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**INSECURITY AND INSTABILITY IN AFRICA:
ASSESSING THE EFFECTIVENESS OF REGIONAL
SECURITY COOPERATION IN THE SAHEL**

by

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September 2018

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EFFECTIVENESS OF REGIONAL SECURITY COOPERATION IN THE
SAHEL**

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ABSTRACT

Following the increase of transnational threats in the Sahel and even further in the Maghreb, the regional security cooperation's ability to tackle these threats and their root causes is predicated on certain conditions. These basic conditions include regional countries' shared perception of the threats, development of a comprehensive geographic Sahel–Maghreb approach with the support of external partners and the international community, and proper balance between security, development, and governance. The transnational nature of threats and their interconnections characterize these unprecedented security challenges. Lessons learned from successful and failed attempts at regional security cooperation as well as the U.S.-led initiatives and an analysis of the United States, European Union, and African Union strategy for the Sahel reveal significant findings, ranging from the global awareness of the deteriorating security environment and the need for collective action, to the need to overcome regional rivalries and adopt a less military-centric approach. The overall end state remains the framing of a suitable and workable regional cooperation beyond security that contributes to regional and global security and stability and prosperity in both the Sahel and the Maghreb.

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

I.	INTRODUCTION.....	1
A.	SIGNIFICANCE OF THE RESEARCH QUESTION.....	1
B.	LITERATURE REVIEW	3
	1. Trends in the Literature.....	4
	2. Tentative Definitions of Concepts Related to Regional Security Cooperation	9
	3. Regional Security Cooperation and Regionalism	12
	4. Securitization Theory and Regional Security Cooperation	14
	5. Theoretical Paradigms and Regional Security Cooperation	15
C.	POTENTIAL EXPLANATIONS AND HYPOTHESES	18
D.	RESEARCH DESIGN	19
E.	THESIS OVERVIEW	19
II.	CHARACTERISTICS OF INSECURITY AND INSTABILITY IN THE SAHEL REGION	21
A.	GEOGRAPHY OF THE THREATS	21
	1. Sheer Size of the Sahel.....	22
	2. Climatic Conditions	26
	3. Geographical Features.....	27
	4. Ungoverned Spaces	27
B.	HISTORIC CONTEXT OF INSECURITY AND INSTABILITY	29
	1. Pre-colonial Period (5th through 15th Centuries)	29
	2. Colonial Period (16th through 19th Centuries).....	37
	3. Post-colonial Period (1960 to the Present Day)	39
C.	CURRENT SECURITY THREATS IN THE SAHEL	41
	1. Transnational Terrorism.....	42
	2. Transnational Smuggling	47
	3. Secessionist Movements.....	52
III.	ATTEMPTS AT REGIONAL SECURITY COOPERATION IN THE SAHEL	57
A.	FACTORS THAT FOSTER REGIONAL SECURITY COOPERATION	57
B.	FAILED ATTEMPTS AT REGIONAL COOPERATION.....	59
	1. CEMOC	59
	2. UFL.....	61

C.	SUCCESSFUL ATTEMPTS AT REGIONAL COOPERATION.....	63
1.	AMISOM	63
2.	MNJTF.....	65
3.	Joint Force G5 Sahel.....	68
D.	INITIATIVES BY THE UNITED STATES	72
1.	U.S. PSI	72
2.	U.S. TSCTP.....	74
E.	CHALLENGES TO COOPERATION.....	75
1.	Regional Rivalries	76
2.	Regional Competition	77
3.	Mutual Mistrust	78
F.	CONCLUSION	79
IV.	DIFFERENT PATHS FOR REGIONAL COOPERATION IN THE SAHEL	81
A.	U.S. STRATEGY FOR SECURITY AND DEVELOPMENT IN THE	81
1.	Predominance of Military Solutions.....	83
2.	Suspicion about U.S. Commitment to Regional Security Cooperation	87
3.	Drivers of Threats in the Maghreb.....	88
B.	EU STRATEGY FOR SECURITY AND DEVELOPMENT IN THE SAHEL.....	89
C.	THE AFRICAN UNION STRATEGY FOR SECURITY AND DEVELOPMENT IN THE SAHEL.....	94
D.	CONCLUSION	98
V.	RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONCLUSION.....	101
A.	FINDINGS AND LESSONS LEARNED.....	102
1.	Adequate Balance between Security, Development, and Governance.....	102
2.	Importance of the Maghreb	103
3.	Shared Perception of Threats	105
B.	RECOMMENDATIONS.....	106
C.	CONCLUSION	107
	LIST OF REFERENCES	109
	INITIAL DISTRIBUTION LIST	131

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 1.	The Sahel region.	24
Figure 2.	The trans-Saharan routes.....	31
Figure 3.	Linkages between criminality and terrorism.....	47

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LIST OF TABLES

Table 1.	EU assistance to the Sahel and Maghreb	93
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LIST OF ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

ACSR	African Center for the Study and Research on Terrorism
AfDB	African Development Bank
AMISOM	African Union Mission in Somalia
APSA	African Peace and Security Architecture
AQIM	Al Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb
ASEAN	Association of Southeast Asian nations
AU	African Union
AU PSC	African Union Peace and Security Council
CEMOC	Joint Operational Staff Committee
CEN-SAD	Community of Sahel-Saharan States
CFE	conventional armed forces in Europe
CILSS	Interstate Committee for Drought Control in the Sahel
CISSA	Committee of Intelligence and Security Services of Africa
CSDP	common security and defense policy
DDR	disarmament, demobilization, and socio-economic reintegration
DOD	Department of Defense
DOS	Department of State
ECCAS	Economic Community of Central African States
ECOWAS	Economic West African States
EEAS	European External Action Service
EU	European Union
EUCAP Sahel-Mali	EU Capacity Building Mission in Mali
EUCAP Sahel-Niger	EU Capacity Building Mission in Niger
USEUCOM	United States European Command
EUETFS	Emergency Trust Fund for Stability
EUTM	European Training Mission in Mali
FLAM	African Liberation Forces in Mauritania
FLM	Liberation Front of Macina
FROLINAT	National Liberation Front of Chad

G5 Sahel	Group of five Sahel Countries
GSPC	Salafist Group for Preaching and Combat
IGAD	Intergovernmental Authority for Development
JNIM	Jamaat Nusrat Al-Islam Wal-Muslimin (Group of Supporters of Islam and Muslims)
MFDC	Movement of the Democratic Forces of Casamance
MINUSMA	United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali
MISAHEL	African Union Mission for Mali and the Sahel
MNJTF	Multinational Joint Task Force
MUJWA	Movement for Unity and Jihad in West Africa
NATO	North Atlantic Treaty
NMLA	National Movement for the Liberation of Azawad
OAS	Organization of American States
OSCE	Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe
PCRD	post-conflict reconstruction and development
PSI	Pan Sahel Initiative
RAP	regional action plan
REC	regional economic communities
ReCAAP	Regional Cooperation Agreement on Combating Piracy and Armed Robbery Ships in Asia
SCAD	civic service for development action
SIG	Security and Governance Initiative
SNA	Somali National Army
SSR	security sector reform
TSCTI	Trans-Saharan Counter-Terrorism Initiative
UFL	Fusion and Liaison Unit
UN	United Nations
UNODC	United Nations Office for Drugs and Crime
UNSC	Security United Nations Security Council United States
USAFRICOM	United States Africa Command
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
USTSCTP	United States Trans-Saharan Counter Terrorism Partnership

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I. INTRODUCTION

The progressive deterioration of the security situation in the Sahel since the mid-1990s has made the region one of the most dangerous in Africa. The volume and intensity of transnational criminal activities such as terrorism; drugs, weapons, and human trafficking; and insurgencies have created a dangerous and unpredictable security environment. The vast, ungoverned desert regions in Northern and Eastern Mauritania, Northern Mali, Northern and Eastern Niger, Northern Chad, and Southern Libya have become a sanctuary for these criminal groups, which constitute a real and growing threat for the weak Sahel states. Mali already paid the price in 2012, when a coalition of terrorist groups, drug smugglers, and rebel groups seized and held three administrative regions in Mali's north for ten months, proclaiming the area as the Republic of Azawad.¹ The 2012 crisis marked the culmination of recurring rebellions since 1960. It was the first time, however, that an armed coalition—led by the National Movement for the Liberation of Azawad (NMLA) and backed by Al Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM), the Movement for Unity and Jihad in West Africa (MUJWA), and drug smugglers—succeeded in forcing the retreat of the Malian defense and security forces toward the southern regions.

It is clear that the terrorist- and criminal-affected Sahel states—Burkina Faso, Chad, Mali, Mauritania, Niger, Nigeria, and Somalia—cannot individually address the prevailing security threats, which are regional in nature. This thesis examines how countries in the region have combined their efforts—and how they might further cooperate—in order to tackle collectively these transnational threats by shaping and enforcing a new security environment for the region's overall security and stability.

A. SIGNIFICANCE OF THE RESEARCH QUESTION

Historically, states have cooperated regionally to address and overcome security challenges. In 1947, Britain advocated for an arrangement for regional military cooperation

¹ Azawad—a region in the northern part of the Republic of Mali claimed, without any historical basis, by some Tuareg tribes aiming for the creation of an independent state under the name of Azawad.

in Western Europe,² which paved the way for the creation of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) to face the Soviet threat. While facing the post–Cold War global crises, including civil wars in Liberia and Sierra Leone in Africa, East Timor in Asia, the former Yugoslavia, Tajikistan, and Georgia in Europe, many states have attempted various experiments to regionalize peace and security.³ In 2009, countries in the Gulf of Aden and Arabian Sea, western Indian Ocean, and Red Sea including Comoros, Djibouti, Egypt, Eritrea, Ethiopia, France, Jordan, Kenya, Madagascar, Maldives, Mauritius, Mozambique, Oman, Saudi Arabia, Seychelles, Somalia, South Africa, Sudan, the United Arab Emirates, Tanzania, and Yemen responded collectively to a growing regional piracy problem.⁴ Through regional centers, these countries exchange information, plan and conduct joint patrols, and build navies’ capacity for coastal states.⁵ They have also adopted consensual standard procedures in repressing and suppressing piracy in the western Indian Ocean as well as the Gulf of Aden through regional cooperation.⁶ These regional anti-piracy centers operate similarly to the Regional Cooperation Agreement on Combating Piracy and Armed Robbery Ships in Asia (ReCAAP).⁷ Therefore, states, perceiving benefits in cooperating regionally in the security domain, promoted and have been using regional security cooperation in addressing their regional security concerns.

Recently, the East African States regional security cooperation through the African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM) focused on Al Shaabab in Somalia and the newly born G5 Sahel—Burkina Faso, Chad, Mali, Mauritania, and Niger—targeting terrorism in the region are a few examples of regional security cooperation set up to deal with threats in Africa. Advocates for regional security cooperation assume that regional security

² Geir Lundestad, “Empire by Invitation? The United States and Western Europe, 1945–1952,” *Journal of Peace Research* 23, no. 3 (September 1986): 269, <https://doi.org/10.1177/002234338602300305>.

³ Louise Fawcett, “Exploring Regional Domains: A Comparative History of Regionalism,” *International Affairs* 80, no 3 (May 2004): 434, <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1468-2346.2004.00391.x>.

⁴ Freedom Onuoha, “Sea Piracy and Maritime Security in the Horn of Africa: The Somali Coast and Gulf of Aden in Perspective,” *African Security Review* 18, no 3 (September 2009): 41–42, DOI: 10.1080/10246029.2009.9627540.

⁵ Onuoha, “Sea Piracy and Maritime Security in the Horn of Africa.”

⁶ Onuoha.

⁷ Onuoha.

cooperation promotes states' collective effort, or likely influences them to overcome traditional obstacles and sources of rivalry that push states to adopt counterproductive and detrimental policies to regional and collective security.

This thesis seeks to define the characteristics of regional security cooperation that determine success or failure. Based on these characteristics, the research provides perspectives on regional security cooperation that offer potential options to states in order to better achieve their objective in a collective effort. The thesis further provides policy makers, from the Sahel states in particular, and the United Nations (UN), the African Union (AU), the European Union (EU), the Economic West African States (ECOWAS), and the Maghreb in general, insights about indispensable factors necessary for successful regional security cooperation in the Sahel. As the region faces growing transnational security challenges that threaten regional and global security and stability, regional security cooperation is potentially an effective response. As part of the debate, the study also provides the typology of regional security cooperation related to its effectiveness.

B. LITERATURE REVIEW

Regional security cooperation has long been an evolving concept, but it has gained more urgency with today's rising security concerns. The complexity and the diversity of current regional and global security challenges that transcend national borders better explain this constant evolution of the regional security concept praised by states as the way to build a secure and stable collective environment. In 2016, at the first plenary session of the seventh Xiangshan forum in China on "enhance[ing] security dialogue and cooperation and establish[ing] a new type of international relations," the Vice Foreign Minister of China, Liu Zhenmin, shared his thoughts; specifically, he commended the topic of "working together to improve regional security architecture and address common challenges," as highly relevant for regional countries and a reflection of a "common need to deal with security challenges together."⁸ This perspective echoes Muthiah Alagappa's

⁸ Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the People's Republic of China, "Work Together to Improve Regional Security Architecture and Address Common Challenges," accessed September 3, 2018, https://www.fmprc.gov.cn/mfa_eng/wjdt_665385/zyjh_665391/t1405158.shtml.

point about regionalism being cooperation among regional states to enhance their national well-being for mutual gain.⁹ To explore this theme more fully, this section analyzes trends in the concept of regional security cooperation through different scholars' perspectives. As such, this literature review has four sections: trends in the literature, tentative definitions of regional security cooperation concepts, regional security cooperation and regionalism, securitization theory and regional security cooperation, and theoretical paradigms and regional security cooperation.

1. Trends in the Literature

Throughout the literature, three main trends emerge. The first group touts the plus side of regional cooperation. The second group identifies some of the balancing necessary to make regional cooperation work. Lastly, some thought leaders remain critical of regional cooperation and emphasize the negative side.

Regional security cooperation is beneficial for states because it helps reduce the prospect of wars and security challenges as well as promotes collective security efforts. Barry Buzan and Ole Waever indicate that the invention of the concept of the regional security complex aimed to support regional-level initiatives as the appropriate way for performing large practical security analysis.¹⁰ In other words, the regional security dynamic remains “the interplay between global powers and close security interdependence.”¹¹ Seth G. Jones, citing Alexander Wendt, argues for the benefits of regional security cooperation and notes the example of European states that “have internalized common norms and values to such a degree that the security of others is not only viewed as related to their own, but ‘as literally being their own.’”¹² As a result, the current concept of security is viewed as a regional matter.¹³ Fred Chernoff notes that

⁹ Muthiah Alagappa, “Regionalism and Conflict Management: A Framework for Analysis,” *Review of International Studies* 21, no. 4 (1995): 363. <http://www.jstor.org.libproxy.nps.edu/stable/20097422>.

¹⁰ Barry Buzan and Ole Waever, *Regions and Powers: The Structure of International Security* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 43, <https://scholar.google.com/>.

¹¹ Buzan and Waever, *Regions and Powers: The Structure of International Security*, 43.

¹² Seth G. Jones, *The Rise of European Security Cooperation* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 53, <https://scholar.google.com/>.

¹³ Jones, *The Rise of European Security Cooperation*, 53.

promoting cooperation through regimes minimizes its dangers and costs.¹⁴ Referring to Robert Keohane, Chernoff also argues the probability of cooperation as a continuous established regime whenever countries share a community of interests.¹⁵ In the same way, Clive Archer qualifies the advantages of regional cooperation as “a collective defense” with the objectives “to defend members against an identified enemy or threat,” including planning “between the members on how such threats might be met by a collective response.”¹⁶ Therefore, regional security cooperation contributes to undermine interstate wars and drive states toward a collective effort in addressing security challenges.

Alyson Bailes and Andrew Cottey argue that regional security cooperation offers fundamental conditions for interaction, communication, and dialogue among members handled at high-level meetings that include heads of state and other senior civil and military officials.¹⁷ Such an environment definitely helps foster mutual confidence, prevent miscommunication and misperception, and build consensus around shared interests and identity.¹⁸ Bailes and Cottey further justify the benefits as a system aiming to ensure a collective response to aggression and threats to peace with the prevention or containment of wars.¹⁹ They also estimate that cooperation shapes states behavior positively and minimizes their tendency to the use of force and ensures their abiding by existing international rules related to the respect of borders, use of certain types of weapons, and conduct of provocative actions such as military movements.²⁰ Lastly, referring to security community, Bailes and Cottey argue that Karl Deutsch views the reassurance benefits of cooperation as an environment free of members’ interstate wars where disputes are settled

¹⁴ Holger Mölder, “The Security Dilemma in the Baltic Sea Region and Its Impact on the Regional Security and Defense Cooperation” (PhD diss., Naval Postgraduate School, 1998), 13, <https://calhoun.nps.edu/bitstream/handle/10945/26755/securitydilemmai00mold.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y>.

¹⁵ Mölder, 13.

¹⁶ Mölder, 14.

¹⁷ Alyson J. K. Bailes and Andrew Cottey, “4. Regional Security Cooperation in the Early 21st Century,” *SIPRI* (1992), 200, 202, <https://www.sipri.org/sites/default/files/YB06ch04.pdf>.

¹⁸ Bailes and Cottey, 202.

¹⁹ Bailes and Cottey, 202.

²⁰ Bailes and Cottey.

peacefully in some other way.²¹ In theory, these scholarly views carry perspectives that advocate the relevancy and the efficacy of regional security cooperation to overcome security issues in a collective way.

Nevertheless, these perspectives tend to minimize challenges that obstruct the implementation of such an ideal (if not idealized) regional harmony. For example, Olli J. Teirilä points out that the “nexus of terrorism and organized crime [have] posed wide ranging challenges to international cooperation,” while comparing the security situation in the Andean and the Sahel regions.²² Teirilä also argues that analysis of relations “between insurgency, terrorism, and organized crime” in these two regions shares various similarities, including security threats and possible strategic weaknesses in the groups involved.²³ The overlapping of multiple security actors worsens security and states’ cooperation, raising the question of ownership of the issues.²⁴ G. Shabbir Cheema emphasizes that the success of a cooperation resides in the connection between the organizations’ composition and the problem these organizations confront,²⁵ meaning that a lack of balance challenges the effectiveness of regional security cooperation.

Additionally, effective regional security cooperation requires states to perceive threats similarly. Raino Vayrynen argues that a workable regional security cooperation primarily requires a shared perception of challenges coupled with the willingness of states to take collective action.²⁶ Achieving such effective cooperation goes along with the general desire to promote peaceful intra-regional relations and to ensure a sustainable

²¹ Bailes and Cottey, 201.

²² Olli J. Teirilä, “The Challenges to Cooperation Posed by the Nexus of Terrorism and Organized Crime: Comparing the Situations between the Andean and the Sahel Regions,” *Studies in Conflict and Terrorism* 37, no. 1 (2014), 18, <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/1057610X.2014.853605>.

²³ Teirilä, 36.

²⁴ Teirilä.

²⁵ G. Shabbir Cheema, Christopher A. McNally, and Vesselin Popovski, eds. *Cross-border Governance in Asia: Regional Issues and Mechanisms* (Tokyo: United Nations University Press, 2011), 108, doi:10.1107/s0108768107031758/bs5044sup1.cif.

²⁶ Raino Vayrynen, “Collective Violence in a Discontinuous World: Regional Realities and Global Fallacies,” *International Social Science Journal* 38, no. 4 (1986): 522, doi:10.1107/s0108768107031758/bs5044sup1.cif.

regional autonomy.²⁷ For a regional cooperation to work, according to Buzan and Waever, states must realize that their national securities are almost inseparable, because their concerns on security issues are fundamentally and collectively interconnected.²⁸ Michael Barnett mitigates his argument arguing, for example, the high dependency of the prospect of regional security cooperation in the Middle East “on whether the region establishes the conditions for strategic stability and mutual assurance,” before acknowledging that “the present predilection for competitive security arrangements and the continuing drama of domestic conflict undermines the promise of regional security cooperation.”²⁹ In sum, various challenges make the effectiveness of regional security cooperation less obvious in achieving their intended outcomes.

Some thought leaders remain more pessimistic about the effectiveness of regional security cooperation. Louise Fawcett, for instance, identifies capacity, sovereignty, and hegemony as three issues contributing to her pessimism on contemporary regionalism.³⁰ She argues that states’ limited capacity and resources in less industrialized countries constrain their action, “whether in the military, economic, diplomatic, or institutional sphere.”³¹ Charter constraints attach “a high priority to sovereignty and non-interference” principles and increase such limitations.³² She then emphasizes that the persistence of suspicion, rivalry, and competition further reduces the prospects for cooperation.³³ In addition, Fawcett remarks that although state willingness to cooperate corresponds to their capacity, sovereignty plays a central role and imposes constraints.³⁴ Lastly, she supports that sovereignty is still important in state matters, and states’ attachment to sovereignty permanently governs their commitment to any particular cooperative project in fragile

²⁷ Vayrynen, 522.

²⁸ Buzan and Waever, “Regions and Powers: The Structure of International Security,” 43.

²⁹ Michael N. Barnett, “Regional Security after the Gulf War,” *Political Science Quarterly* 111, no. 4 (1996): 597–598, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/pdf/2152086.pdf>.

³⁰ Fawcett, “Exploring Regional Domains: A Comparative History of Regionalism,” 442.

³¹ Fawcett, “Exploring Regional Domains: A Comparative History of Regionalism,” 443.

³² Fawcett.

³³ Fawcett.

³⁴ Fawcett.

states and new sovereign states that are sensitive to such encroachment.³⁵ Therefore, the pessimism shared by scholars emanates from the challenges related to both relations between states and internal matters.

Similarly, Amitav Acharya regrets that military security cooperation remains the “least pronounced and effective” realm of regionalism in developing nations even amid the emergence of “many security-oriented regional organizations and institutions.”³⁶ Michael Handel supports this point and argues that the choice of weak states to align collectively increases their defense costs but inversely decreases their efficiency and the reliability of their own security.³⁷ This argument makes coordination between military and politics in the weak states’ environment particularly difficult because of “technical, logistical, and doctrinal reasons ... hierarchies of interests, conflicting priorities and competition for leadership and influence within the alliance.”³⁸ Therefore, these scholars despair about the likelihood of achieving regional security cooperation.

Adding to that pessimism on cooperation, Holger Mölder adopts Robert Jervis’s realist perspective through his well-known concept of the security dilemma, which characterizes the international system as anarchic and based on self-help where states perceive the increase in one state’s security as a decrease in others’ security.³⁹ He argues that this anarchic nature of international politics creates a competitive environment made of fear, where rival powers can threaten another state’s sovereignty, creating the emergence basis of a security dilemma.⁴⁰ For example, a historical example supporting Jervis’s arguments is Thucydides’s classical concept of the causes of war asserting that it was inevitable as the growth of Athenian power created fear in Sparta, thus acknowledging the

³⁵ Fawcett, 444.

³⁶ Amitav Acharya, “Regional Military-Security Cooperation in the Third World: A Conceptual Analysis of the Relevance and Limitations of ASEAN (Association of Southeast Asian Nations),” *Journal of Peace Research* 29, no. 1 (1992): 7, doi:10.1107/s0108768107031758/bs5044sup1.cif.

³⁷ Michael Handel, *Weak States in the International System* (London: Frank Cass, 1981), 154–156, doi:10.1107/s0108768107031758/bs5044sup1.cif.

³⁸ Handel, *Weak States in the International System*, 154–156.

³⁹ Robert Jervis, *Cooperation under the Security Dilemma*, *World Politics* 30, no. 2 (1978): 186.

⁴⁰ Jervis, 186.

existence of a security dilemma in Ancient Greece.⁴¹ Citing Michael Howard, Mölder remarks that, “the causes of war remain rooted, as much as they were in the pre-industrial age, in perceptions by statesmen of the growth of hostile power and the fears of restriction, if not the extinction, of their own,”⁴² The prospect of a security dilemma, according to these scholars, makes regional security cooperation almost impossible.

2. Tentative Definitions of Concepts Related to Regional Security Cooperation

With these contrasting academic opinions in mind, it is valuable to consider the differing definitions of concepts related to regional security cooperation that contribute to the debate. Bailes and Cottey consider alliances, collective security, security regimes, and security communities as at “least four models of regional security cooperation” that carry relevant “prima for the 21st century.”⁴³ These scholars define alliances as a form of international cooperation, including both military defense and attack, in addressing a common external, as well as, internal threat or opponent.⁴⁴ Cooperation is used “as a means to an end rather than a good in itself, and an alliance’s membership necessarily excludes the enemy.”⁴⁵ Supporting the positive side of cooperation, alliance contributes to minimize the probability of interstate wars, promotes confidence building, and prevents disputes, and promotes their peaceful settlement, which can trigger non-security cooperation.⁴⁶ Successful examples of such alliances are the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) and NATO.⁴⁷ Paul M. Evans indicates that the Asia-Pacific countries have adapted and responded to the uncertainty of the post-Cold War environment through strengthening the capabilities of national military and “outpouring interest in new mechanisms for regional cooperation on security matters ... including a spectrum of ideas”

⁴¹ Mölder, “The Security Dilemma in the Baltic Sea Region and its Impact on the Regional Security and Defense Cooperation,” 9.

⁴² Mölder, 9.

⁴³ Bailes and Cottey, “Regional Security Cooperation in The Early 21st Century,” 199.

⁴⁴ Bailes and Cottey, 199.

⁴⁵ Bailes and Cottey, 199.

⁴⁶ Bailes and Cottey, 199, 200.

⁴⁷ Bailes and Cottey, 200.

in order to build a security cooperation and a coordinated consensus.⁴⁸ Several new basic security arrangements have emerged through a “collective security or concert system” that exemplify this cooperation. Among them are NATO for Asia as “a new alliance of the like-minded,” the cooperation of the United States-Japan-South Korea in enhancing prevailing alliance partnerships through multilateral communication, and Cambodia’s efforts to solve specific regional problems of conflict through “ad hoc multinational cooperation.”⁴⁹ Therefore, the concept of regional security cooperation carries diverse perspectives that intensify arguments among scholars.

The concept of collective security, on the other hand, is relatively new. Bailes and Cottey argue that “the concept emerged in the twentieth century in response to the ambivalent effects of older-style balance-of-power politics and alliances.”⁵⁰ The UN falls within the framework of the concept as a system aiming to prevent or contain war by assuring a collective response to aggression and threats to peace.⁵¹ According to Bailes and Cottey, the success of such a system requires the inclusion of all regional or world states and directs inward attention to their actions.⁵² Typical examples are the League of Nations and the UN from a global perspective and the AU, the Organization of American States (OAS), and the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE) from an extensive regional perspective.⁵³ Nevertheless, Bailes and Cottey temper their optimism and note the limitation of such system to work perfectly because it is evident that the larger the membership is, the more difficult it is to reach a consensual judgement and willingness to deal with offenders.⁵⁴ Those authors even recognize, based on experience, that a consensus among major powers drives the approach to work well, but if the approach fails,

⁴⁸ Paul M. Evans, “Building Security: The Council for Security Cooperation in the Asia Pacific (CSCAP),” *Pacific Review* 7, no. 2 (1994): 126, <https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/pdf/10.1080/09512749408719081>.

⁴⁹ Evans, “Building Security: The Council for Security Cooperation in the Asia Pacific (CSCAP),” 126.

⁵⁰ Bailes and Cottey, “Regional Security Cooperation in the Early 21st Century,” 200.

⁵¹ Bailes and Cottey.

⁵² Bailes and Cottey.

⁵³ Bailes and Cottey.

⁵⁴ Bailes and Cottey.

it results in greater dangers in the case of conflicts.⁵⁵ As a result, regional groups may also face some constraints in their quest for security.⁵⁶ Thus, the will of security actors is a major driver for regional and global security cooperation.

In addition, the notion of a security regime defines a type of regional security cooperation through non-security related issues such as regulating of international trade and transportation.⁵⁷ Bailes and Cottey observe, in the definition of norms through security regimes, a cooperative and general positive attitude of states' behavior with the potential provision of ways to implement, support, and verify these norms.⁵⁸ For example, the OSCE and some Latin American regional initiatives might fall within the framework of security regimes based on their measures for regional arms control, nuclear weapon-free zones, and the 1990 Conventional Armed Forces in Europe (CFE) Treaty.⁵⁹ The effectiveness of such cooperation rests on the high level of respect for the required features, including "internal power patterns, institutionalization, incentives, and penalties," to ensure that states observe these norms.⁶⁰ Consequently, non-security aspects represent important drivers for regional and global security cooperation.

Similarly, a security community, as previously defined, contributes to improving regional security cooperation. Bailes and Cottey present Karl Deutsch's reflection on the European integration, emphasizing the far-reaching goals of the post-World War II years that turned Europe toward a larger security community of global industrialized democracies.⁶¹ Even though these security communities help to minimize the potential for conflicts within the group, a backlash remains in the tendency to weaken internal frontiers. As a result, member states can become vulnerable to such transnational threats as terrorism

⁵⁵ Bailes and Cottey.

⁵⁶ Bailes and Cottey.

⁵⁷ Bailes and Cottey.

⁵⁸ Bailes and Cottey, "Regional Security Cooperation in the Early 21st Century," 200.

⁵⁹ Bailes and Cottey, 200.

⁶⁰ Bailes and Cottey, 200.

⁶¹ Bailes and Cottey, 201.

and trafficking.⁶² Hence, the security community represents an important concept for a thriving regional security cooperation.

3. Regional Security Cooperation and Regionalism

In an anarchic world characterized by a struggle for power in the international arena and “the lack of an international authority capable of enforcing agreements,”⁶³ states pursue limited security cooperation in the range of their interests. Ronald D. Asmus argues that Norway, as a NATO ally during the period of uncertainty of the Cold War, chose to rely on a defense concept of joining an alliance during the crisis period only rather than accepting a permanent deployment of foreign troops on its soil because of geographical and internal politics factors.⁶⁴ By contrast, because of the threat represented by Warsaw Pact as well as geographic and domestic political imperatives, Germany opted for NATO combat troops with a massive permanent peacetime presence.⁶⁵ The anarchic nature of international relations, therefore, constitutes a challenge to regional security cooperation.

Traditional approaches including a focus on the use of military force and interstate politics⁶⁶ have changed since the end of the Cold War, with more integration of world affairs due to globalization and the evolution of the global threats of terrorism. In the wake of the Cold War, academic study on security cooperation in general and particularly at the regional level has grown as the global system has become less Eurocentric and such participants as developing countries got more actively engaged with larger autonomy. The result was the shift down from the global level of conflict locus.⁶⁷ In addition, for example, Hussein Solomon and Jakkie Cilliers argue that the combination of “the dynamic and

⁶² Bailes and Cottey, 201.

