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THE GROWING CRISIS IN AFRICA'S SAHEL REGION

JOINT HEARING

BEFORE THE

SUBCOMMITTEE ON AFRICA, GLOBAL HEALTH, GLOBAL HUMAN RIGHTS, AND INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS

AND THE

SUBCOMMITTEE ON THE MIDDLE EAST AND NORTH AFRICA

AND THE

SUBCOMMITTEE ON TERRORISM, NONPROLIFERATION, AND TRADE

OF THE

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THE GROWING CRISIS IN AFRICA'S SAHEL REGION

TUESDAY, MAY 21, 2013

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,
SUBCOMMITTEE ON AFRICA, GLOBAL HEALTH,
GLOBAL HUMAN RIGHTS, AND INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS, AND
SUBCOMMITTEE ON THE MIDDLE EAST AND NORTH AFRICA, AND
SUBCOMMITTEE ON TERRORISM, NONPROLIFERATION, AND TRADE,
COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN AFFAIRS,
Washington, DC.

The committees met, pursuant to notice, at 2 o'clock p.m., in room 2172 Rayburn House Office Building, Hon. Christopher H. Smith (chairman of the subcommittee) presiding.

Mr. SMITH. This meeting will come to order. And good afternoon to everyone. Today's hearing is intended to examine the challenges faced by the nations of Africa's Sahel region, especially the spread of both terrorism and trafficking in the entire area. These problems alone impose a danger to the security of both the Sahel and developed countries, not only because of air traffic to West Africa that transits northern Mali but also because of the use of the region as a base of attacks by Islamic extremists on Western targets. Moreover, the preexisting humanitarian crisis is now worsened and as are human rights concerns. The underlying political instability is becoming equally serious.

We are holding this hearing jointly because the threat that we face goes beyond the jurisdiction of any one of our subcommittees. It involves not only Africa's Sahel region but also countries in north Africa, especially Algeria and Libya. It also involves terrorist groups originating from and based in nations outside of the Sahel. It is a sign of how seriously the Committee on Foreign Affairs considers this matter that our three subcommittees have come together to consider this today.

There are various definitions of the Sahel, but for the purposes of this hearing, we mean the nations of Senegal, Mauritania, Mali, Burkina Faso, Niger, and Chad.

In early 2012, the Government of Mali was overthrown, as we all know, in a military coup and subsequently lost control of the northern area of the country, which constitutes more than half of its land area. Mali had long been considered a stable example of African democracy, but, as we learned in our subcommittee's hearing in June 2012, the coup and resulting loss of so much territory revealed the hollowness and rot within the Mali democratic system.

The influx of well-armed terrorist groups, broken promises to neglected ethic groups, lack of adherence to democratic principles, and rampant drug smuggling all made the Malian Government vulnerable to breakdown.

We must ask now whether other countries in Africa's Sahel region are also more vulnerable than we think. Mali provided a staging ground for al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb, or AQIM, which is daily becoming an ever-greater threat in the region and perhaps globally. AQIM is considered the best funded of all al-Qaeda affiliates and, through its ties to other terrorist groups, may be funding their activities as well.

In a July subcommittee hearing last year, we learned that Boko Haram, in Nigeria, is not a unified organization but, rather, various factions, some of which are focused on embarrassing the Nigerian Government but others that have a more global jihadist view. It is the latter that we have had present in northern Mali and impose a threat to Western interests, not to mention the interests of the Mali people.

Boko Haram attacks lead Nigerian President Goodluck Jonathan, last week, to declare a state of emergency in three northern states in his country. A radical Boko Haram splinter group, known as Ansaru, may have attacked Nigerian troops en route to a peacekeeping operation in Mali.

In Mali, three terrorist groups dominate the rebellion that split off the north: MUJAO, a splinter group of AQIM; Ansar al-Dine, an Islamic Tuareg rebel group; and the MNLA, a more secular Tuareg group. These groups have different aims and sometimes clash with one another. Nevertheless, they collectively pose and continue to pose a threat to the peace of Mali and the region.

As a result of the rebel actions in northern Mali, there are currently more than 300,000 internally displaced persons in Mali, more than 74,000 refugees in Mauritania, 50,000 refugees in Niger, and nearly 50,000 refugees in Burkina Faso. The displacement of nearly ½ million Malians strains already scare resources in the Sahel, with recipients often in remote areas.

French forces, as we know, were able to forestall a rebel advance in southern Mali earlier this year. And an African military contingent is in the process of being deployed to Mali even now. However, chasing rebels out of Mali's major northern towns will be easier than ending ongoing terrorist attacks or reconciling ethnic groups whose enmity has grown over the last year.

We look forward to today's witnesses. To our two witnesses from the administration, thank you for being here. And I will properly introduce you in a moment, but thank you for your leadership. It is making a huge difference.

I would like to now yield to my good friend and colleague Ms. Bass for an opening statement.

Ms. BASS. As always, thank you, Chairman Smith, for holding this hearing today.

I was pleased yesterday to see the formal announcement of President Obama's upcoming visit to the continent next month.

I know we are here today to discuss the Sahel, a vast region that stretches from the Atlantic Ocean to the Red Sea. Each of the nations in the region experience a unique set of challenges, which, as

we know, make developing effective and far-reaching programs extraordinarily difficult. While the crisis in Mali was spiraling out of control, a humanitarian crisis was underway that affected tens of millions of people throughout the region.

The U.N.'s 2013 Sahel regional strategy amply illustrates the immense challenge experienced by those living in the Sahel and nations like our own, who have the resources and desire to make a difference.

The report notes that some of the key drivers to the humanitarian crisis include food and security, epidemic disease, floods, locust infestation, and the continued crisis in Mali and the displacement of populations, both internally and those who continue to seek refuge in Mali's neighboring countries.

With an estimated need of nearly $2 billion, CRS reports that the U.N. consolidated appeals process will bring aid organizations together to coordinate a response to major humanitarian crises and disasters and appeal for funds through a collaborative and coordinated plan.

I am pleased that Nancy Lindborg from USAID will be here to discuss the administration's new resilience strategy, which was launched late last year and is a promising program that I believe will fundamentally change the way we think about development, particularly in regions and in countries that endure repeated cycles of shock. The resilience strategy makes sense when you consider these key drivers to these humanitarian crises.

While the challenges are great, there is a window of opportunity that can be seized upon. If we work within nations and collaborate effectively with donors, the resources available can be used to save lives and prevent decline in the living conditions of millions of infants, expectant mothers, and those that require assistance of some sort.

Mr. Chairman, today and tomorrow, a delegation from Mali, a country that has been the focus of this committee's attention, will visit the Congress. I believe you have already had a chance to meet with them. This delegation, led by the Speaker of Mali's National Assembly, is here to discuss their upcoming Presidential election, now slated for July 28th, the security challenges that remain in the north of the country and opportunities toward economic development, including a focus on expanding the country's fragile infrastructure.

As members of the committee are likely aware, yesterday the U.N. announced the appointment of a special envoy who will assist in helping Mali regain political stability and security in its vast north. And last week, the country was able to secure over $4 billion in pledges from donor nations to assist in peace and stability efforts and reconstruction of failing infrastructure. With these important announcements and the transition of the African-led international support mission to a U.N. peacekeeping force, I believe these are positive steps that will ensure a Malian future that is both peaceful and prosperous.

I want to close by retelling a story. In late February, I traveled to Mali to see firsthand the many efforts underway that would return Mali to a model democracy for the region and the continent. The CODEL that I was on included Senators Coons and Isakson

as well as Representative Sewell. We had a chance to meet with displaced families from Timbuktu who spoke of their desire to return to their homes. They sought to return home, not merely because that was where they were from but because they wanted to return home to vote. They wanted to cast their ballots to show the world that the people from Mali themselves seek peace, stability, and a return to normalcy. Our nation is helping to make this a reality. And we should continue to do so throughout the Sahel, a region that greatly requires our attention and support.

Thank you.

Mr. SMITH. Thank you very much, Ranking Member.

I would like to, before I go to Chairwoman Ros-Lehtinen, just introduce to all assembled, Younoussi Touré, who is the Speaker of the Malian Assembly. Thank you. You and your delegation are very welcome to this hearing. And I appreciated the time earlier that we had together. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I would like to now yield to my good friend and colleague, the former chair of the full committee, now chair of the Subcommittee on the Middle East and North Africa, Ileana Ros-Lehtinen.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Thank you so much, Mr. Chairman. And thank you for your steadfast leadership for many decades on this important topic.

We have been following the developments in this region closely, but the growing crisis in north Africa and the Sahel has been a largely underemphasized threat to U.S. national security interests. For far too long, U.S. foreign policy has been focused on fighting terrorist groups like al-Qaeda and Afghanistan in the Middle East. Yet, we have looked away from the serious and growing threats coming from north Africa and the Sahel. These areas have become breeding grounds of extremist activity as these nations face many internal struggles, political instability from dangerous droughts that are wiping out entire villages to food shortages, human rights concerns, and domestic conflicts. This leaves large swaths of land ungoverned. And their borders are porous and easy to cross undetected.

This fragility gives these extremist groups, like al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb, AQIM, Boko Haram, Ansar al-Dine, and others, the ability to roam freely in the most lawless region, setting up safe havens for terrorist activities, and doing their dirty work, kidnapping, drug trafficking, arms trafficking. And this became evident in the fallout of the Arab Spring as Ghadafi fell and arms and fighters from Libya spread throughout the region.

As Secretary Clinton said when she testified before us in January, there is no doubt that the Algerian terrorists had weapons from Libya. There is no doubt that the remnants of AQIM in Mali had weapons from Libya. The weak governments in north Africa and the Sahel don't have the will nor the capacity to confront these extremist groups. And that leaves the United States and our interests extremely vulnerable.

The administration has yet to develop a plan or even recognize the severity of the threat. In his push to end the war in Afghanistan, the President justifies a withdrawal because he believes that, as he has repeatedly stated, that we are close to our goal of defeating al-Qaeda, that we have decimated al-Qaeda. Yet, al-Qaeda is

still as great a threat as ever and is expanding. We see them in north Africa. We see them in the Sahel. They are fighting in Syria. I guess they didn't get the same memo the President received.

We have seen a disturbing alliance between drug traffickers and these terrorist groups in the region, allowing the terrorists to develop new resources to finance their illicit activities while at the same time undermining those governments and our U.S. national security interests.

Just last month, we saw a direct narcoterrorism link between African nations and the FARC, a U.S.-designated foreign terrorist organization. Several top figures from Guinea-Bissau's military, including the head of its armed forces and former head of the Navy, were arrested on cocaine and weapons trafficking charges. Both were accused of agreeing to store tons of cocaine and buying weapons for the FARC. These criminal activities undermine our security in our hemisphere and provide the financing capabilities to terrorists.

The administration needs to come to the realization that we are a long way still from defeating al-Qaeda and its influence. To confront these threats, we need a strategy, a strategy that disrupts the operations of extremist networks, that denies them safe havens, and prevents an escalation of emerging threats by also targeting precursor conditions that foment instability.

I look forward, Mr. Chairman and Ranking Member Bass, to our witnesses today. Thank you so much for convening this timely hearing.

Mr. SMITH. Thank you very much, Chairwoman Ros-Lehtinen. The chair now recognizes the ranking member of the Middle East and North Africa Subcommittee, Mr. Deutch.

Mr. DEUTCH. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, for holding this hearing on an issue that, while it may not make the top headlines on a regular basis, certainly has significant implications on the security of the African continent and implications for stability throughout the Middle East.

Now, the current environment in the Sahel is precarious and worrisome. The proliferation of militant groups in the region, many of which have ties to al-Qaeda in the Maghreb, pose debilitating threats to a region with a history of instability. The partnership and coordination of these radical groups can and has turned smaller domestic disputes into full-blown regional crises.

With service on commercial networks traversing over state lines, the porous borders between countries allow for easy and unregulated movement of militant groups, arms, drugs, and other contraband that weaken nations and put populations at risk. The conflict in Mali exemplifies the trouble that these non-state armed groups can cause, not only to a country's security and safety of their civilians but to the greater Sahel region as well.

We are seeing how quickly a previously stable democratic government can deteriorate, heading toward the likes of Somalia. Thus far in Mali, our approach has been one of limited engagement, bolstering French and U.N. forces with intelligence and other forms of assistance. In the short term, intervention was needed and the United States, supported, through the Security Council, authorization of an international peacekeeping force in Mali.

We have taken other steps to strengthen the security infrastructures in the region, including through bilateral agreement with Niger in the presence of UAV base in that country, but this should only be one step in our development of what I hope is a broader, more comprehensive approach to dealing with the instability and violent extremism in the region.

To combat these and other armed groups and to reduce further threats to regional and international security, we must join with our partners in Maghreb to enhance cooperation and prevent the spread of extremism and the flow of arms to the Sahel. We must create and implement the comprehensive and a multifaceted plan. We must consider what preemptory and preventative steps we can take to address the structural issues found across the region. Strengthening a country's essential institutions can help prevent any need for future military use. There are a number of regional challenges that are widespread and interlinked, from severe institutional underdevelopment, punishing socioeconomic conditions, high levels of poverty, and other troubling indicators that I am sure will be the focus of today's testimony.

The problems we are witnessing are long-term challenges to the region. I am concerned that they may only be setting the scene for additional crises in the future. There must be greater international attention placed on the Sahel. That is what we are doing today.

I appreciate your holding this hearing, Mr. Chairman. I look forward to hearing from the witnesses. I yield back.

Mr. SMITH. Thank you very much, Mr. Deutch.

I now recognize the chairman of the Terrorism, Nonproliferation, and Trade Subcommittee, Ted Poe of Texas.

Mr. POE. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Since 2012, a coup in Mali, and the 2011 overthrow of Ghadafi in Libya, the security in the Sahel has gotten worse, not better. At a time when the United States, as it is said by the administration, pivots to the East, we cannot leave behind our obligation to the continent of Africa.

Some might think that this is not a problem for the United States, but they are wrong. Most Americans, many Americans, shall I say, never heard of Mali until this crisis. They thought it was an island in the south Pacific. But what happens in the Sahel is directly related to our regional interests and security here at home. The prevention of an attack on our homeland and on our Western allies by radical Islamic extremists is a challenge and will be for the foreseeable future.

In the Sahel, al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb, or AQIM, appears to be taking advantage of the chaos. That is what terrorist groups do. In January, thousands of French troops, along with local allied fighters, had to launch a military offensive because terrorists had taken over part of Mali, which is about the size of Texas. I want to commend the French for their efficiency and their quick response.

Recently the French announced that they will keep 1,000 troops in Mali for the foreseeable future to consolidate the gains and keep al-Qaeda on its back foot.

Recognizing the scope of this challenge, the United States has begun training African forces in neighboring Niger to fight in Mali.

The United States only has about 1,800 troops in all of Africa, but 4,000 more are on the way to train African forces.

Due north in Algeria, al-Qaeda has brigades of radical killers aided by their brothers in Tunisia. Fortunately, the Algerian National Popular Army is doing its best to fight al-Qaeda.

The seriousness of the situation in Algeria hit home with us after the extremists attacked a gas plant on the border of Algeria and Libya. AQIM-linked terrorists wanted to seize the plant in the hopes of creating a massive explosion and killing everyone in the area. Fortunately, they were unsuccessful but not before gunfights and the follow-up rescue mission resulted in the death of plant workers from nine different countries. Three of those killed were Americans, two of them being Texans. And one of them was my constituent, Victor Lovelady from Atascocita, Texas. He was an energy worker, and he was killed, not just because of what he did but because of who he was. He was killed because he was an American.

A radical Islamic al-Qaeda group by the name of the Signatories in Blood—what a lovely name that is—claimed responsibility for this terrorist attack. They are a spinoff of AQIM. And they seek to destroy us and kill us indiscriminately. This is the real world. This is not a fiction story.

We have asked the Algerian Government for Victor Lovelady's personal effects, but we haven't gotten them back yet.

We have learned from the past couple of years that we are not good at predicting threats. I hope we can better understand today the nature of the terrorist threat in the Sahel and policy options available to us.

I look forward to the testimony of our witnesses.

Mr. SMITH. Thank you, Chairman Poe.

I now yield to the ranking member, Brad Sherman, from California.

Mr. SHERMAN. Thank you.

Several groups have rebelled against the central Malian Government for independence in northern Mali just in the last 1½ years. The Tuareg tribes in northern Mali have had major socioeconomic and political grievances against the Bamako government and have rebelled in the past.

Ghadafi supported this movement. And many Tuaregs fought for Colonel Ghadafi as he struggled to stay in power. Before returning to Mali, Tuaregs took a large amount of sophisticated weapons with them, including a huge number of surface-to-air missiles looted from Libyan weapons depots. The Libyan weapons reinvigorated a longstanding rebellion and expanded it into a major conflict.

We should learn from this lesson as we look at Syria. The outcome in Syria is important to us. The outflow of weapons from Syria may turn out to be even more important.

Returning to looking at Mali in the Sahel, we should note that the MNLA, the National Movement for Liberation of Azawad, is fighting to create an independent country that would have less than 1 million people as far as we can tell and would include only half Tuaregs in the Sahel region. This seems to be an unrealistic objective from so many standpoints, including the world's general consensus that the borders in Africa are inviolate and that messing

around with those borders could only lead to huge numbers of conflicts.

The MNLA was initially backed by Ansar al-Dine, the extremist Islamic group. Then that group and smaller Islamic groups began imposing a harsh version of Sharia law in some areas. Many of these extremist Islamists are foreign jihadist fighters. By July of last year, the MNLA had a falling out with the Islamic groups over their vision for the future of northern Mali. Ansar al-Dine and the other Islamic groups seemed to have the upper hand. And then France intervened, as we all know, in July 2012 to beat back the advance on Mali's central government. And France has deployed thousands of troops with the aid of the United States, both in terms of aerial refueling missions, drones, other logistical support.

