TRANSATLANTIC SECURITY SYMPOSIUM 2013
The Deep Roots of the Mediterranean:
Transatlantic Security from the Sahel to the Horn of Africa
Istituto affari internazionali (IAI)
Rome, 2/XII/2013

a. Agenda
b. List of participants
1. Security Challenges in the Sahel and Horn of Africa after the Arab Uprisings. Strengths and Weakeness of the EU and US Approaches / Riccardo Alcaro and Nicoletta Pirozzi (15 p.)
2. EU and US Strategic Outlook in the Sahel and the Horn of Africa after the Arab Uprisings / Richard Downie (12 p.)
3. Geopolitical Disruptions in the Sahel: An Opportunity for Global Cooperation? / Matthieu Pellerin (10 p.)
4. Security in the Sahel: Linking the Atlantic to the Mediterranean / Kwesi Aning and Lydia Amedzrator (9 p.)
5. Security in the Horn of Africa: Linking the Indian Ocean to the Mediterranean / Marta Martinelli (13 p.)

(a)

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The Deep Roots of the Mediterranean: Transatlantic Security from the Sahel to the Horn of Africa

Rome, 2 December 2013

International Conference Hall
Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs
P.le della Farnesina, 1

AGENDA

With the support of

Compagnia di San Paolo, NATO Public Diplomacy Division and Italy's Ministry of Foreign Affairs

NATO OTAN

Compagnia di San Paolo

Ministero degli Affari Esteri

8:15-8:30	**REGISTRATION OF PARTICIPANTS**
8:30-8:35	**WELCOME ADDRESS**
	Ettore Greco, Director, Istituto Affari Internazionali, Rome
8:35-9:15	**KEYNOTE SPEECH**
	Security in Africa after the Arab Uprisings: Prospects for EU cooperation with Africa's Regional Organizations
Keynote speaker	**Lapo Pistelli**, Italy's Vice Minister of Foreign Affairs
	Q&A
9:15-9:30	**SEMINAR INTRODUCTION**
	Giovanni Brauzzi, Deputy Director General, Directorate-General Political and Security Affairs, Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Rome
	Riccardo Alcaro, Senior Fellow, Transatlantic Programme, and Project Manager, Transatlantic Security Symposium, Istituto Affari Internazionali, Rome
9:30-11:00	**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, Organization 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
11:00-11:30	**COFFEE BREAK**
11:30-13:00	**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 (ECDPM), Maastricht
Paper-givers	**Matthieu Pellerin**, Associate Researcher, Africa Programme, Institut Français des Relationes 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 Arieff, Analyst in African Affairs Congressional Research Service, Washington DC
	Open debate
13:00-14:30	**LUNCH**
14:30-16:00	**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	**Mohadmed Abdirizak**, Somalia Country Director, National Democratic Institute, Nairobi
	Annette Weber, Middle East and Africa, German Institute for International and Security Affairs, Berlin
	Open debate
16:00-16:15	**FINAL REMARKS**
	Nicoletta Pirozzi, Senior Fellow, Europe Programme, Istituto Affari Internazionali, Rome

Working Language will be English

A special thanks to Italy's Ministry of Foreign Affairs for kindly making the conference room available.

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LIST OF PARTICIPANTS

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Christopher Alden	Reader, Department of International Relations, The London School of Economics and Political Science, London
Emiliano Alessandri	Programme Officer, External Cooperation Section, Organization 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
Giovanni Brauzzi	Deputy Director General, Directorate-General Political and Security Affairs, Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Rome
Giampaolo Calchi-Novati	Professor, University of Pavia
Claudio Catalano	Research Department, Finmeccanica
Placida Shuvai Chivandire	Deputy Ambassador, Embassy of the Republic of Zimbabwe, Rome
Emilio Ciarlo	Head, International Department, Democratic Party, House of Deputies
Giuseppe Cucchi	Scientific Coordinator, Political and International Area, Nomisma
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 D.C.
Bora Dushku	British Embassy, Rome
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Raffaello Matarazzo	Researcher, Istituto Affari Internazionali (IAI), and Political Analyst, Eni, Rome
Marco Massoni	Roma Tre University

Maurizio Melani	Ambassador, Board Member of the Italian Trade Promotion Agency, former Director General in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs
Fernando Pallini Oneto	Counsellor , Unit for Analysis, Planning and Historic Diplomatic Documentation, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Rome
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Lapo Pistelli	Italy's Vice Minister of Foreign Affairs
Lia Quartapelle	Foreign Affairs Committee, House of Deputies
Asser Rasmussen Berling	Councellor, Embassy of Denmark
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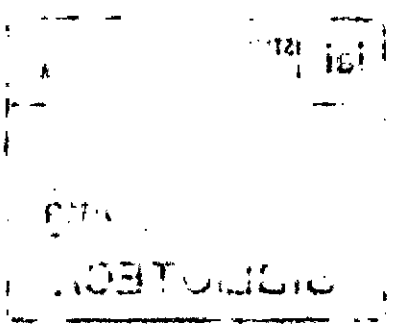
Annette Weber	Middle East and Africa, German Institute for International and Security Affairs, Berlin



Istituto Affari Internazionali

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The Deep Roots of the Mediterranean: Transatlantic Security from the Sahel to the Horn of Africa

ROME, 2 DECEMBER 2013

Security Challenges in the Sahel and Horn of Africa after the Arab Uprisings.

Strengths and Weaknesses of the EU and US approaches

By

Riccardo Alcaro and Nicoletta Pirozzi

Senior Fellows, Transatlantic and Europe Programme, Istituto Affari Internazionali, Rome

Introduction

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 its member states and the United States (US to adjust. As the so-called Arab Spring 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 the EU and the US to new risks.

Critical in spreading and cementing this notion has been the realization 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 operation in Mali attests. 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 United States-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. A closer look at how events in North Africa and especially Libya have changed the strategic outlook of the Sahel and the Horn of Africa is therefore needed in order to analyze the path that the EU and its member states have taken when pursuing their security interests and how the coordination with US interventions could help achieve security objectives in this large, complex and troubled region.

The Arab Spring, the Sahel and 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. Almost 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 mobilization has not materialized outside the Arab world; second, political turmoil in North Africa has triggered a chain reaction that, along an axis linking Libya to Mali, has exacerbated ethnic- and religious-based tensions, particularly in the Sahel but also, albeit to a lesser extent, in the Horn of Africa.

There are several reasons explaining why the Arab Spring, which propagated like fire on straw across Arab countries, has not made significant inroads southwards. It may suffice here to list a number of factors that, in varying combinations depending on the country, have contributed to inhibiting mass political mobilization south of North Africa.

On the positive side, the absence of massive anti-government demonstrations has reflected the trend towards multiparty politics experienced by several states from West to East Africa (*The Economist* 2012).[1] None of these countries is a fully stable democracy – the rule of law and respect

[1] A 2012 assessment by *The Economist* (2012) found that the region features 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 'authoritarian regimes' pack comprised the Gambia, Guinea-Bissau, Burkina Faso, Togo, Chad,

for human rights are wanting at best. Yet, the electoral cycles with which their populations are familiarizing – and the handouts that sometimes accompany them – may have worked as a 'safe 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 generalized social rage (Shinn 2011).

On a more disturbing note, state control of TV and other media, brutal crackdown 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. Unsurprisingly, then, and unlike the 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 materialize.

The Libya-Mali axis: spreading insecurity across the Sahel and beyond

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 twenty and forty years (notoriously the age when people are most susceptible to political radicalization) went back to their country of origin or relocated to other places in search for a living. Estimates about the volume of outflows of people vary, but certainly they were 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 and other countries.

The impact of returnees and migrants flows on the economic and social fabric of Sahelian states has been anything but irrelevant. To varying degrees, these countries suffer all 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, transport infrastructures. Evidently, Sahelian countries are ill-prepared to absorb migrants flows in large numbers, let alone integrate or re-integrate them. On the top of that, the collapse of border checks in Libya, as well as in Tunisia and in part Egypt, has been a godsend for organized crime, which has long established roots in the region, regularly crossed by illicit traffics of any sort: humans, arms, diamonds, drugs. Western Africa, in particular, is used by Latin American

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Sudan, Eritrea and Ethiopia. Mali was included in this latter group due to the military coup occurred there in early 2012, ending a streak of twenty years of democratic life.

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 2013), unsecured weapons storage facilities in Libya have been the source of a significant growth in arms traffics. Large caches of weapons, including rocket-powered grenades (RPG), 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 twenty years old democratic experience, 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 (US), the EU and the UN. 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 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 a UNSC-mandated, African-led mission (AFISMA), rapidly turned the Islamist offensive into a rout. By mid-2013 they had recaptured the lost territories, facilitated an agreement with the MNLA, provoked a split within Ansar Dine between radicals and those willing to sue for peace, and forced Islamists 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). But the Libya-Mali axis has not stopped producing insecurity.

[2] 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*).

The race for Jihad: terrorism in the Sahel in light of the Libya-Mali axis

As has 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 by extremist Islamist groups brought about by 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 North, West and East 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 its activities in the country's north and reduce them in the south (Dowd 2013; Dowd and Raleigh 2013). It is at this point in time that AQIM became increasingly active in Mali, to the extent that in 2013 AQIM's recorded activities there have greatly outmatched those in Algeria, the first time ever that the qaedist group has been more active in another country (Dowd and Raleigh 2013: 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 incentivized Islamist groups to compete with one another to gain in visibility and reputation.

As said above, Mali's rebellion and aftermath saw the active participation by a local Islamist 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 twenty-nine Islamists, at the cost however of the lives of thirty-nine 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 Islamist groups, are generally assumed to be involved in a number of illicit traffics, including drugs, arms and the very lucrative business of kidnapping foreigners, particularly Europeans.[3]

The fragmentation of the Islamist front into a variety of groups, often in competition, certainly hampers a dangerous centralization 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 a single entity or among two or more of them, Islamist groups are relatively close in terms of ideology and tactics. Moreover, in the last years a tendency towards 'internationalization' 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-

[3] The US State Department maintains that Belmokhtar might have raised around fifty million dollars out of the kidnapping business ("A Terror Leader Emerges, Then Vanishes, in the Sahara", *The Wall Street Journal*, 11 February 2013, http://online.wsj.com/news/articles/SB10001424127887323511804578296170934762536).