⁶³ Charles L. Glaser, “Realists as Optimists: Cooperation as Self-Help,” *International Security* 19, no. 3 (1994): 50, doi: 10.2307/2539079.

⁶⁴ Ronald D. Asmus, Richard L. Kugler, and F. Stephen Larrabee, “NATO Expansion: The Next Steps,” *Survival* 37, no 1 (1995), 14, doi: 10.1080/00396339508442774.

⁶⁵ Asmus, Kugler, and Larrabee, “NATO Expansion: The Next Steps,” 14.

⁶⁶ Claire Wilkinson, “The Copenhagen School on Tour in Kyrgyzstan: Is Securitization Theory Useable Outside Europe?” *Security Dialogue* 38, no. 1 (2007): 6, doi:10.3897/bdj.4.e7720.figure2f.

⁶⁷ Robert E. Kelly, “Security Theory in The ‘New Regionalism’,” *International Studies Review* 9, no. 2 (June 2007): 197, <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1468-2486.2007.00671.x>.

historical interplay of domestic, global, political, economic, social, and environmental factors” could describe regional insecurity in Southern Africa,⁶⁸ transcending the capacities of individual states and thus requiring a collective response. Therefore, regional security cooperation, viewed within the spectrum of regionalism or region, does not build consensual views among scholars.

Buzan argues that even though new threats are being globalized by nature, “there is a good case for thinking that the new security agenda will be considerably less monolithic and global, and considerably more diverse, regional, and local in character than the old one.”⁶⁹ Martino Gabriel Musumeci argues the concept of a world political system under liberal idealists is a cooperation between states guided by international norms and rules, including regimes, laws, and human rights as well as other agreements.⁷⁰ Andrew Hurrell notes that despite the ambiguity of the concept of regionalism, a wide range of factors, including economy, society, politics, culture, geography, and history, may be important features in its growth.⁷¹ In conceptualizing regionalism, Bjorn Hettne refers to Hurrell who identifies five varieties including “regionalization (informal integration), identity, interstate cooperation, state-led integration, and cohesion.”⁷² Hettne defines regionalism through the concept of region as a group of states that share a common geographical region with common interdependency.⁷³ He indicates that regionalism could be made up of larger continents as well as a cluster of small states situated within the same geographic area.⁷⁴

⁶⁸ Hussein Solomon, and Jakkie Cilliers, “Southern Africa and The Quest for Collective Security,” *Security Dialogue* 28, no. 2 (1997): 194, doi:10.3897/bdj.4.e7720.figure2f.

⁶⁹ Barry Buzan, “Rethinking Security after the Cold War,” *Cooperation and Conflict* 32, no. 1 (March 1997): 12, <https://doi.org/10.1177/0010836797032001001>.

⁷⁰ Martino Gabriel Musumeci, “World Order and Regional Security Theories: The Value of Almost Forgotten Theoretical Legacies” (working paper, University of São Paulo, Brazil, February 2011), 2, http://paperroom.ipsa.org/papers/paper_26490.pdf.

⁷¹ Andrew Hurrell, “Explaining the Resurgence of Regionalism in World Politics,” *Review of International Studies* 21, no 4 (1995): 333–334, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/pdf/20097421.pdf>.

⁷² Bjorn Hettne, “Beyond the ‘New’ Regionalism,” *New Political Economy* 10, no. 4 (2005): 130, doi: 10.1080/13563460500344484.

⁷³ Hettne, 140.

⁷⁴ Hettne, 129.

These academic contributions also mean that regionalism or a region defined by geographic proximity matters in regional security cooperation.

4. Securitization Theory and Regional Security Cooperation

Securitization theory explains the formation of regional arrangements and their response to threats agenda.⁷⁵ Paul D. Williams presents securitization theory as a concept built on analysis identifying security references beyond states' physical integrity, including sovereignty or legitimate ideology, national identity, and economy.⁷⁶ He builds his argument on the Copenhagen school perspective that presents securitization as a priority over other issues under the decisive responsibility of top leaders without the normal political haggling because of the importance, the urgency, and existential nature of the subject.⁷⁷ Claire Wilkinson, also referring to the Copenhagen school of thought, views as essential the need to address new security challenges such as migration, transnational criminality, and national conflict in all security analysis, while refraining from a move toward global and individual approaches to security advocated by some scholars.⁷⁸ Williams argues the context of globalism needs to broaden the concept of security beyond the military and to include political, economic, societal, and environmental aspects.⁷⁹ The concept of securitization aims to promote regional organization and response to security threats.

Building on scholars' contribution to regional security cooperation, Waever notes that the process of most significant securitization takes place interdependently in the framework of the regional security complex rather than at the state level, which contrasts

⁷⁵ Muthiah Alagappa, "Regionalism and Conflict Management: A Framework for Analysis," *Review of International Studies* 21, no. 4 (1995): 363. <http://www.jstor.org.libproxy.nps.edu/stable/20097422>.

⁷⁶ Paul D. Williams, "Regional Arrangements and Transnational Security Challenges: The African Union and the Limits of Securitization Theory," *African Security* 1, no. 3 (2008), 3, doi: 10.1080/19362200802285732.

⁷⁷ Williams, 3.

⁷⁸ Wilkinson, "The Copenhagen School on Tour in Kyrgyzstan," 6.

⁷⁹ Williams, "Regional Arrangements and Transnational Security Challenges," 4.

with the view held by traditional analysis and the classical theorists.⁸⁰ Even though previous analysts of the Copenhagen school have focused on national or societal elites, Buzan and Wæver depart from that perspective and assert the benefits of the application of securitization theory at the regional, societal, or state level.⁸¹ Wilkinson points out the contrasts between traditionalists and non-traditionalists and argues that while the former tend toward the use of military force and politics between states, the latter inclines toward the broadening or deepening of the security agenda.⁸² The diverse views of scholars feed the contradictory debate on regional security cooperation.

5. Theoretical Paradigms and Regional Security Cooperation

Scholars' debates on regional security cooperation encompass patterns that are more speculative. Bruce W. Jentleson and Dalia Dassa Kaye base their explanation of regional security cooperation on theoretical paradigms in considering realist approaches to security cooperation, domestic politics explanations, and the status-identity approach,⁸³ hypothesizing on the concept.

From the realist perspective, characterized by the motivation of states to promote national interests, the perception of regional security cooperation differs. Jentleson and Kaye assert that the perspective of traditional realists tends to see imperatives of external security as forces largely opposing regional security cooperation.⁸⁴ They further support the realist approach to security cooperation that argues security cooperation is driven primarily by the external security environment surrounding a state.⁸⁵ On the other hand, Richard Ned Lebow and Janice Gross Stein temper this perspective and emphasize “the

⁸⁰ Barry Buzan, *People, States and Fear: An Agenda for International Security Studies in the Post-Cold War Era*, 2nd ed. (New York: Harvester Wheatsheaf, 1991), 4.

⁸¹ Buzan, and Wæver, *Regions and Powers: The Structure of International Security*, 42–45.

⁸² Wilkinson, “The Copenhagen School on Tour in Kyrgyzstan,” 6.

⁸³ Bruce W. Jentleson and Dalia Dassa Kaye, “Security Status: Explaining Regional Security Cooperation and Its Limits in the Middle East,” *Security Studies* 8, no. 1 (1998): 207, doi:10.1080/09636419808429369.

⁸⁴ Jentleson and Kaye.

⁸⁵ Jentleson and Kaye.

importance of at least the elemental cooperation of ‘reassurance’ in crisis.”⁸⁶ Therefore, the perspective of regional security cooperation conflicts with the realist approach.

Also, states’ internal and domestic limitations are important aspects of regional security cooperation development. As Etel Solingen emphasizes, the form or nature of a state’s governance is an essential explanatory factor influencing security policy, assuming that “the democratic nature of states is a fundamental piece of the puzzle in understanding conflict and cooperation.”⁸⁷ Solingen further hypothesizes that political coalitions favoring liberal domestic reform policies will engage in regional cooperation, if they view a strong commitment in their regional partners.⁸⁸ By contrast, Steven R. David argues that leaders in developing countries are often caught in the balance between internal threats and external ones while considering alliance formation, which explains the sometimes anomalous alliances these states form with external actors.⁸⁹ Jentleson and Kaye argue that “regional actors” would need “leadership survival concerns, coalitions types or other political and economic constraints within the state” to motivate them to “engage” and then to refrain from regional security cooperation.⁹⁰ This debate on domestic-based influence certainly explains state behavior toward regional security cooperation.

Analysts of the status-identity approach argue that the enhancement of a state’s security through regional cooperation might also influence negatively its relative standing in other ways.⁹¹ From a constructivist point of view, though, how a state sees itself in the world can influence its interests and involvement in regional security cooperation.⁹² As a result, concerns related to identity-based status can impact negatively on regional

⁸⁶ Richard Ned Lebow and Janice Gross Stein, “Rational Deterrence Theory: I Think, Therefore, I Deter,” *World Politics* 41, no. 2 (January 1989): 210, doi:10.3897/bdj.4.e7720.figure2f.

⁸⁷ Etel Solingen, “Democracy, Economic Reform and Regional Cooperation,” *Journal of Theoretical Politics* 8 no. 1 (1996): 79, 80, doi: 10.1177/0951692896008001005

⁸⁸ Solingen, 79, 80.

⁸⁹ Steven R. David, “Explaining Third World Alignment,” *World Politics* 43, no.2 (January 1991): 238–240, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/2010472>.

⁹⁰ Jentleson and Kaye, “Security Status: Explaining Regional Security Cooperation,” 212.

⁹¹ Jentleson and Kaye, “Security Status: Explaining Regional Security Cooperation,” 213.

⁹² Jentleson and Kaye, “Security Status: Explaining Regional Security Cooperation,” 214.

cooperation processes, despite the incentives for cooperative arrangements offered by strategies or domestic conditions.⁹³ Therefore, regional security cooperation comes with advantages as well as possible disadvantages. These overall theoretical paradigms presented by Jentleson and Kaye contribute to the debates regarding various aspects of regional security cooperation, ranging from the threat environment to internal issues and down to nonmaterial characteristics.

Regardless of how regional security cooperation is defined or interpreted, the conclusions indicate differences regarding how to achieve effectiveness in regional security cooperation. While some scholars agree that regional security cooperation presents many challenges that alter its effectiveness, other scholars claim that regional security cooperation is a valuable way to deal with security issues when member states perceive a threat at similar levels. Additional perspectives view and evaluate regional security cooperation under a broader and more comprehensive approach in terms of geographic proximity and the mobilization of member states' elements of national power. One school of thought views regional security cooperation as a single effective aspect to tackle a collective threat, whereas an opposing point of view sees it working well while as a collective effort. For example, Eric Rosand, Alistair Millar, and Jason Ipe observe that the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD) initially focused on development "but gradually took on security functions, underscoring the reality of the intimate relationship between security and development in the horn of Africa."⁹⁴ The organization has made tremendous progress through capacity building including legislation and training in fighting terrorism in the region.⁹⁵ Therefore, various supportive and opposing arguments surround the concept of regional security cooperation.

⁹³ Jentleson and Kaye.

⁹⁴ Eric Rosand, Alistair Millar, and Jason Ipe, "Enhancing Counterterrorism Cooperation in Eastern Africa," *African Security Review* 18, no. 2 (2009): 98, DOI: 10.1080/10246029.2009.962753298.

⁹⁵ Nyesiga Nicholas Humble, "Combating Transnational terrorism in the East African Region: The Role of the African Union Mission in Somalia" (PhD diss., Naval Postgraduate School, 2017), 12, <http://hdl.handle.net/10945/10504>.

C. POTENTIAL EXPLANATIONS AND HYPOTHESES

This research focuses on the effectiveness of regional security cooperation as part of the promotion of individual states' interests through a collective effort. The objective of the research is to assess the effectiveness of regional security cooperation as part of a response to the security dilemma facing the Sahel states and its benefits as a potential alternative to minimize antagonism and conflicts. The thesis investigates several related questions. At what level can the mechanism of regional security cooperation gain states' support such that they share the same objectives, considering their diverse interests and their divergences? Also, which other possible alternatives that support the military can be explored to stir such cooperation? Potential explanations and hypotheses are as the following:

1. Regional security cooperation in the Sahel is generally ineffective as states do not perceive the threat in the same way, resulting in a regional environment made of suspicion, mistrust, rivalries, and ambiguous connections.
2. Effective regional security cooperation in the Sahel requires a comprehensive geographic Sahel–Maghreb approach with the extension of cooperation beyond the borders of the current G5 Sahel states and includes the remaining Sahel states from West Africa to East Africa as well as the Maghreb states in North Africa. The reason is that international terrorism, transnational smuggling, and secessionist movements that affect Sahel mostly have their roots in the Maghreb.
3. Effective regional security cooperation requires a comprehensive approach going beyond the military by including other incentives that embrace fields where every state in the region recognizes or engages its vital interests in either development or security.

D. RESEARCH DESIGN

This thesis adopts a single case study approach to provide insight into defining the types of regional security cooperation that are either effective or ineffective at achieving objectives. The thesis examines the Sahel where security cooperation seems to have failed so far amid several challenges (such as states perceiving the threat differently, some states having little interest in fighting the threats, other states compromising with terrorists in exchange for their security, and states saddled by intense regional rivalries). Further, the thesis considers failed security cooperation as attributable to the lack of concrete expectations. The overall objective is to assess effective regional security cooperation and define factors that contribute to successful achievements. The approach analyzes and links the theoretical arguments and concepts from the research to the proposed hypotheses regarding the types of regional security cooperation. The case study of the Sahel also explores forms of regional security cooperation to define causal factors leading to effectiveness. Throughout the exploration, the study might find that there are limitations in focusing only on security aspects while pursuing effectiveness in such cooperation and other factors, such as addressing the root causes of the threat environment, may contribute to achieving the desired outcomes. The research relies on primary sources as well as secondary academic sources and the author's personal experience. The exploitation of these sources paints the situation in the region and addresses the challenges as well potential options for achieving effective regional security cooperation.

E. THESIS OVERVIEW

The thesis has five chapters, beginning with this introduction. Chapter II examines the characteristics of insecurity and instability in the Sahel region. It focuses on the geography of the threats including the Sahel and the Maghreb and the historic context of the long-standing insecurity and instability in the region. Chapter II also addresses the current regional threats represented by transnational terrorism, illicit trafficking, and secessionist movements. Chapter III investigates various attempts at regional security cooperation in addressing these transnational threats. This chapter focuses on the driving factors of regional security cooperation, the successful and failed attempts, and the U.S.

led initiatives, as well as the challenges to effectiveness. Chapter IV examines different paths to achieving regional security cooperation. The chapter analyzes the U.S., EU, and AU strategies for the Sahel under the scope of addressing transnational challenges through regional security cooperation. Chapter V presents conclusions and recommendations.

II. CHARACTERISTICS OF INSECURITY AND INSTABILITY IN THE SAHEL REGION

The current security situation in the Sahel has risen to a critical and uncertain phase with unpredictable insecurity and instability. The region faces some of the most serious and growing security challenges in Africa, if not the world, including international terrorism, transnational smuggling, and secessionist movements. The characteristics of these threats reside in their transnational nature, where terrorists, criminals, and insurgencies capitalize on difficult geographic conditions as well as on issues deeply rooted in the past, and exploit the global phenomenon of terrorism networks. While the former characteristics relate to the position and the environment of the Sahel and its history, the latter refer to the exacerbation of existing menaces in the region. This chapter tackles the close relationship between the geography of the Sahel and the threats as well as the historic context of insecurity and instability that evolved progressively to the current threats in the region today.

A. GEOGRAPHY OF THE THREATS

The concentration of transnational threats in the Sahel results from the prevalence of conditions conducive to their development and growth. James Cockayne posits, “Geography is partly to blame,” as the Sahel and West Africa have risen rapidly to become “a Silicon Valley” for non-state actors’ criminal innovation.⁹⁶ Criminal groups have successfully organized massive trans-Atlantic cocaine trade and criminal markets with other forms of lawlessness in the region including criminalized insurgencies, oil bunkering, hostage kidnapping, and smuggling of cigarettes, humans, and arms as well as increasing secessionist militancy and Islamist terrorism.⁹⁷ All Sahel countries offer an environment

⁹⁶ James Cockayne, *Transnational Threats: The Criminalization of West Africa and the Sahel* (Goshen, IN: Center on Global Counterterrorism Cooperation, December 2011), 1, http://globalcenter.org/wp-content/uploads/2012/07/cockayne_policybrief_1113.pdf.

⁹⁷ Cockayne, 2.

favorable to terrorism that matches Cristiana Brafman Kittner's theory of terrorist safe havens.⁹⁸ She points out geographic features that ensure inaccessibility of states and favor concealed activities as one specific condition necessary for the establishment of criminal safe havens.⁹⁹ This section examines particular geographic characteristics that drive insecurity and instability in the Sahel including the region's sheer size, climate conditions, geographical features, and ungoverned spaces.

1. Sheer Size of the Sahel

The particular geographical position of the Sahel characterizes its various definitions. The *Oxford Living Dictionary* defines the Sahel as the large semi-desert region that slips along the southern border of the North African Sahara desert and comprises its northern part under the name of Sudan.¹⁰⁰ This definition roughly meets other descriptions. Yahia Zoubir, for example, depicts the Sahel as the "region where sub-Saharan Africa meets North Africa."¹⁰¹ Henry Le Houerou points out the Arabic origin of the Sahel as "Sahil" meaning "coast" located at the southern border of the Sahara desert with vast flat terrain spreading gently through the countryside.¹⁰² Similarly, Grégory Giraud defines the Arabic origin of the word "Sahil" as "shore."¹⁰³ Erik Eckholm and Lester Brown, in addition to supporting the Arabic etymological origin, refer to the Sahel as the narrow strip bordering the Sahara that has suffered droughts.¹⁰⁴ The geographical definition of the

⁹⁸ Cristiana C. Brafman Kittner, "The Role of Safe Havens in Islamist Terrorism," *Terrorism and Political Violence* 19, no. 3 (2007): 307, <https://doi.org/10.1080/09546550701246791>.

⁹⁹ Kittner, 307.

¹⁰⁰ *Oxford Living Dictionaries*, s.v. "Sahel," accessed July 7, 2018, <https://en.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/sahel>.

¹⁰¹ Yahia H. Zoubir, "The United States and Maghreb–Sahel Security," *International Affairs* 85, no. 5 (2009): 989, doi: 10.1111/j.1468-2346.2009.00842.x.

¹⁰² Henry N. Le Houerou, "The Grazing Land Ecosystems of the African Sahel," *Springer Science and Business Media*, 75 (2012): 3, <https://scholar.google.com>.

¹⁰³ Grégory Giraud, "Cinquante Ans de Tensions dans la Zone Sahélo-Saharienne," *La Guerre au Mali* [Fifty Years of Tensions in the Sahelo-Saharan Zone, *The War in Mali*] (2013), 28, accessed July 7, 2018, https://algeria-watch.org/pdf/pdf_fr/galy_guerre_mali_chap1.pdf.

¹⁰⁴ Erik Eckholm and Lester R. Brown, "Spreading Deserts—The Hand of Man," *Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists* 34, no. 1 (1978): 11, doi: 10.1080/00963402.1978.11458455.

region corresponds to the etymological meaning as a transitional zone between the dry Sahara and the humid forest. Because geography makes the region a convergent influence zone from North Africa and Sub-Saharan Africa, this section describes the Sahel as an insecure and unstable region.

As Figure 1 shows, the Sahel spans eight countries. The region is located at the southern edge of the Sahara along a strip 300 to 500 kilometers (km) wide.¹⁰⁵ The Sahel encompasses the territory from the Atlantic Ocean in West Africa to the Red Sea in East Africa through Senegal, Mauritania, Mali, Burkina Faso, Algeria (South), Niger, Chad, Nigeria (north), Sudan, Eritrea, and Ethiopia. Alex Whiting asserts that the Sahel stretches from the western coast of Africa through Mauritania and Mali to the eastern coast through Sudan and Eritrea, and skirts the southern border of the Sahara desert.¹⁰⁶ The Sahel equals roughly half of the area of the United States.¹⁰⁷ The huge size of the Sahel across many countries makes the entire region vulnerable to contagious cross-border challenges. Indeed, Alfred Grove argues that the boundaries of the Sahel “are not readily definable,”¹⁰⁸ meaning the region is geographically complex.

¹⁰⁵ Giraud, “Cinquante Ans de Tensions dans la Zone Sahélo-Saharienne,” 28.

¹⁰⁶ Alex Whiting, “Climate Change May Turn Africa’s Arid Sahel Green: Researchers,” Reuters, July 5, 2017, <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-climatechange-africa-sahel/climate-change-may-turn-africas-arid-sahel-green-researchers-idUSKBN19Q2WK>.

¹⁰⁷ Robert B. Lloyd, “Ungoverned Spaces and Regional Insecurity: The Case of Mali,” *SAIS Review of International Affairs* 36, no 1 (Winter–Spring 2016): 133.

¹⁰⁸ Alfred T. Grove, “Geographical Introduction to the Sahel.” *Geographical Journal* 144, no. 3 (1978): 407, doi: 10.2307/634817.

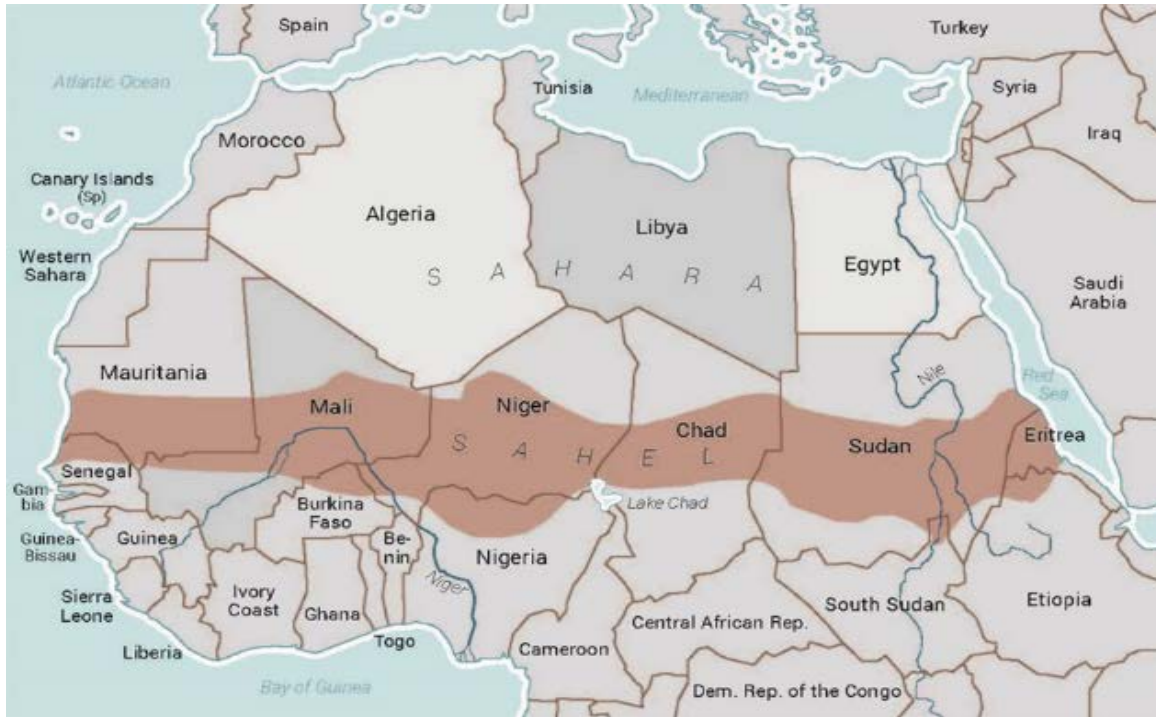


Figure 1. The Sahel region.¹⁰⁹

In addition, the Sahel has complex undefined geographical borders with the Maghreb. The Sahel is a natural geographical extension of the Maghreb in sub-Saharan Africa. Geography links the two regions although they are distinct. Africa's Sahara-Sahel strip extends across all or part of at least seven nations from Senegal to Chad and is considered an integrated region for historical, climatic, economic, cultural, and religious reasons.¹¹⁰ The Sahel necessarily involves the Maghreb in view of the inseparable geographical considerations of the two regions. Indeed, Robert Vernet argues that the long period of dryness during the late Pleistocene divided the Sahara desert “into two great ensembles.”¹¹¹ He states that aridity characterizes areas north of the tropics and the Sahara

¹⁰⁹ “Sahel Region Map,” Google Maps, accessed May 4, 2018, <https://www.google.com/search?q=the+Sahel&client=firefox-b>.

¹¹⁰ Stephen Harmon, “Securitization Initiatives in the Sahara-Sahel Region in the Twenty-First Century,” *African Security* 8, no. 4 (2015): 227, <https://doi.org/10.1080/19392206.2015.1100503>.

¹¹¹ Robert Vernet, “Climate during the Late Holocene in the Sahara and the Sahel: Evolution and Consequences on Human Settlement,” in *Droughts, Food and Culture*, ed. F. A. Hassan (Boston, MA: Springer, 2002), 47, <https://doi.org/10.1007/0-306-47547-2>.

desert and is spreading progressively on a slow pace toward the southern region and the Sahel.¹¹² Furthermore, geopolitical changes in the Sahel directly affect the Maghreb countries, given their geographical proximity and their social, ethnic, and religious ramifications.¹¹³ Because the Sahel is a natural geographical extension of the Maghreb in sub-Saharan Africa, it is, therefore, difficult to establish a natural boundary between the two regions. As the result, the Sahel suffers the ripple effects of most border challenges from the Maghreb.

Furthermore, the Sahel has undefined geopolitical borders. From a geopolitical perspective, Yves Lacoste defines the Sahel as part of the broader Sahara region that includes North Africa in the north, Mauritania in the west, the Basin of the Red Sea in the east, and Chad in the south.¹¹⁴ On the other hand, the European Union, in its security and development strategy for the Sahel, has chosen a more restrictive definition that refers to Mauritania, Mali, and Niger as the “three core Sahel states” with extended limits to the southern region of Algeria, and the northern part of Burkina Faso and Chad.¹¹⁵ The region’s recent significance for policy makers in Washington derives mostly from political, economic, energy interests, military, strategic, and security interest considerations, as the United States considers the Sahel as the extension of the Maghreb.¹¹⁶ These divergent geopolitical considerations, however, do not contribute to frame a common geography of the threats scouring the region.

¹¹² Vernet, 47.

¹¹³ Aomar Baghzouz, “Le Maghreb et L’Europe Face à la Crise du Sahel: Coopération ou Rivalités?,” [The Maghreb and Europe Facing the Sahel Crisis: Cooperation or Rivalry?] *L’Année du Maghreb* IX (2013): 173, <https://journals.openedition.org/anneemaghreb/1969?file=1>.

¹¹⁴ Yves Lacoste, “Sahara, Perspectives et Illusions Géopolitiques,” [Sahara, Perspectives and Geopolitical Illusions], *Hérodote* 3, no. 142 (2011): 41, <https://www.cairn.info/revue-herodote-2011-3-page-12.htm>.

¹¹⁵ Luis Simon, Alexander Mattelaer, and Amelia Hadfield, *A Coherent EU Strategy for The Sahel* (Brussels: EUR-OP Institute for European Studies, 2012), 8, doi: 10.2861/79208.

¹¹⁶ Yahia H. Zoubir, “The United States and Maghreb-Sahel Security,” *International Affairs (Royal Institute of International Affairs 1944)* 85, no. 5 (2009): 977, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/40388919>.

2. Climatic Conditions

The proximity of the Sahel to the Sahara desert submits the region to very dramatic climatic and physical conditions. Harsh climatic conditions, such as severe drought and desertification, have caused a decline in the environmental setting and habitat in the Sahel.¹¹⁷ High temperatures throughout the year, coupled with a scant and unpredictable annual 400 to 1,000 millimeter (mm) rainfall during three months, are followed by a nine-month dry season.¹¹⁸ The region has long suffered from successive droughts, resulting in starvation and loss of stock and livestock.¹¹⁹ Sharon E. Nicholson, Compton J. Tucker, and M. B. Ba observe that during recent years the “advances” of the Sahara desert closely mimic variations in rainfall in the Sahel.¹²⁰ Furthermore, climate change has forced local populations to migrate in the quest of a better quality of life in cities, abandoning their traditional way of life.¹²¹ The degradation of farmlands and rangelands has posed a weightier threat to human welfare as the result of desertification encroachment.¹²² Erik Eckholm and Lester R. Brown argue that the Sahel has drawn world attention because environmental deterioration has culminated in human tragedy as the desert has overtaken once rich lands.¹²³ The Sahel, amid these shifting climatic conditions that drive an unfriendly environment, represents a source of insecurity and instability.

¹¹⁷ John M. Mbaku, “Economics: Patterns and Levels of Life in Sahel West Africa since the 1960s,” *Africa Insight* 19, no. 1 (1989): 46, http://hdl.handle.net/10520/AJA02562804_350.

¹¹⁸ A. Kalinganire, J. C. Weber, A. Uwamariya, and B. Kone, “Improving Rural Livelihoods through Domestication of Indigenous Fruit Trees in the Parklands of the Sahel,” *Fruit Trees* 10 (2007): 186, <https://scholar.google.com>.

¹¹⁹ Grove, “Geographical Introduction to the Sahel,” 407.

¹²⁰ Sharon E. Nicholson, Compton J. Tucker, and M. B. Ba, “Desertification, Drought, and Surface Vegetation: An Example from the West African Sahel,” *Bulletin of the American Meteorological Society* 79, no. 5 (1998): 815, [https://doi.org/10.1175/1520-0477\(1998\)079<0815:DDASVA>2.0.CO;2](https://doi.org/10.1175/1520-0477(1998)079<0815:DDASVA>2.0.CO;2).

¹²¹ Eckholm and Brown, “Spreading Deserts—The Hand of Man,” 11, 12.

¹²² Eckholm and Brown, 12.

¹²³ Eckholm and Brown, 12.

