afrique/2min/20150307-mali-attaque-restaurant-terrasse-attentat-bamako-terrorisme-serval/; "Mali: trois tués dont un soldat de l'ONU dans des tirs de roquette à Kidal," L'Orient-Le Journal, March 8, 2015. http://www.lorientlejour.com/article/914749/mali-trois-tues-dont-un-soldat-de-lonu-dans-des-tirs-de-roquette-a-kidal-nouveau-bilan.html; Caleb Weiss, "Al Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb Claims 2 Attacks in Mali," The Long War Journal, June 1, 2015. http://www.longwarjournal.org/archives/2015/06/al-qaeda-in-the-islamic-maghreb-claims-two-attacks-in-mali.php.

[218] "Country Reports on Terrorism 2013 Africa Overview," United States Department of State, July 7, 2015, http://www.state.gov/j/ct/rls/crt/2013/224820.htm.

[219] National Consortium for the Study of Terrorism and Responses to Terrorism, Accessed June 12, 2015.

insurgencies, endogenous problems as coups, military rule, chronic insecurity, and debilitating poverty all challenged successive governments. In addition to a challenging political and military environment, there are implications for counterterrorism assistance resulting from the United States' policy to suspend non-humanitarian assistance to countries not under democratic rule.[220] Despite this, Mauritania has avoided the surge in violence that has plagued Mali and Nigeria over recent years. Inter alia, a complex set of political, military, social, and geographic factors are responsible for the situation. The situation provides a compelling case study to contrast against those of Mali and Nigeria, both of which are subject to repeated terrorism from Salafi-Jihadists.

Figure 8.   Map of Mauritania.[221]

While the history of Mauritania has hardly been a model of stability, terrorism in Mauritania is largely the result of external influences rather than homegrown insurgencies. As the only Islamic Republic in the Sahel, Mauritania maintains a complex relationship with the larger Islamic community, which at various times has served as an

---

[220] "U.S. Foreign Assistance Act of 1961," Council on Foreign Relations, June 10 2015, http://www.cfr.org/foreign-aid/us-foreign-assistance-act-1961/p27046.

[221] "Map of Mauritania," World Embassy Information, August 20, 2015, http://www.worldembassyinformation.com/world-maps/maps-of-mauritania.html.

impediment and an advantage in combating radical Islamic ideologies. Since 2000, the most threatening terrorist group has been AQIM née the Salafist Group for Preaching and Combat (GSPC). GSPC arose from the chaotic political and military landscape of Algeria in the 1990s, where numerous Islamist groups fought the Algerian military for control of the government.[222] While the GSPC may have originated in Algeria, operations quickly spread into neighboring Mauritania and its neighbors as the group publicly embraced al-Qaeda's idea of global jihad.[223] In March 2002, the GSPC was designated a Foreign Terrorist Organization by the Department of State, that at the time acknowledged that they were "among the most active of the twenty-seven groups commonly listed under the aegis of bin Laden's network."[224] After its initial incarnation as an anti-government organization, the group, led by the notorious Abdelmalek Droukdel, went through a number of ideological changes and expanded operations to include attacks against civilians, smuggling, and trafficking.[225] The now infamous Mokhtar Belmokhtar—a.k.a. Marlboro Man due to his smuggling activities—led the battalion that operated in Mauritania and the Algerian-Malian border.[226] He was also one of many influential figures with ties to Mauritania. Many at the time dismissed the group as nothing more than smugglers and bandits, accusing the Algerian government and the United States of exaggerating the threat to further their own interests. While the exact magnitude of the threat that GSPC posed (outside of harassing Algerian security forces) remained unclear, GSPC certainly expanded operations. Strengthening their ties with al-Qaeda, the group formally re-branded itself al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb in 2007. While the group's

---

[222] Stephen Harmon, "From GSPC to AQIM: The Evolution of an Algerian Islamist Terrorist Group into an Al-Qa'ida Affiliate and its Implications for the Sahara-Sahel Region." *Concerned Africa Scholars* No. 85 (Spring 2010): 12-29. http://concernedafricascholars.org/docs/bulletin85harmon.pdf.

[223] Dan Darling, "Social Analysis: Al-Qaeda's African Arm," Winds of Change, April 1, 2004, http://www.windsofchange.net/archives/004795.html.

[224] Johnathan Schanzer, "Algeria's GSPC and America's 'War on Terror,'" The Washington Institute, October 2, 2002, http://www.washingtoninstitute.org/policy-analysis/view/algerias-gspc-and-americas-war-on-terror.

[225] Harmon, "From GSPC to AQIM," 12-29.

[226] Zachary Laub, "Al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb," Council on Foreign Relations, March 27, 2015, http://www.cfr.org/terrorist-organizations-and-networks/al-qaeda-islamic-maghreb-aqim/p12717.

influence has waxed and waned over the years, their continued existence and perpetual comebacks is indicative of the trouble with counterterrorism efforts in the region.

In 2002, when the Pan-Sahel Initiative launched, Mauritania was under the rule of President Maaouiya Ould Sid Ahmed Taya, a former Army colonel who took power via coup d'état in 1984.[227] The fact that President Taya came to power via a coup foreshadowed the difficulties that the United States faced in Mauritania as they attempted to balance security goals and political objectives in the war on terror. After numerous failed coup attempts, there was a successful attempt in 2005 that saw the end of President Taya's rule, the institution of a military council, and the introduction of a constitutional amendment limiting presidential power to two five-year terms.[228] At this time, the first evidence of al-Qaeda affiliated violence occurred when suspected al-Qaeda operatives killed fifteen Mauritanian soldiers at an outpost in the Saharan region of Eastern Mauritania.[229] The GSPC posted a message on their website taking credit for the attack stating that it was "revenge for our brothers who were arrested by the apostate Mauritanian regime over the recent period and as a support for the oppressed Muslims there."[230] As the opening salvo in the Salafi-Jihadist insurgency that would soon engulf the entire region of the Sahel, this event made clear that GSPC was not only willing and capable of attacking outside of Algeria, but also that they were recruiting outside of Algeria. These realizations, along with a number of other notable attacks against western interests in Algeria, provided the impetus for the United States to expand the Pan-Sahel initiative into the more comprehensive Trans-Sahara Counterterrorism Partnership.

In 2007, after two years of military rule, President Sidi Ould Cheikh Abdallahi became the country's first democratically elected president. Within the year, Mauritania

---

[227] "Mauritania Profile-Timeline," *BBC,* May 27, 2015. http://www.bbc.com/news/world-africa-13882166.

[228] Christoper Boucek, "Mauritania's Coup: Domestic Complexities and International Dilemmas," Carnegie Endowment, August 2008, http://carnegieendowment.org/files/boucek_mauritania.pdf.

[229] Stephen Ulph, "Algerian GSPC Launch Attack in Mauritania." *Terrorism Focus* 2, no.11 (June 2005): 20, http://www.jamestown.org/programs/tm/single/?tx_ttnews%5Btt_news%5D=503&tx_ttnews%5BbackPid%5D=238&no_cache=1#.VaFtCHinARk.

[230] Ibid., 20.

began to see the Islamic violence linked to the newly branded AQIM expand as four French tourists were murdered in the central Mauritanian town of Aleg.[231] The murders were the first incidence of violence against western interests that occurred in Mauritania and it stressed through the nascent political system. It was followed shortly afterwards by an unsuccessful attack on the Israeli embassy in the capital city Nouakchott. Although less spectacular than the earlier high profile attack on the United Nations Headquarters in Algiers, these attacks severely impacted the Mauritanian tourist economy and damaged the country's profile as a safe, moderate Muslim nation.[232] The ineffectual response from the Mauritanian government after the earlier murder of Mauritanian soldiers likely emboldened local AQIM leadership, already believing Mauritania a soft target due to its vast, desolate desert geography. Both these factors point toward the importance of state capacity when developing a successful counterterrorism program. At the time, Mauritania had been receiving U.S. counterterrorism assistance from the United States for over five years; however, the episodic nature of coups and military rule that characterized the political system stymied efforts to increase state capacity.

Mauritania's first step toward democracy proved to be difficult, with President Abdallahi accused of abuses of power, being soft on Islamists, and attempting to create a family dynasty for political power.[233] In keeping with their turbulent political history, an August 2008 military coup toppled President Abdallahi—effectively ending the short experience in democracy.[234] The coup was followed a few weeks later by the murder of twelve Mauritanian soldiers by AQIM operatives.[235] The incident highlighted a number of enduring problems that faced Mauritania, largely because of the perpetual political chaos that defined the country. Weak border security, an underestimation of the threat

---

[231] Oris and Arenas-García, "AQIM & Mauritania: Local Paradoxes, Regional Dynamics and Global Challenges."

[232] Nicholas Schmidle, "The Saharan Conundrum," *The New York Times*, February 13, 2009. http://www.nytimes.com/2009/02/15/magazine/15Africa-t.html?pagewanted=5&_r=2.

