

Transatlantic Security from the Sahel to the Horn of Africa

IAI RESEARCH PAPERS

Edited by
Riccardo Alcaro and Nicoletta Pirozzi



Edizioni Nuova Cultura



IAI

Istituto Affari Internazionali

IAI Research Papers

Transatlantic Security from the Sahel to the Horn of Africa

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Riccardo Alcaro and Nicoletta Pirozzi*



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Series Editor

Natalino Ronzitti

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List of Contributors

Riccardo Alcaro is Visiting Fellow, Center on the United States and Europe, Brookings Institution, Washington DC, and Senior Fellow, Transatlantic Programme, and Project Manager, Transatlantic Security Symposium, Istituto Affari Internazionali, Rome

Lydia Amedzrator is Research Fellow, Faculty of Academic Affairs and Research, Kofi Annan International Peacekeeping Training Center, Accra

Kwesi Aning is Director, Faculty of Academic Affairs and Research, Kofi Annan International Peacekeeping Training Center, Accra

Richard Downie is Deputy Director, Africa Programme, Center for Strategic and International Studies, Washington DC

Marta Martinelli is Senior Policy Analyst, European Union External Relations, Open Society Institute, Brussels

Mathieu Pellerin is Associate Researcher, Africa Programme, Institut Français des Relations Internationales, Paris

Nicoletta Pirozzi is Senior Fellow, Europe Programme, Istituto Affari Internazionali, and Adjunct Professor, Roma Tre University, Rome

Lorenzo Vai is Scholarship Holder, Istituto Affari Internazionali, Rome, Centro Studi sul Federalismo, Turin and University of Turin

List of Abbreviations

| | |
|---------|--|
| ACIRC | African Capacity for Immediate Response to Crises (AU) |
| AFISMA | African-led International Support Mission to Mali |
| AFRICOM | Africa Command (US) |
| AGIR | Alliance Globale pour l'Initiative Resilience (EU) |
| AGS | Alliance Ground Surveillance (NATO) |
| AMISOM | African Union Mission in Somalia |
| APF | African Peace Facility |
| APS | African Partnership Station |
| APSA | African Peace and Security Architecture |
| AQAP | al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula |
| AQIM | al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb |
| ATA | Anti-Terrorism Assistance |
| ASF | African Standby Force |
| AU | African Union |
| AUHIP | Africa Union High Level Implementation Panel |
| BRICS | Brazil, Russia, India, China, South Africa |
| CAR | Central African Republic |
| CEMOC | Comité d'État Major Opérationnel Conjoint |
| CEN-SAD | Community of Sahel-Saharan States |
| CENTCOM | Central Command (US) |
| CPA | Comprehensive Peace Agreement (Sudan-South Sudan) |
| CSDP | Common Security and Defence Policy (EU) |
| CTF-151 | Coalition Task Force 151 |
| DEA | Drug Enforcement Administration (US) |
| EASBRIG | Eastern African Stand-by Brigade |
| ECHO | European Humanitarian Office |
| ECOWARN | early warning system |
| ECOWAS | Economic Community of West African States |
| EDF | European Development Fund |
| EEAS | European External Action Service |
| EEBC | Eritrea-Ethiopia Boundary Commission |
| EPLF | Eritrea People Liberation Front |
| EPRDF | Ethiopian People Revolutionary Democratic Front |
| ESS | European Security Strategy |

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

| | |
|-------------------|---|
| EU | European Union |
| EUAVSEC | European Union Aviation Security Mission in South Sudan |
| EUBAM Libya | European Union Border Assistance Mission in Libya |
| EUCAP Sahel Niger | European Union Mission in Niger |
| EUCAP Nestor | European Union on Regional Maritime Capacity Building in the Horn of Africa |
| EUFOR Chad/CAR | European Union Military Mission in Chad and the Central African Republic |
| EUNAVFOR Somalia | European Union Naval Operation against Piracy in Somalia |
| EUSR | European Union Special Representative |
| EUTM Mali | European Union Training Mission in Mali |
| EUTM Somalia | European Union Training Mission in Somalia |
| GCC | Gulf Cooperation Council |
| HoA | Horn of Africa |
| HR/VP | High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy/Vice President of the European Commission |
| IDP | internally displaced person |
| IGAD | Intergovernmental Authority on Development |
| IISS | International Institute for Strategic Studies |
| JTF-HoA | Combined Joint Task Force-Horn of Africa (US) |
| MARSIC | Critical Maritime Routes Programme (EU) |
| MASE | Regional Maritime Security Programme (EU) |
| MINUSMA | Multidimensional Integrated Stabilisation Mission in Mali (UN) |
| MNLA | <i>Mouvement National pour la Libération de l'Azawad</i> |
| MOJWA | Movement for Oneness and Jihad in West Africa |
| NATO | North Atlantic Treaty Organisation |
| ONLF | Ogaden National Liberation Front |
| OSCE | Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe |
| PLA | People's Liberation Army (China) |
| RDC | Rapid Deployment Capability (AU) |
| RECs | Regional Economic Communities |
| RMs | Regional Mechanisms |
| RPG | rocket-powered grenade |

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

| | |
|-------|--|
| SHARE | Supporting the Horn of Africa's Resilience initiative (EU) |
| SSR | security sector reform |
| TFG | Transitional Federal Government |
| TSCTI | Trans-Sahara Counterterrorism Initiative |
| TSCTP | Trans-Sahara Counterterrorism Partnership (US) |
| TSZ | Transitional Security Zone |
| UAE | United Arab Emirates |
| UFL | Fusion and Liaison Unit |
| UK | United Kingdom |
| UN | United Nations |
| UNMEE | United Nations Mission in Eritrea and Ethiopia |
| UNODC | United Nations Office for Drugs and Crimes |
| UNSC | United Nations Security Council |
| US | United States |
| USAID | United States Agency for International Development |

Preface

In 2011, as mass popular protests were shaking long-established authoritarian regimes in North Africa to their very foundations, the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO) intervened in support of a coalition of rebel forces fighting the autocratic rule of Libya's dictator Muammar Qaddafi.

The operation in Libya was instrumental in ending Qaddafi's rule. However, due also to the West's short-sighted reluctance to develop a more consistent post-conflict strategy to back legitimacy and authority of Libya's new government, NATO's intervention has ultimately created new threats. After the fall of Tripoli, the rebel coalition consistently proved unable to exert control over the territory, particularly as regards the circulation of small arms and light weapons. Such weapons have remained in the hands of the militias that have fought against Qaddafi, but they have also found their way outside the country, often carried by foreign fighters who had sided with Qaddafi during the conflict. This has created a vast zone of insecurity south of North Africa, in that large, inhospitable and yet strategically critical region that runs west to east through the Sahara desert, and is generally known as the Sahel.

The Sahel was a flashpoint also before the Arab uprisings and the toppling of authoritarian regimes in North Africa. Islamic terrorism, illicit trafficking (of human beings, drugs, weapons), sectarian tensions, interstate rivalries, intra-state conflicts, weak states were all challenges already besetting the area. Yet, in the wake of political revolution, sometimes carried out with violent means (as in Libya), North Africa has experienced a collapse of security checks on its indefinite borders with the Sahel. This has had direct repercussions on the fragile stability of Sahelian countries. Terrorist organisations affiliated with the al-Qaeda network have found new room for manoeuvre (and more arms), fomenting and exploiting at the same time sectarian and ethnic tensions in countries that, given their often artificial origin from the colonial era, are multi-ethnic and multi-faith. Nowhere was this more evident than in Mali. Here, al-Qaeda groups joined with Tuareg separatists to rebel against the central government and launch a military campaign that was only stopped thanks to direct military intervention by France. In short, the Arab uprisings, at least until North African states re-establish an

acceptable degree of control of their territory, have extended Europe's southern neighbourhood deep into the Sahara desert and beyond.

The political earthquake that occurred on the southern shores of the Mediterranean is destined to have repercussions also in another critical region, namely the Horn of Africa. Insecurity and instability in East Africa – both on land and at sea – might make northwards inroads into areas of the Red Sea that Egypt, preoccupied with the enormous challenges of its political transition, may be unable to control. Even more than the Sahel, the Horn of Africa has been a hotspot of international concern for decades due to the rivalries between countries in the region over border disputes and control of natural resources – particularly between Ethiopia, Eritrea and Kenya; the ongoing Somali civil war and the connected rise of Islamist power in the south of the country; as well as the dramatic resurgence of large-scale piracy threatening shipping routes in strategically key areas such as the Western Indian Ocean, the Gulf of Aden and the Bab-el-Mandeb strait.

In Libya, the military intervention led by France and the United Kingdom (UK) first, and NATO later, heavily relied on key US military support, while the European Union (EU) was relegated to a back seat. In Mali, while France was almost universally commended for having stopped the advance of terrorists and separatists, it only got indirect support from the United States and little or no help at all from its EU partners. The security challenges in the Horn of Africa, being older in origin and having a more direct impact on Western economic interests, have led NATO and the European Union to intervene militarily with concomitant maritime missions. The European Union has also deployed military and civilian missions to assist fragile state authorities in the fight against criminal organisations and the rebuilding of a functioning security and judicial system.

In the final analysis, while there is a clear awareness of the need to work out common EU policies and greater transatlantic coordination on North African and East African matters, there seems to be little understanding that such cooperation should be extended to the Sahel region.

The time is ripe then to start a reflection on how the Arab uprisings have changed the strategic landscape of Europe's neighbourhood, with the Mediterranean security complex now extending its roots deeply into the Sahara as well as the waters off Somalia. This exercise should focus on European and American security interests in the Sahel and the Horn of Africa regions, as well as on ways through which the European Union and

the United States can better collaborate with each other and with relevant regional actors, including both countries and multilateral organisations such as the African Union (AU), the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) and the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD).

To promote such a reflection, the Istituto Affari Internazionali (IAI) organised an international conference on “The Deep Roots of the Mediterranean: Transatlantic Security from Sahel to the Horn of Africa”, which took place at Italy’s Ministry of Foreign Affairs on 2 December 2013. The conference was the sixth edition of IAI’s multi-annual *Transatlantic Security Symposium* initiative,¹ a series of annual events in which analysts and scholars from both America and Europe discuss the main issues in the transatlantic security agenda with experts from other regions and countries.

This volume collects the revised and updated versions of the papers presented and discussed at the conference, as well as a report of the debate that followed.

As editors, we express our gratitude to the sponsors of the 2013 edition of the Transatlantic Security Symposium: Italy’s Ministry of Foreign Affairs, NATO’s Public Diplomacy Division and the Compagnia di San Paolo. We also thank all conference participants for contributing to a successful event and ultimately for making the publication of this volume possible.

(R.A., N.P.)

¹ Further information about the Transatlantic Security Symposium initiative is available on IAI’s website: <http://www.iai.it/content.asp?langid=2&contentid=700>.

1.

The Libya-Mali Axis: Spreading Instability across the Sahel and the Horn of Africa

Riccardo Alcaro

In recent times the Sahel and the Horn of Africa have witnessed the emergence of a fragmented, but also larger Islamist militant front. In part as a result of the security gaps created by political turmoil in North Africa, militant groups have proliferated in number, while their activities have grown in both ambition and geographical reach. It is a redline that, unrolling from a spinning axis whose two ends are represented by Libya and Mali, has run across this vast geographical region with increasing speed.

Three major effects have originated from the Libyan and Malian crises. The first one is the greater porosity of borders due to the collapse of state authorities following rebellion and civil war. The second effect is the greater availability of weapons left unsecured in storage facilities in Libya. And the third is the greater mobility of militants, most notably Islamist radicals committed to a jihadist ideology.

With more arms and less border checks, radical Islamist groups have found it easier to engage in lucrative traffic while at the same time they have begun to draw more daring plans. Most of the time they have continued to be active in their traditional theatre of operations, showing both pragmatism and opportunism in tying their cause to local grievances and allying with other armed groups fighting central governments. But the more permissive environment brought about by the popular uprisings in North Africa has also increasingly led Islamist armed groups to consider the merit of expanding their activities outside their original reimits. Not only is the framing of their fight as part of a broader struggle for Islam in keeping with their innermost religious beliefs, it is also a way to gain in reputation and access assets, like arms, information and training, provided by international networks. The wish to emulate and compete with successful groups has added to the

problem in that it has reinforced the dynamic of internationalisation of Africa's multifaceted Islamist front.

Looking at how this dynamic of deteriorating security in Saharan Africa has unfolded in the last couple of years has the advantage of allowing us to tell a unitary story about security challenges linking the Sahel and the Horn to North Africa. Certainly a single narrative built along the Libya-Mali axis and its effect on African Islamist radicalism only allows us to draw a fragment of a bigger and more complex picture. Yet it is a relevant one because it has extra-regional implications affecting the security interests of far away countries, including the United States (US) and the member states of the European Union (EU). Indeed, the proliferation of Islamist activities in these areas has made it very difficult to compartmentalise security challenges emanating from the Sahel and, albeit to a lesser extent, the Horn of Africa.

INSTABILITY WITHOUT REVOLUTIONS

In early 2011 the Arab Spring spread so quickly across North Africa, the Middle East and the Gulf that commentators braced for popular protests moving further south to sub-Saharan Africa. Three years later, a preliminary assessment of the effects on this region of the Arab uprisings tells a different story. This story revolves around two basic findings: first, mass political mobilisation has not materialised outside the Arab world; second, political turmoil in North Africa has triggered a chain reaction that, along the axis linking Libya to Mali, has exacerbated ethnic- and religious-based tensions, particularly in the Sahel but also in the Horn of Africa.

In part, the absence of massive anti-government demonstrations can be attributed to the trend towards multiparty politics experienced by several states from West to East Africa.¹ None of these countries is a fully stable democracy – the rule of law and respect for human rights

¹ A 2012 assessment by *The Economist* found that the region featured more “flawed democracies” and “hybrid regimes” than “authoritarian regimes”. In the “flawed democracies” group were included, from West to East, Cape Verde, Senegal, Ghana, Benin and Somaliland. Mauritania, Guinea, Sierra Leone, Liberia, Ivory Coast, Niger, Nigeria and South Sudan belonged to the second group, the “hybrid regimes”, while the “authoritarian regimes” pack comprised Gambia, Guinea-Bissau, Burkina Faso, Togo, Chad, Sudan, Eritrea and Ethiopia. Mali was included in this latter group

are wanting at best. Yet, the electoral cycles – and the handouts that sometimes accompany them – may have worked as a “safety valve” funnelling popular discontent into the polls rather than pouring it onto the streets (IISS 2011: 281).

Another factor that may have contributed to diluting the revolutionary zeal, particularly in East Africa, is the less-than-abysmal state of the economy, which has prevented economic disgruntlement from escalating into generalised social rage (Shinn 2011).

The technological backwardness of Sahelian and East African societies compared to the North African ones might also have played a role. In Tunisia, Libya and above all Egypt mass movements were not only stimulated but also partly coordinated by an Internet-savvy youth who made the best use of social media to exchange information and plan street protests. Such a degree of familiarity with information technologies is nowhere to be seen south of North Africa, particularly in the Sahel (only three percent of Mali’s population, for instance, has access to the Internet).

More disturbingly, state control of TV and other media, brutal crack-downs on demonstrators, arrests of political opponents and repression of often weak and divided opposition forces have all played a role in checking the revolutionary contagion from the north (IISS 2011). That authoritarian or semi-authoritarian governments resorted to such measures is certainly attributable to their instinct of self-preservation. However, the concern about events in North Africa extended beyond the risk of domestic outbreaks of popular protest.

African governments were also keenly anxious about the implications for their countries’ stability of regime change in North Africa, especially in Libya. They feared not only the loss of the generous financial contributions with which Libya, under former dictator Muammar Qaddafi, had regularly endowed the African Union (AU), but also the prospective power vacuum that would follow Qaddafi’s fall.

The Libyan dictator undoubtedly exercised a tyrannical rule. But he had also managed to contain tribal tensions and ensure a relatively effective control of his country’s borders (which he cynically opened and closed to exert pressure on southern European countries with the prospect of greater migratory flows). Unsurprisingly, then, and unlike the

due to the military coup occurred there in early 2012, which ended a streak of twenty years of democratic life.

Arab League, the AU opposed NATO's intervention in support for Libyan rebels in 2011 and attempted until the very end to broker a mediation. As it happened, the attempt failed, the regime crumbled and Qaddafi was hunted down and butchered by one of the myriad of militias of which the rebellion consisted. What came next, while significantly better in terms of public access to and participation in politics, is a government in thrall to the militias (which refuse to dissolve and disarm) and consequently yet unable to control its territory and borders. It was not long after Qaddafi's fall that the AU's fears started to materialise.

THE EMERGENCE OF THE LIBYA-MALI AXIS

Libya's civil war resulted in massive outflows of both people and weapons from the country. As the once strong Libyan economy ground to a halt, economic immigrants from several neighbouring countries, most of them aged between 20 and 40 (notoriously the age when people are most susceptible to political radicalisation) went back to their country of origin or relocated to other places in search of a living. Estimates about the volume of outflows of people vary, but they might well have been in the order of hundreds of thousands. Some of them attempted to cross the Mediterranean in the hope to make good in wealthy European countries. Others chose or were forced to choose the opposite route and went southwards, to Chad, Niger, Mali.

The impact of returnee and migrant flows on the economic and social fabric of Sahelian states has been anything but irrelevant. Sahelian countries are ill-prepared to absorb migrant flows in large numbers, let alone integrate or re-integrate them. To varying degrees, these countries all suffer from severe structural weaknesses: poverty and malnutrition, often the result of the terrible droughts that regularly hit this dry and arid territory, internally displaced persons (IDPs), inefficient or non-existent systems to provide basic services to the population such as healthcare, education, and transport infrastructure. On top of that, the collapse of border checks in Libya as well as in Tunisia and in part Egypt has been a godsend for organised crime, which has long established roots in a region regularly crossed by illicit traffic of any sort: human, arms, diamonds, drugs. Western Africa, in particular, is used by Latin American drug cartels as a launch pad to bring cocaine and other illicit substances to Europe's lucrative markets (George 2012).

Criminal networks have benefitted not only from the increased porosity of borders, but also from the greater availability of weapons. According to the United Nations Security Council (UNSC 2013a), unsecured arms storage facilities in Libya have been the source of a significant growth in arms traffic. Large caches of weapons, including rocket-powered grenades (RPGs), anti-aircraft artillery, ammunition, plus, of course, the ubiquitous AK-47, have travelled southwards in all directions, particularly towards Chad, Niger and Mali. Carrying such weapons were not only smugglers, but also ex-combatants that had fought as mercenaries under Qaddafi. Among them there were many ethnic Tuareg from Mali, whose return home has triggered a chain of events the implications of which have yet to play out fully.

Many of these Tuareg had in the past fought for the independence of the Azawad, a territory loosely interpreted to span northern Mali and portions of Algeria and Niger, and had moved to Libya following fragile peace agreements with the Malian and Nigerien governments (IISS 2012). Coming back to Mali in large numbers, battle-hardened and well-armed, these former Qaddafi loyalists bolstered the ranks of the National Movement for the Liberation of the Azawad (known as MNLA after its French name *Mouvement National pour la Libération de l'Azawad*), a non-sectarian Tuareg group founded in late 2011.

The inflow of new fighters resulted in a revival of Tuareg separatism and open rebellion followed suit. By early 2012, after a string of easy victories against Mali's regular troops, the MNLA had secured control of basically the whole of the country's north. The failure to curb the uprising led to a military coup in the capital, Bamako, where a military junta put an end to Mali's 20-year-old democratic experiment, but failed to get support by either African actors such as the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) and the AU, or by non-African ones such as the United States, the European Union and the United Nations. Bowing to African and Western demands, the junta eventually agreed to restore an appearance of civilian rule by appointing an interim president and agreeing to hold elections. Its credibility suffered a further blow when it became evident that it was unable to tackle the rebellion.

The MNLA, despite having declared the independence of the Azawad (which also failed to get international recognition), had its own problems, particularly with radical Islamist armed groups with which it had allied in the early phases of the uprising. These included the Movement for

Oneness and Jihad in West Africa (MOJWA)² and the Mali-based Ansar Dine, consisting mainly of Tuareg. By June 2012 the rift between the secular and Islamist components of Mali's rebellion was resolved largely in favour of the latter, which remained in control of the urban areas of Timbuktu, Gao and Kidal (IISS 2012). The radical regime imposed by MOJWA and Ansar Dine, based on a draconian interpretation of the sharia law that also foresaw floggings and amputations for violators, raised alarm beyond the Sahel. Events finally came to a head in January 2013, when an apparently unstoppable Islamist southward advance led France to intervene in support of the hapless government in Bamako.

French troops, later joined by contingents from Chad, Nigeria, Niger and other countries operating under the UNSC-mandated African-led International Support Mission to Mali (AFISMA)³, rapidly turned the militant offensive into a rout. By mid-2013 the French and their allies had recaptured the lost territories, facilitated an agreement with the MNLA (which would later suffer an internal division), provoked a split within Ansar Dine between hard-liners and those willing to sue for peace, and forced Islamist militants to resort to guerrilla tactics in rural areas (IISS 2013).

For the time being, the risk of a takeover of Mali's government by radical extremists linked or directly affiliated with the al-Qaeda network seems to have been removed (Heisbourg 2013). Nevertheless, the Libya-Mali axis has not stopped producing insecurity.

THE RACE FOR JIHAD IN THE SAHEL

As happened with Libya when state authority there collapsed, Mali's rebellion has resulted in further waves of internally displaced persons and people seeking refuge in neighbouring countries. This has further exacerbated the problems of state fragility in the Sahel mentioned above. But the Malian crisis stands out especially because it is a strong testament to the increased potential for action that extremist Islamist groups have

² The group is also referred to with different acronyms: MUJWA (Movement for Unity and Jihad in West Africa) or MUJAO (after the French name *Mouvement pour le Tawhîd et du Jihad en Afrique de l'Ouest*).

³ Deployment of AFISMA was authorised by UN Security Council resolution 2085 of 20 December 2012.

gained due to protracted instability in Libya. It may be premature to predict that the “Libyan fallout” will take the form of a “mobilization of the vast Muslim population in Africa by threat groups active in the North, West and East of Africa” (Gunaratna 2012). But certainly political tensions and insecurity in Arab countries have allowed al-Qaeda-affiliated groups to reposition on the African continent, making the Sahel and, in part, also East Africa a prominent theatre of jihadist activities (Ammour 2012).

The terrorist group that usually grabs headlines in the area is the regional branch of al-Qaeda, al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM). Yet, its involvement in the Sahel is relatively recent. Between 2007 and 2010 AQIM operated almost exclusively in Algeria, with some limited forays into Mauritania since late 2007 and Niger since the following year. By 2010, however, Algerian security forces had managed to terminate AQIM’s activities in the country’s north and reduce them in the south (Dowd 2013; Dowd and Raleigh 2013b). It was at this point in time that AQIM became increasingly active in Mali, to the extent that in 2013 AQIM’s recorded activities there greatly outmatched those in Algeria, the first time ever that the Qaedaist group was more active in another country (Dowd and Raleigh 2013b: 8). There is little doubt that AQIM’s newly found eagerness to act in the Sahel is as much a consequence of the heavy pressure put on it by Algerian forces as it is the result of an opportunistic calculation that the Malian crisis provided fertile ground for bolder action. In fact, the crisis has even incentivised Islamist armed groups to compete with one another to gain in visibility and reputation.

As mentioned above, Mali’s rebellion and aftermath saw the active participation by a local group, Ansar Dine, as well as by MOJWA, which is itself a splinter group of AQIM. Another breakaway brigade, led by a former AQIM prominent leader, Mokhtar Belmokhtar (a veteran of the Algerian civil war), carried out a spectacular attack in January 2013 when it captured the In Amenas gas plant in southern Algeria, taking eight hundred people hostage. The episode ended in bloodshed when Algerian special forces raided the facility and killed 29 jihadists, at the cost however of the lives of 39 foreign hostages and an unknown number of Algerian workers. Belmokhtar is also believed to have directed terrorist attacks in Niger against foreign targets – the attacks were serious enough to prompt the French and Chinese governments to deploy troops to protect French- and Chinese-owned uranium mines (IISS 2013). Belmokhtar’s brigade, like other radical Islamist militias, is generally assumed to be involved in

illicit trafficking, including drugs, arms and the very lucrative business of kidnapping foreigners, particularly Europeans.⁴

The fragmentation of the extremist Islamist front into a variety of groups, often in competition, certainly hampers a dangerous centralisation of planning and resources. Yet it also reflects a race for influence among extremists that might well lead them to increase number and scale of attacks. Even if fierce infighting takes place within the jihadist front, the various groups remain close in terms of ideology and tactics. Moreover, in the last years a tendency towards internationalisation seems to have emerged, with traditionally locally focused groups apparently becoming more willing to expand both their relations with like-minded foreign entities and their areas of activity.