3. Geographical Features

As a result of the continuous decline in climatic conditions, the Sahel has become an inhospitable region. Yet, many of the resulting geographical features in the Sahel harbor natural sanctuaries profitable to the development of threats. Richard Minter characterizes the region as a desolate landscape with little vegetation and far flat or featureless land rising more than 11 feet and falling more than 100 feet below sea level with many ravines, ridges, and revetments.¹²⁴ The Sahel combines large desert spaces with sandy dunes, mountains, sparse wooded forests, and oases. Aridity, waterlessness, and underpopulation illustrate the main features of the Sahel.¹²⁵ The Hoggar Mountain chain, which extends roughly over 8,500 square miles in northeastern Mali along the Algerian border to the Chad-Niger Air Mountains, comprises “steep, craggy hills and valleys” as well as “strewn arid riverbeds and landscape.”¹²⁶ Multiple blind spots and gaps favor the expansion and interconnection of criminal flows on all sides.¹²⁷ Sparse and wooded forests along Mali-Niger-Burkina Faso, Mali-Mauritania, and Chad-Nigeria-Cameroon borders around the basin of the Chad Lake, as well as the Chad-Sudan borders and various oases across the region, constitute main refuges for groups looking to conceal themselves or their illegal activities.

4. Ungoverned Spaces

Weak countries have struggled to maintain control over their remote and hostile spaces in the Sahel as well as their long and porous borders. The description of ungoverned

¹²⁴ Richard Minter, *Shadow War: The Untold Story of How Bush Is Winning the War on Terror* (Washington, DC: Regnery Publishing, 2004), 88.

¹²⁵ Cees De Haan, Etienne Dubern, Bernard Garancher, and Catalina Quintero, *Pastoralism Development in the Sahel: A Road to Stability?* (Washington, DC: World Bank, 2016), vii, <https://openknowledge.worldbank.org/handle/10986/24228> License: CC BY 3.0 IGO.

¹²⁶ Joshua Rhett Miller, “Al Qaeda Finds New Stronghold in Rugged Mountains of Mali as It Regroups in Africa,” *Fox News World*, March 3, 2013, <http://www.foxnews.com/world/2013/03/03/malian-mountains-provide-perfect-anctuary-for-al-qaeda-report-finds.html>.

¹²⁷ Mohamed Saleck, “Sahel: Une Géopolitique de l’Invisible,” [Sahel: A Geopolitics of the Invisible], *Agora Vox, le Média du Citoyen*, December 21, 2010, <https://www.agoravox.fr/actualites/international/article/sahel-une-geopolitique-de-l-86235>

spaces as remote and vulnerable zones that lay beyond the reach of central government¹²⁸ illustrates the case of the Sahel countries. Robert B. Lloyd argues that the Sahel constitutes a major ungoverned space on the continent where formal governments exercise little or no control.¹²⁹ Secretary-General of the United Nations António Guterres declared that climate change and underdevelopment have contributed to disastrous humanitarian and security crises in the Sahel as consequences of the countries' weakness.¹³⁰ Poor border control in the Sahel has become a danger to international peace and security, and local communities in border regions live in a disastrous situation where non-state actors, including terrorist groups and drugs, weapons and human smugglers, have overpowered states' authority, and undermined sustainable human development in a multitude of ways.¹³¹ Therefore, countries' inability to secure their territories is a main underlying driver of insecurity and instability in the Sahel.

The UN Security Council perceives the Sahel as a “threat to international peace and security” in terms of the growing threat of terrorism in the region.¹³² The Minister for Europe and Foreign Affairs of France, Jean Yves Le Drian, argues that drug trafficking and human trafficking finance to terrorist groups in the Sahel represent a global threat.¹³³ Difficulties in countries' control over their territories have contributed to the development of illegal activities, growing illicit trafficking, and increasing violence by transnational

¹²⁸ Abdi Ali Fauziya, “Winning Hearts and Minds in Ungoverned Spaces,” UNDP Regional Service Centre for Africa, November 27, 2017, <http://www.undp.org/content/undp/en/home/blog/2017/winning-hearts-and-minds-in-ungoverned-spaces.html>.

¹²⁹ Robert B. Lloyd, “Ungoverned Spaces and Regional Insecurity: The Case of Mali,” *SAIS Review of International Affairs* 36, no 1 (Winter-Spring, 2016): 133, <https://doi.org/10.1353/sais.2016.0012>.

¹³⁰ United Nations Security Council, “Briefing Security Council on Joint Force for Sahel, SecretaryGeneral- Urges Innovative International Actions to Keep Region from ‘Sinking into Chaos,’” 8080th Meeting (AM), SC/13046, October 30, 2017), <https://www.un.org/press/en/2017/sc13046.doc.htm>.

¹³¹ United Nations Development Program, “Management and Border Communities in the Sahel,” 1, accessed August, 31 2018, [https://info.undp.org/docs/pdc/Documents/NER/Border%20Management%20%20Border%20Communities%20in%20the%20Sahel%20\(Pro%20Doc\)%20v2.pdf](https://info.undp.org/docs/pdc/Documents/NER/Border%20Management%20%20Border%20Communities%20in%20the%20Sahel%20(Pro%20Doc)%20v2.pdf) .

¹³² United Nations Development Program.

¹³³ “UN Security Council’s Ministerial Meeting on the G5 Sahel - Speech by Jean-Yves Le Drian (30 October 2017),” France Diplomacy, accessed September 1, 2018, <https://www.diplomatie.gouv.fr/en/french-foreign-policy/united-nations/events/events-2017/article/un-security-council-s-ministerial-meeting-on-the-g5-sahel-speech-by-jean-yves>.

Islamist groups such as AQIM and Boko Haram in the Sahel and Saharan border region.¹³⁴ They have also posed serious threats to stability, development, and global peace and security.¹³⁵ Therefore, the disastrous situation in the Sahel is the result of worsening geographical conditions coupled with countries' lack of control over their territories.

B. HISTORIC CONTEXT OF INSECURITY AND INSTABILITY

The evolution of historical dynamics in the Sahel explains the current trend of insecurity and instability through different periods. During the pre-colonial period, local kingdoms and empires felt unsafe and unsecure with the invasions from the Maghreb as the result of the trans-Saharan route and internal political instability. European conquests and domination drove insecurity and instability during the colonial period. Uncertainty characterized the post-colonial period with the legacy of colonialism including the social and political tension born from the colonial ruling systems that divided elites, as well as the contemporary security dynamic including the thriving international terrorism, illicit transnational smuggling, and insurgencies. This section examines the evolution of insecurity and instability from the historic context to the contemporary status.

1. Pre-colonial Period (5th through 15th Centuries)

Maghreb conquests through the trans-Saharan roads and wars of succession characterized factors of insecurity and instability in the Sahel during the pre-colonial period. Regional interaction through trans-Saharan routes and trade subjected the Sahel region to deep influence from North Africa. Historically, the Sahel was known as the gateway to West Africa from the Sahara desert to the north and the site of West Africa's

¹³⁴ United Nations Development Program, "Management and Border Communities in the Sahel," 2.

¹³⁵ United Nations Development Program, 2.

greatest medieval empires and commercial towns a thousand years ago.¹³⁶ According to Kwesi Aning and Lydia Amedzrator, trans-Saharan trade and the concomitant spread of Islam represented historical distinguishing features of interaction on both sides of the Sahara desert with deep-rooted political, commercial, and cultural influence in the transitional zone of the Sahel.¹³⁷ Ghislaine Lydon cites Edward Bovill who argues that, “Trans-Saharan roads wove ties of blood and culture between the peoples north and south of the desert.”¹³⁸ The historic context of insecurity in the Sahel are captured in the thoughts of Pietro Musilli and Patrick Smith who state, “The political, economic and social crises that stretch across Africa’s Sahel region are connected via trade routes that were established centuries ago.”¹³⁹ Trans-Saharan roads, the forerunner of the flowering of trans-Saharan trade, served as the gateway for conquests and invasions of the Sahel from the Maghreb as Figure 2 illustrates.¹⁴⁰

¹³⁶ Bruce S. Hall, *A History of Race in Muslim West Africa, 1600–1960*, vol. 115 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011), 28.

¹³⁷ Kwesi Aning and Lydia Amedzrator, “Security in the Sahel. Linking the Atlantic to the Mediterranean,” *Transatlantic Security from the Sahel to the Horn of Africa 12*, ed. Riccardo Alcaro and Nicoletta Pirozzi (Rome, Italy: Institute for International Affairs, 2014), 59.

¹³⁸ Ghislaine Lydon, *On Trans-Saharan Trails: Islamic Law, Trade Networks, and Cross-Cultural Exchange in Nineteenth-Century Western Africa* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 1.

¹³⁹ Pietro Musilli and Patrick Smith, “The Lawless Roads: An Overview of Turbulence across the Sahel” (NOREF: Norwegian Peacebuilding Resources Center, 2013), 1, https://scholar.google.com/scholar?hl=en&as_sdt=0%2C5&q=The+lawless+roads%3A+an+overview+of+turbulence+across+the+Sahel&btnG=.

¹⁴⁰ “Africa Map,” Google Maps, accessed June 6, 2018, https://www.google.com/search?q=trans+saharan+traders+and+empire+in+west+africa&source=lnms&tbm=isch&sa=X&ved=0ahUKEwjklJqj7bXbAhVklH0KHwADJcQ_AUIDCgD&biw=1280&bih=913#imgrc=BR-5uam8YCN0OM:

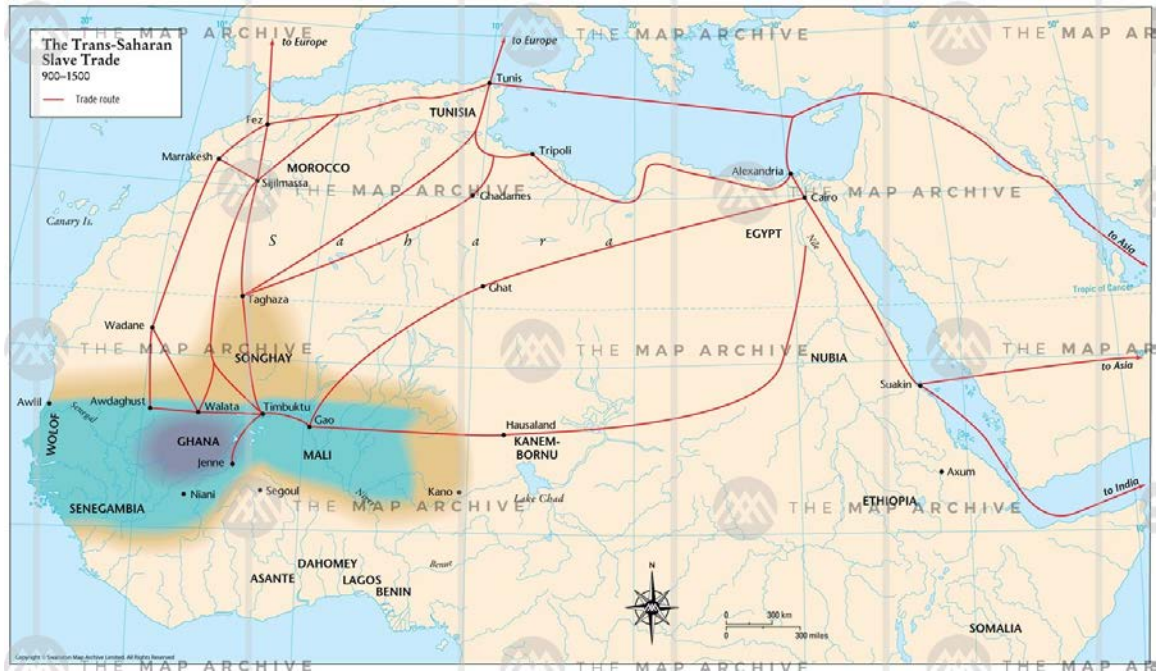


Figure 2. The trans-Saharan routes.¹⁴¹

The history of insecurity and instability flows through the Almoravids' invasion of the empire of Ghana, the Moroccan invasion of the Songhay empire, the internal power struggle in the empire of Mali, and the attempts of some local Islamic clerks to create religious states.

In the third century, as the result of trans-Saharan routes and trade, the Berberes Zenetes' invasion and influence of the Sahara extended to Senegal and Sudan, current-day Mali.¹⁴² The copper from the Saharan mines of Takedda found in Djenné in current-day Mali and Igbo-Ikwu in current-day Nigeria, dating from before the eighth century, fueled the great Arab influence on and expansion of trans-Saharan trade.¹⁴³ According to Colin

¹⁴¹ "Africa Map," Google Maps, accessed June 6, 2018.

¹⁴² Attilio Gaudio, *Les Populations du Sahara Occidental: Histoire, Vie et Culture* [Populations of Western Sahara: History, Life and Culture] (Paris: Karthala Editions, 1993), 19.

¹⁴³ Djibril Tamsir Niane, "Le Mali et la Deuxième Expansion Manden Histoire Générale de l'Afrique 4," [Mali and the Second Manden Expansion, General History of Africa 4], Institut Afrique Monde (1985), 142, http://www.institutafriquemonde.org/img/Histoire%20G%C3%A9n%C3%A9rale%20de%20l'Afrique/4.Histoire%20G%C3%A9n%C3%A9rale%20de%20l'Afrique_UNESCO_Chapitre6.pdf.

Newbury, the main routes included the Niger-Morocco stages through Adrar or Taoudeni to Tenduf or Tafilet in current-day Morocco; the central Timbuktu-In Salah-Ghadames-Tunis or Tripoli road; the ancient route from Chad through the Fezzan to Tripoli; the ancient way from the Hausa country through Agades and Ghat, in current-day Niger, and the eastern route from Darfur to Cyrenaica.¹⁴⁴ These trans-Saharan routes and trade resulted in building strong relation between the Sahel and the Maghreb.

The trans-Saharan routes long served to connect the Maghreb and the Sahel kingdoms. The empire of Ghana and Mali, and the kingdom of Takrur, flourished on the gold trade from tropical Africa to the Mediterranean.¹⁴⁵ The most important avenue of long-distance trade through the caravans' routes between the Mediterranean and the eastern Sudan linked Benghazi and Wadai in current-day Chad remained economically viable and declined only later with the attack and capture by the French of Ain-Galakathe, the Sanusi capital.¹⁴⁶ Therefore, trans-Saharan routes that crossed the Saharan desert and connected the Sahel to North Africa served as a cultural highway for social integration as well as insecurity and instability.

Consequently, insecurity and instability rose as challenges to local empires and kingdoms. The trans-Saharan trade that triggered influence from Maghreb over the Sahel ancient states led to the decline of empires such as ancient Ghana. The Almoravids, an imperial Berber Muslim dynasty centered in Morocco in the Maghreb, introduced the teaching of the Koran in the savannahs of the Sahel,¹⁴⁷ strengthening their influence over existing empires in the region. A. J. H. Goodwin argues that great empires in West Africa

¹⁴⁴ Colin W Newbury, "North African and Western Sudan Trade in the Nineteenth Century: A Re-Evaluation," *Journal of African History* 7, no. 2 (1966): 235, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/179952>.

¹⁴⁵ James Miller, "Trading through Islam: The Interconnections of Sijilmasa, Ghana, and the Almoravid Movement," *Journal of North African Studies* 6 no. 1 (2001), 1, DOI: 10.1080/13629380108718420.

¹⁴⁶ Stephen Baier, "Trans-Saharan Trade and the Sahel: Damergu, 1870–1930," *Journal of African History* 18, no. 1 (1977): 41, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/180416>.

¹⁴⁷ Yves-Jean Saint Martin, *Empire Toucouleur 1848–1897*, [Toucouleur Empire 1848-1897] (Paris Le Livre Africain, 1970), "The Almoravids. of Arabia: Al-Mourabitun ... The Almoravids are Saharan Berbers of the Lemtouna tribe, converted in the 11th Century to Maliki Islam, the most rigorous of the four Muslim rites. Under the spiritual direction of Abdullah Ibn Yasin, they dominated the Western Sahara, then Morocco, and southern Spain as well as in the Sahel-Sahara band of West Africa." 22.

declined following conquests and colonization from the “Maghreb or Mauretanian shores of the Mediterranean,” referring to the case of the Ghana empire, which “slowly collapsed under the Almoravids rulers in the [12th] century, following their victory of 1076,”¹⁴⁸ and leading to its disappearance in the early 13th century.¹⁴⁹ The collapse of the empire led to chaos. Civil wars ravaged the Soninke provinces of Wagadu, Baxunu, Kaniaga, and Nema of current-day Mali.¹⁵⁰ Trans-Saharan routes became hazardous,¹⁵¹ contributing to political instability that led to insecurity and instability through raids and ambushes against caravans. Invasions from North Africa constituted a source of uncertainty for the indigenous people in the Sahel at the time.

Furthermore, the introduction and the spread of Islam in the Sahel faced fierce opposition, a source of insecurity and instability in the Sahel. The violent introduction of Islam in the Africa savannah dates back to the period of the Almoravids from North Africa.¹⁵² Around the 11th century, the Almoravids, a group originating in Morocco, led a “Jihad to purify” and expand the practice of a traditional form of Islam in the kingdoms of Ghana in present-day Mali and Takrur in present-day Senegal.¹⁵³ A perpetual rivalry erupted between the Islamized peoples and the animist peoples in the Sahel who rejected Islamic precepts. In the middle of the 11th century, after the liberation of the most important provinces including Manden (present-day Mali) and Takrur from the domination of the indigenous empire of Ghana, Wardjabi, the king of Takrūr, converted to Islam and

¹⁴⁸ A. J. H Goodwin, “The Medieval Empire of Ghana,” *The South African Archaeological Bulletin* 12, no. 47 (1957): 109, https://www.jstor.org/stable/3886971?seq=1#metadata_info_tab_contents.

¹⁴⁹ Robert Nicolăi, “La Généalogie des Langues Africaines à l’Epreuve du Contact: L’Exemple du Songhay au Croisement de l’Histoire, de la Sociologie et de la Linguistique,” [The Genealogy of African Languages at the Proof of Contact: The Example of Songhay at the Crossroads of History, Sociology and Linguistics], *Academia.edu*, 6, accessed July, 6, 2018, https://s3.amazonaws.com/academia.edu.documents/35765925/Freiburg2007.pdf?AWSAccessKeyId=AKIAIWOWYYGZ2Y53UL3A&Expires=1535917745&Signature=5GMQ2ZEEZpiZIYsVCq2Z26zhcMoA%3D&response-content-disposition=inline%3B%20filename%3DLa_genealogie_des_langues_africaines_a_l.pdf.

¹⁵⁰ Niane, “Le Mali et la Deuxième Expansion Manden,” 145,

¹⁵¹ Stephen Baier, “Trans-Saharan Trade and the Sahel: Damergu, 1870–1930,” *Journal of African History* 18, no. 1 (1977): 40, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/180416>.

¹⁵² Niane, “Le Mali et la Deuxième Expansion Manden,” 145.

¹⁵³ Ricardo Laremont and Gregorian Hrach, “Political Islam in West Africa and the Sahel,” *Military Review* 86, no. 1 (2006): 34.

actively participated in the holy war that the Almoravids unleashed against the indigenous regions.¹⁵⁴ In 1056, his son Labi perpetuated the policy of alliance with the Almoravids and fought the Godala.¹⁵⁵ For example, at the end of 12th century, the Sosso people, under the Kante dynasty, went to war against Muslims.¹⁵⁶ Civil wars tore apart Wagadu, the central province; some groups of Soninke, remaining faithful to the ancient rites, fled to the province of Nema.¹⁵⁷ The brutal Islamization of the Sahel shocked indigenous civilization and sparked a trend of unpredictable insecurity and instability.

These trends did not spare the Mali empire. The empire, born from the ashes of the fallen empire of Ghana, knew all its glories under the reign of its first king, Soundiata Keita, and his successor Kankou Moussa, before collapsing amid conflicts of succession to the throne. Soundiata Keita conquered most former provinces of the Ghana empire, including the kingdom of Jolof and Tiramaghanroya in Senegambia, and extended the empire up to Casamance and current Guinea-Bissau in the West and Gao and Takrur in the East, after establishing a “Constitution” known as the “Kurukanfuga chart” during the legitimate Constituent Assembly.¹⁵⁸ For the stability of the empire, the charter codified customs, traditions, and prohibitions that still govern relations between the Mandenka clans, on the one hand, and between those clans and the other clans of West Africa.¹⁵⁹ The pilgrimage of his successor, Kankou Moussa, to Mecca in Saudi Arabia in 1325 and especially his transit to Cairo in Egypt—where he distributed so much gold that the price of the precious metal dropped for a long time—made him the best known of the emperors of Mali.¹⁶⁰ The echoes of his impressive pilgrimage and the reputation of the empire caught the interest of external invaders such as Egypt, the Maghreb, Portugal, and the merchant

¹⁵⁴ Niane, "Le Mali et la Deuxième Expansion Manden," 145.

¹⁵⁵ Niane, "Le Mali et la Deuxième Expansion Manden," 145.

¹⁵⁶ Niane, "Le Mali et la Deuxième Expansion Manden," 149.

¹⁵⁷ Niane, "Le Mali et la Deuxième Expansion Manden," 148.

¹⁵⁸ Niane, "Le Mali et la Deuxième Expansion Manden," 157.

¹⁵⁹ Niane, "Le Mali et la Deuxième Expansion Manden," 158.

¹⁶⁰ Niane, "Le Mali et la Deuxième Expansion Manden," 173.

cities of Italy.¹⁶¹ At the death of Kankou Moussa, the resurgence of insecurity and instability undermined the prosperity of the empire and led to its collapse.

A succession struggles led to political tensions and weakened the empire. During the 15th century, the empire of Mali declined with the assassination of two emperors in two years following the internal struggles over the succession of power.¹⁶² Madina Ly-Tall recounts that following the death of Mansa Moussa II around 1387, struggles erupted between the descendants of Sundiata, the senior branch of the royal family, and the junior branch, the descendants of Sundiata's younger brother, Mande Bory.¹⁶³ The former attempted to regain power from the latter, who had held the throne since the reign of Kankou Moussa.¹⁶⁴ The Tuareg, the Berbers, and the Songhay troops led the first strikes against the empire by taking advantage of these internal tensions.¹⁶⁵ Around 1433, the Tuareg forayed into and captured the major towns of Timbuktu, Walata, Nema (in current-day Mauritania), and Gao (in current-day Mali), and took control of their trans-Saharan roads, thus marking the collapse of the empire of Mali and the emergence of the Songhay empire under the rule of Sunni Ali Ber.¹⁶⁶ The empire fell and produced ripple effects of political uncertainty and rivalries.

Despite its early and strong relation with North Africa, the Songhay empire did not escape the trend of recurrent insecurity, domestic instability, and invasion. Internal uncertainty between the Islamized emperors and the large indigenous population as well as the empire's conquest by North Africa led to the collapse of Songhay. Furthermore, the early conversion to Islam of the kings that attracted the literati and Arab-Berber merchants did not ease domestic tensions.¹⁶⁷ As Islam became the official royal religion under the

¹⁶¹ Niane, "Le Mali et la Deuxième Expansion Manden," 173.

¹⁶² Madina Ly-Tall, "The Decline of the Mali Empire" in *Africa from the Twelfth to the Sixteenth Century*, ed. Djibril Tamsir Niane (Heinemann-California-UNESCO, 1984), 174.

¹⁶³ Ly-Tall, "The Decline of the Mali Empire," 174.

¹⁶⁴ Ly-Tall, "The Decline of the Mali Empire," 174.

¹⁶⁵ Ly-Tall, "The Decline of the Mali Empire," 174.

¹⁶⁶ Ly-Tall, "The Decline of the Mali Empire," 174.

¹⁶⁷ Ly-Tall, "The Decline of the Mali Empire," 174.

rule of Dia Kossoi XV, he had to strike a delicate and critical balance between the mass of the pagan populace and the Islamized populations.¹⁶⁸ Rivalries and tensions raged in the empire throughout the rule of Sunni ‘Ali Islam XVIII during which Songhay religious system was completely eclipsed and thus Sunni ‘Ali’s authority was destroyed with it—even though the rule of Muhammad Toure later completed the Islamization process.¹⁶⁹ The empire reached its apogee under the rule of Askia Daoud between 1549 and 1583 when it enjoyed a prosperous economy and intellectual pursuits flourished thanks to the trans-Saharan caravans that got the best from the Atlantic caravels.¹⁷⁰ In the 1580s, the Songhay empire conquered the oases of Gurara and Tuwat, as well as the salt flats of Taghaza (in current-day Mali), key transit passages to the trans-Saharan trade.¹⁷¹ This ascent was short-lived, however, as political rivalries rocked the empire.

The instability born from these succession struggles weakened the empire. The succession of Askia Daoud in 1586 created unrest among Songhay princes as the result of his brother’s proclamation as emperor.¹⁷² The empire rapidly decayed under the rule of Muhammad IV Bani, resulting in a civil war that split the empire into two.¹⁷³ The Balama Al-Sadduk with headquarters in Timbuktu revolted.¹⁷⁴ Along with other princes, he marched on Gao before Ishak II, the Askia of Gao, defeated and decimated the rebellion.¹⁷⁵ Consequently, these internal quarrels of succession weakened the Songhay empire, which could not withstand a Moroccan invasion. Under orders from the Sultan of Morocco, Pacha

¹⁶⁸ John O. Hunwick, “Religion and State in the Songhay Empire, 1464–1591,” 315, 317, Africabib.org, accessed September 2, 2018, <https://www.africabib.org/rec.php?RID=191529354>.

¹⁶⁹ Hunwick, “Religion and State in the Songhay Empire, 1464–1591,” 315, 317.

¹⁷⁰ Djibril Tamsir Niane, *Africa from the Twelfth to the Sixteenth Century* (Paris: Unesco International Scientific Committee for the Drafting of a General History of Africa, 1984), <https://books.google.com/books?isbn=9231017101>.

¹⁷¹ John O. Hunwick, *Timbuktu and the Songhay Empire: Al-Sa‘di’s Ta’rīkh Al-Sūdān Down to 1613, and Other Contemporary Documents*, vol. 27 (The Netherlands: Brill, 2003), <https://scholar.google.com/scholar>.

¹⁷² Hunwick, *Timbuktu and the Songhay Empire*.

¹⁷³ Hunwick, “Religion and State in the Songhay Empire.” 315.

¹⁷⁴ Michel Abitbol, “The End of the Songhay Empire,” in *General History of Africa V: Africa from the Sixteenth to the Eighteenth Century* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1992), 303.

¹⁷⁵ Niane, *Africa from the Twelfth to the Sixteenth Century*, 196.

Djouder, a Spanish leader of many Christian clergymen, led a Moroccan expedition that attacked Timbuktu and Gao, and defeated the Songhay army on March 12, 1591, during the battle of Tondibi (current-day Mali).¹⁷⁶ The poverty of the empire disappointed the Sultan of Morocco, who turned away from the region and sparked chaos made of mercenaries' brutal exploitation, successions of intrigue, and bloody revolts.¹⁷⁷ This growing insecurity contributed to the decline of trade as political instability grew in the region, leading to the fall of the Songhai empire, civil wars in Bornu (current-day Nigeria) and in Fezzan and Agades (current-day Niger), and ultimately, to French colonization.¹⁷⁸ The new unstable environment led to changes in trade itineraries with more considerable lateral traffic of oils, cereals, silks, cotton, and leather goods in the Maghreb as well as toward sub-Saharan Africa under the control of Moroccan, Tuat, Ghadames, Cha'amba, Omadi and Tuareg leaders, agents, and carriers.¹⁷⁹ This defeat marked the end of the empire, victim of its internal disputes and the external invasion. The fall of these empires, among many in the Sahel, demonstrates the climate of uncertainty, insecurity, and instability in the region before the European invasion. The trend of uncertainty remained almost constant throughout the period of European invasion and colonization.

2. Colonial Period (16th through 19th Centuries)

As time went on, Africa in general and the Sahel in particular revolted against European imperialist aggression in the forms of peaceful missionary explorations, military invasion, and ultimately conquest leading to colonization. The arrival of and the conquest by Europeans amplified political insecurity and instability as small established ethnic and religious-based kingdoms resisted colonial invasion.

¹⁷⁶ Denise Paulme, "L'Afrique Noire jusqu'au XIVe Siècle (Ie partie)," *Cahiers d'Histoire Mondiale*, [Black Africa until the Fourteenth Century (Part I), *Cahiers d'Histoire Mondiale*], *Journal of World History*, *Cuadernos De Historia Mundial* 3, no. 3 (1957):567, <http://libproxy.nps.edu/login?url=https://search.proquest.com/docview/1298903892?accountid=12702>.

¹⁷⁷ Paulme, "L'Afrique Noire jusqu'au XIVe Siècle (Ie partie)," 567.

¹⁷⁸ A. Adu Boahen, *Britain, the Sahara and the Western Sudan* (London: Oxford University Press, 1964), 105, 106, 115, 116, 119, 126.

¹⁷⁹ Colin W. Newbury, "North African and Western Sudan Trade in the Nineteenth Century: A Re-evaluation," *Journal of African History* 7, no. 2 (1966): 235, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/pdf/179952.pdf>.

Africans rejected European attempts at colonization. Rulers in the Sahel treated European conquests as military occupation, particularly where the imposition of white rule demanded unconditional submission of Muslim societies to infidels.¹⁸⁰ For example, in 1881, the decision of the French governor Briere de L'Isle to construct a colonial railway connecting Dakar to Saint Louis in Senegal met with opposition from Lat Dior, the Damel of Cayor in the Senegambia, who realized that the project would lead to the independence of the Cayor under the French influence.¹⁸¹ He initiated a holy alliance composed of Ely, the Emir of Trarza, Abdul Bokar Kane of Futa Toro, and Alboury N'Diaye from the Djoloff to evict the French from the land of their ancestors.¹⁸² In December 1881, Colonel Wendling led a French expedition in the Cayor, deposed Lat Dior, and enthroned his nephew Samba Laobe Fall in August 1883 who was later assassinated in 1886.¹⁸³ Lat Dior led the resistance and inflicted heavy losses on the French and their allies on October 27, 1886, at the well of Dekhle (current-day Senegal) before his death along with his sons.¹⁸⁴ The resistance fed violence across the Senegambia in response to French colonial ambitions.

In the middle of the 19th century, the Tukulor empire rose to be the regional power in Western Sudan, sharing guns and gunpowder with France and Britain; the empire's economy was "based on gold, gum, kola nuts, and textiles."¹⁸⁵ Rulers perceived the French policy of military conquest to promote and protect their commercial interests as disruptive to trade, political stability, and peaceful coexistence.¹⁸⁶ Referring to A. S. Kanya-Forstner, Carolyn M. Warner argues that the Tukulor rulers approved of commercial relations with

¹⁸⁰ A. Adu Boahen, ed., *Africa under Colonial Domination 1880–1935*, Vol. 7 (Paris: UNESCO, 1985), 117.

¹⁸¹ Boahen, *Africa under Colonial Domination 1880–1935*, 118.

¹⁸² Boahen, *Africa under Colonial Domination 1880–1935*, 118.

¹⁸³ Boahen, *Africa under Colonial Domination 1880–1935*, 119.

¹⁸⁴ Boahen, *Africa under Colonial Domination 1880–1935*, 119.