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 'internationalize' 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 a global jihad and claimed direct affiliation with al-Qaeda.[4] 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.[5] Attesting to this is the increased sophistication of Boko Haram's techniques and potentially also the steep surge in politically violent events attributed to the group since 2010 (Dowd 2013: 4). It should also 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 eight thousand 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 one thousand soldiers) and its successor, the UN-led Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization 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 'terrorist connection': 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 organization. With this, the Horn of Africa eventually enters the picture. The 'terrorist connection' might in fact be the most appropriate analytical framework to consider events in North, West and East Africa from a unitary perspective, since for the most part the Horn's political dynamics seem 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.[6] While indisputable evidence substantiating this claim is lacking, it is a fact that most recently al-Shabaab has shown a tendency towards internationalizing 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.[7] In September 2013 an al-Shabaab commando seized the Westgate shopping mall in Nairobi, Kenya's capital, a tragic event in which over seventy 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 seventy-four 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 might have the edge now. The attack follows a period in which al-Shabaab merged with the Kenya-based al-Hijra and intensified

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

[5] "Africa's Islamist militants 'co-ordinate efforts'", *BBC News*, 26 June 2012, http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-africa-18592789.

[6] "Al-Qaeda, Boko Haram, and al-Shabaab 'merge'", *Hurriyet Daily News*, 27 June 2012, http://www.hurriyetdailynews.com/al-qaeda-boko-haram-and-al-shabaab-merge.aspx?pageID=238&nID=24095&NewsCatID=357.

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

contacts with Tanzanian Islamist groups such as the Ansar Muslim Youth Centre (Gatsiounis 2012).

It is hard to identify the ultimate reasons behind al-Shabaab's 'internationalization turn'. In large part, they must have to do with the severe setbacks suffered by the group in the last few years. Up until 2009-2010 al-Shabaab was in control of most of southern Somalia, could boast around fifteen thousand 'soldiers', and profited from its links with Somali pirates operating off the Horn of Africa (IISS 2011). It 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 organization (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 AU mission 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-Shaabab's legitimacy was the decision in 2011 to refuse access to humanitarian aid workers trying to help 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 organization that uses terrorist tactics to destabilize its enemies. Against this backdrop, seeking alliances outside Somalia is for al-Shabaab's current leadership a means to access to assets pertaining to members of an international network (visibility, advice, training, intelligence, logistical support etc.) and also a way to launch attacks abroad, thereby amplifying the impact of its actions (Downie 2013). In these terms, the growth in jihadist groups and activities in the Sahel partly generated by the spinning Libya-Mali axis of insecurity could benefit al-Shabaab at a critical juncture.

To conclude this brief overview, a main effect of the Arab uprisings, but especially of the civil war and unfinished transition in Libya, has been that of making very difficult, for regional and external players alike, to compartmentalize security challenges emanating from the Sahel and, to a lesser extent, the Horn of Africa. The strategic outlook for an actor such as the EU has thus changed significantly, warranting an adjustment of strategy and policy.

The EU and US approaches to security in the Sahel and the Horn of Africa

Framing African security after the Arab uprisings: continuity and change

The analysis conducted above has drawn a picture of the post-Arab Spring sub-Saharan African predicament that features elements of both continuity and change. The events occurred since 2011 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 laid bare the main deficiencies in their approach. Among these features, the following are worth underlining:

- The security threats that affect both Sahel and Horn of Africa countries are connected with the radicalization of grievances deeply rooted in their societies, fuelled by the increased inflows of arms and militants originating from a North Africa in turmoil. The complexity of the situation on the ground is reflected in nationalist rebellions, weak civilian governments, unprepared and ill-equipped security forces, combined with large-scale humanitarian crises. This requires a *multidimensional approach to crisis*

management that goes beyond the traditional military and law enforcement interventions by elaborating holistic ways 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 that overcome country borders and produce impact at a regional and even global level. This is the case of criminal, terrorist and piracy activities, which have created the so-called 'arc of instability' (UN Security Council 2013) that runs east from Mali and Niger to west in the waters off the Somali coasts. Any strategy for external intervention that is not able to go beyond national boundaries and place and address local factors of destabilization in a *regional framework* is destined to be ineffective.

- A third consideration is linked to the fatigue of regional actors to provide credible 'African solutions to African problems' in the Mediterranean as well as in the Sahel and the Horn of Africa, in stark contrast with the rhetoric of local ownership in crisis management and peace-building. Both the AU and ECOWAS have 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 regional and continental institutions with operational capabilities. A *renewed partnership with African actors* based on deeper engagement but also more realistic expectations is a key factor for effective interventions aimed at lasting security.

- Last but not least, the effectiveness of international actions to manage crises in Africa has been compromised 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 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 materialize without *concerted political interventions* among international partners.

The EU response to African security challenges: from disorientation to collective effort

The security environment produced by the Libyan crisis and the popular uprisings in Southern Mediterranean countries has affected European perceptions and policies towards the African continent in a number of ways. The EU and its member states have thus been compelled to rethink their approach to stability and development in the Mediterranean and sub-Saharan regions. However, this change of pace has been determined not only by the evolution of the security situation on the ground. It is also the result of internal restructuring followed to the adoption of the Lisbon Treaty, with an enhanced role attributed to the High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy (HR) and the creation of an EU diplomatic service, and the evolving priorities of European capitals *vis-à-vis* their 'Big Neighbour' in the south, Africa, marked by a new French unilateral push, increased isolationism by the United Kingdom (UK), and crawling disengagement by Germany.

The EU has initially failed to articulate a credible response not only to the Arab upheavals and the Libyan crisis, but also to their implications further south. It has thus relegated itself in a back seat with respect to its own member states (especially France and the UK), the US and NATO (Jolyon Howorth 2011: 318-321). From the Horn of Africa to the Sahel, the pressure exercised by some member states, most notably France, to resort to EU military capabilities has been steadily opposed by the majority of European countries. Political motivations, including scarce public support for military interventions grounded on moral considerations or justified by the

need to save resources in a time of decreasing financial resources, have contributed to the EU's difficulties.

Following the initial phase of disorientation and lack of cohesiveness, however, the EU has made an effort to regain its role as regional security actor and overcome the operational standstill that has beset its Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP) for almost three years. The Union has recently launched three new civilian missions (EUCAP SAHEL in Niger, EUCAP Nestor in the Horn of Africa and EUAVSEC in South Sudan) and two military operations (EUTM Mali and EUBAM Libya) to improve security and good governance from West to East Africa. However, both the tasks and the geographical scope of these CSDP missions are evidently too limited to face the challenges at hand. Even if the EU has correctly identified the main determinants of success and failure for its interventions in the planning phase, the arrangements reached between EU institutions and member states on policy instruments is far from ideal.

In the case of the Sahel, in the aftermath of the coup d'état in Mali in March 2012, the Foreign Affairs Council 'underlined its determination to support Sahel countries, in partnership with regional organisations and other international partners, in their efforts to fight against the interlinked challenges of poverty, terrorism, violent extremism and organised crime and to address spill-over effects of the recent crisis in Libya' (Council of the European Union 2012: 1).

While the French insistence on the deployment of a military mission to Mali encountered the widespread opposition of a number of countries, especially from Germany at the forefront, the EU was eventually able to reach an agreement on the deployment of EUCAP SAHEL Niger. The scope of the mandate and the strength of the mission have undeniably suffered from these political divergences between member states. The end state defined by the EU for EUCAP SAHEL Niger is the establishment of a Nigerien effective security and judicial system, able to fight off terrorism and organized crime. This is an incredible challenging task for a civilian CSDP mission that counted just forty-four experts in early 2013. An EU training mission in Mali (EUTM Mali) was eventually deployed only in March 2013, due to the military advance of Islamist insurgents in northern Mali and the subsequent air and land operation launched by France in January 2013. Comprising about 550 military trainers, it is intended to help improve the military capabilities of the Malian Armed Forces. The limited scale and piecemeal approach of both EUCAP SAHEL Niger and EUTM Mali generate concerns about their capability to produce any significant impact on the security situation in either Mali or Niger.

The EU comprehensive approach and regional strategies in the Sahel and the Horn of Africa

The EU has tried to partially mitigate its inability to devise policy responses that adequately tackle challenges in sub-Saharan Africa by connecting CSDP missions and other relevant instruments in the framework of comprehensive approaches and regional strategies. This can be considered as one of the main evolutions of the EU's approach to security in Africa after the entry into force of the Lisbon Treaty. In the Horn, the cocktail of threats ranging from piracy to 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 mission deployed by the EU is EUCAP Nestor, tasked with contributing to the development of regional maritime capacity-building in the region. The operation is also meant to strengthen the EU's comprehensive approach to fighting piracy and instability in the region (Council of the European Union 2012: 1-2). This approach to counter-piracy is based on the combination of military and legal action with political and diplomatic efforts, as well as development assistance and international coordination.

Simultaneously, the other two CSDP missions currently deployed in the region – the naval EUNAVFOR Atalanta mission and the EU Training Mission in Somalia (EUTM Somalia) – were reviewed to enhance complementarily between each other and with EUCAP Nestor when the

latter was launched. One of the objectives of the EU planners was to ensure coordination between the CSDP missions and the three large projects run by the European Commission: the Regional Maritime Security Programme (MASE) (a forty-odd million euros project) that aims to contribute to tackling the root causes of piracy in Somalia, enhancing judicial capabilities to handle piracy suspects, addressing economic impact and financial flows related to piracy and improving regional capacities for maritime security functions; the Pilot project on Piracy, Maritime Awareness and Risks (a one million euros project) that explores the potential use of tools such as satellite technologies to develop an approach to obtain real-time maritime situational awareness; and the Critical Maritime Routes Programme (MARSIC) (a six million euros project) that supports maritime security and safety in the Western Indian Ocean by enhancing information-sharing and training capacities. The logic behind this review exercise was to consider the mission as a means to create the right conditions for the European Commission's instruments to operate through a post-operation support mechanism. In the implementation of the EU's comprehensive action on the ground, a special coordination role has been assigned to the EU Special Representative (EUSR) for the Horn of Africa, which was appointed by the HR in December 2011 with a view to contributing to regional and international efforts to achieve lasting peace, security and development in the region (Council of the European Union 2011).