[233] Christoper Boucek, "Mauritania's Coup: Domestic Complexities and International Dilemmas," Carnegie Endowment, August 2008, http://carnegieendowment.org/files/boucek_mauritania.pdf.

[234] "Troops Stage Coup in Mauritania," *BBC News*, August 6, 2008. http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/africa/7544834.stm.

[235] Schmidle, "The Saharan Conundrum."

posed by Salafi-Jihadists, and limited counterterrorism assistance all correlate with the constant upheaval within the government. In the aftermath of the incident, the United States declined to assist in the hunt for the perpetrators because the military junta had removed President Abdallahi, again putting the United States' counterterrorism goals in a precarious position vis-à-vis political objectives. The June 2009 killing of American missionary worker Christopher Leggett in a crowded market in Nouakchott again highlighted the increasing reach of AQIM.[236] The sheer brazenness of the attack was as shocking as the fact that the group had killed an American citizen—both elements pointed toward an increased confidence and determination within AQIMs leadership. Not long afterwards, in July 2009, Gen Mohamed Ould Abdel-Aziz—leader of the 2008 coup—won the election and was installed as Mauritania's president. A few months after the elections, AQIM kidnapped three Spanish aid workers, who were all released after the Spanish government purportedly paid large ransom payments.[237] A month later AQIM again targeted western interests, kidnapping two Italian tourists, also later released after diplomatic negotiations and an unconfirmed ransoms.[238] While all the hostages were eventually released unharmed, the incidents further widened the scope of AQIM operations in Mauritania, damaging their international reputation and severely restricting tourism. At the time, some suggested that the United States counterterrorism efforts in the region were actually attracting jihadists where there was none before.[239] Certainly the dialectics of "near" and "far" enemies represent a component critical of the narrative that AQIM pushes, presenting difficulties for the United States as it attempts to bolster state capacity without maintaining a large presence that Salafi-Jihadists invariably use as evidence of western meddling.

---

[236] Ahmed Mohamed, "Christopher Leggett Death: Al Qaida Says It Killed American In Mauritania For Proselytizing," *Associated Press*, July 26, 2009. http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2009/06/25/christopher-leggett-death_n_220625.html.

[237] Jacques Roussellier, "Terrorism in North Africa and the Sahel: Al-Qa'ida's Franchise or Freelance?" *Middle East Institute*, Policy Brief, no. 34 (August 2011): 4. https://www.mei.edu/sites/default/files/publications/Roussellier.pdf; Thurston, "AQIM, Kidnapping, and Murder: A Brief History."

[238] Thurston, "AQIM, Kidnapping, and Murder: A Brief History."

[239] Scott C. Johnson, "The Terrorist Myth In North Africa," *Newsweek*, November 19, 2009. http://www.newsweek.com/terrorist-myth-north-africa-76619.

After the unprecedented violence that marred Mauritania in 2009, there were relatively few attacks perpetrated in 2010. This lull was likely the result of the hardline that President Abdel-Aziz, a staunch secularist, adopted against Islamic terrorism. Almost immediately after taking office, President Abdel-Aziz enacted a national counterterrorism law that defines "terrorism as a criminal act, describes court procedure in terrorism cases, and prescribes punishment for perpetrators."[240] While this may have been a politically calculated maneuver to assuage western political leaders uncomfortable with supporting another former coup leader, it was a step in the right direction toward strengthening institutions necessary to counter terrorism. AQIM activities in Mauritania were limited to a single suicide bombing at a military checkpoint, which is relatively low when compared to the numerous attacks perpetrated by AQIM in Mali and Niger during the same time period.[241] Additionally, Mauritania prosecuted a record number of suspected terrorists—fifty-six—with punishments ranging from fines to the death penalty.[242] Along with this, Mauritania undertook efforts to improve border security through the establishment of ten additional checkpoints along the borders with Algeria and Mali.[243] All of these improvements are the result of increased state capacity in areas of security, bureaucracy, legislation, and the judiciary.

The trend continued into 2011 as Mauritania significantly increased its regional interoperability and coordination. Joint operations between Mali and Mauritania to counter the transnational movement of AQIM were successful in the Wagadou forest region.[244] Additionally, Mauritanian military units were training with their Algerian counterparts in the Kidal region of Algeria — most likely in operations designed to

---

[240] "Country Reports on Terrorism 2013 Africa Overview," United States Department of State, July 7, 2015, http://www.state.gov/j/ct/rls/crt/2013/224820.htm.

[241] Global Security, "Al-Qaeda in the Land of the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM)," May 26, 2015, http://www.globalsecurity.org/military/world/para/gspc.htm.

[242] "Country Reports on Terrorism 2011: Mauritania," United States Department of State, July 12, 2015, http://www.refworld.org/docid/4e52481f37.html.

[243] Ibid.

[244] "AQIM on Mauritania/Mali Fighting" *The Moor Next Door*, July 12, 2011, https://themoornextdoor.wordpress.com/2011/07/12/aqim-on-mauritanamali-fighting/.

counter AQIM.[245] Despite these improvements, the year was not without incident as a gendarmerie was abducted, and a suicide truck bombing was foiled in Nouakchott, along with an attempted assassination plot against President Abdel-Aziz.[246] These events revealed two major trends. First, that Mauritanian forces were becoming increasingly more capable of repelling attacks by AQIM. Second, that AQIM was not ready to give up on their attempts to destabilize Mauritania through terrorism and the exploitation of the disenfranchised population. Many of these attacks, like those in earlier years, featured involvement from Mauritanian citizens.[247] As a turning point, 2011 proved to be the year that Mauritania needed to bolster its image in the region and internationally. From a regional perspective, it showed the durability of AQIM as they soon increased their efforts in neighboring Mali and nearby Niger.

While 2012 continued the peaceful trend in Mauritania, the March coup d'état in neighboring Mali and the subsequent Tuareg rebellion in Northern Mali provided AQIM with a safe haven from which to operate unchecked. At the time the Commander of USAFRICOM, General Carter Ham, acknowledged that AQIM was " an organization of growing concern" and "that the linkages between AQIM and Boko Haram are probably the most worrisome in terms of the indications we have that they are likely sharing funds, training and explosive materials that can be quite dangerous."[248] This characterization of AQIM alongside the revelation of possible ties with Boko Haram put a question mark on the efficacy of U.S. counterterrorism efforts. After all, by this point almost ten years of funding and training had been doled out for Trans-Saharan countries to fight AQIM. However, the effective disruption of AQIM activities in Mauritania shows that as individual states increase their capacity they can offer an effective, although limited, challenge to the lure of Islamic extremism. It also shows the fluidity of the situation as

---

[245] "Country Reports on Terrorism 2011: Mauritania," United States Department of State, July 12, 2015, http://www.refworld.org/docid/4e52481f37.html.

[246] "Al-Qaeda Offshoot Threatens Life of Mauritanian President," *Al Arabiya News*, February 7, 2011. http://www.alarabiya.net/articles/2011/02/07/136694.html.

[247] "Thurston on AQIM Confrontations; Profile of a Mauritanian AQIM Fighter," *The Moor Next Door,* July 6,2011, https://themoornextdoor.wordpress.com/2011/07/06/thurston-on-aqim-confrontations-profile-of-a-mauritanian-aim-fighter/.

[248] Mark Doyle, "Africa's Islamist Militants 'Co-ordinate Efforts'," *BBC International News*, June 26, 2012. http://www.bbc.com/news/world-africa-18592789.

the groups seek opportunities elsewhere, which underscores the importance of regional collaboration.

The increased acumen of Mauritania's military and police coupled with the recent boost in regional cooperation certainly decreased AQIMs operations in Mauritania. However, these efforts all addressed the symptoms of terrorism, rather than addressing the root causes. In this regard, President Abdel-Aziz began making progress as well. Instituting a de-radicalization program that aimed to co-opt the non-violent Islamic opposition that suffered repression under previous leaders was an important first step. In addition, the development of a counter narrative began in earnest in 2013. The Mauritanian Ministry of Islamic Affairs and Traditional Education began educating former *mahadra*—Quranic school students—in a variety of occupational subjects at centers throughout the country.[249] Programs like this, that train Islamic scholars to offer a narrative to counter that offered by the Salafi-Jihadists, illustrate the importance of state capacity. Furthermore, they address the root causes of terrorism that Salafi-Jihadists depend on for recruitment. When one considers that Mauritania fundamentally acted as a rear-base for AQIM operations and recruitment after the violence subsided in 2010, the importance of attacking the root causes becomes understandable.

The June 2014 elections in Mauritania that saw the re-election of President Abdel-Aziz suffered from low voter turnout and an opposition boycott; despite these problems, the United States and other Western governments welcomed the results, presumably because of President Abdel-Aziz's successful counterterrorism program.[250] If so, this illustrates that a focus on counterterrorism efforts trumps democratization and efforts to establish rule of law, something that critics have longed worried about leading to increased danger of political unrest. Years of steady improvements in economic freedom and integration into the global economy have done little to counter widespread corruption and a judicial system that is highly vulnerable to political influence. Mauritania's defense expenditures have fluctuated over the past decade and their current military budget of

---

[249]"Country Reports on Terrorism 2013: Mauritania," United States Department of State, April 30 2014, http://www.refworld.org/docid/536229d52f.html.