¹⁸⁵ Carolyn M. Warner, "The Political Economy of 'Quasi-Statehood' and the Demise of 19th Century African Politics," *Review of International Studies* 25, no. 2 (1999): 241, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/20097592>.

¹⁸⁶ Warner, "The Political Economy of 'Quasi-Statehood' and the Demise of 19th Century African Politics," 242.

France, but rejected French building and control via gunboat trade posts on Tukolor land.¹⁸⁷ Soon after, in 1864, trade with Europe caused fragmentation and led to a succession of crises exacerbated by the French and later dismantled the empire.¹⁸⁸ In March and April 1893, Louis Archinard invaded the territory of Macina, occupied the towns of San, Djenne, and Biandagara in current-day Mali, and repulsed the Tukolor sovereigns,¹⁸⁹ thus ending the rule of the empire. European colonization added to the existing insecurity and internal political instability made of succession feuds led to the gradual decline and collapse of empires and kingdoms.

3. Post-colonial Period (1960 to the Present Day)

The post-colonial period saw insecurity and instability from the independence of countries in the 1960s through the end of the Cold War in the 1990s, as well as from the global security challenges emerging post 9/11. The wars of secession and tensions born from the European balkanization of Africa marked the period after independence in the Sahel. These domestic challenges, creating greater insecurity and instability, shook most of the Sahel countries. Aïssatou Fall argues that the numerous armed conflicts, including bloody coups d'état, rebellions, or violent separatist movements sparked throughout West Africa in the aftermath of independence, were secessionist movements that claimed the independence of certain ethnic groups or regions.¹⁹⁰ The consequences of the balkanization of Africa did not spare the Sahel countries.

These internal crises involved all the Sahel countries. In the 1960s, the most glaring examples involved Nigeria and Chad while new secessionist movements rose in Niger,

¹⁸⁷ Warner, "The Political Economy of 'Quasi-Statehood' and the Demise of 19th Century African Politics," 242.

¹⁸⁸ Warner, "The Political Economy of 'Quasi-Statehood' and the Demise of 19th Century African Politics," 242, 247.

¹⁸⁹ Michal Tymowski, "Les Esclaves du Commandant Quiquandon," [The Slaves of Commander Quiquandon], *Éditions de l'École des Hautes Etudes en Sciences Sociales* 40, no. 158 (2000), 176, <https://journals.openedition.org/etudesafricaines/>.

¹⁹⁰ Aïssatou Fall, "Understanding the Casamance Conflict: A Background," Koffi Anan International Peacekeeping Training Center, 2010, 4, <https://www.africaportal.org/publications/understanding-the-casamance-conflict-a-background>.

Mali, and Senegal, respectively, in the 1980s and 1990s.¹⁹¹ For example, in 1966, the governance of the first Chadian President François Tombalbaye, an autocratic ruler, failed to settle a civil war sparked between the government and insurgent Muslim groups from the north, known as the Front de Libération Nationale du Tchad (FROLINAT).¹⁹² The violence was a response to interethnic tensions originating from a member of the southern Sara ethnic group.¹⁹³ In 1975, General Felix Malloum killed Tombalbaye during a coup, and civil war raged in the country as internal tensions divided FROLINAT in 1976.¹⁹⁴ Political struggles over power created greater instability and insecurity that continued through the successive presidencies of Goukouni Oueddei in 1979, Hissen Habre in 1982, and Idriss Deby in 1990.¹⁹⁵ Uncertainty remained ongoing in Chad as a result of political instability.

The rebellion in Casamance, Senegal, Mali, and Niger represented some examples of the numerous civil wars that rocked post-colonial Sahel countries. Since 1982, the Mouvement des Forces Démocratiques de la Casamance (MFDC) violently opposed the Senegalese government, claiming its sovereignty and territorial integrity inherent in independence in 1960.¹⁹⁶ Since independence in 1960, Mali and Niger faced ethnic tensions linked to the Tuareg who contested the rule of the majority Sudanese ethnic groups (Bambara in Mali and Djerma in Niger) and marginalization.¹⁹⁷ In the 1980s and 1990s, revolt broke out as the result of permanent and growing tensions between the central

¹⁹¹ Fall, "Understanding the Casamance Conflict: A Background," 4.

¹⁹² Jennifer Giroux, David Lanz, and Damiano Sguaitamatti, "The Tormented Triangle: The Regionalization of Conflict in Sudan, Chad, and the Central African Republic," *Crisis States Research Centre Working Papers Series 2*, no. 47 (2009): 4, <http://eprints.lse.ac.uk/28497/1/WP47.2.pdf>.

¹⁹³ Giroux, Lanz, and Sguaitamatti, "The Tormented Triangle: The Regionalization of Conflict in Sudan, Chad, and the Central African Republic," 4.

¹⁹⁴ Giroux, Lanz, and Sguaitamatti, "The Tormented Triangle: The Regionalization of Conflict in Sudan, Chad, and the Central African Republic," 4.

¹⁹⁵ Giroux, Lanz, and Sguaitamatti, "The Tormented Triangle: The Regionalization of Conflict in Sudan, Chad, and the Central African Republic," 4.

¹⁹⁶ Fall, "Understanding the Casamance Conflict: a Background," 4.

¹⁹⁷ Thomas Krings, "Marginalization and Revolt among the Tuareg in Mali and Niger," *GeoJournal* 36, no. 1 (1995): 58, <https://link.springer.com/content/pdf/10.1007/BF00812527.pdf>.

government and rebel groups.¹⁹⁸ The case of these three countries is emblematic of insecurity and instability in the Sahel during the post-colonial period.

Since the end of the Cold War, the Sahel countries have increasingly borne the brunt of contemporary global security challenges. The Sahel is part of the EU counterterrorism agenda because of the predominant expansion of AQIM's operations.¹⁹⁹ In addition to the Sahel, other particular geographical areas of the EU agenda include the South Asia given the efforts of NATO, the EU, and EU member states in Afghanistan, and Yemen regarding the failure of Nigerian Umar Farouk Abdulmutallab's attempt bombing on December 25, 2009.²⁰⁰ In addition, most countries in the Sahel faced internal tensions and rivalries due to states' failure to overcome ethnic, political, and religious differences, and to form and forge a common sense of citizenship.²⁰¹ According to an information report from the French Senate in 2013, the Sahel remains central in the expanded network of classic cannabis, cocaine, weapons, and migrants trafficking.²⁰² The combination of these challenges characterizes the complexity of the current security situation in the Sahel.

C. CURRENT SECURITY THREATS IN THE SAHEL

The prevailing security challenges in the Sahel resemble a duplication of threats that scoured the region in the past. The growing influence of Islamist extremists in the Sahel has a long historical path.²⁰³ The contemporary Sahel has become embroiled in a more disastrous security situation with stronger and active non-state actors. The 2017 annual early-warning report of the International Crisis Group comments that jihadists, entrenched criminal networks, and armed groups exploit political and security

¹⁹⁸ Krings, "Marginalization and Revolt among the Tuareg in Mali and Niger," 60.

¹⁹⁹ Thomas Renard, "Terrorism and Other Transnational Threats in the Sahel: What Role for the EU?," *Policy Brief September 2010* (2010), 1, https://www.files.ethz.ch/isn/126760/renard_policybrief_106.pdf.

²⁰⁰ Renard, "Terrorism and Other Transnational Threats in the Sahel: What Role for the EU?."

²⁰¹ David Carment, "Assessing State Failure: Implications for Theory and Policy," *Third World Quarterly* 24, no. 3 (2010): 412, doi: 10.1080/0143659032000084384.

²⁰² Senat Français, *Rapport Information de la Commission du Sahel*, [Information Report of the Sahel Commission] (Paris July 3, 2013), 109, <https://www.senat.fr/rap/r12-720/r12-720-syn.pdf>.

²⁰³ Kwesi Aning and Lydia Amedzrator, "Security in the Sahel. Linking the Atlantic to the Mediterranean," *Transatlantic Security from the Sahel to the Horn of Africa* 12 (2014): 61.

vacuums across the Sahel putting the region on a trajectory of greater violence and widening instability.²⁰⁴ The complexity of the current security situation is reflected in its transnational nature coupled with linkages between non-state actors engaged in transnational terrorism, which constitutes the greatest threat; the increase of human, weapons, and drugs smuggling; and recurrent secessionist rebellions.

1. Transnational Terrorism

International terrorism represents the current major and transnational threat in the whole Sahel. The harsh legacy of Algeria's civil war in the 1990s resulted in the emergence of AQIM, which has established footholds in the Sahel following Algeria's containment of the radical Islamist insurgency and the successful disruption of North African terrorist cells in Europe.²⁰⁵ AQIM is the oldest and most well-known terrorist group operating in the Sahara desert and the Sahel.²⁰⁶ The analysis of a jihadist blog posted on May 2013 implies that AQIM's theater of operations stretches from Mauritania in West Africa to the Horn of Africa and encompasses groups such as Boko Haram, Ansarul, and Al-Shabaab.²⁰⁷ AQIM's rooting in the Sahel represents a direct and immediate security challenge for countries in the region and has a major impact on regional geopolitics through its influential role in the interests of the Maghreb countries as well as its alleged connection to the dynamics between the Sahel and Maghreb.²⁰⁸ From its Algerian origins, the evolution and

²⁰⁴ European Union, *From Early Warning to Early Action Report, EU Watch List 2017*, International Crisis Group, <https://www.crisisgroup.org/global/3-watch-list-2017>.

²⁰⁵ Jacques Roussellier, "Terrorism in North Africa and the Sahel: Al-Qa'ida's Franchise or Freelance?," Middle East Institute, 2011, <http://www.mei.edu/content/terrorism-north-africa-and-sahel-al-qaidas-franchise-or-freelance>.

²⁰⁶ Pauline Bax, "How the Jihadists Advanced in Western Africa: QuickTake Q&A," *Bloomberg*, August 17, 2017, <https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2017-08-18/how-the-jihadists-advanced-in-western-africa-quicktake-q-a>.

²⁰⁷ Bernard E. Selwan Khoury and Esther Baron, "AQMI à la Conquête du Sahel «Islamique» Un Califat qui s' étend de la Mauritanie à la Somalie et qui Risque d'investir entre Autre l' Algérie La France contre l' Amérique," [AQIM Conquers the Sahel" Islamic "a Caliphate that Extends from Mauritania to Somalia and May Invest in among Others Algeria France against America], *Outre-Terre* 3 (2013): 3, <https://scholar.google.com>.

²⁰⁸ Dario Cristiani, and Riccardo Fabiani, "Al Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM): Implications for Algeria's Regional and International Relations," *Istituto Affari Internazionali*, 2011, 7, 8, <https://scholar.google.com>.

the progressive influence of AQIM have spread beyond Algeria's borders. AQIM has become the hegemon transnational non-state actor in the Sahel.

AQIM has also spun off many affiliates that have allied in the Sahel. Carrying the leadership of the global terror network in North Africa, AQIM and its notable affiliates—Ansar Dine, Al-Murabitun, Islamic State in Greater Sahara, and Boko Haram—are active in the Sahel countries, mainly in northern Mali and Niger, and other non-Sahel regions across northern Algeria, Libya, Nigeria, and Tunisia.²⁰⁹ They operate throughout the Sahel with their epicenter in Mali and Niger; Boko Haram in the Lake Chad Basin between Niger, Nigeria, and Cameroon; the Islamic State (IS) in Libya and the region of the “three borders” (Mali-Burkina-Niger); and Al Shabaab in the Horn of Africa. The most notable affiliates include the Movement for Oneness and Jihad in West Africa (MUJAO), Ansar Dine, Ansarul Islam, Liberation Front of Macina (FLM)—the name Macina refers to a historic Fulani Islamic emirate in the 19th century centered around Mopti and Segou in central-day Mali²¹⁰—and Al-Murabitun, all born as the result of the Malian crisis in 2012. The complexity of terrorism in the Sahel resides in the multiplicity of terrorist groups across the region.

Worse, under the impetus of AQIM, terrorist groups connected and strengthened their organization and coordination effort. In 2012, key terrorist leaders, including Iyad Ag Agaly, Amadou Koufa, and Belmoktar, formed close relationships.²¹¹ In 2015, Malian Iyad Ag Agaly, founder of Ansar Dine, created and led an alliance that gathered many terrorist groups in the Sahel under the name of Jamaat Nusrat Al-Islam Wal-Muslimin (JNIM, Group of Supporters of Islam and Muslims) including AQIM, Ansar Dine, FLM, and Al-Murabitun.²¹² The new alliance pledged allegiance to Taliban leader Mullah Haibatullah, Al-Qaeda leader Ayman Al-Zawahiri, and leader of Al Qaeda's North African franchise

²⁰⁹ Conor Gaffey, “Which Jihadi Groups Operate in Africa's Sahel Region?,” *Newsweek*, June 6, 2017, <http://www.newsweek.com/isis-africa-al-qaeda-africa-boko-haram-621443>.

²¹⁰ Conor Gaffey, “Mali Hotel Attack: What Is the Macina Liberation Front, Mali's Boko Haram?,” *Newsweek*, November 24, 2015, <http://www.newsweek.com/mali-hotel-attack-who-are-macina-liberation-front-malis-boko-haram-397727>.

²¹¹ Gaffey, “Mali Hotel Attack: What Is the Macina Liberation Front, Mali's Boko Haram?”

²¹² Bax, “How the Jihadists Advanced in Western Africa: QuickTake Q&A.”

Abu Musab Abdul Wadud.²¹³ The connection brought “together leaders of multiple ethnic groups” including Iyad Ag Ghaly, Tuareg leader of Ansar Dine; Muhammed Kufa, Fulani leader of Ansar Dine’s sub-affiliate Katiba in Macina; Yahia Abu Al-Hamam, Algerian-Arab leader of AQIM’s Sahara region; as well as Abou Abderrahman Al-Senhadji, Berber of AQIM’s judge; and Al-Hasan Al-Ansari, a Malian Tangara Arab, deputy leader of Al-Mourabitun.²¹⁴ For example, a coalition of AQIM, Ansar Dine, and MUJAO helped Tuareg rebels seize regions in northern Mali in 2012.²¹⁵ AQIM strengthens its capacities and influence by attracting and nurturing the cohesiveness of several actors of various ethnicities.

The various groups have freely operated beyond their respective country’s borders. The ambition to expand within the Sahel has also included the rapprochement between Abu Walid Al-Sahrawi, leader of the Islamic State in the Great Sahara, active in the area known as the “three borders” (Mali-Burkina-Niger), and Ansarul Islam, the Burkinabe jihadist group raging in the northern region of the country.²¹⁶ The ensuing alliance has claimed several attacks in Mali, Ivory Coast, Burkina Faso, and Niger. The double attacks on the French Embassy and the Army Staff in Ouagadougou, the capital of Burkina Faso, in March 2018, represented the most daring of these attacks.²¹⁷ The alliance has federated and outclassed AQIM and has continuously coordinated terrorist activities in the Western Sahel.

AQIM has accentuated connections with other notable terrorist groups in the Sahel, including Boko Haram in the region of the Lake Chad basin and Al Shabaab in the horn of Africa. The November 2011 U.S. House of Representatives Homeland Security report

²¹³ Jacob Zenn, “The Attack on U.S Special Forces in Niger: A Preliminary Assessment,” *Jamestown Foundation*, October 26, 2017, www.refworld.org/docid/5a0d6a2b4.html.

²¹⁴ Zenn, “The Attack on U.S Special Forces in Niger: A Preliminary Assessment.”

²¹⁵ Bax, “How the Jihadists Advanced in Western Africa: QuickTake Q&A.”

²¹⁶ Baba Ahmed, Benjamin Roger, Christophe Boisbouvier and Farid Alilat, “Sahel: Iyad Ag Ghaly, l’insaisissable ennemi public n°1,” [Sahel: Iyad Ag Ghaly, the Elusive Public Enemy No. 1], *Jeune Afrique*, March 19, 2018, <http://www.jeuneafrique.com/mag/540964/politique/sahel-iyad-ag-ghaly-linsaisissable-ennemi-public-n1/>.

²¹⁷ Laura Smith-Spark, “Burkina Faso Attacks Leave 8 Dead, 80 Injured,” *CNN*, March 3, 2018, <https://www.cnn.com/2018/03/03/africa/burkina-faso-ouagadougou-attack-intl/index.html>.

remarked that: “Boko Haram’s evolving tactics and targeting may be the result of ties between AQIM in North Africa and Al Shabaab in Somalia ... Such cross-pollination of weapons, tactics, and bomb-making expertise can quickly increase the capabilities of terrorist groups.”²¹⁸ Nigerian officials pointed to a Nigerian man returning from Somalia as the author of the August 2011 attack on the UN building in Abuja claimed by Boko Haram.²¹⁹ Also, changing tactics among insurgent and terrorist groups and the increasing attacks in this “arc of instability” revealed their growing relationship.²²⁰ The connection between major terrorist groups increases the potential of their sophistication with the exchange of expertise and experience.

In addition, AQIM sustains its funding through connections with drugs and weapons smuggling as well as kidnapping of Westerners in the Sahel. According to an analysis by the Foundation for Defense of Democracies’ Center on Sanctions and Illicit Finance, AQIM made around \$100 million through ransom and drug trading in 2016.²²¹ AQIM involvement in smuggling of narcotics as a source of funding has transformed the Sahel into a waystation between cartels in Latin America and European markets.²²² As a result, the group gained access to weapons such as small arms, machine-guns, and surface-to-air missiles, and facilitated its potential for recruiting.²²³ Kidnapping for ransom also constitutes a major source of funding. Andrew Gilligan presents AQIM as “the richest and best-armed offshoot of Al-Qaeda thanks to its tactic of kidnapping Westerners for

²¹⁸ Erin Foster-Bowser and Angelia Sanders, *Security Threats in the Sahel and Beyond: AQIM, Boko Haram and Al Shabaab* (Norfolk, VA: Civil Military Fusion Centre (NATO), April 2012), 10, www.cimicweb.org.

²¹⁹ Foster-Bowser and Sanders, *Security Threats in the Sahel and Beyond: AQIM, Boko Haram and Al Shabaab*.

²²⁰ Foster-Bowser and Sanders, *Security Threats in the Sahel and Beyond: AQIM, Boko Haram and Al Shabaab*, 1.

²²¹ Javier E. David, “Al Qaeda’s Arm in North Africa Has Made around \$100 Million through Ransom and Drug Trading,” *CNBC*, December 6, 2017, <https://www.cnbc.com/2017/12/06/al-qaedas-arm-in-north-africa-has-made-100-million-dollars-via-ransom-drug-trade.html>.

²²² Zachary Laub and Jonathan Masters, “Al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM),” *Council of Foreign Relations Backgrounders* 8, 2014, 5, <https://scholar.google.com>.

²²³ Laub and Masters, “Al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM),” 2.

ransom.”²²⁴ Between 2006 and 2011, AQIM collected an estimated \$70 million in ransom payments from the kidnapping of Westerners for ransom operations.²²⁵ According to the Algerian journal *El-Khabar*, in March 2012, Al-Qaeda in the Sahara Emirate “earned 183 million euros in ransoms.”²²⁶ Even more, various terrorist groups have emerged and infested the Sahel as the consequence of such connections.

The threat of AQIM has largely exceeded the borders of the Sahel and the Maghreb, respectively, as its main area of operation and origin. Carrying the ideology of international jihad based on the fight against regimes deemed anti-Islamic and the institution of Sharia states, AQIM has declared its foremost “far enemies” as Spain and France in particular because of their historic links and colonial legacy in the region, and for their continuous provision of political and military support to local regimes that AQIM opposes.²²⁷ In foreign travel advice to Algeria, the United Kingdom warns its citizens to remain vigilant in Algeria following various AQIM and its affiliates’ attacks.²²⁸ In March 2016, AQIM claimed a terrorist assault that left 16 people dead including four Europeans on the beach in Grand-Bassam in Ivory Coast.²²⁹ These assaults against states beyond the Sahel and Maghreb borders, as shown in Figure 3,²³⁰ demonstrate the strategic vision and ambition of AQIM.

²²⁴ Andrew Gilligan, “The Terror Threat Posed by Al-Qaeda Bandits Controlling the Sahara,” *Telegraph*, January 20, 2013, <https://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/al-qaeda/9813685/The-terror-threat-posed-by-al-Qaeda-bandits-controlling-the-Sahara.html?NewsWatchCanada.ca>.

²²⁵ Bowser and Sanders, *Security Threats in the Sahel and Beyond: AQIM, Boko Haram and Al Shabaab*, 2.

²²⁶ Khoury and Baron, “AQMI à la conquête du Sahel «islamique»,” [AQIM conquers the Sahel Islamic], 16.

²²⁷ Laub and Masters, “Al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM),” 3.

²²⁸ “Foreign travel advice Algeria,” Foreign and Commonwealth Office, July 13, 2018, <https://www.gov.uk/foreign-travel-advice/algeria/terrorism>.

²²⁹ Mark Tran and Alex Duval Smith, “Ivory Coast Attack: At Least 16 Dead’ after Gunmen Open Fire at Beach Resort,” *Guardian*, March 13, 2016, <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2016/mar/13/gunmen-open-fire-in-ivory-coast-tourist-resort>.

²³⁰ “Trans-Saharan Trafficking and Threats Finance, Google Search,” accessed August, 8, 2018, https://www.google.com/search?q=trans+saharan+trafficking+and+finance+threats&source=lnms&tbm=isch&sa=X&ved=0ahUKEwjH252x897cAhVmHDQIHRbdBk0Q_AUICygC&biw=1280&bih=913.

Figure 3 shows the complexity and the ambiguity of the nexus of terrorism and narcotics and human trafficking in the Sahel and the Maghreb.

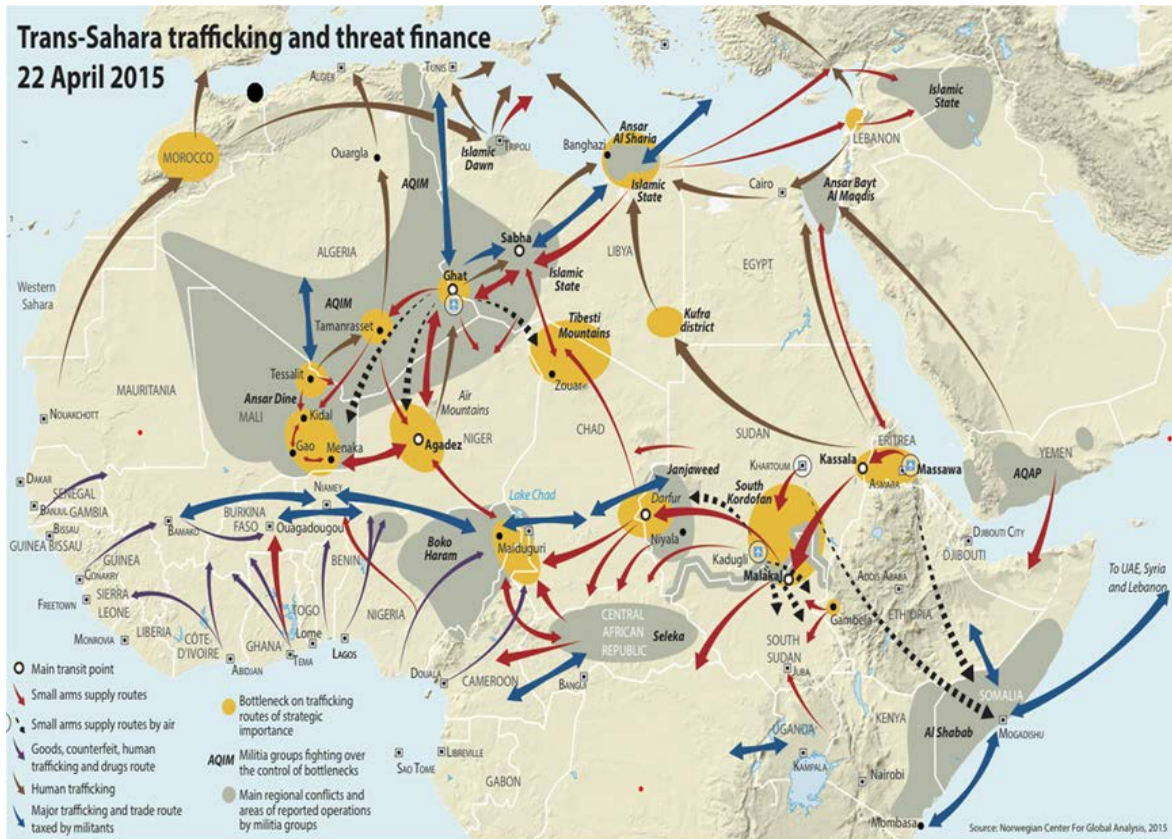


Figure 3. Linkages between criminality and terrorism²³¹

The extension of AQIM’s range of action represents its growing evolution from being a regional terrorist group to a global threat compared to its notable peers Boko Haram and Al Shaabab that focus locally.

2. Transnational Smuggling

Smugglers in the Sahel have continued to exploit and benefit from the heritage of trans-Saharan roads that had once served as a springboard for prosperous trade between the

²³¹ “Trans-Saharan Trafficking and Threats Finance,” Google Search.

Maghreb and the Sahel. Aning and Amedzrator maintain that the crisis dynamic in the Sahel under the debilitating influence of criminal groups follows a long historical path.²³² Contemporary organized criminal groups deal mainly in drug, weapons, and human smuggling. The intense complexity of this transnational smuggling has transformed the Sahel into a platform of convergence for international criminal networks.

The Sahel is an open space for drug smuggling—mainly cocaine and cannabis. Yahia Zoubir explains that the Sahel has become a transit hub for drugs from Latin America to Europe through Guinea Bissau, Mauritania, Morocco, and Algeria.²³³ The rapid expansion of illegal drugs across the Sahel flows through two distinct influxes by diverse routes that intersect at times: “South American cocaine to Europe including via Libya and Egypt” since around 2005, “and Moroccan cannabis resin to Libya, Egypt, and the Arabian Peninsula.”²³⁴ Both “the Atlantic coast” and “the desert through the Sahel and Sahara” serve as cocaine shipping routes to Europe for Colombian cartels.²³⁵ These actors began diverting some flights carrying drugs from the West African coast to the uninhabited and ungoverned spaces of Mali in the Sahel, strengthening their grip and surveillance in the whole West Africa.²³⁶ In November 2009, a Boeing 727 from South America with nearly ten tons of cocaine crashed in North Mali, evidencing the shifting patterns of cocaine transport.²³⁷ Around 15 percent of global cocaine production, representing 80 to 100 tons annually, transits through the region.²³⁸ The extension of drug smuggling beyond the Sahel

²³² Aning and Amedzrator, “Security in the Sahel. Linking the Atlantic to the Mediterranean,” 61.

²³³ Yahia H. Zoubir, “The Sahara-Sahel Quagmire: Regional and International Ramifications,” *Mediterranean Politics* 17, no. 3 (2012), 454, <https://doi.org/10.1080/13629395.2012.725307>.

²³⁴ Simon Julien, “Le Sahel comme espace de transit des stupéfiants. Acteurs et conséquences politiques,” [The Sahel as a Transit Area for Narcotics. Actors and Political Consequences], *Hérodote* 3 (2011):142.

²³⁵ Pascal Fletcher, “Climate, Arms and Drugs Make Lethal Mix in Sahel,” *Reuters*, June 5, 2008, <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-sahel-security-idUSL0578509820080605>.

²³⁶ Ricardo René Larémont, “Al Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb: Terrorism and Counterterrorism in the Sahel,” *African Security* 4, no. 4 (2011): 251.

²³⁷ Larémont, “Al Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb: Terrorism and Counterterrorism in the Sahel,” 251.

²³⁸ Julien, “Le Sahel comme espace de transit des stupéfiants. Acteurs et conséquences politiques,” [The Sahel as a Transit Area for Narcotics. Actors and Political Consequences], 12.

borders explains the transnational dimensions of the threat and its sophistication as the region serves as a highway for intercontinental trafficking.

The increasing intensity of drug smuggling in the Sahel constitutes a serious threat to regional countries. According to a 2013 U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) report, drug trafficking “threatens political, economic, and social development: it can foster corruption and violence, undermine rule of law and good governance, jeopardize economic growth, and pose potential public health risks.”²³⁹ Stephen Harmon argues that drug trafficking is a “potential for instability” in the Sahara-Sahel region.²⁴⁰ The 2004 Report of the UN Secretary General’s High Level Panel on Threats, Challenges and Changes entitled *A More Secure World: Our Shared Responsibilities* indicated that transnational drug smuggling posed an increased security threat to both individuals and states.²⁴¹ The UN Security Council, in December 2013, similarly noted that drug trafficking has contributed to undermine particularly states’ authority, security, stability, governance, social and economic development as well as rule of law in the Sahel.²⁴² The nature of illicit trafficking as a transnational activity carries potential economic and judicial risks, respectively, of exposition to criminal networks of “seizure and consequent financial loss,... non-compliance of other criminal business partners to ‘contractual agreements,’ [and] the possibility of criminal prosecution and consequent sentencing.”²⁴³ Thus, the challenges posed by transnational drug smuggling have seriously affected security in the Sahel.

²³⁹Brooke Stearns Lawson and Phyllis Dininio, “The Development Response to Drug Trafficking in Africa: A Programming Guide,” United States Agency for International Development (USAID), April 2013, https://www.usaid.gov/sites/default/files/documents/1860/Development_Response_to_Drug_Trafficking_in_Africa_Programming_Guide.pdf.

²⁴⁰ Stephen Harmon, “From GSPC to AQIM: The Evolution of an Algerian Islamist Terrorist Group into an Al-Qaeda Affiliate and Its Implications for the Sahara-Sahel Region,” *Concerned Africa Scholars* 85 (2010): 19.

²⁴¹ Antonio L. Mazzitelli, “Transnational Organized Crime in West Africa: The Additional Challenge,” *International Affairs (Royal Institute of International Affairs 1944)*, 83, no. 6 (2007): 1071–090. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/4541911>.

²⁴² Mazzitelli, “Transnational Organized Crime in West Africa: The Additional Challenge.”

²⁴³ Lansana Gberie, “Crime, Violence and Politics: Drug Trafficking and Counter Narcotics Policies in Mali and Guinea,” *Center for 21st Century Security and Intelligence Latin America Initiative* (2015), <https://www.brookings.edu/wp-content/uploads/2016/07/Gberie-Mali-and-Guinea-final.pdf>.