The effective combination of all these instruments should be ensured by the Strategic Framework for the Horn of Africa, which was approved by the Council of the European Union 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 2011: 6-8). It identifies then 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 (Council of the European Union 2011: 10-11). For the future, the Strategy indicates that the EU's response should support regional ownership and mutual responsibility, as well as regional cooperation efforts to guarantee peace, stability and development (Council of the European Union 2011: 13).

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 to identify 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 conducted by the EU in the region.

A similar regional approach has been adopted through the EU Strategy for Security and Development in the Sahel (the Sahel Strategy), which acknowledges the negative impact that the region's instability exerts not only on the development of local populations, but also on the security of European citizens, including of course the threat posed by AQIM and its affiliates. 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' (Council of the European Union 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 (Council of the European Union 2011: 7-8). Some observers have pointed out that the Sahel Strategy seems to disproportionately emphasize development instruments to the detriment of security responses through CSDP action(Oladiran Bello 2012: 2). Another charge levied against the EU's approach is its allegedly poor understanding of the geopolitics of the region, which fails to take 'the complex interactions among interlinked conflict systems' into account (ibidem: 2). The Sahel Strategy selects just three core countries – Mali, Mauritania and Niger – as the EU'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.

Reinforcing EU-Africa partnership beyond the Brussels-Addis Ababa axis

The support to AU structures and capabilities in the field of peace and security is one of the key priorities of the EU's approach to African stability. However, the EU has shown a tendency to institutionalize dialogue and crystallize practices of cooperation along the well-established Brussels-Addis Ababa axis, while efforts to engage with other crucial actors remain to some extent limited. In particular, the role of sub-regional organizations – including Regional Economic Communities and Regional Mechanisms (REC/RMs) – in conflict prevention, management and resolution is mostly overlooked. The comparative advantages of REC/RMs in terms of cultural understanding, geographical closeness and personal links in conflict-affected areas are underestimated. In addition, the legitimate and vital interest of REC/RMs in being at the forefront of peace and security initiatives is not adequately taken into account and effectively included in the crisis management cycle, from conflict prevention to post-conflict reconciliation (Kai Schäfer 2012: 24-25).

The EU has established privileged relations with ECOWAS, one of the most developed African sub-regional organizations in the field of peace and security – building on a twenty-year experience in conflict prevention, management and resolution. In some cases, ECOWAS has proved readier to react to emergencies than the AU on regional crises. For example, ECOWAS was the first to condemn the coups d'état in Niger in 2010 and Mali in March 2012, while the AU was more timid. The crisis in Mali, in particular, has shown that ECOWAS can rely on the political will of its member states to intervene in the region, as attested to by the organization's offer to deploy a 3,300 strong military mission to face the Islamist threat in the north of the country. However, it must be recognized that ECOWAS suffers 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 makes it heavily dependent on external support.

The EU supports ECOWAS in a number of ways, including through the African Peace Facility in the framework of the EU-Africa Partnership on Pace and Security and through the Regional Indicative Programme, that allocates 120 million euros for political integration, including peace and security activities. Nevertheless, the EU has not been able to ensure an increased involvement of ECOWAS so as to bring about an effective intervention, as demonstrated by the belated support offered by the EU to AFISMA in Mali and the lack of coordination between enforcement actions carried out in the framework of ECOWAS with EU operations.

US strategies towards African security: moving beyond the war on terror

The US has traditionally attributed marginal importance to Africa in their security policy. Until the terrorist attack to two US embassies in East Africa in 1998 and the retaliatory strike against a pharmaceutical factory in Sudan suspected to be linked to al-Qaeda, which are considered the turning point in the US policy towards the region, US military involvement in the 1990s had basically been limited to the disastrous deployment of US forces to Somalia (Lauren Ploch 2010).

It was only during the George W. Bush administration that US attention for African security received a boost. 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. The focus on the continent continued to expand, at least at the declaratory level, under the Barack Obama administration, which initially claimed to be more willing to promote good governance and

peace, especially in Somalia, Darfur, Zimbabwe and the Democratic Republic of the Congo (Obama 2009).

Countering terrorism, weapons proliferation and crime is still the main security priority for the US in sub-Saharan Africa, even if the strategic thinking about the objectives of US policies 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) to consultative cooperation (Obama 2010).

In line with this general orientation, the US has devoted significant resources to building capacities of African partners. In the Horn of Africa, the US 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 US has a permanent military base and support local agencies through training maritime officers, providing patrol boats and equipment. In addition to national support programmes, the US also organizes an annual regional naval partnership exercise (named Cutlass Express) involving Djibouti, Kenya, Mauritius and Seychelles. Moreover, the US leads the Combined Maritime Forces, an international naval partnership established in 2002 to provide security to civilian maritime traffic in the Middle East, Africa and South Asia. In the Sahel, the United States play 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.

Overall, the US security approach tends to 'show a continued lack of understanding of the complex dynamics that make up African political and cultural environment' (Claire Metelitis 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 were 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 EU and its member states, as well as to African actors, while the US continue to 'lead from behind' and support partners with military equipments, strategic airlift and intelligence capabilities from Libya to Somalia and Sudan.

Conclusions: 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 EU 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 organizations like ECOWAS.

US policies in sub-Saharan Africa are certainly not incompatible with the range of actions carried out by the EU. 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. Improved coordination should be pursued in light of recent changes in the US strategic outlook for African security, which seems

to be evolving, slowly but surely, in a way which is more consistent to the EU's holistic approach. This however has not been sufficient to produce a drive towards greater and more regular cooperation. The US lingering focus on the challenge of Islam-rooted terrorism may chime with the strategic outlook of certain EU member states, France in particular, 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. 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 terrorism's spread and other security challenges in sub-Saharan Africa. A comprehensive approach is needed, based on the support to African actors with the aim to restore state accountability, empower regional structures and build or rebuild good governance. The EU and the US have different comparative advantages that could be potentially combined to achieve these objectives and create an 'arc of shared responsibility' from the Sahel to the Horn.

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The Deep Roots of the Mediterranean: Transatlantic Security from the Sahel to the Horn of Africa

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

by

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Introduction: the strategic outlook

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 organized 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 others[1]. 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 phase of their 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, organized crime, political instability, and illegal migration. For the EU, 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

[1] For more explanation of the concept of the Regional Security Complex, see Barry Buzan and Ole Waever (2003), *Regions and Powers: The Structure of International Security*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

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. On a broader level, crime, terrorism, and conflict in the region undermine the policy objectives of both the EU and the US to promote good governance, democratization, 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 US and EU define and prioritize their respective interests?

The first observation to make is that the US and the EU give differing levels of attention to these regions. The EU 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. 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 EU 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 2010[2], while a strategic framework for the Horn of Africa was adopted by the EU Council in 2011.[3]

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 to the region and the commitment of an additional five billion euros of development assistance in November 2013.[4] 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 EU 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 EU to take a stronger lead in the Sahel, without much success.[5] According to Roland Marchal, France is often suspected of acting alone in the Sahel and then asking the EU to foot the bill.[6] While the EU, 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 EU—has not laid out in a single document a strategy for either region. Historically, the US 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

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[2] European Union External Action Service (2010), Strategy for Security and Development in the Sahel http://www.eeas.europa.eu/africa/docs/sahel_strategy_en.pdf

[3] Council of the European Union (2011), *Council Conclusions on the Horn of Africa,* 14 November 2011 http://www.consilium.europa.eu/uedocs/cms_data/docs/pressdata/EN/foraff/126052.pdf

[4] European Commission press release (2013), *EU reinforces its support for the Sahel in the years to come* (IP/13/1013), 4 November, 2013 http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_IP-13-1013_en.htm

[5] Roland Marchal (2013), "Military (Mis)Adventures in Mali", in *African Affairs* 1-12, May 30, p. 1-12 http://afraf.oxfordjournals.org/content/early/2013/05/29/afraf.adt038.full.pdf+html

[6] Ibid p. 6

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 100 million dollar in 2012 puts these grand ambitions into perspective.[7] While there were signs in 2013 that the level of activity has been stepped up—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 US has been more engaged over a longer period of time in the Horn, although largely on a bilateral level. It has not 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.

While the level of engagement may vary, the EU and the US share many overlapping interests in the Sahel and the Horn of Africa. Both are concerned by insecurity and the potential impact of terrorism, organized crime, and armed conflict on their nationals residing in the region. For the EU, 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 EU and US 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 US 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 US 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 EU is concerned about terrorism for the same reasons as the United States. The UK 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 EU and the US 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

[7] The FY12 budget for TSCTP included $52 million of State Department/USAID funding and $46 million allocated to Operation Juniper Shield, according to Alexis Arieff (2013), *Crisis in Mali*, Congressional Research Service, January 14, p.16 http://www.fas.org/sgp/crs/row/R42664.pdf A small amount of additional funding came from Department of Defense 1206 authorities, which allow the Secretary of Defense to allocate money to train and equip foreign military forces for counterterrorism and stability operations.

humanitarian assistance, supporting economic development and improving governance. Both the EU and US 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.'[8]

A particular concern for the EU 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 350 Eritreans and Somalis whose overcrowded boat sunk off the coast of the Italian island of Lampedusa in October 2013 raised the stakes for the EU to pursue policy solutions that get to the heart of the development challenge in the region.

Policy responses

To a large degree, the US and EU 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 organizations, including the African Union (AU) and the Regional Economic Communities (RECs), to respond to and prevent crises.