[250] "Mauritania Poll Returns Incumbent as Opposition Boycotts Vote," *Deuschtes Welles*, June 22, 2014. http://www.dw.com/en/mauritania-poll-returns-incumbent-as-opposition-boycotts-vote/a-17728609.

$149 million currently accounts for 4% of the GDP, slightly more than a 1% increase over 2000 spending. Mauritania purchases most of their arms from Europe, with recent purchases mainly comprised of transport aircraft.[251] Because of the coups in 2005 and 2008 and U.S. restrictions on arms sales, the United States has sold no major armaments to Mauritania over the past decade. Manpower changes have seen Mauritania's military workforce increase slightly from 20,700 personnel to 20,870 personnel, a 0.82% increase over the past decade.[252] These measurements show that Mauritania's success does not come from an overwhelming militarized police state. Rather this data illustrates that the capacity of the state to counter terrorism has increased under the rule of President Abdel-Aziz and the long-term counterterrorism assistance from the United States and France.

This absence of terrorist attacks since 2011 has led some to speculate that Mauritania is the first Sahelian country to reach a post-Islamic insurgency period.[253] While Mauritania has not experienced the same surge in violence and terrorism that Nigeria and Mali have seen in the years since 2009, declaring terrorism defeated is premature for a number of reasons. First, historically a number of key militants operating elsewhere in the Sahel came from Mauritania even though they did not carry on attacks within the country.[254] Recent data suggests this trend continues, which suggests that in the eyes of Salafi-Jihadists, Mauritania's position has transformed into a base for, rather than a target of, Islamic extremism. Considering that Mauritania is the only Islamic Republic in the Sahel—its citizenry is one hundred percent Muslim—and it is home to some of the most inhospitable geography in the region, this idea has credibility. In March 2015 the *Homeland Security News Wire* recounted how ISIS and al-Qaeda may be training

---

[251] Stockholm International Peace Research Institute, SIPRI Military Expenditure Database.

[252] "Armed Forces Personnel, Total," World Bank, Accessed September 20, 2014, http://data.worldbank.org/indicator/MS.MIL.TOTL.P1.

[253] Ibrahim Yahaya Ibrahim, "Managing the Sahelo-Saharan Islamic Insurgency in Mauritania: The Local Stakes of the Sahelian Crisis," *Sahel Research Group Working Paper*, No. 3 (August 2014): 2, http://sahelresearch.africa.ufl.edu/files/Yahaya_StakesMauritania_Final.pdf.

[254] Megan O'Toole, "U.S. Ramps Up 'Terrorism' Fight in Mauritania," *Al Jazeera*, July 14, 2014. http://www.aljazeera.com/news/middleeast/2014/07/us-ramps-up-terrorism-fight-mauritania-20147148214271804.html.

together in camps located in the barren deserts of eastern Mauritania.[255] Similarly, Veryan Khan, writing for the Terrorism Research and Analysis Consortium, described Mauritania as "a powder keg very few people are talking about."[256] These warnings illuminate the difficulty of defeating terrorism in the Sahel and the elusive nature of terrorists operating throughout the region that have little interest in established borders or ruling governments. Second, the crisis in Mali very likely provided an opportunity for many Salafi-Jihadists to leave Mauritania in search of a more winnable cause. If true, there is some reason to celebrate in Nouakchott since their counterterrorism response likely played a role in making operations difficult in Mauritania, encouraging terrorists to conduct attacks elsewhere. It appears that the government in Nouakchott considers these explanations valid as it continues de-radicalization programs and maintains an active role in stabilizing Mali.[257] Both initiatives suggest that Mauritania remains aware of the threat posed by Salafi-Jihadists operating in the region.

Perhaps the most salient warning for a potential resurgence in terrorism is the socioeconomic situation. Mauritania remains a chronically poor state that suffers from a host of socioeconomic ills that have the potential to undermine the recent gains in countering terrorism. Mali saw a similar lull in the years preceding the 2012 coup d'état, where a number of socioeconomic fissures that lay dormant for years converged to send Mali into chaos. The country continues to struggle with high levels of extreme poverty, corruption remains entrenched in the judicial and legislative systems, and health and disease issues overwhelm the country's healthcare system.[258] These factors present significant challenges for the leadership in Nouakchott and provide opportunities for violent extremist ideologies to take hold among the disenfranchised population. Considering Mauritania's historical struggles with good governance and legitimacy, it is

---

[255] "Training Camps in Mauritania Train Foreign Recruits for ISIS, al-Qaeda," *Homeland Security News Wire*, March 26, 2015. http://www.homelandsecuritynewswire.com/dr20150326-training-camps-in-mauritania-train-foreign-recruits-for-isis-alqaeda.

[256] Ibid.

[257] "UN Extols Mauritania Role in Mali Crisis," *Star Africa*, February 4, 2015. http://en.starafrica.com/news/un-extols-mauritania-role-in-mali-crisis.html.

[258] "United Nations Development Report 2013," World Health Organization, April 20, 2015, http://www.who.int/countryfocus/cooperation_strategy/ccsbrief_mrt_en.pdf.

plausible that the violence has yet to end. This threat underscores the importance of tackling development alongside defense whenever possible, especially in the realm of counterterrorism operations where the symptoms are as importance as the cause.

In conclusion, Mauritania presents a rather unique case in the milieu of the Trans-Sahara. The chaos that defined Mauritania's political system from 2002 through 2009 correlates with the height of terrorist activity within the country. Likewise, the relative political calm that defined the period after 2009 was the result of various factors that worked to strengthen state capacity. U.S. counterterrorism funding has spearheaded a number of initiatives specifically designed to bolster the security, administrative, legal, and infrastructural capacities of the government in Nouakchott. From programs designed to improved anti-money laundering and counter terrorist financing to programs designed to develop border security and cooperation during the crisis in Mali, U.S. counterterrorism initiatives have demonstrated an understanding of the underlying causes that support and sustain many terrorist organizations. Despite the strong design of counterterrorism initiatives like the TSCTP and the substantial funding associated with counterterrorism assistance in Northwest Africa, evidence suggests that the ability of the state to absorb and transform the assistance into demonstrable change makes all the difference. The presidency of Abdel-Aziz, despite its non-democratic beginnings and authoritarian tendencies, has produced some of the best counterterrorism results in the Sahel. This is, in large part, due to the government's ability to capitalize on counterterrorism assistance from the United States and France to increase its capacity.

D.   SUMMARY

The lessons from these case studies underscore the importance of a state's capacity when addressing the Salafi-Jihadist threat. The foremost lesson is that the United States cannot overlook the capacity of the recipient state in the pursuit of counterterrorism objectives. Not only does it hamper the long-term goals of United States counterterrorism assistance, but it also plays directly into the narrative being offered by Salafi-Jihadist organizations. The situations in Nigeria, Mali, and Mauritania, while unique and varied, all illustrate the link between state capacity and the effectiveness of

counterterrorism initiatives. In Nigeria, the government of Goodluck Jonathan represented the neo-patrimonialism that defines post-colonial governments throughout the region. These patronage practices—coupled with challenging demographics—alienate large segments of the society, providing jihadists with a supply of recruits and challenging the developing counterterrorism capacity of the state. Mali presents a different set of circumstances: the government in Bamako failed to capitalize on the significant funding that resulted from Mali's status as a democratic star in the region. The developing counterterrorism capacity was not accompanied by socioeconomic or political reform, thereby limiting the states ability to counter the ideological spread of Salafi-Jihadism. These limitations, exacerbated by the stark geography that defines much of the country's north, paved the way for the events that unfolded after the coup in 2012. Meanwhile Mauritania showed that an autocratic leader can be a significant advantage when countering terrorism because of the ability to marshal resources and direct political will toward a specific cause: in this case, developing a counterterrorism capacity. However, the case of Mauritania, where AQIM still operates from within, also illustrates the difficulty of long-term solutions and the need for regional collaboration. Throughout the case studies, it is apparent that underdeveloped state capacity undermines counterterrorism initiatives.