More importantly, drug-smuggling networks derive strength from complex networks that serve the interests of such non-state actors as terrorist and secessionist groups. The flexibility, global outreach, and amorphous structure of criminal networks in the Sahel have ensured their success.²⁴⁴ Ricardo Larémont argues that AQIM's survival in the region depends on its economic and symbiotic link with local Tuareg and Bérabiche tribes involved in clandestine contraband of various products such as cocaine, cannabis resin or hashish, and counterfeit tobacco as well as human beings.²⁴⁵ The recent entry of AQIM into airborne cocaine trafficking has brought a new dynamic to the collaboration between smugglers and terrorists in the Sahel.²⁴⁶ In 2009, the Director of United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), Antonio Maria Costa, remarked that in addition to terrorist groups, rebel groups in the Sahel harness resources from drug trafficking to finance their operations, buy equipment, and pay their troops.²⁴⁷ Extreme and profitable contraband traffic in cocaine has exacerbated the mix of transnational smuggling.²⁴⁸ All these non-state actors earn great benefits through drug smuggling in the region.

The large sums of money generated by drug smuggling drive non-state actors in this trafficking. UNODC estimates that about \$1.8 billion in cocaine—or about 25 percent of Europe's annual cocaine consumption—goes through West Africa and the Sahel.²⁴⁹ These enormous revenues largely exceed the annual military budget of almost all Sahel countries, as in the case of the \$183 million Malian military budget, the largest in the Sahel

²⁴⁴ Gail Wannenburg, "Organized Crime in West Africa," *African Security Studies* 14, no. 4 (2005): 5.

²⁴⁵ Larémont, "Al Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb: Terrorism and Counterterrorism in the Sahel," 249.

²⁴⁶ Larémont, "Al Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb: Terrorism and Counterterrorism in the Sahel," 251.

²⁴⁷ "L'argent de la drogue alimente les groupes terroristes dans le Sahel, selon l'ONU," [Drug Money Feeds Terrorist Groups in the Sahel, According to the UN], *Jeune Afrique*, December 8, 2009, <http://www.jeuneafrique.com/depeches/98570/politique/largent-de-la-droque-alimente-les-groupes-terroristes-dans-le-sahel-selon-lonu/>.

²⁴⁸ Stephen A. Harmon, *Terror and Insurgency in the Sahara-Sahel Region: Corruption, Contraband, Jihad and the Mali War of 2012–2013* (London: Routledge, 2016), 33.

²⁴⁹ Stephen Ellis, "West Africa's International Drug Trade," *African Affairs* 108, no. 431 (2009): 172, <https://doi.org/10.1093/afraf/adp017>.

countries, and close to the \$5.3 billion Algerian military budget in 2009.²⁵⁰ Therefore, money remains the major motivation of drug smuggling in the Sahel.

Like drug smuggling, transnational human trafficking has also represented a regional security threat, particularly with the migration of despairing youth from conflict zones and poor regions of Sub-Saharan Africa across the Sahel strip toward Europe via the Mediterranean coast. Human smuggling has become an increasingly lucrative and flourishing enterprise.²⁵¹ This traffic has dangerous connections with organized criminal groups and the enormous incomes that they generate. For example, the Tebu in Chad, with ties in Libya, Niger, and Sudan, have taken advantage of human smuggling and earned as much as \$60,000 per week, resulting in the expansion of their territory “from Agadez in Niger to Al Kufra in Libya and east from Lake Chad to the Salvador Triangle on the border with Mali.”²⁵² The new territorial expansion allowed the Tebu to fund the purchase of arms through their illegal activities, resulting in violent clashes with the Tuaregs, another dominant nomadic tribe in the region.²⁵³ In addition to the Tebu, the Tuaregs dispersed in Algeria, Mali, Niger, and Libya are also important lynchpins in the trans-Saharan human smuggling network that remains a security challenge in the Sahel as it has fueled instability.²⁵⁴ Like the large sums of money originating from drugs, the revenue from human trafficking has fueled insecurity and instability in the Sahel.

Similarly, transnational weapons smuggling has fueled insecurity in the Sahel. From drug traffickers to terrorist and secessionist movements, this traffic has remained the center of gravity of their operational and tactical capabilities. Francesco Strazzari and

²⁵⁰ Jean-Pierre Filiu, “Could Al-Qaida Turn African in the Sahel?,” SciencesPo, 2010, 7, <https://hal-sciencespo.archives-ouvertes.fr/hal-01069428>.

²⁵¹ Tuesday Reitano, “A Perilous but Profitable Crossing: The Changing Nature of Migrant Smuggling through Sub-Saharan Africa to Europe and EU Migration Policy (2012–2015),” *European Review of Organized Crime* 2, no. 1 (2015): 1, https://s3.amazonaws.com/academia.edu.documents/37867116/1_Tuesday_Reitano_pp1-23.pdf?AWSAccessKeyId=AKIAIWOWYYGZ2Y53UL3A&Expires=1536044024&Signature=Qbcrp%2FYngERV4rBRtPsKNaziJc%3D&response-content-disposition=inline%3B%20filename%3DPerilous_but_Profitable_Crossing_The_Cha.pdf.

²⁵² Reitano, “A Perilous but Profitable Crossing,” 10.

²⁵³ Reitano, “A Perilous but Profitable Crossing,” 10.

²⁵⁴ Reitano, “A Perilous but Profitable Crossing,” 10.

Simone Tholens point out that local countries and the international community are concerned about the uncontrolled proliferation of weapons and their accessibility to criminal groups and insurgencies, which has contributed to the rise of new armed groups across various conflict fronts in the Sahel.²⁵⁵ The spectacular terrorist attack against the gas complex of Tiguentourine, in Amenas, in Algeria involved smuggled weapons from the Libyan civil war.²⁵⁶ The Sahel has faced weapons smuggling mainly from conflict zones. These zones included the Western Sahara since 1975, Aouzou's strip between Chad-Libya in the 1980s, the civil war in Algeria in the 1990s, Darfur and South Sudan in Sudan, the Malian crisis 2011 and 2012, and mainly the civil war in Libya in 2011 following the collapse of the Gaddafi regime. According to the *Washington Post*, in 2012, the Malian insurgency used smuggled weapons from a Libyan arsenal to seize northern regions, and Boko Haram militants who participated in these operations returned to Nigeria with Libyan heavy weapons that served them in the Malian conflict.²⁵⁷ The regional and international dimension of weapons smuggling connected to criminal and armed groups has raised major security challenges among Libya's neighbors as guns proliferation from the country has rekindled local conflicts in the Sahel.²⁵⁸ In sum, smuggling represents as complex a threat as transnational terrorism and insurgencies because the multiple actors involved and their immense interests oppose regional countries' interests.

3. Secessionist Movements

Countries in the Sahel have continued to deal with claims of secessionist movements born in the aftermath of independence. For example, in Mali, a recurrent Tuareg insurgency surfaced when 150 Tuareg officers and soldiers seized their serving

²⁵⁵ Francesco Strazzari, "Libyan Arms and Regional Instability," *International Spectator* 49, no. 3 (2014): 54, <https://doi.org/10.1080/03932729.2014.937142>.

²⁵⁶ Strazzari, "Libyan Arms and Regional Instability," 59.

²⁵⁷ Sudarsan Raghavan, "Nigerian Islamist Militants Return from Mali with Weapons, Skills," *Washington Post*, May 31, 2013, https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/africa/nigerian-islamist-militants-return-from-mali-with-weapons-skills/2013/05/31/d377579e-c628-11e2-9cd9-3b9a22a4000a_story.html?utm_term=.4575db2137fe.

²⁵⁸ Francesco Strazzari and Simone Tholens, "'Tesco for Terrorists' Reconsidered: Arms and Conflict Dynamics in Libya and in the Sahara-Sahel Region," *European Journal on Criminal Policy and Research* 20, no. 3 (2014): 343, DOI 10.1007/s10610-014-9233-y.

military camps in Kidal and Menaka and deserted with their weapons and army vehicles on May 23, 2006.²⁵⁹ After 30 years of rebellion in the southern region, the Casamance conflict remained an unhealed sore for Senegal.²⁶⁰ In February 2008, a rebellion resurfaced in Chad and aimed to topple President Deby before the uprising was defeated with French support.²⁶¹ The insurgencies have remained active with intermittent insecurity despite the evolution of their claims and methods over time.

The insurgencies have adapted over time to the new security environment and have created connections beyond national borders. Internal secessionist movements contesting central authority have overflowed into neighboring countries and beyond with transnational connections creating regional security challenges. The conflict in Casamance in Senegal for example, has spilled over into Gambia and Guinea Bissau where rebels groups have reappeared, creating tension between neighboring countries.²⁶² Although it has not reached the level of violence of other Sahel conflicts, the insurgency has left a fertile, beach-fringed chunk of land wedged in Casamance between northern Gambia, and southern Guinea-Bissau has been stuck in a situation of “neither war nor peace.”²⁶³ The African liberation forces in Mauritania (FLAM) has remained passive along the southern border of the country with Senegal.²⁶⁴ This political movement created in 1980 has accused Mauritania’s Moorish-dominated governments of promoting a form of “apartheid” against black Mauritians and often carried out sporadic, small-scale guerrilla operations in the

²⁵⁹ Angel Rabasa, I. V. Gordon, Peter Chalk, Audra K. Grant, K. Scott McMahon, Stephanie Pezard, Caroline Reilly, David Ucko, and S. Rebecca Zimmerman, *From Insurgency to Stability. Volume 2: Insights from Selected Case Studies* (Santa Monica, CA: RAND, 2011), <http://www.jstor.org/stable/10.7249/mg1111-2osd.13>.

²⁶⁰ David Lewis, “Casamance Conflict Is Unhealed Sore for Senegal,” *Reuters*, February 25, 2012, <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-senegal-casamance/casamance-conflict-is-unhealed-sore-for-senegal-idUSTRE81O09C20120225>.

²⁶¹ Lydia Polgreenfeb, “Chad’s Capital Eerily Quiet as Rebellion Falter,” *New York Times*, February 6, 2008, <https://www.nytimes.com/2008/02/06/world/africa/06chad.html>.

²⁶² Lewis, “Casamance Conflict Is Unhealed Sore for Senegal.”

²⁶³ Lewis, “Casamance Conflict Is Unhealed Sore for Senegal.”

²⁶⁴ Chris Simpson, “Mauritania’s Victims of the Race Divide,” *BBC NEWS*, August 29, 2001, <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/africa/1515054.stm>.

south of the country.²⁶⁵ The prevailing ramifications of internal crises spilling into neighboring countries have been felt throughout the whole Sahel. Indeed, the transnational nature of these insurrections makes them regional insecurity and instability drivers.

The multi-dimensional crisis in Mali in 2011 and 2012 represented the worst recent case where the spread of internal threats, including terrorism, drug, and weapons smuggling as well as political tension, reached the regional level. Mali experienced a military coup d'état carried out by a group of junior officers that consequently led to the fall of the three administrative regions of Gao, Timbuktu, and Kidal. The territory came under the control of a coalition of secessionist National Movement of the Liberation Azawad (NMLA) and terrorist groups that allied and fought the Malian army.²⁶⁶ NMLA connections far exceeded the borders of Mali from where the movement fought the Malian army. Conflict in Mali, in its turn, came as “the result of escalation and diffusion and contagion mechanisms from the Libyan Civil War.”²⁶⁷ The Libyan conflict spilled over national borders and exacerbated the crisis in Mali with connections between the secessionist movement of the NMLA, terrorist groups, and the Tuareg military diaspora in Libya. The latest Tuareg rebellions came as the result of increasing destabilization of the Sahara-Sahel region since 2003, with its epicenter in the northern regions of Niger and Mali.²⁶⁸ The spectrum of the current failing and failed nature of countries in the Sahel having the transnational traits of internal tensions bears similarities with the decline and the collapse of early empires.

The threat of secessionism has spared only Burkina Faso. The country has never experienced internal secessionist claims since independence in 1960. Multiple military coups d'état, sources of political instability, have never degenerated into territorial claims.

²⁶⁵ Chris Simpson, “Mauritania’s Victims of the Race Divide,” *BBC NEWS*, August 29, 2001, <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/africa/1515054.stm>.

²⁶⁶ Emmanuel Grégoire, “Islamistes et rebelles touaregs maliens: alliances, rivalités et ruptures.” [Malian Tuareg Rebels and Islamists: Alliances, Rivalries and Ruptures], *EchoGéo* (2013): 1, 23, <https://journals.openedition.org/echogeo/13466>.

²⁶⁷ Scott Shaw, “Fallout in the Sahel: The Geographic Spread of Conflict from Libya to Mali,” *Canadian Foreign Policy Journal* 19, no. 2 (2013): abstract, <https://doi.org/10.1080/11926422.2013.805153>.

²⁶⁸ Jeremy Keenan, “Uranium Goes Critical in Niger: Tuareg Rebellions Threaten Sahelian Conflagration,” *Review of African Political Economy* 35, no. 117 (2008): 453, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/20406532>.

The country has kept its homogeneity despite internal tensions. Still, the overflow of the Malian crisis of 2012 into the country has disrupted its tranquility following alleged obscure connections between non-state actors and the regime of President Blaise Compaore at the time. In November 2017, President Roch Kabore blamed his predecessor Blaise Compaore of “collusion” with the jihadists who fueled the Malian crisis.²⁶⁹ Burkina Faso has suffered the consequences of its ambiguous connections to the Malian Tuareg rebellion in 2012.

In sum, the disastrous security situation in the Sahel is the result of the combination of cross-border threats, including especially international terrorism, smuggling, and secessionist movements. Their transnational nature undermines actions to overcome them and challenges states’ authority as well as the foundation of nations in the region, and the subsequent effects of this situation create an environment of permanent instability and insecurity.

²⁶⁹ Christophe Ayad, “Le président burkinabé met en cause les «Collusions» de son prédécesseur avec les djihadistes,” [The Burkinabé president puts in question the "collusions" of his predecessor with the jihadists], *Le Monde Afrique*, November 6, 2017, http://www.lemonde.fr/afrique/article/2017/11/06/le-president-burkinabe-met-en-cause-les-collusions-de-son-predecesseur-avec-les-djihadistes_5210917_3212.html#jKfOBekKSkh1lb6V.99.

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III. ATTEMPTS AT REGIONAL SECURITY COOPERATION IN THE SAHEL

The Sahel countries have collectively reacted to the growing transnational threats within the region, organizing themselves according to their respective capacities to meet the security challenges in the region. Their degree of commitment, expression of political will, and support from their international partners, respectively, have determined the outcome of the different attempts at regional security cooperation. This chapter examines factors that have fostered regional security cooperation and assesses some of the successful and failed regional cooperation attempts, U.S.-led initiatives, and the challenges to achieving effective and efficient cooperation by transcending the countries' rivalries, which constitute the main obstacles.

A. FACTORS THAT FOSTER REGIONAL SECURITY COOPERATION

Three primary factors have driven Sahel countries to attempt regional security cooperation. The first factor is the growth of transnational threats, mainly from AQIM and its affiliates that have progressively established themselves in the Sahel as well as the Maghreb, threatening local governments. According to John Rollins, the primary terrorist threat in the Sahel and North Africa is AQIM, its affiliates, and its related cells,²⁷⁰ which spread progressively through the Algerian Saharan provinces and hold training camps in the neighboring Sahel countries.²⁷¹ This transnational dynamic reflects both the complexity and ambiguity of the AQIM threat.

Second, in addition to security challenges, the Sahel countries share a wide range of internal problems, including youth unemployment, lack of education and opportunity,

²⁷⁰ John Rollins, *Al Qaeda and Affiliates: Historical Perspective, Global Presence, and Implications for U.S. Policy*, CRS Report No. R41070 (Washington, DC: Congressional Research Service, 2010), 14, https://books.google.com/books?hl=en&lr=&id=BKwAA-j9E0oC&oi=fnd&pg=PA1&dq=Al+Qaeda+and+Affiliates:+Historical+Perspective,+Global+Presence,+and+Implications+for+U.S.+Policy+&ots=zIGo2De97k&sig=MFrMOimLHkBEWJTqTzox_OAwDR0#v=onepage&q=Al%20Qaeda%20and%20Affiliates%3A%20Historical%20Perspective%2C%20Global%20Presence%2C%20and%20Implications%20for%20U.S.%20Policy&f=false.

²⁷¹ Rollins, *Al Qaeda and Affiliates: Historical Perspective, Global Presence, and Implications for U.S. Policy*, 14.

poverty, and drought that have contributed to the deterioration of regional security conditions and the cooperation to resolve such. Sahel countries have realized that success in overcoming these governance issues lies in their cooperation, which is also more credible in the eyes of the international community. Collective and successful efforts to deal with poverty and infectious disease, to end transnational activities, to carry out post-civil war reconstruction, and to minimize terrorist threats and the spillover of dangerous materials require partnership between responsible states.²⁷² The awareness of the Sahel countries about the homogeneity of their security problem represents a positive step in improving cooperation.

Third, while countries in the region did not always fully perceive the rising security challenges as a major threat to their national security, the international community and Western powers, including the United States and the European Union, have long advocated for regional security cooperation. According to the *World Politics Review*, in June 2017, the UN Security Council welcomed and approved a resolution plan for Mauritania, Mali, Burkina Faso, Niger, and Chad to combat extremist militant groups across the Sahel.²⁷³ In recent years, incentives for security cooperation have originated from local governments' initiatives as well from external initiatives. For example, Algeria is a key player in security cooperation in the Sahel, given its central geographic position at the crossroads between the Mediterranean, the Arab World, and Sub-Saharan Africa.²⁷⁴ Algeria also has strong diplomatic influence because the country is a member of the Organization of the Islamic Conference, the Arab League, the African Union, NATO's Mediterranean Dialogue and the New Partnership for Africa's Development, and is the economic and military leader in the region.²⁷⁵ Because of its influence, Algeria plays a central role in whether cooperation

²⁷² Patrick Stewart, "Weak States and Global Threats: Assessing Evidence of Spillovers," *Center for Global Development Working Paper* No. 73 (January 2006), 3, <http://dx.doi.org/10.2139/ssrn.984057>.

²⁷³ Anouar Boukhars, "Overcoming the Barriers to Regional Security Cooperation in West Africa and the Sahel," *World Politics Review*, May 30, 2017. <https://www.worldpoliticsreview.com/articles/22299/overcoming-the-barriers-to-regional-security-cooperation-in-west-africa-and-the-sahel>.

²⁷⁴ Peter. J. Pham, "Foreign Influences and Shifting Horizons: The Ongoing Evolution of Al Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb," *Orbis* 55, no. 2 (2011): 240.

²⁷⁵ Pham, "Foreign Influences and Shifting Horizons," 240.

succeeds or fails in the Sahel. Considered “as a distinct and integrated region,” the Sahel-Saharan regions experienced securitization initiatives ranging mainly from “Algeria’s attempts to control its own Saharan reaches,” to “a series of U.S.-led primarily military programs.”²⁷⁶ In addition, securitization initiatives also include remarkable missions in Somalia and the Basin of the Lake Chad that were led by regional countries. The deterioration of the security environment motivated the reaction of the Sahel countries toward regional security cooperation initiatives.

B. FAILED ATTEMPTS AT REGIONAL COOPERATION

In the Sahel, countries’ different national and geopolitical interests have influenced their perception of transnational threats, have revived traditional regional rivalries and competitions, and have caused some regional security cooperation attempts to fail. These initiatives include the Joint Operational Staff Committee (CEMOC) between Algeria, Mali, and Mauritania and the Fusion and Liaison Unit (UFL) between Algeria, Burkina-Faso, Niger, Nigeria, Libya, Mauritania, Chad, and Mali.

1. CEMOC

Some of the Algerian-led initiatives to achieve regional security cooperation have failed to achieve their expected objectives. These Algerian efforts, perceived as a tool serving Algerian interests, combined with participant states’ weakness, might explain the failure.²⁷⁷ CEMOC has borne the stigma of Algeria’s domination, influence, and political manipulation in the Sahel, and it failed as a whole.²⁷⁸ CEMOC’s creation fell within the framework of regional security cooperation in the Sahel’s war on transnational terrorism. This military staff structure created on April 21, 2012, regrouped the armed forces of member countries under the leadership of Algeria with headquarters in Tamanrasset in

²⁷⁶ Stephen Harmon, “Securitization Initiatives in the Sahara-Sahel Region in the Twenty-first Century,” *African Security* 8, no. 4 (2015): 228, <https://doi.org/10.1080/19392206.2015.1100503>.

²⁷⁷ Laurence Thieux., “The Dilemmas of Algerian Foreign Policy Since 2011: Between Normative Entrapment and Pragmatic Responses to the New Regional Security Challenges,” *Journal of North African Studies* (2018): 14, doi: 10.1080/13629387.2018.1454651.

²⁷⁸ Thieux., “The Dilemmas of Algerian Foreign Policy Since 2011: Between Normative Entrapment and Pragmatic Responses to the New Regional Security Challenges,” 14.

southern Algeria, aiming for the deployment of 75,000 troops by the end of 2012 to localize and destroy terrorist groups.²⁷⁹ From its creation in 2012 to the present, CEMOC has failed at the political, operational, and tactical levels.

CEMOC never really had a chance because it was led by Algeria, which carries a stigma. Politically, the member countries have not committed any major or concrete actions for its operationalization. The organization lacked a clear political framework as well as proper funding. Member countries that consented to join the organization did so without any further subsequent actions; their membership remained the sole political commitment to the organization and has faced criticism. In September 2011, Niger's Minister of Foreign Affairs, Mohamed Bazoum, called CEMOC "the masquerade of Algerian counterterrorism."²⁸⁰ He declared Algeria's advocated Joint Military Headquarters, established in Tamanrasset in April 2010 to counter terrorism and crime in the Sahel, had been ineffective; in particular, he noted that CEMOC had not conducted any operation.²⁸¹ The organization also lacked trust from some key regional countries and the support of international partners because of the stigma associated with Algerian domination. Therefore, the stillborn CEMOC possessed little chance to perform any achievements.

Operationally, the lack of orientation and political commitment has negatively affected the operational and tactical levels, reducing CEMOC to a bureaucratic organization. The main actions at the operational level have included periodic meetings of the committee of the Joint Chiefs of Staff of the member countries to examine the security situation in the region. Their last meeting dates back to August 15, 2017, in Nouakchott, Mauritania, with the purpose to analyze the security situation in the Sahel region and

²⁷⁹ "L'Algérie et la lutte anti-terroriste dans le Sahel" [Algeria and the Fight against Terrorism in the Sahel], Terrorism Research Center, accessed June 8, 2018, <http://www.recherches-sur-le-terrorisme.com/Documentsterrorisme/lutte-anti-terrorisme-sahel-cemoc-algerie.html>.

²⁸⁰ Jeremy H. Keenan, "Politique étrangère et guerre mondiale contre le terrorisme dans la reproduction du pouvoir algérien," [Foreign Policy and World War against Terrorism in the Reproduction of Algerian Power], *Revue Tiers Monde* 2 (2012): 51.

²⁸¹ Keenan, "Foreign Policy and World War against Terrorism in the Reproduction of Algerian Power," 51.

learned lessons from the previous meeting held on October 28, 2016, in Bamako, Mali.²⁸² The series of high-level meetings has not resulted in any major, active decisions. From its creation to today, CEMOC has not mobilized forces or planned and coordinated a single operation on the ground. CEMOC has quickly showed its limits and remained an empty shell by reducing its ambitions to the maintenance of a figurative and non-operational headquarters. Therefore, inaction has contributed to CEMOC's failure.

Tactically, CEMOC's ambitions to deploy 75,000 men and to conduct border patrols have fizzled almost entirely. A few officers from the four member countries have staffed the tactical headquarters, grouped in brand new air-conditioned buildings in Tamanasset, in southern Algeria.²⁸³ The inactivity of the tactical headquarters has characterized the failure of CEMOC's decisional process. Although the organization continues to exist theoretically, this Algerian-led regional initiative has failed miserably due to the lack of political will and the disinterest of international partners.

2. UFL

Like CEMOC, the ambitions of the UFL's initiative, which began with the best intentions of the member countries and thus raised hopes, quickly degraded due to the lack of tangible results. The UFL is an expanded regional information-sharing initiative among the Sahel countries aimed at strengthening the capacity of CEMOC. The organization falls within the framework of regional coordination and intelligence sharing in the war on transnational terrorism. For goodwill, during a meeting, the heads of the intelligence and security organizations of the seven Sahel countries called "Les Pays Du Champ" (The Countries of the Field) created the UFL on April 6, 2010, with its headquarters in Algiers to coordinate the war on transnational terror and counter terrorist propaganda.²⁸⁴

²⁸² Adam Kenzi, "Conseil des Chefs d'état-major des Pays membres du CEMOC: une délégation de l'ANP à Nouakchott," [Council of Chiefs of Staff of CEMOC Member Countries: ANP Delegation in Nouakchott], *AlgeriePatriotique*, August 14, 2017, <https://www.algeriepatriotique.com/2017/08/14/conseil-chefs-detat-major-pays-membres-cemoc-delegation-de-lanp-a-nouakchott/>.

²⁸³ Terrorism Research Center, "L'Algérie et la lutte anti-terroriste dans le Sahel," [Algeria and the Fight against Terrorism in the Sahel].

²⁸⁴ Saturnin Nadoun Coulibaly, "Afrique de l'Ouest: Unité de Fusion et de Liaison - Un rempart contre le terrorisme dans le Sahel," [West Africa: Fusion and Liaison Unit - A Bulwark against Terrorism in the Sahel], *Sidwaya Quotidien*, April 12, 2012, <http://fr.allafrica.com/stories/201204130875.html>.

The organization grew out of the March 2010 recommendations of the Foreign Ministers of the seven countries—including Algeria, Mali, Mauritania, Niger, Burkina-Faso, Libya, and Chad—to combat the growing terrorist threat in the Sahel.²⁸⁵ Nigeria initially declined to join but later accepted the offer in November 2011 because Boko Haram posed a threat in the north of the country.²⁸⁶ Nevertheless, the Algerian-led organization has struggled to gather member countries’ deep commitment as well as strong external support.

Overall, the achievements of the UFL have not satisfied its members, and hope has seemingly faded with regard to results. For example, in 2012, following the collapse of Mali’s northern regions into the hands of terrorist, secessionist, and criminal groups, critics rose against the organization for its lack of foresight.²⁸⁷ Some European leaders also perceived CEMOC and UFL as “empty shells,” doubting the Algerian commitment to achieve security in the Sahel²⁸⁸ and undermining both organizations’ likelihood to achieve any substantial results.

Both CEMOC and UFL failed to achieve the main objective of bolstering military, security, and intelligence cooperation in the war against extremism and responding to the Malian crisis in 2012.²⁸⁹ Terrorist networks and actions have multiplied, and organized crime has reached unexpected proportions throughout the region. AQIM’s violent activities including operations in northern Mauritania, Mali, Niger, and southern Algeria, as well as the kidnapping of foreigners and smuggling of cars, cigarettes, arms, and drugs, have

²⁸⁵ Coulibaly, “West Africa: Fusion and Liaison Unit - A Bulwark against Terrorism in the Sahel.”

²⁸⁶ Coulibaly, “West Africa: Fusion and Liaison Unit - A Bulwark against Terrorism in the Sahel.”

²⁸⁷ “Niger: de si précieux Services de renseignement,” [Niger: So Valuable Intelligence Services], *Jeuneafrique*, August, 1, 2014, <http://www.jeuneafrique.com/48257/politique/niger-de-si-pr-cieux-services-de-renseignement/>.

²⁸⁸ Ismail Olawale and Agalaw Ababu Kife, “New Collective Security Arrangements in the Sahel: A Comparative Study of the MNJTF and G-5 Sahel,” *Friedrich Ebert Stiftung*, last modified, June 6, 2018, library.fes.de/pdf-files/bueros/fes-pscc/14346-20180606.pdf.

²⁸⁹ Anouar Boukhars, “Overcoming the Barriers to Regional Security Cooperation in West Africa and the Sahel,” <https://www.google.com/search?q=New+Collective+Security+Arrangements+in+the+Sahel%3A+a+comparative+study+of+the+MNJTF+and+G-5+Sahel.%22&ie=utf-8&oe=utf-8&client=firefox-b-abSahel.>”

reached an alarming height in recent years, creating instability in the Maghreb and Sahel.²⁹⁰ The progressive degradation of the security situation in the whole Sahel, coupled with the 2012 Malian crisis, has largely illustrated the failure of these two regional initiatives.

C. SUCCESSFUL ATTEMPTS AT REGIONAL COOPERATION

Countries' willingness and strong commitment to collectively address regional security challenges, coupled with the support of international partnerships, has led to the success of some regional security initiatives. These initiatives have contributed to reduce significant terrorist threats in their area of operation. Among others, these successfully implemented initiatives include African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM) in the Horn of Africa against Al Shabaab, the Multinational Joint Task Force (MNJTF) against Boko Haram in the region of Lake Chad, and the recently born G5 Sahel against AQIM and its affiliates in five Sahel countries.

1. AMISOM

AMISOM is an effective model of regional security cooperation that is holistically succeeding against Al Shabaab. The initiative falls within the framework of the AU Constitutive Act and its Protocol on the Peace and Security Council (PSC) for effective conflict prevention, management, and resolution.²⁹¹ The AU PSC created AMISOM on January 2007, with the approval of the AU and the UN, with the first and sixth points of its mandate, respectively, to reduce and to conduct continuously offensive operations against Al Shabaab threats and other opposing armed groups.²⁹² The May 2017 London Security Pact and the August 2017 UN Security Council Resolution 2372 directed AMISOM and its partners in building a Somali-led security sector in terms of capacity, accountability, acceptability, and affordability in order to forecast the withdrawal of

²⁹⁰ Laurence A. Ammour, *Regional Security Cooperation in the Maghreb and Sahel: Algeria's Pivotal Ambivalence* (Washington, DC: National Defense University, Africa Center for Strategic Studies, 2012), 1, <http://www.dtic.mil/cdn/404w.html>.

²⁹¹ "AMISOM Mandate," African Union Mission in Somalia, assessed August, 19, 2018, <http://amisom-au.org/amisom-mandate/>.

²⁹² "AMISOM Mandate," African Union Mission in Somalia.

AMISOM.²⁹³ AMISOM has showed remarkable progress within the execution of its mandate.

Politically, AMISOM sparked unprecedented regional, continental and international support. The initiative drove the contribution of active troops and police at the continental level from four immediate neighboring countries of Somalia including Burundi, Djibouti, Kenya, Uganda, and Ethiopia, as well as West and South African countries including Ghana, Nigeria, Sierra Leone, and Zambia.²⁹⁴ The initiative draws its strength from the strong mobilization and support for its cause at the African continent level.