Both the EU and the US 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 EU and the US 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 US, 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

[8] The White House (2012), *U.S. Strategy Toward Sub-Saharan Africa*, p.i http://www.whitehouse.gov/sites/default/files/docs/africa_strategy_2.pdf

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 EU 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.[9] One area where the EU has a comparative advantage over the US 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 organized crime, offer limited prospects of success due to their tiny budget and miniscule staffing levels.[10] One area where the EU and US have successfully worked together on security assistance is in 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 US 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 US 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 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 US of potentially useful intelligence from captured suspects, and are generally viewed extremely negatively in the region.

The EU is even more reluctant than the US 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

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

[10] European External Action Service Common Security and Defence Policy, *The EUCAP SAHEL Niger Civilian Mission* http://www.eeas.europa.eu/csdp/missions-and-operations/eucap-sahel-niger/pdf/02052013_factsheet_eucap-sahel-niger_en.pdf

application in the real world that the option of despatching the battle group seems to have been discounted without any real consideration.'[11] As in previous episodes, the EU 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 EU'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 combined with 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.[12]

The twin prerogatives of pursuing long-term development objectives and meeting crises with short-term, 'quick fixes' is not confined to the security sector. The EU and US 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 EU *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 more than a quarter of a million people.

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 organizations 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 AU 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 organization and sounding the alarm to the international community on the threat posed by Islamist groups in the north. 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 organizations find themselves pulled along by EU and US policies. While the EU and US have made a strategic investment in supporting the AU and the RECs, particularly in their efforts to establish an African Standby Force (ASF) to respond to crisis and conflict across the continent, progress to date have 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 AU.

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[11] Olivier de France and Nick Witney (2013), *Europe's Strategic Cacophony*, European Council on Foreign Relations policy brief, April 2013, p.1 http://ecfr.eu/page/-/ECFR77_SECURITY_BRIEF_AW.pdf

[12] EU NAVFOR (2012), "EU Naval Forces Deliver Blow Against Somali Pirates on Shoreline",15 May, 2012 http://eunavfor.eu/eu-naval-force-delivers-blow-against-somali-pirates-on-shoreline/

An additional constraint on effective partnership with Africa's regional organizations is that the RECs do not offer the best framework for dealing with some 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 organization. The other relevant regional organization, the Community of Sahel-Saharan States (CEN-SAD) is utterly ineffective.

For all these reasons, the US 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 US is sometimes guilty of viewing problems through the eyes of self-interested allies. The close relationship between the US and Ethiopia 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 US 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 US gave tacit support to Ethiopia's ill-judged invasion of Somalia in 2006, which created the conditions for al-Shabaab's rise to power. On other occasions, the US has taken a tougher line against less valuable partners, leading to accusations of double-standards. The US 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 welcome, 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 US and the EU, 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 to the UN Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali (MINUSMA), the first time that the PLA has been called upon to take part in a UN mission.[13] 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.[14] For the EU, there is the specific challenge of coordinating and aligning the interests and activities of individual member states—such as France in Mali and the UK 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.[15]

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[13] People's Daily Online (2013), "First Chinese Peacekeeping Taskforce to Mali is Ready", 18 October, 2013 http://english.peopledaily.com.cn/90786/8429064.html

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

[15] Reuters (2013), "France Denies Paying Ransom as Sahel Hostage Return", 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 organized 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 organized 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.[16] 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.[17]
- *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 standard 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

[16] U.S. Government Accountability Office (2008), *Combating Terrorism: Actions Needed to Enhance Implementation of Trans-Saharan Counterterrorism Partnership*, July 31, 2008 http://www.gao.gov/products/GAO-08-860

[17] Keynote address by Linda Thomas-Greenfield, Assistant Secretary, U.S. Department of State Bureau of African Affairs (2013), Eighth Annual Trans-Saharan Counterterrorism Partnership Conference, National Defense University, Washington, DC, 30 October 2013, http://iipdigital.usembassy.gov/st/english/texttrans/2013/10/20131030285479.html#axzz2kMBjqx61

way to go; while U.S. 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 organized crime will remain threats to stability across the region until states improve their ability to arrest and prosecute wrongdoers. Donors such as the EU and US should make it a strategic priority to assist them.
- *Burden sharing between partners.* Budget realities in the EU and the US 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 organizations like the AU 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 frequented 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 organizations 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 EU and US 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 BRIC (Russia, India and Brazil) nations, 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 US and EU; 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 EU or US. An estimated two million Somalis live outside their country and up to half a million Ethiopians.[18] These groups

[18] Paul D. Williams (2011), *Horn of Africa: Webs of Conflict and Pathways to Peace,* Woodrow Wilson Center, October 2011, p.33 http://www.wilsoncenter.org/sites/default/files/Horn%20of%20Africa%20Conflict%20Mapping%20Doc-%20FINAL.pdf

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.

- *Diplomatic efforts to tackle neglected conflicts.* Some of the regions' conflicts have a broader impact on security in the whole region. This is particularly true of the conflict between Ethiopia and Eritrea, which continues to be waged through proxies elsewhere in the region. Eritrea's determination to play the role of regional spoiler stems from its resentment over the international community's failure to hold Ethiopia to the terms of the Algiers Agreement that ended their war in 2000. Festering conflicts such as the one between Ethiopia and Eritrea, and internal conflicts in the likes of Ethiopia and Sudan, deserve more diplomatic attention from the likes of the EU and AU but should be guided by the principle of 'do no harm.' Foreign interference plays out very badly, particularly in the Horn, and should be carefully synchronized with locally-led peacebuilding efforts.

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The Deep Roots of the Mediterranean: Transatlantic Security from the Sahel to the Horn of Africa

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

by

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Introduction

This article takes a political perspective of the Sahel, necessarily 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, 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 the source of major geopolitical changes in the Sahel. In particular, the fall of Libya's longstanding ruler Muammar Qaddafi, which has undeniably been a tectonic shock (Pellerin 2012). Qaddafi ensured a form of regulation of the sub-region's geopolitical orders. Hence, his death has accelerated critical dynamics also outside Libya, including in Mali. The disintegration of the Libyan state has opened the territory to a broad spectrum of threats that are discussed below.

The Tuareg rebellion in Mali remains a largely endogenous phenomenon, but its activation was undoubtedly helped by the return of Tuareg Libyan fighters and especially a Malian Tuareg, Ibrahim Ag Bahanga, whose pacifism held only through the interested generosity of Qaddafi. Today, the Malian and Libyan dynamics feed off each other. Southern Libya is a safe haven for civilians who have fled the war in northern Mali, an area of opportunity for mercenaries who came to make denser the Tuareg *thuwar* in southern Libya and a temporary fallback zone, or possibly a more sustainable area of reorganization for terrorist groups.

The Arab Spring has also led to a reawakening of religious and cultural identities, mothballed under the Tunisian, Libyan or Malian autocratic regimes. One can observe the defence of plural identity interests in Libya (Tubu, Berber), but it is mostly religious identities that have emerged since 2011. Assisted 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 so significant that Muslim Brotherhood parties have won the elections in Egypt and Tunisia. In post-revolution Libya, the Muslim Brotherhood, supported also by Salafist groups, has been nibbling away at national institutions (including the General National Congress). Such groups have seen their political influence grow thanks to increased preaching. Salafist militant groups have also been founded, under the nameof 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 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 in the Sinai.

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

Until 2011, northern Mali was undoubtedly 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. There are currently three simultaneous 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. Malian subsidiary provided by Ansar Dine is partly dissipated and groups set again their action in international (or regional) Jihad. In parallel, the Sinai emerged as a second hub, carrying a somewhat anarchic Jihad. While Sinaoi groups are currently undergoing a process of re-organization, at this point they are very little correlated to Sahelian problems. Sinai Jihad is both regional (attacks against Israel) and strictly national (Jihad in support for the Egyptian Muslim Brotherhood). Finally, Libya is an essential link between these two centres under two respects : a) relations between the Sahelian-Saharan jihadist groups (AQIM, MOJWA, Al Mourabitoun) and Libyan jihadist cells (in the Fezzan, the Cyrenaica and in the Djebel Nefousa); b) 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 characterized by a nationalist commitment although their ambitions may be more comprehensive, as the constitution of Ansaru, a Boko Haram splinter group, might suggest. Boko Haram also remains a very poorly organized and syncretic movement that differs somewhat within the jihadist galaxy. In spite of their predominantly national dimension, these groups have close connections with foreign jihadist groups. Boko Haram sent fighters in 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 of national authorities, 2013 has seen an uncoordinated but parallel counter-reaction by both national and foreign actors. In Mali, Ansar Dine and MOJWA's advancement 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, the military has forcibly removed the Muslim Brotherhood from power and retake the reins 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. Disturbed in their respective strongholds, these groups are required to travel for obvious 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 greater recruitment by Islamist groups.

The spread of organized crime

The roots of organized 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 drug trafficking industry, organized 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 Lampedusa's coast in which hundreds of people have died) have highlighted the seriousness of the problem. Already crucial at the time of Qaddafi, who regulated migration flows according to political expediency, organized 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 prevent departures from Agadez.

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[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 2013.

[3] Interview by the author 2013.

Moreover, after the fall of Qaddafi, the opening of its military arsenal and its takeover by militias (Misrata, Zintan in particular) has quickly turned Libya into an open market for arms heading to the 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 among civilians (Pellerin 2012).

Drug trafficking is certainly a main problem for the coming years. Appeared in the 1990s, the drug trade grew to represent a profit in the Sahel of nine hundred million dollar in 2009 (UNODC, 2010). 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 sectors, for instance in Morocco). It creates further insecurity because it is the source of armed clashes (rarely involving civilians).