Belmokhtar's claim that the In Amenas attack was a retaliation against France's intervention in Mali was an attempt to frame the action in accordance with the well-established, effective al-Qaeda narrative of Western countries bent on imposing their will on Islamic societies. In so doing, Belmokhtar was using the international involvement of third countries in Mali as a way to internationalise both his cause and his activities.

Boko Haram, the Islamist armed group active in Nigeria's north-eastern states (Borno state in particular), offers another example to show how the Libya-Mali axis has been affecting the region. The group's focus has so far remained mostly national, yet its presumed leader, Abubakar Shekau, has called for global jihad and claimed direct affiliation with al-Qaeda.⁵ While it remains unclear whether this is more posturing than reality, top officials from AFRICOM, the US Africa Command, maintain that the AQIM-Boko Haram link could in fact have gone beyond ideological affinity and extended to operational matters.⁶

Attesting to this is the increased sophistication of Boko Haram's techniques and potentially also the steep surge in politically violent events

⁴ The US State Department maintains that Belmokhtar might have raised around \$50 million out of the kidnapping business. Drew Hinshaw, Siobhan Gorman and Devlin Barrett, "A Terror Leader Emerges, Then Vanishes, in the Sahara", *The Wall Street Journal*, 11 February 2013, <http://online.wsj.com/news/articles/SB10001424127887323511804578296170934762536>.

⁵ Bill Roggio, "Boko Haram praises al-Qaeda", *The Long War Journal*, 30 November 2012, http://www.longwarjournal.org/archives/2012/11/boko_haram_emir_prai.php.

⁶ Mark Doyle, "Africa's Islamist militants 'co-ordinate efforts'", *BBC News*, 26 June 2012, <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-africa-18592789>.

attributed to the group since 2010 (Dowd 2013: 4). There have also been credible reports of Boko Haram fighters being trained in northern Mali during the short-lived rule by radical Islamists there. Moreover, it should be noticed that Boko Haram's early 2013 offensive in Borno state, which compelled Nigeria's President Goodluck Jonathan to declare a state of emergency and send in up to 8,000 troops and aircraft to restore order, coincided with Nigeria's military involvement in Mali. Nigeria was among the largest contributors to both AFISMA (with about 1,000 soldiers) and its successor, the UN-led Multidimensional Integrated Stabilisation Mission in Mali (MINUSMA). Although it is only speculation, it is possible that Boko Haram concluded that the overstretching of Nigeria's army in multiple peacekeeping missions, including Mali, was too good a chance not to profit from.

THE RISK OF AL-SHABAAB'S INTERNATIONAL TURN

Along with AQIM (and its affiliates) and Boko Haram, the third group that makes African and Western governments lose sleep in Africa is al-Shabaab, the Somalia-based Islamist-armed organisation. With this, the Horn of Africa eventually enters the picture. The "terrorist connection" is in fact an appropriate analytical framework to consider events in North, West and East Africa from a unitary perspective, since the Horn's political dynamics have otherwise proved to be more impermeable to spill-over effects from North Africa than the Sahel's. In 2012 AFRICOM officials went as far as to suggest that AQIM, Boko Haram and al-Shabaab were taking steps to intensify ties and even coordinate activities.⁷ While indisputable evidence substantiating this claim is lacking, it is a fact that recently al-Shabaab has shown a renewed tendency towards internationalising its agenda and activities along a pattern typical of al-Qaeda-affiliated groups.

In early 2012 its young leader Mukhtar Ali Zubair, better known as Godane, publicly pledged allegiance to Ayman al-Zawahiri, the recognized leader of the old al-Qaeda.⁸ In September 2013 an al-Shabaab commando

⁷ "Al-Qaeda, Boko Haram, and al-Shabaab 'merge'", *Hurriyet Daily News*, 27 June 2012, <http://www.hurriyetdailynews.com/?pageID=238&nID=24095>.

⁸ "Al-Shabaab joining al-Qaeda, monitor groups says", *CNN*, 10 February 2012, <http://edition.cnn.com/2012/02/09/world/africa/somalia-shabaab-qaeda>.

seized the Westgate shopping mall in Nairobi, Kenya's capital, a tragic event in which over 70 people died. The Westgate attack was not al-Shabaab's first venture outside Somalia – the group was responsible for the July 2010 bombings that killed 74 people in Uganda's capital, Kampala. Yet, the Westgate episode suggests that the faction within al-Shabaab that advocates the broadening of the group's agenda to encompass actions outside of Somalia might have the edge now. The attack follows a period in which al-Shabaab merged with the Kenya-based al-Hijra and intensified contacts with Tanzanian groups such as the Ansar Muslim Youth Centre (Gatsiounis 2012).

It is hard to identify with certainty the ultimate reason behind al-Shabaab's international "turn". In part, this is in line with a group that has traditionally tried to establish contacts outside its area of operation in Somalia. In large part, however, it must have to do with the severe setbacks suffered by the group in the last few years. Up until 2009-10 al-Shabaab was in control of most of southern Somalia, could boast around 15,000 combatants, and profited from its links with Somali pirates operating off the Horn of Africa. Pirates used to pay between 10 and 50 percent of their ransom takes in "taxes" to al-Shabaab, to which they also sold weapons while helping it set up a maritime capability to transport jihadists into and out of Somalia (IISS 2011). Al-Shabaab also enjoyed relatively large popular consensus, a feat achieved by playing the nationalist card against the hated, US-backed Ethiopian troops that had defeated the Union of Islamic Courts, the Islamist organisation (of which al-Shabaab is an offspring) that ruled in Mogadishu for a brief spell in 2006.

Three years later, al-Shabaab's predicament has changed dramatically. As Somali warring factions eventually agreed to end their rivalries and start a constitutional process, troops from Ethiopia, Kenya and the African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM), supported by local non-Islamist militias, have gradually recaptured most urban areas from al-Shabaab, including Mogadishu and the port of Kismayo, depriving it of a key access to the coast (IISS 2011, 2012, 2013). Moreover, international antipiracy operations have managed to curb Somali pirates' activities, thus reducing revenues for al-Shabaab coming from that source. Finally, as has been the case with Ansar Dine in Mali, al-Shabaab's brutal imposition of sharia law in the territories it controlled alienated more and more people. Especially damaging for al-Shabaab's standing was the decision in 2011 to deny humanitarian aid workers access to the local population hit by a terrible famine.

As a result of its territorial losses, al-Shabaab has re-morphed itself from a de facto government ruling a territory into a militant organisation that uses terrorist tactics to destabilise its enemies. Against this backdrop, seeking alliances outside Somalia is for al-Shabaab's current leadership a means of accessing assets pertaining to members of an international network (visibility, advice, training, intelligence, logistical support etc.) and also a way to launch attacks abroad, whereby it hopes to amplify the impact of its actions (Downie 2013). In these terms, the growth in jihadist groups and activities in the Sahel partly generated by the Libya-Mali axis of insecurity could benefit al-Shabaab at a critical juncture of its fight against its Somali, East African and Western enemies.

CONCLUSION

Jihadism in Africa north of the Equator is a present, widespread and growing threat. Yet, it is less a problem per se than it is an aggravating factor of other challenges, of a security and non-security nature alike.

Jihadism works as a stimulant of social, economic and political grievances, often interlinked with ethnic or religious tensions. When radical Islamism joins or merges with separatist movements, like in Mali or Nigeria, it certainly becomes a threat to the integrity of the state and a trigger for civil conflict. Yet, it remains unable to mobilize large sections of the civilian population. Militant groups also engage in criminal networks, to the extent that they are often indistinguishable from ransom-seeking kidnappers or arms and drugs smugglers. Yet illicit traffic thrives also due to a political environment fraught with corruption, tolerance and connivance. Jihadism's religious undertone breeds fanatic convictions and facilitates transnational radicalisation. Nevertheless, even though it is impossible to quantify, there certainly is a large proportion of militants who are less inspired by the dream to restore the glory of a mythologized caliphate than they are by the prospect for more concrete gains such as status, revenues and protection. In short, jihadism lays bare the plague of poor governance affecting several, if not most, countries of this macro-region.

Hence, the proliferation of Islamist activities is as much a consequence of the weakness of law enforcement authorities as it is of the inability of governments to prevent social exclusion, soothe religious and ethnic tensions, ensure basic social service and create ascending paths of

social mobility. The argument has been heard so much that it sounds trivial, yet it remains true that terrorism – meant here is radical armed Islamism that resorts to terrorist tactics – is just a part of greater security challenges arising from intra-state and interstate tensions, and that these in turn are also a reflection of poor governance and lack of development. These challenges are at the same time more complex and more specific, as each country has its own set of problems. In fact, the narrative of the Libya-Mali axis of instability is misleading insofar as it is understood as a comprehensive analysis. It is instead just a way to highlight how turmoil in North Africa has affected security in the Sahel and the Horn by making the jihadist threat more acute.

This narrative, in other words, stands only as an analysis of the increasingly inter-regional nature of Africa's radical Islamism. It is not meant to capture the more complex security predicament confronting the countries in which jihadists of any sort operate, and says little about the social, economic, cultural, religious and ethnic undercurrents of political violence in the Sahel and the Horn. Its analytical added value lies in that it tracks reaction and counter-reaction dynamics across different regions. In so doing, it highlights the difficulty of extricating the analysis of local problems from the regional and sometimes even inter-regional dimension. This difficulty affects not only the analysis of the challenges, but also the analysis of potential responses, as changes in the security landscape of one or more regions evidently warrant a policy adjustment by local, regional and extra-regional stakeholders. It is on these potential responses, in particular by two major external actors such as the United States and the European Union, that the following chapters focus.

2.

EU Security Policies in the Sahel and the Horn of Africa after the Arab Uprisings: What Prospects for Transatlantic Cooperation?

Nicoletta Pirozzi

The popular uprisings that have shaken a number of Arab countries since 2011 have profoundly impacted the strategic landscape of North Africa and beyond, forcing external players such as the European Union (EU) and the United States (US) to adjust their political and security approaches. As the so-called Arab Spring has slid into political uncertainty, lingering insecurity and civil conflict, European and American initial enthusiasm for anti-authoritarian protests has given way to growing concerns that revolutionary turmoil in North Africa may in fact have exposed EU countries and the United States to new risks.

Critical in spreading and cementing this notion has been the realisation that developments in the vast area south of Arab Mediterranean countries, the Sahel, have now such a potential to affect Europe's security and interests as to warrant even military intervention, as France's operations in Mali and the Central African Republic (CAR) attest. European involvement in fighting piracy off the Horn of Africa had already laid bare the nexus between European security and protracted crises in sub-Saharan Africa, given that piracy is largely a by-product of state failure as well as of economic and social grievances in the region. But the new centrality acquired by the Sahel after the Arab uprisings – first and foremost after Libya's civil war – has elevated this nexus to a new, larger dimension. The centre of gravity of Europe's security, which after 9/11 and the US-led invasion of Iraq had moved along a south-eastern trajectory towards the Middle East, may now be swinging to Africa, encompassing a wide portion of the continental landmass extending south of Mediterranean coastal states.

The United States has reacted to the events spreading from North Africa to sub-Saharan regions with a strategy of “selective engagement”

that is in line with its changing role in connection with the shift of power at the global level and the evolution of the transatlantic relationship. Notwithstanding the rhetoric of “leading from behind” in crisis theatres spanning the Balkans, the Middle East and Africa, the United States has only partially managed to disengage from Europe and the Mediterranean. Repeated US requests to the European Union to do its part and take care of the security and stability of its neighbourhood have crashed against the recrudescence of state failure and the terrorist menace from Libya to Mali to the Horn. This has forced the United States to remain involved in these regions through both counter-terrorism and capacity-building activities, while ensuring costly advanced capabilities for military operations.¹

In this chapter, a look at how events in North Africa and especially along the Libya-Mali axis have changed the strategic outlook of the Sahel and the Horn of Africa is instrumental to analyse the path that the European Union has taken when pursuing its regional security interests and see how its coordination with the United States could help achieve its objectives in this large, complex and troubled region.

FRAMING AFRICAN SECURITY AFTER THE ARAB UPRISINGS: CONTINUITY AND CHANGE

The sub-Saharan African predicament in the wake of the Arab Spring features elements of both continuity and change. The uprisings in North Africa have produced two major effects: on the one hand, they have confirmed and exacerbated some crucial trends in security dynamics from the Sahel to the Horn of Africa; on the other hand, they have confronted external actors with additional complexities and stressed the main deficiencies in their approach.

- The security threats that affect countries in both the Sahel and the Horn of Africa are connected with the exacerbation of grievances deeply rooted in their societies, fuelled by the increased inflows of arms and militants from a North Africa in turmoil. The complexity of the situation on the ground is reflected in nationalist rebellions, weak governments, unprepared and ill-equipped security forces,

¹ In Libya the United States provided nearly 80 percent of all air refueling, almost 75 percent of aerial surveillance hours and 100 percent of all electronic warfare missions. See US Department of Defense 2011.

combined with large-scale humanitarian crises. This requires a *multidimensional approach to crisis management* that goes beyond military and law enforcement interventions and is instead predicated on an holistic way to support good governance and long-term stability.

- Another important point concerns the increasing role of transnational networks as amplifiers of local drivers of instability and insecurity that cross country borders and produce effects at a regional and even global level. This is the case of criminal, terrorist and piracy activities, whose connections have led the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) to warn against an “arc of instability” (UNSC 2013b) that runs east from Mali and Niger to the waters off the Somali coasts. The notion of an “arc of instability” should be taken with a grain of salt as it may obfuscate the analysis of local dynamics by neglecting fundamental national specificities. Yet, it retains practical validity, since any strategy for external intervention that does not place and address local factors of destabilisation in a *regional framework* is destined to be ineffective in the long term.
- A third consideration is linked to the difficulty of regional actors to provide credible “African solutions to African problems” in the Sahel and the Horn of Africa, in stark contrast with the rhetoric of local ownership in crisis management and peace-building. The African Union (AU) has shown a chronic inability to cope with recent crises without foreign backing, thus putting into question the huge investments devoted to capacity-building in the last decade and the strategy adopted by foreign actors to empower nascent continental institutions with operational capabilities. A *renewed partnership with African actors* based on deeper engagement with sub-regional organisations such as the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) and the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD) at political and strategic level, but also more realistic expectations about their autonomous capacity to deliver, is a key factor for effective action aimed at lasting security.
- Last but not least, the effectiveness of international crisis management in Africa has been severely jeopardized by uncoordinated priorities and policies. If the willingness of certain capitals – from Paris to London and Washington – to protect economic interests and political ties has made possible the launch of military operations by air, land or water to tackle security

challenges in Libya, Mali and Somalia, the sustainability of peace, reconciliation and development processes cannot materialise without *concerted political interventions* among international partners.

Against this background, the following paragraphs offer an overview of the European Union's security approach to the Sahel and the Horn of Africa in the aftermath of the Arab uprisings and the Libyan crisis by looking at the design and implementation of its policies and strategies. The final aim is to provide an assessment of the EU performance as regards multidimensional crisis management, regional frameworks, partnership with African actors and concerted political interventions, so as to identify opportunities of cooperation and division of labour with the United States.

EU RESPONSE TO AFRICAN SECURITY CHALLENGES: FROM DISORIENTATION TO PIECEMEAL ACTION

The security environment created by the Libyan crisis and the popular uprisings in Southern Mediterranean countries has affected European perceptions and policies towards the African continent in several respects. The European Union and its member states have been compelled to rethink their approach to stability and development in the Mediterranean and sub-Saharan regions. This process has not only been reactive, however. It is also the result of the Union's institutional restructuring that followed the adoption of the Lisbon Treaty, with an enhanced role attributed to the High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy/Vice President of the European Commission (HR/VP) and the creation of a European External Action Service (EEAS). While these institutional innovations have achieved a degree of greater coherence of planning and resources at the EU level, they have nonetheless been insufficient to produce real harmonisation (Pirozzi 2013a and 2013b). In fact, the priorities of the most important European capitals *vis-à-vis* their African neighbours have followed different and sometimes diverging paths, reflected in France's strong interventionist push, increasing isolationism by the United Kingdom (UK), and creeping disengagement by Germany.

Initially, the European Union failed to articulate a credible response not only to the Arab upheavals and the Libyan crisis, but also to their implications further south. It thus relegated itself to a back seat with

respect to its own member states (especially France and the UK), the United States and NATO. The HR/VP was not able to reconcile the diverging stances of national leaders in the aftermath of North African turmoil, including the offer of then-French Foreign Minister Michelle Alliot-Marie to Tunisia's President Zine el-Abidine Ben-Ali to send riot police to help quell protests or the declarations by Italy's former Prime Minister Silvio Berlusconi and his Foreign Minister Franco Frattini in support of President Hosni Mubarak in Egypt and Muammar Qaddafi in Libya (Howorth 2011: 318-321). For its part, the EEAS was still in the first phase of its implementation and did not fulfil its mandate as a fully-fledged diplomatic service.

The cautious attitude, which did not operationalise EU institutions' new powers and competences derived from the Lisbon Treaty, alongside the uncoordinated reactions of European capitals, were the main causes of the EU inability to act as a credible crisis manager from the Horn of Africa to the Sahel. In particular, the pressure exercised by some member states to resort to EU military action, most notably France in both Libya and Mali, was opposed by the majority of European countries. Political motivations, including scarce public support for interventions out of moral considerations or the need to save money in a time of decreasing financial resources, contributed to EU indecisiveness.

Following this early phase of disorientation, however, the European Union has made an effort to regain a proactive role and overcome the operational standstill that has beset its Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP) for almost three years. The Union has recently launched four new civilian missions – EUCAP Sahel in Niger, EUCAP Nestor in the Horn of Africa, EUAVSEC in South Sudan and EUBAM in Libya – and two military operations – EUTM in Mali and EUFOR in Central African Republic – to improve security and good governance from West to East Africa. Nevertheless, both the tasks and the geographical scope of these CSDP missions seem too limited to face the challenges at hand. Even if the European Union has correctly identified the main determinants of success and failure for its interventions in the planning phase, the arrangements eventually reached between EU institutions and member states on policy instruments are far from ideal.

The end state defined by the European Union for EUCAP Sahel Niger, for instance, is the establishment of a Nigerien effective security and judicial system, able to fight off terrorism and organised crime. This is an incredibly challenging task for a civilian mission of less than 50 personnel. The same can be said of EUTM Mali, which was eventually deployed

in March 2013 only after Islamists and Tuareg rebels seized control of the northern part of the country and France intervened militarily, thus making it clear to all that action was urgent. The mission is in theory aimed to support the rebuilding of the Malian armed forces with a view to restore constitutional and democratic order, help the Malian authorities to exercise their sovereignty over the whole of the country and neutralise organised crime and terrorist threat, a daunting mandate for a staff that in all comprise just about 550 military trainers with non-combat tasks.

THE EU COMPREHENSIVE APPROACH IN THE SAHEL AND THE HORN OF AFRICA

The European Union has tried to mitigate its inability to devise adequate policy responses to challenges in sub-Saharan Africa by connecting CSDP missions and other instruments in the framework of comprehensive approaches and regional strategies. This can be considered as one of the main evolutions of the Union's approach to security in Africa after the entry into force of the Lisbon Treaty.

In the Horn, the cocktail of threats of piracy, terrorism and state failure has been addressed through a combination of civilian and military (including maritime) missions, as well as longer-term capacity-building projects. The latest CSDP mission in the region (launched in February 2012) is EUCAP Nestor, tasked with tackling piracy while contributing to the development of rule of law and regional maritime capacity-building. Simultaneously, the other two EU missions in the area – the naval operation EUNAVFOR Atalanta and the EU Training Mission (EUTM) in Somalia – are being reviewed to enhance complementarity with one another and EUCAP Nestor. Atalanta, EUTM Somalia and EUCAP Nestor are meant to contribute to the EU comprehensive approach to counter-piracy, which is based on the combination of military and legal action with political and diplomatic efforts, as well as development assistance and international coordination.

In line with this approach, post-Lisbon EU planners have made additional efforts to ensure effective coordination between CSDP missions and the projects run by the European Commission to tackle the root causes of piracy in the Horn of Africa. Such projects include the Regional Maritime Security Programme (MASE), which aims to enhance judicial and maritime security capabilities in the region while

addressing economic and financial factors related to piracy; the Pilot Project on Piracy, Maritime Awareness and Risks, which explores the potential use of tools such as satellite technologies to develop real-time maritime situational awareness; and the Critical Maritime Routes Programme (MARSIC), which supports maritime security and safety in the Western Indian Ocean by enhancing information-sharing and training capabilities.

The effective combination of all these instruments should be ensured by the Strategic Framework for the Horn of Africa, which was approved by the EU Foreign Affairs Council on 14 November 2011. This document acknowledges the great diversity and at the same time inseparability of the security threats affecting the area (Council of the European Union 2011c: 6-8); identifies crisis response and management as the fastest growing area of EU engagement through CSDP missions and financial support, especially in Somalia, Sudan and South Sudan (*ibidem*: 10-11); and indicates that the European Union's response should support regional ownership and mutual responsibility (*ibidem*: 13). In the implementation of this regional strategy, a special coordination role has been assigned to the EU Special Representative (EUSR) for the Horn of Africa, who was appointed by the HR/VP in December 2011 with a view to contributing to regional and international efforts to achieve lasting peace, security and development (Council of the European Union 2011b).

In spite of an overall correct assessment of the situation on the ground, it is unclear if the Strategic Framework for the Horn of Africa should be considered as the product of a genuine effort at identifying a collective purpose for EU engagements or alternatively as a "reverse engineering" exercise, consisting in the development of a conceptual hat aimed at providing *ex post* coherence to a number of different and often non-aligned activities. At the same time, it is worth reflecting on the viability of a consistent regional approach in the Horn, considering the persistent tensions between local powers, the coexistence of failed states with authoritarian governments, and the different perceptions of the European Union by national leaderships in the area. For example, EUCAP Nestor is working well in Seychelles, Djibouti and partly in Somalia and Tanzania, but agreement on its implementation with Kenya is still pending.

The European Union has adopted a similar regional approach to the Sahel through the EU Strategy for Security and Development in the Sahel (the Sahel Strategy), which acknowledges the negative impact that the

region's instability has not only on local populations, but also on the security of European citizens. After insisting on the "inter-dependence of security and development" in the area and assessing that "problems in the Sahel are cross-border and closely intertwined", the Sahel Strategy stresses the need for a "regional, integrated and holistic" approach (EEAS 2011: 1-2). This approach is articulated in complementary areas of action of the Strategy: development, good governance and internal conflict resolution; political and diplomatic action; security and the rule of law; fight against and prevention of violent extremism and radicalisation (ibidem: 7-8).

One of the main charges levied against the European Union's approach in this Strategy is its allegedly poor understanding of the geopolitics of the region, which fails to take "the complex interactions among interlinked conflict systems" into account (Bello 2012: 2). For example, the Sahel Strategy selects just three core countries – Mali, Mauritania and Niger – as the European Union's primary focus, thus failing to involve key regional players such as Algeria and Nigeria from the outset. This choice has inevitably undermined the possibility to tackle crucial economic, security, humanitarian and governance aspects through a genuine and inclusive regional dimension. As in the case of the Horn of Africa, CSDP interventions operating in more than one country in the region have proved difficult to implement. Negotiations are ongoing in Brussels for the deployment of a new civilian mission in Mali to reinforce EUTM Mali in the training of local security forces. However, instead of integrating the new mission in EUCAP SAHEL Niger as originally planned, the new mission will be launched as a stand-by operation, while EUCAP Sahel Niger will keep a national scope and will probably be renamed as EUCAP Niger.

The record of the European Union's comprehensive approach to the Horn of Africa and the Sahel in the aftermath of the Arab uprisings and Libya's civil war is mixed. At the conceptual level its value is uncontested, especially because it allows external stakeholders to identify systemic factors of instability and transnational connections among threat perpetrators. However, when it comes to the design and implementation of interventions, it is crucial to reinforce the assessment of national specificities and the modulation of means to tackle them, in order to combine coherent approaches with targeted actions.