IV.   CONCLUSION

Despite steadily increasing funds, an increasingly expansive geographical footprint, and the creation of a combatant command, U.S. counterterrorism policies in the Sahel have not stopped the rise of Salafi-Jihadist terrorism. While suffering some setbacks, AQIM continues to operate with impunity. Meanwhile, Boko Haram, MUJAO, Ansar al-Dine and others have come into existence and now represent significant regional threats as recent attacks by Boko Haram in Chad illustrate.[259] Moreover, the states of the Sahel remain mired down by structural issues resulting from weak economies, poor governance, and social grievances. The situation that unfolded after the 2012 coup d'état in Mali illustrated the deep fissures that existed beneath the democratic façade of the state. Likewise, the persistent and increasingly violent upheaval in Nigeria illustrates how a large economy does not necessarily improve the underlying conditions that terrorism exploits. Considering that U.S. counterterrorism initiatives in the Trans-Sahara were designed to "enhance the indigenous capacities of governments" so they could "confront the challenge posed by terrorist organizations" these situations show that the programs have not been successful.[260] This paper finds that this failure is not the result of ill-defined goals, the militarization of Africa partners, or a lack of strategic interest on behalf of the United States. The failure primarily results from the United States not having accounted for the limited capacity of the states within the Sahel.

The limited capacity of the recipient states to absorb and capitalize on the counterterrorism assistance hinders efforts and emboldens terrorist organizations. In the beginning stages of counterterrorism operations in the Trans-Sahara, the Sahelian countries received counterterrorism assistance with little ability to effectively apply it and little regard to its long-term utility. Likewise, the United States lacked mechanisms to measure the effectiveness of the counterterrorism assistance. In addition, the recipient states did not necessarily subscribe to the whole of government approach that the United

---

[259] "Chad Troops Kill 19 Insurgents After Boko Haram Raid on Army Post," *Agence Free Presse*, July 16, 2015. http://news.yahoo.com/chad-troops-kill-19-insurgents-boko-haram-raid-143325352.html.

[260] "Country Reports: Africa Overview," United States Department of State, June 11, 2014, http://www.state.gov/j/ct/rls/crt/2012/209979.htm.

States promoted. However, in an effort to quickly align with the U.S.-led and western supported fight against global terrorism, a number of weak states in the Trans-Saharan region declared they had a terror problem. The politically astute and shrewd African leaders quickly understood that there were political, economic, and material benefits to alignment. The pre-9/11 international environment was a unipolar world where the United States was the sole, undisputed superpower and many African politicians saw an opportunity to increase their political economy. Likewise, the United States was quick to accept and champion any professed allies in the emerging war against terrorism. In the rush to court one another, policy makers on both sides failed to account for the effects that limited state capacity would have on counterterrorism efforts.

Salafi-Jihadism has been particularly virulent in the region because its ideological foundations center on the corruption and illegitimacy of the secular state: a notion that spreads easily in areas where the state's limited capacity makes it appear incapable or unwilling to serve the citizenry. Furthermore, these organizations operate in regions of the state largely outside the reach of the central government. Capitalizing on the limited reach of the state, these organizations exploit the resulting porous borders, presenting additional challenges for the state's capacity. For these reasons, the Salafi-Jihadists operating in the Sahel may remain a challenge for the international community, regional organizations, and local leaders until the countries of the Sahel increase their capacity.

Considering the importance of state capacity in countering terrorism, it is likely that the states of the Sahel will struggle with Salafi-Jihadism for some time. The ability to develop a state's capacity simply exceeds the scope and design of current U.S. initiatives in the region. Furthermore, developing state capacity relies heavily on the ability of the United States and its partners to realize the sometimes-contradictory nature of security and politics. Nigeria and Mauritania provide examples of how counterterrorism goals in the Sahel do not always fall in line with political goals—a divergence that has implications for the development of a state's capacity. In Nigeria, President Jonathan was roundly regarded as doing little to stop the rising violence of Boko Haram and the Nigerian Security Forces were routinely accused of committing human rights abuses. Both instances put the United States on cautious footing regarding the amount of

counterterrorism assistance Nigeria would receive and which units would receive it. Likewise, in Mauritania, the political and humanitarian issues that plagued the Abdel-Aziz presidency called into question the wisdom of U.S. counterterrorism assistance. Conversely, the situation in Mali highlights how the achievement of political goals can gloss over security issues. Perhaps most alarming, these cases show how a government's failure to develop the whole capacity of state can actually strengthen, and in some cases, enable terrorist ideologies to spread.

In the Sahel, Salafi-Jihadists have successfully exploited the limitations in state capacity and U.S. policies. As such, the United States' counterterrorism initiatives need to evolve in step if they are going successfully counter these organizations. Any such evolution will require a reassessment of the approach that considers the weak state capacity prevalent throughout the region. This may require a re-balancing of funding to funnel more toward socioeconomic issues or the possibility of working through regional organizations like the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) rather than directly with host governments. Additionally, it may require the United States to prioritize its security goals over its political goals. Considering the counterterrorism initiatives in the Trans-Sahara resemble initiatives elsewhere, the implications of policy changes are far reaching. However, in the challenging and dynamic environment of counterterrorism operations in the Sahel, this thesis argues no amount of U.S. aid—counterterrorism or otherwise—brought into the region will ever replace the need for local state capacity.

THIS PAGE INTENTIONALLY LEFT BLANK

LIST OF REFERENCES

Acemoglu, Daron and James Robinson. "10 Reasons Countries Fall Apart." *Foreign Policy,* Jul/Aug 2012.

Adesoji, Abimbola O. "Between Maitatsine and Boko Haram: Islamic Fundamentalism and the Response of the Nigerian State," *Africa Today* 57, no. 4 (Summer 2011): 99–115.

Alexander, Yonah. "Maghreb & Sahel: Addressing the Rising Threat from al-Qaeda & other Terrorists in North & West/Central Africa." International Center for Terrorism Studies at the Potomac Institute for Policy Studies*,* (January 2010): 1-80, http://www.potomacinstitute.org/attachments/525_Maghreb%20Terrorism%20report.pdf.

"Al-Qaeda Kidnaps Malian Soldier, Customs Guide." Star Africa. August 11, 2010. http://en.starafrica.com/news/al-qaeda-kidnaps-malian-soldier-customs-guide-official-75974.html.

"Al-Qaeda Offshoot Threatens Life of Mauritanian President." *Al Arabiya News*, February 7, 2011. http://www.alarabiya.net/articles/2011/02/07/136694.html.

"Al-Qaeda Sends Reinforcements to Aid Islamists in Mali." France 24. November 17, 2012. http://www.france24.com/en/20121117-al-qaeda-sends-reinforcements-aid-islamists-mali-alqaeda-aqim-mnla.html.

Angelique Chrisafis, Julian Borger, Justin McCurry, and Terry Macalister. " Timeline of the In Amenas Siege." *The Guardian*, January 25, 2013. http://www.theguardian.com/world/2013/jan/25/in-amenas-timeline-siege-algeria.

Arieff, Alexis. *Al Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM) and Al Murabitoun* (CRS Report No. IF10172). Washington, DC: Congressional Research Service, 2015. http://pennyhill.com/jmsfileseller/docs/IF10172.pdf.

"Bamako frappée au cœur: une première depuis l'opération Serval." *RFI*, March 7, 2015. http://www.rfi.fr/afrique/2min/20150307-mali-attaque-restaurant-terrasse-attentat-bamako-terrorisme-serval/.

Bandyopadhyay, Subhayu, Todd Sandler, and Javed Younas, "Foreign Aid as Counterterrorism Policy." *Oxford Economic Papers* 63, no.3 (2011): 423-447. doi: 10.1093/oep/gpq030.

Berman, Eli. *Radical, Religious, and Violent: The New Economics of Terrorism.* Cambridge: MIT Press, 2009.

Besancon, Marie L. "Relative Resources: Inequality in Ethnic Wars, Revolutions, and Genocides," *Journal of Peace Research* 42, no.4 (July 2005): 393–415. doi: 10.1177/0022343305054086.

Black, Cofer Amb. "The Prevention and Combating of Terrorism in Africa." Remarks at the Second Intergovernmental High-Level Meeting on the Prevention and Combating of Terrorism In Africa in Algiers, Algeria, October 20, 2004. http://2001-2009.state.gov/s/ct/rls/rm/2004/37230.htm.

"Boko Haram Pledges Allegiance to ISIL." *Al Jazeera*, March 8, 2015. http://www.aljazeera.com/news/2015/03/nigeria-boko-haram-pledges-allegiance-isil-150307201614660.html.

"Boko Haram: Splinter Group, Ansaru Emerges." Vanguard. February 1, 2012. http://www.vanguardngr.com/2012/02/boko-haram-splinter-group-ansaru-emerges/.

Boucek, Christoper. "Mauritania's Coup: Domestic Complexities and International Dilemmas." Carnegie Endowment. August 2008. http://carnegieendowment.org/files/boucek_mauritania.pdf.

Boutton, Andrew. "U.S. Foreign Aid, Interstate Rivalry, and Incentives for Counterterrorism Cooperation." *Journal of Peace Research* 51, no.6 (September 2014): 741–754. doi: 10.1177/0022343314543144.

Brenner, Louis. *West African Sufi: The Religious Heritage and Spiritual Search of Cerno Bokar Saalif Taal.* California: University of California Press, 1984.

Bunzel, Cole. "From Paper State to Caliphate: The Ideology of the Islamic State," Washington, DC: The Brookings Institute, 2015. 7–11.