Most importantly, drug trafficking weakens state institutions, in the sense that it feeds the corruption of security forces and political elites, to the extent that officials at the highest level in Mauritania, Guinea, Togo, Niger or Egypt have been involved in it. This level of implication varies depending on two parameters, the hierarchy and the degree of involvement. Depending on the position in the state hierarchy of the official involve in the illicit traffic, drug traffickers alternatively benefit from passive complicity of custom officials to actually controlling, thanks to their political connection, security forces theoretically in charge of prosecuting them. The degree of involvement is 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 resulting in a gradual erosion of sovereign institutions (as in Guinea Bissau) or a coup (as in Mali). Collusion between organized crime and state officials (some of whom had gotten very rich very quickly, feeding rivalries and infighting) was a critical factor behind the government's inability to tackle the rebel Tuareg-Islamist coalition in the south, inability which eventually led to the coup that ousted President Touré from power.

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 first one is built uniformly nationwide, while the second is in its infancy, resulting more often than not from the sum of the national policies of EU member states. This latter 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 a European 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 traffics. Terrorism is the third common 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 2012). 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 UK'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 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 to defend French (and European) interests, as eloquently shown by its prompt intervention in Mali. The prevalence of national priorities is observed through the nationality of EU officials in the EU. Those in charge of Libya are mainly British and 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 the French 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 organizational terms, the beginnings of the European Union diplomacy are marked by a partitioning of the institutions, notably between the European Commission and the EEAS.

Widely shared objectives

A comparative analysis of US and European strategies requires first to recall that the Sahel is not built on the same level of importance to the EU and the United States. Secondary zone for the United States, the Sahel is erected as a priority by the European Union. The American zone of primary interest remains the Horn of Africa, a trend likely to increase with the amenities of the camp Lemmonier in Djibouti and works of the Entebebe airport in Uganda.

The European Union, through the Sahel Strategy adopted in March 2011, had valued the importance of development presented as inherently linked to security. A different perspective from that of the United States primarily focused on the fight against terrorism through the TSCTP (Trans-Sahara Counterterrorism Partnership) adopted in 2007 as a continuation of PSI (Pan-Sahel Initiative in 2002) and TSCTI (Trans-Sahara Counterterrorism Initiative in 2005) in the aftermath of September 11, 2001, the high point being the creation of AFRICOM (United States Africa Command) in 2007. However, despite these differences in approach, the objectives are very widely shared as shown in the table. The tropism, whether it be development (EU) or security (United States), prove in fact to be inseparable.

	European Union (Sahel Strategy)	**United States (TSCTP)**
Democratic Governance	Strengthening resilience against rebellion, terrorism and organized crime.	Promoting democratic governance.
Regional Coordination	Supporting regional political coordination.	Strengthening regional counterterrorism capabilities.

	Supporting regional organization capabilities.	Enhancing and institutionalizing cooperation among the region's security forces.
Supporting national security capabilities.	Enhancing operational and strategic capacities in the wider security, law enforcement and judicial sectors.	Assistance to security forces, law enforcement programming.
Preventing radicalization	Preventing violent extremism and radicalization	Countering violent extremism programming

If the objectives are common, the means used by the Americans and Europeans differ materially. The European defence remaining largely embryonic in favor of national defence policies of European states, the military aspect of the action of the European Union is largely deficient, and the emphasis is on development. € 663 million are dedicated to the entire Strategy including 500 to Governance issues and 135 to Security / Rule of law. This focus on development is also explained by the context of the adoption of the Plan, before the fall of the Libyan regime and the chain reaction in the Saharan band, including the Malian crisis. Since then, efforts have been rebalanced with the launch of EUCAP Niger, for the formation of internal security forces, called to be replicated in Mali and Mauritania, and the EUTM project that demonstrates Europe's ability to also meet military challenges in post-conflict phase. Conversely, if the U.S. strategy is to be "integrated" on paper, where military assistance is accompanied by support for democratic institutions, civil society, development and economic growth the lack of resources of the State Department limits this ambition (Kandel, 2013). Most of the U.S. action focuses on training and capability building of the army and local security forces.

The Serval operation: a turning point

The Serval operation is unquestionably a turning point in the approach to global security in the Sahel. Many observers (Kepel, 2013) have noted the lack of support (other than by a speech) given to France in the war effort in Mali, at European level as at U.S. level. However, the Americans have provided significant logistical support (transport, information) that is a form of division of labor in terms of natural distribution areas of influence between France and the U.S. At a closed-door conference held at the DAS in France two months before the intervention, the Under-Secretary of State for African Affairs Johnnie Carson recalled that Mali was only ranked 9th for countries or concern for the Unites States. However, the Americans play a complementary support to the French commitment.

In terms of military engagement, the French intervention in Mali came to question the U.S. strategy of ", footprint" in Africa, already well underway by the U.S. drone strikes in Somalia in 2012 (Kandel 2013), and has undoubtedly helped to more easily open the way for Americans, who in addition to their presence in Mali, were heavily deployed in Niger (Niamey, Arlit, and Agadez). On the French side, this intervention has transgressed a postcolonial complex under which it was appropriate not to intervene directly on the ground.

However, the trend remains the strengthening of transatlantic partnerships with regional security centres, including Niger, Chad and Mauritania, for the simple reason that the American and European means of projection are tendentiously in a reduction phase and the U.S. army is already engaged on other fronts. On the American side, changing the name of TSCTI to TSCTP (from "initiative" to "partnership") in 2007 illustrates the desire to regionalize the U.S. approach. It is the same with Europeans, who ardently support the capacity (equipment and training) of states and regional organizations. 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 the "shopping list" as recently seen with the creation of the Sahel Security College.

In geopolitical terms, since 2011, the ongoing abolition of frontiers of the Sahel-Maghreb Jihad, already mentioned in the first part of this article, is a factor of rapprochement between Europeans and Americans. If AQIM was primarily a matter of concern for Europe, and especially France, due to the focus of the Algerian terrorist organization on France and French interests, proven connections between AQIM on one hand, and Ansar Al Sharia, Boko Haram and to a lesser extent Al Shabaab and AQAP on the other hand are a concern for Americans. Moreover, the bombing of In Amenas is a reminder that the oil facilities in southern Algeria (thus including U.S. facilities) were not immune to the threat of terrorism. Southern Libya seems to be in the process of forming a jihadist hub to Cyrenaica, Niger, Chad, and southern Algeria (Interview, 2013), which justifies an increased American presence in Niger for a rapid response and intelligence. Southern Libya could become the meeting point between the natural areas of European (British and French in particular) and American concerns.

What convergence between international and regional actors?

The security of the Sahel by sahelian States : a mission largely fragmented

African sub-regional organizations still suffer from excessive compartmentalization and rivalries linked to membership of each other's organizations. At the West Africa and the Sahel levels, ECOWAS (Economic Community Of West African States), whose role played in the Malian crisis with the MISMA (later transformed for many States into the MINUSMA) must be acknowledged, is fully supported by its international partners. It has the regulatory framework and strategic plans tailored to address key threats in the sub-region, and also it developed an early warning system (ECOWARN) to improve responsiveness. ECOWAS also adopted common positions on immigration, organized crime and drug trafficking. In the same trend, it should be noted the useful creation by the African Union of a rapid reaction force, named CARIC (African Capacity for Immediate Response to Crises), which is supposed to offer to the organization the possibility to assume its own security without any western support. This is supposed to be only an interim measure before the full operationalisation of the African Standby Force (ASF), and its Rapid Deployment Capability (RDC).

The sub-regional organization has been plagued by leadership wrangles, the mediation of Burkina Faso has been widely challenged by the States of the sub-region. In addition, certain framework-nations of the region do not belong to ECOWAS. Mauritania has tried to minimize the initiatives of the organization of West Africa by promoting the African Union and the CEMOC (Joint Operational Staff Committee), largely under Algerian influence. On the other side, Mali has been very reluctant to a Mauritanian deployment in the framework of the MINUSMA. Concerning Chad, a non-ECOWAS member, Idriss Deby had many times conditioning the deployment of his country on the inclusion of this intervention in the framework of NATO (North Atlantic Treaty Organization) rather than ECOWAS.

Algeria has also challenged the rule of ECOWAS in the Malian case, on behalf of the natural leadership that the country has always had since 1963 on this issue. Algeria has initiated the Tamanrasset Agreements (1991), the National Pact (1992) and Algiers Agreements (2006) and is involved in terms of counter-terrorism by creating in 2010 the group of "Countries of the Field" (Algeria, Mauritania, Mali and Niger), supposedly the main actors involved in the situation in the Sahel, by establishing the CEMOC in Tamanrasset in 2010 and the Fusion and Liaison Unit (UFL), a cell grouping information based in Algiers. These two structures remain under close domination of Algeria, which significantly distorts the framework of regional cooperation.

Maghreb states cooperation largely weakened by the relative scope of the Barcelona Process and the UFM (Union for the Mediterranean) could be strengthened in the wake of the "Arab Spring" but it has not happened. The frameworks for regional cooperation in the Maghreb are

still very limited, both because of the paralysis of Tunisian, Libyan and Egyptian diplomacies and the Algerian-Moroccan rivalry crystallized for decades around the question of Western Sahara.

A Western involvement globally accepted, but with limits

To anticipate a closer cooperation between international and regional actors, it is important to analysis the regional actors' perception of this Western involvement. Most regional actors rather positively welcome this one for various reasons. Some states do not have specific ways to curb security threats that can even challenge national sovereignty, like in Mali and in Libya. The former Malian President of transition Diouncounda Traore had asked France to intervene and the reaction to the French intervention was overwhelmingly positive. Now, the Libyan Prime Minister Ali Zeidan is seeking strong support from the international community to rise to security challenges.

For states that are not in such an advanced stage of disintegration, the relationship with international powers is slightly more ambiguous. On the one hand, states such as Mauritania and Niger willingly seek the support of the international community, which has resulted in several hundred million USD of logistical support, training and even in budget allocation, at the same time that a Western support acts as a "security umbrella ". On the other hand, these states should nationally not appear subservient to international partners, notably not alienating the population, often much more reluctant to the Western presence. In Mauritania, for example, the impregnation of Salafist groups pressured Mauritanian authorities into having counterterrorism ambitions (Tisseron, Pigne, 2012). One should recall that in January 2013, a Mauritanian preacher issued a fatwa against France because of its involvement in northern Mali. Regarding the case of Niger, the government welcomed French Special Forces in Arlit with great reserve. On the one hand, the state took the risk in the eyes of neighboring communities to be on Areva's side while local news constantly reminds its unpopularity. On the other hand, the authorities of Niger have to resist pressure from those bothered by the Western military presence, starting with traffickers and especially drug traffickers who have strong connections at a high-level of the state apparatus. Finally, the authorities have feared that the French military presence hides a desire to get closer to Tuareg populations, historically close from French intelligence services, even more four years after the end of the rebellion in Niger and with another one by this same community in progress in Mali. However, some states in the region with clear regional ambitions disapprove this Western intrusion, particularly the French one, in what they consider a stronghold. This is especially the case of Algeria.