Among the questions raised there, is the Malian Government capable of defending itself and its territorial integrity? And for how long will it need French assistance to do that?

We are still haunted by Colonel Ghadafi's legacy. We are facing the consequences of the arms leaving Libya. What can be done to both continue to contain weapons in Libya, which is still not a stable country, as recent events or relatively recent events in Benghazi illustrated? What can we do to make sure that we don't have more outflows of weapons from Libya?

We need to examine the role of Saudi and Gulf states and well-connected, wealthy individuals operating with the tacit support of their governments in funding Islamic extremists in the Sahel and elsewhere. We need to ask what can be done to stop drug smuggling in the Sahel. And how big a problem is that? And who is earning the profits? And what are those profits funding?

And we need to ask whether the Tuareg have legitimate concerns and what can be done to meet those legitimate concerns without profiting the bad actors that have been operating in northern Mali.

We have a lot to learn. We have some excellent witnesses. And I yield back.

Mr. SMITH. Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman.

We welcome back Ambassador Yamamoto, Donald Yamamoto, who is no stranger to the Africa Subcommittee having testified several times before. He is Acting Assistant Secretary of State for African Affairs, having served since 2009 as the Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary for the Bureau of African Affairs at the U.S. Department of State. His distinguished career has included serving as U.S. Ambassador to Ethiopia from November 2006 to July 2009 and as a Deputy Assistant Secretary of State in the Bureau of African Affairs from 2003 to 2006.

We will then hear from Nancy Lindborg, who has testified before our subcommittee on the Eastern African famine. She is the Assistant Administrator for the Bureau for Democracy, Conflict, and Humanitarian Assistance at USAID. She previously spent 14 years as President of Mercy Corps, where she focused on international development.

During her time with Mercy Corps, she also served in a number of positions where she worked on issues relating to foreign relations and foreign assistance and, again, like Ambassador Yamamoto, has a very distinguished background.

Ambassador Yamamoto?

STATEMENT OF THE HONORABLE DONALD Y. YAMAMOTO, ACTING ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF STATE, BUREAU OF AFRICAN AFFAIRS, U.S. DEPARTMENT OF STATE

Ambassador YAMAMOTO. Thank you very much for your graciousness.

And I submit a longer version for the record.

Mr. SMITH. Without objection, it will be a part of the record.

Ambassador YAMAMOTO. Thank you, Chairman Smith, Ros-Lehtinen, and Poe, and Ranking Members Bass, Deutch, Sherman, and the other members of this committee, for the opportunity to testify to you today.

The countries of the Sahel face a complex series of interconnected and ever-evolving challenges. The 80 million people of the Sahel, representing roughly 10 percent of the sub-Saharan Africa's total population live in some of the world's poorest countries, which consistently rank at the bottom of any human development scale.

The security vacuum following the Libyan revolution and the crisis in Mali exacerbated the Sahel's longstanding political, economic security and humanitarian vulnerabilities. Instability in Mali and increased arms flow from Libya into the region also collided with a humanitarian crisis brought on by drought, poor harvests in the region already burdened by chronic poverty and food insecurity.

Addressing the Sahel's many challenges demands a comprehensive approach. We are working closely with regional countries and organizations to improve their capacity to secure porous borders and challenge terrorists and transnational criminal networks.

The Trans-Sahara Counterterrorism Partnership, TSCTP, is the United States' primary vehicle to assist countries in the region to improve the counterterrorism capacity capability and capacity to control border areas. Algeria, Burkina Faso, Mauritania, and Chad are currently using training and equipment provided under TSCTP to contain the threat of AQIM and other extremist groups.

Sahel countries have played an active role in supporting the French and African-led military intervention that has pushed extremists back into the isolated areas in northern Mali. Chad's role in Mali has been significant. Burkina Faso and Niger have also each contributed around 670 soldiers to the African-led International Support Mission in Mali, AFISMA.

The United States is in the process of providing up to $96 million to support AFISMA troop and police-contributing countries, including Niger and Burkina Faso. Improving security in the Sahel, however, requires more than counterterrorism responses. The acute security and humanitarian challenges facing the Sahel today demand a robust international response.

Our short-term successes may be fleeting if we fail to address the longstanding political and economic fragility and render the Sahel susceptible to crisis and conflict. Poor governance, weak democratic institutions, and a lack of development and economic opportunities cultivate fertile ground for instability. Improving governance, strengthening democratic institutions, and increasing economic opportunities, particularly for the young, therefore, are central to improving Sahel's prospects for long-term stability and security. This is recited in the U.N. Security Council resolution 2100, which articulates a comprehensive approach to addressing the multifaceted

problems facing Mali. And this is also to a conference that my colleague and I attended in Brussels to address this issue.

While Mali and the Sahel remain extremely vulnerable, there are signs of progress. Niger, for instance, has achieved remarkable political and economic reforms since returning to democracy after the 2010 coup.

Mali is also moving forward. The United States cosponsored resolution 2100 and joins the international community in supporting Mali's plan to hold Presidential elections in July. The creation of a Malian Peace and Reconciliation Commission signifies another important step forward. Elections and national reconciliations are crucial in setting Mali back on the path toward peace and security.

And so, with this, I welcome your questions.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Yamamoto follows:]

Testimony by Acting Assistant Secretary Donald Yamamoto
Bureau of African Affairs, U.S. State Department

House Subcommittees on Africa, Global Health, Global Human Rights, and International Organizations
And
Terrorism, Nonproliferation, and Trade
And
Middle East and North Africa

May 21, 2013

"The Growing Crisis in Africa's Sahel Region"

Thank you very much Chairmen Smith, Poe, and Ros-Lehtinen, Ranking Members Bass, Deutch, and Sherman, and Members of the Committee; for the opportunity to testify before you on this important topic. The countries of the Sahel face a complex series of interconnected and ever-evolving challenges. The crisis in Mali, and security vacuum following the Libyan revolution, exacerbated the Sahel's longstanding political, economic and humanitarian vulnerabilities. Instability in Mali and increased arms flows from Libya into the region, collided with a humanitarian crisis brought on by drought and poor harvests in a region already burdened by chronic poverty and food insecurity.

Addressing the Sahel's intertwined security and humanitarian problems demands a comprehensive approach. We are working closely with regional countries and organizations to improve their capacity to secure porous borders and challenge terrorists and transnational criminal networks. The United States also continues to lead the robust international response to meet the needs of the Sahel's

most vulnerable people. Any short-term progress, however, could be jeopardized by the region's continued political and economic frailties, including persistently poor governance, weak institutions, and the lack of economic opportunities, particularly for youth. Building strong democratic institutions and promoting inclusive government and economic growth are at the center of our approach as we attempt to solidify security gains and restore stability to the Sahel and its people.

Crisis and Conflict in the Sahel

By extension, security in the Sahel and North Africa are inextricably linked. Porous borders and limited government presence and capacities mean that insecurity in one part of the region can quickly become a security threat in another. In 2011, one result of the Libyan revolution, among many others, was an increase in the flow of dangerous weapons and well-armed, experienced fighters into the Sahel. The collapse of Libyan security institutions caught the Sahel at an especially vulnerable time. In Mali, a rebellion in the north by heavily armed, primarily Tuareg rebel groups, together with weak governance in Bamako, corruption, and an ineffectual counterterrorism response, culminated in a March 2012 coup d'état. Terrorist and extremist groups, including al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM), exploited the resulting political vacuum and seized control of the northern two-thirds of Mali. Terrorists enjoyed greater freedom of movement and, temporarily, access to a larger pool of potential recruits and training opportunities. At the same time, transnational criminal networks used well-established smuggling routes to increase their trafficking in weapons, drugs and people. Chad has been a steady route for illicit weapons trafficking out of Libya. However, the Chadian government, with State Department support, has

significantly increased its efforts to counter the illicit trafficking of advanced conventional weapons including man-portable air defense systems (MANPADS).

In the aftermath of the terrorist takeover of northern Mali, neighboring countries – including Mauritania, Burkina Faso, and Niger –intensified their own efforts to block violent extremists and criminal networks from expanding their operations into other parts of the region. The Trans-Sahara Counterterrorism Partnership (TSCTP) has been the United States' primary vehicle to assist these and other countries in the region to improve their capacity to monitor and control border areas and improve their overall counterterrorism capability. TSCTP supports a coordinated and comprehensive U.S. government approach to building long-term security capacity in Algeria, Burkina Faso, Chad, Mauritania, Niger, Morocco, Nigeria, Senegal, and Tunisia. The program is designed to support partner and regional efforts to contain and marginalize terrorist organizations, disrupt efforts to recruit and train extremists, counter efforts to establish safe havens, and disrupt foreign fighter networks. Niger, Burkina Faso, Mauritania, and Chad are utilizing the training and equipment provided under TSCTP to contain the threat of AQIM and other extremist groups.

Sahel countries have played an active role in supporting the French and African-led military intervention that has pushed extremists back into isolated areas in northern Mali. Chad's role in Mali has been significant. Chadian troops deployed using Chadian assets and have played a central role in counterterrorism operations. Both Burkina Faso and Niger have each contributed around 670 soldiers to the African-led International Support Mission in Mali (AFISMA) and have pledged to increase their troop contributions when appropriately-vetted elements of AFISMA transition into a UN peacekeeping operation in July 2013.

The United States is in the process of providing up to $96 million to support AFISMA troop and police contributing countries, including Niger and Burkina Faso. Our support includes training, vehicles, communications equipment, and personnel equipment, which will help AFISMA contingents to transition from a regional force into effective UN peacekeepers.

While the French and African-led intervention successfully wrestled control of the majority of Malian territory from terrorists and weakened AQIM, continued asymmetric attacks against international and Malian forces in and around northern population centers illustrate that Mali and the region remain vulnerable to violent extremism. A stable and successful future in Mali depends on a coordinated approach to security, political, development, and humanitarian challenges. We firmly supported the adoption of United Nations Security Council Resolution 2100 (2013). The Resolution lays out a comprehensive approach to addressing the multifaceted crises in Mali – an approach that prioritizes not only the need to confront the immediate security challenges in Mali, but also stresses the need to restore democratic governance, implement an inclusive national dialogue, protect civilians, promote human rights, reform Mali's security sector, deliver humanitarian assistance, and establish effective mechanisms for justice and accountability.

Addressing insecurity in Mali is only one piece of the Sahel's security puzzle. Terrorists pushed out of Mali will show up in other ungoverned spaces. Instability in Libya and the lack of government control over its southern territory will continue to post an ever-present threat to the Sahel. Porous borders and insufficient reach by security services makes the Mali – Niger – Libya corridor an area of concern because it can facilitate the movement of terrorist groups and

transnational criminal networks. We will continue to work with regional partners and organizations to build their capacity and improve regional cooperation to combat this shared threat.

Humanitarian Challenges

Responding to the instability in Mali and Libya alone would have presented an enormous challenge. Yet in the midst of the international community's response to this spike in regional instability, the Sahel faced a serious humanitarian crisis in 2012 brought on by a severe drought and failed harvests that put 18.7 million people at risk for food insecurity, including one million children at risk of severe acute malnutrition. Since the beginning of the conflict in Mali, more than 475,000 Malians have been displaced internally or across borders, further straining already stretched resources. Burkina Faso, Mauritania and Niger have generously welcomed some 175,000 refugees, despite their own food insecurity. The United States continues to lead the international response to this humanitarian crisis. Since Fiscal Year 2012, we have been providing over $550 million in humanitarian assistance across the Sahel to address food insecurity and the needs of conflict-affected Malians, including refugees.

Early warning systems and a robust international response helped prevent a humanitarian catastrophe; but an estimated 10 million people remain at risk of food insecurity. Sadly, food shortages are nothing new for the arid Sahel, which has experienced debilitating, recurring droughts throughout its history. More attention is needed to alleviate chronic food insecurity and break the cycle of emergency assistance. USAID Assistant Administrator Nancy Lindborg will provide details on a new U.S. government initiative to build resilience throughout the Sahel.

Consolidating Gains: Building Governance and Inclusive Economic Growth

While the acute security and humanitarian challenges facing the Sahel today demand a robust international response, we must remember that our short-term successes may be fleeting if we fail to address the longstanding political and economic fragility that make the Sahel susceptible to persistent crisis and conflict. Poor governance, weak democratic institutions, and a lack of development and economic opportunity cultivate fertile ground for instability. Helping these countries to strengthen their institutions and be more responsive and inclusive is equally critical to addressing the region's deep-seated security, political and development challenges.

The Sahel remains vulnerable, but we are also seeing signs of progress throughout the region to improve governance, boost transparency and accountability, and promote inclusive economic growth. Niger has made measurable progress on political and economic reform since returning to democracy after a 2010 coup. In 2012, Niger achieved eligibility for a Millennium Challenge Corporation compact. There are also signs of progress in Burkina Faso, which in December 2012 held successful parliamentary elections that were judged free and fair by the international community. In Mauritania, long-delayed parliamentary elections are now scheduled for October 2013.

Promoting economic growth and development is also critical to putting the Sahel on a path to stability. Creating viable economic opportunities and meeting the basic needs of its citizens remain a daunting task for countries that consistently rank at the very bottom of any measure of human development. Ensuring

women's full participation in the economy is critical for countries to raise productivity, generate demand, and pull communities out of poverty. We are working with all our partners in the Sahel on a wide variety of economic, health, and education programs. In Burkina Faso, a five-year, $481 million Millennium Challenge Corporation Compact, which is on track to successfully conclude in 2014, is reducing poverty through investments in roads, improved agricultural productivity, land use rights, and primary education. In Mauritania, the U.S. - North Africa Partnership for Economic Opportunity (NAPEO) is building a network of U.S. and North African business leaders, entrepreneurs, civil society and public sector leaders to foster job creation, regional cooperation, and entrepreneurship, with a focus on youth. Assistant Administrator Lindborg will have much more to share on our efforts to promote economic growth and development.

Comprehensive Solutions to Complex Problems

Addressing the complex and evolving security, political and humanitarian challenges in the Sahel demands a comprehensive regional and international approach. Under the leadership of Under Secretary of State for Political Affairs Wendy Sherman, the State Department and USAID have convened a working group, chaired by the Deputy Assistant Secretaries of the Africa, Near East, and Counter Terrorism bureaus, that is conducting a thorough review of our approach to security in the Maghreb and Sahel to ensure that our regional and functional bureaus are effectively working together to address the region's interconnected challenges. Many of our partners, including the European Union, the United Kingdom, and France, are engaging in similar efforts to create multidimensional, Sahel-wide strategies, and we are coordinating closely to ensure a common and

complementary approach. The United States is also supporting the ongoing efforts of the UN Special Envoy for the Sahel, Romano Prodi, to develop an integrated UN strategy for tackling the region's multiple crises.

In closing, we must continue our efforts to approach the Sahel and the Maghreb's interconnected problems with a comprehensive regional and international effort. Such an effort must address the immediate security threat posed by violent extremists and transnational criminal networks, while at the same time building the institutional capacity needed to address the Sahel's political economic and humanitarian challenges.

Mr. SMITH. Ambassador Yamamoto, thank you very much.

Ms. Lindborg?

Ms. LINDBORG. Thank you.

STATEMENT OF THE HONORABLE NANCY E. LINDBORG, ASSISTANT ADMINISTRATOR, BUREAU FOR DEMOCRACY, CONFLICT AND HUMANITARIAN ASSISTANCE, U.S. AGENCY FOR INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Ms. LINDBORG. Good afternoon. Thank you, Chairman Smith, Ranking Member Bass, and members of the other subcommittee leadership: Ros-Lehtinen, Poe, Deutch, and Sherman. Thank you for assembling us today for this important topic.

As Acting Assistant Secretary Yamamoto noted, he and I were at a conference in Brussels last week, where 80 nations came together to support Mali, which is an important development. During that event, President Traore of Mali noted how grateful he was for the international support and the fact that terror had abated. And he commended us to address the root causes of this crisis, with good governance as the priority. And his comments, as many of you understood, really addressed the complex challenges that fact the Sahel, where we have insecurity, weak governance, chronic underdevelopment that combine to result in great vulnerabilities to drought, to conflict, to terrorism. And these vulnerabilities have kept millions in the Sahel in a state of poverty and perpetual humanitarian crisis.

I have visited four countries in the Sahel since the Fall of 2011. Without question, there are bright spots. In Senegal, with the peaceful transfer of power in their last elections, women attained 43 percent of the parliamentary seats. A civilian energetic government in Niger that has withstood the recent pressures, remarkable farmer-led regreening efforts in Niger and Burkina Faso. However, the challenges in this highly complicated region have humanitarian and security implications that, as you have noticed, we absolutely must stay focused on.

So four ways that USAID is tackling these challenges: First, continued humanitarian assistance, life-saving for a region that is buffeted by continual shock. In 2012, the third drought hit the Sahel in less than a decade. It affected 18.7 million people, 8 million people were in need of emergency food assistance.

Thanks to the early warning systems that we have invested in for the past several decades, we saw signs of this drought as early as the Fall of 2011. We were able to move in prepositioned assistance and I believe forestall a much worse crisis.

However, as that drought was coming forward, the conflict worsened in northern Mali. Malians fled to the south and across borders to communities that were already stretched by drought.

In 2012 and 2013, we have provided over $550 million in humanitarian assistance to the drought-affected and conflict-affected families. And this brings me to our second area of focus, which is building resilience.