Callimachi, Rukmini. "ISIS Releases a Recording It Says Was Made by Its Leader." *New York Times*, May 14, 2015. http://www.nytimes.com/2015/05/15/world/middleeast/isis-releases-recording-said-to-be-by-its-reclusive-leader.html?_r=0.

Camara, Kamissa. "Mali: Beacon of Democracy Gone Dark." The Fletcher Forum of World Affairs. August 2, 2012. http://www.fletcherforum.org/2012/08/02/camara/.

Center for Global Development, "Mali's President Touré Talks Democracy and Development at CGD," November 20, 2006, http://www.cgdev.org/blog/malis-president-touré-talks-democracy-and-development-cgd.

Central Intelligence Agency, "The World Factbook," May 26, 2015, https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/ni.html.

Chairman Joint Chiefs of Staff. *Counterterrorism*. Joint Publication 3–26. Washington, DC: JP3 -26, 2014. http://www.dtic.mil/doctrine/new_pubs/jp3_26.pdf.

Chambas, Ibn. "Death Toll from Boko Haram Violence 'Staggering.'" United Nations Radio. January 8, 2015. http://www.unmultimedia.org/radio/english/2015/01/death-toll-from-boko-haram-violence-staggering/#.VXS2YMYTMRk.

Chau, Donovan C. "U.S. Counterterrorism in Sub-Saharan Africa: Understanding Costs, Cultures, and Conflicts." *Strategic Studies Institute*. (September 2008): 1-80. http://www.strategicstudiesinstitute.army.mil/pdffiles/PUB821.pdf.

Chauzal, Grégory and Thibault van Damme, "The Roots of Mali's Crisis: Moving Beyond the 2012 Crisis." Clingendael, Netherlands Institute of International Relations. March 2015. http://www.clingendael.nl/sites/default/files/The_roots_of_Malis_conflict.pdf.

Chothia, Farouk. "Profile: Who are Nigeria's Ansaru Islamists?" BBC. January 21, 2015. http://www.bbc.com/news/world-africa-21510767.

———. "Who are Nigeria's Boko Haram Islamists?" BBC. January 21, 2015. http://www.bbc.com/news/world-africa-13809501.

Committee on Armed Services United States Senate. *National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2014* Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 2014. http://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/pkg/CRPT-113srpt44/pdf/CRPT-113srpt44.pdf.

Connect Africa Blog. https://connectafrica.wordpress.com/.

Council on Foreign Relations, "U.S. Foreign Assistance Act of 1961," June 10 2015, http://www.cfr.org/foreign-aid/us-foreign-assistance-act-1961/p27046.

Crenshaw, Martha. "The Causes of Terrorism," *Comparative Politics* 13, no.4 (July 1981): 377-399. doi: 10.2307/421717.

Crimes Against Humanity Program, "Unsecured Libyan Stockpiles Empower Boko Haram and Destabilize African Sahel," February 6, 2012,

http://www.humanrightsfirst.org/2012/02/06/unsecured-libyan-stockpiles-empower-boko-haram-and-destabilize-african-sahel.

Cronin, Audrey Kurth. "Behind the Curve: Globalization and International Terrorism."
    In *Contending with Terrorism: Roots, Strategies, and Responses*, edited by
    Michael E. Brown, 28-56. Cambridge: MIT Press, 2010.

Darling, Dan. "Social Analysis: Al-Qaeda's African Arm." Winds of Change. April 1,
    2004. http://www.windsofchange.net/archives/004795.html.

Dempsey, Thomas. "Counterterrorism in African Failed States: Challenges and Potential
    Solutions." *Strategic Studies Institute* (April 2006): 1-43.
    http://www.strategicstudiesinstitute.army.mil/pubs/display.cfm?pubID=649.

Dickson, David. "Political Islam in Sub-Saharan Africa: The Need for a New Research
    and Diplomatic Agenda," *United States Institute of Peace* 140, (May 2005): 7-9,
    http://www.usip.org/sites/default/files/sr140.pdf.

Doyle, Mark. "Africa's Islamist Militants 'Co-ordinate Efforts'." BBC International
    News. June 26, 2012. http://www.bbc.com/news/world-africa-18592789.

Edeh, Suzan. "Bauchi Deadly Kidnapping: Gaping Bullet Holes in Expatriates' Live
    Camp." *Vanguard*, February 23, 2013.
    http://www.vanguardngr.com/2013/02/bauchi-deadly-kidnapping-gaping-bullet-holes-in-expatriates-live-camp/.

Elbagir, Nima, Paul Cruickshank and Mohammed Tawfeeq, " Boko Haram Purportedly
    Pledges Allegiance to ISIS." CNN. March 7, 2015.
    http://www.cnn.com/2015/03/07/africa/nigeria-boko-haram-isis/index.html.

Ellis, Stephen. "Briefing: The Pan-Sahel Initiative." *African Affairs* 103, no. 412 (July
    2004): 459–464. doi:10.1093/afraf/adh067.

Emerson, Stephen. "Back to the Future: The Evolution of U.S. Counterterrorism Policy in Africa." *Insight on Africa* 6, no.1 (January 2014): 43–56. doi: 10.1177/0975087814532587.

———. "Desert Insurgency: Lessons From the Third Tuareg Rebellion." *Small Wars & Insurgencies* 22, no. 4 (September 2011): 669–687. doi:10.1080/09592318.2011.573406.

Felbab-Brown, Vanda and James J.F. Forest, "Political Violence and the Illicit Economies of West Africa," *Terrorism and Political Violence* 24, no.5 (November 2012): 787-806. doi:10.1080/09546553.2011.644098.

Felix, Bate. "Six U.N. Peacekeepers Wounded by Roadside Bomb in North Mali." Reuters. January 4, 2015. http://ca.reuters.com/article/topNews/idCAKBN0KD0DF20150104.

Fessey, Thomas. "Boko Haram Attack: What Happened in Baga?" BBC. February 2, 2015. http://www.bbc.com/news/world-africa-30987043.

Flood, Derek Henry. "Between Islamization and Secession: The Contest for Northern Mali." *Combatting Terrorism Center Sentinel* 5, no. 7 (July 2012) : 1–5.

Forest, James J. F. "Al-Qaeda's Influence in Sub-Saharan Africa: Myths, Realities and Possibilities." *Perspectives on Terrorism* 5, no. 3–4 (September 2011): 63-80. *http://www.terrorismanalysts.com/pt/index.php/pot/article/view/156/309.*

Friedman, Uri. "How Nigeria became Africa's Largest Economy Overnight," *The Atlantic*, April 7, 2014. http://www.theatlantic.com/international/archive/2014/04/how-nigeria-became-africas-largest-economy-overnight/360288/.

Gberie, Lansana. "State Officials and their Involvement in Drug Trafficking in West Africa: Preliminary Findings." *West Africa Commission on Drugs Background Paper,* No.51 (2013): 1-26. http://www.wacommissionondrugs.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/08/Challenging-the-Myth-of-the-Drug-Terror-Nexus-in-the-Sahel-2013-08-19.pdf.

Gellner, Ernest. *Postmodernism, Reason, and Religion.* London: Routledge, 1992.

Global Security, "Al-Qaeda in the Land of the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM)," May 26, 2015. http://www.globalsecurity.org/military/world/para/gspc.htm.

———. "Operation Objective Voice," May 18, 2015," http://www.globalsecurity.org/military/ops/objective-voice.htm.

Goodman, Colby. "U.S. Shifts to Increase Military Aid to Maghreb and Sahel." Security Assistance Monitor. February 17, 2015. http://www.securityassistance.org/blog/us-shifts-increase-military-aid-maghreb-and-sahel.

Guffey, Jason. "Northern Mali Conflict 2012," *Small Wars Journal* 10, no.7 (July 2014). http://smallwarsjournal.com/jrnl/art/northern-mali-conflict-2012.

Guitta, Oliver and Robin Simcox. "Terrorism in Nigeria: The Threat from Boko Haram and Ansaru." The Henry Jackson Society. June 9, 2014. http://henryjacksonsociety.org/2014/06/09/terrorism-in-nigeria-the-threat-from-boko-haram-and-ansaru/.

Gunaratna, Rohan. "Combating Al-Qaida and Associated Groups." in *How States Fight Terrorism: Policy Dynamics in the West,* edited by Doron Zimmerman and Andreas Wenger, 175-203. Colorado: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 2007.

Gutelius, David. "U.S. Creates African Enemies Where None Were Before." Christian
        Science Monitor. July 11, 2003. http://www.csmonitor.com/2003/0711/p11s01-
        coop.html.

Gwartney, James and Robert Lawson. "Economic Freedom of the World: 2008 Annual
        Report." *Economic Freedom Network* (2008).
        http://www.freetheworld.com/2008/EconomicFreedomoftheWorld2008.pdf.