In addition, the commitment of States in the region in the fight against terrorism is an additional source of vulnerability because they would face retaliation from terrorist groups. The anti-terror commitment of Mauritania resulted in the AQIM attacks in return. The Nigerian commitment to Mali in the MINUSMA was presented by MUJAO as the main reason for the Agadez attack in May 2013. It is the same for Chad frequently targeted in AQIM and MUJAO messages, and whose army was targeted in the attack of Tessalit in October.

Keeping in mind thess limits, two subjects could pave the way to a closer cooperation between all of these actors : border control and drug trafficking.

Border control as the highest priority

The Arab Spring and the Libyan crisis suddenly recalled that the boundaries of the region were extremely porous and in the absence of a strong state control, this porosity embodied a huge threat to the security of the region. We have already mentioned the implications for arms trafficking. Throughout the year 2012 this porosity also largely fueled circuits of drug trafficking and still do despite the Serval operation. Corridors of drug trafficking and movement of terrorists groups have rapidly emerged: Kidal-Oubari's corridor (primarily through the pass of Salvador in Niger), or Gao-Agadez' corridor through Tassara. Other areas, mainly in Libya and Mali became

"gray areas" generating a threat to neighboring borders: Ashati and Oubari region and Jebel Akdhar in Libya, region of Kidal Taoudéni or desert Menaka in Mali, etc.

It is observed that the efforts of regional, national and international actors often focus on border security. High priority for the United States and European Union, the latter formed a EUBAM (EU Border Assistance Mission) in Libya (training of border guards and Libyan coastguards) which is very inconclusive at this stage. Americans announced last spring their desire to help the Libyan to adopt a land borders control system. Countries in the region have also tried to strengthen their cooperation in the field at the Ghadames summit held on 2013 January 11 which saw the participation of Tunisia, Libya and Algeria. In Niger, a joint committee has been formed to allow an increased Niger-Libya border control. The commission intends to rely on Tubu nomads, Tuareg and Arabs supposed to hold the border.

Border surveillance could also be an opportunity to multilateralise efforts, including with NATO, which has drones, and which is now equipped with surveillance system named Alliance Ground Surveillance (AGS). This framework should involve international and regional partners, including institutions with experience in this issue (OSCE, UNODC, Interpol).

Drug trafficking or the requirement of enhanced cooperation

The issue of drug trafficking is essentially both a cross-border and transnational problem as actors of this network often have at least dual citizenship and use aliases. Any struggle only at a national level will hardly be sustainable. It will weaken a network, ideally dismantle it but before it is reorganized later. This issue should receive a regional treatment involving the main concerned states, i.e. including Nigeria, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Morocco, Mauritania, Algeria, Mali, Niger, Burkina Faso, Libya, Egypt and Chad. If ECOWAS has affirmed its commitment to fight against these networks, and national plans called for the establishment of institutions responsible for the fight against money laundering (the FIU or Financial Intelligence Unit), the goodwill of the sub-regional institution is fraught with political sensitivities of the concerned states. In addition, behind a façade of speech, it does not seem that Europeans are as committed as Americans to fight against drug trafficking. If you stop on the design of the 2012 CONOPS of MISMA, the problem of drug trafficking is simply not mentioned while the "traffic" in general is classified in the end of the list. It is clear that the only effective operations launched in West Africa were from the Americans and the DEA with the support of national authorities (Liberia) or without them (Guinea-Bissau, Ghana). This American commitment reflects the fact that South American cartels pass a portion of their goods by West Africa to enter the U.S. market. On the European side, the commitment is limited to a few seizures (French or Spanish for example) of cargoes without containing the channels. Interpol could play a key role in this enhanced international cooperation, firstly because Interpol has launched many arrest warrants which have never been enforced.

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The Deep Roots of the Mediterranean: Transatlantic Security from the Sahel to the Horn of Africa

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Security in the Sahel: Linking the Atlantic to the Mediterranean

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Introduction

Located at the southern end of the Sahara desert, the Sahel runs for at least 4500km from Senegal through Mauritania, Mali, Burkina Faso, Niger and Chad, and blends into the less arid Sudano-Sahel belt to its southern edge.[1] The Sahel is bordered by the Mediterranean Arab countries[2] to the north and the Atlantic Ocean[3] to the west. As a historic transitional zone, the Sahel has had long commercial, cultural and political connections with both sides of the Sahara desert. Perhaps, a distinguishing feature of this interaction is the trans-Saharan trade, and how trade networks which were 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 neighboring 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, Libyan national army. It is believed that the Tuareg formed the core of Qaddafi's special brigade that fought in the 2011 Libyan civil war, which culminated in the demise of Qaddafi's government. As fallout from the latter, fighters migrated to their home countries with vast arms caches. The possible net effect of these events has raised disturbing questions about the nature of the mutually reciprocal relationship with the former Libyan leader and the extent to which the 'mutual benefits' have a debilitating influence on the Sahel states.

Further, prompted by the Tuareg's long desire for freedom from personalist rule and the recurring demands for secession of the Azawad region in the north of Mali, an armed rebellion was launched by the Tuareg against the Malian army in January 2012 which culminated in the March 2012 coup d'état and the eventual ouster from power of President Amadou Toumani Toure. These series of events ushered in a period of upheavals including the proclamation of Northern Mali by the National Movement for the liberation of the Azawad (MNLA) as an independent state, and the splintering of rebel groups which are collaborating with al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM) to stage extremist and covert activities in the Sahel. These events raise concerns relating to the possible roles of Tuareg rebels in the current Sahel crisis and the dynamics at play. How have the Tuareg capitalized on the dynamics driving the Sahel crisis? What is the nature of the partnerships among the networks of criminal, extremist and opportunist 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 article analyzes 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 effects of these events is the perpetuation of a vulnerable environment which in turn has contributed to upheavals and is sustaining the Sahel crisis; (b) the security situation in the Sahel

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[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, K., Okyere, F. & Abdallah, M. (2012). *Addressing Emerging Security Threats in Post-Qaddafi Sahel and ECOWAS Response to the Malian Crisis.* Retrieved from http.www.kaiptc.org/Publications/Policy-Briefs/Policy-Briefs/Addressing-Emerging-Security-Threats-in-Post-Gadda.aspx

[2] Includes North African countries – Libya, Algeria, Egypt, Morroco and Tunisia

[3] Includes West African countries such as Senegal, Equatorial Guinea, Benin, Gambia and Ghana

has linkages with historical events including the long distance caravan trade and the role of Tuareg fighters in regional wars.

Therefore, in furtherance of this discussion, this article will focus on:

- The long historical connections between North Africa and the Sahel; and
- An analysis of the security linkages between the two regions.

Historical connections: a shatterproof factor for 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 jihadists groups have a long historical trajectory.

Navigating their way through basic routes[4] which mostly intersected at Timbuktu, long distance travellers who engaged in the trans-Saharan trade played a major role in the economies of the West African 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' (Baier, 1977). 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 (Baier, 1977). The caravans that were used for long distance trade were large (two to three thousand pack oxen). Also, the caravans were organized 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 & Amedzrator 2013). The traders negotiated alliances using their cross cultural skills[5] 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 (SOFREP, 2013). The introduction 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, a legalese interpretation of the Koran and Islamic tradition that emphasized what was best for the public, also led to a shared legal culture amongst Muslim traders (SOFREP, 2013).

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 (North and West Africa) of the Sahara through the trans-Saharan trade, conquest, pilgrimage and education continued to be intensive (De 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

[4] Three basic routes were used by long distance traders: the Eastern route connected Northern Libya to the markets of western Sudan; the western route was from north western Algeria through Mauritania to the Niger River Bend; and a third route linked eastern Sudan to Egypt.

[5] Typical among them was the use of Islam to connect to the trading communities

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 (De Haas, 2006).

Wage labour migration survived the collapse of the long-distance caravan trade thriving on contraband and subsidized Algerian and Libyan goods such as cigarettes travelling to northern Mali and Niger (UNODC, 2005). Organized 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.[6]

In essence, 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 (SOFREP, 2013). For instance, it is reported that 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 market[7] and eighteen percent of the Algerian market[8] (Lacher, 2012).

In sum, historical accounts link West African drug trafficking networks with other 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 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, I have 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 2010) .