Even in the best of times, the Sahel has high malnutrition. And shock after shock keeps millions in perpetual crisis. We know that these will continue to happen. And what used to be 10-year cycles of drought are now every other year. Galvanized by the Horn

drought, followed by the Sahel drought, we have launched a resilience agenda, with the goal of reducing chronic crisis because of chronic poverty. We are working with international development partners to get ahead of the crisis and enable families and communities to weather these shocks more effectively. We have increased our team in the Sahel. And we have our development and humanitarian teams working together to design joint programs.

Our third area of focus is governance. This is fundamental to stability, to sustaining our resilience and our development gains, and to withstanding the inevitable shocks. The March 2012 coup in Mali vividly illustrates this.

Going forward, legitimacy will be essential for the sustainability of any democratic transition. We are working in Mali to support this return to democracy, as we are working to support and consolidate democracies in Niger and Nigeria and elsewhere in the region.

Assistant Secretary Yamamoto has spoken about our efforts to counter violent extremism. And we continue to work as part of the interagency on the interagency Trans-Sahara Counterterrorism Partnership to complement our relief, resilience, and development efforts.

None of these shocks will be defeated overnight. And the heart of progress will be legitimate accountable democratic governance. This is vital to ensuring that we have an alternative to extremism and to protecting precious development gains in the face of inevitable shocks for our own national and economic security and for the people of the Sahel who have already endured so much.

Thank you very much.

[The prepared statement of Ms. Lindborg follows:]

WRITTEN STATEMENT
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HUMANITARIAN ASSISTANCE,
U.S. Agency for International Development

"The Growing Crisis in Africa's Sahel Region"
May 21, 2013

Thank you Chairman Smith, Ranking Member Bass and Members of the Subcommittee on Africa, Global Health, Global Human Rights, and International Organizations; the Subcommittee on the Middle East and North Africa; and the Subcommittee on Terrorism, Nonproliferation, and Trade, for the opportunity to speak with you today about the complex set of developments affecting the people of the Sahel and USAID's efforts to date. Thank you also for your continued support for our assistance programs that make a difference in the lives of millions every day.

Introduction

Last week, along with Acting Assistant Secretary Don Yamamoto, I attended a conference in Brussels where 80 nations came together to pledge support for Mali as it seeks a pathway back to democracy, peace and prosperity. President Traore of Mali began the meeting by thanking the international community for its help and expressing his gratitude for the fact that, in the north of Mali, people are no longer having their hands and feet cut off by terrorists, women are no longer being raped, and Islam is no longer being defamed as a tool of terrorists. In his speech, he emphasized that "we must learn our lessons from bad governance and realize that the collapse of this house of cards endangered our people as well as the entire region." He commended all of us "to address the root causes of this crisis with good governance as the first priority."

President Traore's comments underscore the complex challenges facing the Sahel, where areas of insecurity, weak governance and chronic underdevelopment combine to result in great vulnerabilities—to drought, conflict, and terrorism—that have kept millions across the region in a state of poverty and perpetual humanitarian crisis.

Since the Fall of 2011, I have visited four of the countries that comprise the Sahel. The families I met, in Niger, Burkina Faso and Mali, were experiencing serious crisis for the second or third time in a decade. Thanks to your support and to the continued efforts of USAID, the State Department, and our international development partners, many of these families—mothers and their children—have been able to endure.

There are significant bright spots in the region, including the very encouraging 2012 elections in Senegal; the current energetic, democratic government in Niger; the African-led International Support Mission in Mali (AFISMA); and the remarkable regreening efforts in Niger and Burkina Faso that have created important pockets of resilience to recurrent drought. However, the challenges in this highly complex, interwoven region have humanitarian and security implications that require our focused and sustained engagement.

Working closely with our colleagues across the U.S. government as well as with international development and African partners, USAID is responding to these challenges with country and regional programs that provide immediate life-saving humanitarian assistance; build resilience so households, communities, and systems can better withstand shocks; support the development of accountable, legitimate democratic governance; and analyze and address the 'push' and 'pull' drivers of violent extremism with development tools.

Humanitarian Crisis in the Sahel and the U.S. Response

In the fall of 2011, thanks to mechanisms including the Famine Early Warning System Network (FEWSNET), which USAID has supported for 25 years, we saw signs that there would be a tough lean season ahead for the Sahel. The third drought to hit the region in less than a decade would affect 18.7 million people by the height of the crisis in 2012, with more than 8 million people in need of emergency food assistance.

I am confident that taking early action in response to early warnings prevented a bad situation from becoming much worse. As early as November 2011, USAID began pre-positioning food commodities and, in February 2012, I traveled to Niger and Burkina Faso to assess the worsening situation. Since the beginning of 2012 the U.S. government has provided over $550 million in humanitarian assistance to reach more than three million people across the region. This includes more than $181 million for Mali's ongoing complex crisis, of which $32 million was announced last week. The U.S. response provided food, cash and vouchers to those most vulnerable across the Sahel; supported protection and emergency assistance to Malian refugees, IDPs, and conflict-affected populations and treatment for acutely malnourished children; taught pastoralists better ways to produce fodder; and helped farmers who had lost their seed stock plant for the next season.

Our response to the most recent crisis in the Sahel was smarter, more targeted, and more market-sensitive than ever to help the communities of the region build resilience to the next, inevitable drought. Because food markets were still functioning in most parts of the Sahel, our cash and voucher programs allowed vulnerable families and communities to access locally available food and basic goods in addition to our in-kind food aid. Coupled with temporary work opportunities, these efforts supported local markets and promoted sustainable agriculture practices even while responding to acute needs. We focused on strengthening nutrition by providing new, nutrient-rich food products and by promoting key nutrition messages. Importantly, for many pastoralist

families in the Sahel, cows, sheep, and goats are tantamount to savings accounts; our emergency response continues to help families keep livestock healthy and alive.

Recent reports from the Nigerien government say some 800,000 people in Niger will require food assistance in coming months despite above average rainfall and crop production in 2012. While still too high, this number is significantly lower than the 6.4 million Nigeriens in need at the peak of the crisis last year.

Looking ahead, the interrelatedness of West African markets and insecurity will continue to have a strong effect on food security. Flooding in the regional breadbasket of Nigeria and conflict in Northern Nigeria and Northern Mali are affecting markets and trade flow region wide. In Nigeria's Borno and Yobe states—the epicenter of the Boko Haram conflict—high staple food prices coupled with conflict-related declines in crop production, cash incomes, and market trade flows are expected to result in crisis levels of food insecurity. While food prices are likely to increase atypically as demand outpaces supply, the good news is that last year's plentiful harvests have allowed many across the Sahel to earn more from sales and keep a little for themselves.

Building Resilience to the Region's Recurrent Crisis

Childhood malnutrition and underdevelopment are endemic in the region under even the best of circumstances, so one poor harvest can push millions of the most vulnerable into severe risk. As a result of climate change, areas that used to experience severe drought once every ten years are now affected every two or three, meaning food prices have been continually high since the food crisis of 2008. When drought hit its peak in 2012, many families were still struggling to recover from food crisis in 2010. The farmers of Chad, Niger, Burkina Faso, and their neighbors were forced to borrow money to buy food or the seeds to plant during the rainy season saddling them with crippling debts and perpetuating a vicious cycle of need.

Recurrent crises like we have seen in the Sahel erase development gains we cannot afford to lose. USAID is determined to get ahead of these kinds of chronic crises by doing business differently. We cannot prevent drought in Niger or flooding in Nigeria, but we can and are working to create better solutions and build greater resilience among the most vulnerable.

In Dakar, Senegal, we have brought our humanitarian and development teams together to form a regional Joint Planning Cell (JPC) to undertake joint analysis and joint planning for a more comprehensive approach to programming in the region. They are working to layer, sequence and integrate our relief and development resources and activities for a greater, long-term impact. With the goal of tackling drivers of vulnerability—poverty, marginalization, weak governance, low rainfall, population pressure and high population growth, food price volatility and climate variability—our JPC is driving forward a resilience strategy that builds on successful adaptations and innovations already underway to reduce risk, build resilience, and facilitate inclusive

economic growth in targeted areas. The goal is to reduce humanitarian caseloads in the region by several hundred thousand while benefiting millions.

USAID's resilience work in the Sahel is part of a larger, international Resilience Agenda galvanized by the 2011 crisis in the Horn of Africa. Together with our development partners, we committed to the shared goal of building resilience to get ahead of chronic crisis, protect development gains, and make populations around the world less vulnerable to inevitable shocks. This renewed focus on resilience is vital to building food security—tantamount to human security—for so many across the Sahel.

The Vital Role of Transparent, Accountable Governance

As we have seen in crises around the world, the lack of good governance in the Sahel has been a core contributor to the region's instability—and compromised local governments' ability to prevent the onset and escalation of crisis. The March 2012 coup in Mali, coinciding with a regional food security crisis well under way, reflected the fragility of Mali's democratic development and exacerbated humanitarian need region wide.

Disillusionment with the government's inequitable delivery of basic services and management of the Tuareg rebellion in the north made the country vulnerable to political upheaval. Previous iterations of the Tuareg rebellion had been handled with limited political concessions and promises, while the physical distance between northern and southern Mali enabled Bamako to underplay the problems of security and poor governance in the north.

Ordinarily, frustrations with the incumbent government's performance would have been expressed through a change of leadership and parties. An influx of fighters and weapons from Libya, among other factors, made this time different. Ultimately, the deficits of a government that was not inclusive, accountable, or responsive to the needs of its people were laid bare when an under-resourced and poorly equipped Malian army illegitimately took power in a coup d'etat, disrupting 20 years of democratic rule.

Going forward, government legitimacy will be essential for the sustainability of any democratic transition. USAID supports an inclusive electoral process that includes the participation of all Malian citizens. Our partners will provide support for training and technical assistance to government institutions for election administration, electoral legal reform, domestic election observation, and civic and voter education, with targeted assistance for IDPs and returned refugees. In January 2013, USAID launched a "Mali Transition Initiative," a pilot program to support the democratic process and participation in elections. USAID recently expanded the initiative to support peace and reconciliation efforts – consistent with the Section 7008 coup restrictions – through activities that facilitate dialogue at the national, regional and community

levels, bringing together traditional, non-governmental community leaders, youth, women, and religious leaders.

While we look forward to the restoration of democratic rule following presidential elections scheduled for July, Mali's political crisis has left the country unable to deal over the last year with the escalating humanitarian and security crisis within and beyond its borders. More than 300,000 IDPs are reportedly now in the country and 175,000 Malian refugees in Niger, Burkina Faso, and Mauritania. While the French intervention has increased humanitarian access to the hard-to-reach north, violence by remnants of extremist groups continue to complicate relief efforts and pose additional threats to the security of the region. Meanwhile, recent surveys indicate that displaced populations still hesitate to return for fear of reprisals, general insecurity, or the lack of basic services like education and health care. With Malians in the north still extremely vulnerable due to limited interventions over the last year, public structures decimated, and a host of actors vying for power, Mali's new democracy will face steep challenges indeed.

As the U.S. commitment to a strong, humanitarian response in the Sahel remains unwavering, our continued support for a peaceful democratic transition in Mali and support for stronger, more accountable governance across the region will be just as vital.

In Niger, USAID provided critical support for electoral and constitutional reform to help enable a peaceful transition from military to civilian rule following the February 2010 military coup, and we continue to support good governance through support for greater transparency in the extractive industries. In Nigeria, USAID prioritizes extensive elections support, ongoing civil society engagement, capacity building for key government agencies with a focus on strengthening fiscal responsibility and improving transparency, and strengthening independence of the judiciary. At both the national and local levels, transparent and accountable governance is vital for West Africa to endure the range of shocks it is confronting—from climate change to conflict to the array of extremist groups now vying for influence.

Development's Role in Countering Violent Extremism

While the recent rise of violent extremism in West Africa cannot be directly attributed to drought, chronic food insecurity, or weak governance, each of these factors can indirectly exacerbate instability in the region. Just as droughts and floods result in crisis because of the Sahel's underlying chronic vulnerabilities, structural "push" factors can create the conditions that favor the rise of violent extremism. USAID's 2012 policy on countering violent extremism (CVE) defines push factors as high levels of social marginalization, poorly governed or ungoverned areas, government repression and human rights violations, endemic corruption and elite impunity, and cultural threat perceptions. Importantly, these push factors only contribute to violent extremism when combined with 'pull' factors, which often involve the appeal of an inspirational figure or material, emotional, or spiritual benefits from affiliation with an extremist group.

Since 2006, through the Trans-Sahara Counterterrorism Partnership (TSCTP), an integrated interagency approach to address violent extremism in the region, USAID has worked to forge partnerships between the U.S. and African governments to empower participants to resist the drivers of extremism at the individual and community levels. USAID's work under TSCTP focuses on the four areas where we see the greatest opportunity for local partnerships and progress: youth empowerment, education, media, and good governance.

To ensure that the impact of our development assistance and CVE efforts are not undermined by the influence of drug trafficking—a clear contributor to instability in a region that has long been home to illicit smuggling networks—USAID is working with the interagency to mitigate the trafficking of narcotics and transnational organized crime and developing a USAID programming guide based on the impact of drug trafficking on development in the region. The incursion of fast drug money into the Sahel's political systems exacerbates existing governance challenges, as armed groups in the region exact security fees from drug traffickers in exchange for protection.

Conclusion

To help defeat the range of shocks that has put West Africa on the front pages of international newspapers over the last year, we have increased our focus on tackling the region's chronic underdevelopment and underlying vulnerabilities. USAID is at the forefront of these efforts, working closely with our interagency partners, and doing business differently to ensure that each investment goes even further.

At the heart of progress will be legitimate, accountable democratic governance, as we are already seeing in countries like Senegal and Niger. This will be vital to ensuring an alternative to extremism and to protecting precious development gains in the face of inevitable shocks—for our own national and economic security and for the people of the Sahel who have already endured so much.

Thank for your time today, and I look forward to taking your questions.

Mr. SMITH. Ms. Lindborg, thank you very much for your testimony. And, without objection, your full statement will also be made a part of the record.

We do have three votes on the floor. I thought I would ask some questions and then we would go into a brief recess. Then we will come right back and go to the other members for their questions if that is okay.

Let me just ask first, earlier today, as I mentioned, I had a very good meeting with Malian Speaker Touré, who is obviously the former Prime Minister as well. And we spoke about a number of issues, including the challenges of the July election. And I wonder if you might just speak to whether or not that election can occur in a way that would be free, fair, and inclusive.

We also talked about malaria. I chaired a hearing just a few days ago with Admiral Ziemer. We had Mark Dybul, who now is Executive Director of the Global Fund, who told us that we are at a tipping point. There is a lack of bed nets, despite the best efforts of the international community, including the United States, and that the nets do not last forever. You know, once they are 2 to 3 years old, they have to be replaced. When there is a crisis like we have seen in Mali, infectious diseases and parasites are also opportunistic and could gain a foothold.

I wonder, Ms. Lindborg especially, if you could speak to that? You spoke eloquently to the hunger issue. Maybe you could elaborate a bit on what the issues are, the challenges of malaria and other infectious diseases.

We also had just a few days before that with Dr. Frieden, who talked about multi-drug resistance and resistance in general. You talked about the resiliency efforts. Well, resistance is something we are all concerned about when antibiotics fail to do their magic. So if you could speak to those issues, I would appreciate it.

Ms. LINDBORG. Sure. First of all, for the July elections, we are working very closely with international partners and certainly with the Malians to do two things. First is support a reconciliation approach. One of the issues is addressing the fact that so many Malians felt disenfranchised and not a part of the overall conversation.

We are supporting both that national reconciliation approach as well as support for the mechanics of the election. Clearly one of the important issues is ensuring that the many refugees and IDPs, internally displaced people, have an opportunity to vote. And UNDP along with UNHCR are very much focused on ensuring that there are those kinds of more inclusive registration approaches.

There are two parts to the election. One is the Presidential, which is scheduled for July 28th. And it is unclear whether the legislative elections will be able to be held then or scheduled for later in the fall. It is critical that Mali have the elections as a means of returning to its democratic roots and taking a pathway forward.

On your second question about malaria, this is critical. You are absolutely right in that, even as we look at very high malnutrition rates, at the height of the drought, the largest killer of children under five in Burkina Faso was malaria. For that reason, as part of the resilience agenda—and it is a little bit like your three subcommittees coming together—we have brought together across sec-

tors our teams in USAID to put together a more comprehensive, focused approach that includes our efforts to combat malaria and our family-planning approaches and our food insecurity approaches together so that we are able to address some of the root causes across the sectors and have a more potent and effective approach to, even as we save lives, setting the pathway to development.

Infectious diseases are always of concern when you are moving into emergency. And a lot of our efforts, in addition to our health programming, are also in water sanitation.

And the final piece is that, in addition to the bed nets, it is the behavioral change that is so important, which is why you want to package these together.

Mr. SMITH. Was the Brussels conference a success?

Ms. LINDBORG. It was——

Mr. SMITH. Go ahead. Please. I am sorry.

Ms. LINDBORG. It was very successful in that it both raised a lot of money, it kept the attention of the issue with the top of international attention. And there was a combined agreement among most of the nations there that it was imperative for Mali to return to its democratic roots and to have national reconciliation as key to moving forward.

Mr. SMITH. We are almost out of time, but just if you could spend a moment on the State Department-led, pan-Sahel initiative charged with detecting and responding to suspicious movement? Has it worked? Are we happy with the coordination?

And the other point, just like these committees coming across lines, I know that the State Department is looking to do so because there is a split in terms of jurisdiction. Is the coordination much improved in your opinion? And what might we expect in terms of new initiatives?

Ambassador YAMAMOTO. Yes. As far as the coordination between not only the interagencies but also with the governments involved in the Sahel, it has been very cooperative and focused on really clear common agendas and themes.