Gwartney, James and Robert Lawson. "Economic Freedom of the World: 2004 Annual
        Report." *Economic Freedom Network* (2004).
        http://www.freetheworld.com/2004/efw2004complete.pdf.

Hafez, Mohammed M. *Suicide Bombers in Iraq: The Strategy and Ideology of
        Martyrdom*. Washington, D.C: United States Institute of Peace, 2007.

Harmon, Stephen. "From GSPC to AQIM: The Evolution of an Algerian Islamist
        Terrorist Group into an Al-Qa'ida Affiliate and its Implications for the Sahara-
        Sahel Region." *Concerned Africa Scholars* No. 85 (Spring 2010): 12-29.
        http://concernedafricascholars.org/docs/bulletin85harmon.pdf.

Heidt, Maria Rapela. *Moral Traditions: An Introduction to World Religious Ethics*.
        Winona, MN: Anselm Academic, 2010.

Ibnein, Abu. "Oumar Ould Hamaha: A Case Study of the Bridges Between Three
        Groups." Geneva Centre for Training and Analysis of Terrorism. January 10,
        2013. http://gctat.org/fr/analysis/29-ranoc/220-oumar-ould-hamaha-a-case-study-
        of-the-bridges-between-three-groups.html.

Ibrahim, Ibrahim Yahaya. "Managing the Sahelo-Saharan Islamic Insurgency in
        Mauritania: The Local Stakes of the Sahelian Crisis," *Sahel Research Group
        Working Paper*, No. 3 (August 2014): 1-34.
        http://sahelresearch.africa.ufl.edu/files/Yahaya_StakesMauritania_Final.pdf.

Institute for Economics and Peace, "Global Terrorism Index," November 14, 2014, http://economicsandpeace.org/research/iep-indices-data/global-terrorism-index.

"Interim Statement by the Cater Center on Mali's Presidential Elections," The Carter Center, May 7, 2002, http://www.cartercenter.org/news/documents/doc522.html.

International Crisis Group. *"Islamist Terrorism in the Sahel: Fact or Fiction?"* Crisis Group Africa Report No. 92 (March 2005). http://www.crisisgroup.org/~/media/Files/africa/west-africa/Islamist%20Terrorism%20in%20the%20Sahel%20Fact%20or%20Fiction.pdf.

"Islamists Ansaru Claim Attack on Mali-bound Nigeria Troops." *Reuters*, January 20, 2013. http://www.reuters.com/article/2013/01/20/us-nigeria-violence-idUSBRE90J0B520130120.

Johnson, Charles M. Jr. *Actions Needed to Enhance Implementation of Trans-Sahara Counterterrorism Partnership* (GAO-08-860). Washington, D.C: Government Accountability Office, 2008. http://www.gao.gov/assets/280/279056.pdf.

———. *U.S. Efforts in Northwest Africa Would Be Strengthened by Enhanced Program Management* (GAO-14-518). Washington, D.C: Government Accountability Office, 2014. http://www.gao.gov/assets/670/664337.pdf.

Johnson, Scott C. "The Terrorist Myth In North Africa." Newsweek. November 19, 2009. http://www.newsweek.com/terrorist-myth-north-africa-76619.

Jones, Seth G. A Persistent Threat: The Evolution of al Qa'ida and Other Salafi Jihadists. Santa Monica, CA: RAND Corporation, 2014. http://www.rand.org/content/dam/rand/pubs/research_reports/RR600/RR637/RAND_RR637.pdf.

Jurgensmeyer, Mark. "Terror in the Name of God," *Current History,* 100 (November 2001): 357–361.

Keenan, Jeremy. *The Dying Sahara: U.S. Imperialism and Terror in Africa.* New York: Palgrave, 2013.

Kennedy-Boudali, Lilianne. Examining U.S. Counterterrorism Priorities and Strategy Across Africa's Sahel Region. Santa Monica, CA: RAND Corporation, 2009. http://www.rand.org/content/dam/rand/pubs/testimonies/2009/RAND_CT335.pdf.

———. "The Trans-Sahara Counterterrorism Partnership*." The Combating Terrorism Center: United States Military Academy West Point,* 2007.

Kindl, Martin F. *AFRICOM'S Role in Interagency Counterterrorism Efforts: An Assessment in 3D*. (Homeland Security Digital Library 698166). Washington, D.C: Homeland Security Digital Library, 2010. https://www.hsdl.org/?view&did=698166.

Laub, Zachary. "Al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb." Council on Foreign Relations. March 27, 2015. http://www.cfr.org/terrorist-organizations-and-networks/al-qaeda-islamic-maghreb-aqim/p12717.

Lebovich, Andrew. "AQIM and it's Allies in Mali." The Washington Institute. February 5, 2013. http://www.washingtoninstitute.org/policy-analysis/view/aqim-and-its-allies-in-mali.

Loboda, Luke. "The Though of Sayyid Qutb." Ashbrook Statesmanship Thesis, 2004. http://www.ashbrook.org/wp-content/uploads/2012/06/2004-Loboda-The-Thought-of-Sayyid-Qutb-PDF.pdf.

"Mali: trois tués dont un soldat de l'ONU dans des tirs de roquette à Kidal." *L'Orient-Le Journal*, March 8, 2015. http://www.lorientlejour.com/article/914749/mali-trois-tues-dont-un-soldat-de-lonu-dans-des-tirs-de-roquette-a-kidal-nouveau-bilan.html.

"Mali Tuareg Rebels Declare Independence in the North," *BBC News*, April 6, 2012. http://www.bbc.com/news/world-africa-17635437.

Malka, Haim and William Lawrence. "Salafi-Jihadism's Next Generation." Center for Strategic and International Studies. October 11, 2013. http://csis.org/publication/jihadi-salafisms-next-generation.

"Mauritania Poll Returns Incumbent as Opposition Boycotts Vote." *Deuschtes Welles*, June 22, 2014. http://www.dw.com/en/mauritania-poll-returns-incumbent-as-opposition-boycotts-vote/a-17728609.

"Mauritania Profile-Timeline." *BBC,* May 27, 2015. http://www.bbc.com/news/world-africa-13882166.

Miles, William F.S. "Deploying Development to Counter Terrorism: Post-9/11 Transformation of U.S. Foreign Aid to Africa." *African Studies Review* 55, No. 03 (October 2013): 27–60. DOI: http://dx.doi.org/10.1017/S0002020600007198.

Miller, Terry Amb., Anthony B. Kim, and Kim R. Holmes. *2014 Index of Economic Freedom.* The Heritage Foundation, Washington, D.C., 2014. http://www.heritage.org/index/pdf/2014/book/index_2014.pdf.

Moghadam, Assaf. "The Salafi-Jihad as a Religious Ideology," *CTC Sentinel* 1, no.3 (February 2008): 14-17.

Mohamed, Ahmed. "Christopher Leggett Death: Al Qaida Says It Killed American In Mauritania For Proselytizing." Associated Press. July 26, 2009.

http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2009/06/25/christopher-leggett-
death_n_220625.html.

Montanaro, Domenico, Lisa Desjardins, Rachel Wellford and Simone Pathe, "Who Said
It? Bush vs. Obama on Islam," PBS News Hour, February 19, 2015,
http://www.pbs.org/newshour/updates/said-obama-vs-bush-islam/.

Moor Next Door, The. https://themoornextdoor.wordpress.com/.

Morgan, Andy. "What Do the Tuareg Want?" Al Jazeera. January 9, 2014.
http://www.aljazeera.com/indepth/opinion/2014/01/what-do-tuareg-want-
20141913923498438.html.

Moss, Todd. "Lesson from Mali's Debacle: Time to Rethink Counterterrorism
Cooperation." Center for Global Development. May 10, 2012.
http://www.cgdev.org/blog/lesson-mali's-debacle-time-rethink-counterterrorism-
cooperation.

Moyar, Mark. "How Misguided U.S. Aid Contributed to Mali's Coup." Bloomberg
Review. March 11, 2013. http://www.bloombergview.com/articles/2013-03-
11/how-misguided-u-s-aid-contributed-to-mali-s-coup-mark-moyar.

National Consortium for the Study of Terrorism and Responses to Terrorism. University
of Maryland. Accessed March 6, 2015. http://www.start.umd.edu.

National Counterterrorism Center, "Al-Qa'ida in the Lands of the Islamic Maghreb
(AQIM)," April 23, 2015, http://www.nctc.gov/site/groups/aqim.html.

"Nigeria's 2003 Elections: The Unacknowledged Violence," Human Rights Watch, June
2004, http://www.hrw.org/reports/2004/nigeria0604/nigeria0604.pdf.

"Nigeria Girls' Abduction: Protest March in Abuja." BBC News. April 30, 2014. http://www.bbc.com/news/world-africa-27216931.

"Nigerian Governors' Mafia: How Powerful?" *Daily Independent*, February 19, 2013. http://dailyindependentnig.com/2013/02/nigerian-governors-mafia-how-powerful/.