Understanding security links between the Sahel and 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'.[9] Qaddafi supported West African migrants through his pan-African policy to allow them to reside and work in Libya. These

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[6] See UNODC. (2005). *Transnational Organized Crime in the West African Region.* Retrieved from http://www.unodc.org/pdf/transnational_crime_west-africa-05.pdf

[7] Accounts for about $240 million in proceeds at retail price

[8] Accounts for about $228 million at retail price

[9] See Aning, K., Okyere, F. & Abdallah, M. (2012). *Addressing Emerging Security Threats in Post-Qaddafi Sahel and ECOWAS Response to the Malian Crisis.* Retrieved from http.www.kaiptc.org/Publications/Policy-Briefs/Policy-Briefs/Addressing-Emerging-Security-Threats-in-Post-Gadda.aspx

migrants, some of whom were Tuareg, were trained by the Libyan dictator to fight for him in regional wars and the 2011 Libya crisis as part of his Islamic Legion and Special Brigade. However, after the ousting of Qaddafi, these mercenaries migrated to their home countries with stockpiles of arms. 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.[10]

The negative impact of recent political revolts in the Arab world, especially the Libya crisis, on the Sahel 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.'[11]

Further, there is increasing evidence of reciprocal and interconnected partnerships among criminal gangs and extremists groups dealing in the illicit trafficking of narcotic drugs, human smuggling, terrorism and kidnappings for ransom. The nature of the interconnections exists perhaps in two forms: a) international militants groups and criminal networks, such as AQIM, operating in the region have exploited their long ethnic affiliations with rebel groups operating in the Sahel, like 'Signed in Blood Battalion' and Ansar Dine, to expand their activities; b) a confluence of militant groups operating in the Sahel have established networks 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 strategies of criminals network of to 'vertically integrate' 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). Moreover, criminal operatives engaged in illicit businesses collaborate with terrorists and rebel groups to obtain logistics – cars, satellite phones to undertake their illicit activities (Aning 2010). Proceeds 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 organizations have established networks with the local population and radical groups in order to facilitate their activities and increase their gains. Sometimes, these networks perpetuate long 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 2010). 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.[12] This interconnectedness among criminal gangs and their threats to security have led me to argue the following (Aning 2010):

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[10] See Sidibe K. (2012). *Criminal Networks and Conflict Resolution Mechanisms in Northern Mali. IDS Bulletin, 43(4), 74-88.*

[11] See Aning, K., Okyere, F. & Abdallah, M. (2012). *Addressing Emerging Security Threats in Post-Qaddafi Sahel and ECOWAS Response to the Malian Crisis.* Retrieved from http.www.kaiptc.org/Publications/Policy-Briefs/Policy-Briefs/Addressing-Emerging-Security-Threats-in-Post-Gadda.aspx

[12] See Sidibe K. (2012). *Criminal Networks and Conflict Resolution Mechanisms in Northern Mali. IDS Bulletin, 43(4), 74-88.*

'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.'

Additionally, ungoverned spaces in the Sahel – porous borders, vast deserts which are not monitored, mountain ranges, long coasts and sparse population has 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 (Aning, 2010). The Sahel (particularly Mali and Mauritania)[13] is emerging as major staging posts and trading hubs for cocaine. 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 (UNODC, 2013). Sometimes, narcotic peddlers use land routes from the Sahara Desert to parts of North Africa where the drugs are flown to Europe or shuttled across the Mediterranean in speed boats (UNODC, 2013). 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 (UNODC, 2013).

Additionally, arms circulating in the Sahel are mostly shipped from Iran, Sudan and China, North Africa and 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)[14] (Ammour, 2007). Also, the grey areas along the Mediterranean and Atlantic coasts and the Sahara desert, as well as mountainous areas, are utilized by criminals for the smuggling of irregular migrants – including militant groups and criminals. Key hubs for irregular migrants are Gao (Mali) and Agadez (Niger) and the coasts of Senegal and Mauritania, and the main routes used by West African migrants include[15]:

- By the Mediterranean sea to the Canary Islands;
- By land and sea across the Straits of Gibraltar[16] (Spain); 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 (UNODC, 2013). Also, criminals and radical groups use the illegal migration routes to evade detection at the less vulnerable borders and to 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 form eastern Algeria to Mauritania's border with Senegal (Sidibe, 2012). As they control the desert, the illicit activities generate funds for the survival of the militant groups and the expansion of extremism in the Sahel.

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[13] See UNODC. (2013). *Transnational Organized Crime in West Africa: A Threat Assessment.* Retrieved from http://www.unodc.org/documents/data-and-analysis/tocta/West_Africa_TOCTA_2013_EN.pdf

[14] Historical trade route used as a hub and transit zone for arms trafficking

[15] See UNODC. (2013). *Transnational Organized Crime in West Africa: A Threat Assessment.* Retrieved from http://www.unodc.org/documents/data-and-analysis/tocta/West_Africa_TOCTA_2013_EN.pdf

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

Further to the security links, the situation in the Sahel cannot be wholly divorced from the political context.[17] The question which arises is: how have governance challenges contributed to the Sahel crisis? There are reports that the government of former Malian President Amadou Toumani Toure utilized organized 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 & Bah 2009). State complicity with organized crime is believed to have 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.

Conclusion

The security situation in the Sahel is linked to a constellation of internal and external factors – spillover effects of Arab Spring, interconnected and mutually beneficial relationships among criminal, militant and local populations, vast deserts and mountainous areas which are not monitored (ungoverned spaces) and governance crises. The Arab Spring for instance has spearheaded the migration of fighters, weapons and militants groups who are using the Sahel to plan, stage and fund extremist activities against Sahelian states. More so, the militant and criminal groups who migrated to the region have engaged in reciprocal partnerships with rebel groups and the local population to advance their gains and 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 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.

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[17] See Dowd, C. & Raleigh, C. (2013). 'The myth of Global Islamic Terrorism and Local Conflict in Mali and the Sahel'. *African Affairs*, 112/448.

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The Deep Roots of the Mediterranean: Transatlantic Security from the Sahel to the Horn of Africa

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

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Introduction

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, and unfavorable 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 neighbours' internal dynamics is a common trait in the foreign policies of the countries in this region and creates an ongoing cycle of civil and interstate wars. In addition, a shared historic past, including active opposition to standing regimes, participation in supporting rebel movements and conducting destabilization 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 personalized the tensions between leaders in the region. 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 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 10,000 third generation refugees born of refugee parents and grandparents[2]. It is a sad reminder of the inability of local leaders to negotiate their disagreements and to address the proliferation of security threats in a collaborative way. After 20 years of existence, the camp is also testimony to the normalization of violence and conflict in the region as a way of resolving disputed interests. 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 population 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 Somalis hosted in the Kenyan territory.

Cross-border tensions are reflected also in the fact that key regional stakeholders, like Egypt, Sudan and Ethiopia all 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 the harsh environmental conditions also push pastoralists communities to search constantly for better access to water and pastures which has led to conflict with sedentary agricultural communities of the Horn.

With the notable exception of Somalia, local regimes are characterized 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

[1] The refugee population in the region is comprised for the most part by Somalis primarily hosted in Kenya, Yemen and Ethiopia: see UNHCR, 2012 http://www.unhcr.org/4f439dbb9.html

[2] See: UNHCR, 2012 http://www.unhcr.org/4f439dbb9.html

between a centrally based ruling elite and marginalized 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 on the occasion of the recent protests following the government's announcement of reductions in fuel subsidies. It is against this background that international actors play into regional events and thereby add an additional layer of complexity with their global agenda.

The aim of this paper is to give an account of international responses to the challenges that affect the region with a particular focus on EU and US approaches. The paper argues that recent EU and US initiatives have been framed predominantly in terms of security and state fragility thus limiting their understanding of the complex dynamics on the ground and narrowing policy options. The paper provides some critical perspectives on the effects of such interventions, arguing that initiatives based on security interests result in an emphasis on "regime stability" that tends to reinforce highly illiberal regimes in the region. This in turn undermines the EU and US's credibility as democracy and human rights promoters. Finally the paper puts forward proposals for engagement with local actors.

Regional 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 their implementation. Several analysts emphasize that the key factor affecting stability and development in the Horn is the troubled relationship between Eritrea and Ethiopia (Plaut, 2013; Clapham,2013; Mulugeta, 2011; Healey, 2008). As Clapham 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' (Clapham, 2013)[3]. 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 aggressive nationalism and the expansion of its territory, with virtually all of its neighbours (Ibidem). Internally, it organized 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 but there remained deep ideological differences. 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 (Ibidem: 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 UN supervised demilitarized zone (UNMEE, deployed in the Transitional Security Zone, TSZ) and an internationally sponsored Boundary Commission whose

[3] http://riftvalley.net/news/why-horn-different#.UoDIDDpkDnF accessed on 9 November 2013.

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 is contested. Ethiopia appealed to both the Commission and to the UN 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 on its part 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 remain highly mobilized 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 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: 163). In response, armed groups began to oppose the government's practices of marginalization, repressive policies and militarization 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 creation 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 and the US to intervene by sending 28,000 troops in an operation named 'Restore Hope'. Somali militias led by General Mahdi and General Aideed epitomized clan based lines of conflict and mobilized clan alignments against a common enemy: the US (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 whilst a Transitional Federal Government was established first abroad and then brought back to Mogadishu. Concerned by these developments, Christian Ethiopia decided to invade Somalia in 2006 in an attempt to bolster the Transition Federal Government 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, it sidelined with groups opposing Ethiopia's invasion. In spite of this Ethiopia managed to briefly establish its control over Mogadishu whilst supporting the TGF 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 it allowed both Eritreans and Ethiopia rebels to operate from its territory whilst Ethiopia supported the Sudan's People Liberation Movement of Southern Sudan (Plaut: 325) against Khartoum. Years of confrontation were only resolved with the 2005 Comprehensive Peace Agreement. A referendum held in 2011 has determined the independence of Southern Sudan and has opened the space for Southern

Sudan to organize its own political life. However, disagreements over the oil rich border area of Abjei and its status continue to undermine relations between the two countries, whilst demands for self-determination in Darfur, heavily repressed by Khartoum, contribute to ongoing warfare and horrific humanitarian crises.