And then one last step, going back to the elections in Mali, I think the elections in Mali would be critical to establishing and moving forward on the whole wide range of issues because by going into democracy issues, we can address the other issues; in other words, release our funding and assistance which have been held up by the sanctions of 7008.

But more important is that it is part of the linchpin of the other crises that we must address, which is the humanitarian crisis, the reconciliation in the north, and also the conflict with the extremists.

Mr. SMITH. Ms. Bass?

Ms. BASS. Yes. I know we are getting ready to break to go to votes, but I just wanted to begin my questioning. And I can finish it when we come back.

I wanted to know if you could briefly discuss the role that AFRICOM may be planning to secure the areas. And if you don't have time to finish, we can finish when I get back.

Ambassador YAMAMOTO. You know, I defer to the DoD colleagues on AFRICOM, but, just shortly, in the Mali context, what

AFRICOM and DoD are not only the refueling for French aircraft but also intelligence sharing, which we are doing multi-agency.

And the other issue is providing strategic lift within the region to help some of the 15 African countries who are participating in AFISMA go into Mali to provide security assistance.

Mr. SMITH. The subcommittee stands in brief recess, subject to the call of the chair. I do apologize to our witnesses for the delay.

[Brief recess.]

Ms. BASS. Thank you very much. And sorry you had to wait, but we are through with votes now. We won't be interrupted again.

I know as I was running back and forth to my other hearing, that you mentioned the conference in Brussels. I wanted to know if you could describe the character of the conference and what new information may assist our committees.

And then I know it was reported that over $4 billion was pledged at the conference. I wanted to know how much was the U.S.'s contribution and what stipulations were made to ensure that Mali takes appropriate steps to hold elections.

Ms. LINDBORG. Hi. Thank you.

You know, it was very important that 80 nations came together at that moment to signal support for Mali. The funding that was raised is not all new money, I think, as the French noted. It includes money that is already in play. It also includes money that will be forthcoming from a variety of countries based on benchmarks achieved by Mali. But what is essential is that it provide that immediate assistance right now, especially as Mali moves forward to address national reconciliation in elections.

We announced $32 million of new money that is primarily for humanitarian assistance and for specifically the refugees. But we also noted the funds that we have already put toward Mali, which includes the $550 million of humanitarian assistance regionally and of that $7 million of democracy rights and governance support specifically for Mali and our funding for health programs and, specific to Mali, humanitarian.

So I think that it was a very positive conference. We commended the French and the Europeans for hosting it. And we look forward to working with the international community on what is a very important, and it won't be easy, road to bring Mali back to democracy.

Ms. BASS. Well, you know, I wondered when we were there in February and had met with the President and asked him how he was going to be able to hold elections with a couple of hundred thousand people displaced. And maybe you could respond to that, you know, whether there is the capacity to do that, how it will be done, who will be monitoring.

Ambassador YAMAMOTO. Thank you.

Let me just start with a couple of points and turn to my colleague. The issue is that registration in the north, as you know, in the last election was about 36–37 percent of the people voting in 2007. And for credible elections to take place, you really need to have the registration of the minority groups, ethnic groups up in the north: The Tuaregs, the Songhais, and the Arab groups.

Nancy Lindborg and I talked to President Issoufou of Niger. And we said that we would like to work for it and registering the refugees. There were about 400,000 who are internally displaced or in

refugee camps. And so registering them, we figured that we can probably get to those magical numbers and to make it a reasonably credible election.

The French are also working in Kidal. So, therefore, you can have registration of groups in that area.

It is not the cleanest. It is messy. But at least we need to work for it. The elections are critical. The elections would be critical in holding because from there, we can do the other things that we need to do.

Ms. BASS. And you referred to the internally displaced.

Ambassador YAMAMOTO. That is right.

Ms. BASS. The externally displaced?

Ambassador YAMAMOTO. Like Tunisia, Mauritania, Chad, to register them as well in the refugee camps.

Do you want to add?

Ms. LINDBORG. I would just simply add that USAID with our efforts to provide election support is very focused on ways to include the internally displaced populations. There are a number of measures underway, including outreach, information campaigns. There will be a need, as you probably heard when you were there, to continue to augment the capacities of the Elections Commission.

There is a proposal to introduce biometric identification. And all of these measures we strongly believe must be accompanied by a reconciliation campaign, that there is that opportunity for dialogue so that people trust the elections and enable them to feel compelled. So there is both the mechanics of it and then the communications campaign and ways to make it a more inclusive, legitimate process.

Ms. BASS. And could you speak some about USAID's humanitarian efforts in the greater Sahel?

Ms. LINDBORG. Sure. You know, as I noted in my comments, we started in 2011, in the fall, with efforts to provide humanitarian assistance to the drought and doing so in a way that lay the foundation for greater resilience, even as we saved lives, overlay by all this displacement. So we have both the ongoing efforts to address the drought.

And one thing we kept in mind is that in the north, there was only ever 10 percent of the population that was in need. And in Mali, the greater need always was in the south with the food insecurity just in terms of proportion.

So the resilience agenda is giving us a way to address that, even as we look at ensuring we reach those populations in the north that are coming out of, really, a reign of terror over the last year.

Mr. SMITH. Mr. Weber, the gentleman from Texas?

Mr. WEBER. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

I guess this question is for Ms. Lindborg. Am I saying that right? Are we able to identify a lot of the countries in the Sahel that are going to be U.S.-friendly, for example? And if they are coming out of a background, terror, for example, how do we identify them and get the word out that we want to help them become stable economies, stable governments? Are we able to identify a list and then prioritize that list so that we can begin to work in the ones that need the most priority firstest? Is that a word?

Ms. LINDBORG. Let me start. And I may ask my colleague if he wants to jump in on that.

Mr. WEBER. Okay.

Ms. LINDBORG. But our humanitarian assistance is provided on the basis of need. And we work directly with communities in need, not through the governments. Our development assistance is very much about working in ways that create more accountable, more transparent, and more inclusive democracies, even as we invest also in health and agricultural programs.

In the Sahel, there are a range of governments. And there is a range of ways in which we are providing support to strengthen both our democracies but also investments in their economic and social indicators.

Mr. WEBER. Without going through the list and counting the countries, is it seven, ten, twelve?

Ms. LINDBORG. We have development programs and development missions primarily in Senegal. And of that spine of countries, we did in Mali. As Assistant Secretary Yamamoto said, the development activities are suspended until the return to the democratic roots of Mali.

We are increasing our programming in Burkina Faso and in Niger. And in Chad, we have primarily just humanitarian assistance, as is the case in Mauritania.

Mr. WEBER. Is there another country that you will identify that is probably going to need our help next; in other words, developing events, where you could say, "On a timeline basis, we are going to be here next"?

Ms. LINDBORG. You know, one of the problems with the Sahel is that it is chronically underdeveloped. And you could argue that it could absorb significant new development investments across the whole region. That is one of the reasons that we have partnered very closely with the European Union in an organization called AGIR, the Alliance for Global Investments in Resilience because we know that we need to partner to leverage the investments that everybody brings to the table, both to build resilience and improve more inclusive governance at all levels, local level, national, and regional.

Mr. WEBER. Okay. Did you want to weigh in, Mr. Yamamoto?

Ambassador YAMAMOTO. I guess just a general comment is that not only coordinating with the other organizations because this is not only a U.S. issue. It involves the regional states but also the diaspora. You know, you were mentioning how many countries are like the United States. You know, we did a survey about, you know, 70 percent of Africans like the United States. And why is that? Because we didn't have the colonial baggage, but more importantly is you have a large——

Mr. WEBER. You said 70 percent?

Ambassador YAMAMOTO. 70 percent.

Mr. WEBER. Okay.

Ambassador YAMAMOTO. You have a large diaspora in the United States who provide assistance and support. And that is also another group that we can rely on to help engage and try to resolve problems in Africa.

Mr. WEBER. Okay. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I yield back.

Mr. SMITH. Thank you very much.

Mr. Cotton?

Mr. COTTON. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. Yamamoto, I would like to ask a couple of questions about Mali and its implications. I am new to Congress, but when I saw the news in 2012 the Mali Government was struggling, that it might fall and France had to intervene, I found that to be somewhat surprising. I thought Mali was one of the more stable examples of a Sahel country. So I would like to know, one—do you share that assessment, first? Second, if so, what do you think we got wrong in our assessment? What did we miss in thinking that it was one of the better examples of stability in the region? And, third, how does that assessment bear on what other countries might face similar instability?

Ambassador YAMAMOTO. Let me take a first crack and then turn to my colleague. I think the issue is, you know, you look at these democratic countries or democratic-leaning countries. This year it is fragility of institutions within these countries. Mali is a very democratic country, where the institutions were very fragile. And so when you say, "Where did we fail?" I think the issue is not so much the failure. I think what you look at is there is a lot of number of issue. In other words, you had the influx of extremists coming into the area. You have the rise of the Tuareg rebellion. You have missed cues and missed plays by the government in making a military operation in the north, rather than dialogue as some of their main input into trying to reach out to these ethnic groups.

And so there is a combination of problems within these countries. What we are trying to do right now is stabilize it to first return democratic values and good governance to make the governments accountable to the people. And second is to address the terrible humanitarian crisis of 400,000 displaced. The other issue is to promote a dialogue with the government with all of the ethnic groups and tribal groups. And the final point is to address the issue of extremism. So that is the kind of thing.

Do you have anything you want to add?

Ms. LINDBORG. I would just underscore that any time you have marginalized populations, even if you have successful democratic elections, if you do not address those grievances, you are setting the stage for longer-term problems and the possibility of the kind of conflict that broke out. And we see this country after country. And it speaks to the importance of having an inclusive and very legitimate democracy, not just elections.

Mr. COTTON. I believe that other countries in the region are expected to contribute peacekeeping forces for Mali. I know that Mali right now is the center of counterterrorist operations in the region. Is there a concern on your part that the peacekeeping forces from those other countries could weaken their defenses and encourage Islamic jihadists to move out of Mali and into neighboring countries?

Ambassador YAMAMOTO. That is a very good point. They right now are speaking with the commander for the AFISMA, the African troops. In AFRICOM, you know, we have 15 countries, which speak 3 different foreign languages. And the capacity and capability is very different from each troop but because these countries

are committed to stability in Mali, because it is not only for Mali but for the stability of the region.

So are these countries also facing problems? Of course, they are, not only from extremist operations but also internally from weak institutions, fragility. And so by them coordinating and developing and providing assistance in troops to the Mali operation, that speaks volumes of their commitment, not only to Mali but also to their own defense as well.

I think it is going to take time. It is going to take a lot of effort. But we wanted to emphasize that this has to really be an African-led, African-managed operation because ultimately they bear the full responsibility for what happens in that area.

Mr. COTTON. When France intervened, they took the lead, but the United States very promptly had to provide assets like strategic airlifts, refueling, intelligence surveillance, reconnaissance. I am aware of those things as an ex-soldier.

Are there other kinds of critical assistance that the United States Government provided to either the French or to the Mali Government that we should have in mind as we look at the possibility of having to intervene to support counterterrorist operations elsewhere in the region?

Ambassador YAMAMOTO. I defer to my DoD colleagues, but on the French side, of course, we did the presidential draw-down authority. So, in other words, we had the $19 million total for the fuel, for the aircraft, and then intelligence we collected. And the other thing is to provide lift for the equipment into the area but also for helping for lift of some of the African troops into Mali.

As far as doing military operations or other things for the Malian Government, you would have to go to the DoD side, but what we are trying to do is make sure that AFISMA and the troops there have the equipment they need and the support, logistical support, and also we are going to continue to contribute so they can develop a command and control center, coordinate and integrate all of these troops and have good interoperability. I think that would be critical.

Mr. COTTON. Thank you.

Mr. SMITH. Mr. Cotton, thank you very much.

I just want to observe that Speaker Touré is still here, the Speaker of the Malian Parliament, the former Prime Minister. And I would just say, Mr. Speaker, Tom Cotton, who just asked the questions, one of the greatest things about our committee and, really, our Congress is the diversity of backgrounds. Tom spent 5 years on active duty. He is a graduate of Harvard Law School. So he combines those disciplines. And he was deployed twice to Afghanistan and to Iraq. So he asks questions that are relative to military issues, as do other members, all of whom have come here with a great deal of background sometimes.

Thank you.

Mr. COTTON. And I did join the Army after having gone to law school and practiced law, which may affect the depth of my legal skill and knowledge.

Mr. SMITH. That is great. Thank you, Tom.

Mr. Cook?

Mr. COOK. Thank you very much, Mr. Chair.

I have to apologize for my voice. I have laryngitis. I haven't been giving a lot of speeches, obviously.

But I just wanted to go back to your comment about the popularity of Americans, which I think obviously was a shock to a lot of people here. And I appreciate you explaining why. Now, how we could take advantage of that—and I think you already answered the question in terms of, you know, support those activities, just the geography of the region there with so many different countries and the different languages and ethnic groups and how some type of—whether it is the African Union or some type of loose federation of African states, what is the glue, the common denominator? Because I agree with you. I think that is the only way. You know, Africa governed and the chances made by Africa's outside interlopers are not going to do it, but I think we have the opportunity to help something like that.

I think what I am looking for is some kind of common denominator to enable something like that, where it is just very hard for me when I look at a map and you look at the different countries and just remember some of the countries, Ouagadougou, the capitals. And what was it? Nouakchott that was the capital of Mauritania and very, very difficult. Most Americans don't understand it and particularly looking at a map.

And then I wonder if you might have any—if you could elaborate on what kind of denominators that we think are most successful for the Americans to have an impact in that area.

Ambassador YAMAMOTO. I think each and every day, the United States has a tremendous impact, not only from the agencies but from American industry. I mean, here today, we have NGO groups, faith-based groups doing a lot of work in Africa and doing good work.

I think one of the things that you raise as a very important issue is, how do you bring all of these countries together? The African Union is one forum. You know, we assigned an American Ambassador to the African Union several years ago. Other countries have followed suit. We are trying to build capacity and capability. And then we are looking at the subregional groups, such as ECOWAS in the West, CEEAC in the central, SADC in the South. You have got all of these different organizations and regional groups.

And I think to build capacity, to build the ability to coordinate, and to face challenges on their own, that really is kind of the golden objective we are trying to do.

And I think the careful coordination between these organizations and the good will that we have with these groups, I think we are looking at I think successes now. And they can multiply in the future.

And so I think the—not only American foreign assistance but mainly American good will. Look what the United States does today. We brought in justices recently to look at the American system. That really helped influence how they view, how justice and law and the ability to talk with you, sir, and the chairman on how the Parliaments and the Congresses should work and operate. That also helps to promote good governance.

But I will turn to my colleague from USAID.

Ms. LINDBORG. You know, when I was in Senegal shortly after their Parliamentary elections, I met with a group of women who were ecstatic because 43 percent of the new Parliamentarians were women. And I was congratulating them. And one woman looked at me and said, "You know, this didn't happen overnight. We have been working on this for 25 years. And it has been with extraordinary help from the American public."

I say that to illustrate two things: 1) that progress is possible; and, 2) that it is going to take a while. But it is about helping countries, communities, civil society, private sector feel an ownership stake in the future of their country, and supporting their pathway forward. And we are seeing, as I noted, bright spots. Niger has an extraordinary program called the Nigerieus Nourish Nigeriens that is a very energetic comprehensive look at how to create greater economic opportunities for their people. And it is when people feel included in that future and understand the support that the United States is providing for that that you work on both of those fronts.

And the U.S. has been a tremendous partner for support for Africa that I think is borne out by these public opinion polls.

Mr. SMITH. Two very brief questions. One, when it comes to inclusion in partners, are we including the faith-based groups? And to what extent? If you could maybe say a word or two and then provide a breakout, if you will, a spreadsheet?

And, secondly, we have 300,000 IDPs and, of course, what, 150,000-plus refugees. I know we are working hand in glove with the UNHCR and other friends, but what is the unmet need when it comes to those IDPs and refugees? Is there a dollar amount that could be affixed to what that need is and maybe a breakout as to what the commodities are and other kinds of items that are now missing?

Ms. LINDBORG. Well, first of all, we have wonderful faith-based partners throughout the region. And the importance of those groups is that they have been there through thick and thin working at the community level. And we are honored to have them as partners and be delighted to provide you a breakout of who is doing what where. It is an impressive list. And we are through that able to leverage the generosity of the American public, which provides private support through these groups as well so that we are able to greatly increase the overall assistance that we provide. It is part of the American generosity.

On the needs of the IDPs and the refugees, there is a new U.N. appeal for 2013 of $410 million. And I am delighted to provide the committee a breakout of what that goes to, what has come in, both from the U.S. and from other donors.

Mr. SMITH. What is our contribution to that $410 million appeal?

Ms. LINDBORG. Our contribution to date just for Mali, refugees and IDPs, is $181 million, just over. And so there are both ongoing needs for just essential——

Mr. SMITH. Is that the same thing? The $410 million appeal is also the Mali aid or is that different?

Ms. LINDBORG. Right. That is just Mali.

Mr. SMITH. That is just Mali.

Ms. LINDBORG. That is just Mali. And so it is both ongoing needs.

Mr. SMITH. Okay.

Ms. LINDBORG. It is also we have been very focused on ensuring that the impact on drought-affected communities is addressed as well because many of them have gone to stay with communities that are already deeply stressed from the drought.

Mr. SMITH. Now, in terms of the assistance, I was part of a launch with seven African first ladies 2 years ago. You might recall it very well, the First 1,000 Days Initiative, from conception to the second birthday. How well are we doing in the Sahel region with regards to backing up that unbelievably important first 1,000 days of life? Because if you get that right, of course, you are more apt to get the rest of it right too.