REINFORCING THE EU-AFRICA PARTNERSHIP BEYOND THE BRUSSELS-ADDIS ABABA AXIS

The objective of providing “African solutions to African problems” is at the basis of the creation of the African Peace and Security Architecture (APSA), a complex of norms, structures, capabilities and procedures the goal of which is to enable the African Union and African sub-regional organisations to carry out a number of tasks in the field of peace and security. Support for APSA is a key target of the European Union’s Africa policy, as stated in the 2007 Joint Africa-EU Strategy. EU-African cooperation has been institutionalised along the well-established Brussels-Addis Ababa axis, while efforts to engage with other crucial actors have remained modest. In particular, the role played by sub-regional organisations – including Regional Economic Communities and Regional Mechanisms (REC/RMs) – in conflict prevention, management and resolution has been neglected.

REC/RMs have significant comparative advantages in terms of cultural understanding, geographical closeness and personal links in conflict-affected areas. At the same time, some of them have developed their own capabilities to address conflicts and manage crises through early warning, mediation and peacekeeping instruments. ECOWAS in the Sahel and IGAD in the Horn, for instance, have both established Early Warning Systems. ECOWAS has set up three committees responsible for Political Affairs, Peace and Security, and a Council of the Wise for mediation and conflict prevention. IGAD has peace facilitators and special envoys for conflict prevention, management and resolution in Somalia, Eritrea and Sudan. While ECOWAS has developed a rapid response capability consisting of three battalions provided by its member states, IGAD does not have a stand-by force, but has been instrumental in developing the Eastern African Stand-by Brigade (EASBRIG).

In some cases, sub-regional organisations proved readier to react to emergencies than the African Union. For example, ECOWAS was the first to condemn the *coups d'état* in Niger in 2010 and Mali in March 2012, while the African Union was more timid. The crisis in Mali, in particular, has shown that ECOWAS has the potential, or at least the political will, to intervene in the region, as attested to by the organisation’s prompt offer to deploy a 3,300-strong military mission to face the Qaedist escalating threat in the north of the country.

However, it must be recognised that sub-regional entities in Africa still suffer from several shortfalls – including lack of human and financial

resources, slow pace of internal integration, insufficient coordination with AU institutions – that hamper autonomous action and make them heavily dependent on external assistance. The European Union itself has strengthened its support to sub-regional organisations in the Second Action Plan (2011-2013) of the Joint Africa-EU Strategy in a number of ways, including through the African Peace Facility, which has channelled 740 million euros since its establishment in 2004,² and through the Regional Indicative Programmes, that allocate 120 million euros for political integration, including peace and security activities. The European Union has also promoted closer cooperation between sub-regional and continental structures in the field of peace and security, for instance by supporting the establishment of liaison officers in Addis Ababa and at REC level.

Nevertheless, the Union has so far failed to engage sub-regional organisations in a more substantial political-strategic dialogue, as demonstrated by its belated support to the African-led International Support Mission (AFISMA) in Mali, a military mission deployed by ECOWAS at the beginning of 2013, and the lack of any coordination mechanism between EU and ECOWAS operations. EU-IGAD relations have been recently improved through the signing in June 2013 of a three-year Agreement on Maritime Security aimed at tackling piracy on land in Somalia in the framework of the MASE project.

US STRATEGIES TOWARDS AFRICAN SECURITY: MOVING BEYOND THE WAR ON TERROR?

For a long period after the end of the Cold War, the United States attributed marginal importance to Africa in its security policy. US military involvement in Africa in the 1990s was basically limited to the disastrous deployment of military forces to Somalia. Then, the terrorist attacks against the US embassies in Nairobi and Dar es Salaam in 1998 and the retaliatory strike against a pharmaceutical factory in Sudan suspected to be linked to al-Qaeda marked a turning point (Ploch 2011: 14).

² African Peace Facility (APF) funds have been allocated as follows: a hundred million euros for capacity-building, six hundred million euros for peace support operations led by the African Union and Africa sub-regional organisations, fifteen million euros for an early response mechanism aimed at financing preparatory stages of peace support operations or mediation processes, and forty million euros for possible contingencies.

Under the George W. Bush administration (2001-2009), US attention for African security increased. Africa's oil supplies started to be seen as a US strategic interest, while East Africa and the Sahel became crucial in the global war on terrorism. In 2007 the US Department of Defence created a separate, unified Command for Africa, AFRICOM, which is responsible for operations, exercises and security cooperation on the African continent and surrounding waters. The attention to African peace and security continued to grow, though only at the declaratory level, under the first term of Barack Obama. The US president did not meet the expectations raised by his election and his visits to Egypt and Ghana during his first year in office (Obama 2009). The lack of concrete engagement that characterised Obama's first term might give way to an American pivot to Africa during his second mandate, with a renewed focus on counter-terrorism originated by the recrudescence of militant Islamist activities in Mali and Algeria (Pham 2013).

Countering terrorism, weapons proliferation and crime are still the main security priorities for the United States in sub-Saharan Africa, even if the US strategic thinking about the region has partially evolved. An approach based exclusively on military and intelligence cooperation (Bush 2002) has gradually shifted towards strengthening fragile and failing states (Bush 2006) and more recently to strengthening good governance and the rule of law (Obama 2010). At the same time, the means to achieve these objectives have been refocused from bilateral engagement and coalitions of the willing (Bush 2002) to partnering with African actors (Bush 2006) and consultative cooperation (Obama 2010). In the US Strategy toward Sub-Saharan Africa, adopted in June 2012, one of the four pillars is dedicated to peace and security and details US action as centred on: (1) counter al-Qaeda and other terrorist groups; (2) deepen security partnerships with African countries and organisations to advance regional security cooperation and security sector reform; (3) prevent transnational criminal threats, including piracy off the coast of Somalia; (4) prevent conflict and, where necessary, mitigate mass atrocities and hold perpetrators accountable; and (5) support UN and other initiatives to promote peace and security.

In the Sahel and the Horn of Africa, the United States has devoted significant resources to building capacities of African partners, particularly in the counter-terrorism and counter-piracy sectors.

In the Horn, the United States is engaged in a number of initiatives on maritime security and counter-piracy, mostly funded through the Anti-

Terrorism Assistance (ATA) programme. Its main focus is on Djibouti and Kenya, where the United States has a permanent military base and support local agencies through training maritime officers and the provision of patrol boats and equipment. In addition to national support programmes, the United States also organises an annual regional naval partnership exercise (named Cutlass Express) involving Djibouti, Kenya, Mauritius and Seychelles.

In the Sahel, the United States plays a crucial role in the security field through the Trans-Saharan Initiative, which supports national security forces with counter-terrorism awareness courses, logistical support, communication equipment and medical training. AFRICOM is also intended to provide support to APSA, in particular by funding the development of command and control infrastructures and liaison officers, as well as resourcing military mentors for peacekeeping training. These activities include reconnaissance, patrolling, maritime security, communications and other tactics.

Overall, it is fair to conclude that the US security approach tends to “show a continued lack of understanding of the complex dynamics that make up African political and cultural environment” (Metelits 2013) and seems to be stuck in the old paradigms of Cold War policy, including ideological competition – once directed towards the Soviet Union and now focused on new actors like China – and embrace of African leaders that align with Washington – like in Ethiopia and Somalia. Direct US military interventions, which have been recently carried out with coalitions of the willing or through limited NATO missions or unilateral commando raids in both Libya and Somalia, were all focused on terrorist or insurgency challenges. Broader crisis management is left to the European Union and its member states, as well as to African actors, while the United States continues to “lead from behind” and supports partners with military equipments, strategic airlift and intelligence capabilities from Libya to Somalia and Sudan.

LESSONS LEARNED AND PROSPECTS FOR IMPROVED TRANSATLANTIC COORDINATION

EU policy towards security in the Sahel and the Horn of Africa has undergone a considerable evolution in recent years, due in part to the new instruments of the Lisbon Treaty but, above all, to the telluric movements

in the African geopolitical scenario brought about by political turmoil in North African countries, Libya's civil war and the Malian crisis. From a conceptual point of view, the European Union has correctly identified the complex nature of the security challenges, taking account of their interrelations, and has also been able to design appropriate strategies and instruments to tackle them in the framework of a comprehensive and regional dimension. However, the weak point is the translation of strategy into action, which is constantly undermined by the contrasting views of EU member states and an insufficient involvement of local actors, such as sub-regional organisations like ECOWAS.

The US's lingering focus on the challenge of Islam-rooted terrorism chimes with the strategic outlook adopted by certain EU member states, France in particular, after the turmoil in North Africa and the crises in Libya and Mali. But this, if anything, has made structured US-EU efforts to address the root causes of the region's instability more difficult. This gap has certainly an impact on potential options for transatlantic cooperation, and its precise nature should be assessed in order to allow for the design of practical cooperative initiatives. US policies in sub-Saharan Africa are certainly not incompatible with the range of actions carried out by the European Union. The willingness to support African military capabilities and security sector reform, in particular, is a potential area for a coordinated, if not common, endeavour. This opportunity would certainly be worth further reflection.

Military and security forces, law enforcement measures and intelligence cooperation are essential elements in the fight against terrorism, but cannot alone address the conditions conducive to its spread and other security challenges in sub-Saharan Africa. In most regions in the African continent, extreme poverty and absolute inequality continue to create fertile conditions for destabilisation, insecurity and war. Effective interventions cannot underestimate the inextricable link between immediate security concerns and long-term development needs. In response to these challenges, a comprehensive approach is needed, based on the support to African actors with the aim to trigger sustainable development, restore state accountability, empower regional structures and build or rebuild good governance. The European Union and the United States have different comparative advantages that could be potentially combined to achieve these objectives and turn the "arc of instability" into an "arc of shared responsibility" from the Sahel to the Horn of Africa.

3.

EU and US Policies in the Sahel and the Horn of Africa. The Search for Sustainable Approaches

Richard Downie

It is currently popular to talk of Africa as a continent on the cusp of an era of transformative growth, made possible by unprecedented levels of stability and improved standards of governance. While there is much evidence to support the “Africa Rising” narrative, a strong countervailing trend is in evidence in the Sahel and the Horn of Africa.

The Sahel, a band of weak states stretching from Senegal in the west to Sudan and Eritrea in the east, is beset by a host of challenges. These include food insecurity compounded by high fertility rates and the impact of climate change; transnational organised crime—in particular narcotics trafficking—and its complex relationship with terrorism and jihadist extremism; challenges to state legitimacy exacerbated by poor standards of governance and pervasive corruption; a failure to integrate marginalized populations and the pastoralist way of life; porous borders; and destabilizing flows of people and weapons. In Mali, all of these elements combined to trigger the armed uprising of late 2011, the collapse of civilian rule in March 2012, and the takeover of the northern two-thirds of the country by Islamist militia groups.

The Horn of Africa states of Eritrea, Djibouti, Ethiopia, Somalia, Sudan, and South Sudan share many of the same vulnerabilities as their neighbours in the Sahel. They are drought-prone and poor; their governments tend to be both weak and authoritarian; and their populations have competing visions of how, and by whom, they wish to be governed. The governments of the region are more intent on staying in power through crude policies of divide-and-rule rather than trying to accommodate their diverse populations in an inclusive way. In addition, states in the region are locked into a “regional security complex” whereby insecurity in one country

tends to have negative consequences for the others¹. The nexus of the Horn of Africa's regional security complex is the frozen conflict between Ethiopia and Eritrea, which sends destabilizing waves crashing over its neighbours. Since the end of the formal, open, phase of war—the 1998-2000 conflict in which an estimated eighty thousand people lost their lives—the two neighbours have continued hostilities through proxies, notably in Somalia. In fact, armed conflict has involved all of the countries in the region in recent memory, causing massive internal displacement and destabilizing refugee flows.

The Arab uprisings unleashed forces which have further unsettled the Sahel and Horn of Africa regions. Five nations share borders with countries whose regimes were either toppled or experienced extended protests during the Arab Spring. All five—Mauritania, Mali, Niger, Chad, and Sudan—have very limited ability to control their territorial boundaries and have been virtually powerless to resist southward flows of migrants, fighters and arms, most notably from the civil war that accompanied Muammar Qaddafi's fall in Libya. Since the beginning of the Arab Spring, Mali has collapsed and serious protests have caused the governments in Sudan and Mauritania to stumble. While none of these events were determined by developments further north, the broader context of political tumult in the Maghreb has exposed and widened pre-existing vulnerabilities.

When the United States (US) and the European Union (EU) look at the Sahel and Horn of Africa regions, they see a constellation of weak states whose inability to deal with their security challenges enables threats to emerge, metastasize and potentially spread as far as their shores. The assortment of dangers include terrorism, organised crime, political instability, and illegal migration.

For the European Union, separated from the Sahel by a thin strip of Mediterranean Sea and a set of North African states embroiled in political tumult in the wake of the Arab Spring, these threats are uncomfortably close to home. While they are less immediate for the United States, they are not insignificant. A large Somali diaspora leaves US policymakers fretting over the potential for al-Shabaab-inspired attacks on the homeland. The Latin American drug cartels who use the Sahel as a staging post to target European markets reinvest their profits into the United States.

¹ For more explanation of the concept of the Regional Security Complex, see Buzan and Waever 2003.

On a broader level, crime, terrorism and conflict in the region undermine the policy objectives of both the European Union and the United States to promote good governance, democratisation, peace and stability. And in one of the poorest corners of the world, efforts to run development projects and deliver humanitarian supplies to the needy are seriously undermined by the threat that kidnappers and armed groups pose to European and American aid workers. Finally, the cost of doing business for Western firms is artificially raised when mines, oil wells and other industrial infrastructure must be protected from terrorist attack by state and private security forces; and where investments are put on hold because of the perceived commercial risks.

US AND EU INTERESTS IN THE SAHEL AND HORN OF AFRICA

As they survey the troubled political and security landscape in this part of Africa, how do the United States and the European Union define and prioritize their respective interests?

The first observation to make is that they give differing levels of attention to these regions. The European Union has taken a keener and more long-standing interest in both the Sahel and the Horn of Africa by virtue of their proximity to Europe and an appreciation that instability from drug trafficking, terrorism, illegal migration and other threats can have an immediate impact on its member states (Pirozzi 2012). Furthermore, the colonial histories of leading EU nations—France, the United Kingdom (UK), and Italy—account for a level of interest in, and knowledge of, this part of Africa that is not replicated in the United States. As a result, the European Union thinks of both the Sahel and Horn of Africa as distinct regions deserving of their own policies. The EU External Action Service (EEAS) laid out a strategy for security and development in the Sahel in March 2011 (EEAS 2011), while a strategic framework for the Horn of Africa was adopted by the EU Council in November 2011 (Council of the European Union 2011c).

The collapse of Mali in particular increased the flow of EU diplomatic and financial resources to the Sahel, including the appointment of an EU Special Representative (EUSR) to the region and the commitment of an additional five billion euros of development assistance in November 2013 (European Commission 2013). It also triggered two Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP) missions to the Sahel, in Niger and Mali, and an

additional border management initiative in Libya. However, the impact of these engagements should not be overstated, despite the significant price tag. An important distinction should be made between the activities and interests of the Union and those pursued by individual member states. Most of the dynamic activity in the Sahel has been led by France. Indeed, France has for several years been trying to persuade the European Union to take a stronger lead in the Sahel, without much success (Marchal 2013). According to Roland Marchal, France is often suspected of acting alone in the Sahel and then asking the European Union to foot the bill (*ibidem*: 6). While the Union, through the EEAS, has the institutional tools at its disposal to respond to crises of the sort experienced by Mali in 2012, it has been fairly slow to utilize them.

The United States has given less consistent attention to the Sahel and Horn of Africa and—unlike the European Union—has not laid out in a single document a strategy for either region. Historically, the United States has viewed the Sahel as peripheral to national interests. Instead, its policy tools in the region have largely been directed toward providing humanitarian assistance to the needy. This remains the case despite growing anxiety over the security situation, and there is little appetite for active engagement and few available resources to make a large impact.

The most important policy initiative, the Department of State-led Trans-Sahara Counterterrorism Partnership (TSCTP) and its military component, Operation Juniper Shield, is tasked with tackling radicalism and its root causes across ten countries. But its modest budget of approximately a hundred million dollars in 2012 puts these grand ambitions into perspective.² While there were signs of increased activity in 2013 —the opening of a drone base in Niger, accompanied by the deployment of around a hundred military personnel; and the formation by the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) of a joint planning cell to coordinate development efforts and humanitarian assistance—the prevailing view is that Europe should take the policy lead on the Sahel, its “backyard”.

By contrast, the United States has been more engaged over a longer period of time in the Horn, although largely on a bilateral level. It has not

² The FY12 budget for TSCTP included 52 million dollars of State Department/USAID funding and 46 million allocated to Operation Juniper Shield, according to Alexis Arieff (2013: 16). A small amount of additional funding came from Department of Defense authorities, which allow the Secretary of Defense to allocate money to train and equip foreign military forces for counterterrorism and stability operations.

adequately acknowledged the fact that some of the most pressing challenges facing individual countries have important regional dimensions. Most of the activity has been crisis-driven, with Sudan and Somalia attracting the most attention. Sudan's many conflicts have generated domestic concern and activism in the United States, leading to considerable engagement by Congress and episodic but important diplomatic initiatives by successive White House administrations. Somalia, with its ongoing terrorist threat and large US-based diaspora, has also attracted periodic attention, although the ill-fated humanitarian intervention which culminated in the Black Hawk Down incident of 1993 led to a decade of diplomatic disengagement. Ethiopia is a long-standing development and security partner, while Djibouti hosts the only significant US military base on the African continent, Combined Joint Task Force-Horn of Africa (JTF-HoA).

While the level of engagement may vary, the European Union and the United States share many overlapping interests in the Sahel and the Horn. Both are concerned by insecurity and the potential impact of terrorism, organised crime and armed conflict on their nationals residing in the region. For the European Union, some of whose members have significant commercial interests in parts of the region, there is the added requirement to protect key infrastructure, such as the French-owned Areva uranium mines in Niger.

The European Union and the United States are also concerned that insecurity in the Sahel and Horn does not reach levels where it poses a direct threat to their populations at home. The United States has increasingly viewed this part of Africa through a security lens. Since the early 1990s, when Osama bin Laden took up residence in Sudan, to the 1998 bombings of US embassies in East Africa, and the 9/11 attacks of 2001, the spectre of terrorism has loomed large in US calculations toward the Horn of Africa. That concern has since spread outwards to cover the Sahel. The United States is particularly worried by terrorist groups linked to al-Qaeda, such as al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM) in the Sahel and al-Shabaab in Somalia. The presence in the United States of a large Somali-American community containing a small number of al-Shabaab sympathizers explains why Somalia is perhaps the one country in Africa that, in the US estimation, poses a direct national security threat.

The European Union is concerned about terrorism for the same reasons as the United States. The United Kingdom and the Nordic countries have large Somali diasporas and France is home to people from many of the Sahel nations affected by AQIM and its associated groups.

The European Union and the United States are concerned that terrorism and broader insecurity frustrate a set of shared policy goals in the Sahel and Horn of Africa aimed at tackling poverty, delivering humanitarian assistance, supporting economic development and improving governance. Both are explicit in linking development and security in this way. As the White House strategy toward Sub-Saharan Africa, published in 2012, puts it: “Sustainable, inclusive economic growth is a key ingredient to security, political stability, and development” (Obama 2012: i).

A particular concern for the European Union is that the failure to improve living conditions and economic prospects for Africans in these regions incurs a direct cost to member states by increasing the flow of migrants to Europe. This concern has been heightened by the ongoing political instability in the Maghreb states, which makes countries like Libya, Tunisia, and Algeria less attractive final destinations for economic migrants and has weakened their capacity to police their borders and turn back would-be migrants. The deaths of more than three hundred and fifty Eritreans and Somalis whose overcrowded boat sunk off the coast of the Italian island of Lampedusa in October 2013 raised the stakes for the Union to pursue policy solutions that get to the heart of the development challenge in the region.

POLICY RESPONSES

To a large degree, the United States and European Union share a common vision and understanding of the problems of the Sahel and Horn of Africa. The diagnosis is that poverty, lack of economic opportunity, and poor governance or under-governance provide the conditions in which instability and insecurity can thrive. The remedy is building responsive, accountable government institutions that meet the needs of their people, improving the ability of state security forces to deal with security threats, and strengthening the resilience of vulnerable populations to perennial crises such as food insecurity. Capacity building is therefore at the heart of the policy approach, in word if not in deed. An important component of capacity building efforts is improving the ability of Africa’s regional organisations, including the African Union (AU) and the Regional Economic Communities (RECs), to respond to and prevent crises.

Both the European Union and the United States propound “whole of government” approaches that apply the “3 Ds” of defence, diplomacy and

development to multifaceted problems. This is in evidence in some of the signature policy responses; the EU's Sahel and Horn of Africa Strategies and the US TSCTP, which are broad, multi-country initiatives including development assistance, security sector reform (SSR) and capacity-building, as well as strategies to counter violent extremism.

Despite all the talk of "whole of government" approaches in the US government, the policy tools it has at its disposal tend to lend themselves to security-driven responses. The formation of the US Africa Command (AFRICOM) in 2008 provided the institutional muscle to pursue US security goals in a more singular way. This has led to a view of the continent that has been quick to spot the threats and rather slower to grasp the opportunities. Certainly, in its assessment of the terrorist threat, the US military has a tendency to "join the dots," between the various groups. AFRICOM has painted an arc of instability sweeping across the Sahel, the Horn and into the Arabian Peninsula that downplays the ideological divisions of the various armed groups and portrays them as part of a network united by a common ambition to wage jihad against the United States.

In its security policy toward the Sahel and Horn of Africa, the European Union and the United States focus their efforts on the long-term objective of building the capacity of African security forces to a level where they will ultimately be able to deal with their own security crises and those of their neighbours. For the United States, this involves a range of bilateral and multilateral efforts under programs such as International Military Education and Training and the Global Peace Operations Initiative. A range of annual exercises such as Flintlock in the Sahel bring African states (and invited European allies) together to work on counter-terrorism, border security, battlefield medicine, peacekeeping, and disaster response, among other activities. These efforts are generally welcomed by African partners but tend to be disconnected and lack follow-through, raising questions about their ability to foster institutional change over the long-term. They also tend to be overwhelmingly focused on military-military cooperation, neglecting civilian security institutions such as the police, which are in desperate need of reform in every single state of the Sahel-Horn of Africa region.

US military activities have also been largely disconnected from the various, small-scale training and assistance missions conducted by the European Union in the Sahel and Horn of Africa. By far the most ambitious of these is the EU Training Mission in Mali (EUTM Mali), which has the unenviable task of transforming the Malian military from the mutinous,

incompetent rabble which surrendered more than half of the country to armed militia groups into a professional, truly national fighting force. It is expected to achieve all this in fifteen months with a staff of less than five hundred.³ One area where the European Union has a comparative advantage over the United States is in providing police and gendarme training. However, civilian security operations such as EUCAP Sahel Niger, which offers training and assistance to Nigerien police in combating terrorism and organised crime, offer limited prospects of success due to their tiny budget and miniscule staffing levels.⁴ One area where Brussels and Washington have successfully worked together on security assistance is Somalia, where they have provided training, equipment and financial assistance to troop contributing nations to the African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM). In addition, they have trained vetted units and paid salaries of the Somali National Armed Forces.

While the policy approach to improving security is framed around the long-term challenge of local partner capacity-building and envisages results over a similarly extended timescale, short-term emergencies routinely emerge that demand an immediate response. These emergencies are dealt with on a case by case basis. The United States is generally reluctant to get involved in these sorts of operations, particularly in the Sahel, where for the most part national security interests are not considered to be at stake. The US military wishes to adopt a low-profile stance in the region and avoid committing “boots on the ground” in combat operations. This was the position taken in Mali, where the United States was content to play a supporting role to the French Operation Serval, providing airlift for African contributing forces, in-air refuelling services and intelligence from its surveillance aircraft.

However, there have been occasional—and in 2013 more frequent—forays into offensive operations. When the decision is made to take action, the emphasis is on so-called “light footprint” operations favouring drone strikes and the use of Special Forces. Somalia has been the focus of these activities, reflecting concerns about al-Shabaab’s ability to strike US interests in the region and beyond. An aborted raid by US Navy SEALs on al-Shabaab’s coastal stronghold of Barawa in the wake of the September 2013 Westgate mall terrorist attack in Nairobi was followed

³ EU Training Mission Mali Mandate and Activities: http://www.eutmmali.eu/?page_id=228.

⁴ Factsheet on EUCAP SAHEL Niger in EEAS website: <http://www.eeas.europa.eu/csdp/missions-and-operations/eucap-sahel-niger>.

weeks later by a missile strike which reportedly killed the group's top explosive expert, along with another senior operative. These operations are extremely controversial, even when they succeed. They are legally dubious, risk killing civilians, deprive the United States of potentially useful intelligence from captured suspects, and are generally viewed extremely negatively in the region.