The regional conflict dynamics and their consequences presented above 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 role of the international community has also been framed by clear national interests based in particular on issues such as access to oil, strategic trade routes, and supporting political 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 USA and the USSR 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 to humanitarian crises, conflict also provides a breeding ground for organized crime both at sea and on the land, illegal arms proliferation, and the destabilization 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. The US have intensified their counter-terrorism operations since the 1998 attacks on their embassies and in December 2002 the United States central command (CENTCOM) created a joint task force: the US Combined Joint Task Force-Horn of Africa to 'provide the United States with a forward presence in the region, train the region's law enforcement agencies on counterterrorism, collect intelligence, and oversee humanitarian assistance efforts' (Dagne, 2010: 3). Located in the former French military base Camp Lemonnier in Djibouti, the JTF-HoA is the only permanent US military base in Africa and was established to support Operation Enduring Freedom, combating terrorism and piracy in and off the coast of the Horn of Africa. Since 2011 the US 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 US has also set up 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 US, France, the UK, the EU, all play a role in combating the consequences of the crises in the region, with the bulk of international interventions revolving around security concerns and economic interests. China in particular pursues an aggressive policy of economic competition with the West in Africa. Her 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 UN. China's successful penetration in Africa is owed to several considerations: 1) China supports its economic interests with skilled economic diplomacy through triennial heads of state 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). Importantly, China frames its relations with Africa based on its experience as a developing country, it fills an important gap in Western development aid by focusing on much needed infrastructure, and, unlike the EU, 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 US and China require a stable environment to gain access to Africa's energy and raw material resources. This might open opportunities for cooperation such as in May 2012 when China and the US worked together at the UN Security Council to pass UNSCR 2046 on Sudan and South Sudan (Brown, 2012: 89). International security efforts concentrate also on the proliferation of maritime piracy that threatens transport and trade operations off the Somali and Kenya costs[4]. 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 programs and contributes to joint operations with the US and the EU as well as other fleets in the region. Between 2008 and 2012 its navy has conducted 12 separate anti-piracy missions and escorted vessels from over 50 countries (Ibidem: 13). In addition, Oman, Dubai and the United Arab Emirates as well as Japan and China, all contribute 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 EU's approach to the region of the Horn reflects international concerns with security dynamics[5]. However, since 2006 the EU has progressively tried to develop a comprehensive approach culminating in the adoption of the 2011 Strategic Framework for the Horn of Africa.

[4] 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 USD million. However the agency also estimates that piracy has also begun to loose attractiveness since the publication of 'Best Management Practices' to help vessels escape pirates routes and strengthen onboard security measures. In addition, ransom negotiations have become more protracted and hostages need to be held for longer and international operations have also contributed to piracy loosing part of its attraction. (UNODC, 2013: 35).

[5] Indeed the 2003 European Security Strategy recognizes regional conflicts as a key threat to the EU's own interests. Council of the European Union, 2003, p. 4.

Diplomatically the EU is present through its delegations that allow the EU 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. It supports the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD) which is the principal regional organization and it has also supported mediation, the implementation of peace agreements as well as training of security personnel as a way of diversifying its approach to peace and security issues.

The Strategic Framework establishes from the onset that the EU's 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 EU to protect its own citizens from the threats that emanate and spill-over from some parts of the region (Council of the EU, 2011: 3). The Strategic Framework sets out areas of action but also points that out that concrete implementation will require the adoption of further sub-strategies and action plans.. It is not in the scope of this article to give a detailed account of all the initiatives the EU undertakes in the region, but they can be roughly summarised 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 EU has supported development programs for a total of 2 billion euros between 2010-2013. During the same period it was the biggest donor to Somalia and was contributing 325 million euros to support the African Union Mission to 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 of the countries of the region albeit independently from EU delegations and in 2012 the EU Commission adopted a new action plan for the Horn, code named SHARE and totalling 270 million euros to support recovery from the 2011 drought (EP, 2012: 19).

Political/diplomatic: the EU 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 (CPA); until October 2013 it has availed itself of the diplomatic skills of the EU Special Representative for the Sudan(s): Ambassador Marsden has been able to support the mediation efforts of the African Union as well as of major sponsors of the CPA such as China and the US. In 2012 it has nominated a Special Representative for the Horn: initially charged with a specific focus on Somalia and anti-piracy policies, the EUSR-HoA has currently seen its mandate extended to include the two Sudans. The EU also organises 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 EU leads in security operations in the region under the banner of its Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP). Operation Atalanta (EUNAVFOR) was launched in 2008 and is currently 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 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 EU, the UN, the US 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 EU has also launched a mission to strengthen border and customs control at the

airport in Juba, South Sudan. In addition the EU also participates in the Global Counter Terrorism Forum where, together with Turkey, it presides over the working group on countering terrorism financing[6].

The EU strategic framework for the HoA is a welcome development from past, less coherent, EU approaches and it builds on several years of reflections in the EU institutions. Some concrete signs of improvements include the nomination 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 EU to act along a security-development nexus. However early indications point to a mixed record in the EU'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 that there was little commitment from the EU to protect fishing in Somali waters particularly from illegal fishermen or from individuals transporting toxic materials. Although the EU has set up the EUCAP Nestor operation precisely to support local authorities in developing their capacities to protect their economic zones, the nuances of missions mandates need to be better communicated so that unrealistic expectations are not created.

In addition the EU needs to reflect critically on its ability to promote not only stability but actual democratic systems of governance in the region and in 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 EU by its development funds may not be as important as expected especially if it considers that new actors are playing on the same ground, are themselves providing aid (for instance China with its infrastructure development programs) and are less interested in discussing the institutional make-up of the HoA governments or their relations with their population.

Critical perspectives: the limitations of international interventions

A superficial review of the historical security dynamics in the Horn region, would lead to conclude that conflict in the Horn is entrenched in the uncompromising political culture of the countries and the personal traits of their 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 state is centralized in the hands of this or that ethnic group or clan. In response to such perceptions, international initiatives in the Horn have emphasized the paradigm of state building.

Whilst in the 80s and most of the nineties external intervention (particularly in the form of development) was designed to strengthening 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 terrorist attacks of 9/11 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 realize development goals and consolidate peace (Pkalya, 2012:14). The crucial question

[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: www.theGCTF.org

[7] It might be worth to consider 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.

however remained of 'peace for who'? As the post 9/11 dynamics of exporting insecurity ensured that the key preoccupation of western interveners in unstable areas was the preservation of stability and the protection of western interests[8]. Whilst this is not negative per se and it is certainly understandable, the framing of problems relating to instability in the Horn as mainly "security", has led to a narrowing of options that are considered for international engagement in the region.

In security terms the emphasis on preventing the establishment of al-Qaeda cells in the Horn or the radicalization of local Muslim communities, has turned into 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 US deployed efforts to re-engage constructively with Somali actors. However such efforts have also divided diverse Muslim communities into 'moderate' and 'extremist' camps and contributed to isolating and dividing the Somali population along these lines (Sabala, 2011: 108). Although al-Shabaab has been weakened in Somalia it is not completely defeated and its threats against Kenya's intervention in Somalia is made possible by its ability to infiltrate refugee camps and recruit from disaffected Somali army elements, creating an imminent threat to Kenya. On the other hand regional dynamics intertwine with national ones as there are concerns that the marginalized Muslim communities particularly along the coastal areas may also radicalize (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 with clear terrorist objectives to Muslim communities in general can indeed motivate stigmatized communities to confront the West and its allies' ideological stance Intervention understood simply and technically as stabilization aims at controlling phenomena that could cause instability. As such, the option of considering dissenting voices is precluded. The incompatibility of the project of stabilization with dynamics of emancipation and social change has the effect of leaving community demands unfulfilled and generating public disaffection for international efforts that do not promote inclusive participation (McGynty, 2012: 29). As evidence of this, Mesfin states 'The diffusion of modern military technologies and state of the art techniques of organization, which the US approach entailed, went beyond the modernization of the military or the transfer of weapons. It led to the institutionalized 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: 19). The governance systems of the states of the Horn of Africa are amongst the most under-developed in Africa (with the exception of Somaliland and to a certain extent Puntand). 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 Sudan's Comprehensive Peace Agreement and has contributed troops to UN peacekeeping missions in the Darfur region. It is also instrumental in fighting al-Shabaad militias in Somalia. As a consequence, partners like the US and the EU have demonstrated a certain de facto 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 are emerging in the region as a result of all the efforts at stabilization.

[8] Mark Duffield has explained the security-development dynamics that lock together core and peripheral region of the world in the seminal work on western liberal peace initiatives entitled 'Globalisation and the New Wars'.

Western efforts at securing the region and stabilizing it have had to rely on the identification of like- minded partners such as Ethiopia and Kenya, that are willing to further the super 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 the states in the region 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 the security dynamics clearly point to the need for cross-boundary or trans-national approaches based on a thorough understanding of the interconnectedness of the problems in the region. However, the EU and the US 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 have to be pragmatic but as the behaviour of China on Sudan at 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 Zenawi and the change of leadership in Eritrea may offer an opportunity to revamp reconciliation efforts between these two countries. The EU and the US need to coordinate their approaches better and to invest in joint peacemaking initiatives. Whilst IGAD may play a useful role it is important to recognize that the Organization 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. The EU and US development aid programs should focus more on providing local communities with employment opportunities that will make piracy unattractive to them. These include the vital fishing activity. However as exemplified by Somali fishermen more needs to be done to protect their maritime environment from illegal pollution and illegal exploitation of their fishing zones and investment in the local infrastructure that will allow them to develop their own indigenous fishing industry. In short, international vessels charged with deterring pirates, could also ensure that the Somali exclusive zone is protected and that toxic cargoes are not allowed anywhere near the coast. In addition 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. A thorough understanding of Puntland's unique position vis-à-vis Somalia and of its challenges in terms of rule of law and justice administration provide an opportunity for the international community to adopt initiatives that should focus on judicial responses and strengthening local judicial systems. Similar to programs that target the demobilization and reintegration of ex-combatants, such initiatives could also include an element of pirates' reintegration in the economic and livelihood system of their communities strengthening overall resilience to recruitment.

When looking at the root causes of the current instability the US and the EU 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 both allies are aware of this, but more needs to be done to balance security concerns with initiatives that push local allies to opening up their regimes. Both the US and the EU dispose of political (such as political dialogues) and financial mechanisms (such as the Instrument for Stability and EIDHR) for the protection of human rights defenders and both could use them in a more clear way to stir local governments towards democracy.

The challenge launched by China to Western interests in the African continent should not lead the EU and US to downplay their ideological or 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, who is not a member of the OECD, could be involved with observer status and generally 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 EU and US could help local partners perceive them as opportunities and support infrastructure, transport and energy projects that have the potential to generate positive interdependence, contribute to conflict prevention and focus on shared gains. Such infrastructures would not be developed to serve primarily routes away from local actors but between local actors. In other words, they should not 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.

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