Ms. LINDBORG. Yes. You are absolutely right. That is critical. And we have increased our focus on nutrition during those first 1,000 days. And one of the most important things we have done from the emergency side is increased the development of the highly digestible therapeutic foods that are so critical for those first 1,000 days and refocus some of our assistance programs to work both on the behavioral changes as well as the more nutritional products that can address malnutrition, without which you have impacts for the rest of an individual's life.

Mr. SMITH. Can I ask you, in terms of probiotics, has USAID integrated a probiotic mindset? Obviously, antibiotics have greatly increased the ability of people in their gut to carry the good flora. Where are we in terms of promoting good probiotic efforts, the good organisms?

Ms. LINDBORG. Yes. There are some interesting new studies out that show that clean water can be even more important than antibiotic treatments for addressing some of the gastrointestinal diseases that affect children and create malnutrition. So part of that is investment in greater clean water and sanitation approaches.

Mr. SMITH. Well, my point is—and maybe you can take it back—is, you know, the whole idea of immunity. And there is a growing body of knowledge that immunity is almost exponentially enhanced by having the right probiotic mix in a person's gut, gut flora.

Ms. LINDBORG. Yes. We can give you more details on that.

Mr. SMITH. Thank you for your testimony. I think we are finished with members. And thank you for your very honorable and effective service. Thank you.

Mr. SMITH. I would like to now welcome our second panel to the witness table, beginning with Mr. Rudolph Atallah, a 21-year veteran of the U.S. Air Force who retired as a lieutenant colonel. He served in the Office of the Secretary of Defense and as Africa counterterrorism director, where his responsibilities included advising the Secretary of Defense and other senior officials on counterterrorism policy, strategy, and serving as an adviser to the State Department numerous Embassies across Africa.

He has been a featured guest on programs on NPR, CSPAN, and the National Geographic Channel, where he has discussed African piracy and successful resolution of the 2009 Maersk Alabama incident.

We will then hear from Dr. Mima Nedelcovych, who is a partner in the Schaffer Global Group, a Louisiana-based project development, finance, and implementation company focused on agro-indus-

trial and renewable energy projects in the emerging markets in Africa and Latin America. For the Schaffer Group, he is the lead partner in a sugar project in Mali. He recently established an independent consulting practice on trade facilitation, project development, project finance, and public-private partnerships in Africa.

And then we will hear from Nii Akuetteh, who is an independent policy researcher analyst who specializes in U.S. foreign policy, African development, and international relations. He often publishes in American and African journals and appears in Aljazeera, Voice of America, the BBC, and other TV and radio outlets analyzing African issues. He has been a Georgetown University professor, journal editor, and leader of advocacy organizations working on three continents. He created and led two organizations focusing on democracy and conflict in Mali.

Colonel, if you could begin?

Mr. ATALLAH. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, distinguished members of the subcommittee.

I submitted a written statement for the record.

Mr. SMITH. Without objection, yours and all of the others' full statements will be made a part of the record.

STATEMENT OF MR. RUDOLPH ATALLAH, SENIOR FELLOW, MICHAEL S. ANSARI AFRICA CENTER, ATLANTIC COUNCIL

Mr. ATALLAH. Since my testimony on the situation in Mali last June, things have escalated dramatically, causing further instability in the Sahara and the Sahel. Many skeptics underestimated the Islamist threat and claim that the Saharan branch of AQIM was only focused on kidnappings for ransom and illicit trade, rather than jihadist activities. A year later, Mali is faced with a new threat: Suicide bombers, a phenomenon never seen in the Sahel before. In fact, since 9 February, Mali has experienced 12 suicide attacks in the cities of Timbuktu, Gao, Kidal, Méneka, and now Gossi, which happened on 9 May. These are primarily areas that were once under Islamist control after the secular MNLA was elbowed out by AQIM and its allies. I am concerned that in time, AQIM's influence and tactics will grow more sophisticated and violent following a similar evolution seen by the Nigerian jihadist group Boko Haram from 2011 to present.

The root causes of terrorist escalation in Mali and across the region are complex and multi-faceted. Understanding the why of this present violence and the logic of its perpetrators requires us to look more closely at some of the principal regional issues that contributed to this current crisis.

First, militants linked to al-Qaeda, hardened by years of survival under oppressive regimes, have been revived in this region since the start of the Arab Spring. Seasoned fighters from Afghanistan, Algeria, Iraq, Syria further bolster their skills and intent, helping them to expand their networks, strengthening their fighting capacities and resolve to recruit new militants.

Terrorist training camps exist in several parts of the region, and every state is vulnerable to AQIM, which has been massively bolstered by weapons flow, porous borders, and security vacuums in the Sahel, in combination with fragile regional governments.

The recruitment narrative of AQIM has also been given new life via Western intervention in Mali and renewed, increasingly severe focus on Western targets. The recent Amenas in Algeria; the hostage crisis; and the September 11, 2012 attack on the U.S. consulate just exemplify some of these patterns.

Another catalyst for violence, violent extremism in Mali and the broader region is the confluence of marginalized peoples, pushed into harsh border areas, and violent extremist organizations. Militant Islamists, like AQIM, Boko Haram, MUJAO, Ansar al-Dine, and others prove attractive to some within marginalized ethnic groups, coerced into a veritable no-man's land, seeking social justice and political recognition.

Despite the French intervention in 2013, of this year, designed to route out AQIM, the former has most certainly not concluded its project in Mali. For the better part of a decade, proselytization, intermarriage, a variety of inducements, and alliances with tribes have left AQIM with many friends in northern Mali and the region.

Moreover, AQIM fighters have opted for tactical withdrawal versus the supposed strategic defeat that some claim. Some militants clearly remain in the country, evidenced by the increased suicide bombings, while others have merely taken refuge in Libya, Algeria, Sudan, Niger, Mauritania, and elsewhere.

In sum, the French, Chadian, and Malian efforts in the main pushed against AQIM and their allies out of Mali. The network remains resilient and has emerged less effective but more clandestine in nature.

In contrast to Mali, Morocco stands out as a model for a reform in progress in the region. It continues to fight terrorism through the strengthening of the security and justice systems and emphasizes a preventive dimension against violent extremism and organized crime through reform in the economic, political, social, religious, and educational fields. And they have actually put this all in the Amazigh, or the Berber, language.

Nevertheless, like other countries in the region, Morocco is concerned with the risks of infiltration by terrorists fleeing Mali via illegal immigration channels. For example, 2 weeks ago, Moroccan authorities dismantled two terror cells that, according to news agencies, were believed to be in contact with jihadists in Mali.

While there are few proverbial silver bullets to solve this complex problem set, there are several approaches that could make a difference. And let me provide a few of them.

The first recommendation is, as we were discussing with the previous panel, to bring USAID back into the fight in the key territories in northern Mali and the surrounding region. Couple that with the support of U.S. and allied special forces initiatives. From Tindouf, Algeria to the Aouzou Strip in northern Chad, the arc of instability, as the U.N. calls it, the populations of this under-governed region receive little support and are left exploited by various political actors, including AQIM and its allies.

The second recommendation pertains to addressing border insecurity in the region. Borders between countries of the Sahara remain porous and open to terrorists and smuggler activity, both of which weaken governance and promote corruption, not to mention global insecurity. It is time that these countries of the region re-

ceive assistance to secure and monitor a movement along their borders. This applies not only to land traffic but also to air.

Finally to effectively counter the jihadist narrative wielded by AQIM, a comprehensive and expertly crafted information operations campaign is necessary for the region. Violent extremists associated with AQIM experience far too much safe haven in social, print, and televised media, and this must be rectified. Recently, news agencies flocked to write about AQIM's new Twitter account, which gained 5,000 new members in 2 weeks. And it is noteworthy that the Syrian terror group Jabhat al-Nusra, Somalia's al-Shabaab, and Tunisia's Ansar al-Sharia are all followed by this new AQIM Twitter account. Countering AQIM's media expansion and online havens is crucial to our long-term success against violent extremism in the region.

Thank you.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Atallah follows:]

Conflict and Instability in the Sahara and the Sahel:
Local Dilemmas, Global Implications

Prepared Statement of

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and
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before the

United States House of Representatives
Committee on Foreign Affairs
Subcommittee on Africa, Global Health, Global Human Rights, and International Organizations
Subcommittee on the Middle East and North Africa
Subcommittee on Terrorism, Nonproliferation, and Trade

on

"The Growing Crisis in Africa's Sahel Region"

Tuesday, May 21, 2013,
2:00 p.m.
Rayburn House Office Building, Room 2172
Washington, D.C.

Introduction

North Africa and the intertwined Sahel, from Egypt to Mauritania, is a region that has undergone profound and destabilizing political and social change in the last several years, especially since the "Arab Spring" of 2011. Nascent political systems, newly empowered non-state actors, and underlying structural problems in the region

contribute to an increasingly volatile mix, the implications of which—especially terrorism—are global in scope.

This statement explores the areas and sources of security and instability in the Sahara and Sahel, emphasizing several geographic focal points and specific threats. Terrorist networks associated with al-Qa'ida in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM) will receive a great deal of attention in this discussion, as will the patterns of radicalization and the illicit economies that support them. Left unaddressed, these patterns and nefarious actors will increasingly threaten the interests of the United States and her allies, both within and without Continental Africa.

I will conclude with several recommendations to the Congress, the primary one being to take the necessary legislative steps to empower and direct the Administration to work with the international community to synchronize critical USAID assistance to at-risk populations in places like Northern Mali with the efforts of Special Operations Forces (SOF) to deny safe haven to terrorist actors, diminish their standing within at-risk populations and prevent them from using the area to continue to threaten US and allied interests.

Mali

Since I last came before the Subcommittee on Africa, Global Health, and Human Rights to discuss the situation in Mali in June 2012, things have escalated dramatically in the West African country, causing further instability in the Sahara and the Sahel. Many skeptics underestimated the Islamist threat and claimed that the Saharan branch of AQIM was only focused on kidnappings for ransom and illicit trade, rather than jihadist activities. A year later, Mali is faced with a new threat, suicide bombers—a phenomenon never seen before in the Sahel. In fact, since 9 February 2013, Mali has experienced twelve suicide attacks in the cities of Timbuktu, Gao, Kidal, Ménaka, and now Gossi. These are primarily areas that were once under Islamist control after the predominantly Tuareg National Movement for the Liberation of Azawad (MNLA) was elbowed out of Northern Mali last June by AQIM and its allies. This trend, which speaks to the inculcation of the insidious ideology, ethos and means of al-Qa'ida's global jihad, is not going to disappear anytime soon. I am concerned that, in time, AQIM's influence and tactics will grow more sophisticated and violent in Mali, following a similar evolution seen in the Nigerian jihadist group Boko Haram from 2011 until present.[1]

The root causes of the terrorist escalation in Mali and across the region are complex and multi-faceted. Understanding the "why" of this present violence and the logic of its perpetrators requires us to look more closely at some of the principal regional issues that contributed to the current crisis.

[1] See J. Peter Pham, *Boko Haram's Evolving Threat*, Africa Center for Strategic Studies African Security Brief No. 20 (April 2012).

First, the situation in Northern Mali has recently escalated because jihadists across the region have become more proactive and lethal generally—a trend mirrored in Mali. Militants linked to al-Qa'ida, hardened by years of survival under oppressive regimes, have been revived in this region since the start of the "Arab Spring." Seasoned fighters from Afghanistan, Algeria, Iraq, and Syria further bolster their skills and intent, helping them to expand their networks, strengthening their fighting capacity and resolve to recruit new militants.[2] Terrorist training camps exist in several parts of the region, especially the Egyptian Sinai and Upper Egypt, southern and eastern Libya, northern Mali and northern Nigeria. Every state in this region is vulnerable to AQIM, which has been massively bolstered by weapons flow, porous borders and security vacuums in the Sahel, in combination with fragile regional governments. The recruitment narrative of AQIM has also been given new life via Western intervention in Mali and a renewed, increasingly severe focus on Western (rather than Muslim government and civilian) targets. Beyond the recent In Amenas hostage disaster, the September 11, 2012, attack against the US Consulate in Benghazi exemplifies this pattern. Militants like Mokhtar Belmokhtar will also look increasingly to establish their *bona fides* and recruitment potential by striking accessible Western targets, including corporations with spectacular theatrical impact. Heavy-handed government responses to AQIM, as witnessed in Algeria, only raise the bar of lethality.[3]

Another catalyst for violent extremism in Mali and the broader region is the confluence of marginalized peoples, pushed into harsh border areas, and violent extremist organizations. Militant Islamist elements like AQIM, Boko Haram, The Movement for Tawheed and Jihad in African (MUJAO), Ansar Dine, and others prove attractive to some within marginalized ethnic groups, coerced into veritable no-man's lands, seeking social justice and political recognition. Across the Sahel and Sahara, there are numerous examples of such marginalized peoples living in (predominantly post-independence) areas marked by weak governance, poverty, ethnic tensions and other insecurities that develop symbiotic relationships with extremists. This is the situation in Northern Mali and Niger with elements of the Tuareg ethnic group; the Toubous in southern Libya, northeastern Niger, and northern Chad; and the Sahraoui from Western Sahara. Nigeria, the most populated country on the African continent, is also mired in corruption, abusive security challenges and strife between the largely Muslim North and the predominantly Christian South. In each country, marginalized groups seek haven from oppressive regimes in neglected regions, while foreign militants are drawn to the same spaces to capitalize on the discontent. This creates a destabilizing conundrum that is playing out across the region.

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[2] For an overview of the social and operational impact of foreign jihadist fighters, see Frank J. Cilluffo, Jeffrey B. Cozzens, and Magnus Ranstorp, *Western Foreign Fighters: Trends and Implications* (Washington, DC: George Washington University, October 2010).

[3] Magnus Ranstorp, Rudolph Atallah, and Jeffrey B. Cozzens, "Hva vi bør lære av In Amenas" ("After In Amenas: Five Lessons for Corporate Security in Africa"), *VG Nett*, January 29, 2013, http://pluss.vg.no/2013/01/29/1103/yXQCKe.

A further reason for escalating destabilization in Mali is central government corruption. In Bamako (and elsewhere), the central government embezzled aid money destined for the North, leaving its inhabitants, the Tuareg, Songhai, Arabs, and others out to fend for themselves. Fifty-three years after independence, and these resourceful peoples continue to be deprived of development, leaving the door open for extremist elements to exploit their grievances to generate recruits. Tuareg (and others) are at home in the desert and know how to make a living there, but the lack of resources prevents them from developing a modern economy. While the Tuareg excel at trading (especially livestock) and tourism, Bamako refuses to acknowledge that these pastoralists produce a significant amount of their milk and meat. If they had good roads and trucks, they could capitalize on these primary industries much more efficiently. We should support their business efforts instead of stigmatizing them. Bamako needs to acknowledge the legitimate input of Tuareg into the national economy and support them through more extensive development. Bamako has not been doing this.

A severe cultural and ethnic divide between northern and southern Mali are the result of this central government corruption. From the perspective of many Tuareg (especially the older generation), before independence, their social and economic ties were historically with people of the North; decades post-independence, the Tuareg and Arabs still find it difficult to integrate with the South. Bamako elites jockeying for lucre and other civilians scrambling for scarce resources and sparse development money want to stigmatize "light-skinned" peoples as a means of excluding them economically and politically. These elites exclude whole populations based on arbitrary factors like skin color. This creates antagonism between pastoralists and agriculturalists, no matter where the Tuareg live.

The principal antagonists are some of the ethnic Bambara, who are largely in control of the government and benefit from the best salaried jobs, nepotism, cronyism, military positions, and major corruption. In order to make their government seem like a democracy and procure Western aid, they also support a few "clients" in a patron-client system.

A further reason for the violence has to do with the entrenchment of jihadists in Mali. When the (primarily Algerian) Salafist Group for Preaching and Combat (GSPC, the precursor to AQIM) first set foot in Northern Mali in 2003, it was careful to integrate itself into the local population. Extremists like Belmokhtar and Abdelhamid Abu Zeid (recently killed by French forces) married into local tribes, forging ties with and securing support from these communities, making it extremely difficult to extricate AQIM entirely. Clearly AQIM is not a creation of the "Arab Spring" or even a new threat. It is a terrorist group that traces its origins back to the Algerian civil war in the early 1990s. While the overthrow of Muammar Gaddafi from power did indeed allow AQIM in Mali access to more sophisticated weapons, its threat and presence in Mali pre-dated Gaddafi's fall by almost a decade.

AQIM has also been relatively successful in establishing itself in Mali beyond intermarriage because of its ability to seize opportunities—a theme promoted by al-Qa'ida leader Ayman al-Zawahiri himself in a July 2007 message to the group. This opportunity came last year, when a confluence of factors—namely, the Malian rebellion, the fall of Gaddafi to the northeast and the presence of generally like-minded factions like MUJAO and Ansar Dine —coalesced to spark a jihadist insurgency that carved out a de facto "jihadist condominium" in Northern Mali.[4] This "condominium" will, in theory, allow AQIM to "command the good and forbid the evil" on the ground (i.e. apply its understanding of shari'a law) to "reform" local tribes; manage the work of local jihadist partners, MUJAO and Ansar Dine; and develop a base to strike both near and far enemies—essentially, the pattern proposed by jihadi theorist Abu Bakr Naji in *Management of Savagery*.[5]

Despite the French intervention in early 2013 designed to route AQIM, the former has most certainly not concluded its project in Mali. For the better part of a decade, proselytization, intermarriage, a variety of inducements, and alliances with tribes have left AQIM with many friends in northern Mali and the region. Evidence shows that even corrupt Malian officials have benefited financially from the jihadists' presence, making it all the more difficult to root out the violent extremists.