The European Union is even more reluctant than the United States to get involved in offensive military operations in Africa. This is not because it lacks the tools to take action. Instead it reflects the difficulty of reaching political consensus and the failure of a majority of member states to acknowledge the strategic importance of the Sahel. A recent analysis of EU defence policy, based on an analysis of each of the member states' defence strategies, concludes that the Mali crisis "might almost have been designed as the long-sought opportunity for the EU to deploy one of its battle groups – which occupy a place of honour in the Lisbon Treaty as the epitome and acid test of European defence co-operation. [...] Yet so divorced has talk of European defence become from any practical application in the real world that the option of despatching the battle group seems to have been discounted without any real consideration" (France and Witney 2013: 1). As in previous episodes, the European Union allowed its policy to be led by the member state with the most interests at stake in this part of Africa: France.

There are occasional exceptions to the Union's reluctance to contemplate robust security engagement in Africa. The naval task force assembled to tackle Somali piracy in the Gulf of Aden is one of the most successful, if expensive, recent efforts. The EU NAVFOR Somalia Operation Atalanta and US Combined Task Force 151 teamed up with the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO) and other international partners to establish a transit corridor for vessels travelling through the Gulf of Aden, reducing piracy to minimal levels. This is not merely a containment operation. The mandate was expanded in 2012 to allow for offensive operations against the Somali mainland and EU NAVFOR forces launched attacks against pirate bases in May 2012.⁵

The twin prerogatives of pursuing long-term development objectives and meeting crises with short-term, "quick fixes" is not confined to the

⁵ EU NAVFOR, *EU Naval Force Delivers Blow Against Somali Pirates On Shoreline*, 15 May 2012 <http://eunavfor.eu/eu-naval-force-delivers-blow-against-somali-pirates-on-shoreline>.

security sector. The European Union and the United States have tried to tackle the long-term problem of food insecurity in the Sahel and Horn of Africa through initiatives like USAID's Feed the Future Program and the European Union's *Alliance Globale pour l'Initiative Resilience* (AGIR). These projects aim to improve agricultural productivity, tackle market inefficiencies, and address other root causes of food insecurity. But progress has been repeatedly thrown off track by the pressing need to respond to catastrophic droughts in the Horn of Africa in 2011-12 and the Sahel in 2012-13. The emergency response to the Horn of Africa drought in 2011 was slow, expensive, unwieldy and unable to prevent the deaths of as many as a quarter of a million people (Checchi and Robinson 2013).

ASSESSING THE VALUE OF PARTNERSHIPS

One of the most important shared principles of the EU and US policy approach to the Sahel and Horn of Africa is that African partners should be in the lead. This rhetorical commitment to the idea of "African solutions to African problems" is harder to implement in reality. When faced with crises such as state collapse in Mali and drought in the Horn of Africa, African governments and regional organisations do not possess the resources to respond effectively. There are occasional exceptions: Ethiopia had the state capacity to mount an operation that spared its population the worst effects of the 2011-12 regional drought. But the response to the Mali crisis was more indicative of the norm.

The African Union prevaricated in the face of the March 2012 coup d'état which toppled President Amadou Toumani Touré. The Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) acted more decisively, suspending Mali from the organisation and sounding the alarm to the international community on the threat posed by radical Islamist groups in northern Mali. But while ECOWAS showed an admirable willingness to launch a military response to retake the north, there were serious doubts about its ability to do so. Its ponderous efforts to mount this response were in stark contrast to the speed of the rebel advance, which convinced France to launch its own intervention in January 2013.

Time and again, capacity constraints and lack of consensus mean that on many issues, African governments and regional organisations find themselves pulled along by EU and US policies. The European Union and the United States have made a strategic investment in supporting

the African Union and the RECs, particularly in their efforts to establish an African Standby Force (ASF) to respond to crisis and conflict across the continent, but progress to date has been glacial. While the regional components of the ASF that cover the Sahel and Horn of Africa have arguably made the most progress, they are well short of attaining the capability to perform the six levels of operations envisaged for them by the African Union.

An additional constraint on effective partnership with Africa's regional organisations is that the RECs do not offer the best framework for dealing with some of the most pressing crises. In the aftermath of Mali's collapse, the policy lead was provided by ECOWAS, but some of the nations most affected by the turmoil and best equipped to respond, such as Mauritania, Algeria and Chad, are not members of this organisation. The other relevant regional organisation, the Community of Sahel-Saharan States (CEN-SAD) is utterly ineffective.

For all these reasons, the United States in particular continues to favour bilateral relationships. This approach can be more efficient but creates its own problems. By falling back on reliable "go-to" partners, the United States is sometimes guilty of viewing problems through the eyes of self-interested allies. The close US-Ethiopia relationship is one example of this phenomenon. By portraying itself as a valuable security partner which shares the US preoccupation with stamping out international terrorism, Ethiopia has benefited from military support that has been used to pursue its own internal "terrorists" and garner diplomatic favour in its dispute with Eritrea. The United States has also been willing to tone down—at least in public—its criticism of Ethiopia's human rights record and lack of progress on democratic reform. On occasion, this partnership has resulted in poor decision-making which has undermined US policy goals in the region. The United States gave tacit support to Ethiopia's ill-judged invasion of Somalia in 2006-7, which created the conditions for al-Shabaab's rise to power. On other occasions, the United States has taken a tougher line against less valuable partners, leading to accusations of double-standards. The US government immediately cut off non-emergency support to Mali following the overthrow of the civilian government in 2012. While its adherence to the principle of supporting democracy was laudable, it also constrained US policy options, leaving it a bit-part player on the sidelines until the return to civilian rule in August 2013.

In addition to African partners, a host of external actors are also becoming increasingly important in the Sahel and Horn of Africa. Some,

such as the United Nations (UN), are natural partners for the United States and the European Union, while others are potential rivals for influence. China's commercial activities in Africa are well-documented but its contribution to peacekeeping operations is another important lever of influence. China has contributed four hundred personnel from the People's Liberation Army (PLA) to the UN Multidimensional Integrated Stabilisation Mission in Mali (MINUSMA), the first time that the PLA has been called upon to take part in a UN mission.⁶ It is also engaging diplomatically, for example in Sudan and South Sudan, where disputes threaten its investments in the oil industry and test its policy of non-interference in internal affairs.

The increasingly crowded field of international actors involved in Africa can lead to policy coordination problems. Turkey's recent engagement in development, diplomacy, and commercial activities in Somalia has been largely positive—and warmly welcomed by Somalia—but has also led to conflicting agendas and duplication of programs.⁷ For the European Union, there is the specific challenge of coordinating and aligning the interests and activities of individual member states—such as France in Mali and the United Kingdom in Somalia—with its own. On occasion, the actions of member states have actively undermined EU policy. This was illustrated by the ransom payments made by Spain and Italy in 2012 to release aid workers held by AQIM. Even more concerning was the speculation that while the French military was chasing down the remnants of AQIM in northern Mali, its government was paying the terrorist group up to twenty million euros for the release of four of its nationals seized in Niger in 2010.⁸

⁶ "First Chinese Peacekeeping Taskforce to Mali is Ready", *People's Daily Online*, 18 October 2013, <http://english.peopledaily.com.cn/90786/8429064.html>.

⁷ Kyle Westaway, "Turkey is Poised to Cash in on a Stable Somalia," *Quartz Daily Brief*, 17 September 2013, <http://qz.com/124918/turkey-is-poised-to-cash-in-on-a-stable-somalia>.

⁸ Abdoulaye Massalatchi and Nicholas Vinocur, "France Denies Paying Ransom as Sahel Hostage Return", *Reuters*, 30 October 2013, <http://www.reuters.com/article/2013/10/30/us-france-niger-hostages-idUSBRE99T1EE20131030>.

CLOSING THOUGHTS AND POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

As EU and the US policymakers survey the Sahel and the Horn of Africa, they can be forgiven for feeling overwhelmed by the scale of the challenges and struck by the relative paucity of resources at their disposal. While all the current chatter about Africa is of a continent on the rise, the vast majority of people in this region remain impoverished. A host of underlying challenges confound efforts to address this fundamental problem of poverty: a harsh climate, rapid population growth, limited economic opportunities, and weak state capacity. These structural challenges erode state legitimacy and breed resentment among alienated populations, creating an enabling environment for destabilizing threats to emerge such as organised crime, religious extremism, political instability and violent conflict.

For the foreseeable future, EU and US approaches to the region will centre on containing or neutralizing these immediate threats—which if unchecked can harm national security interests—while at the same time pursuing long term development and poverty alleviation strategies to address their root causes. Unfortunately, a combination of limited resources, wavering attention, and the sheer difficulty of achieving the longer-term goals means that the immediate threats inevitably take priority, even though they are merely symptoms of the broader problems. This reactive approach is understandable when lives are at stake but it is not a recipe for delivering sustainable solutions to the regions' challenges. In order to be effective and sustainable, EU and US policy responses in the Sahel and Horn of Africa require:

- *A “whole of government” approach that goes beyond mere rhetoric.* Too many of the current policies are driven by the security agenda, with development efforts trailing behind. This is particularly true of the US approach, which stems from a threat-based view centred on violent extremism and transnational organised crime, and which prescribes military capacity building as the answer. The limitations of this strategy were underlined by a US government audit of its flagship policy in the Sahel—the TSCTP—as far back as 2008, which found that the implementing agencies “lack a comprehensive integrated strategy” to guide their efforts (US Government Accountability Office 2008). In 2012, the report’s authors revisited the issue and were disappointed to find that the State Department had taken a “piecemeal approach” to addressing their concerns.

These shortcomings were exposed most dramatically in the wake of the Mali crisis by revelations that the army captain who launched the March 2012 coup d'état had received military training on multiple occasions in the United States. The most senior US diplomat for Africa has admitted that "events in Mali raised hard questions" and a much-needed review has been taking place of the TSCTP with a view to getting development professionals from USAID to play a bigger role (US Department of State 2013).

- *A long-term view*, driven by a cohesive strategy that identifies the chronic underlying vulnerabilities of the region. Priority must be given to the long-term goals of building resilience and improving the capacity and quality of host country institutions so that limited resources are not continually diverted toward short-term emergency responses like humanitarian relief to the hungry or controversial security operations like drone strikes on suspected terrorists. USAID is trying to do this by forming Joint Planning Cells for the Horn of Africa and Sahel, bringing together humanitarian assistance and development functions to work together on integrated strategies on food security. But there is a long way to go; while US security cooperation is rhetorically committed to the long-term task of institution-building and the importance, for example, of cementing the primacy of civilian authority over the military, the lion's share of assistance is devoted to short-term "train and equip" counter-terrorism initiatives. The limitations of US efforts on institution-building are underlined by the fact that three of the ten countries receiving assistance under the TSCTP have suffered coup d'états since 2008. This tension between pursuing long-term goals and finding short-term fixes to immediate threats is to some degree unavoidable but leads to policy confusion and agencies working at cross-purposes.
- *A focus on civilian security*. Too many of the current policy initiatives focus on military-military cooperation rather than strengthening the ability of police and other civilian security agencies to do their job in a professional, accountable manner. Weak rule of law is a major source of public frustration across the Sahel and Horn of Africa, where many citizens feel that the state is either unwilling or incapable of operating a criminal justice system that can address their human security needs and prevent impunity. Corruption and organised crime will remain threats to stability across the

region until states improve their ability to arrest and prosecute wrongdoers. Donors such as the European Union and the United States should make it a strategic priority to assist them.

- *Burden-sharing between partners.* Budget realities in the European Union and the United States mean that no more than modest amounts of money will be committed to the Sahel and the Horn of Africa for the foreseeable future. It is therefore critical that maximum value is extracted from these limited resources. The two donors should adopt a more collaborative approach that agrees on mutual priorities and avoids programmatic overlaps. The current policy approach is too haphazard, which is inexcusable given the large number of shared interests in the region.
- *In addition, cooperation should be broadened with African partners,* even at the cost of slower progress. Working with organisations like the African Union and the various sub-regional groupings can be challenging and frustrating due to low capacity and the difficulty of achieving policy consensus. But it is critical if these institutions are to be effective in the long-term. The phrase “African solutions to African problems” is frequently heard in American and European policy circles but too often it is mere rhetoric. One priority should be strengthening the RECs, which are often the frontline organisations in dealing with insecurity. An approach that works through regional groups is important because so many of the problems in the Sahel and the Horn have regional dimensions. At the same time, the Sahel and the Horn of Africa and the RECs do not have overlapping boundaries, making it necessary to include a broader set of states in any crisis response.
- *More effective cooperation with other external partners.* The relative power of the European Union and the United States is on the wane in Africa, meaning that the opinions and activities of a broader set of partners must be considered. China and the other BRICS nations (Russia, India, Brazil and South Africa), Turkey and the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) states all have interests to promote in the Sahel and Horn of Africa. Not all of these interests overlap with those of the United States and European Union; not all of these actors are keen to collaborate or coordinate their activities. The vast majority, however, are committed to promoting peace and stability in the region and efforts should be stepped up to at least include them in regular consultations on specific issues and crises.

- *Dialogue with the diaspora.* Another important and frequently overlooked set of external actors are the diaspora populations. Most of the countries in the Horn of Africa and Sahel have large diasporas, many of whom live in the European Union or the United States. An estimated two million Somalis live outside their country and up to half a million Ethiopians (Williams 2011: 33). These groups maintain strong connections to their homelands, from supporting family members with remittances to agitating against the governments they left behind. They can be a source of stability or instability but their considerable influence means that they must be included in strategies to tackle the regions' problems.

4.

Security in the Sahel. Linking the Atlantic to the Mediterranean

Kwesi Aning and Lydia Amedzrator

Located at the southern end of the Sahara desert, the Sahel runs for at least 4,500km from Senegal through Mauritania, Mali, Burkina Faso, Niger and Chad, and blends into the less arid Sudanese-Sahel belt to its southern edge.¹ The Sahel is bordered by the Mediterranean Arab countries² to the north and the Atlantic Ocean to the west. A transitional zone historically, the Sahel has had deep-rooted commercial, cultural and political connections with both sides of the Sahara desert. A distinguishing feature of this interaction is the trans-Saharan trade.

Trade networks in the area were long controlled by Berber nomads, the Tuareg, who negotiated alliances with other traders and used their economic and political superiority to navigate their way through trade routes in order to sell and exchange goods, and sometimes raid neighbouring communities. The trans-Saharan trade declined in the 1900s following the introduction of the railway transportation system.

However, mobility on both sides of the Sahara desert continued with the exodus of Tuareg to North Africa, particularly Libya, due to severe droughts in the 1970s and 1980s, and the repression of the Tuareg population by the Malian government. Profiting from former Libyan ruler Muammar Qaddafi's pan-African policy, these migrants were allowed to reside and work in Libya and some of the migrants, again the Tuareg, were recruited into the Islamic Legion, Libya's former paramilitary force. It is believed that the Tuareg formed the core of Qaddafi's special brigade that fought (and lost) in the 2011 Libyan civil war. As fallout from the demise of Qaddafi, fighters migrated to their home countries with vast arms caches.

¹ It covers Senegal, southern Mauritania, Mali, Burkina Faso, southern Algeria, Niger, northern Nigeria, Chad, northern Cameroon, Sudan, and Eritrea. However, the core Sahelian countries are: Mali, Niger and Mauritania (see Aning, Okyere and Abdallah 2012).

² Algeria, Egypt, Libya, Morocco and Tunisia.

The possible net effect of these events has raised disturbing questions about the nature of these countries' relationships with the former Libyan leader and the extent to which the supposed "mutual benefits" have now a debilitating influence on the Sahel states.

Further, prompted by their long desire for political freedom and autonomy, in January 2012 the Tuareg launched an armed rebellion against Mali's central government. The rebellion easily managed to secure control of the largely Tuareg-inhabited Azawad region (spanning Mali's north), a success that resulted in the March 2012 coup d'état and the eventual ouster from power of Malian President Amadou Toumani Touré, accused of being incapable of stopping the secession of over half the country. This series of events ushered in a period of upheavals including the proclamation of northern Mali as an independent state by the National Movement for the Liberation of the Azawad (MNLA) and the fight between the MNLA itself and its radical Islamist allies, which are part of or affiliated with al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM), as well as the expansion of the extremist Islamist front in the Sahel region.

These events raise concerns relating to the possible roles of Tuareg rebels in the current Sahel crisis. How have the Tuareg capitalized on the dynamics driving the Sahel crisis? What is the nature of the partnerships among criminal and extremist groups who have their bases in the Mediterranean and the Sahel? And what is the character of the illicit activities of these networks and how is that facilitated by the links between North Africa and the Sahel?

This chapter analyses the security situation in the Sahel, and how it is linked to political events in North Africa. It argues that (a) events on both sides of the Sahara are interlinked and that the net effect of this interconnectedness is the perpetuation of a vulnerable environment that contributes to sustaining the Sahel crisis; and (b) that the security situation in the Sahel has its roots also in history, more precisely the long-distance caravan trade and the role of Tuareg fighters in regional wars. In furtherance of this discussion, this chapter focuses on, first, the long historical connections between North Africa and the Sahel; and, second, the analysis of the security linkages between the two regions.

HISTORICAL CONNECTIONS: A DRIVER OF INSECURITY IN THE SAHEL?

West Africa has a long historical engagement with North Africa. Probably the most famous aspect of this relationship was the trans-Saharan trade and the concomitant spread of Islam. Therefore, the dynamics of the crisis situation in the Sahel and the debilitating influence of criminal operatives and jihadist groups have a long historical trajectory.

Navigating their way through basic routes,³ which mostly intersected at Timbuktu, long distance travellers played a major role in the economies of the Sahel region by channelling salt and animals from the desert into the more fertile lands of the south, and in return obtaining grain, cloth and manufactured articles (Baier 1977). The trans-Saharan trade was controlled by Berber nomads, the Tuareg, due to their camel caravans and political power. The nomads sometimes used the marginal land of the desert edge to undertake “annual cycles of transhumance” (ibidem). For instance, the Tuareg travelled with their animals to the north during the rainy season to take advantage of good pasture and went to the south in December to sell dates and desert salt (ibidem). The caravans that were used for long distance trade were huge (two to three thousand pack oxen). They were organised hierarchically. The Tuareg, who were skilled fighters, led the caravans in order for the traders to be able to defend themselves against bandits and criminals (Aning and Amedzrator 2013). The traders negotiated alliances, using their cross-cultural skills⁴ to manoeuvre in the African markets, and tapped into local networks to conduct transactions in all kinds of merchandise as well as enslaved Africans (Lydon 2009).

The introduction of Islam, be it Sunni or Sufi, into Western and Northern Africa played a critical role in the development of the trade routes during the long distance trade. It was easier for the tribesmen scattered across the Sahel and the Sahara to collaborate because they shared the same core religious beliefs, which created affinity for the traders. Eventually, Islam promoted literacy, which allowed Muslim traders to draft contracts and legal agreements between parties (Murphy 2013). The introduction

³ Three basic routes were used by long distance traders: the eastern route connected northern Libya to the markets of western Sudan; the western route ran from north-western Algeria through Mauritania to the Niger River Bend; and a third route linked eastern Sudan to Egypt.

⁴ Typical among them was the use of Islam to connect to the trading communities.

of paper into the region and the ability to read and write were central to the establishment of complex trading networks that spanned the Saharan desert. The Maliki Doctrine, an interpretation of the Koran and Islamic tradition that emphasised what was best for the public, also led to a shared legal culture amongst Muslim traders (*ibidem*).

After centuries of long distance mobility, the golden age of the trans-Saharan trade ended with the collapse of the Songhai Empire after the Moroccan invasion in 1591. By 1911, the introduction of the railroad transportation system eventually brought about the decline of the trans-Saharan trade (Baier 1977).

This notwithstanding, population mobility on both sides of the Sahara (North and West Africa) through the trans-Saharan trade, and through conquest, pilgrimage and education, continued to be intensive (Haas 2006). In the 1970s and 1980s forced and voluntary settlement of nomads, wars in the Sahel and droughts provoked two types of mobility. First, impoverished (former) nomads and traders, such as the Tuareg, started to migrate to work at construction sites and the oil fields of southern Algeria and Libya. Second, with recurrent warfare in the entire Sahel zone, thousands of refugees settled in towns and cities in Libya, Algeria, Mauritania, and Egypt (*ibidem*).

Wage labour migration survived the collapse of the long distance caravan trade thriving on contraband goods such as cigarettes travelling to northern Mali and Niger (UNODC 2005). Organised crime in West Africa in its contemporary form is generally perceived to have emerged in the 1970s, though antecedents have been traced to the ancient traditions of long distance commerce and activities of European criminal gangs who pioneered inter-continental crime from bases in West Africa during colonial times (*ibidem*).

The trans-Saharan trade routes have changed dramatically over the centuries, from thousands of camels walking through the windswept desert to transport gold from mines deep in West Africa to the modern day drug traffickers shooting across the Sahara in pickup trucks loaded with bales of cocaine and other contraband goods (Murphy 2013). Cigarette smuggling has greatly contributed to the emergence of the practices and networks that have allowed drug trafficking to grow. The smuggling of cigarettes to North African markets began to thrive in the early 1980s, and it developed into a large-scale business controlled by a few major players. Cigarettes, imported through Mauritania, supplied a large portion of the Algerian and Moroccan markets, while those imported through Cotonou

in Benin and Lomé in Togo were routed through Niger and Burkina Faso to Libya and Algeria. In 2009, the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) estimated that cigarettes smuggled along these routes accounted for around sixty percent of the Libyan tobacco market⁵ and eighteen percent of the Algerian market⁶ (Lacher 2012).

West African drug trafficking networks have been linked with African diaspora communities in Europe, North and South America from as early as the 1980s, when economic hardships and repressive political conditions in the sub-region generated an exodus of West Africans to countries in the Mediterranean and Atlantic zones.

The long historical and commercial connections linking the Sahel and the Mediterranean and Atlantic areas have thus impacted the security situation in the Sahel. Criminals are able to stage their operations in one area of the Sahel and easily move to grey areas in North Africa, for example, and along some vulnerable European coasts.

In commenting on the interconnectedness of criminal networks and their survival strategies, one of us has argued elsewhere that “[t]hese [networks] have developed into multiple interlocking pieces and reflect the fact that the Sahel region has a long history of trafficking activities, perpetrated chiefly by the Tuareg, and that the roots of the current collaboration between traffickers and terrorist or rebel groups in fact span several years” (Aning 2010a).

UNDERSTANDING SECURITY LINKS BETWEEN THE SAHEL, THE MEDITERRANEAN AND ATLANTIC ZONES

The uprisings in the Arab world provided a precursor for the Sahel crisis. This is because they “stirred up a combination of rebels, weapons, refugees, smugglers and violent Islamic militant activities in the already fragile and turbulent Sahel region” (Aning, Okyere and Abdallah 2012). Qaddafi supported West African migrants through his pan-African policy to allow them to reside and work in Libya. These migrants, some of whom were Tuareg, were trained by the Libyan dictator to fight for him in regional wars and the 2011 Libya conflict. After the ousting of Qaddafi, these mercenaries migrated to their home countries with stockpiles of arms.

⁵ About 240 million dollars in proceeds at retail price.

⁶ About 228 million dollars at retail price.

This has contributed to the easy availability of arms which are being used by militants in the Sahel to stage attacks against central governments. For instance, it is estimated that about 81,000 Kalashnikovs, Israeli Sub machine guns, mortars, hand grenades, grenade launchers, anti-aircraft and anti-tank artillery and missile launchers are circulating in the Sahel (Sidibé 2012: 74-88).

The negative impact on the Sahel of recent political revolts in the Arab world, especially the Libya crisis, has been widely debated. This impact was reiterated by the Nigerien President, Mahamadou Issoufou, who stated that:

The Libyan crisis amplifies the threats confronting countries in the region. We are already exposed to the fundamentalist threat, to the menace of criminal organizations, drug traffickers, arms traffickers... Today, all these problems have increased. All the more so because weapon depots have been looted in Libya and such weapons have been disseminated throughout the region [...] eventually bringing to power religious extremists.⁷

Further, there is increasing evidence of growing links among criminal gangs and extremist groups involved in illicit trafficking of narcotics, human smuggling, terrorism and kidnappings. Such interconnections exist in two forms: a) international militant groups and criminal networks, such as AQIM, operating in the region have exploited their ethnic affiliations with rebel groups operating in the Sahel, like Mokhtar Belmokhtar's "Signed in Blood Battalion" and Mali's Ansar Dine, to expand their activities; b) a confluence of militant groups operating in the Sahel that have established links with the local population in order to facilitate their activities.