In addition, international support encompasses various resolutions of the United Nations Security Council and EU assistance. After the initial resolution in 2007, the UN Security Council updated additional resolutions in 2011, 2012, 2013, 2014, 2016, and 2017.²⁹⁵ A variety of sources providing funding range from the UN Assessed Peacekeeping Budget, the UN Trust Fund for AMISOM, the UN Trust Fund for Somali Security Forces, the AU Peace Fund, and external partners, the most significant of which is the European Union, which supported logistics for uniformed personnel, “totaling approximately €163 million in 2012.”²⁹⁶ The success of AMISOM resides mainly in the wide range of political and financial support from the regional countries as well as from the international partners.

Along with the military primacy, AMISOM encompasses political and development incentives. In addition to fostering security conditions, the mandate of AMISOM extends “in supporting the Somali government and its institutions in their efforts to stabilize the country, advancing the process of dialogue and reconciliation, facilitating the provision of humanitarian assistance, and creating conditions for long-term stability,

²⁹³ Paul D. Williams, “Somalia’s African Union Mission Has a New Exit Strategy. But Can Troops Actually Leave?,” *Washington Post*, November 30, 2017, <https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/monkey-cage/wp/2017/11/30>.

²⁹⁴ AMISOM, “Mandate of the African Union Mission in Somalia.”

²⁹⁵ AMISOM, “Mandate of the African Union Mission in Somalia.”

²⁹⁶ Paul D Williams, “AMISOM in Transition: The Future of the African Union Mission in Somalia,” *Rift Valley Institute Briefing Paper 13* (2013): 6.

reconstruction and development in Somalia.”²⁹⁷ AMISOM built its objectives around a comprehensive approach addressing the threat as a whole in order to set conditions favorable for political, economic, and development integration.

Operationally and tactically, AMISOM successfully planned, coordinated, and conducted operations and directed actions on the ground. The coherence of action among the international, regional, national, operational, and tactical levels drove AMISOM to great achievements in addressing insecurity in the region. These achievements have included institution building such as “a new interim Constitution, the inauguration of a new Federal Parliament, and the swearing in of Hassan Sheikh Mohamud as President of the Federal Republic of Somalia on September 10, 2012.”²⁹⁸ The Somali National Army (SNA) with the support of AMISOM has achieved tactical success including the effective eviction of Al-Shabaab militants and insurgents from most major urban centers, such as the capital city Mogadishu in southern Somalia, and Baidoa and the port cities of Kismayo and Marka in South-Central Somalia.²⁹⁹ As a result, Al Shabaab has lost a lot of territory and capacity, which has subsequently reduced its influence. Furthermore, the success brought Somalia back as a world nation.

2. MNJTF

Like AMISOM, MNJTF has largely contributed to reducing the threat, the influence, and the activities of Boko Haram in the region of the Lake Chad between Chad, Nigeria, and Niger. The spread of Boko Haram threats beyond its Nigerian origins motivated the strengthening of regional security cooperation and the creation of MNTF, which specifically aims to address the transnational threat. According to Virginia Comolli, in 2014 and 2015, violence related to Boko Haram escalated with new characteristics including female suicide attacks, frequent abductions, and the seizing of towns and villages

²⁹⁷ Donatien Nduwimana, *AMISOM in Somalia: A Ray of Hope?* (Nairobi: International Peace Support Training Centre, 2013), 12.

²⁹⁸ Nduwimana, *AMISOM in Somalia: A Ray of Hope?*, 12.

²⁹⁹ Nduwimana, *AMISOM in Somalia: A Ray of Hope?*, 2.

with the death toll rising to 15,000, worrying countries in the region.³⁰⁰ Virginia Comolli explains that Boko Haram's expansion reached beyond Nigeria's borders, having a substantial aggressive presence in Cameroon and targeting Niger and Chad.³⁰¹ MNJTF has been a strong tool that carries regional countries' willingness to degrade the threat of Boko Haram.

Countries' political and military commitment explains the sudden rise in power and the deployment of MNJTF. The initiative of regional security cooperation among Lake Chad Basin countries through MNJTF, headquartered in Ndjamen, Chad, dates back to 1998.³⁰² Incentives to grant better funding and the authorization of the African Union for the deployment of the force by the end of July 2015 led MNJTF to gain a better operational coordinated capacity of up to 10,000 troops.³⁰³ According to a 2016 report of the Institute for Security Studies, MNJTF estimated countries troops' contribution as 150 for Benin, 2,450 for Cameroon, 3,000 for Chad, 1,000 for Niger, and 3,000 for Chad.³⁰⁴ Hans de Marie Heungoup, a Cameroonian security expert with the International Crisis Group assesses MNJTF's initiatives as illustrating the African countries' ability to handle their own real security challenges.³⁰⁵ He indicates the seriousness of the threats of Boko Haram made with thousands of fighters, and praises the efforts of African countries in dealing effectively with the situation without almost any support from Western countries.³⁰⁶ The regional political leadership's perception of Boko Haram as a common threat has enabled MNJTF to thrive.

Additional political incentives included the signature in March 2014 of a deal to increase the coordination of border policing and intelligence sharing among the directors-

³⁰⁰ Virginia. Comolli, "The Regional Problem of Boko Haram," *Survival* 57, no. 4 (2015): 109, <https://doi.org/10.1080/00396338.2015.1068560>.

³⁰¹ Comolli, "The Regional Problem of Boko Haram," 109.

³⁰² Comolli, "The Regional Problem of Boko Haram," 110.

³⁰³ Comolli, "The Regional Problem of Boko Haram," 110.

³⁰⁴ "Defeating Boko Haram, A Regional Task Force Takes on An Insurgency," *African Defense Forum* 11, Quarter 1 (2017): 14, <http://adf-magazine.com/adf-eng-v11n1/>.

³⁰⁵ "Defeating Boko Haram, A Regional Task Force Takes on An Insurgency," 22.

³⁰⁶ "Defeating Boko Haram, A Regional Task Force Takes on An Insurgency," 22.

general of the external intelligence services of Nigeria, Benin, Cameroon, Chad, and Niger, alongside France.³⁰⁷ With political will and international support, MNJTF quickly gained momentum and achieved full operational capabilities and concrete tactical actions on the ground. These joint efforts have reduced the influence, propaganda, and expansion of the terrorist threat in a significant way. Boko Haram has suffered intense attacks since 2015 that have weakened its capacities. The Nigerian Minister of Information, Lai Mohammed, declared that following the major defeat of Boko Haram, the group lacked capacity to conduct traditional horrendous attacks and has been dislodged from the area it previously controlled.³⁰⁸ In an interview with the BBC, Nigerian President Muhammadu Buhari emphasized the success and argued it was a technical win in the war against Boko Haram because the security situation improved, allowing people to go back to their neighborhoods.³⁰⁹ The establishment of MNJTF has helped to reverse the fear of complete collapse and sparked renewal perspectives in the region.

The actions of MNJTF have helped improve the overall security situation in the region. The gradual return of normalcy to the devastated areas resulted from the complete dislodging of Boko Haram from the region under its control.³¹⁰ In July 2015, commercial operations resumed in the international airport in Maiduguri after its shutting down in December 2013 following attacks on the military and the air force base close to the airport.³¹¹ In September 2016, the popular cattle market of Damboa in Borno state, closed since 2014, reopened.³¹² In northeast Nigeria, the celebration of Eid without fear of bomb attacks for the first time in five years largely illustrated improvement of the security

³⁰⁷ Comolli, "The Regional Problem of Boko Haram," 111.

³⁰⁸ "Nigeria: The Defeat of Deadly Boko Haram?" *Al Jazeera*, December 29, 2015, <http://www.aljazeera.com/news/2015/12/nigeria-defeat-deadly-boko-haram-151229103945329.html>.

³⁰⁹ "Nigeria Boko Haram: Militants 'Technically Defeated' – Buhari," *BBC*, December 24, 2015, <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-africa-35173618>.

³¹⁰ Hakeem Onapajo, "Has Nigeria Defeated Boko Haram? An Appraisal of the Counter-Terrorism Approach under the Buhari Administration," *Strategic Analysis* 41, no. 1 (2017): 69, <https://doi.org/10.1080/09700161.2016.1249177>.

³¹¹ Onapajo, "Has Nigeria Defeated Boko Haram?," 69.

³¹² Onapajo, "Has Nigeria Defeated Boko Haram?," 69.

situation.³¹³ The International Crisis Group also noted the significant reduction in the group's attacks as well as the serious depletion of its equipment, including its fleet of four-wheel-drive and armored vehicles.³¹⁴ As a result, MNJTF drew the attention of external actors. In July 2017, Florence Parly, French Minister of Armed Forces, visited MNJTF's leadership, praised the success, and forecast the initiative as model in combating AQIM in the Sahel through the G5 Sahel.³¹⁵ The creation of an environment conducive to regional security cooperation, including the political will and the support of its partners, has determined the success of MNJTF.

3. Joint Force G5 Sahel

The G5 Sahel, the latest regional security initiative to combat transnational threats in the Sahel, has attracted strong regional, continental, and international support that strengthens its ongoing operationalization and augurs its success. The experience represents African countries' new attempt to take on responsibility for their own security.³¹⁶ The G5 Sahel launched on July 2, 2017, is defined as the Joint Force deployed by the regional organization G5 Sahel with 5,000 troops and with the mandate to "combat terrorism, drug trafficking and human trafficking."³¹⁷ The G5 Sahel draws its relevance from its member its countries' willingness and its comprehensive approach that combines security and development considerations.

The G5 Sahel falls within the framework of regional security and development coordination among Mali, Niger, Mauritania, Burkina Faso, and Chad to undermine the growing transnational threats and achieve prosperity and peace. In September 2016, the initiative of the G5 Sahel Permanent Secretariat was tasked with developing a special

³¹³ Onapajo, "Has Nigeria Defeated Boko Haram?," 69. .

³¹⁴ Onapajo, "Has Nigeria Defeated Boko Haram?," 69.

³¹⁵ "Defeating Boko Haram, A Regional Task Force Takes on An Insurgency," 14.

³¹⁶ "Finding the Right Role for the G5 Sahel Joint Force," Report No. 258/Africa, International Crisis Group, December 2017, <https://www.crisisgroup.org/africa/west-africa/burkina-faso/258-force-du-g5-sahel-trouver-sa-place-dans-lembouteillage-securitaire#map-5772->.

³¹⁷ Annelies Hickendorff, Aurélien Tobie, and Jaïr van der Lijn, "Success of Joint Force Sahel Depends on Local Actor Engagement," *SIPRI*, August 18, 2017, <https://www.sipri.org/commentary/blog/2017/success-joint-force-sahel-depends-local-actor-engagement>.

strategy called the “Strategy for the Development and Security of G5 Sahel Countries,” which illustrated the commitment member countries’ leadership.³¹⁸ The president of Chad, Idriss Deby, declared that the multidimensional relationship built through the long history between the people of the Sahel reinforced regional countries’ engagements to build a peaceful, prosperous, harmonious region.³¹⁹ He acknowledged the inseparable interdependence between security and development challenges and advocated the willingness of regional countries to confront the situation.³²⁰ On July 2, 2017, during the G5 Sahel meeting in Bamako, French President Emmanuel Macron emphasized on the necessity of a larger development project as part of security efforts in addressing security challenges in the Sahel and the need for concrete actions rather than rhetoric.³²¹ The coherence and strength of political support are the backbones of the initiative’s success.

The G5 Sahel built its central mission on the principle of the inseparable link between security and development. According to President Mohamed Ould Abdel Aziz from Mauritania, no lasting development exists without security and vice versa.³²² He has praised regional countries’ agreements in uniting their efforts in order to tackle both security challenges and enduring development in the Sahel.³²³ Both external support and the increased military presence are essential in the potential represented by the comprehensive agenda of the G5 Sahel in countering terrorism and preventing irregular

³¹⁸ Abdelhak Bassou, “Development and/or Security: Issues Concerning the Relationship between the European Union, the Maghreb, and the Sahel,” *Africa Portal*, July 4, 2017, 2, <https://www.africaportal.org/publications/development-andor-security-issues-concerning-relationship-between-european-union-maghreb-and-sahel/>.

³¹⁹ Bassou, “Development and/or Security: Issues Concerning the Relationship Between the European Union, the Maghreb, and the Sahel,” 2.

³²⁰ Bassou, “Development and/or Security: Issues Concerning the Relationship Between the European Union, the Maghreb, and the Sahel,” 2.

³²¹ “Barkhane: visite du Commandant de la Force du G5 Sahel.” État-major des Armées Françaises, [“Barkhane: Visit of the G5 Sahel Force Commander.” Staff of the French Armies,], July 26, 2017, <https://www.defense.gouv.fr/english/operations/operations/actualites/barkhane-visite-du-commandant-de-la-force-du-g5-sahel>.

³²² Daniel Flynn, “African Nations Form G5 to Work on Sahel Security, Development,” *Reuters World News*, February 16, 2014, <https://uk.reuters.com/article/uk-africa-sahel-g5/african-nations-form-g5-to-work-on-sahel-security-development-idUKBREA1F0P220140216>.

³²³ Flynn, “African Nations Form G5 to Work on Sahel Security, Development.”

migration.³²⁴ The central focus on human security with a “strong support to people-centered civilian component” and the involvement of local civil society exemplify priorities given to development and governance.³²⁵ Along with the political will of the member countries, the pertinence of the comprehensive approach of the G5 Sahel combining security and development explains its rapid rise and its ongoing operationalization.

Furthermore, the G5 Sahel’s relevance has helped the initiative gain substantial worldwide financial support essential to its operationalization. This initiative, although in the construction phase, has already attracted the favor of and support from international partners. The commitment of Germany and the EU along with France during a summit in Paris on December 13, 2017, aimed to mobilize further financial and equipment support for the force.³²⁶ The international conference in Brussels on February 23, 2018, to finance the military component of the G5 Sahel exceeded hopes as the outcome of the meeting registered a pledge of €114 million out of the €123 million for 2019.³²⁷ The United States pledged \$60 million to support the G5 Sahel with the expectation that the countries in the region will take on full regional ownership “within a three to six year period, with continued U.S. engagement.”³²⁸ The Arab Organization for Agricultural Development (OADA) and the Arab Bank for Economic Development in Africa (BADEA) have provided technical and financial support up to \$325,000 to fund primary studies targeting

³²⁴ Hickendorff, Tobie, and van der Lijn, “Success of Joint Force Sahel Depends on Local Actor Engagement.”

³²⁵ Hickendorff, Tobie, and van der Lijn, “Success of Joint Force Sahel Depends on Local Actor Engagement.”

³²⁶ Denis M. Tull, “Mali, The G5 and Security Sector Assistance: Political Obstacles to Effective Cooperation,” B=German Institute for International and Security Affairs, Berlin, December 2017, 1, <https://www.ssoar.info/ssoar/handle/document/55731>.

³²⁷ Jean-Pierre Stroobants, “Le financement de la Force G5 Sahel assuré, mais pour un an seulement” [G5 Sahel Force Funding Secured, But for One Year Only], *Le Monde Afrique*, February 23, 2018, http://www.lemonde.fr/afrique/article/2018/02/23/sahel-macron-affirme-la-determination-entiere-des-dirigeants-europeens_5261613_3212.html#u1iJxxLRWD3Hcv4C.99.

³²⁸ Rodrigo Campos and Aaron Ross, “U.S. Pledges Up to \$60 Million for Security in Sahel Region,” *Reuters*, October 30, 2017, <https://www.reuters.com/.../us...usa/u-s-pledges-up-to-60-million-for-security-in-sahel...>

sustainable development projects in the G5 Sahel countries.³²⁹ This strong mobilization of external partners, essential to the success of the G5 Sahel, illustrates the relevance of the initiative.

The ongoing political progress has trickled down to the operational and tactical level. On September 9, 2017, in Sevare, Malian President Ibrahim Boubacar Keïta inaugurated Mali as the headquarters of the force that the Malian Major General Didier Dacko heads as the commander of the G5 Joint Force; a senior officer from Burkina Faso is his deputy, and the Chief of Staff is from Niger.³³⁰ The chiefs of defense of member countries' armed forces have continuously coordinated, planned, and operated through multiple meetings. On November 4, 2017, the five chiefs of staff of the armed forces of Burkina Faso, Niger, Chad, Mali, and Mauritania (G5 Sahel) held a reflection meeting on the security situation in Ouagadougou.³³¹ They signed an operating charter for a military cross-border cooperation partnership within the framework of bilateral and multilateral cooperation in the war on terrorism and cross-border crime.³³² At the tactical level, in November 2017, the Force conducted its first tactical operation, named Hawbi, in the region of the three borders of Mali, Niger, and Burkina Faso to show that the joint force had started its activities.³³³ The G5 Sahel stated that the operation aimed to fight armed groups and illicit traffickers and to control the region of the three borders in order to improve the security situation and to allow the peaceful return of population in their

³²⁹ “Le G5 Sahel et ses partenaires lancent l’Etude diagnostique des potentialités des produits agricoles, animaliers et halieutiques,” [G5 Sahel and Partners Launch the Diagnostic Study of the Potentials of Agricultural, Animal and Fisheries Products], Secretariat Permanent du G5, April 27, 2018, <http://www.g5sahel.org/index.php/13-actualite-des-pays-g5/1308-le-g5-sahel-et-ses-partenaires-lancent-l-etude-diagnostique-des-potentialites-des-produits-agricoles-animaliers-et-halieutiques>.

³³⁰ Marielle Vitureau, “Mali: Inauguration du Quartier général de la Force conjointe du G5 Sahel,” [Mali: Inauguration of G5 Sahel Joint Force Headquarters], *RFI*, last modified September 9, 2017, <http://www.rfi.fr/afrique/20170909-mali-inauguration-quartier-general-force-conjointe-g5-sahel-ibm-mopti>.

³³¹ Ibrahima Dia, “G5 Sahel: Les Chefs d’état-major signent une charte de Cooperation,” [G5 Sahel: The Chiefs of Staff Sign a Cooperation Charter], *Malinet*, April 6, 2018, <http://www.malinet.net/flash-info/g5-sahel-les-chefs-detat-major-signent-une-charte-de-cooperation/>.

³³² Dia, “G5 Sahel: The Chiefs of Staff Sign a Cooperation Charter.”

³³³ Anthony Fouchard, “Mali: Une Première Operations du G5 Sahel sans Accroc,” [Mali: A First Operation of the G5 Sahel without a Hitch], *RFI*, November 4, 2017, www.rfi.fr/.../20171104-mali-g5-sahel-force-operation-premiere-in.

villages.³³⁴ The ongoing capacity building of the G5 Sahel built strength from the agreement and cooperation at the political level.

Although the force has not yet reached its full operational capabilities, its ongoing rapid rise has established good prospects for achieving regional security cooperation in the fight against transnational threats in the Sahel.

D. INITIATIVES BY THE UNITED STATES

Along with regional attempts to combat transnational security challenges, the Sahel has seen external partners' initiatives to foster security cooperation in the region. Since the dawn of the global war on terror, various external partners, mainly the United States, have pushed for stronger regional security cooperation in the Sahel. The country advocated for regional initiatives against transnational threats, mainly terrorism, through two main programs. The programs included the Pan-Sahel Initiative (PSI), launched in 2002 with an \$8 million budget to reinforce the military capacities of countries in the region, and the Trans-Saharan Counter Terrorism Partnership (TSCTP) in 2005, representing the U.S. engagement in the Sahel that stems from the fight against terrorism in the early 2000s.³³⁵ The two initiatives have reflected the concretization of the U.S. security advocacy in the region.

1. U.S. PSI

The new environment in the global war on terror shepherded the progressive U.S. commitment to increasing its presence in Africa. Combating global terror mainly drove the U.S. strategy in Africa.³³⁶ The 2002 U.S. National Security Strategy set policies of the Bush administration toward the Sahel during the early development of AQIM.³³⁷ This

³³⁴ Edward McAllister, "G5 Sahel Launches Military Operation in African Scrublands," *Reuters*, November 2, 2017, <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-africa-security/g5-sahel-launches-military-operation-in-african-scrublands-idUSKBN1D21VS>.

³³⁵ Damien Helly and Greta Galeazzi, "Avant la lettre? The EU's Comprehensive Approach (to Crises) in the Sahel," *Briefing Note* no. 75 (2015), 5, www.ecdpm.org/bn75.

³³⁶ George W. Bush, *National Security Strategy* (Washington, DC: White House, 2002), <http://www.dtic.mil/get-tr-doc/pdf?AD=ADA406411>.

³³⁷ Bush, *National Security Strategy*.

strategy aimed to “help strengthen Africa’s fragile states, help build indigenous capability to secure porous borders, and help build up the law enforcement and intelligence infrastructure to deny havens for terrorists.”³³⁸ Alongside this point, the strategy emphasized that “forming coalitions of the willing and cooperative security arrangements are key to confronting these emerging transnational threats.”³³⁹ The strategy also singled out bilateral engagement through building coalitions as the security strategy focus.³⁴⁰ This policy has reflected a new beginning of U.S relations with Africa in the area of security.³⁴¹ This strategic vision explained the gradual and passive strengthening of U.S. engagement in the Sahel with the development of strategic military assistance partnership.

The U.S. European Command (EUCOM) implemented the strategy of the war on terror in the Sahel and the Maghreb through the PSI. The PSI was essential to EUCOM’s responsibility in combating terrorism in the whole region of North Africa, West Africa, as well as in the Sahara deserts.³⁴² Under the State Department’s funding, the PSI Counterterrorism initiative included Chad, Mali, Mauritania, and Niger and aimed to fight transnational threats such as terrorism and illicit trade, and to enhance regional security cooperation through training that U.S. Special Forces from EUCOM provided to military units in beneficiary countries.³⁴³ In addition, the initiative evolved from training programs into an anti-terrorist campaign for tracking down suspected terrorists, as the threat of the Algerian radical *Groupe Salafiste pour la Predication et le Combat* (GSPC-Salafist Group for Preaching and Combat) grew and expanded progressively in the region,³⁴⁴ reflecting the military focus of U.S. policy.

³³⁸ Bush, National Security Strategy, 10, 11.

³³⁹ Bush, National Security Strategy 11.

³⁴⁰ Bush, National Security Strategy. 11

³⁴¹ Bush, National Security Strategy. 12.

³⁴² Stephen Ellis, “Briefing: the Pan-Sahel Initiative,” *African Affairs* 103, no. 412 (2004): 459, https://www.jstor.org/stable/3518567?seq=1#metadata_info_tab_contents.

³⁴³ Ellis, “Briefing: the Pan-Sahel Initiative,” 459.

³⁴⁴ Ellis, “Briefing: the Pan-Sahel Initiative,” 460.

This shift in strategy did not reduce security challenges, however. Rather the initiative sparked political debate in the United States. Conventional views in Washington perceived the PSI as “a conspicuous success in prohibiting the establishment of an Islamist safe haven in the Sahara.”³⁴⁵ Yet, the PSI failed to achieve its objectives.³⁴⁶ The expansion of violent extremist ideologies and their steady rise in the Sahel and the Maghreb since 2002 raised many questions about the effectiveness of U.S. policy.³⁴⁷ This mixed perception has created doubt about the success of PSI and its future expansion.

2. U.S. TSCTP

Despite these different perceptions, in 2005, the Department of State replaced the PSI with the more broadly scoped TSCTP that expanded geographically including Algeria, Morocco, Nigeria, Senegal, Tunisia, and, afterwards, adding respectively Burkina Faso and Cameroon in 2009 and 2013.³⁴⁸ This new initiative entailed a more comprehensive regional stand. TSCTP, as an interagency effort, comprised the Department of Defense, Department of State, and USAID, and endeavored to enhance local government capacities in the Pan-Sahel and confront security threats from terrorist groups in the trans-Sahara.³⁴⁹ This partnership focused on capacity building of security forces on counterterrorism through training and equipping.³⁵⁰ Targeting threats in deeply affected areas, the success of U.S. counterterrorism strategy against the growing AQIM growing threats was essential in the region remote and critical area.³⁵¹ TSCTP carried greater ambitions than the PSI.

³⁴⁵ Ellis, “Briefing: the Pan-Sahel Initiative,” 462.

³⁴⁶ Stephen A. Harmon, *Terror and Insurgency in the Sahara-Sahel Region: Corruption, Contraband, Jihad and the Mali War of 2012–2013* (London: Routledge, 2016), 131.

³⁴⁷ David M. Andre, “United States Cot, Naval Postgraduate School, 2015), 28. https://calhoun.nps.edu/bitstream/handle/10945/47224/15Sep_Andre_David.pdf.

³⁴⁸ U.S. Department of State, *Africa; Programs and Initiatives 2016* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1948), 27, <http://www.state.gov/j/ct/programs/>.

³⁴⁹ U.S. Department of State, *Africa; Programs and Initiatives 2016*, 27.

³⁵⁰ U.S. Department of State, *Africa; Programs and Initiatives 2016*, 27.

³⁵¹ Stephen Emerson, “Back to the Future: The Evolution of U.S. Counterterrorism Policy in Africa,” *Insight on Africa* 6, no. 1 (2014): 47–48, <https://scholar.google.com>.

Like the PSI, the TSCTP came under fire for its failure to reduce transnational threats in the Sahel. Okolie and Kelechi, citing Burgess, note that the interagency collaborative efforts of the TSCTP in the global war on Islamist terrorism have not achieved their original envisioned objectives.³⁵² Similarly, referring to Simon Tisdall, Okolie and Kelechi describe the U.S. regional initiative as unsuccessful and at times shambolic in fighting growing terrorist threat.³⁵³ Aloysius-Michael Okolie and Elijah Nnamani Kelechi further note criticism of the Government Accountability Office of the TSCTP regarding the government's failure to build a comprehensive integrated approach and remarking on the limitations of the progress measurement toward the counterterrorism goals.³⁵⁴ Therefore, TSCTP's reputation took a blow just as the PSI did.

In sum, the two well-intended, U.S.-led initiatives failed as they neither built the expected military capacities of member states nor fostered regional security cooperation in the war on transnational threats in the region. The United States pursued passive foreign policies through military capacity building that did not involve any active role. As a result, despite U.S. initiatives, the world witnessed helplessly the rise of Islamic extremism together with smuggling, fueling internal secessionist movements.

E. CHALLENGES TO COOPERATION

Regional security cooperation does not quite always work in the Sahel, resulting in the progressive deterioration of the Sahel's security situation. Individual countries have proved unable to deal with transnational threats that have challenged their authority and the stability of their nations. Countries with divergent security interests have also

³⁵² Aloysius-Michaels Okolie and Elijah Nnamani Kelechi, "United States' Trans-Saharan Counter Terrorism Partnership and Management of Boko Haram Insurgency in Nigeria," *Caritas University Journal of Political Science* 1 no. 1, University of Nigeria, Nsukka, Nigeria, (December, 2016), 30, https://www.researchgate.net/profile/nnamani_elijah/publication/315687953_united_states'_trans-saharan_counter-terrorism_partnership_and_management_of_boko_haram_insurgency_in_nigeria_2005-2015/links/58db926f92851c961d7efd4f/united-states-trans-saharan-counter-terrorism-partnership-and-management-of-boko-haram-insurgency-in-nigeria-2005-2015.pdf.

³⁵³ Okolie and Kelechi, "United States' Trans-Saharan Counter Terrorism Partnership and Management of Boko Haram Insurgency in Nigeria," 30.

³⁵⁴ Okolie and Kelechi, "United States' Trans-Saharan Counter Terrorism Partnership and Management of Boko Haram Insurgency in Nigeria," 30.

countenanced competition and rivalries, which, consequently, have led to the failure of attempts at regional security cooperation. Yet, the increasing involvement of international actors in dealing with transnational security challenges in the region has begun to influence the regional political environment in favor of a shared vision of threats and the promotion of collective solutions. Therefore, this evolution assumes that effective security cooperation is reachable, though it is still far from being achieved.

1. Regional Rivalries

The climate of rivalries between Algeria, Morocco, and Libya in the Maghreb—origins of the threats that have scoured the Sahel—has negatively affected relations among countries in the region and hindered any attempts at cooperation. Rivalries between the three North African countries have always disrupted regional security cooperation, particularly the Algerian-Moroccan continuing tension.³⁵⁵ Similarly, the two countries' rivalry “over the deadlocked Western Sahara conflict” has exacerbated tension as “Moroccan diplomatic influence in Mali and Mauritania” attempted to impede the initiative and success of an “effective regional security framework” that excludes Morocco.³⁵⁶ Countries in the Sahel have traditionally suffered from the consequences of differing perceptions of Maghreb countries over the promotion of their geopolitical interests. These tensions have always undermined any attempt at regional cooperation.

The situation deteriorates when rivalries arise between North Africa and the Sahel countries. For example, in 2010, tensions rose between Mali and Mauritania as well as Mali and Algeria regarding the perception that the Malian leadership hesitated to fight AQIM, to have alleged connections with transnational criminals, to free Western hostages in exchange for ransom payments, and to release convicted AQIM members.³⁵⁷ This turmoil

³⁵⁵ Wolfram Lacher, “The Malian Crisis and the Challenge of Regional Cooperation,” *Stability: International Journal of Security and Development* 2, no. 2 (2013): 18, <http://doi.org/10.5334/sta.bg>.

³⁵⁶ Salim Chena, “Portée et Limites de l’Hégémonie Algérienne dans l’Aire Sahélo-Maghrébine,” [Scope and Limits of Algerian Hegemony in the Sahelo-Maghreb Area], *Hérodote*, 142, no. 3 (2011): 108–124.

³⁵⁷ “Libération des Quatre islamistes: l’Algérie Rappelle son Ambassadeur,” [Liberation of the Four Islamists: Algeria Recalls its Ambassador], *Jeune Afrique*, last modified February 23, 2010, www.jeuneafrique.com/.../liberation-des-quatre-islamistes-l-algerie-.

led to diplomatic tension. In 2010, Mauritania and Algeria protested by recalling their ambassadors from Mali.³⁵⁸ The Algerian-led initiative to create CEMOC and UFL suffered from these rivalries. While Libya reportedly rejected the offer to join, Algeria deliberately excluded Morocco.³⁵⁹ Therefore, the influence of the Maghreb countries has not contributed to foster regional cooperation.

2. Regional Competition

Competition over regional hegemony has also exacerbated rivalries and turmoil among key countries in the region. Libya and Algeria competed over leading mediation in the 2006 and 2007 Tuareg insurgencies, respectively, in northern Mali and Niger.³⁶⁰ Wolfram Lacher notes that Libya's connections to the "Tuareg rebel factions allowed the country to torpedo Algerian efforts" to grant peace between belligerent parties.³⁶¹ Anouar Boukhars argues that Morocco, Algeria, Chad, and Nigeria have a central stake in West Africa and the Sahel geopolitics,³⁶² as they these countries constitute the main regional security hegemons. In addition, countries' pursuit of their geopolitical interests has worsened the climate of competition, and has limited their commitment to any attempt to cooperate beyond the Sahel and the Maghreb borders. At the height of the Malian crisis in 2012, while ECOWAS members supported the French vision for a military intervention against the coalition of terrorist groups in the country, Algeria and Mauritania opposed such plans because ECOWAS intervention would push terrorists back to their countries of origin.³⁶³ Algeria as a regional key player because of its army strength, its alleged control over the terrorist groups, and strong influence on the destabilizing Tuareg rebel groups, has not also supported outside interference in a region that it has considered as its influence

³⁵⁸ "Liberation of the Four Islamists: Algeria Recalls its Ambassador."