Nossiter, Adam. " Militant Says He is Behind Attack in Niger." The New York Times. May 14, 2013. http://www.nytimes.com/2013/05/25/world/africa/militant-says-he-is-behind-fatal-niger-attack.html?ref=world&_r=1.

———. "Qaddafi's Weapons, Taken by Old Allies, Reinvigorate an Insurgent Army in Mali." The New York Times. February 5, 2012. http://www.nytimes.com/2012/02/06/world/africa/tuaregs-use-qaddafis-arms-for-rebellion-in-mali.html?_r=0.

Nye, Joseph S. 1990. "Soft Power." *Foreign Policy* 80, (Autumn 1990): 153–171. http://faculty.maxwell.syr.edu/rdenever/PPA-730-27/Nye%201990.pdf.

Oris, Diego Guerrero and Nahuel Arenas-García. "AQIM & Mauritania: Local Paradoxes, Regional Dynamics and Global Challenges." Instituto de Estudios sobre Conflcitos y Accion Humantaria. February 7, 2012. http://www.iecah.org/web/images/stories/doc_12_2012.pdf.

Østebø, Terje. "Islamic Militancy in Africa." African Center for Strategic Studies. November 2012. http://africacenter.org/wp-content/uploads/2012/11/AfricaBriefFinal_23.pdf.

O'Toole, Megan. "U.S. Ramps Up 'Terrorism' Fight in Mauritania." Al Jazeera. July 14, 2014. http://www.aljazeera.com/news/middleeast/2014/07/us-ramps-up-terrorism-fight-mauritania-20147148214271804.html.

Rabasa, Angel, Stacie L. Pettyjohn, Jeremy J. Ghez, and Christopher Boucek. Deradicalizing Islamist Extremist. Santa Monica, CA: RAND Corporation, 2010. http://www.rand.org/content/dam/rand/pubs/monographs/2010/RAND_MG1053.pdf.

Rotberg, Robert I. *When States Fail: Causes and Consequences*. Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 2004.

Roussellier, Jacques. "Terrorism in North Africa and the Sahel: Al-Qa'ida's Franchise or Freelance?" *Middle East Institute*, *Policy Brief,* no. 34 (August 2011): 1-10. https://www.mei.edu/sites/default/files/publications/Roussellier.pdf.

Sageman, Marc. "Fighting the Right War." Paper presented at the National Defense University 2006 Joint Operations Symposium, Washington, D.C., March 2006. http://www.artisresearch.com/articles/Sageman_Fighting_the_Right_War.pdf.

"Saharan States to Open Joint Military Headquarters," *BBC News*, April 21, 2010. http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/africa/8633851.stm.

"Sahel: Backgrounder of the Sahel, West Africa's Poorest Region," Integrated Regional Information Networks, June 2, 2008. http://www.irinnews.org/report/78514/sahel-backgrounder-on-the-sahel-west-africa-s-poorest-region.

Sandole, Dennis J.D. "The 'New' Terrorism: Causes, Conditions and Conflict Resolution." *Vienna Journal in Peace Research*, no.121 (December 2004): 43-56.

Schanzer, Johnathan. "Algeria's GSPC and America's 'War on Terror.'" The Washington Institute. October 2, 2002. http://www.washingtoninstitute.org/policy-analysis/view/algerias-gspc-and-americas-war-on-terror.

Schmidle, Nicholas. "The Saharan Conundrum." *The New York Times*. February 13, 2009. http://www.nytimes.com/2009/02/15/magazine/15Africa-t.html?pagewanted=5&_r=2.

Schultz, Richard H. "Global Insurgency Strategy and the Salafi Jihad Movement." INSS Occasional Paper 6, United States Air Force Academy, 2008.

Schwartz, Matthew, Liat Shetret, and Alistair Millar**.** "Rethinking International Counterterrorism Assistance to the Greater Horn of Africa: Toward a Regional Risk Reduction Strategy." *Perspectives on Terrorism* 7, no. 6 (December 2013): 100-112. http://globalcenter.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/12/314-2107-2-PB.pdf.

Serafino, Nina M. *Security Assistance Reform: "Section 1206" Background and Issues for Congress* (CRS Report No. RS22855). Washington, D.C: Congressional research Service, 2014. http://fas.org:8080/sgp/crs/natsec/RS22855.pdf.

———. *Global Security Contingency Fund (GSCF): Summary and Issue Overview* (CRS Report No. R42641). Washington, DC: Congressional Research Service, 2014. https://www.fas.org/sgp/crs/row/R42641.pdf.

Sheehan, Michael A. and Geoff D. Porter, "The Future Role of U.S. Counterterrorism Operations in Africa," *CTC Sentinel* 7, no.2. (February 2014): 1-4.

Shurkin, Michael. "France Gets Tougher on Terrorism." *World Report*. July 29, 2014. http://www.usnews.com/opinion/blogs/world-report/2014/07/29/the-us-should-cheer-frances-new-counterterroism-plan-in-africa.

Simonelli, Corina, Michael Jensen, Alejandro Castro-Reina, Amy Pate, Scott Menner and Erin Miller. "Background Report: Boko Haram Recent Attacks." National Consortium for the Study of Terrorism and Responses to Terrorism. May 2014. https://www.start.umd.edu/pubs/STARTBackgroundReport_BokoHaramRecentAttacks_May2014_0.pdf.

Stockholm International Peace Research Institute. "SIPRI Military Expenditure Database 1988-2014." Swedish Parliament. Accessed September 6, 2014. http://www.sipri.org.

Swedberg, Jeffrey and Steve Smith. "Trans-Sahara Counterterrorism Partnership Evaluative Study." Dexis Consulting Group (April 2014): 1-33.

Tarnoff, Curt and Alex Tiersky. *State, Foreign Operations Appropriations: A Guide to Component Accounts* (CRS Report No. R40482). Washington, D.C: Congressional Research Service, 2015. https://www.fas.org/sgp/crs/row/R40482.pdf.

Taspinar, Ömer. "Fighting Radicalism, not 'Terrorism': Root Causes of an International Actor Redefined," *SAIS Review* vol. XXIX, no.2 (Summer-Fall 2009): 75-86. http://www.brookings.edu/~/media/research/files/articles/2009/9/summer%20fall%20radicalism%20taspinar/summer_fall_radicalism_taspinar.pdf.

Terrorism Research and Analysis Consortium, "Joint Trask Force (JTF) Nigeria," June 1, 2015, http://www.trackingterrorism.org/group/joint-task-force-jtf-nigeria.

———. "Signers in Blood Battalion," June 20, 2015, http://www.trackingterrorism.org/group/signers-blood-battalion.

Think Security Africa, "Factsheet on the Movement for Unity and Jihad in West Africa," August 2012, http://thinksecurityafrica.org/wordpress/wp-content/uploads/MUJAO.pdf.

Thurston, Alex. "Amnesty for Boko Haram: Lessons from the Past." African Futures. May 20, 2013. http://forums.ssrc.org/african-futures/2013/05/20/amnesty-for-boko-haram-lessons-from-the-past/.

———. "AQIM, Kidnapping, and Murder: A Brief History." The Christian Science Monitor. January 19, 2011. http://www.csmonitor.com/World/Africa/Africa-Monitor/2011/0119/AQIM-kidnapping-and-murder-a-brief-history.

Tilly, Charles. "War Making and State Making as Organized Crime." In *Bringing the State Back In*, edited by Peter Evans, Dietrich Rueschemeyer, and Theda Skocpol, 169-187. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985.

"Training Camps in Mauritania Train Foreign Recruits for ISIS, al-Qaeda." *Homeland Security News Wire*, March 26, 2015. http://www.homelandsecuritynewswire.com/dr20150326-training-camps-in-mauritania-train-foreign-recruits-for-isis-alqaeda.

Transparency International, "Corruption Perceptions Index 2013," November 5, 2014, http://issuu.com/transparencyinternational/docs/cpi2013_brochure_single_pages?e=2496456/5813913.

"Troops Stage Coup in Mauritania." BBC News. August 6, 2008. http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/africa/7544834.stm.

Ulph, Stephen. "Algerian GSPC Launch Attack in Mauritania." *Terrorism Focus* 2, no.11 (June 2005). http://www.jamestown.org/programs/tm/single/?tx_ttnews%5Btt_news%5D=503&tx_ttnews%5BbackPid%5D=238&no_cache=1#.VaFtCHinARk.

United Nations, "Human Development Index," August 28, 2014, http://hdr.undp.org/en/content/human-development-index-hdi.

———. "Understanding the Causes of Violent Extremism in West Africa," May 10, 2103, http://www.irinnews.org/report/98012/understanding-the-causes-of-violent-extremism-in-west-africa.

"UN Extols Mauritania Role in Mali Crisis." Star Africa. February 4, 2015. http://en.starafrica.com/news/un-extols-mauritania-role-in-mali-crisis.html.

United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, "Sahel: A Call of Humanitarian Aid," February 20, 2015, https://docs.unocha.org/sites/dms/ROWCA/Coordination/SRP/Sahel_SRP_2015.pdf.