In the first instance, the relationship is "cooperative and multi-layered". As part of the strategy of "vertically" integrating into their networks of operation in the Sahel, criminal gangs fix associates at every level of their transaction and sometimes collaborate with the "more hierarchical, mafia-style operations" of Columbian criminal groups (UNODC 2005: 17). Moreover, criminal operatives engaged in illicit businesses collaborate

⁷ Quoted in Aning, Okyere and Abdallah 2012. For the full text of the interview, see: François Soudan and Anne Kappès-Grangé, "Mahamadou Issoufou : 'Kaddafi, les Nigériens, le Calife et moi...'", *Jeune Afrique*, 28 July 2011, <http://www.jeuneafrique.com/Article/ARTJAJA2636p030-035.xml0>.

with terrorists and rebel groups to obtain logistic assets – cars, satellite phones, etc – to undertake their activities (Aning 2010a). Revenues from these illicit activities help militant groups to fund and stage terrorist activities in their areas of operation and perpetuate the conditions of instability in which criminal activities thrive.

In the second instance, criminal organisations have established networks with the local population and radical groups in order to facilitate their activities and increase their gains. Sometimes, these networks build on familial ties and provide welfare services to the local communities to facilitate their movements. In this instance, local people who are familiar with the desert terrain are used as drivers and guides among others (Aning 2010a). In other instances, individuals and rebel groups kidnap and “sub-contract” their hostages to AQIM and its operatives who are able to extract huge ransoms (Sidibé 2012). This interconnectedness among criminal gangs has led one of us to argue the following:

the most serious challenges to state survival at the beginning of the 21st century are not only the influx of multiple trafficked goods, but also the links and relationships among these groups [...] for the storage of goods, and for providing information on routes, the identification of watering sources, the presence of tourists, and the activities of soldiers or security forces, as well as warehouse for storage, a warren of safe houses and, in some instances, the connivance of law enforcement agencies. (Aning 2010a)

Additionally, ungoverned spaces in the Sahel – porous borders, vast unmonitored deserts, mountain ranges, long coasts and sparse population have been exploited by criminal networks “to maximize profit with the minimum of risk and to obtain the financial means to carry out their attacks on governments” and weaken the state structure (ibidem). The Sahel (particularly Mali and Mauritania) is emerging as major staging posts and trading hubs for cocaine (UNODC 2013a). It is estimated that one-third of Moroccan cannabis production transits the Sahel states to the Algerian-Moroccan border where it is moved through networks to Mauritania, Mali, Niger and Chad before it ends up in Sudan or Egypt (ibidem). Sometimes, narcotic peddlers use land routes from the Sahara to parts of North Africa where the drugs are flown to Europe or shuttled across the Mediterranean in speedboats (ibidem). Alternatively, cocaine produced in Latin America is either shipped through the Gulf of Guinea to

Senegal and Mauritania and further to Morocco and Algeria before finding its way in Europe, or it takes air route through Bamako, Casablanca or Dakar (*ibidem*).

Moreover, arms circulating in the Sahel, mostly shipped from Iran, Sudan, China and North Africa, are trafficked through the desert to trading hubs in the Sahel – Aïr, Hoggar and Tibesti mountain ranges, and traditional arms trading centres in Agadez (Niger) and Gao (Mali)⁸ (UNODC 2013a: 35). Also, the grey areas along the Mediterranean and Atlantic coasts and the Sahara desert, as well as mountainous areas, are utilised by criminals for the smuggling of irregular migrants – including militant groups and criminals. Key hubs for irregular migrants are Gao and Agadez and the coasts of Senegal and Mauritania, and the main routes used by West African migrants include (UNODC 2013a: 26-27):

- by the Mediterranean sea to the Canary Islands;
- by land and sea across the Straits of Gibraltar⁹; and
- by land to Spanish North African enclaves, Ceuta and Melilla.

Due to the hostile nature of the desert routes, networks of militant groups and local people serve as guides for irregular migrants for a fee (*ibidem*). Also, criminals and radical groups use the illegal migration routes to evade detection and easily move to other areas of operation. These “ungoverned terrains” have provided a safe haven for extremist groups and a training and recruitment hub for mobile fighters. AQIM’s operations are believed to cover thousands of kilometres from eastern Algeria to Mauritania’s borders with Senegal (Sidibé 2012). Illicit activities generate funds for the survival of the militant groups and the expansion of extremism in the Sahel.

The situation in the Sahel cannot be wholly divorced from the political context (Dowd and Raleih 2013a). The question that arises is: how have governance challenges contributed to the Sahel crisis? There are reports that the government of former Malian President Amadou Toumani Touré utilised organised crime and violence as a resource to grow its influence in the north by allowing its local allies to engage in criminal activities and playing leaders of the tribes in the northern communities off against each other (Lacher 2012). Some state officials in the security agencies have also been implicated in crime (Aning and Bah 2009). State complicity with organised crime is believed to have

⁸ Historical trade route used as a hub and transit zone for arms trafficking.

⁹ This journey for migrants usually proceeds from Tamanrasset (Algeria) and they transit through Sebha in Libya and Dirkou in Niger.

contributed to the economic and military influence of AQIM in the Sahel. The net negative effect of political collusion with criminal gangs has perpetuated a vulnerable condition in the Sahel.

MANAGING THE SAHEL'S SECURITY PROBLEMS: WHAT CAN THE EU AND THE US DO?

Having discussed the urgent security challenges confronting the Sahel, this section explores the kinds of contribution that the European Union (EU) and the United States (US) can make to support the management of the Sahel's security problems.

First, there should be a discussion between European and Atlantic partners and countries within the wider sub-region as well as the regional body, the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), on what kind of support they require and the priority areas on which to focus. This will ensure ECOWAS member states responsibility and local ownership and avert any kind of foreign support that is not anchored on the realities and the immediate demands of the region. In order to ensure pragmatism, focus, urgency and long-term impact, any kind of contribution from European and Atlantic partners must be driven by local demands. Moreover, to ensure coherence and long-term impact, the United States and the European Union have to build on and support existing initiatives at the national, regional and international levels. In more specific terms, the following recommendations can be considered to support the management of the Sahel's security problems:

In terms of *governance and development*:

- investment in good governance, human rights and rule of law projects to fight the emerging culture of impunity;
- support the enhancement of transparent and locally accountable governance by improving institutional capacity;
- assist in improving on education and creating economic opportunities for local communities especially the youth; and
- improve access to basic services such as roads, livelihoods, education, and social services.

As for *drug trafficking*:

- support the improvement and harmonisation of legislation against drug trafficking in ECOWAS member states;

- improve and expand the oversight capacity and responsibility of parliaments in West Africa in relation to the problem of drug trafficking and other activities carried out by organised crime; and
- support the improvement of the legal framework for the freezing and seizure of criminal proceeds by supporting the setting up of financial intelligence units in all West African states.

Finally, concerning *terrorism*:

- strengthen the capacities of the security and law enforcement agencies and the rule of law sectors to fight terrorism in a more efficient manner;
- support the development of national mechanisms and a common regional framework for the prevention and combating of terrorism;
- provide ECOWAS and its member states with the requisite capacities including expertise, human and financial resources to defeat terrorist networks and infrastructures, deny terrorist haven and sponsorship and eradicate sources of terrorist financing; and
- support counterterrorism cooperation in the region on critical areas such as intelligence, data-gathering ability and capacity-building in the judicial and security sector.

CONCLUSION

The security situation in the Sahel is linked to a constellation of internal and external factors – spillover effects from the Arab Spring, interconnected and mutually beneficial relationships among criminal gangs, militant groups and local populations, vast deserts and mountainous areas that are not monitored (ungoverned spaces), and governance crises.

The Arab Spring, for instance, has spearheaded the migration of fighters, weapons and militant groups who are using the Sahel to plan, stage and fund extremist activities against Sahelian governments. The militant and criminal groups who migrated to the region after Libya's civil war have engaged with rebel groups and the local population to advance their strategies. The vast deserts and mountainous areas provide cover for criminals who are able to stage their operations in one area and easily manoeuvre to continue their operations elsewhere. Also, the porosity of the borders in the Sahel zone and illegal routes across the Sahel and the Mediterranean zones has facilitated illicit activities

such as the trafficking of arms, drugs and people. These activities have generated huge revenues for criminals and extremist groups, which are utilized to fund clandestine activities.

Besides, a key part of this discussion is related to how historical antecedents have had a debilitating influence on the Sahel situation (how is the present influenced by the past?). The trans-Saharan trade – a long distance trade – connected traders from sub-Saharan Africa to North Africa. Berber nomads, who controlled the trade, identified trade routes and negotiated alliances with local communities using their economic and military superiority. Correspondingly, in contemporary times, some of these historical trade routes have been used by criminals and their local allies (mainly Tuareg) – who are familiar with the illegal routes to perpetrate crime. AQIM and its operatives control illegal routes and levy taxes on their “clients” – criminals, irregular migrants among others. These activities have contributed to instability in the Sahel.

5.

Geopolitical Disruptions in the Sahel: an Opportunity for Global Cooperation?

Mathieu Pellerin

This chapter takes a political perspective of the Sahel, therefore broader than a strictly geographical one. This political understanding of the Sahel also integrates states geographically peripheral to the Sahel but nonetheless closely involved in the security dynamics of the Sahelian-Saharan zone. After recalling the ongoing security dynamics in the region, with a special focus on religious extremism and drug trafficking, it discusses this issue in terms of transatlantic and regional cooperation. It finally identifies the issues that require closer cooperation between international, regional and national stakeholders.

SECURITY DYNAMICS AT WORK

Maghreb-Sahel: mutual disruption

The Arab Spring has been a source of major geopolitical changes in the Sahel. In particular, the fall of Libya's longstanding ruler Muammar Qaddafi has undeniably been a tectonic shift (Pellerin 2012). Qaddafi ensured a form of rule of the sub-region's geopolitical order. Hence, his death has accelerated critical dynamics outside Libya, such as in Mali.

The Tuareg rebellion in Mali remains a largely endogenous phenomenon, but its outbreak was undoubtedly helped by the return of Tuareg fighters from Libya, and especially a Malian Tuareg, Ibrahim Ag Bahanga, who had been kept at bay only by the interested generosity of Qaddafi. Bahanga contributed to creating Mali's separatist Tuareg armed group, the National Movement for the Liberation of the Azawad (known as MNLA after its French name: *Mouvement National pour la Libération de l'Azawad*), which constituted the main force of the

rebellion. Today, the Malian and Libyan dynamics feed off each other. Southern Libya has become at the same time a safe haven for those who have fled the war in northern Mali, but also and more disturbingly a temporary fallback zone (or possibly an area of reorganisation) for mercenaries-turned-*thumar* (“revolutionaries”) or terrorist groups.

The Arab Spring has also led to a reawakening of religious and cultural identities, mothballed under the autocratic regimes of Tunisia, Libya and Egypt. Helped by amnesties in Tunisia and Egypt and the opening of prisons in Libya, many radical Islamists (Abu Iyadh, the leader of Ansar al-Sharia in Tunisia, for example) have emerged on national political scenes. This trend has been a by-product of the broader emergence of a large front of political Islamist parties, particularly within the Muslim Brotherhood family, which have won elections in Egypt and Tunisia. In post-revolution Libya, the Muslim Brotherhood, supported also by Salafist groups, has been nibbling away at the authority of national institutions, including the General National Congress. Such groups have seen their political influence grow thanks to increased preaching, a practice they have been free to engage in after the repressive arm of autocratic regimes dissolved. Salafist militant groups have also been founded, under the name of Ansar al-Sharia, both in Tunisia and Libya. The proliferation of activities by Islamist militias has extended to other countries as well, as attested to by the role played in the Malian rebellion by al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM) and its affiliates as well as by the local extremist Islamist group Ansar Dine. All these groups have a radical agenda, with some of them openly advocating the establishment of an Islamic caliphate. Taking advantage of the relaxation of state control over Islamist groups, jihadist sleeping cells have proliferated in Tunisia, Libya and also in Egypt’s Sinai Peninsula.

The coexistence of several nerve centres of jihad as an illustration of the dissemination of threat

Until 2011, northern Mali was the nerve centre of jihad in the Sahel. If AQIM mainly operated in Algeria, most of its leaders had already relocated to the northern area of Mali. Now, there are at least three nerve centres in the Sahel-Maghreb area.

The hub of regional jihad continues to be the north of Mali under the presence of most jihadist leaders of AQIM and the Movement for Oneness

and Jihad in Western Africa (MOJWA)¹ or al-Mourabitoun in the regions of Gao, Timbuktu and Kidal. The Malian framework in which an Islamist emirate would have been created has dissolved however following the collapse of Ansar Dine. Radical groups have therefore set themselves on the path of regional jihad.

The Sinai has emerged as a second hub, in which a somewhat anarchic jihad is carried out by groups unconnected to international networks. While Sinai groups are currently undergoing a process of reorganisation, at this point in time they are very little involved in Sahelian problems. Sinai jihad is both regional (attacks against Israel) and strictly national (particularly after the military overthrow by force of President Mohamed Morsi, who stems from the Muslim Brotherhood).

Finally, Libya is an essential link between these two centres in two respects: a) because of relations between the Sahelian-Saharan jihadist groups (AQIM, MOJWA, al-Mourabitoun) and Libyan jihadist cells (in the Fezzan, the Cyrenaica and the Djebel Nefousa); b) because of relations between some Egyptian jihadist groups and Libyan jihadist groups in the Cyrenaica.²

Jihadist groups in Tunisia (Ansar al-Sharia) and Nigeria (Boko Haram) are characterised by a national commitment although their ambitions may be broader in scope, as the creation of Ansaru, a Boko Haram splinter group that professes allegiance to the global jihad agenda, suggests. Boko Haram also remains a very poorly organised and syncretic movement within the jihadist galaxy. In spite of their predominantly national dimension, these groups have connections with foreign jihadist groups. Boko Haram, or more probably Ansaru, sent fighters into northern Mali in 2012, while Ansar al-Sharia Tunisia has links with AQIM.³

After the widespread expansion of jihadism during 2012, due also to the passivity (and sometimes complicity) of national authorities, 2013 saw an uncoordinated but parallel reaction by both regional and extra-regional actors. In Mali, Ansar Dine and MOJWA's achievements have been reversed by France's intervention. In Tunisia, state authorities have confronted more aggressively Islamist groups following several murders of politicians and a July 2013 attack against Tunisian soldiers. In Egypt,

¹ The groups is also referred to with different acronyms: MUJWA (Movement for Unity and Jihad in West Africa) or MUJAO (after the French name *Mouvement pour le Tawhîd et du Jihad en Afrique de l'Ouest*).

² Interview by the author with a Libyan thuwar, Tripoli, September 2013.

³ Interview by the author 2013.

the military has forcibly removed the Muslim Brotherhood from power and retaken control of the state. Even Libya's weak government has attempted, though to no avail, to check Islamist activities.

There exists a window of opportunity for international and regional partners to strengthen their coordination, particularly with regard to border security. Hard-pressed in their respective strongholds, militant groups need to be in constant movement for security reasons and this weakens them considerably. Strengthened coordination is even more urgent as repression can in the short term certainly lead to more retaliatory attacks and a greater recruitment capacity by radical Islamist groups.

The spread of organised crime

The roots of organised crime in the Sahel are well-known: poverty, weakness of security forces, former rebels who have not been disarmed, availability of illicit goods. From goods smuggling between Algeria and Mali to the human and drug trafficking industry, organised crime takes many forms.

For twenty years now, illegal immigration in the Sahel-Maghreb region has been a major security and humanitarian challenge for Europe, particularly for its southern shore. Several humanitarian tragedies (the most recent being the shipwreck off the Italian island of Lampedusa in which hundreds of people have died) have highlighted the seriousness of the problem. Already crucial at the time of Qaddafi, who controlled migration flows according to political expediency, organised crimes has benefitted from the lack of central authority in Libya. In Niger, the main transit destination in West Africa, security forces are largely powerless (and sometimes accomplices). However, it should be noted that, in the wake of the most recent humanitarian tragedies, Niger has taken drastic measures to reduce migration flows from Agadez, Niger's main point of departure of migrants.

Moreover, after the fall of Qaddafi, the takeover of weapons deposits by militias (in Misrata and Zintan in particular) has quickly turned Libya into an open market for arms heading east (Egypt, Sinai, Palestine), south (weapons sent to Boko Haram in Nigeria via Niger and Chad) or west (via the Tunisian border and Algeria to armed groups in northern Mali). The Sahel-Maghreb region has never experienced such a high level of arms availability (Pellerin 2012).

Drug trafficking is certainly a huge problem. First appearing in the 1990s, the drug trade grew to represent a profit in the Sahel of more than \$900 million in 2011 (UNODC 2012). Whether it is cannabis from Morocco, cocaine from Latin America, but also pills (tramadol) and heroin from East Africa, it is a challenge in many ways. It undermines territorial sovereignty, as drug trafficking networks operate in areas controlled by local militias (which therefore participate in the business). Drug trafficking also destroys the official economy (especially because of the loss of productivity of other agricultural sectors, for instance in Morocco) and it creates further insecurity because it is the source of armed clashes between rival gangs as we saw in Mali.

Most importantly, drug trafficking weakens state institutions because it feeds corruption of security forces and political elites, to the extent that officials at the highest levels in Mauritania, Guinea, Togo, Niger or Egypt have been involved in it. Drug traffickers alternatively benefit from passive complicity of custom officials to de facto control, thanks to their political connections, of security forces theoretically in charge of prosecuting them.

Involvement of state officials in illicit activities oscillates between two poles, tolerance and complicity. Complicity, as it seemed to be the case in Mali under former President Amadou Toumani Touré (Lacher 2012), is a form of terminal cancer, in which drug traffickers affect the state like metastases do the body. Remission becomes almost impossible. The death of the state results from a gradual erosion of sovereign institutions (as in Guinea Bissau) or a coup (as in Mali). Collusion between organised crime and state officials (some of whom had gotten very rich very quickly, feeding rivalries and infighting) was a critical factor behind the Malian government's inability to tackle the rebel Tuareg-Islamist coalition in the north, an inability which eventually led to the coup that ousted President Touré from power.

THE UNITED STATES AND EUROPE IN THE SAHEL

It is always very difficult to compare the foreign policy of the United States (US) with that of the European Union (EU), for the simple reason that the former is built uniformly nationwide, while the latter is in its infancy, resulting more often than not from the sum of the national policies of EU member states. This factor complicates the matter. For instance, while

EU member states largely share the assessment of the threats emanating from the region, they differ in terms of priority interests, sometimes considerably.

Is there an EU policy in the Sahel?

Europeans share many interests in the Sahel, starting with curbing migration flows from the Sahel to Italy, Spain, France or Greece. Drug trafficking is also a focal point, as Europe is the preferred final destination of illicit traffic. Terrorism is the third shared threat, given that European individuals (from diplomats to tourists) and companies are regularly targeted by these groups, as attested to by the tragic In Amenas gas plant siege in southern Algeria, in which dozens of foreign workers, alongside an unknown number of Algerians, were killed.

These three issues are, unsurprisingly, at the heart of the European strategy in the Sahel as developed through the EU's Strategy for Security and Development (EEAS 2011). The Sahel Strategy is based on the assumption that security and development are inextricably linked and that the complex crisis in the Sahel requires close regional cooperation. But this strategy suffers from a critical lack of strategic coordination and is limited to a juxtaposition of aid actions and development measures undertaken by European states in Mali, Mauritania and Niger.

In spite of this common threat assessment, however, EU member states have quite different priorities, depending on a combination of factors such as strategic or economic interests or historical ties stemming back to the colonial era. For instance, Italy's key interest in the stability of Libya depends on its colonial legacy, its energy reliance on Libyan resources and the fact that most irregular migrants heading for Italy depart from Libyan coasts. Libya is also very important to the United Kingdom (UK), as is the Sahel region, particularly after the In Amenas incident (the plant attacked is jointly operated by the United Kingdom's BP and Norway's Statoil). France has also a stake in Libya, although it has failed to take direct responsibility for the post-conflict transition (although it was critical in triggering the Western campaign in support of anti-Qaddafi rebels). French interests lie in particular in francophone West Africa, where Paris is ready to use hard power and assume its share of responsibility in its historical area of influence, as eloquently shown by its prompt intervention in Mali and the Central African Republic (CAR). The prevalence of national priorities is observable through the nationality

of EU officials in EU institutions. Those in charge of Libya, for instance, are mainly British or Italian.

There is an undeniable lack of confidence among European players, particularly when a strategic interest of a member state is at stake. Since the EU military mission in Chad and the Central African Republic (EUFOR Chad/CAR) in 2008, France has been accused of using European assets to its own advantage. Unsurprisingly, the other EU member states regard France's strongly interventionist agenda in the Sahel with suspicion. This criticism is very frequent and we can observe it also in the implementation of the EUCAP SAHEL mission in Niger. The project, very ambitious in the beginning, has been eventually weakened by quarrels between European governments (especially due to a widespread lack of confidence in France's intentions) and rivalries between EU services. In addition, in strictly organisational terms, EU diplomacy is characterized by recurrent inter-institutional quarrels, notably between the European Commission and the European External Action Service (EEAS).

Widely shared objectives

A comparative analysis of US and European strategies requires us first to recall that the Sahel is not on the same level of importance to the European Union and the United States. A priority for the former, it is a zone of secondary importance for the latter. In sub-Saharan Africa, the United States' zone of primary interest remains the Horn of Africa, where the US armed forces have established a military presence, notably in camp Lemmonier in Djibouti and in Uganda where the work under way by the US army at the Entebbe airport illustrates their long-term commitment in the country.

The European Union, as stated in the Sahel Strategy adopted in March 2011, considers development as inherently linked to security. This is a quite different perspective from that of the United States, which is primarily focused on the fight against terrorism through the Trans-Saharan Counterterrorism Partnership (TSCTP), an initiative launched in 2007 as a continuation of the 2002 Pan-Sahel Initiative (PSI) and the 2005 Trans-Saharan Counterterrorism Initiative (TSCTI). To stress the point, in 2007 the US armed forces decided to create a new regional command for the whole of Africa, United States Africa Command (AFRICOM). However, despite differences in approach, the objectives of the European Union and

the United States are widely shared (see the table below), security and development being ultimately inseparable.

| Topic | European Union (Sahel Strategy) | United States (TSCTP) |
|--|--|---|
| <i>Democratic governance</i> | Strengthening resilience against rebellion, terrorism and organised crime | Promoting democratic governance |
| <i>Regional coordination</i> | Supporting regional political coordination Supporting regional organisational capabilities | Strengthening regional counterterrorism capabilities Enhancing and institutionalising cooperation among the region's security forces |
| <i>Supporting national security capabilities</i> | Enhancing operational and strategic capacities in the wider security, law enforcement and judicial sectors | Assistance to security forces, law enforcement programming |
| <i>Preventing radicalisation</i> | Preventing violent extremism and radicalisation | Countering violent extremism programming |

If the objectives are common, the means used by Americans and Europeans differ. European common defence remains embryonic. The military aspect of the action of the European Union is largely deficient and the emphasis is on development. The Union has allocated 663 million euros for the implementation of the Sahel Strategy, including five hundred million for governance support and 135 million for security and the rule of law. This focus on development is partly a reflection of the fact that

the plan was adopted before the fall of Qaddafi's regime in Libya and the chain reaction that it triggered across the Sahel.

Since then, efforts have been made to rebalance the EU Sahel Strategy with more security-orientated initiatives. These include the EUCAP SAHEL Niger operation, which is aimed at training internal security forces, and the EUTM Mali mission aimed at training Mali's security forces. These commitments demonstrate the European Union's willingness to tackle security challenges in post-conflict phases also by employing (limited) military means.

Conversely, if the US strategy is, on paper, an "integrated" one, meaning that military assistance is accompanied by support for democratic institutions, civil society, development and economic growth, the reality is that the lack of resources of the US State Department is an often insurmountable limitation (Kandel 2013). Most of the US action focuses on training and capability-building of local armies and security forces.

The Serval Operation: a turning point

France's Serval Operation in Mali might become a turning point in the emerging transatlantic approach to security in the Sahel. Many observers (Kepel 2013) have noted the lack of support (other than rhetorical) given to France in the war effort in Mali by both its European partners and the United States. Yet, the Americans have played a critical support role to the French by providing logistical support and information, which is a form of effective division of labor in areas of influence where French or European interests are higher than US ones. At a closed-door conference held at the French Ministry of Defence two months prior to the intervention, US Under-Secretary of State for African Affairs Johnnie Carson recalled that Mali was not at the top of the list of countries of US concern.