Moreover, AQIM fighters have opted for tactical withdrawal, versus the supposed strategic defeat that some claim. Some militants clearly remain in the country, evidenced by the increase of suicide bombings, while others have merely taken refuge nearby in Libya's south, Algeria, Sudan, Mauritania, and elsewhere. Once a strategic opening is perceived by AQIM's leadership—and a new racial savagery wrought by Malian forces on the Tuareg, Arabs and Peul pushes them even closer to the 'enemy of their enemies,' the jihadists—re-infiltration and new 'condominiums' will be established.[6]

In sum, while French, Chadian, and Malian efforts have in the main pushed AQIM and their allies out of Mali, the network remains resilient and has emerged less effective but more clandestine and dispersed. The Malian military itself has little support among Northern populations, which are needed to deny safe haven to AQ. This makes it exceedingly difficult to find and attack the jihadists without significant population support—a situation reminiscent of dislodging the Taliban from Afghanistan. Further,

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[4] See Fernando Reinares, "AQIM's Existing and Disrupted Plans in and from the Sahel—Analysis," *Eurasia Review: News and Analysis*, May 12, 2013, http://www.eurasiareview.com/12052013-aqims-existing-and-disrupted-plans-in-and-from-the-sahel-analysis/.

[5] Abu Bakr Naji, *The Management of Savagery: The Most Critical Stage Through Which the Umma Will Pass*, trans. William McCants, (Cambridge: John M. Olin Institute for Strategic Studies, Harvard University, May 23, 2006), http://www.wcfia.harvard.edu/olin/images/Management%20of%20Savagery%20-%2005-23-2006.pdf.

[6] See Reinares, "AQIM's Existing And Disrupted Plans In And From The Sahel—Analysis."

the withdrawal of a large portion of French combat forces will almost certainly exacerbate friction between secular rebels (MNLA) and the state, with the chance of any negotiated solution unlikely and escalation towards active future rebellion probable. This distracts both Mali and the MNLA from the fight against AQ, essentially creating the instability, time and space needed for the jihadists to reestablish a safe haven in Mali's north.

The Tuareg

In the cases of Mali and Niger, Tuareg (and to a lesser extent, certain Arab tribes) remain marginalized and oppressed by the central governments. In January, after France drove jihadists from key cities of Timbuktu, Gao and Kidal, an undisciplined and unprofessional Malian military took advantage of the victory to beat, torture and kill non-combatants (Tuareg and Arabs) who allegedly supported the MNLA. Human Rights Watch has documented numerous atrocities against civilian populations, which are fueling deep resentment by a suffering population. If left unchecked, terrorist groups like AQIM, MUJAO, and Ansar Dine will exploit local grievances and young populations with no economic opportunities.

While on trip to Kidal in late 2002, a Tuareg friend named Ibrahim showed me a mosque where Tuareg youth were being recruited by missionaries from the Tabligh Jamaat sect for indoctrination into a more radical brand of Islam. In our conversation, Ibrahim explained that his people and culture would never be radicalized because the youth were the backbone of their society. Today, the majority of Tuareg want nothing to do with jihadists' version of shari'a law, which also curtails rights for women that are upheld by the Tuareg. They prefer to embrace a secular lifestyle, allowing each person to follow his/her beliefs. As if to back this statement, on 19 September 2006 and 23 Oct 2006, three years after GSPC members settled in Northern Mali, Tuareg clashed with the Salafist group to push them out of their territory, with no support from the central Malian government, which at the time was receiving counter-terrorism military aid and training, the Tuareg sustained heavy losses.

Unfortunately, because of the poor treatment of the Tuareg by Bamako over the years, they are caught between a rock and a hard place, and the radicalization of a few is a sad testimony to the pressures they face in an isolated and ethnically charged region. Indeed, some Tuareg prefer to side with Islamists, not for ideological reasons but to keep Bamako and anti-Tuareg violence out of the North. Moreover, a small minority of Tuareg are radicalized because of the influence of a charismatic Tuareg leader named Iyad Ag Ghaly, who gained notoriety for leading the second Tuareg rebellion in the early 1990's. Today, Ag Ghaly is the emir of Ansar Dine and his involvement with AQIM landed him on the US's list of Specially Designated Global Terrorists.

Libya

A weak central government, strong militia groups, and resilient jihadist networks are three main factors contributing to an unstable environment in Libya. Local interest groups also dominate the political landscape and exercise authority over the distribution of power, federalism, and ethnic minority rights.

Over the last year and a half, Benghazi in particular has been the epicenter of targeted attacks on security forces, Western diplomats and international organizations. Recent militancy in and around Benghazi illustrates the broader instability that increasingly mars Libya. Following the revolution's end, many attacks in Benghazi (especially against police stations) have historically occurred at night, resulting in few casualties. However, on May 13, 2013, Benghazi saw a shift in the nature of attacks. A car bomb exploded near the Jalaa Hospital resulting for the first time in civilian deaths (no one claimed responsibility). The Ministry of Interior, struggling to bring militias under some form of centralized control, can do little about such violence—even as it faces increasing pressure to reign in the revolutionary brigades.

The brigades that in large part control security in Libya are divided into two competing factions: one focused on local interests and another driven by Islamist ideology. Whether Islamist or not, the brigades demand sweeping political exclusion of anyone once associated with the old regime, primarily the alliance of many independents from Libya's south and central regions. Wolfram Lacher explains in his paper "Fault Lines of the Revolution" that organized extremist groups are emerging in the country, but they typically operate outside the framework of the new official institutions and garner their support when needed.[7] This is in keeping with the historic anti-state lineage of anti-state jihadist groups in the region.

AQIM, which finds refuge primarily in southern Libya (another marginalized region), is believed to have growing interest in cementing its presence there since the French-led intervention forced them to regroup outside Mali. According to several Libyan security personnel interviewed by a trusted contact, during the early part of May 2013, AQIM representatives met with local Libyan jihadist groups to refocus attacks on French interests in the region. The meeting, which lasted several days, was held at an undisclosed location in the mountains of Djabal al Akhdar.

These developments should come as no surprise. We know that from the spring of 2011, AQIM cadres fought in Libya during the Revolution. Moreover, Belmokhtar was kept closely informed of the progress of the attack against the US Consulate in Benghazi on September 11, 2012.

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[7] Wolfram Lacher, *Fault Lines of the Revolution: Political Actors, Camps and Conflicts in the New Libya*, (Berlin: Stiftung Wissenschaft und Politik, May 2013), 16, http://www.swp-berlin.org/en/publications/swp-research-papers/swp-research-paper-detail/article/libya_fault_lines_of_the_revolution.html.

Rising Tunisian Extremists

Overt militancy and attacks are, of course, the most tangible way to chart the evolution and reach of AQIM. Beyond Mali, Tunisia is another region of struggle and recruitment for AQIM, largely because of its weak Islamist government and the hard-core salafists' proficient social media apparatus, preaching and charitable organizations.[8] The Tunisian government (or what remains of it) recently conceded that it had struggled against two small jihadist groups near the Algerian border led by AQIM-linked veterans of the jihad in Mali.[9] According to Tunisian Foreign Minister Othmane Jarandi, some 800 Tunisians are fighting in the Islamist rebel ranks in Syria.[10] If past is precedent, the likelihood of them returning to Tunisia or somewhere else in the region to fight for AQIM's cause is high, much as Tunisian Combatant Group (TCG) veterans did upon their return from Afghanistan. Further, 11 of the 32 terrorists who attacked the Algerian gas plant were Tunisians, and a Tunisian citizen, Ahmed Abassi, has recently been charged with involvement in the plot to derail a passenger train between Toronto and New York City.[11]

Former TCG activists, some of whom are linked to the Tunisian Ansar al-Sharia (AST) and inspired by jihadist preachers like Kamel Zarouq, fuel the Tunisian reservoir of potential AQIM operatives. Zarouq and other extremist preachers are actively engaged in *da'wa* (in this case, proselytizing and social services) in and around the Tunis area.[12] Zarouq's own words are instructive and speak to the supranational goals of AQIM and its Tunisian supporters: "Our goal is to support the Islamic nation, to support our religion, to elevate the shari'a, and to spread the law of Muhammad. Our goal is to pull the nations out of darkness and into light. Our goal is to instate the shari'a, and regain Andalusia and Jerusalem."[13]

On May 12, 2013, Abu Yadh, the extremist leader of Tunisian Ansar al-Sharia, said much the same in a diatribe that threatened Tunisian authorities bent on cracking down on salafi activism. Accusing the authorities of waging "war against Islam"—a common jihadi accusation against regional governments—and recalling Tunisian jihadists' participation in Afghanistan, Chechnya, Bosnia, Iraq, Somalia and Syria, Abu Yadh added that "these

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[8] See Ghassan Ben Khalifa, "The Secret of Salafists' Appeal in Tunisia," *Al Monitor*, May 1, 2013, http://www.al-monitor.com/pulse/culture/2013/05/disadvantaged-tunisian-youth-embrace-salafism.html.

[9] See Abou Djaffar, "Papa, Get the Rifle From its Place Above the French Doors! / They're Comin' from the Woods!" *Le Monde*, May 2, 2013, http://aboudjaffar.blog.lemonde.fr/2013/05/02/papa-get-the-rifle-from-its-place-above-the-french-doorstheyre-comin-from-the-woods-the-rifle-alela-diane/.

[10] See "Tunisia FM: 800 Tunisian Islamists Fighting in Syria," *Naharnet*, May 11, 2013, http://www.naharnet.com/stories/en/82683.

[11] See Jessica Murphy, "Via Suspects Discussed Alternative Plans to Poison Air/Water to Kill up to 100,000 People: Court Docs," *Toronto Sun*, May 9, 2013, http://www.torontosun.com/2013/05/09/third-man-arrested-in-plot-to-derail-via-train.

[12] See Khalifa, "The Secret of Salafists' Appeal in Tunisia."

[13] "Tunisian Muslim cleric: 'Our goal is to Instate the Shari'a, and Regain Andalusia and Jerusalem,' and Conquer Rome," *Jihad Watch*, May 10, 2013, http://www.jihadwatch.org/2013/05/tunisian-muslim-cleric-our-goal-is-to-instate-the-sharia-and-regain-andalusia-and-jerusalem-and-conq.html.

young people" are ready to give their lives to defend the salafist project in Tunisia, saying: "Our lives will not be expensive if paid for our religion is attacked and if our preaching is embarrassed."[14] He also warned against government interference with a planned May 19 Ansar al-Sharia conference in the city of Kairouan.

Al-Qa'ida in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM)

Al-Qa'ida in the Islamic Maghreb is the most notorious violent extremist network in the region and a principal source of terrorist violence. Trends related to AQIM that we are witnessing across North Africa and the Sahel should be a cause for concern. The next section explores these developments.

AQIM remains poorly understood and generally underestimated. This could be due to the fact that the organization's Shura council and leadership is in Kabylia, in northern Algeria, and intelligence sharing from the host country is marginal at best. However, AQIM has been forming networks in the Maghreb and the Sahel for many years, and developing cells or cooperating in other ways with extremist factions like Boko Haram, the Boko Haram splinter group Ansaru, and various Tunisian and Libyan jihadists. The recent attack against the Embassy of France in Tripoli and the failed attack against the British embassy illustrate that the Algerian jihadists and their local allies are able and ready.

It is noteworthy that the head of AQIM's notables' council, Abu Ubayda Youssef al Annabi, recently called for support in attacking France.[15] This call echoed a common refrain of many other global jihadists—join the fight globally against Islam's oppressors—but was very specific for AQIM and representative of its growing vision and, likely, reach. Indeed, AQIM's ability to leverage support and increasingly develop its narrative is where its strength lies. Speculation over whether the group operates as a unified organization, how it is divided into smaller franchises or the count of its "members" is basically irrelevant. The important matter is the influence it wields to mobilize support from Islamists across the region, harness discontent and legitimize violent jihad against regional states and their Western supporters. This ability lends it an increasing global character, which has been especially apparent over the last two years.

AQIM has been expanding and forging relationships across the Sahara and Sahel for years with significant implications for the region. These relationships go beyond North and West Africa, as the involvement of Canadians in the In Amenas, Algeria, gas plant attack demonstrated. After the gas plant attack in Algeria, Mokhtar Belmokhtar's popularity grew among certain youth in North Africa. An example from social media

[14] "Abou Iyadh déclare officiellement la guerre aux forces de l'ordre Tunisiennes," *Business News*, May 5, 2013, http://www.businessnews.com.tn/details_article.php?t=520&a=38045&temp=3&lang.

[15] Sheikh Majayd, "الحرب على مالي" ("The War in Mali"), May 2013, http://azelin.files.wordpress.com/2013/05/shaykh-abc5ab-ubaydah-yc5absuf-al-anc481bc4ab-22the-war-in-mali22-ar.pdf.

provides one useful metric. A Facebook page called the "Derna Media Center" (DMC) gained 4000 new "likes" in two weeks after the attack when Belmokhtar's photo was posted on the site and he was touted a hero (Facebook removed the page). While these "likes" could, of course, indicate many different things and do not suggest 4,000 new AQIM recruits, they serve as one quantifiable illustration of the attention (and potential attraction) AQIM is capable of generating within some regional segments.

In sum, AQIM is linked to a greater or lesser extent to almost all increasingly active jihadist networks across the region, even if by inspiration alone. Indeed, in just the first two weeks of May we have witnessed continued suicide attacks in Mali and the dismantling of two terror cells in Morocco (the "Al Mouahidoun" and "Attawhid" cells, according to news agencies, which had already carried out robberies to fund their activities and were believed to be in contact with jihadists in northern Mali).[16] Further, Egypt claims that it has disrupted a terror plot against one or possibly two foreign embassies; Boko Haram has not stopped its relentless attacks in Northern Nigeria; and an alleged Tunisian militant was arrested for apparently plotting against US and Canadian interests. [17] While some view these events as wholly disconnected, my experience on the ground and contacts across North Africa strongly suggest that the common denominator tying them together is AQIM and/or its inspiration.

Boko Haram

Boko Haram is a terrorist group allied with AQIM that wants to create an Islamic State across Nigeria. While some question its links to AQIM, the proof of this relationship—and therefore the threat from Boko Haram to allied interests and US—is growing.

In August 2011, the group attacked the UN Headquarters with a suicide bomber—an innovation that speaks to the group's commitment to tactical progress and jihadist modus operandi. It is not a coincidence that the same year a spokesman for the group, Abu Al-Qaqa, claimed that Boko Haram had ties with al-Qa'ida. While there is no concrete proof to this assertion, the group undoubtedly drinks from the same well, as evidenced by its behavior and pronouncements. A well-publicized video on YouTube titled "Join the Caravan" shows Nigerians participating in training with AQIM. Further, in September 2011, AQIM's media wing released for the first time a 2011 message purportedly written by Abubakar Shekau, the leader of Boko Haram. These events highlight the ideological and potentially operational support that permits Boko Haram to grow in sophistication (and threat).

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[16] "Morocco Dismantles Two Cells That Planned Attacks on its Soil," *Middle East Online*, May 9, 2013, http://www.middle-east-online.com/english/?id=58666.

[17] Tom Perry and Yasmine Saleh, "Egypt Says Thwarts Suicide Attack on Foreign Embassy," *Reuters*, May 11, 2013, http://www.reuters.com/article/2013/05/11/us-egypt-algaeda-plot-idUSBRE94A07K20130511.

Since the French intervention in Mali in January of this year, evidence suggests that some members of Boko Haram have turned their sights outside of the Nigerian border—another indicator of affinity for the global jihad. In January, two Nigerian troops were killed and five seriously injured after a splinter of Boko Haram, Jama'atu Ansarul Muslimina Fi Biladis Sudan (or, "Vanguards for the Protection of Muslims in Black Africa") claimed responsibility. The Nigerian soldiers were deploying to Mali to join West African forces. After the attack, in a written statement, Ansaru said: "We are gladly informing the general public, especially those in the black Africa, that...with the aid and guidance of Allah we have successfully executed our first attempt in griping [sic] the Nigerian army troops that aimed to demolish the Islamic empire of Mali."[18] This attack clearly shows solidarity between the Nigerian terrorists and those in Mali and logically implies (another) strong link between Boko Haram and AQIM.

Further, in a video that aired before the release of a kidnapped French family in April, a Boko Haram spokesman openly threatened France: "Let the French President know that he has launched war against Islam and we are fighting him everywhere. Let him know that we are spread everywhere to save our brothers." Filmed in Arabic, this video highlights a new approach for the group designed to maximize appeal, which historically addressed all videos in a local language called Hausa.

Also, for the first time, the group took hostages to leverage its own agenda—a page from AQIM's playbook. In the video, Boko Haram uses the family as a bargaining chip to end Western military action in Somalia and Mali, calls for the release of prisoners from Cameroonian and Nigerian jails and asks for a ransom payment. When the hostages were released, news sources reported that Boko Haram received a $3 million ransom payment and secured the release of some members detained in Cameroon. These demands and their global character clearly reflect the growing influence of AQIM in the region.

Organized crime & narco-trafficking

Organized crime—especially various forms of smuggling and narco-trafficking—is the lifeblood of the vast under-governed expanse of the Sahara. It is within this largely decentralized and politically corrupt milieu that terrorists and criminals work together to access weapons and money to sustain their symbiotic operations.

Cigarette smuggling

In 2003, I traveled to Dirkou in the Eastern Niger near the Chadian border. During my visit, I witnessed a large convoy of trucks heading north towards the Libyan border. When I inquired about the cargo, my guide explained that it was black market tobacco destined for the markets in Libya and Europe. He went to say that the cargo received

[18] "Islamists Kill Nigerian Soldiers Heading to Mali," *IRIN News*, January 21, 2013, http://www.irinnews.org/Report/97301/Islamists-kill-Nigerian-soldiers-heading-to-Mali.

protection from the Nigerien military, which collected a small percentage of the revenue because the government was poor and this was a way to compensate.