³⁵⁹ Lacher, "The Malian Crisis and the Challenge of Regional Cooperation," 18.

³⁶⁰ Lacher, "The Malian Crisis and the Challenge of Regional Cooperation," 18.

³⁶¹ Lacher, "The Malian Crisis and the Challenge of Regional Cooperation," 18.

³⁶² Anouar Boukhars, "Overcoming the Barriers to Regional Security Cooperation in West Africa and the Sahel," *World Politics Review*, May 30, 2017, <https://www.worldpoliticsreview.com/articles/22299/overcoming-the-barriers-regional-security-cooperation-in-west-africa-and-the-sahel>.

³⁶³ Lacher, "The Malian Crisis and the Challenge of Regional Cooperation," 18.

zone.³⁶⁴ For example, Algeria considers Mali as part its strategic backyard and perceives negatively the French army deployment in the northern regions of the country.³⁶⁵ Therefore, regional countries' interests take precedence over interests of achieving regional security cooperation.

3. Mutual Mistrust

In addition to rivalries and competition, mutual mistrust among countries in the Sahel and the Maghreb remains a major constraint for achieving regional security cooperation. Mistrust has revolved around suspicious relations between states' interests, terrorism, and smuggling. Some analysts describe Algerian intelligence services as "masters in the black arts of disinformation" with a probable connection to and manipulation of hostage-taking episodes in the Sahel.³⁶⁶ Jean-Herve Jezequel, the West Africa Deputy Project Director at the International Crisis Group, indicates that misunderstandings sometimes grew between regional countries as in the case of Mali and Mauritania and Niger and Mali.³⁶⁷ He praises some forms of confidence building in order to frame a common understanding of trust and consensus between countries.³⁶⁸ The various presumed connections between terrorism, transnational criminalities, and states' interests have fueled the persistence and growth of the threats in the Sahel as Maghreb states, including Algeria, Morocco, Tunisia, and Libya as well as foreign powers have promoted their strategic and operational interests in the region.³⁶⁹ Meghrebis who constituted the large percentage of the foreign fighters of Al Qaeda in Iraq helped in building the trust

³⁶⁴ Lacher, "The Malian Crisis and the Challenge of Regional Cooperation," 18.

³⁶⁵ Lacher, "The Malian Crisis and the Challenge of Regional Cooperation," 18.

³⁶⁶ Stephen Ellis, "Briefing: the Pan-Sahel Initiative," *African Affairs* 103, no. 412 (2004): 461, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/3518567>.

³⁶⁷ Salem Solomon, "Observers Call for Deeper Diplomatic Engagement in the Sahel," *VOA*, February 10, 2018, <https://www.voanews.com/a/observers-call-for-deeper-diplomatic-engagement-sahel/4248234.html>.

³⁶⁸ Solomon, "Observers Call for Deeper Diplomatic Engagement in the Sahel."

³⁶⁹ Pham, "Foreign Influences and Shifting Horizons: The Ongoing Evolution of Al Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb," 240.

connections between Maghreb-based groups and Al Qaeda central.³⁷⁰ This unhealthy environment is not likely to guarantee the necessary regional collaboration to overcome threats in the region.

Mistrust has negatively constrained the achievement of regional security cooperation in the Sahel and Maghreb region. Laurence A Ammour argues the incapacity of neighboring countries to frame a consensual cooperation has fragmented their actions against AQIM increasing its influence in the region.³⁷¹ He also remarks, “Algeria faces inverse incentives to combat AQIM outside of Algiers as it gains much of its geostrategic leverage by maintaining overstated perceptions of a serious terrorism threat.”³⁷² As a result, Laurence A Ammour concludes, “the Algerian government’s limited legitimacy, primarily derived from its ability to deliver stability, constraints a more comprehensive regional strategy.”³⁷³ According to a 2016 report of the Center for Strategic and International Studies, the difference in levels of threat perceptions and mutual distrust have undermined the effectiveness of joint action.³⁷⁴ Therefore, suspicions around key security stakeholders’ connections with terrorism explain regional countries’ reluctance to adhere fully to any regional initiative.

F. CONCLUSION

The failure and the success of the various initiatives have rested on the political willingness of the regional states and international support. The main factors that drove these attempts range from growth of transnational organized crime—mainly AQIM and its affiliates—and advocacy by Western powers to promote regional cooperation. CEMOC

³⁷⁰ Pham, “Foreign Influences and Shifting Horizons: The Ongoing Evolution of Al Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb,” 240.

³⁷¹ Ammour, “Regional Security Cooperation in the Maghreb and Sahel: Algeria’s Pivotal Ambivalence,” 1.

³⁷² Ammour, “Regional Security Cooperation in the Maghreb and Sahel: Algeria’s Pivotal Ambivalence,” 1.

³⁷³ Ammour, “Regional Security Cooperation in the Maghreb and Sahel: Algeria’s Pivotal Ambivalence,” 1.

³⁷⁴ Jennifer G. Cooke and Thomas M. Sanderson, “A Report of the CSIS: Transnational Threats Project and the CSIS Africa Program, Militancy and the Arc of Instability Violent Extremism in the Sahel,” Center for Strategic & International Studies, September 2016, www.csis.org.

and UFL, as well as the U.S. PSI and TSCTP, failed as they lacked the ability to reduce the transnational threats while AMISOM and MNTF succeeded as they have seriously reduced Boko Haram's influence and hindered its capacity to operate. Further, the G5 Sahel's ongoing capacity building promises a successful future. Competition, rivalries, and mistrust, however, have created a cold relationship and environment among countries that constrain promotion of regional security cooperation. Reasons for failures and success of these initiatives include, respectively, predominance of countries' interests and their willingness to cooperate, and the support of external partners. Therefore, this chapter shows that regional security cooperation is possible if the Sahel and Maghreb countries express strong political support and the international community supports that cooperation.

IV. DIFFERENT PATHS FOR REGIONAL COOPERATION IN THE SAHEL

This chapter analyzes the U.S., EU, and AU regional strategies for the Sahel in addressing transnational threats in the region. The chapter aims to contribute to framing a comprehensive, effective, suitable, and implementable model for regional security cooperation that can address transnational security challenges in the Sahel. The analysis determines how the concept of these strategies can test and validate my hypotheses in achieving effective regional security cooperation in the Sahel: the balance between security, development, and governance; the necessary inclusion of the Maghreb; and the shared perception of the threats with the expression of regional countries' political will to cooperate and the support of the international community. Each strategy has strengths and weaknesses, suggesting none of them alone carries the right, exact, or absolute solution. Therefore, effective Sahel regional security cooperation results from combining common strengths among actors who understand regional threats and, thus, can address underlying drivers of insecurity and instability within the Sahel, as well as in the Maghreb countries, with the expected support of external partners.

A. U.S. STRATEGY FOR SECURITY AND DEVELOPMENT IN THE SAHEL

The United States does not seem to have a comprehensive security cooperation strategy to address transnational threats in the Sahel. Despite official rhetoric of renewed interests in Africa, the United States continues to pursue a low-profile policy toward the continent, resulting in U.S. unpreparedness for events, including security challenges, political instability, and humanitarian challenges. J. Peter Pham argues that the “overall U.S. engagement in the Sahel remains minimal,” despite the U.S. State Department’s official statement naming the Sahel terrorist groups, including Mokhtar Belmokhtar, Al-Mulathamun, Boko Haram, and Ansaru, as the greatest regional threats to U.S. interests.³⁷⁵

³⁷⁵ J. Peter Pham, “Does Washington Have a Stake in the Sahel?” Council on Foreign Relations, January 10, 2014, <https://www.cfr.org/expert-brief/does-washington-have-stake-sahel>.

U.S. interests in the Sahel fall within the broader context of the U.S. interests in Africa, which are driven mainly by the military. The perspective meets the views of General Kip Ward, U.S. AFRICOM commander, perceiving the role of Department of Defense (DOD) in Africa “as part of the a ‘three-pronged’ U.S. government approach,” with the DOD carrying a leading role through U.S. AFRICOM on security backed the Department of State and USAID in a secondary role.³⁷⁶ Therefore, security implications challenge U.S. engagement in Africa.

Historically, Africa has not been a U.S. priority, and the United States has tended to leave the continent to its EU partners. For example, U.S. policy makers have maintained the steadfast belief that “Africa is ‘a European responsibility.’”³⁷⁷ Peter J. Schraeder argues that, during the Cold War, the United States left complete responsibility to its European allies to lead their former African colonies.³⁷⁸ In 1968, Under-Secretary of State for the Kennedy Administration, George Ball, “succinctly summarized” U.S. recognition of “Africa as a ‘special European responsibility.’”³⁷⁹ In 1983, in addressing Chad’s growing crisis, President Ronald Reagan told President Francois Mitterrand that France held historical responsibility to intervene,³⁸⁰ ultimately downsizing the leading role of the United States. Recently, in 2011, during the civil war and political crisis in the Ivory Coast, President Barack Obama backed off and let France and the Europeans lead, acknowledging

³⁷⁶ Lauren Ploch, *Africa Command: US Strategic Interests and the Role of the US Military in Africa*, CRS Report No. RL34003 (Washington, DC: Congressional Research Service, 2010), 5, https://books.google.com/books?hl=en&lr=&id=4Ryi__Q3-cAC&oi=fnd&pg=PA1&dq=U.S.+core+interests+in+the+Sahel+&ots=80ssH5kzOH&sig=LrES77xDetIrNAK8APdI-MFRZ60#v=onepage&q&f=false.

³⁷⁷ Peter J. Schraeder, “From Berlin 1884 to 1989: Foreign Assistance and French, American, and Japanese Competition in Francophone Africa,” *Journal of Modern African Studies* 33, no. 4 (1995): 539, <https://www.cambridge.org/core/journals/journal-of-modern-african-studies/article/from-berlin-1884-to-1989-foreign-assistance-and-french-american-and-japanese-competition-in-francophone-africa/985E3612D47A66DFC79A307B6FC7125C>.

³⁷⁸ Cooke and Sanderson, “A Report of the CSIS: Transnational Threats Project and the CSIS Africa Program, Militancy and the Arc of Instability Violent Extremism in the Sahel,” 546.

³⁷⁹ Cooke and Sanderson, “A Report of the CSIS: Transnational Threats Project and the CSIS Africa Program, Militancy and the Arc of Instability Violent Extremism in the Sahel,” 546.

³⁸⁰ Cooke and Sanderson, “A Report of the CSIS: Transnational Threats Project and the CSIS Africa Program, Militancy and the Arc of Instability Violent Extremism in the Sahel,” 546.

the high leverage that France already had in the region.³⁸¹ As a result, the U.S. low-priority policy in Africa is characterized by the prevalent use of military, suspicions surrounding regional countries' commitment to U.S. sponsored initiatives, and neglect of threat drivers in the Maghreb countries.

1. Predominance of Military Solutions

The United States remains unprepared not only for emergencies but for overall growing security challenges in Africa and the Sahel. In April 1986, following Colonel Muammar Gaddafi's links to "hiatus terrorist attacks," combined U.S. Air and Navy forces bombed "five targets in Tripoli and Benghazi" to coerce Libya.³⁸² "A relatively benign executive order of January 7, 1986" guided this "operational continuum" of the "try and see" policy as an "urgent classic ultimatum" of a coercive strategy.³⁸³ In 1992, following the humanitarian crisis in Somalia, the United States deployed one of the largest forces in Africa, Operation Restore Hope, comprised of 25,000 troops from 24 countries under the UN security mandate for restoration of security, provision of humanitarian needs, and support to civilian population.³⁸⁴ Unfortunately, the United States then lost 18 U.S. Rangers following a disastrous attempt to arrest General Mohamed Farrah Aideed and withdrew its troops.³⁸⁵ In 1998, in reaction to the terrorist bombing of the U.S. embassy in Nairobi and Kampala in East Africa, the United States retaliated by bombing a pharmaceutical factory in Khartoum, Sudan.³⁸⁶ Thus, military action epitomized these reactions as the case of "'try and see approach,' another variant of coercive diplomacy ... in which a demand is formulated without the explicit threat or time limit and involves a

³⁸¹ Nick Amies, "Critics Accuse Obama of Inaction in Africa," *DeutschWeille*, August 14, 2018, <https://www.dw.com/en/critics-accuse-obama-of-inaction-in-africa/a-15194523>.

³⁸² Tim Zimmermann, "The American Bombing of Libya: A Success For Coercive Diplomacy?" *Survival* 29, no. 3 (1987): 206, <https://iiss.tandfonline.com/doi/pdf/10.1080/00396338708442356>.

³⁸³ Tim Zimmermann, "The American Bombing of Libya: A Success For Coercive Diplomacy?," 206, 207.

³⁸⁴ A. Sarjoh Bah and Kwesi Aning, "US Peace Operations Policy in Africa: From ACRI to AFRICOM," *International Peacekeeping* 15, no. 1 (2008): 131, <https://doi.org/10.1080/13533310701879969>.

³⁸⁵ Bah and Aning, "US Peace Operations Policy in Africa: From ACRI to AFRICOM," 614, 615.

³⁸⁶ Ploch, *Africa Command: US Strategic interests and The Role of the US Military in Africa*, 5.

gradual threat rather than step-level increase in pressure,” with the objective “to foster the flexibility of the coercive strategy.”³⁸⁷ The militarily-reactive posture and lack of consistence of the United States dealing with African issues explains the uncertainty of the country’s prevailing approach, shortfalls in readiness to commit a full engagement in Africa.

In the decades of the global war on terror, continuous militarization of U.S. policy toward Africa in general and the Sahel in particular has increased through various administrations. The 2018 U.S. National Security Strategy, under President Donald Trump, indicates military and security as priority actions toward Africa with the objective to work continuously with partners in improving capacities of their security services to deal with terrorist threats and the whole spectrum of illicit trafficking including human, arms, drugs, and natural resources.³⁸⁸ The strategy also emphasizes this partnership in the defeat of terrorist groups and their affiliates threatening U.S. interests.³⁸⁹ Nearly 20 years after the 9/11 terrorist attacks, the military and security remain central in U.S. relations with Africa.

The military presence also increased under President Barack Obama; however, he also created the Security Governance Initiative (SGI). The 2010 U.S. National Security Strategy mentioned various security hotspots on the African continent in general, including civil wars in Sudan, South Sudan, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, and the Central African Republic.³⁹⁰ The strategy particularly mentioned the Sahel as home to violent extremism that threatened civilians, regional countries, and U.S. national security and was spreading across the whole region in Somalia and Nigeria.³⁹¹ In response, President Barack Obama pledged an SGI, deepening security partnerships with African countries and institutions in order to address conflicts and transnational threats and to build African

³⁸⁷ Silvia Romeo, “Coercive Diplomacy, Theories and Application: A Case Study on US Administration and Libya,” (PhD diss., University of LUISS Guido Carli Chicago, 2015-2016), 8, https://tesi.luiss.it/17579/1/072842_ROMEO_SILVIA.pdf.

³⁸⁸ Donald Trump, *National Security Strategy* (Washington, DC: White House, 2018), <https://www.whitehouse.gov/wp-content/uploads/2017/12/NSS-Final-12-18-2017-0905.pdf>.

³⁸⁹ Trump, *National Security Strategy*.

³⁹⁰ Barack Obama, *National Security Strategy* (Washington, DC: White House, 2015), <http://nssarchive.us/wp-content/uploads/2018/0/2015.pdf>.

³⁹¹ Obama, *National Security Strategy*.

peacekeeping capacity under strong recommendation of respect of human rights and the rule of law.³⁹² Despite a slight move toward governance, military presence continued to increase.

During his terms, President George W. Bush established U.S. AFRICOM, essentially heightening U.S. military presence in Africa. The 2001 U.S. National Security Strategy emphasized security in its International Strategy, which asserted:

Our Nation's cause has always been larger than our Nation's defense. We fight, as we always fight, for a just peace—a peace that favors liberty. We will defend the peace against the threats from terrorists and tyrants. We will preserve the peace by building good relations among the great powers. And we will extend the peace by encouraging free and open societies on every continent.³⁹³

The prevalence of the military characterized the Bush administration in promoting U.S. interests in the world.

Despite the political differences among these three administrations, ultimately, U.S. political strategy continues to use military force. Specifically, President George W. Bush created AFRICOM, representing the U.S. military institution, with its first mission statement directing the Command mission “to promote U.S. strategic objectives” through building partnership, security capability, and military professionalization of African countries in order to strengthen regional stability and security.³⁹⁴ In 2007, the Bush administration increased military aid significantly through the creation of AFRICOM, signaling the enhancement of its strategic interests.³⁹⁵ President Barack Obama worked toward state-building in creating the SGI while his administration also increased military presence, and, so far, President Donald Trump like President George W. Bush has increased military presence. Analysis of these U.S. strategies reflects their military focused, which has resulted in an imbalance in security, governance, and development.

³⁹² Obama, National Security Strategy.

³⁹³ George W. Bush, *National Security Strategy* (Washington, DC: White House, 2018), <https://www.state.gov/documents/organization/63562.pdf>.

³⁹⁴ Ploch, Africa Command: US Strategic interests and The Role of the US Military in Africa, 1.

³⁹⁵ Nicolas Van de Walle, “US Policy toward Africa: The Bush Legacy and the Obama Administration,” *African Affairs* 109, no. 434 (2009): 3, <https://doi.org/10.1093/afraf/adp065>.

Several activities illustrate the militarization of U.S. policy in promoting its strategic interests in Africa in general and the Sahel in particular. Baz Lecocq and Paul Schrijver argue that, within the concept of Operation Enduring Freedom, the U.S. Army opened two fronts in Africa, “one in the Horn of Africa, the other in the Sahara–Sahel,”³⁹⁶ with the objective “to train quick reaction forces in each of the four countries.”³⁹⁷ Citing Sigrid Faath, Lecocq and Schrijver state that the latter front started with Pan Sahel Initiative including Mauritania, Mali, Niger, and Chad, then, later, the Trans-Saharan Counter-Terrorism Initiative (TSCTI) with Algeria, Morocco, Tunisia, Senegal, and Nigeria, in addition to the original Sahel countries, aiming to create counterterrorist units with temporary operation support bases for U.S. forces in each country.³⁹⁸ In 2014, the United States spent \$100 million to build “a temporary base for surveillance drones in Agadez, central Niger ... to help West African countries in combating terrorist groups and control their borders.”³⁹⁹ These moves exemplify the military focus of the U.S. strategy in the Sahel.

One of the reasons for the imbalance in security, development, and governance of U.S. policy is the reluctance of U.S. leadership to fully acknowledge other options. As Marcel Plichta argues, U.S. policy makers misperceive the Sahel as outside the umbrella of counterterrorism, and even the most moderate non-security perspectives, including that of Secretary of State Mike Pompeo, remain entrenched in the narrow and militaristic view of the conflict.⁴⁰⁰ U.S. Africa Commander, General Thomas D. Waldhauser, during his March 2018 testimony before Congress, affirmed that the use of military force has little to

³⁹⁶ Baz Lecocq and Paul Schrijver, “The War on Terror in a Haze of Dust: Potholes and Pitfalls on the Saharan Front,” *Journal of Contemporary African Studies* 25, no. 1 (2007): 143, DOI: 10.1080/02589000601157147

³⁹⁷ Lecocq and Schrijver, “The War on Terror in a Haze of Dust,” 143.

³⁹⁸ Lecocq and Schrijver, “The War on Terror in a Haze of Dust,” 143. See also Chapter III of this thesis.

³⁹⁹ Emma Farge, “U.S. Building \$100 Million Drone Base in Central Niger,” *Reuters*, September 30, 2016, <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-niger-security/u-s-building-100-million-drone-base-in-central-niger-idUSKCN12023L>.

⁴⁰⁰ Marcel Plichta, “The U.S. Learned the Wrong Lessons from the Niger Ambush,” *Washington Examiner*, June 2, 2018, <https://www.washingtonexaminer.com/opinion/op-eds/the-us-learned-the-wrong-lessons-from-the-niger-ambush>.

achieve in dealing with various challenges in Africa and stressed the need for significant reforms beyond the military including pragmatic political and economic development in the Sahel.⁴⁰¹ Potential alternatives that are less dependent on military might exist in boosting U.S. policies for the Sahel.

2. Suspicions about U.S. Commitment to Regional Security Cooperation

Following suspicions about the motivation for the U.S.-led war in Iraq in 2002, African countries in general and the Sahel in particular remained cautious toward the growing U.S. engagement on the continent. For example, African key stakeholder countries reacted negatively to U.S. attempts to locate the headquarters of AFRICOM on the continent.⁴⁰² South Africa and Algeria, U.S. strategic partners, have been reluctant to host the command because of potential interference in their sovereignty,⁴⁰³ raising dormant distrust. Some conspiracy theorists believe that the U.S. attempt might hide the pursuit of an alleged secret U.S. military agenda on the continent.⁴⁰⁴ The U.S. African partners have perceived the shift of U.S. new strategic orientation as too militaristic and reacted with much reserve.

The conditions for granting U.S. military assistance worsened this perception of mistrust. The most controversial fact is that the grant of U.S. military assistance is based on “U.S. political, economic, and energy interests rather than government transparency, democracy, and human rights performance.”⁴⁰⁵ In such an environment, regional countries might mistakenly undermine U.S.-led initiatives presumed to promote partnership. As a result, these initiatives might likely encounter unofficial willingness to cooperate from countries in the region. Therefore, most regional countries’ perception of U.S. policies is not inclined to boost regional countries’ full commitment, which is indispensable to achieve regional security cooperation.

⁴⁰¹ Plichta, “The U.S. Learned the Wrong Lessons from the Niger Ambush.”

⁴⁰² Ploch, *Africa Command: US Strategic Interests and the Role of the US Military in Africa*, 10.

⁴⁰³ Ploch, *Africa Command: US Strategic Interests and the Role of the US Military in Africa*, 10.

⁴⁰⁴ Ploch, *Africa Command: US Strategic Interests and the Role of the US Military in Africa*, 10.

⁴⁰⁵ Catherine Besteman, “‘Beware of those Bearing Gifts’. An Anthropologist’s View of AFRICOM,” *Anthropology Today* 24, no. 5 (2008): 20–21, <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-8322.2008.00614.x>.

3. Drivers of Threats in the Maghreb

Similarly, U.S. policy toward the Maghreb, a key player in the Sahel security threats, carries the same security focus, neglecting the root causes of insecurity and instability. Marina Ottaway remarks that security concerns drive U.S. policy regarding the Maghreb countries, neglecting recent political transformations, and acknowledges the restoration of political stability as a grant for succeeding in counterterrorism efforts.⁴⁰⁶ Despite the reality of U.S. concerns about increasing security threats in the Maghreb and Sahel, engagement in the fundamental political transformation of the Maghreb countries should be supported because only successful political and economic transitions can provide the long-term stable framework for tackling security issues.⁴⁰⁷ The 2008 TSCTP, the most notable U.S. regional security initiative that covered the Maghreb and the Sahel, has not produced significant achievements,⁴⁰⁸ neither fostering regional security cooperation nor reducing transnational threats. Therefore, the implementation of U.S. military-focused policies have not gained regional countries' interests as being indispensable in addressing the Sahel transnational threats through regional security cooperation.

Because of its emphasis on military measures, reluctance of leadership, and trust issues, the United States has only been able to achieve a limited influence on regional countries' desire to cooperate. Jeremy Keenan argues that U.S. militarization policy has disrupted the hitherto relative tranquil Sahara-Sahel region, brought more "insecurity, repression, economic and social disruption, political instability," and is far from achieving development and security, as AFRICOM claims.⁴⁰⁹ Similarly, Catherine Besteman indicates that, although official claims support AFRICOM's capacity "to enhance security

⁴⁰⁶ Marina Ottaway, "The Egyptian Constitution: Mapping Where Power Lies," *Woodrow Wilson International Center Viewpoints Series* 42 (2013), 1, https://www.wilsoncenter.org/sites/default/files/american_policy_in_the_maghreb_counterterrorism_is_not_enough_0.pdf.

⁴⁰⁷ Ottaway, "The Egyptian Constitution: Mapping Where Power Lies," 3.

⁴⁰⁸ Ottaway, "The Egyptian Constitution: Mapping Where Power Lies," 3. See also Chapter III of this thesis.

⁴⁰⁹ Jeremy Keenan, "US Militarization in Africa: What Anthropologists Should Know about AFRICOM," *Anthropology Today* 24, no. 5 (2008): abstract, <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-8322.2008.00613.x>.

through military capacity-building, humanitarian projects, and development,” the fact is that AFRICOM’s military orientation destructively tends to define security in solely military terms, preventing real progress.⁴¹⁰ The implementation of U.S. policies for the Sahel has not contributed in boosting regional countries’ desire to cooperate, thus raising inherent hurdles.

Ultimately, U.S. military-focused policies have not addressed the root causes of insecurity and instability in the Sahel. Donald C. Bolduc sees the U.S. government’s approach regarding regional insecurity and instability as inadequate, despite the fact that policy makers and senior leaders in the military and State Department have acknowledged for decades the growth of extremist groups, criminal networks, and illicit trafficking nexus.⁴¹¹ Bolduc also argues that the United States has failed to frame a “comprehensive African strategy” that addresses violent extremism and governance issues and creates an environment favorable for socioeconomic development.⁴¹² Kwesi Aning, Thomas Jaye, and Samuel Atuobi argue that U.S. strategic interests have led to highly and increasingly militaristic and state-centric engagements in Africa that differ fundamentally from human security for development as African security concerns.⁴¹³ In sum, with military-focused policies that cause countries in the region to only cautiously commit, U.S. engagement has so far struggled to catalyze regional consensus in addressing the Sahel transnational threats and their underlying factors through regional security cooperation.

B. EU STRATEGY FOR SECURITY AND DEVELOPMENT IN THE SAHEL

As opposed to the U.S. approach, the EU security strategy for the Sahel falls within the framework of a strong interaction of previously referenced security, development, and governance through broader regional security cooperation that includes the Maghreb. On

⁴¹⁰ Besteman, “‘Beware of Those Bearing Gifts’: An Anthropologist’s View of AFRICOM,” 20–21.

⁴¹¹ Donald C. Bolduc, “The U.S. Has No Clear Strategy for Africa. Here’s Why It Really Needs One,” *National Public Radio*, April 27, 2018, <https://www.npr.org/sections/parallels/2018/04/27/597005836/the-u-s-has-no-clear-strategy-for-africa-heres-why-it-really-needs-one>.

⁴¹² Bolduc, “The U.S. Has No Clear Strategy for Africa.”

⁴¹³ Kwesi Aning, Thomas Jaye, and Samuel Atuobi, “The Role of Private Military Companies in US-Africa Policy,” *Review of African Political Economy* 35, no. 118 (2008): 613, DOI: 10.1080/03056240802569300.

March 21, 2011, the EU Foreign Affairs Council adopted the European External Action Service (EEAS) Sahel strategy draft as a major policy initiative.⁴¹⁴ EU reports from fact-finding missions in Mali, Niger, Mauritania, and Algeria in 2009 and 2010, as well as the multiple kidnapping of European hostages by AQIM, have triggered European engagement.⁴¹⁵ EU leadership expressed strong political will toward an engaged strategy, understanding the importance of the Sahel as an inescapable part of the broader European neighborhood and that the protection of European prosperity and security depends on establishing a ring of well-governed neighboring countries.⁴¹⁶ This strategy of engagement drives consensus among European countries.

The EU strategy framework includes security to address regional threats as well as governance and development to address underlying drivers of insecurity and instability, and most importantly, the framework includes the Maghreb as part of a broader Sahel security concern driven by a strong political willingness. Four key themes summarize this comprehensive approach:

Firstly, that security and development in the Sahel cannot be separated, and that helping these countries achieve security is integral to enabling their economies to grow and poverty to be reduced. Secondly, that achieving security and development in the Sahel is only possible through closer regional cooperation. This is currently weaker than it needs to be, and the EU has a potential role to play in supporting it. Thirdly, all the states of the region will benefit from considerable capacity building, both in areas of core government activity, including the provision of security and development cooperation. Fourthly, that the EU therefore has an important role to play both in encouraging economic development for the people of the Sahel and helping them achieve a more secure environment in which it can take place, and in which the interests of EU citizens are also protected.⁴¹⁷

⁴¹⁴ Luis Simon, Alexander Mattelaer, and Amelia Hadfield, *A Coherent Strategy for the Sahel* (Brussels, Belgium: EU Directorate-General for External Policies, May 2012), 10, doi: 10.2861/79208.

⁴¹⁵ Simon, Mattelaer, and Hadfield, *A Coherent Strategy for the Sahel*, 10.

⁴¹⁶ Simon, Mattelaer, and Hadfield, *A Coherent Strategy for the Sahel*, 33.

⁴¹⁷ “Africa, Strategy for Security and Development in the Sahel,” EU External Action Service, June 2016, 1, https://eeas.europa.eu/sites/eeas/files/strategy_for_security_and_development_in_the_sahel_en_0.pdf.

This summary of the strategy includes highlights of security issues in the Sahel and Maghreb.

The EU strategy takes into account the indispensable link between security, development, and governance in the region. The strategy, in its larger regional context, focuses on Mali, Mauritania, and Niger as the primarily affected nations and is articulated around a large spectrum of additional plans including “development, good governance, internal conflict resolution, political and diplomatic aspects, security and rule of law, and violent extremism and radicalization.”⁴¹⁸ In addition, medium- and long-term objectives include a five-to-ten-year perspective to set “conditions for local and national sustainable development” for prosperity in the Sahel region that undermines the influence of transnational threats.⁴¹⁹ The three-year perspective aims to improve access of populations to “basic services” such as “roads, livelihoods, education, and social services,” and consequently reduce the potential for armed groups, terrorists, and criminal groups’ recruitments.⁴²⁰ Therefore, the EU strategy targets the underlying factors that feed insecurity and instability in the region.

Furthermore, the EU’s allocation of substantial funding to the strategy for the Sahel demonstrates the expression of the political will. As shown in Table 1, this funding includes the Sahel as well as the Maghreb as part of its broader strategy, with €606,250 million and €193 million, respectively.⁴²¹ For example, the EU, the biggest donor, supports the G5 Sahel’s initiative through three main tracks including political partnership, development assistance, and security support.⁴²² The political partnership includes regular high-level EU-G5 dialogues with the purpose “to strengthen regional cooperation” on common shared interests such as counterterrorism, security, youth employment, migration, sustainable

⁴¹⁸ “Africa, Strategy for Security and Development in the Sahel,” EU External Action Service, 7.