In terms of military engagement, the French intervention in Mali has put into question the US "footprint" in Africa, which is overly reliant on the use of drones notably in Somalia (Kandel 2013), spurring the Americans to assume a larger role on the security on the Sahel, as the dramatic surge in US military deployment in Niger (Niamey, Arlit, and Agadez) attests. On the French side, this intervention has meant the definitive overcoming of a post-colonial complex, according to which it was inappropriate to intervene directly on the ground.

The strengthening of transatlantic partnerships with regional security players, including Niger, Chad and Mauritania remains however the preferred course of action of both the European Union and the United

States for the simple reason that the American and European means of projection are tendentially in a reduction phase and the US army is already engaged on other fronts. On the American side, changing the name of TSCTI to TSCTP (from “initiative” to “partnership”) in 2007 illustrated the desire to regionalize the US approach. It is the same with Europeans, who support the capabilities (with equipment and training) of regional states and organisations. But it would be wise for Americans and Europeans to better coordinate their actions in order to draw strategic priorities rather than falling into the trap of just drawing a “shopping list”, as recently seen with the creation of the Sahel Security College which is supposed to train and increase coordination among Sahelian security forces.

In geopolitical terms, the “abolition” of national frontiers of the Sahel-Maghreb-based jihad should bring Europeans and Americans much closer than before. If AQIM is primarily a matter of concern for Europe, and especially France, due to its focus on France and French interests, proven connections between AQIM on the one hand and Ansar al-Sharia, Boko Haram and to a lesser extent al-Shabaab in Somalia and al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula (AQAP) on the other hand are a great concern for Americans. Moreover, the In Amenas attack is a reminder that oil facilities in southern Algeria (including facilities operated by US companies) are certainly not immune to the threat of terrorism. Southern Libya seems to be in the process of becoming a jihadist hub linking Cyrenaica, Niger, Chad and southern Algeria,⁴ which justifies an increased American presence in Niger for rapid response and intelligence. Southern Libya could become the meeting point between the natural areas of European (British and French in particular) and American interests.

WHAT CONVERGENCE BETWEEN INTERNATIONAL AND REGIONAL ACTORS?

The security of the Sahel by Sahelian states: a mission largely fragmented

African sub-regional organisations still suffer from excessive compartmentalisation and rivalries. The Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), which has played an important role in the Malian crisis by taking the lead of the African-led International

⁴ Interview by the author with security officer, Niger, May 2013.

Support Mission in Mali (AFISMA), later transformed into the UN-led Multidimensional Integrated Stabilisation Mission in Mali (MINUSMA), has received widespread international support.

ECOWAS has the regulatory framework and strategic plans tailored to address key threats in the sub-region, and it has also developed an early warning system (ECOWARN) to improve responsiveness. ECOWAS has also adopted common positions on immigration, organised crime and drug trafficking. In the same trend, it should be noted the useful creation by the African Union (AU) of a rapid reaction force, named African Capacity for Immediate Response to Crises (ACIRC), which should provide the continent-wide organisation with the capability to assume responsibility for its own security without any Western support. ACIRC is supposed to be only an interim measure before the full operationalisation of the African Standby Force (ASF), and its Rapid Deployment Capability (RDC).

ECOWAS has been plagued by leadership wrangles. The leadership of Blaise Compaoré, the president of Burkina Faso, during the Malian mediation has been strongly criticized. Another problem is that certain key nations of the region do not belong to ECOWAS. One of them, Mauritania, has tried to minimize the initiatives of ECOWAS by promoting the African Union and the Joint Operational General Staff Committee (known after the French acronym CEMOC), a body formed by the military general staffs of Algeria, Mauritania, Niger and Mali, which is largely under Algerian influence. On the other hand, Mali has been very reluctant to accept a Mauritanian deployment in the framework of MINUSMA. Concerning Chad, another non-ECOWAS member, President Idriss Deby has often conditioned the deployment of his country's forces on NATO taking command of the operation rather than ECOWAS.

Algeria has also challenged the role of ECOWAS in Mali, given the prominent role it has traditionally played there since 1963. Algeria was the main force behind the Tamanrasset Agreements (1991), the National Pact (1992) and Algiers Agreements (2006) – a series of agreements between Mali's central government and Tuareg and Arab rebels living in the country's north. It is also a staunch promoter of counter-terrorism in the area, presiding over the creation in 2010 of the group of "Countries of the Field" (Algeria, Mauritania, Mali and Niger). The latter is supposedly the main actor engaged in the Sahel, as it was behind the establishing of CEMOC in Tamanrasset in 2010 and the Fusion and Liaison Unit (UFL), a permanent consultation

body between the “Countries of the Field” based in Algiers. These two structures remain under close control of Algeria, which significantly distorts the framework of regional cooperation.

Maghreb interstate cooperation could be strengthened in the wake of the Arab Spring, but so far this has not happened. In fact, the frameworks for regional cooperation in the Maghreb are still very limited, both because the Tunisian, Libyan and Egyptian diplomacies are paralyzed by the troubled political transitions occurring in their countries, and because the decades-old Algerian-Moroccan rivalry around the question of Western Sahara continues unabated.

Western involvement generally accepted, but with limits

To anticipate how closer cooperation between international and regional actors can actually take place, it is important to analyse the regional actors’ perception of Western involvement. Most of them rather positively welcome it, for various reasons. One reason is that some regional states simply do not have the capacity to curb effectively so severe threats that can even undermine national sovereignty, as is the case in Mali and post-Qaddafi Libya. The former Malian provisional president, Diounounda Traoré, implored France to intervene. Both in Mali and its surrounding region, the reaction to the French intervention was overwhelmingly positive. Similarly, Libya’s Prime Minister Ali Zeidan is now seeking support from the international community to tackle security challenges in his own country.

States that do not face risks of territorial disintegration have a more ambivalent relationship with international powers. On the one hand, countries such as Mauritania and Niger willingly seek international (particularly Western) support and assistance, which has taken the form of several hundred million dollars worth of logistical support, training and even budget allocations. The Western support works here as a sort of “security umbrella”. On the other hand, Sahel governments must not appear too close to Western powers out of concern that they could alienate public opinion. Sahelian populations are generally not well-inclined towards Europe or the United States, which they perceive as coveting a colonial-like interest in dominating their countries, and tend to consider their governments’ ties with Western powers as forms of subservience. Moreover, extremist groups, particularly from the Islamist camp, regularly use the proximity of regional governments to the West

to challenge their legitimacy and increase their own ranks. In January 2013, for instance, a Mauritanian preacher issued a fatwa against France because of its involvement in northern Mali. In Niger, the government agreed to have French Special Forces deployed at the Areva-run Arlit uranium mines with great caution (Areva is France's state-run nuclear company). The decision involved a serious risk of backlash given Areva's local unpopularity.

Public opinion is not the only problem. Nigerien authorities face pressure from those bothered by Western military presence, starting with illicit traffickers and especially drug traffickers who have strong connections in the highest echelons of the state apparatus. Niger's government also fears that the French military presence hides a desire to support the Tuareg, historically close to French intelligence services, even more so as the last outbreak of Tuareg separatism in Niger is only four years old and another one is still in progress in Mali.

Other states in the region, notably those with open regional ambitions, openly contest what they considered illegitimate Western intrusion, particularly the French one. Algeria stands out in this respect.

The commitment of states in the region to the fight against terrorism is an additional source of vulnerability because more than Western countries they face retaliation from terrorist groups. The anti-terror commitment of Mauritania, for instance, has resulted in attacks by AQIM. Niger's commitment to Mali in AFISMA/MINUSMA was presented by MOJWA as the main reason for the attack against army barracks in Agadez in May 2013. It is the same for Chad, frequently targeted by AQIM and MOJWA messages, and whose army was targeted in an attack at Tessalit (Mali) last October.

Keeping these limits in mind, closer cooperation between all of these actors, regional and extra-regional alike, should concentrate on two critical issues: border control and drug trafficking.

Border control, the most urgent priority

The collapse in security checks that has accompanied political crisis and revolution in North Africa, most notably in Libya, has made boundaries extremely porous. In the absence of strong state control, such a porosity poses a huge security threat. The implications for arms trafficking have already been recalled. Throughout 2012 permeability of borders also fueled circuits of drug trafficking, and still do, despite the Serval Operation.

New “corridors” for both drug traffickers and militants (sometimes the difference between the two is rather blurred) have rapidly emerged. Among them, the Kidal-Oubari corridor (primarily through the pass of Salvador in Niger) and the Gao-Agadez corridor through Tassara are worth mentioning. Other areas, mainly in Libya and Mali, have become “grey zones” which pose a severe threat to neighboring states. Into this category fall, among others, the Ashati and Oubari region and Jebel Akhdhar in Libya, Kidal, Taoudéni and desert of Menaka in Mali.

Improving border security is therefore a high priority not only for regional countries, but also for the United States and the European Union. The latter has launched an EU Border Assistance Mission in Libya (EUBAM Libya), tasked with training border guards and coast guards, but the mission has been so far ineffective.⁵ The Americans announced last spring their desire to help Libya adopt a land borders control system. Countries in the region have also tried to strengthen their cooperation in the border control field at the Ghadames summit held on 11 January 2013, which saw the participation of Tunisia, Libya and Algeria. In Niger, a joint committee has been formed to improve Niger-Libya border control. The committee intends to rely on Tubu nomads, Tuareg and Arabs, to control the border.

Border surveillance could also be an opportunity for further multilateral efforts, including with NATO, which has drones, and which is now equipped with a surveillance system named Alliance Ground Surveillance (AGS). This framework should involve international and regional partners, including institutions with experience in this issue, such as the Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), the United Nations Office for Drugs and Crimes (UNODC) and Interpol.

Drug trafficking or the requirement of enhanced cooperation

The issue of drug trafficking is essentially both a cross-border and a transnational problem as persons involved in illicit traffic often have at least dual citizenship and use aliases. Any initiative taken purely at a national level will hardly be of any effect. This issue should receive regional attention, involving the main concerned states, i.e. Nigeria, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Morocco, Mauritania, Algeria, Mali, Niger, Burkina Faso, Libya, Egypt and Chad. ECOWAS has stated its commitment to

⁵ See Nicoletta Pirozzi's chapter in this volume.

fighting against critical networks and several states have called for the establishment of anti-money laundering regional mechanisms. Financial Intelligence Units have been created in many countries, such as Niger, Mali, Burkina-Faso or Mauritania, but suffer from a lack of resources.

In addition, behind the rhetorical façade, it does not seem that Europeans are as committed as the Americans to fight drug trafficking. The only effective antinarcotics operations in West Africa have been carried out by the US Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA) with the support of national authorities (Liberia) or without them (Guinea-Bissau, Ghana). This American commitment reflects the fact that South American cartels transport a portion of their goods through West Africa to enter the US market. On the European side, the commitment is limited to a few seizures of cargoes (particularly by French or Spanish law enforcement authorities), but no sustained effort at interdicting the drug routes has been put in place. Interpol could play a key role in this enhanced international cooperation, firstly because Interpol has launched many arrest warrants which have never been enforced.

These two topics have to be considered as top priorities because of their ability to impact massively on Sahel security (and beyond). Drug networks are very resilient despite Western presence in the Sahel and borders will remain unsafe given the Libyan's turmoil and sustainable fragilities in northern Mali. More action by the European Union and the United States, better if in cooperation, is badly needed.

6.

Struggling to Make a Difference: Challenges and Prospects for International Intervention in the Horn of Africa

Marta Martinelli

The Horn of Africa is a region of the East African peninsula comprising the states of Djibouti, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Somalia, Uganda, Kenya, Sudan and (most recently) South Sudan. These are also the member states of the political regional grouping known as the Intergovernmental Authority for Development (IGAD). As in other parts of Africa, the Horn is plagued by ongoing instability and insecurity, exacerbated by the close interdependence of its constituent states, unfavourable climate and environmental conditions as well as, importantly, by the geo-strategic interests and ensuing initiatives of international actors.

The distinction between the internal and the international dynamics is constantly blurred as national events impact neighbouring countries. Active interference in internal dynamics of neighbours is a common trait in the region, which feeds an ongoing cycle of civil and interstate wars. In addition, the fact that regional leaders have a shared past of active opposition to standing regimes, participation in supporting rebel movements and destabilisation by proxy (such as between Ethiopia and Eritrea, Eritrea and Ethiopia in Somalia or Ethiopia and Djibouti and to a lesser extent Ethiopia and Sudan) has added a layer of personal rivalry and animosity to interstate tensions. As a result, regional and international foreign policy is also influenced by considerations of amity and enmity between these leaders, which is not always compatible with strategic considerations.

Conflict and climate conditions resulting in droughts and famine favour endemic displacement both internally and externally.¹ The Horn

¹ The refugee population in the region is comprised for the most part by Somalis primarily hosted in Kenya, Yemen and Ethiopia (UNHCR 2012).

is known the world over for the worst humanitarian disasters and for hosting the largest and longest standing refugee camp in the world, in Dabaab since 1991, as a result of the Somali civil war. The camp (in reality made up of several camps) is situated in north-eastern Kenya at the border with Somalia, and hosts around 463,000 refugees including ten thousand third-generation refugees born of refugee parents and grandparents (UNHCR 2012). It is a sad reminder of the inability of local leaders to negotiate their disagreements and address the proliferation of security threats in a collaborative way. After twenty years, the camp is also testimony to the widespread acceptance of violence and conflict as a way of resolving disputed interests in the region. The refugee situation leads to unregistered people moving across borders and taking up unmonitored residence in neighbouring countries. This in turn affects relations with the local populations but also impacts upon national security, as seen most recently when Kenyans, traumatized by the September 2013 Westgate terrorist attacks, have called on their government to ensure tougher repatriation policies for Somali immigrants.

Cross-border tensions are reflected also in the fact that key regional stakeholders, like Egypt, Sudan and Ethiopia, share the same water resources and in particular the river Nile of which they are part owners and users (Mesfin 2011: 14). Egypt needs to ensure that no hostile government threatens access to the Nile's vital waters and has made it abundantly clear to its neighbours that it is determined to resort to military action if this was to happen (*ibidem*). Competition over access to water does not just affect states but also societal stakeholders. The harsh environmental conditions, for instance, push pastoral communities to search constantly for better access to water and pastures, which has led to conflict with sedentary agricultural communities.

With the notable exception of Somalia, local regimes are characterised by a high degree of stability and local elites are opposed to pluralistic systems of governance. Somaliland, with its combination of electoral democracy and clan-based power-sharing, is an exception that confirms the general trend. The key countries in the Horn have remained under the same administrations or forms of governments for decades (Plaut 2013: 321) and all experience a strong disconnect between a centrally-based ruling elite and marginalised communities particularly in border areas where state administration is weak. Ethiopia and Eritrea have amongst the most undemocratic regimes in the world with routine reports of abuses of human rights and the repression of civil society actors, political

opponents and journalists. Uprisings in North Africa have created opportunities for local activists to articulate demands for improved governance. However, this has also triggered repressive responses such as in Sudan, where government forces cracked down on demonstrators protesting against the announcement of reductions in fuel subsidies. It is against this background that international actors play into regional events and thereby add a layer of complexity with their global agenda.

The aim of this chapter is to give an account of international responses to the challenges that affect the region with a particular focus on the approaches of the European Union (EU) and the United States (US). Although it includes references to non-traditional donors such as China, limitations of focus and space prevent an in-depth analysis of interventions by important players such as Turkey, Iran and Israel or the United Arab Emirates (UAE) and India. For the same reasons and whilst acknowledging their role, the paper does not refer to the rich literature and experience of the African Union (AU) and United Nations (UN) peace-keeping operations in the area.

The chapter argues that recent EU and US initiatives have been framed predominantly in terms of security and state fragility, thus narrowing their understanding of the complex dynamics on the ground and limiting policy options. It provides some critical perspectives on the effects of such interventions, arguing that initiatives based on security interests result in an emphasis on anti-terrorism and “regime stability” that tends to reinforce highly illiberal regimes in the region. This in turn undermines the EU and US credibility as democracy and human rights promoters. Finally, the chapter puts forward proposals for engagement with local actors.

POLITICAL AND SECURITY DYNAMICS IN THE HORN

A brief account of relations between Sudan, Ethiopia, Eritrea and Somalia, in particular, helps shed light on the difficulties that external security and development initiatives are bound to face in this region.

Several analysts emphasise that the key factor affecting stability and development in the Horn is the troubled relationship between Eritrea and Ethiopia (Plaut 2013; Mulugeta 2011; Healey 2008). As Clapham (2013) states, “Ethiopia regarded the Italian colony of Eritrea as part of ‘historic’ Ethiopia [...] and ceaselessly and successfully lobbied in the UN

after the Second World War for it to be 'reunited with the motherland', with eventually catastrophic consequences".

When Eritrea succeeded in gaining independence from Ethiopia in 1993, it restored the borders created by the Italian colonial rulers and embarked upon a process of nationalist-based aggressive expansionism with virtually all its neighbours (*ibidem*).

Internally, it organised itself as a very repressive regime. Initially, friendly relations existed between the Eritrean government, led by the Eritrea People Liberation Front (EPLF) and the government of Ethiopia led by the Ethiopian People Revolutionary Democratic Front (EPRDF), with at its core the Tigrayan People's Liberation Front. The two movements had collaborated to overthrow Ethiopia's Mengistu regime and had agreed on Eritrea's independence as a central tenet of their alliance (Healy 2008: 12). Landlocked Ethiopia was allowed continued use of the Eritrean ports of Massawa and Assab. The leaders of the two countries, Eritrean Issayas Afeworki and Ethiopian Meles Zenawi, appeared to be on friendly terms. In reality it was a relationship based on opportunistic considerations, as deep differences remained.

Economic competition resulted in Eritrea adopting a national currency in 1997 whilst Ethiopia, obliged to pay in dollars for the use of the ports of Assab and Massawa, started redirecting its trade to Djibouti (Healy 2008: 13; Styan 2013: 3). On the ground, disputes were growing over jurisdiction between local authorities along the unmarked border between the two countries. In 1998 war finally erupted, following a shooting incident, when Eritrean forces moved into the Ethiopian-administered village of Badme.

The conflict raged for two years and ended when Ethiopian forces dislodged Eritrea from border positions it had seized in 1998. The 2000 Algiers Agreement provided for a demilitarized zone presided over by the UN Mission in Eritrea and Ethiopia (UNMEE), deployed in the Transitional Security Zone (TSZ) and an internationally-sponsored Eritrea-Ethiopia Boundary Commission (EEBC) whose decision on borders would be final and binding for both parties.

However, the Commission's decision to adjudicate the town of Badme to Eritrea and pursue demarcation was (and is) contested. Ethiopia appealed to both the Commission and to the United Nations, claiming that errors were made in the identification of borders, and requested a neutral mechanism to supervise demarcation in order to rectify such errors. Eritrea managed to alienate most of its neighbours and virtually all of the

international community by demanding that Ethiopia accept the ruling as final. Frantic US efforts to try to resolve the dispute have consistently been dismissed by Eritrea as “pro-Ethiopia”. Both states claim that they accept the ruling of the Boundary Commission but whilst Ethiopia asks for further definition of the demarcation procedure, Eritrea is adamant that the coordinates identified by the EEBC are final and valid. In an attempt to put pressure on Ethiopia, Eritrea has restricted UNMEE’s operations causing the mission to depart. The result is that the two countries’ armed forces remain on high alert along their borders and are effectively locked in a standoff (Healey 2008).

The failure to solve the Eritrea-Ethiopia dispute has contributed directly to fuelling the conflict in Somalia. Both countries have pursued an activist regional foreign policy and war-by-proxy in Somalia (Khadiagala 2008: 4). Somalia’s post-independence and democratically elected government was toppled by a military coup in 1969, when General Siad Barre initiated a programme of “scientific socialism” and tried to erase tribalism from the Somalis’ social make-up by prohibiting citizens from referring to their clan’s affiliation (McLure 2009: 163). In response, armed groups began to oppose the government’s practices of marginalisation, repressive policies and militarisation of virtually every aspect of social life (Farah and Mohamed 2012: 5). This led to two decades of internal strife resulting in Barre’s ousting in 1991 and the secession of Puntland and Somaliland. The latter have developed as two quasi-state entities in the north of the country, engaged in a relatively peaceful and democratic process of state-building. The clan-warfare that followed pushed Somalia into anarchy, which led the United States to intervene by sending 28,000 troops in an operation named Restore Hope. Somali militias led by General Mahdi and General Aideed epitomised clan-based lines of conflict and mobilised clan alignments against the common enemy (*ibidem*). The debacle and withdrawal of the US mission allowed Aideed’s militias to take control of Southern Somalia and ally themselves with Islamist hardliners backed by Egypt and Saudi Arabia.

Islamic Councils began to rule Somalia based on sharia law in opposition to a Transitional Federal Government (TFG) that was established first abroad and then brought back to Mogadishu. Concerned by these developments, Christian Ethiopia invaded Somalia in 2006 in an attempt to bolster the TFG and defeat the Islamists. Ethiopia’s move was also designed to earn international support for its claims in the region by joining in the war against Islamic terrorism.

However, internally this had the effect of reinvigorating old Ogaden secessionist demands as the Ogaden National Liberation Front (ONLF) sought to split the ethnic Somali region of Ogaden from Ethiopia. Subsequent armed fights between the ONLF and the Ethiopian military have exacerbated the humanitarian situation. In pursuit of its competition with Ethiopia, Eritrea began to support the ONLF and other Ethiopian insurgent groups whilst also engaging in a border dispute with Djibouti and forcing it to seek arbitration of the Arab League and of the African Union. In Somalia, Eritrea sided with groups opposing Ethiopia's invasion. In spite of this, Ethiopia managed to briefly establish control over Mogadishu whilst supporting the TFG under the control of President Abdullahi Yusuf. However, resentment over Ethiopian occupation led hundreds of army deserters to join Islamist groups, with al-Shabaab in the lead.

On a different front, Sudan sank into its own internal wars primarily between the North and the South divided along ethnic and religious lines. At the same time Sudan allowed both Eritrean and Ethiopian rebels to operate from its territory whilst Ethiopia supported the separatist Sudan's People Liberation Movement of Southern Sudan (Plaut 2013: 325) against Khartoum. Years of confrontation were only resolved with the 2005 Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA). A referendum held in 2011 has determined the independence of Southern Sudan and has opened the space for Southern Sudan to organise its own political life. However, disagreements over the oil-rich border area of Abjei continue to undermine relations between the two countries, whilst demands for self-determination in Sudan's western region of Darfur, heavily repressed by Khartoum, contribute to ongoing warfare and a horrific humanitarian crises. Most recently (December 2013), ethnic tensions led to violence in South Sudan's Unity and Jongley states, threatening the oil flow from South Sudan and opening prospects for an intervention by Khartoum if Juba cannot control the unrest.

The regional undercurrents of conflict have attracted international attention and the corresponding international interventions have added a layer of complexity to these indigenous dynamics. Whilst trying to respond to such major regional challenges, the international community has played a role ultimately framed by clear national interests based in particular on issues such as access to oil, strategic trade routes, and supporting allies.

INTERNATIONAL INTERESTS AT PLAY IN THE HORN OF AFRICA

The Horn has been the object of colonial interests since the late 19th century when Anglo-French competition played out in Egypt and against the Ottoman Empire. Britain, France and Italy became the three European states most involved in the region (Woodward 2003: 15) and left an imprint on the infrastructure inherited by post-colonial states (particularly in Eritrea and Djibouti), their social configuration and the rivalry between Islamic groups (particularly Somalia and Sudan) and between Christians and Muslims (particularly in Ethiopia and Kenya, and between Ethiopia and neighbouring countries). The region is rich in oil (particularly in Sudan) and owes its strategic value to its proximity to the Red Sea, which is an important route for international trade towards the Middle Eastern, European and American markets. Hence, global players have tried to exert economic, military and political influence on the countries of the region (Sharamo and Mesfin 2011: 19). During the Cold War, the United States-Soviet Union rivalry on the African continent also played a determinant role in shaping regional dynamics and more recently “the Horn has been an arena of intensifying contest since the War on Terror erupted with the attacks on American embassies in Kenya and Tanzania in 1998” (Plaut 2013: 322).