United States Africa Command, "Trans Sahara Counterterrorism Partnership Program Overview," June 01, 2015, www.africom.mil/Doc/7432.

United States Agency for International Development, "Nigeria," July 8, 2015, 2015, http://www.usaid.gov/political-transition-initiatives/where-we-work/nigeria.

———. "USAID/West Africa Peace Through Development (PDEV): Program Assessment Report," March 2011, http://pdf.usaid.gov/pdf_docs/PDACR829.pdf.

United States Department of Defense. *Fiscal Year (FY) 2015 DOD Overseas Contingency Operations (OCO) Budget Amendment Update*. Washington, D.C: Government Printing Office, 2014. http://comptroller.defense.gov/Portals/45/Documents/defbudget/fy2015/amendment/FY15_OCO_Budget_Amendment_Update.pdf.

United States House of Representatives Committee on Homeland Security Subcommittee on Counterterrorism and Intelligence. *Boko Haram: Emerging Threat to the U.S. Homeland.* Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 2011. http://homeland.house.gov/sites/homeland.house.gov/files/Boko%20Haram-%20Emerging%20Threat%20to%20the%20US%20Homeland.pdf.

United States Department of State. "Anti-Money Laundering/Counter Terrorist Financing," May 10, 2015. http://www.state.gov/j/inl/c/crime/c44634.htm.

———. "Background Briefing on Designation of Boko Haram and Ansaru as Foreign Terrorist Organizations and as Specially Designated Global Terrorists," November 13, 2013, http://www.state.gov/r/pa/prs/ps/2013/11/217532.htm.

———. "Boko Haram and U.S. Counterterrorism Assistance to Nigeria," May 14, 2014, http://www.state.gov/r/pa/prs/ps/2014/05/226072.htm.

———. *Congressional Budget Justification: Department of State, Foreign Operations and Related Programs.* Washington, D.C: Government Printing Office, 2015. http://www.state.gov/documents/organization/236395.pdf.

———. *Congressional Budget Justification, Volume 2: Foreign Operations*. Washington, D.C: Government Printing Office, 2014. http://www.state.gov/documents/organization/208290.pdf.

———. "Country Reports: Africa Overview," June 11, 2014, http://www.state.gov/j/ct/rls/crt/2012/209979.htm.

———. "Country Reports on Terrorism 2013 Africa Overview," July 7, 2015, http://www.state.gov/j/ct/rls/crt/2013/224820.htm.

———. "Country Reports on Terrorism 2011: Mauritania," July 12, 2015, http://www.refworld.org/docid/4e52481f37.html.

———. "Country Reports on Terrorism 2013: Mauritania," July 17 2015, http://www.refworld.org/docid/536229d52f.html.

———. *Embassies as Command Posts in the Anti-Terror Campaign*. Washington, D.C: Government Printing Office, 2006. http://fas.org/irp/congress/2006_rpt/embassies.pdf.

———. "FY 2012 Program and Budget Guide: Program Overview," May 21, 2015, http://www.state.gov/j/inl/rls/rpt/pbg/fy2012/185676.htm.

———. "International Military Education and Training Account Summary," May 20, 2015, http://www.state.gov/t/pm/ppa/sat/c14562.htm.

———. "Leahy Vetting: Law, Policy, Process," April 15, 2015, http://www.humanrights.gov/wp-content/uploads/2011/10/leahy-vetting-law-policy-and-process.pdf.

———. "Mali," May 20, 2015, http://www.state.gov/documents/organization/160132.pdf.

———. "Pan-Sahel Initiative," June 9, 2014, http://2001-2009.state.gov/s/ct/rls/other/14987.htm.

———. "Programs and Initiatives," May 23, 2015,
http://www.state.gov/j/ct/programs/index.htm#CTF.

———. *Quadrennial Development and Diplomacy Review 2015*. Washington, D.C:
Government Printing Office, 2015.
http://www.state.gov/documents/organization/241430.pdf.

———. *Remarks from Eighth Annual Trans-Sahara Counterterrorism Partnership
Conference.* Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 2013.
http://www.state.gov/p/af/rls/rm/2013/216028.htm.

———. "Terrorist Designation of Boko Haram and Ansaru," November 13, 2013,
http://www.state.gov/r/pa/prs/ps/2013/11/217509.htm.

———. "Terrorist Designations of the Movement for Unity and Jihad in West Africa,
Hamad el Khairy, and Ahmed el Tilemsi," December 7, 2012,
http://www.state.gov/r/pa/prs/ps/2012/12/201660.htm.

———. "Terrorist Screening and Interdiction Programs," May 20, 2015,
http://www.state.gov/j/ct/programs/tip/.

Voice of America, "Acting President Goodluck Jonathan Succeeds Umaru Yar'Adua in
Nigeria," May 5, 2010, http://www.voanews.com/content/acting-president-
goodluck-jonathan-succeeds-umaru-yaradua-in-nigeria-93043309/154392.html.

Warner, Lesley Anne. "America's Fight Against Terror in West Africa—and its
Shortcomings." The National Interest. April 3, 2014.
http://nationalinterest.org/commentary/catch-22-the-sahel-10176.

———. The Trans Sahara Counter Terrorism Partnership: Building Partner Capacity to
Counter Terrorism and Violent Extremism. Alexandria, VA: Center for Naval
Analysis, 2014. http://www.cna.org/sites/default/files/research/CRM-2014-U-
007203-Final.pdf.

Weber, Max. "Politics as Vocation." In *Essential Readings in Comparative Politics*,
edited by Patrick H. O'Neil and Ronald Rogowski, 4th edition, 39-45. New York:
W.W. Norton, 2013.

Weiss, Caleb. "Al Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb Claims 2 Attacks in Mali." The Long
War Journal. June 1, 2015. http://www.longwarjournal.org/archives/2015/06/al-
qaeda-in-the-islamic-maghreb-claims-two-attacks-in-mali.php.

Whitaker, Beth Elise. "Compliance Among Weak States: Africa and the Counter-
Terrorism Regime." *Review of International Studies* 36, no.3 (July 2010): 639–
662. doi:10.1017/S0260210510000641.

Whitehouse, "Fact Sheet: U.S. Efforts to Assist the Nigerian Government in its Fight Against Boko Haram," White House, October 14, 2014, http://www.whitehouse.gov/the-press-office/2014/10/14/fact-sheet-us-efforts-assist-nigerian-government-its-fight-against-boko-haram.

———. *National Security Strategy of the United States 2010*. Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 2010. https://www.whitehouse.gov/sites/default/files/rss_viewer/national_security_strategy.pdf.

Wiktorowicz, Quintan. "Anatomy of the Salafi Movement." *Studies in Conflict & Terrorism* 29, No.3 (August 2006): 207–239. doi:10.1080/10576100500497004.

Willoughby, Karen L. "Boko Haram Trains Child Soldiers." *Christian Examiner*, Januray 28, 2015. http://www.christianexaminer.com/article/boko.haram.trains.child.soldiers/48224.htm.

World Economic Forum. "The Human Capitol Report 2013," 2013, http://reports.weforum.org/human-capital-index-2013/#section=part-2-%25e2%2580%2593-country-profiles.

World Health Organization. "Global Health Observatory Data Repository," August 10, 2014, http://apps.who.int/gho/data/node.country.

———. "United Nations Development Report 2013," April 20, 2015, http://www.who.int/countryfocus/cooperation_strategy/ccsbrief_mrt_en.pdf.

Zenn, Jacob. "A Biography of Boko Haram and the Bay`a to al-Baghdadi," *CTC Sentinel* 8, no. 3 (March 2015): 17-21. https://www.ctc.usma.edu/v2/wp-content/uploads/2015/03/CTCSentinel-Vol8Issue322.pdf.

———. "Ansaru: A Profile of Nigeria's Newest Jihadist Movement." *Terrorism Monitor* 11, no. 1 (January 2013): 7-9. http://www.jamestown.org/uploads/media/TM_011_Issue01_01.pdf.

———. "Leadership Analysis of Boko Haram and Ansaru in Nigeria," *CTC Sentinel* 7, no.2 (February 2014): 23-29. https://www.ctc.usma.edu/posts/leadership-analysis-of-boko-haram-and-ansaru-in-nigeria.

———. "Nigerian Al-Qaedaism." Hudson Institute. March 11, 2014. http://www.hudson.org/research/10172-nigerian-al-qaedaism-.

———. "Nigeria's Civilian Joint Task Force." Council on Foreign Relations. July 18, 2013. http://blogs.cfr.org/campbell/2013/07/18/nigerias-civilian-joint-task-force/.

THIS PAGE INTENTIONALLY LEFT BLANK

INITIAL DISTRIBUTION LIST

1.   Defense Technical Information Center
        Ft. Belvoir, Virginia

2.   Dudley Knox Library
        Naval Postgraduate School
        Monterey, California