⁴¹⁹ “Africa, Strategy for Security and Development in the Sahel,” EU External Action Service, 4.

⁴²⁰ “Africa, Strategy for Security and Development in the Sahel,” EU External Action Service, 4.

⁴²¹ “Africa, Strategy for Security and Development in the Sahel,” EU External Action Service, 9.

⁴²² EU Commission, *Press Release: The European Union's Partnership with the G5 Sahel Countries*, MEMO/18/942 (Brussels, Belgium, February 2018), http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_MEMO-18-942_en.htm.

development, and humanitarian aid.⁴²³ For development assistance, the European Union has committed €8 billion over 2014–2020 to support regional development efforts, and the EU Emergency Trust Fund for stability has committed €43 million so far for preventing “irregular migration and displacement of populations in Africa.”⁴²⁴ The European Union is also a strong advocate for the newly established regional “Alliance for the Sahel,” created “to coordinate existing EU and Member States development assistance better in the region, in a faster and more interlinked way than before through joint action.”⁴²⁵ The EU’s funding commitment for the implementation of its strategy shows its willingness for regional security and stability.

Lastly, the European Union supports the G5 Sahel Joint Force—concrete regional-led security initiatives—with an initial €50 million for the establishment of the force, aiming to counter terrorist groups through improving regional security cooperation.⁴²⁶ Additional measures include the civilian missions EUCAP Sahel-Niger and EUCAP Sahel-Mali, as well as the military training mission in Mali (EUTM) as part of the three relevant EU missions of the Common Security and Defense Policy (CSDP) security to improve regional capacity building of law enforcement and rule of law.⁴²⁷ These different initiatives show the full expression of political will of EU members’ support in boosting regional security cooperation.

As Table 1 shows, the European Union allocates substantial funding both to the core Sahel countries and those of the Maghreb in the implementation of the strategy for the Sahel.

⁴²³ EU Commission, Press Release: The European Union's Partnership with the G5 Sahel Countries, MEMO/18/942.

⁴²⁴ EU Commission, Press Release: The European Union's Partnership with the G5 Sahel Countries, MEMO/18/942.

⁴²⁵ EU Commission, Press Release: The European Union's Partnership with the G5 Sahel Countries, MEMO/18/942.

⁴²⁶ EU Commission, Press Release: The European Union's Partnership with the G5 Sahel Countries, MEMO/18/942.

⁴²⁷ “Africa, Strategy for Security and Development in the Sahel,” EU External Action Service.

Table 1. EU assistance to the Sahel and Maghreb⁴²⁸

EU assistance to the Sahel countries:

Country/region	Ongoing (in million €)		Programmed (in million €)		Proposed Additional Resources (in million €)	Total (in million €)
	Country programmes ^o	IfS	10 th EDF	IfS		
Niger	39,9		42,2		91,6	173,7
Mali	202		38	4	50	294
Mauritania	21,25	1,2	22		8,4	52,85
West Africa region		13,7	66	6		85,7
Total	263,15	14,9	168,2	10	150	606,25

EU assistance to the Maghreb countries:

Country/region	Ongoing (in million €)	Planned (in million €)	New resources	Total
Algeria	99		N.A	99
Libya	24,5		N.A	24,5
Morocco	70		N.A	70
Total	193,5		N.A	193,5

The EU-SAHEL regional action plan (RAP) 2015–2020, which establishes the framework of the 2011 EU strategy for the Sahel, is a tangible holistic approach advocating for a focused regional response on major security priorities for the coming five years.⁴²⁹ Regarding the implementation of the plan, adopted on April 20, 2015, the European Union stressed close regional and international coordination including the UN, AU, ECOWAS, the G5 Sahel, the Lake Chad Basin Commission, and the World Bank as well as civil society through the full direction and primary responsibility of the affected countries.⁴³⁰ Based on the Sahel’s proximity to the European Union and its immediate neighbors, the

⁴²⁸ “Africa, Strategy for Security and Development in the Sahel,” EU External Action Service, 9.

⁴²⁹ Tebas Juan Alberto Mora, *EU-SAHEL, Regional Action Plan (2015–2020): A Tangible Holistic Approach*, Report No. 50 (Madrid: Spanish Institute for Strategic Studies, 2015),” 1, http://www.ieee.es/en/Galerias/fichero/docs_analisis/2015/DIEEEA50-2015_UE-Sahel__JAMT_ENGLISH.pdf.

strategy stresses “a common space for dialogue and cooperation between the Sahel, the Maghreb, and the European Union” in tackling cross-border matters such as security and migration.⁴³¹ This five-year plan represents an important step in the implementation of the EU strategy.

This strategy seemingly meets the Algerian professor Aomar Baghzour’s proposal to create a new framework for cooperation in the Western Mediterranean—including the North of Africa, the countries of the South of Europe and the Sahel countries—as part of the new regional geopolitics excluding the necessity of U.S. oversight.⁴³² He also advises to build this new regional security dynamic on current concrete cooperation initiatives, by either resuming or promoting them, with the ultimate and desirable goal of the Maghreb-Europe-Sahel bloc to bring security, stability, and prosperity to this extended region.⁴³³ In sum, with availability of funding, countries’ strong political will, and support of the international community, the EU Strategy for the Sahel, in its broader geopolitical perspective, is a viable tool that addresses transnational threats and their underlying factors through regional security cooperation.

C. THE AFRICAN UNION STRATEGY FOR SECURITY AND DEVELOPMENT IN THE SAHEL

Like the EU, the AU strategy for the Sahel carries a comprehensive approach that addresses the Sahel security threats through a strong advocacy for regional security cooperation among regional countries as well as a call for international support. The strategy falls within the framework of the AU Agenda 2063 on governance, security, and development issues constituted by Constitutive Act and the general AU strategy.⁴³⁴ Drafted and adopted in 2014, the strategy came as a result of lessons learned from the 2011 Libyan crisis with greater concerns in anticipating and engaging the potential regional spread of

⁴³¹ Mora, EU-SAHEL, Regional Action Plan (2015–2020), 11.

⁴³² Mora, EU-SAHEL, Regional Action Plan (2015–2020), 11.

⁴³³ Mora, EU-SAHEL, Regional Action Plan (2015–2020), 11.

⁴³⁴ AU Peace and Security Council, *The African Union Strategy for The Sahel Region, 449th Meeting, PSC/PR/3(CDXLIX)* (Addis Ababa, Ethiopia: AU Peace and Security Council, August, 11, 2014), 2, <http://www.peaceau.org/uploads/auc-psc-449.au-strategu-for-sahel-region-11-august-2014.pdf>.

the crisis.⁴³⁵ The strategy is articulated around the African Union Mission for Mali and the Sahel (MISAHHEL), which is the AU structure responsible “for the effective implementation of this strategy” and to collaborate closely, take necessary action, and coordinate with other AU institutions within the Sahel and beyond.⁴³⁶ Therefore, the inclusiveness of the collective effort remains central in the implementation of the strategy.

The AU strategy also builds on existing institutions working to strengthen regional security cooperation. Following the Libyan crisis in 2011, the AU coordinated and intensified actions with the Committee of Intelligence and Security Services of Africa (CISSA) and the African Centre for the Study and Research on Terrorism (ACSRT).⁴³⁷ AU security cooperation priority in the Sahel also includes promotion and deepening regional security cooperation through the March 2013 Nouakchott Process, a periodic meeting of the heads of intelligence services and competent ministers of the Sahel region.⁴³⁸ The main objective of the process aims to improve regional security cooperation, share information, and operationalize the African Peace and Security Architecture (APSA) in the Sahel-Saharan region.⁴³⁹ The support to the disarmament, demobilization, and socio-economic reintegration (DDR) process in Northern Mali and the security sector reform (SSR) programs in the Sahel region with partners’ cooperation are part of the priorities.⁴⁴⁰ The implementation of the strategy carries a comprehensive approach that involves other AU organizations.

The strategy highlights governance, development, and the inclusion of the Maghreb as factors that improve security and stability in the Sahel and potentially drive regional

⁴³⁵ AU Peace and Security Council, The African Union Strategy for The Sahel Region, 449th Meeting, 2.

⁴³⁶ AU Peace and Security Council, The African Union Strategy for The Sahel Region, 449th Meeting, 2.

⁴³⁷ AU Peace and Security Council, The African Union Strategy for The Sahel Region, 449th Meeting, 12.

⁴³⁸ AU Peace and Security Council, The African Union Strategy for The Sahel Region, 449th Meeting, 13.

⁴³⁹ AU Peace and Security Council, The African Union Strategy for The Sahel Region, 449th Meeting, 13.

⁴⁴⁰ AU Peace and Security Council, The African Union Strategy for The Sahel Region, 449th Meeting, 15, 16.

countries to cooperate. The introduction of the strategy clearly states governance, security, and development as its three central pillars with the advantage of the AU's oversight mandate, experience, and familiarity with the Sahel issues.⁴⁴¹ For the implementation of its strategy for the Sahel, the African Union has advocated for regional countries' collaboration and cooperation, as well as the support from various Regional Economic Communities, mainly ECOWAS, and international partners.⁴⁴² This strategy is articulated, in terms of governance, around priority areas that include consolidating rule of law, democracy, decentralization, and "sharing of successful experiences," as well as promoting "human rights and humanitarian actions."⁴⁴³ The strategy also addresses anti-corruption, resources management, and the electoral process as well as the involvement of religious and traditional leaders in the process of building peace and national cohesion with the participation of nomadic communities, and the management of conflict.⁴⁴⁴ Each of these priorities promotes regional dialogue in addressing transnational challenges through regional cooperation.

Relating to development, the AU strategy praises regional cooperation through the program of Civic Service for Development Action (SCAD) that offer civilian, civic, and professional training to young volunteers and AU policy on Post-Conflict Reconstruction and Development (PCRD) as initiatives in assisting in the Sahel countries' development projects.⁴⁴⁵ Priority areas for regional cooperation include supporting collaboration between regional countries on "infrastructural and development projects, socio-economic integration of youth and women," regional "agricultural and pastoral development, and

⁴⁴¹ AU Peace and Security Council, The African Union Strategy for The Sahel Region, 449th Meeting, 15, 16.

⁴⁴² AU Peace and Security Council, The African Union Strategy for The Sahel Region, 449th Meeting, 7, 8.

⁴⁴³ AU Peace and Security Council, The African Union Strategy for The Sahel Region, 449th Meeting, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12.

⁴⁴⁴ AU Peace and Security Council, The African Union Strategy for The Sahel Region, 449th Meeting, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12.

⁴⁴⁵ AU Peace and Security Council, The African Union Strategy for The Sahel Region, 449th Meeting, 17.

support” to populations’ resilience.⁴⁴⁶ The strategy emphasizes regional mechanisms in addressing internal insecurity and instability drivers as well as cross-border challenges.

In addition, the strategy wisely frames the regional dimension of the threats in addressing the security challenges. The AU strategy engages the Sahel on an inclusive geographical approach, including the core Sahel as well as the Maghreb countries, and on a geostrategic approach to countries outside the Sahel, particularly Cote d’Ivoire, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Nigeria, and Senegal.⁴⁴⁷ As a collaborative effort, the implementation of the strategy also includes important AU and non-AU structures, programs, or regional countries within and beyond the Sahel as well as assistance and collaboration of the Regional Economic Communities (REC), other regional mechanisms in the Sahel, and African financial institutions.⁴⁴⁸ These institutions involve ECOWAS, the Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS), the Community of Sahel-Saharan States (CEN-SAD), the African Development Bank (AfDB), and the Interstate Committee for Drought Control in the Sahel (CILSS).⁴⁴⁹ The inclusivity of the strategy translates its regional cooperation perspective.

Lastly, the appearance of individual countries’ commitment seems to pave a promising way for regional cooperation dynamics in the Sahel and the Maghreb. Conditions for success include the continuous expression of Sahel countries’ political will for cooperation and other partners, the prioritization of regional, continental, and multilateral assistance over bilateral cooperation, the strengthening of confidence measures, the continuous consultations at all levels between regional stakeholders, and the availability of financial resources necessary for the implementation of the strategy.⁴⁵⁰

⁴⁴⁶ AU Peace and Security Council, The African Union Strategy for The Sahel Region, 449th Meeting, 17, 18, 19.

⁴⁴⁷ AU Peace and Security Council, The African Union Strategy for The Sahel Region, 449th Meeting, 17, 18, 19.

⁴⁴⁸ AU Peace and Security Council, The African Union Strategy for The Sahel Region, 449th Meeting, 2, 3.

⁴⁴⁹ AU Peace and Security Council, The African Union Strategy for The Sahel Region, 449th Meeting, 2, 3.

⁴⁵⁰ AU Peace and Security Council, The African Union Strategy for The Sahel Region, 449th Meeting, 2.

Therefore, the AU strategy makes sense in terms of attempts and good intentions for institutions and coordination in addressing transnational security challenges because it centers on regional cooperation and is expressed with inclusive rhetoric.

Nevertheless, the reliance of the African Union on external partners to support its strategy for the Sahel may portend a failure ahead. The African Union itself is under financial pressure and depends largely on foreign financial aid. For example, the implementation of the AU Pan African Program costs the European Union €6.5 million.⁴⁵¹ China funded and built the AU \$200 million headquarters in Addis Ababa, positioning Ethiopia “a symbol of Beijing’s thrust for influence in Africa, and access to the continent’s natural resources.”⁴⁵² For perspective, in 2012, AU member states contributed to only three percent of the annual programmed budget.⁴⁵³ In such conditions of relying on external support, which is not always guaranteed, the success of the strategy for the Sahel remains more rhetorical than realistic, as the African Union lacks the resources to implement its policy.

D. CONCLUSION

Among the U.S., EU, and AU strategies for the Sahel, no major difference exists in their main objectives to achieve security and stability through regional cooperation. First, all parties share an awareness of the gravity of the deteriorating security situation as well as the necessity to act in a collaborative way. Even if the United States tends to focus on military approaches, its support remains invaluable as all parties recognize that cooperation is indispensable in addressing the threats and their underlying factors. The previous initiatives have paved the road forward to regional security cooperation. Countries in the region and beyond hailed the initial major mobilization as an important leap in overcoming

⁴⁵¹ “The African Union and the EU,” EU External Action Service, Brussels, November 5, 2016, https://eeas.europa.eu/generic-warning-system-taxonomy/404_en/866/The%20African%20Union%20and%20the%20EU.

⁴⁵² Aaron Maasho, “China Denies Report it Hacked African Union Headquarters,” *Reuters*, January 29, 2018, <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-africanunion-summit-china/china-denies-report-it-hacked-african-union-headquarters-idUSKBN1FI2I5>.

⁴⁵³ “Seven Priorities for the African Union in 2018, Briefing No. 135/Africa,” International Crisis Group, January 2018, <https://www.crisisgroup.org/africa/b135-seven-priorities-african-union-2018>.

regional challenges and in reaching regional security cooperation. However, with some countries' fragile openness to regional security cooperation, distrust toward key stakeholder countries taints the regional environment. Thus, a pessimistic argument can be made about regional countries' ability to manage their gains in addressing transitional threats through regional security cooperation. Key stakeholder countries still prioritize their own national interests over regional security.

Second, political differences complicate the achievement of regional security cooperation. Regional countries cooperate either on security as a priority or development and governance previously discussed as the main pillars. It is obvious that regional countries share different interests and are not at the same level of development. While some countries are interested in focusing on security, others might tend toward economic cooperation. In the scheme of a broader regional security cooperation that includes the Maghreb, as the European Union envisions and the African Union more extensively toward West African coastal countries, the core Sahel countries that are deeply affected by transnational threats prioritize security and others might be more interested in economic development. These differences still prevail in the Sahel political environment.

Third, the limitations of predominant military responses have shown that a broader model beyond military and security is necessary to boost the security cooperation effort. The struggles of the previous U.S. attempts at regional security cooperation, as well as the Algerian-led initiatives, prove this point. The current criticism of the militarized U.S. policy in the Sahel represents additional evidence. This reliance means undermining potential drivers of threats. It also generates suspicion around a possible hidden agenda of external powers. Most regional countries are reticent to embrace a foreign military presence or activities on their territory; they perceive it more as a challenge to their sovereignty and accept it reluctantly as the very last resort. Therefore, a less militarized strategy that incorporates development and governance reduces countries' suspicions and is more likely to encourage and foster regional cooperation.

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V. RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONCLUSION

We are engaged in an issue that is beyond us, so the whole world must be in solidarity. It is not a question of tending the bowl, it is not about begging; it is simply a solidarity effort well understood in the interest of the whole world. Not Africa, not sub-region Sahel, not Mali, but the whole world... It is also to say that today we are carrying a project that is in a way a dike with regard to terrorism. If the dike gives way, the whole world will be washed away. So it's as simple as that.⁴⁵⁴

—Ibrahim Boubacar Keita, President of Mali and G5 Sahel

A regional approach is required to solve a regional problem. The Maghreb is mostly the origin of the threats that pervade the Sahel region. With the current regional and international efforts to stabilize the Sahel, the hope is that regional countries and, particularly the Maghreb countries, will express a continuously strong commitment to regional security cooperation. Hence, this openness will facilitate positive collaboration within the Sahel and Maghreb countries and then between the Sahel and the Maghreb regions in order to drive a regional consensus and build an effective regional security cooperation.

A positive collaboration among countries requires statesmanship and dialogue. The Sahel needs active multilateral diplomacy defined by Kishore Mahbubani as a means to solve transnational problems through diplomatic solutions with the engagement of more than one country.⁴⁵⁵ As multilateral diplomacy contributes to problem solving and promotion of international cooperation that is shifting rapidly at the regional level, as in the case of the EU's economic success,⁴⁵⁶ arguments can be made for the potential use and

⁴⁵⁴ Madiba Keita and Aliou Sissoko, "IBK à l'ONU: 'Je Suis Venu pour Porter Le Message Fort du G5 Sahel,'" ["IBK at the UN: 'I Came to Carry the Strong Message of the G5 Sahel,'"] *Journal L'Essor*, December, 15, 2017, <https://www.maliweb.net/nations-unies/ibk-a-lonu-suis-venu-porter-message-fort-g5-sahel-2538712.html>.

⁴⁵⁵ Andrew F. Cooper, Jorge Heine, and Ramesh Thakur, *The Oxford Handbook of Modern Diplomacy* (New York: Oxford University Press 2013), 248, <http://oxfordhandbooks.com/view/10.1093/oxfordhb/9780199588862.001.0001/oxfordhb-9780199588862>.

⁴⁵⁶ Cooper, Heine, and Thakur, *The Oxford Handbook of Modern Diplomacy*, 250, 252.

expectation of multilateral diplomacy to achieve regional security cooperation in the Sahel and Maghreb. In this case, regional security cooperation in the Sahel could become the foundation of a transition toward, for example, economic prosperity that will further motivate regional countries' interests. This chapter gives lessons learned and recommendations for achieving effective regional security cooperation.

A. FINDINGS AND LESSONS LEARNED

Analysis of previous attempts at regional security cooperation in the Sahel and U.S, EU, and AU strategies for the Sahel has highlighted important lessons learned for achieving effective security cooperation in the Sahel. These organizations all share grave concerns regarding the increasing transnational security challenges that constitute threats to national, regional, and global security. The Sahel region remains a geographical space with great regional and global security concerns. Terrorism, illicit trafficking, and secessionist movements threaten national, regional, and global security. An analysis of the evolution of the threats has established that geography and history are important factors that contribute to the growing regional insecurity and instability. While geographical factors favor interaction between the Sahel and the Maghreb and safe havens for non-state actors, the history of permanent conflicts has complicated any alliance of willingness. The continental and international mobilization in support of the Sahel countries reflects the essential definition of these strategies. This section gives the major findings of this research in addressing insecurity and instability in the Sahel.

1. Adequate Balance between Security, Development, and Governance

Military solutions currently dominate regional security cooperation in addressing insecurity and instability in the Sahel. Andrew Lebovich argues that, despite an emphasis on the need for improving governance, security-focused policies remain the center of gravity in region-wide strategies.⁴⁵⁷ Jennifer G. Cooke and Boris Toucas qualify the rapid expansion of international security forces in addressing the 2013 crisis in Mali as a

⁴⁵⁷ Andrew Lebovich, *Bringing the Desert Together: How to Advance Sahel-Maghreb Integration*, ECFR/224 (Brussels, Belgium: European Council on Foreign Relations, July 2017), www.ecfr.eu.

“Regional Security Traffic Jam,” which has proved to be inefficient, as terrorist groups have demonstrated nimbleness and resiliency.⁴⁵⁸ Cooke and Toucas remark that governments in the region have prioritized military force and ignore tackling drivers of militancy in marginalized communities.⁴⁵⁹ The narrowly focused military response of these regional security initiatives achieves neither the elimination of security threats nor countries’ cooperation.

Involved countries and external partners have come to understand that the predominance of a sole and focused military solution does not guarantee the full commitment of countries in collectively addressing transnational security challenges in the region. Military solutions might still be far from improving the situation even if threats are defeated. Other root causes of militancy, which countries face in the Sahel, involve governance and development. According to the June 2017 UNODC progress report on the Sahel program, security, good governance, and development have been vilified for the benefit of the evil flourishing of illicit trafficking in drugs, humans, and weapons through traditional routes,⁴⁶⁰ proving the indispensable link among these three factors. Consequently, the success in achieving any effective regional security cooperation in the Sahel requires a comprehensive approach that goes beyond purely a military one and must encompass security, development, and governance in order to gain regional countries’ interest as well as the international community’s support.

2. Importance of the Maghreb

Any regional security cooperation strategy in the Sahel that excludes the Maghreb is likely to flounder because the two regions are so interlinked in term of security threats. Cristina Barrios and Tobias Koepf remark that none of the numerous regional cooperation

⁴⁵⁸ Jennifer G. Cooke and Boris Toucas, “Understanding the G5 Sahel Joint Force: Fighting Terror, Building Regional Security?,” Center for Strategic and International Studies, November 15, 2017, <https://www.csis.org/analysis/understanding-g5-sahel-joint-force-fighting-terror-building-regional-security>.

⁴⁵⁹ Cooke and Toucas, “Understanding the G5 Sahel Joint Force: Fighting Terror, Building Regional Security?”

⁴⁶⁰ United Nations Office on Drug and Crime, *Results and Activities, Sahel Program Progress*, June 2017, 3, https://www.unodc.org/documents/westandcentralafrika/UNODC_Sahel_Programme_Results_and_Activities_-_June_2017.pdf.

fora in the Sahel-Sahara region “combines a comprehensive geographical scope—by including the Maghreb states in their framework—and a focus on security cooperation.”⁴⁶¹ Analysts recognize the separation between the Sahel and the Maghreb, acknowledging nonetheless the necessity of regional responses to these transnational threats, and that the Sahel-Sahara security equation requires the active involvement of the Maghreb states regarding their interrelation and interdependence.⁴⁶² Anouar Boukhars argues the current origin of insecurity and instability in the Maghreb countries is the growing social and economic marginalization.⁴⁶³ Abdelhak Bassou recognizes the strong security and stability interdependence between the Maghreb, the Sahel regions.⁴⁶⁴ He then argues that there is interference between the two neighboring regions, but that security of the former depends on security of the latter.⁴⁶⁵ He concludes the Sahel countries play an important role in the success of security strategies in the Mediterranean basin, which includes the Maghreb and the European Union.⁴⁶⁶ The Maghreb and Sahel fit in the same security complex as a result of growing transnational threats.

The security threats in the Sahel link back to the Maghreb countries. For example, Alexis Arieff argues, “Algeria is a major source of transnational terrorism.”⁴⁶⁷ The U.S. Government *Trafficking in Persons Report* ranks Algeria on the Tier 2 Watch List for

⁴⁶¹ Cristina Barrios and Tobias Koepf, *Re-mapping the Sahel: Transnational Security Challenges and International Responses* (Paris: ISS, 2014), 51, <http://bookshop.europa.eu/uri?target=EUB:NOTICE:QNAF14002:EN:HTML>.

⁴⁶² Barrios and Koepf, *Re-mapping the Sahel: Transnational Security Challenges and International Responses*, 51.

⁴⁶³ Anouar Boukhars, “The Maghreb’s Fragile Edges,” *African Center for Strategic Studies*, no. 34 (2018): 1, <https://africacenter.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/03/ASB34EN-The-Maghrebs-Fragile-Edges.pdf>.

⁴⁶⁴ Abdelhak Bassou, “Development and/or Security: Issues Concerning the Relationship between the European Union, the Maghreb and the Sahel,” *Africa Portal*, 2, July 4, 2017, <https://www.africaportal.org/publications/development-andor-security-issues-concerning-relationship-between-european-union-maghreb-and-sahel/>.

⁴⁶⁵ Bassou, “Development and/or Security: Issues Concerning the Relationship between the European Union, the Maghreb and the Sahel,” 2.

⁴⁶⁶ Bassou, “Development and/or Security: Issues Concerning the Relationship between the European Union, the Maghreb and the Sahel,” 1.

⁴⁶⁷ Alexis Arieff, *Algeria: Current Issues*, Report No. RS21532 (Washington, DC: Congressional Research Service, 2011), 8, <https://www.hsdl.org/?view&did=730536>.

human trafficking as the country that lacks will to prevent the practice, punish the crime, and protect the victims.⁴⁶⁸ According to the 2016 EU *Drug Markets Report*, Morocco cannabis resin land-channels cross Mauritania and Algeria through the Sahel, the Middle East, and Asia.⁴⁶⁹ This situation describes how security threats are born in the Maghreb countries, transcend their borders, and grow in the Sahel countries, much like the familiar African saying: “you would rather blame your contact point than your collapse site.” Maghreb security threats affect the Sahel, and any regional security strategy that addresses the root causes of Maghreb threats is likely to gain regional countries’ commitment.

3. Shared Perception of Threats

Third, the effectiveness of any regional security cooperation in the Sahel requires regional countries to play down their geostrategic interests and to share a unified perception of threats. For example, while Mauritanian authorities signed a renewal “truce” that includes the release of all AQIM prisoners and payment of an annual \$11 million to \$22 million in exchange of the terrorist groups’ promise to spare the country from its attacks,⁴⁷⁰ Mali, Niger, and Burkina Faso reeled under attacks from the same terrorist groups. Governments in the region must understand that regional transnational threats represent existential threats to their nations that share the same security concerns as the security of my neighbor is also mine.

Countries’ shared perception of threats is indispensable to achieve effective regional security cooperation in the Sahel. Speaking at the U.N. Security Council’s 8024th meeting on August 20, 2017, El-Ghassim Wane, Assistant-Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations declared that the success of the Joint Force in the Sahel depends on the commitment of the G5 Sahel countries to create the force with the strong support of

⁴⁶⁸ Arieff, Algeria: Current Issues, 11.

⁴⁶⁹ NATO Strategic Direction – South Hub, “Illicit Trafficking In North Africa and Sahel (Quick Overview),” March 27, 2018, www.thesouthernhub.org/systems/file_download.ashx?pg=979&ver=1.

⁴⁷⁰ Mark Hosenball, “Al Qaeda Leaders Made Plans for Peace Deal with Mauritania: Documents,” *Reuters*, March 1, 2016, <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-usa-binladen-mauritania/al-qaeda-leaders-made-plans-for-peace-deal-with-mauritania-documents-idUSKCN0W356G>.

their international partners.⁴⁷¹ Therefore, countries should demonstrate voluntarist appropriation of strategies at regional security cooperation.

B. RECOMMENDATIONS

In light of greater global attention drawn to the Sahel recently, this research recommends:

- To ensure a continuous commitment of regional countries in achieving regional security cooperation, we need multilateral diplomacy or diplomatic pressure from external partners and the international community on reluctant countries to reshape those countries' perspective. There is room for regional security cooperation as long as countries fear being sidelined for lack of commitment by the international community.
- Regional security cooperation between the Sahel and the Maghreb remains the sole path to address transitional security challenges. As discussed in Chapter II, geography and history interlink the Sahel and the Maghreb, and the origin of the Sahel threats tracks back to the Maghreb; therefore, the Maghreb must be included in building effective regional security cooperation.
- The support of the international community, coupled with guarantee of available external funding, remains indispensable to ensure the success of any regional cooperation. The Sahel countries rank among the poorest countries in the world and lack economic and financial capacity to address these challenges. So, without external support, these countries will continue to falter as a logical consequence of the deteriorating security situation and permanent lack of regional security cooperation.

⁴⁷¹ U.N. Security Council, Success of Joint Sahel Counter-Terrorism Force Hinges on Cooperation, Funding to Fill Capacity Gaps, Key Peacekeeping Official Tells Security Council, 8024th Meeting, Report No, SC/12956 (New York: UNSC, August 20, 2017), <https://www.un.org/press/en/2017/sc12956.doc.htm>.

- The delicate balance among security, development, and governance must be ensured regionally, both in the Sahel and the Maghreb, as discussed in Chapter IV, and make sure they formed a solution-oriented mandates in addressing the threats and their underlying factors.
- Regional security cooperation must further trend toward regional economic integration with the baseline for more prosperity and opportunity that will undermine offers from criminals and armed groups to recruit terrorists.

C. CONCLUSION

Ultimately, effective regional security cooperation in the Sahel represents a chimera for those who share pessimistic views about African security issues. Most of the Sahel countries are failing states, making them fertile breeding grounds for terrorists, illicit traffickers, and secessionist groups. Yet, the differences among these countries' perception of the threats and their own interests constrain regional security cooperation. This skepticism means regional security cooperation in the Sahel and more broadly in the Maghreb is essentially stillborn.

In addition, some countries in the Sahel and the Maghreb mistakenly think that they can preserve themselves and have peace by redirecting threats to neighboring territories, undermining regional cooperation. Some external powers also, rather than pursuing their own interests, could have avoided contributing to the chaos in Libya following the 2011 NATO intervention that worsened an already fragile regional security and fueled more suspicions among regional countries. For the Sahel, world powers must be more attentive in fostering regional security cooperation through various ways as part of their contribution in sharing the burden of their deeds. The international community's full commitment is required to ensure a strong cooperation between the Sahel and the Maghreb, which is indispensable to guarantee security in the Sahel, because the disastrous security situation raises worldwide concerns.

In the words of the current Malian president, it is a crucial matter of global interest that the Sahel survives and thrives. Therefore, the Sahel countries, with their neighboring

Maghreb countries and extensively their European partners, as well as the international community, all have an interest in forging regional security cooperation and achieving regional security and stability.

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