International attention has also been focused on the humanitarian consequences of the conflicts and the impact of climate change on the region. This has led to very high demands for humanitarian and development assistance programmes. In addition, conflict also provides a breeding ground for organised crime both at sea and on land, illegal arms proliferation, and political and social destabilisation caused by population movements. Prolonged instability affects regional oil producers (such as South Sudan and Somalia), damages US and EU oil interests and creates a need to secure trade routes.

Security concerns in the Horn include the alleged connections between armed groups operating in the region and al-Qaeda cells.

In December 2002 the United States Central Command (CENTCOM) created the US Combined Joint Task Force-Horn of Africa (JTF-HoA) to “provide the United States with a forward presence in the region, train the region’s law enforcement agencies on counter terrorism, collect intelligence, and oversee humanitarian assistance efforts” (Dagne 2010: 19). Located in the former French military base of Camp Lemonnier in

Djibouti, the JTF-HoA is the only permanent US military base in Africa. It was initially established to support Operation Enduring Freedom in Afghanistan with the task of combating terrorism and piracy in and off the coast of the Horn of Africa. Since 2011 the United States has also carried out occasional drone attacks in Somalia and the US navy has taken the lead role in establishing Coalition Task Force 151 (CTF-151), which patrols the waters of East Africa with the contribution of several EU member states. Since 2009 the United States has also been operating the African Partnership Station (APS), where US Navy and Coast Guard vessels operate as floating training centres for naval operations and deliver training to states in the region that are considered vulnerable to trans-border terrorist activities (Kluth 2013: 24).

External powers such as China, India, Iran, Israel, some Gulf states, and more traditional players such as the United States, France, the United Kingdom (UK), the European Union, all play a crisis management role in the region, with the bulk of interventions revolving around security concerns and economic interests.

China in particular pursues an aggressive policy of economic competition with the West in Africa. Its main interests are: securing natural resources, including petroleum and strategic minerals, tapping into Africa's emerging market, and securing political support of African nations at the United Nations. China's successful penetration in Africa is owed to several considerations, such as: 1) support for African economic interests with skilled economic diplomacy through triennial African-Chinese summits; 2) high level bilateral visits; 3) well spread diplomatic presence in Africa; 4) the expansion of Chinese soft diplomacy programs including scholarships, cultural centres and international visits; and 5) preferential trade credits and development finance (Brown 2012: 4). China frames its relations with Africa based on its own experience as a developing country, it fills an important gap in Western development aid by focusing on much needed infrastructure, and, unlike the European Union, it has a policy of non-interference on governance and human rights issues.

Whilst prospects for a real cooperation with China that favours Africa's development are remote due to fundamental ideological differences, in the area of security China is willing to participate in initiatives resulting in safer investment environments. Both the United States and China require a stable environment to gain access to Africa's energy and raw material resources. This might open opportunities for cooperation, as happened

in May 2012 when China and the United States worked together at the UN Security Council to pass resolution 2046² to end hostilities between Sudan and South Sudan (Brown 2012: 89).

International security efforts concentrate also on the proliferation of maritime piracy that threatens transport and trade off the Somali and Kenyan coasts.³ Djibouti has earned an increased strategic position in this regard and whilst it remains an important base for France's military activities, it now acts as the main logistical hub for US and allied operations in East Africa and the Arabian peninsula. It has also become a "laboratory for new forms of military and naval cooperation among and beyond NATO and EU forces" (Styan 2013: 4) engaged in anti-piracy operations. China in particular has developed important regional cooperation programmes and contributes to joint operations with the United States and the European Union as well as other fleets in the area. Between 2008 and 2012 China's navy conducted twelve separate anti-piracy missions and escorted vessels from over fifty countries (ibidem: 13). In addition, Oman, Dubai and the United Arab Emirates, as well as Japan and China, have contributed to developing infrastructure and port capacity in Djibouti as well as to the construction of oil terminals that help fuel the aviation and maritime military forces operating in the region (ibidem: 6).

EU APPROACHES TO THE REGION

In recent years the European Union's approach to the Horn has reflected international concerns with security dynamics.⁴ However, since 2006 the European Union has progressively tried to develop a comprehensive

² Adopted in May 2012. See UNSC, *Security Council Calls for Immediate Halt to Fighting Between Sudan, South Sudan...*, 22 May 2012, <http://www.un.org/News/Press/docs/2012/sc10632.doc.htm>

³ The UNODC estimates that, aside from aid and remittances, piracy has become the largest source of foreign exchange in Somalia. In 2011 alone piracy brought in the country some 150 million dollars. However the agency also estimates that piracy has also begun to lose attractiveness since the publication of *Best Management Practices* to help vessels escape pirate routes and strengthen onboard security measures. In addition, ransom negotiations have become more protracted, hostages need to be held for longer periods, and international operations are more effective – all of which has contributed to piracy losing part of its appeal (UNODC 2013a: 35).

⁴ Indeed the 2003 European Security Strategy (ESS) recognizes regional conflicts as a key threat to EU own interests (Council of the European Union 2003: 4).

approach culminating in the adoption of the 2011 Strategic Framework for the Horn of Africa (Council of the European Union 2011c).

Diplomatically, the European Union has a number of delegations that allow it to interface politically with local governments. It has also appointed a Special Representative (EUSR) for the Horn of Africa with the aim of strengthening its diplomatic and peacemaking initiatives as well as ensuring political coherence in its relations with the region. The Union supports the IGAD, which is the principal regional organisation, and it has also supported mediation efforts, the implementation of peace agreements as well as provided training of security personnel.

The Strategic Framework establishes from the onset that EU interests in the Horn of Africa are defined by the region's geo-strategic importance, historical ties, a desire to contribute to poverty reduction and to self-sustaining economic growth, and the need for the European Union to protect its own citizens from the threats that emanate from some parts of the region (Council of the European Union 2011c: 3). The Strategic Framework sets out areas of action but also points out that concrete implementation requires the adoption of further sub-strategies and action plans. It is not in the scope of this chapter to give a detailed account of all EU initiatives in the region, but they can be roughly summarized as humanitarian/development, political/diplomatic and security. Some examples of this multi-pronged approach are provided below:

- *Humanitarian/development approach*: under the 10th cycle of the European Development Fund (EDF) the European Union supported development programs for a total of two billion euros between 2010 and 2013. During the same period it was the biggest donor to Somalia and was contributing 325 million euros to support the African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM) through the African Peace Facility. The same facility was also used to support the AU mediation initiative on Sudan through the Africa Union High Level Implementation Panel (AUHIP) on Sudan. The European Humanitarian Office (ECHO) operates in all countries of the region albeit independently from EU delegations, and in 2012 the European Commission adopted a new action plan for the Horn, code named SHARE⁵, and totalling 270 million euros to support recovery from the 2011 drought (Soliman, Vines and Mosley 2012: 19).

⁵ It stands for "Supporting the Horn of Africa's Resilience" initiative.

- *Political/diplomatic*: the European Union has offered technical assistance and expertise in drawing up arrangements for oil exploitation between Sudan and South Sudan in implementation of the 2005 Comprehensive Peace Agreement. Until October 2013 it availed itself of the diplomatic skills of the former EU Special Representative for the Sudan(s) (and later UK ambassador to Sudan), Rosalind Marsden, who was able to support the mediation efforts of the African Union as well as of major sponsors of the CPA such as China and the United States. In 2012 the Union appointed a Special Representative for the Horn: initially charged with a specific focus on Somalia and anti-piracy policies, the EUSR-HoA's mandate has been extended to include the two Sudans. The European Union also organizes high-level conferences that help coordinate EU and member states' support for specific national situations such as the conference on Somalia following the end of the Transitional Federal Government in August 2012.
- *Security*: the European Union leads in security operations in the region under the banner of its Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP). Operation EUNAVFOR Atalanta, launched in 2008, has been extended to 2014, with a mandate to carry out maritime patrol and deterrence activities. Atalanta has, since May 2012, begun to operate ashore and attack pirates logistic bases. The EU Training Mission for Somalia (EUTM Somalia) has contributed, since 2010, to the reform of the Somali security sector through training for Somali army units as part of a wider effort between Uganda, the European Union, the United Nations, the United States and the Somali government. In 2012 EUCAP Nestor was also launched as a regional maritime capacity building operation for the countries in the region and the setting up and training of a coastal police force as well as judges with expert advice on maritime security. In 2011 the European Union also launched a mission to strengthen border and customs control at the airport in Juba, South Sudan. In addition the Union also participates in the Global Counter Terrorism Forum where, together with Turkey, it presides over the working group on countering terrorism financing.⁶

⁶ Key to the mandate of the Forum is support for the UN Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy. For more information on the Forum, its members and its activities see the official website: <http://www.theGCTF.org>.

The EU strategic framework for the Horn of Africa is a welcomed development from past, less coherent, EU approaches. It builds on several years of reflections. Some concrete signs of improvements include the appointment of a dedicated EUSR, the launch or continuation of four crisis management missions, and the adoption of a new initiative to deal with the consequences of extreme climate conditions. The Strategy recognizes the need for the European Union to act along a security-development nexus. However, early indications point to a mixed record in the Union's ability to deal with both ends of the nexus.

For instance, Somali witnesses stated at a UK parliamentary hearing on operation Atalanta that the operation's mandate is not concerned with the protection of Somalis, or the Somali coastline or the Somali (ill defined) exclusive economic zone. They pointed out that there was little commitment from the European Union to protect fishing in Somali waters particularly from illegal fishermen or from individuals transporting toxic materials. Although the Union has set up the EUCAP Nestor operation precisely to support local authorities in developing their capacities to protect their economic zones, the nuances of mission mandates need to be better communicated so that unrealistic expectations are not created. In addition, the impact of the four CSDP missions deployed in the area has not been formally evaluated yet and it is difficult to assess to what extent they contribute effectively to promote stability and human security for both the states and the people of the region, although analyses point to a reduction of pirate activities.

The European Union also needs to reflect critically on its ability to promote stability as well as actual democratic systems of governance in the region and, in the case of Somalia, to move from supporting institutions in Mogadishu to supporting the federal administration so that it can extend beyond the capital and be inclusive of all Somali interests. The leverage afforded to the European Union by its development funds may not be as important as expected especially if one considers that new actors are playing on the same ground, are themselves providing aid (for instance China with its infrastructure development programmes) and are less interested in discussing the merits of pluralistic politics with the Horn governments or their treatment of their own populations.

CRITICAL PERSPECTIVES: THE LIMITATIONS OF INTERNATIONAL INTERVENTIONS

A superficial review of historical security dynamics in the Horn region would lead to the conclusion that conflict in the Horn is entrenched in an uncompromising political culture and personal animosity among regional leaders. Descriptions of the dynamics in the Horn of Africa assume an intrinsic resistance to set up an efficient central state or a tendency to accept that the government is centralized in the hands of this or that ethnic group or clan. In response to such perceptions, international initiatives in the Horn have emphasised the paradigm of state-building.

Whilst in the 1980s and most of the 1990s external intervention (particularly in the form of development) was designed to strengthen civil society actors that had been long suppressed by authoritarian and one-party states in Africa, in the period leading up to the 2000s an emphasis on security concerns led to a “rediscovery” of the role of the state as the holder of the monopoly of violence and the best option for ensuring service delivery and development.⁷ This approach was increased when the 9/11 terrorist attacks demonstrated the vulnerability of the West to instability and lack of state control in “peripheral” world regions.

A consensus developed internationally that effective states capable of delivering on core functions of the state would also help realise development goals and consolidate peace). The crucial question, however, remained: “peace for whom”?, as the West’s post-9/11 policies were overly focused on the preservation of stability and the protection of Western security interests.⁸ Whilst this is not negative per se and security initiatives are desirable considering the current state of play, the framing of problems relating to instability in the Horn as mainly “security” has led to a narrowing of options for international engagement in the region.

The emphasis on preventing the establishment of al-Qaeda cells in the Horn or the radicalisation of local Muslim communities has turned into

⁷ It might be worth considering that contestation of such mono-party polities and authoritarian regimes literally exploded at the end of the Cold War with a multiplication of civil conflicts and proliferation of opposition armed groups in several African countries contesting the authority of the state. The subsequent weakening of states as providers of stability and security generated international responses aimed at rebuilding states or strengthening them particularly in post-conflict and transition countries.

⁸ Mark Duffield (2001) has analysed in-depth how the security-development dynamics lock together core and peripheral regions of the world.

a self-fulfilling prophecy and increased resentment particularly against American interventionist policies. For instance, after the 1992 disastrous American intervention in the Somali crisis, the United States made efforts to re-engage constructively with Somali actors. Such efforts have nonetheless divided Muslim communities into “moderate” and “extremist” camps and contributed to isolating and dividing the Somali population along these lines, while also actually facilitating the radicalisation of groups such as al-Shabaab (Sabala 2011: 108). Although al-Shabaab has been weakened in Somalia, it has not been completely defeated, as attested to by the Westgate attack in Nairobi. In fact, al-Shabaab is able to threaten Kenya against intervening in Somalia thanks to its ability to infiltrate refugee camps and recruit from disaffected Somali army elements potential attackers such as the ones that formed the Westgate commando. In addition, regional dynamics intertwine with national ones as there are concerns that marginalised Muslim communities particularly along the coastal areas may also radicalise (Kagwanya 2012: 4). This in turn forces external interveners to rely more and more on security-based responses to the detriment of diversified approaches.

Events in Kenya are only an example of how the extension of security considerations from some groups using terrorist tactics to Muslim communities in general can indeed motivate stigmatised communities to confront the West and its allies. Intervention, understood simply and technically as stabilisation, aims at controlling phenomena that could cause instability. As such, the option of considering dissenting voices is precluded. The incompatibility of the project of stabilisation with dynamics of emancipation and social change has the effect of leaving community demands unfulfilled and of generating public disaffection for international efforts that do not promote inclusive participation (Mac Ginty 2012: 29). As evidence of this, Mesfin states

the diffusion of modern military technologies and state-of-the-art techniques of organisation, which the US approach entailed, went beyond the modernisation of the military or the transfer of weapons. It led to the institutionalised surveillance of entire populations and the blind, wholesale suppression of all political opponents, leading in effect to the diffusion of ideas, such as Islamist fundamentalism, with resultant security problems, particularly in Somalia (Mesfin 2011: 20).

The governance systems of the states of the Horn of Africa are amongst the most underdeveloped in Africa (with the exception of Somaliland and to a certain extent Puntland). Yet international intervention, focused on humanitarian and anti-terrorism issues, fails to recognize the importance of strengthening democratic participation and the promotion of human rights. For example, Eritrea's and Ethiopia's human rights records are amongst the worse on the continent. However, Ethiopia's cooperation on counterterrorism efforts has meant that international partners have turned a blind eye when it comes to the way it treats its own people. In addition, Ethiopia supports the two Sudans' CPA and has contributed troops to UN peacekeeping missions in the Darfur region. It is also instrumental in fighting al-Shabaab militias in Somalia. As a consequence, partners like the United States and the European Union have demonstrated a certain tolerance for illiberal practices and a tendency to dispense with notions of accountability. This raises a question about the commitment of such key players to supporting democracy and human rights and what sort of states and polities are emerging in the region as a result of all the efforts at stabilisation.

Western efforts at securing the region and stabilising it have had to rely on the identification of like-minded partners such as Ethiopia and Kenya, that are willing to further the Western powers' interests in the region from a security and geostrategic perspective. Both of them have amongst the best trained armies in Africa and Ethiopia is also amongst the most influential members of the African Union (McLure 2009: 160). The consequences are that international attention is focused in an uneven way on these states, further contributing to divisions amongst governments in the region that are eager to either please or contrast Western actors.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Regional fragility and security dynamics clearly point to the need for cross-boundary or transnational approaches based on a thorough understanding of the interconnectedness of the problems in the region. However, the European Union and the United States also need to develop a more nuanced understanding of the interests of new interveners such as China, India and Turkey and explore more thoroughly how to engage with them and develop possibilities for collaboration. Such an approach might be pragmatic but, as the behaviour of China on Sudan in the UNSC

demonstrates, it is not confined only to military operations and might have political connotations.

Some of the root causes of instability in the region lie in the relationship between Eritrean and Ethiopian leaders. The recent death of President Menes Zenawi and the change of leadership in Eritrea may offer an opportunity to revive reconciliation efforts between these two countries. The European Union and the United States need to coordinate their approaches better and invest in joint peacemaking initiatives. Whilst IGAD may play a useful role, it is important to recognise that the organisation is made up of countries that suffer from deep mistrust of each other and have all been at various moments involved in hostilities against one another.

Piracy cannot be approached only from a security perspective and the grievances of local populations need to be taken into account. EU and US development aid programmes should focus more on providing local communities with employment opportunities that will make piracy unattractive. These include the vital fishing activity. However, as more needs to be done to protect the maritime environment from illegal pollution and illegal exploitation of fishing zones, and greater investment in the local infrastructure that allow development of indigenous fishing industries are required. In short, international vessels charged with deterring pirates could also ensure that the Somali economic exclusive zone is protected and that toxic cargoes are not allowed anywhere near the coast. In addition, given that Somali pirates continue to operate especially out of Puntland, fair and effective prosecutions conducted through the Puntland judicial system have the potential of providing a strong local deterrent in conjunction with initiatives at sea and additional security measures on land. Similar to programmes that target demobilisation and reintegration of ex-combatants, initiatives that focus on strengthening local judicial systems could also include an element of pirates' reintegration in the economic system of their communities.

When looking at the root causes of the current instability, the United States and the European Union must face up to the fact that they are not only linked to state fragility but also to enduring illiberal regimes such as in Sudan and in Ethiopia. Clearly more needs to be done to balance security concerns with initiatives that push local allies to opening up their regimes. Both the United States and the European Union dispose of political and financial mechanisms for the protection of human rights defenders and both could use them to steer local governments towards

democracy.

The challenge posed by China to Western interests in Africa should not lead the European Union and the United States to downplay their value systems but rather engage more actively in diplomatic and outreach activities. Particularly at the US level, Africa and the countries of the Horn need to be given more prominent status by engaging at the right diplomatic level including with more frequent heads of state visits. China could be approached pragmatically for identifying common ground for rules of engagement in Africa. China has also shown important mediation capacity in Sudan. Although motivated by oil, this is good experience to build upon and meet shared stability interests. In relation to states in the region, an incentive-based system could be developed to support states that perform well on democracy, human rights and development policies. Civil society should be the primary interlocutor for evaluating whether or not progress is being achieved.

Finally, based on the recognition that scarce resources are certainly a reason for conflict, the European Union and the United States could help local partners perceive such resources as opportunities for collaboration and support regional infrastructure, transport and energy projects that have the potential to generate positive interdependence, contribute to conflict prevention and produce shared gains. Such infrastructures would not be developed to just facilitate external investment and trade (such as in the case of the ports of Djibouti) but create opportunities for exchanges between local communities and facilitate trade locally and internationally.

Appendix A

TRANSATLANTIC SECURITY FROM THE SAHEL TO THE HORN OF AFRICA. REPORT OF THE TRANSATLANTIC SECURITY SYMPOSIUM 2013

Lorenzo Vai

Since 2007, the Istituto Affari Internazionali (IAI) has organised a yearly international conference on the current state of the transatlantic relations, to promote dialogue, cooperation, and mutual understanding between the United States (US) and Europe. This sixth edition of the Transatlantic Security Symposium focused on two crucial African regions, namely the Sahel and the Horn of Africa, with a view to address the main security challenges at stake, the security interests in these areas of the United States and the European Union (EU), as well as the potential for cooperation with relevant African countries and organisations.

The meeting was held in Rome on the 2 December 2013. Participants included foreign policy experts, academicians, civil servants, and a number of distinguished scholars and practitioners from Europe, United States and Africa.

Compagnia di San Paolo, NATO Public Diplomacy Division and Italy's Ministry of Foreign Affairs supported the organisation of the conference.

This report provides a summary of the meeting and highlights the key points emerged from the debate, which was divided into three working sessions.

CONTENT

Following a keynote speech by Italy's Vice Minister, Lapo Pistelli, the conference focused on three main topics, which were discussed in three working sessions dedicated respectively to: 1) the EU and US Strategic Outlook in the Sahel and the Horn of Africa after the Arab uprisings; 2) security in the Sahel; 3) security in the Horn of Africa. Each of them

featured an analytical introduction by paper-givers and critical remarks by discussants, followed by an open discussion.

KEYNOTE SPEECH BY ITALY'S VICE MINISTER OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS LAPO PISTELLI AND INTRODUCTION INTO THE CONFERENCE

After a brief introductory speech by Ettore Greco, IAI Director, Lapo Pistelli, Italy's Vice Minister of Foreign Affairs, made a keynote speech on the security situation in Africa after the Arab uprisings and the prospects for Italy and the European Union to better cooperate with African regional organisations. Vice Minister Pistelli offered an overview of the European involvement and actions in the Sahel and Horn of Africa, where the European Union and its member states are the most important contributors of development cooperation and are involved in tackling the root causes of instability. He also recalled the active role played by Italy in the regions, and especially in Somalia, on both a multilateral and bilateral basis.

According to Pistelli, establishing closer partnerships with the African regional organisations represents a cornerstone for the European Union's regional strategies, which will be reviewed at the Africa-EU Summit in April 2014. At the summit, special sessions will be devoted to sensitive issues like immigration and workers' mobility. An increase of interest by developed countries for Africa's economic potential is to be expected in the next years, but the continent's widespread instability will probably persist, Vice Minister Pistelli foresaw. In order to face such instability, the triangular cooperation between the European Union, the United States and Africa remains fundamental. A better sharing of defence, diplomacy and development tools (the so called "3 Ds strategy"), together with intelligence capabilities, is the best way to improve transatlantic cooperation in Africa. A continent, ended the Vice Minister, for which the European Union intends to remain the main partner.

Giovanni Brauzzi, Deputy Director General for Political and Security Affairs at Italy's Ministry of Foreign Affairs, made an introduction to the seminar and put attention on the geostrategic relevance of the belt of countries ranging from the Sahel to the Horn of Africa, as well as on the need to link it to North Africa and the Middle East for crisis management purposes. He also pointed out the importance of an EU comprehensive approach to African security, in cooperation with the United States.

FIRST SESSION: EU AND US STRATEGIC OUTLOOK IN THE SAHEL AND THE HORN OF AFRICA

EU and US in sub-Saharan Africa: similar assessments but different priorities. Taking into consideration the destabilising effects spread by the Arab uprisings into the Horn of Africa and the Sahel - particularly in Mali - the participants mainly agreed on the same analysis of the current EU and US strategic outlook.

Both Western actors show a common assessment and comprehension of the security issues at stake in the Sahel and the Horn of Africa. Poverty, extremely weak economy, and an unsatisfactory level of governance were identified as the major sources of instability and insecurity. In the last years, the European Union and the United States both adopted a long-term multidimensional approach, which has faced these problems with the synergic use of defence, diplomacy and development tools: what has been called the “3 Ds strategy”.

However, although the European Union and United States share a common understanding of the problems, they have a varying level of attention to these regions and identify different priorities. This diverging approach is linked to factors like geographical proximity and the past colonial ties of leading EU member states. Thus, the European Union seems more concerned about threats with an immediate impact on its territory and population, like drug trafficking, terrorism, organised crime, illegal immigration and piracy. On the other side of the Atlantic, the attention to the Sahel and Horn of Africa – regions evaluated as peripheral to the national interest – has been less consistent. The main US priority, at least since 9/11, has been counterterrorism, followed by humanitarian assistance to the needy.

From strategy to action: towards an “arc of shared transatlantic responsibility”? Starting from the aforementioned assumptions, the panel highlighted the differences in the policy responses undertaken by the United States and European Union at the operational level.

The United States has been shown to favour responses justified by security concerns, and with a clear preference for bilateral military cooperation with countries like Ethiopia or Djibouti. So, the United States has appeared reluctant to start combat operations in regions where national security interests are not considered to be at stake, and has preferred a low-profile stance in support of other actors (e.g. the French in Mali).

The European Union has adopted a longer-term perspective, and has acted through civilian missions, which range from good governance promotion to security sector reform. Due to the European public opinion's weak support for military endeavours – especially in time of economic crisis – the use of the military instrument by the Union has been relatively infrequent (one of the best examples remains the anti-piracy maritime mission EU NAVFOR Atalanta). Furthermore, the European Union seems to be more inclined to establish political dialogue and cooperation with African regional actors, such as the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD) or the African Union (AU).