The cigarette smuggling business is nothing new in this region. It began two decades ago and evolved over time into a lucrative business that has profited government officials, military personnel, smugglers and terrorists alike. Extremists like Belmokhtar (a man of many nicknames, including "Mr. Marlboro") greatly benefitted from this business. In 2009, the United Nations Office of Drugs and Crime (UNODC) wrote an in-depth report about the black market tobacco and narco-trafficking trade in North and West Africa.[19] In the report, investigators demonstrated how widespread and lucrative these trades were.

A separate September 2012 report by Wolfram Lacher, "Organized Crime and Conflict in the Sahel Region," referenced the UNODC report but provided further evidence and important insights concerning the complexities of cigarette smuggling networks in North Africa:

> The key actors in this trade are legal cigarette importers and distributors, who import their merchandise from free trade zones such as Dubai. The trade is therefore best interpreted as a deliberate strategy by tobacco companies to circumvent tax regimes or break North African state monopolies on cigarette distribution.
>
> **This system has led to the erosion of the customs services because of corruption and collusion between smugglers and state officials.** For part of its journey, the merchandise is transported in large trucks on the main roads, with the connivance of Malian and Nigerian security officials. In Libya, cigarette smuggling is controlled by networks in the security apparatus dominated by members of the Qadhadfa tribe. In the triangle between Mauritania, Mali, and Algeria, Sahrawi networks—often with the direct involvement of officials in the Polisario movement, which seeks independence for Western Sahara—trade subsidized Algerian goods and humanitarian aid southward and cigarettes northward to Algeria and Morocco. Cigarette smuggling has also contributed to the emergence of smaller gangs of smugglers charged with transporting the merchandise from Mauritania, Mali, and Niger into Algeria. Mokhtar Belmokhtar, who later acquired notoriety as one of the leading figures in AQIM's Sahelian operations, is widely reputed to have long run a cigarette smuggling racket across the Sahara.[20]

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[19] United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime. *Transnational Trafficking and the Rule of Law in West Africa: A Threat Assessment,* July 2009, http://www.unodc.org/documents/data-and-analysis/Studies/West_Africa_Report_2009.pdf.

[20] Wolfram Lacher, *Organized Crime and Conflict in the Sahel-Sahara Region* (Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, September 2012), http://carnegieendowment.org/files/sahel_sahara.pdf.

Narco-trafficking
Since 2003, the region has seen an exponential increase in smuggling of Moroccan cannabis resin, cocaine from Latin America and more recently, methamphetamine (i.e. over the last four years), which is cheap to produce and distribute locally and internationally. Licit and illicit contraband, which developed decades ago, laid the foundation for the lucrative narcotics trade. Routes through the Sahara shift regularly based on regional threats, tribal fight conflicts or wars. Wealth gained by these groups affords them the ability to buy political influence and military power. Mali is a prime example.

In an in-depth report by the International Crisis Group, the researcher notes that the governance—if it can be called that—of northern Mali by the administration of deposed President Amadou Toumane Touré's (ATT) was based on several corrupt agendas: collusion with local rival and opportunist elites, questionable relations with AQIM terrorists and the non-transparent and imbalanced use of international aid (especially aid provided for counter-terrorism operations) to strengthen control over the region.[21] The profits he derived from a criminal economy, sustained by trans-border trafficking (especially of drugs) and ransoms from Western hostages lined the pockets of northern and Bamako elites and officials in the state administration and sustained the economic underdevelopment of the region.[22] The balance in the Sahara is delicate; the international community should help the region's people find alternatives to narco- and weapons trafficking.

In contrast to Mali, Morocco stands out as a model for reform and progress in the fight for equality, counter-terrorism and a counter-narcotics strategy, which is outlined in the 2012 report by the International Narcotics Control Board (INCB).[23] It has achieved significant reductions in the cannabis and cannabis resin industry over the years by outlining a comprehensive strategy combining law enforcement, crop eradication and demand reduction efforts with economic development to erode the "cannabis growing culture" in the north of the country.[24] It continues to fight terrorism through the strengthening of the security and justice systems, and emphasizes a preventive dimension against violent extremism and organized crime through reforms in the economic, political, social, religious and educational fields, many of which were introduced in the Amazigh (Berber) language. These reforms provided a boost in

[21] International Crisis Group, *Mali: Avoiding Escalation*, July 18, 2012, http://www.crisisgroup.org/~/media/Files/africa/west-africa/mali/189-mali-avoiding-escalation-english.pdf
[22] Ibid.
[23] "INCB Expresses Appreciation to Morocco for Its Strategy to Fight Drugs, Report" *Morocco News*, March 6, 2013, http://www.moroccoworldnews.com/2013/03/81265/incb-expresses-appreciation-to-morocco-for-its-strategy-to-fight-drugs-report/.
[24] "Morocco 2009 International Narcotics Control Strategy Report," WikiLeaks Cable, October 30, 2009, http://www.cablegatesearch.net/cable.php?id=09RABAT886.

cultivating a culture of democracy, pluralism and equality in Morocco—qualities that fly in the face of black market economies. .

Nevertheless, like other countries in North and West Africa, Morocco is concerned with the risks of infiltration by terrorists fleeing Mali via illegal immigration channels. Indeed, drugs and human trafficking networks overlap — a cause for concern throughout the region (and Europe). For example in 2011, Moroccan authorities dismantled a large local drug-trafficking network linked to both Colombian cartels and AQIM. The movement of hash to Europe that apparently travels through Morocco also suggests that there remains room for improvement.

A Global Problem Set

While some suggest the threats in the Sahara and Sahel are local or regional in scope, their impact is global. Even a cursory overview of the involvement of North Africans as itinerate jihadists linked to al-Qa'ida demonstrates this.

The Sinjar Records, captured in 2007 on the Syrian/Iraqi border and analyzed by West Point's Combating Terrorism Center, provided a unique quantitative perspective on North African involvement in global jihadism. Most observers of international terrorism will agree that the same patterns witnessed in these documents are again alive and well in different theatres. As observed in Iraq, in Syria, we know that North Africans make up a large percentage of the foreign fighters on the rebel side, many of which are aligned today with the al-Qa'ida-linked Jabhat al-Nusra.[25] Recently, the Tunisian government announced that 800 of its citizens were fighting alongside Islamist rebels in Syria. Further, in a testament to the scope of the problem, the Libyan Foreign Ministry publicly announced that it had no control over citizens who were leaving the country to join the Syrian uprising. Nevertheless, the flow of African jihadists to fight abroad is, of course, nothing new. Indeed, it was two Tunisians that killed Northern Alliance Leader Ahmad Shah Massoud as an apparent favor to al-Qa'ida and the Taliban in the run-up to the 9/11 attacks.

Yet it is not simply Africans leaving to combat perceived threats to Islam outside of the continent that speaks to the global nature of North African militancy: it is also the flow of jihadists *into* Africa. The recent arrest of a French citizen in Mali, Gilles Le Guen (also known as "Abdel Jelil") confirms this point, as does the investigation into the January 2013 attack on the natural gas plant at In Amenas in Algeria. It is becoming increasingly evident that the terrorists who perpetrated the attack were able to recruit individuals from Canada to join the operation. In sum, for militants that share the worldview of AQIM, Africa has many front lines and "occupied territories" that also require the *fard*

[25] Noman Benotman and Roisin Blake, "Jabhat al-Nusra," (London: Quilliam Foundation, January 2013) http://www.quilliamfoundation.org/wp/wp-content/uploads/publications/free/jabhat-al-nusra-a-strategic-briefing.pdf.

'ayn (individually obligatory) support of fighters to combat non-Muslim oppressors. This was a primary ideological contribution developed by one of global jihad's original architects, Abdullah Azzam.

Viewed slightly differently, the development of extremist states (emirates) in Africa matters to jihadists, and when non-Muslim forces threaten them, a global reaction ensues. For instance, when France intervened in Mali, threats to France came from al-Qa'ida in Yemen (AQAP), Jabhat al Nusra in Syria, Boko Haram in Nigeria, and more recently, AQIM.

This legacy of transnational jihadism and its growing impact on "local" groups like Boko Haram is precisely why AQIM is more dangerous than ever before—and is further evidence that combating terrorism in Africa should matter very much to the US and her allies.

Conclusions

The multifaceted threats from terrorism, political violence and criminality in North Africa are on the rise. The issue of Mali and the threat from AQIM and associated violent extremist networks present particularly vexing dilemmas for the US and its allies to address. While there are few proverbial 'silver bullets' to solve this complex problem-set, there are several approaches that could make a difference and are therefore worthy of consideration by Congress.

The first recommendation is to get USAID "back into the fight" to address key humanitarian and development dilemmas in Northern Mali and the surrounding areas, and couple this with support from US and allied SOF initiatives. From Tindouf, Algeria, to the Aouzou Strip in northern Chad (the "arc of instability," according to the UN), the populations of this **under-governed** region receive little support and are left exploited by various political actors, including AQIM and its allies. From narco-trafficking and weapons smuggling to terrorism and kidnappings, these issues fester in this region. Further, since the four rebellions suffered by Mali since 1960, the people of the Sahara like the Tuareg were promised many things in each negotiated peace agreement. These agreements included paved roads, hospitals and schools. Sadly, these promises never materialized and the northern part of the country is littered with incomplete projects and a grieving population that is blamed for the woes of the country. In fact, a half-century of disputes between North and South have led to racism and deep resentment between various ethnic groups. It is these socio-culture tensions that open the door to terrorist exploitation and recruitment, despite the fact that the MNLA remains a secular militia. These issues will remain at the core of Mali's problems until they are addressed and settled once and for all. This is where USAID can help, provided it can operate.

Historically, USAID access to areas like northern Mali has always been related to security. Therefore USAID and their enabling partners have in the past avoided projects

within this area that could actually address the underlying conditions faced by the Tuareg and others. This is because of Embassy- and Bamako-imposed access restrictions. The result has been almost zero in terms of net USAID impact. DOD Humanitarian Assistance and Capacity Development are also limited by security restrictions and achieve little effect with the targeted population groups because they cannot gain the needed access. Meanwhile, violent extremists have themselves provided humanitarian assistance or allowed select Islamic NGOs from Arab countries to operate in areas they controlled. This equation has, of course, boosted their access and influence among certain populations and further entrenched the extremists within their safe haven.

The international community should focus acutely on these "denied area" populations being influenced by violent extremists and develop creative ways to partner SOF capability with USAID. This will also serve as a means of reducing the chance of resumed active conflict between MNLA and the Malian state. Naturally, this will require some nesting of the economic element of national power to incentivize groups towards the desired effect of increasing stability and denying safe haven. Further, because of security concerns in these areas, this USAID activity should be closely partnered with full spectrum SOF operations—especially information operations. Failure to synchronize USAID capabilities with SOF in the safe haven denial fight will create more Embassy-limited projects in 'safe' areas that achieve no effects towards reducing the safe haven enjoyed by violent extremists or their recruitment pool.

It should be noted here that the secular MNLA, despite all criticism, remains an example of an organization that has no interest in militant Islamism or jihadist governance. By dealing with basic grievances in Mali's North, the West, in time, can influence local people as allies in the fight against AQIM. Further, with proper training and support, the international community can convince Bamako and an empowered secular Tuareg community to work together against terrorism and narco-trafficking. However, as previously stated, it is important to provide some form of financial security to bring this situation to bear, and NGOs will play a big role in this respect. Moreover, in order for any of this to happen, genuine reconciliation and stability needs to be the first order of business, as NGOs and peacekeepers cannot operate effectively in a tense and dangerous environment.

The second recommendation pertains to addressing border insecurity in the region. Borders between countries of the Sahara remain porous and open to terrorists and smuggler activity, both of which weaken governance and promote corruption (not to mention global insecurity). It is time that the countries of the region receive assistance to secure and monitor movement along their borders. This applies not only to land traffic but to the air as well.

Finally to effectively counter the jihadi narrative wielded by AQIM, a comprehensive and expertly crafted information operation campaign is necessary for the region. Violent

extremists associated with AQIM experience far too much safe haven in social, print and televised media, and this must be rectified. Recently, news agencies flocked to write about AQIM's new twitter account—an event AQIM used to appeal to popular North African concerns about repression and injustice, and to answer questions by journalists and the public. Following the media buzz, AQIM's new twitter account gained over 5000 new followers two weeks after going live. It is noteworthy that Syrian terror group Jabhat al-Nusra, Somalia's al-Shabaab, and Tunisia's Ansar al-Sharia are all followed by the new AQIM Twitter account.[26] Countering AQIM's media expansion and online "havens" is crucial to our long-term success against violent extremism in the region.

[26] Jamal Oumar and Siham Ali, "AQIM Creates Twitter Account," *Magharebia,* April 4, 2013, http://magharebia.com/en_GB/articles/awi/features/2013/04/04/feature-01.

Mr. SMITH. Thank you very much for your testimony and concrete recommendations for the committee and for the administration to consider.

Mr. Nedelcovych?

STATEMENT OF MIMA S. NEDELCOVYCH, PH.D., PARTNER, SCHAFFER GLOBAL GROUP

Mr. NEDELCOVYCH. Thank you, Chairman Smith and honorable members of the Foreign Affairs Committee.

I appreciate the opportunity to speak. I was asked to speak from a business perspective in dealing in Africa and especially in the Sahel. I like the forum. I am new to this, but there is a full statement. So I can just speak off the cuff.

I have been in Africa pretty much all of my life. You can tell from the accent. And thank you for attempting pronouncing Nedelcovych. I come out of the Balkans. So we know a little bit about tribal warfare. I left Belgrade at 1 year old, grew up in Ethiopia, actually my first 10 years, before coming to the U.S. and making this a home. So I have spent most of my life, one way or another, in Africa. I have been on the public side. I have been on the private side. I have been going many moons ago when USAID first discovered the private sector, brought in as an adviser to see how the private sector could assist, was named to be the U.S. executive director of the African Development Bank in the late '80s under the first father Bush administration.

So I since then have joined Schaffer. Schaffer is in the agro industry. We have been managing developing agro-industrial projects throughout the continent. We have also been in very difficult places. We did the major sugar state development in Kenana, in Sudan, got pulled out of there for various reasons. As you know, it happened that we got pulled out on U.S. sanctions.

Most recently and in the last decade, I would say, we have been working a major, major project in the Office du Niger in Mali. Our attempts are always bringing in these small farmers to the investments into the schemes that we develop. It is the only way we see in the end—and I like this term "resilience." I have to remember that. I always thought of it as economic growth, but I guess it is one and the same, the flip side of the same coin. The importance in the end is very, very simple for me. I went back. I actually have a Ph.D. in political risk. I went back and thought what I wrote back in my dissertation.

There was a sociologist, Maslow, and how theory of the five critical requirements, the pyramid of needs. And the very basic two needs at the bottom of the pyramid are your food, the water, the survival; and then shelter and employment. And if those needs are not met, you will have always the opportunity under whatever guise for extremism to come. You will find radical solutions. I would call them momentive solutions.

But it is very easy. People have nothing to lose, have nothing to lose. And that is where we come from the business standpoint, Mr. Chairman. Looking at difficult areas, I would argue that U.S. business—and we are there in agro industry, certainly.

There is a huge Niger River coming through that area. There are many, many opportunities to develop agro-industrial schemes that

bring in all of the small farmers, but for all of this to happen, you have to have security. We put together a program of over $600 million for the Office du Niger near Ségou and Markala that basically went on hold. We were to go into the major expansion on April 15th. And something happened in February. So we are on hold. Who loses? It is the people there in the end because what we have done now? We have concentrated on projects elsewhere.

I could use an example in Nigeria, where we are up in Sokoto in a rice program. Things got heated up, became very difficult work while we are not developing the program, the project down in the middle states. Who loses? The people in the north.

So, in the end, my plea is really, to the extent possible—and I think USAID has been moving in this direction with my various names, global development alliance or other, to bring in the corporates, get people in that are in, especially people like us, who are in the agro-industrial area. We operate in rural areas. We operate where poverty is.

And the only way you are going to get out of poverty is to create growth, create jobs. Otherwise you are going to have desperate people. And desperate people do desperate acts. So, for me, Mr. Chairman, that is the one take-away I really wanted to pull out of this discussion with further questions.

Also, I will be remiss to not say I sit on the board of the Corporate Council in Africa. I am one of the founding members, among the parties to cut hunger and poverty in Africa. So I can sit and have the debate on the public policy side or from the straight corporate investment standpoint, but I will argue that it is always when those two come together. That is the key. That is where we can have the long-term development money coming in with the commercial money to make growth happen.

We have—and I have copies—submitted a couple of months ago recommendations to the Obama administration from the Corporate Council in Africa on doing business in Africa. And I would also like to conclude by saying the continent, by and large, the trend is very, very positive. The issue is what happens in difficult places like the Sahel and how can public and private interests come together to actually really continue on the basis of resilience, but let's also get on. This is one world we must also all grow and people must have some reason to not be desperate.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Nedelcovych follows:]

Testimony Statement of

Dr. Mima S. Nedelcovych
Partner, Schaffer Global Group

For

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Subcommittee on Africa, Global Health, Global Human Rights, and International Organizations
Christopher H. Smith (R-NJ), Chairman

Subcommittee on the Middle East and North Africa
Ileana Ros-Lehtinen (R-FL), Chairman

Subcommittee on Terrorism, Nonproliferation, and Trade
Ted Poe (R-TX), Chairman

SUBJECT: The Growing Crisis in Africa's Sahel Region
Tuesday, May 21, 2013

I wish to thank Chairmen Smith, Ros-Lehtinen and Poe, as well as the Honorable Members of the Foreign Affairs Committee for the opportunity to testify at this important Joint Subcommittee Hearing to discuss our business perspective on "The Growing Crisis in Africa's Sahel Region" and to assist the subcommittee in its policy making duties.