Participants underlined several shortfalls in both models of response. First, the absence of coordination between US and EU interventions was pointed out. US operations are more limited in their range of activities (mainly counterterrorism) and have been largely disconnected from EU missions that tend to deal with more complex and broader issues. Greater transatlantic coordination could make use of the comparative advantages enshrined in each approach. An improvement that, for some of the speakers, could be backed by the more holistic approach embraced, at least rhetorically, by Barack Obama administration in its recent strategic outlook on African security. This assessment did not find general consensus among the participants, with some of them reminding of how the successful pursuit of a common transatlantic approach implies a preliminary arrangement on how to harmonise the US's and EU's different threats perceptions and priorities. Larger consensus emerged about the well-known problem of the lack of agreement among EU member states, which affects EU response to African security and its external action more generally. A multi-level problem, which regards both member states' action in these regions and the inter-institutional policies coordination at the EU level.

The assessment of the prospects for cooperation with African regional organisations made by the panellists was mixed. Whilst such organisations can provide a comparative advantage to crisis management due to their greater proximity to and understanding of local contexts, their action is hampered by capacity constraints, slow pace of internal consensus-building and lack of coordination with other actors in the field. Even with the external support provided primarily by the European Union, African regional organisations are still not able to ensure effective intervention (as seen in Mali with the ECOWAS-led AFISMA mission).

In addition, the failure by both the European Union and the United States to launch an inclusive dialogue with other relevant external actors in the area – first and foremost China – was remarked by several participants.

Finally, a discussant noted that one of the primary weaknesses of all the policy responses is the “emergency ratio” on which they are usually based, which constitutes a shaky basis to achieve the long-term objectives indicated in all the EU and US strategy papers.

How to deal with complexity? A few lessons from the past and some recommendations. All participants underlined the high level of complexity that lies behind political events in these regions, and the related analytical and political effort required to deal with it. In fact, even if the Sahel and the Horn of Africa are the origin of many security concerns, their definition as a single “arch of instability ranging from the Atlantic to the Indian Ocean”, as a discussant pointed out, could entail a superficial approach. A shortcoming that some participants observed in the regional strategy papers adopted both by the United States and the European Union, as they fall short of including relevant regional dynamics (as in the case of the US strategy), or considering the involvement of key regional players (as for the EU Sahel Strategy).

The Sahel and the Horn of Africa – generally seen as border regions of Northern Africa – can now directly influence EU interests and security and, to some extent, American interests and security. Following the Arab uprisings, these areas have suffered from an increase of instability without benefitting from the political change. Participants agreed that there are several reasons behind this “instability without revolutions”: the efficacy of state repression systems, the relative familiarity with electoral politics enjoyed by some regional states, the less-than-abysmal state of the economy of other states, and still others. A discussant maintained that a not irrelevant element is the lack of familiarity with information technologies among the sub-Saharan countries’ populations.

Some participants pointed out that Western actors have failed to predict the events that have occurred in many sub-Saharan African countries (e.g. Nigeria and Mali). The lesson for the United States and Europe (which they have failed to draw thus far) is that the Sahel presents fast changing realities that require dynamic and coordinated responses. In the European case, the risk that its strategic frameworks are the product of a “reverse engineering exercise to provide ex-post coherence to non-aligned activities” appeared real to many participants.

The intra-European divisions (which contemplate a reluctant Germany, an hyperactive France, and – according to some participants – a United Kingdom leaning towards unilateral rather than EU-wide initiatives) have also negatively affected the timing and the effectiveness of operations conducted so far.

“Constrained by geography”, as commented by a discussant, the United States is not able or willing to play a role in these regions comparable to the EU’s one. This does not justify, however, the US failure in identifying the complex nature of the security challenges and in delineating an effective framework for a comprehensive regional response.

In order to improve EU and US action, the panellists agreed that broader cooperation with African partners (the only way to reach the desired goal of providing “African solution to African problems”), a stronger dialogue with the numerous diaspora communities in Western countries, and more effective transatlantic burden-sharing were all desirable steps. Specifically on the immigration issue several participants agreed on the need for the EU to treat this phenomenon as an opportunity and not only a risk.

SECOND SESSION: SECURITY IN THE SAHEL: LINKING THE ATLANTIC TO THE MEDITERRANEAN

The second session focused on the current instability in the Sahel, highlighting the internal and external factors that foster it. Participants identified the major security issues and questioned EU and US approaches.

The legacy of historical connections. A paper-giver pointed out that the Sahel region has a rich past of economic and cultural exchange with North Africa. Thanks to the trans-Saharan trade flows controlled by the Berber nomads, notably the Tuareg, together with the diffusion of Islam that simplified socialisation and commerce among local peoples, the connections between these two regions were numerous and intense for centuries.

Today, organised crime, drug and human trafficking networks, and terrorist groups have exploited these historical links. Bearing in mind these interconnections, the end of the Libyan civil conflict, with its high number of runaway mercenaries equipped with light and heavy weapons, disseminated new threats southwards, in the Sahel. According to participants, this situation has fostered a partnership among criminal

gangs and fundamentalist groups involved in any type of illicit traffic – especially narcotics and arms.

This condition of instability has favoured radical Islamist organisations, which have been able to better fund their activities with the money raised through illicit traffic. In addition, other circumstances have been to these groups' advantage: the widespread connivance (ranging from simple "tolerance" to more dangerous "complicity") of regional states' security forces and politicians, extensive ungoverned spaces with porous borders, and their often well-established links with local populations.

Due to these internal and external factors, the Sahel (particularly Mali and Mauritania) is emerging today as a main staging post and trading hub for Latin American and North African drugs on their way to Europe. At the same time, arms trafficking from China, Iran, Sudan and North Africa has found in the Sahel's desert a safe route toward the major arms trading centres in Niger and Mali. Finally, organised crime has taken advantage from its control of unpatrolled itineraries through which irregular immigration flows to Europe regularly transit.

The US and EU strategies: new trends with old weaknesses. A panellist highlighted how, in the last decade, the United States has increased its military and financial resources in the Sahel to combat the creation of safe havens for the terrorists. Due to the scarcity of financial resources, a participant remarked, a realistic choice between long-term and short-term objectives is required, based on a serious evaluation of the causes and the effects of regional instability. This political reflection should also remedy the inconsistency that frequently affects US policies in the Sahel.

As a turbulent neighbour of Europe's and a direct source of security threats, the Sahel has attracted increasing EU attention. In 2011 the European Union adopted a Strategy for Security and Development in the Sahel, based upon a security-development nexus and characterised by a comprehensive approach in terms of tools, partnership and functions. However, as usual with the Union, diverging objectives and approaches among EU member states have hampered effective action. The case of Mali, where France intervened militarily without any concrete support by its EU partners, is telling.

But even when the Union has acted, sending Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP) missions, results have left much to be desired. The EU Training Mission in Mali (EUTM Mali) and the EU Border Assistance Mission in Libya (EUBAM Libya) are emblematic examples. Both missions have been given over-ambitious goals, and yet they are both utterly

understaffed, to the extent that they have been largely ineffective. In light of this, a participant questioned the utility of the strategic papers adopted at the European level. Others objected that the EU Strategy for the Sahel is a good document, useful both to identify the best way to act collectively and to foster national debates, but needs further commitment from both EU institutions and member states.

Is a transatlantic partnership in the Sahel possible? Many participants acknowledged the opportunity to develop a more solid transatlantic partnership in the region. The most practical solution was said to be selective cooperation on core issues of regional security, for instance, border control-supporting initiatives in North African countries such as Tunisia and Libya. Libya's border control problem, in particular, could represent a perfect test case for EU and US cooperation, the involvement of other African actors (e.g. Niger) and regional or international organisations (like ECOWAS or the United Nations).

A number of participants indicated the fight against drug trafficking as a second transatlantic priority. The phenomenon was said to be gaining increasing attention in Washington, where the criminal connections between South America, the Sahel and North Africa are a matter of growing concern. On this point, an American participant recalled how the United States has already started to be active even in the civilian sector, supporting the development of judicial and police capacities in several African countries involved in drug trafficking (US programmes in Algeria were mentioned as an example).

On the other hand, participants agreed in considering illegal immigration from the Sahel a major European issue. The phenomenon needs to be tackled at its roots, which can be intuitively identified in the extreme poverty and in a situation of state fragility shared by the majority of the regional countries. Several participants lamented that the immigration issue has undergone a process of "securitisation", which seems to neglect the basically humanitarian nature of this emergency.

Some participants brought up the issue of the exploitation of natural resources. This remains a key point for understanding the interests and the moves of many international actors.

THIRD SESSION: SECURITY IN THE HORN OF AFRICA: LINKING THE INDIAN OCEAN TO THE MEDITERRANEAN

The third session concentrated on domestic and international challenges that have affected the stability of the Horn of Africa. The panellists debated on the role played by international actors, in particular the European Union, the United States and China.

From regional instability to national insecurity. Participants highlighted the insecurity issues that are impacting on the Horn of Africa. The region is dramatically known worldwide for the Somali civil war and its unique and terrible series of humanitarian crises that have generated about half a million of refugees in the last twenty years. The situation of endemic instability in Somalia and the new tensions aroused in South Sudan were said to be the results of internal and international dynamics which frequently intersect with one another. Rivalries between countries tend to interfere with intrastate tensions, thus producing a vicious circle of civil and interstate wars. The high number of territorial disputes, the struggle for the control of natural resources (from water to oil), the presence of multinational states with ethnic and religious minorities without a pluralistic system of governance, and lastly, troubled personal relationships among national leaders, emerged as the main causes of the volatile security situation in the Horn. Extreme poverty in the area has also created a fertile ground for the appearance of security threats ranging from terrorism to piracy.

Some participants identified Ethiopia as the main player in the region, and its conflicting relationship with Eritrea as a key factor that has negatively influenced the stability and development of the entire area. Following Eritrea's independence from Ethiopia in 1993, friendly political relations between the two countries ended soon. Since the 1998-99 conflict – exploded for territorial disputes – borders have remained highly militarised. This persisting military antagonism has contributed to fuelling instability in Somalia, a country devastated by a long civil war, which has taken the form of clan warfare. Both Ethiopia and Eritrea used their proxies in Somalia to fight against each other.

The Ethiopian-Eritrean conflict has affected Sudan as well. The country, divided along ethnic and religious lines, experienced a war between the North and the South that only ended with the independence of the latter in 2011, a result reached also thanks to Ethiopian and international support. Today, despite the Comprehensive Peace

Agreement (CPA) signed in 2005, disputes over important oilfields continue to undermine the relations between Sudan and South Sudan, in an unstable wider context already weakened by the humanitarian crisis in Darfur, Sudan's vast western region.

According to the conference participants, the majority of the countries in the Horn of Africa – with few exceptions – are characterised by stable centralised authoritarian governments, feeble political oppositions and inadequate human rights protection. Such political conditions have preserved the domestic stability from social uprisings but have also hampered social and economic development.

Conversely, in a country like Somalia, which is characterised by diffused anarchy and extreme poverty, new security threats have grown due to political deficiencies. The case of piracy is an example. Because of the absence of a functioning state that protects and assists the fishery sector – which is essential for the local economy – piracy found many followers among starved fishermen. In addition, as underlined by a participant, a failed state cannot intervene to stop pollution activities conducted in Somali waters by foreign vessels which dramatically compromised, in the past, the whole fishing sector.

International action in the Horn between securitisation, economic pragmatism and democracy promotion. Participants recalled that many international actors are present in the Horn. Beside the European Union and the United States, China and, though to a lesser extent, the Gulf states, India, Qatar, Turkey, Iran and Israel, have all given increasing importance to the region. The interests at play in the Horn of Africa are manifold. The area is rich in oil and owns a strategic proximity to important international trade routes. Moreover, the repeated humanitarian crises and the presence of fundamentalist groups have raised alarm in Western quarters.

The European Union started working on a comprehensive plan for the region since 2006, a process which culminated in the Strategic Framework for the Horn of Africa adopted in 2011. The conservation of historical ties (for France, the United Kingdom and Italy), the eradication of poverty, geo-strategic considerations, the protection of European companies and citizens and – last but not least – the control of migration flows, represent some of the major European interests and objectives in this part of Africa. The participants recalled the various European initiatives, from the humanitarian assistance carried out by the European Commission to the diplomatic efforts to reach the CPA or, even more, the

support to international meetings like the Somalia Conference in the UK in 2012. The European Union has launched a number of operations, both military and civilian, in the area. The most significant was said to be the anti-piracy operation EUNAVFOR Atalanta, which is usually taken as a positive example because it has achieved some good results. Nonetheless, a participant questioned the genuine comprehensive approach of the mission, which has until now defended the commercial cargo ships but has not preserved the security of many other actors, including Somali fishermen. The assessment of the other European missions was rather mixed, chiefly due to their limited resources and tasks.

As is the case with its Sahel strategy, the European Union's vision of the Horn is based on the concept of the security-development nexus. Nevertheless, according to the majority of the participants, the implementation of the concept is far from ideal. EU promotion of good governance and economic development, in particular, appears highly problematic. The involvement of a broad range of actors was recommended both at the international and domestic level, so that the Union can better support multilateral solutions through regional organisations like IGAD and help political, ethnic and religious minorities obtain concessions from illiberal regimes.

Security concerns, more specifically the fight against Islamist terrorism, were identified, again, as the main US priority. Since the attacks to its embassies in Kenya and Tanzania in the late Nineties, the United States has conducted a relevant number of counterterrorism and anti-piracy missions in the Horn. Bilateral military cooperation with regional actors, such as Ethiopia or Djibouti, has remained the US favourite solution to face security threats.

In the Nineties, the American intervention in Somalia resulted in a disaster and contributed to increase anti-US resentment in the population, indirectly fuelling religious extremism. Although today terrorist groups like al-Shabaab have been weakened, the condition of widespread insecurity is still there. This is because the United States – and to some extent the European Union – has not tackled what the participants identified as the fundamental challenge for long-term stability: the strengthening of democracy and the promotion of human rights. In fact, both the European Union and the United States have shown a good deal of tolerance towards the illiberal practices adopted by their regional partners (particularly Ethiopia).

Some participants argued that the promotion of democratic values and practices is even more critical today, in the face of growing Chinese

influence in the Horn. In Africa, China has become a key player with a strategy based on pragmatism and economic penetration. The Chinese focus on building infrastructure, its cultural diplomacy and its policy of non-interference in domestic affairs (such as human rights) have been very successful in all countries of the region, and pose a new challenge both to the European Union and United States. According to some participants, the Chinese presence could actually also represent an opportunity for cooperation on common objectives, such as a long-lasting diplomatic solution to Sudan's many critical issues or the construction of a safer legal framework for direct investments by foreign companies.

"Peace for whom?: the limits of the current EU and US interventionism. "Peace for whom?" This was the crucial question posed by the paper-giver to address and understand the nature of Western intervention in the Horn of Africa, which seems to be primarily orientated to preserve stability and protect European and the American security and economic interests. While, on the one hand, this approach appears justifiable, on the other hand it has narrowed the international policy response down to security issues. Hence, for a while the West failed to consider the complex regional dynamics and consequently did not provide sustainable solutions for regional pacification.

A participant made it clear though that there is no single formula to solve the various problems that affect the Horn of Africa. Several recommendations were put forward during the conference. Participants agreed on suggesting cross-boundary and transnational approaches based on a thorough understanding of the interconnectedness of the various security threats emanating from the region. Some participants contended that the development of bilateral relations between external actors and regional powers cannot be the solution for regional problems, which should be faced preferably at the international level by involving more countries and regional organisations. This option seemed unrealistic to another participant because of the generalised lack of a true state community in the Horn. There was more consensus on the fact that the European Union and the United States should try to promote good and democratic governance and simultaneously foster economic development through regional cooperation mechanisms that would fairly share the region's scarce resources. At the institutional level, the support of federalist solutions for countries with ethnic or religious minorities was suggested.

CONCLUSIONS

The debate was intense and lively. A relevant number of topics were addressed with the purpose to provide new perspectives and ideas for understanding and dealing with the security issues in the Sahel and the Horn of Africa from a transatlantic perspective.

In the three sessions, participants formulated analyses and tried to give answers to questions which, in most cases, remain however open. Among these, the most significant were:

- *Strategic approach*: how is it possible to combine a comprehensive and regional strategy as the basis of the EU model with the US one, which tends to prefer a bilateral approach with anchor countries?
- *Scope of EU-US cooperation*: are there common threats that can justify and trigger closer cooperation between the European Union and the United States in the Sahel and Horn of Africa?
- *African ownership*: which are the crucial areas that need to be addressed in order to turn African ownership from rhetoric to facts?
- *Working with other relevant external players*: how can the European Union and the United States involve effectively other regional and international actors? How to escape the ideological competition threat, which seems to affect both EU and US approach towards international actors like China?
- *Inclusive approach*: who are the actors that should be included, i.e. among ethnic and religious groups, diaspora, refugees, etc.? How could this type of approach be implemented by external actors?
- *Functioning states and accountable institutions*: how can external actors empower national actors through a long-term approach based on the nexus between security and development?
- *EU internal divisions*: the European Union is still fragmented between member states with significant national interests at stake such as France and the United Kingdom, others that display a more reluctant attitude – like Germany – and others still that have the ambition to play a role due to their colonial past in specific African regions, such as Italy in Somalia.

All these issues represent a starting point for future studies that would build upon the debate emerged during the Symposium.

Appendix B

TRANSATLANTIC SECURITY SYMPOSIUM 2013 AGENDA Rome, 2 December 2013, Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs

WELCOME ADDRESS

Ettore Greco, Director, Istituto Affari Internazionali, Rome

KEYNOTE SPEECH

Security in Africa after the Arab Uprisings: Prospects for EU cooperation with Africa's Regional Organisations

Lapo Pistelli, Italy's Vice Minister of Foreign Affairs

SEMINAR INTRODUCTION

Giovanni Brauzzi, Deputy Director General, Directorate-General for Political and Security Affairs, Italy's Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Rome

Riccardo Alcaro, Senior Fellow, Transatlantic Programme, and Project Manager, Transatlantic Security Symposium, Istituto Affari Internazionali, Rome

FIRST SESSION

EU and US Strategic Outlook in the Sahel and the Horn of Africa after the Arab Uprisings

Chair

Emiliano Alessandri, Programme Officer, External Cooperation Section, Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe, Vienna

Paper-givers

Riccardo Alcaro and **Nicoletta Pirozzi**, Senior Fellows,
Transatlantic and Europe Programme, Istituto Affari
Internazionali, Rome

Richard Downie, Deputy Director, Africa Programme,
Center for Strategic and International Studies,
Washington DC

Discussants

Kai Schäfer, Independent Consultant, Rome

Alex Vines, Research Director, Area Studies and
International Law; and Head, Africa Programme,
Chatham House, London

Open debate

SECOND SESSION

Security in the Sahel: Linking the Atlantic to the Mediterranean

Chair

Fernanda Faria, Independent Consultant and
Programme Associate, European Centre for Development
Policy Management, Maastricht

Paper-givers

Mathieu Pellerin, Associate Researcher,
Africa Programme, Institut Français des Relations
Internationales, Paris

Kwesi Aning, Head, Research Department, Kofi Annan
International Peacekeeping Training Center, Accra

Discussants

Luis Simon, Research Professor, European Foreign &
Security Policy, Institute for European Studies, Vrije
University, Brussels

Alexis Arief, Analyst in African Affairs, Congressional Research Service, Washington DC

THIRD SESSION

Security in the Horn of Africa: Linking the Indian Ocean to the Mediterranean

Chair

Christopher Alden, Reader, Department of International Relations, The London School of Economics and Political Science, London

Paper-givers

Marta Martinelli, Senior Policy Analyst, EU External Relations, Open Society Institute, Brussels

Paul-Simon Handy, Head, Conflict Prevention and Risk Analysis Division, Institute for Security Studies, Pretoria

Discussants

Mohammed Abdirizak, Somalia Country Director, National Democratic Institute, Nairobi

Annette Weber, Middle East and Africa, German Institute for International and Security Affairs, Berlin

FINAL REMARKS

Nicoletta Pirozzi, Senior Fellow, Europe Programme, Istituto Affari Internazionali, Rome

Appendix C

LIST OF PARTICIPANTS IN THE TRANSATLANTIC SECURITY SYMPOSIUM 2013

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| Mohammed Abdirizak | Somalia Country Director, National Democratic Institute, Nairobi |
| Riccardo Alcaro | Senior Fellow, Transatlantic Programme, and Project Manager, Transatlantic Security Symposium, Istituto Affari Internazionali (IAI), Rome |
| Christopher Alden | Reader, Department of International Relations, The London School of Economics and Political Science, London |
| Emiliano Alessandri | Programme Officer, External Cooperation Section, Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe, Vienna |
| Kwesi Aning | Head, Research Department, Kofi Annan International Peacekeeping Training Center, Accra |
| Alexis Arieff | Analyst, African Affairs, Congressional Research Service, Washington DC |
| Khaled Alkhurainej | First Secretary, Embassy of Kuwait, Rome |
| Leonardo Baroncelli | Ambassador |
| Gianni Bonvicini | Executive Vice President, Istituto Affari Internazionali (IAI), Rome |

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| Giovanni Brauzzi | Deputy Director General, Directorate-General for Political and Security Affairs, Italy's Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Rome |
| Giampaolo Calchi-Novati | Professor, University of Pavia |
| Claudio Catalano | Research Department, Finmeccanica, Rome |
| Placida Shuvai Chivandire | Deputy Ambassador, Embassy of the Republic of Zimbabwe, Rome |
| Emilio Ciarlo | Head, International Department, Democratic Party, House of Deputies, Rome |
| Giuseppe Cucchi | Scientific Coordinator, Political and International Area, Nomisma, Rome |
| Pier Virgilio Dastoli | President, Italian Council, European Movement |
| Giovanna De Maio | Intern, Istituto Affari Internazionali (IAI), Rome |
| Richard Downie | Deputy Director, Africa Programme, Center for Strategic and International Studies, Washington DC |
| Bora Dushku | British Embassy, Rome |
| Fernanda Faria | Independent Consultant and Programme Associate, European Centre for Development Policy Management, Maastricht |
| Usha Gopie | First Secretary, Political Affairs, Embassy of the Kingdom of the Netherlands, Rome |
| Ettore Greco | Director, Istituto Affari Internazionali (IAI), Rome |

| | |
|-------------------------------|--|
| Alessandro Marrone | Researcher, Security and Defence Programme, Istituto Affari Internazionali (IAI), Rome |
| Marta Martinelli | Senior Policy Analyst, EU External Relations, Open Society Institute, Brussels |
| Raffaello Matarazzo | Researcher, Istituto Affari Internazionali (IAI), and Political Analyst, Eni, Rome |
| Marco Massoni | Roma Tre University, Rome |
| Maurizio Melani | Ambassador, Board Member of the Italian Trade Promotion Agency, former Director General in the Italy's Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Rome |
| Fernando Pallini Oneto | Counsellor, Unit for Analysis, Planning and Historic Diplomatic Documentation, Italy's Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Rome |
| Ferruccio Pastore | Director, FIERI, Turin |
| Mathieu Pellerin | Associate Researcher, Africa Programme, Institut Français des Relations Internationales, Paris |
| Eva Pfoestl | Director, Economic and Juridical Area, Istituto di Studi Politici S. Pio V, Rome |
| Nicoletta Pirozzi | Senior Fellow, Europe Programme, Istituto Affari Internazionali (IAI), Rome |
| Lapo Pistelli | Italy's Vice Minister of Foreign Affairs |
| Lia Quartapelle | Foreign Affairs Committee, House of Deputies, Rome |

| | |
|--------------------------------|--|
| Asser Rasmussen Berling | Councillor, Embassy of Denmark |
| Pierfrancesco Sacco | Head, Unit for Analysis, Planning and Historic Diplomatic Documentation, Italy's Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Rome |
| Kai Schäfer | Independent Consultant, Rome |
| Stefano Silvestri | Scientific Advisor, Istituto Affari Internazionali (IAI), Rome |
| Luis Simon | Research Professor, European Foreign & Security Policy, Institute for European Studies, Vrije University, Brussels |
| Anne Stevnsboe Nielsen | Intern, Political Affairs, Embassy of Denmark, Rome |
| Ernst Stetter | Secretary General, Foundation for European Progressive Studies, Brussels |
| Mehari Taddele Maru | Research Fellow, NATO Defense College, Rome |
| Zemedede Teclé | Ambassador of the State of Eritrea, Rome |
| Hans Timbremont | Councillor, Embassy of Belgium, Rome |
| Lorenzo Vai | Research Fellow, Istituto Affari Internazionali (IAI), Rome |
| Alex Vines | Research Director, Area Studies and International Law, and Head, Africa Programme, Chatham House, London |
| Annette Weber | Middle East and Africa Research Area, German Institute for International and Security Affairs, Berlin |

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