Africa has been very important for me both personally and professionally. As you can tell by my name and accent I am not originally from the U.S. but from Serbia. My family fled communist Yugoslavia while I was a baby and we moved to Ethiopia; and when trouble started brewing in Ethiopia we left there and ended our migration in the United States where we now call this our home. I have fond memories living in Ethiopia and the African continent and its people will always be with me.

Africa has been the focus of my professional life, both in my government service and as a business executive. I started out with the Peace Corps in Gabon, USAID's Africa Bureau, and followed by a position at Arthur Young before being named to be U.S. Executive Director to the African Development Bank in Abidjan, Coté d'Ivoire from 1989-1993, where again I lived in Africa. As a Partner of Schaffer Global Group, I traveled widely throughout the continent, and years later, I returned to live in Liberia in 2007, where I was seconded as the Country Representative for Buchanan Renewables.

To elaborate more on my business experience in Africa, my Partners and I at Schaffer Global Group of Baton Rouge, Louisiana, have been developing, investing, and engineering large-scale agricultural processing facilities, primarily in the sugar and rice industries and renewal energy from agriculture wastes. We have been very successful in Africa and have really only suffered two set-backs in our African efforts over the firm's nearly 50 years on the continent:

1. Sudan in the 1990's when the USG instituted unilateral sanctions. Schaffer had developed Kenana Sugar in the 1970s, then largest integrated sugar factory and refinery in the world. However, with Sudan's support of radical Islamist factions, our group was squeezed out in the diplomatic row between the U.S. and Sudan,

2. Currently in Mali we have had to stop our efforts on our $600M+ sugar factory, refinery, ethanol distillery and power plant in the Markala region of the Office du Niger. Even though the fighting and terrorist activity was not directly present in our area, the uncertainty and insecurity frightened off key investors and lenders in the project and we are waiting for the situation to return to normal before we can effectively proceed to tie the pieces back together again.

I will elaborate on Mali as this is current and germane to our topic today. Schaffer first entered into the Mali market over 10 years ago to fill an important agricultural need for Mali in the sugar sector. We first went there at the turn of the century to investigate options to develop an integrated sugar plantation and the ability of the Malian Government and private sector to work with us on a major agro-industrial effort. After a couple of years Schaffer made the business decision to invest in Mali. We had support from USTDA in the initial feasibility study and USAID, through their Global Development Alliance, to assist us with our sugar variety trials; this took nearly 5 years to experiment and to develop best practices and a nursery and pilot farm. Following this, we started our engineering and technical drafts and implemented business plans for strategic investor support from numerous multi-lateral financial institutions like the African Development Bank, the Islamic Development Bank, the Korean EXIM Bank, etc. and then from our private investors leading up to our strategic investor and lead partner, Illovo Sugar of South Africa. Most importantly, we also worked with local farmers to integrate their fields into our joint PPP scheme and process the cane in our facility upon its completion. The process was beginning to run orderly enough for us to begin the effort to start physically grading the land and begin the construction phase last year in 2012.

As you can see from the above, this was close to a 10 year process for Schaffer's effort to begin to come to fruition. There are many risks in business and Africa is one of the riskiest places for business; but believe me, none of us ever contemplated a coup, a terrorist takeover of the northern portion of Mali and then finally, a possible attack in the south by terrorists legions in any of our risk management plans and scenarios. I don't say this lightly as the Schaffer Group and I are experienced Africa hands and the events in early 2012 in Mali came to a surprise to us and to many governments and people around the region and the world. Mali had been a bastion of democratic ideals for the past 20

years with an open society and freedoms.

Although I am not an expert in terrorism activity, the current world-wide terrorism based on factions of Islamic radicalism is violent and uncompromising in its nature towards anyone or any belief that is not in-line with their version of beliefs. These groups use religion as a stepping stone for their violent and illegal activities and only wish to better themselves and not the people of the region. Many of them seem to be criminal and intolerant in nature, use religion as a crutch to enter into the local society, and then take control at first through religious teachings and civility before turning reactionary to the community and converting it to a safe haven for their criminal activities. These criminal activities include drug and human trafficking, kidnapping, bootlegging products, illegal arms dealing and extortion of local communities close to their base of operations.

As we all know, capital is a coward and only goes where it feels comfortable and safe. The recent activities and convulsions in Mali have driven out foreign investments and are drawing attention to neighboring countries that are dealing with radical Islamic factions, like the northern part of Nigeria where Boko Harem is threatening both domestic and foreign interests with their brutal violent campaigns against Christians and Muslims alike. This story is unfortunately only just beginning to unfold.

In addition to Mali, over the many years I have worked in West Africa, I also travelled and conducted business extensively in Nigeria. A couple of years ago we were investigating developing a rice plantation in the northern part of Nigeria. All was moving well, we had found local partners and developers to work with, but then the environment turned sour with the ethnic and criminal environment taking hold in the northern regions of Nigeria. The uncertainty of northern Nigeria is simply making it unsafe to travel and invest there, particularly in agro-industrial projects that take large sums of financing and many years to come to fruition. We have since had to turn our attention to developing the rice project further south in the "Middle Belt" States, to the detriment and investment loss for the people in the north.

Please let me not highlight only what is bad in the region or in Africa as a whole. We all know the rapid rate of growth presently being experienced in many countries in Africa, and this growth is not restricted to oil and gas, and other natural and mineral wealth. There is a growing and consuming middle class, and internal growth that is attracting the attention of international investors. There is no question that growth rates and investments are closely tied to peace and political stability, so we do see a "patchwork" of different levels of development around the continent, but for us in business, the good news is that the trend is VERY positive.

Africa has its risks but the rewards are also profound. There are substantial inflows of direct foreign investment going into various parts of Africa from China, the US, Europe, India, the Gulf investment houses and other Middle Eastern countries that see great returns. The question is what happens to the Sahel region which is experiencing such increased levels of turbulence? Will private capital run away or will it remain on standby waiting to see the eventual resolution to the uncertainties and difficulties?

There are considerable opportunities in developing certain mineral resources and speaking for my own industry, many opportunities for developing agro-industry in a sustainable manner, particularly with the potential of harnessing the Niger River, as it winds thru Mali, Niger and Northern Nigeria. But to do so requires an extended period of political and social stability and strong collaboration between the public and private sectors, domestic and international, to develop the necessary physical and social infrastructure conducive to investments. And yes, it will take considerable financial resources.

So what are the options; not very easy ones? Many years ago a noted psychologist named Abraham Maslow depicted a 5 level "pyramid" of hierarchies that human beings required and yearned for. At the bottom of that pyramid were the two foundation levels, physiological needs (food, water and sleep) and security needs (safety, shelter and employment) that needed to be met before any other desires came into play. For those suffering people in the most unstable parts of the Sahel, these basic needs have to be met or else there will be no hope for peace and stability. Desperate people with little to lose will act desperately and can be easily swayed into "radical" if not "romantic" solutions!

Experienced investors and developers such as ourselves and others operating in the region will need to find a way to closely collaborate with the international "development" community to achieve at least a modicum of economic growth in these regions as the only solution to maintaining peace and stability that could encourage further investment. Without that economic growth, neither the physiological nor the security needs of the common person will be met, and as long as hunger and poverty persists, desperation will breed radical solutions.

I would be remiss to not mention that I am one of the founding members of the Corporate Council on Africa and presently sit on the Board of the CCA as well as the Board of the Partnership to Cut Hunger and Poverty in Africa, in addition to being a proud investor and businessman in Africa. The CCA has recently prepared policy recommendations entitled: *Promoting Shared Interests: Policy Recommendations on Africa for the Second Term of the Obama Administration*. They were prepared April 17, 2013 and I have brought several copies here today for your review and use. There are several recommendations that are particularly pertinent to this hearing today and they have been submitted in my testimony:

Finance Recommendations:

- A growing number of African nations are tapping financial markets for the first time and need U.S. Treasury Department technical assistance to make this policy sustainable.
- Speed up the due diligence process by USG financial agencies.

- Streamline the number of U.S. financial agencies and processes required to reduce disbursement time. This will increase the U.S. private sector's competitiveness in Africa.
- Develop special process vehicles to fund projects in Africa, including regional projects.
- Intensify consultations between the private sector that is actively investing in Africa and key USG entities involved in financing including project financing (i.e., USAID, MCC, IPIC, EX/IM, TDA and State). This channel should provide for clear time sensitive communication on major policy and programmatic issues, so that the views of the private sector can impact the USG decision making process in real-time.
- Remove or reduce obstacles to flexible and fast USG financing, such as the OPIC Carbon Cap, GMO seed restrictions, economic impact tests, use of U.S. bottoms for transportation, and local content requirements. The goal is to make USG financing fully competitive with that offered by other governments.

Agriculture Recommendations:

- Coordinate USG support for agriculture development and agribusiness in Africa with ongoing efforts under the USAID Feed the Future/Grow Africa/New Alliance initiatives and focus on these initiatives' priority countries and value chains, particularly end of value chain activities.
- Continue programs like the USAID Global Development Alliance and Development Innovation Ventures that provide direct financial support to private sector investments.
- Expand USDA programs that strengthen African agricultural and agribusiness institutions through expanded ties to U.S. universities and agricultural research institutes, which are well-positioned to help build capacity. Ensure that there is a role for the private sector as a partner, including supporting U.S. companies that have research collaboration with U.S. colleges and universities.
- Increase investment in existing agribusiness programs in African university networks and expand tertiary agribusiness programs in Africa to raise African skill levels in agricultural commodity trading, commodity exchange contract design, financing, management, equipment operation and maintenance, and smallholder business entrepreneurship.
- Encourage African governments to pass and implement land reforms that allow smallholder farmers (including women farmers) and cooperatives to hold title to land and use it as collateral.

Security Recommendations:

- Expand, or at least maintain, Government funding to the U.S. Department of State Bureau for African Affairs' Africa Peacekeeping Programming (AFRICAP) and the Africa Contingency Operations Training and Assistance (ACOTA) Program as these have played a vital role building Africa's capacity and capability to ensure its own regional security.

- Expand support for capacity and capability building programs for African militaries, police, and judiciaries critical to creating and sustaining secure environments that respect and uphold the rule of law. Programs include International Military Education and Training (IMET), ACOTA, Global Peace Operations Initiative (GPOI), and the Department of Defense's Distinguished Visitors Program for the military. Police and judicial programs include the Department of State International Narcotics and Law Enforcement programs, such as the International Law Enforcement Academy in Botswana.
- Ensure that security sector reform initiatives are holistic including the military, police, judicial, prisons and financial institutions as well as the legal framework of the target country. This has not only improved institutional capacity, but transparency as well, thus enhancing political, economic and social development as well as business investment.
- Lastly, fund AFRICOM security programs, as these require sustainment and expansion, and ensure regional stability. For example, the U.S. Navy and Coast Guard Africa Partnership Station provides valuable capacity building assistance, in addition to operational and public relations benefits. The USG tends to cut Africa programs in times of budget contraction.

Conclusion:

All regions of Africa are important for U.S. business investment, although as we have experienced, some are more attractive than others. We have seen remarkable business investments over the past 15 years in Africa and growth is skyrocketing. There are more international players viewing Africa as a prime destination for their business interests. The USG, through its various arms and vehicles, should be there to assist U.S. companies to compete in this market and to be part of the solution to achieving sustainable growth and social and political stability; particularly in those volatile areas like the Sahel, where close public-private collaboration is most essential. In conclusion, the best if not only way to create sustainable development and counter "radical solutions" is by engendering growth, creating jobs, and meeting those very basic needs we all have for food, shelter, security and employment. American companies can do this and can work hand-in-hand with the USG to improve policy decision-making in order to provide the best returns for our African friends and the U.S. business community.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify today. I look forward to answering your questions.

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Mr. SMITH. Mr. Nedelcovych, thank you so very much for that. And your recommendations, I have seen that. I would like to at least take some of that and put it into the record. And we will follow up on those recommendations as well, I think. I thank you for that.

Remember, you are not just speaking to the Congress. You are speaking to the Speaker of the National Assembly of Mali. So I hope he heard your message as well.

I would like to now ask Mr. Akuetteh if he could proceed.

STATEMENT OF MR. NII AKUETTEH (FORMER GEORGETOWN UNIVERSITY PROFESSOR OF AFRICAN AFFAIRS)

Mr. AKUETTEH. Chairman Smith, thank you very much for including me in this hearing this afternoon. And I thank you and the other committees for placing so much attention on an important Africa issue.

Point of personal privilege. Because I am immigrant from Ghana, I am an African, I would like to extend to you the appreciation of fellow Africans for the attention that you and the committees are placing on this very important issue.

I also have to say that, as was mentioned by Mr. Nedelcovych, there is some good news in Africa. The AU is celebrating its 50th anniversary. The President is visiting three countries noted for the advanced, you know, progress in democracy. There is fast economic growth.

So I think it is appropriate that this hearing is focusing on a troubled spot, a big area that is under stress, but it should be noted that there is good news on the continent.

Now, the region that we are talking about and in the invitation letter, about nine countries are covered. So we are talking about a very big area. I would also even add that there is one area we should include, which is the Western Sahara, because some of the issues, some of the problems in the Western Sahara are spilling over into Mali in terms of fighters with grievances who may be involved in Mali.

Now, the problems that the Sahel, as defined in this hearing, is facing are very serious problems, from terrorism all the way to bad governance through lack of democracy. So this is a region in stress.

And always when I look at U.S. policy, it seems to me that there is a very big unspoken question by the American people, what has this got to do with me? What has this got to do with us? And I think it is great to focus on this problem because it does affect U.S. interests. Problems in the Sahel which are stressing the countries does affect the U.S. Therefore, it seems to me the imperative is very clear for the U.S. to help these countries cope with their problems that they are facing. Otherwise, when the problems get out of hand, they spill over into the neighborhood, it will not be just one or two African countries if the problems get out of hand. It will affect you clearly.

It might even because—one of the problems that were cited has been cited is drug trafficking from Latin America through West Africa. I think research has shown that there is a reverse. There is drug money going back into Latin America and even arms.

So this can also affect U.S. interests in its own hemisphere. It can affect U.S. interests in Europe. So this is a very important issue. And any help that the U.S. gives African countries to cope with them is really I think a good investment in its own interests.

Now, one of the things that strikes me is that I think in the area we are talking about, the U.S. interests really picked up after 9/11. It has been 10 years. So a key recommendation,a key point in my view is that there needs to be a review of U.S. strategy in the region. After 10 years and after the problem in Libya, now we have Mali. It seems to me that a thorough review needs to be done so that lessons can be learned and a new strategy can be crafted.

Until that thorough review is done, it seems to me there are areas where improvements can be made. I think that terrorism is a problem, not just for the U.S. but even for African countries. And I think the way to deal with it is to push hard on democracy because it seems to inclusive democratic government goes a long way in preventing, at the very least, homegrown terrorism.

In the region that we are looking at also, Mali is clearly the epicenter. So it seems to me that special attention should be paid to Mali. And I would like to see the U.S. play a leading role, not in the security area, because, you know, we have AFISMA and the U.N., but in the reconstruction of Mali, what just happened in Brussels.

I would like for the U.S. to—it is my recommendation that the U.S. play a very strong role in that, particularly in two areas: The area of the elections. I have to confess, Mr. Chairman, that I am one of the people who is nervous about the elections because the recent example in a couple of other African countries, Cote d'Ivoire, next door, and Kenya, that we need to make sure that, as important as the Malian elections are, we have to have contingency plans and make sure that they happen well.

And, secondly, I think the Mali's reconstruction plan, their reconciliation and dialogue committee, I think the U.S., with its history and its diversity and its democracy, can be a special help to the U.S. So it is also my recommendation that that should be a big focus in the way that the U.S. can help Mali and, therefore, the Saharan region going forward.

I thank you again for including me.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Akuetteh follows:]

"Reviewing and Improving US Security Strategy in Africa's Sahel Region"

Written Testimony Submitted by Mr. Nii Akuetteh

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House Committee on Foreign Affairs

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Hearing on "The Growing Crises in Africa's Sahel Region"

Chairman Smith and Ranking Member Bass;
Chairman Ros-Lehtinen and Ranking Member Deutch;
Chairman Poe and Ranking Member Sherman:

Good afternoon. I am honored that you have included me among the witnesses testifying here this afternoon. More importantly, I am deeply grateful that you are devoting so much of your personal, official and institutional resources to critical problems in Africa. I thank you as an African-born immigrant and I believe I speak for my fellow Africans in expressing this gratitude.

As I am sure you already know, you have some pretty impressive staff. Please know that they just went to great lengths to allow me to be at this table today. I appreciate their help very much.

Mr. Chairman, "Sahel" is a useful, geographic description. It is usually designates the band of semi-arid land that marks the southern edge of the Sahara Desert and which runs through African countries from the Atlantic ocean to the Red Sea, especially these six West African countries—Senegal, Mauritania, Mali, Burkina Faso, Niger, and Chad.

However, this hearing must be commended for taking a different, broader, better view. This it does by looking as far north as Libya and as far south as Nigeria. This is because geography and history have long knitted the Africans living between the Mediterranean and the Atlantic together—the Sahara Desert and the rainforest belt notwithstanding. The borders that today separate these communities into modern countries are relatively recent and quite porous.

There is an even more powerful, more relevant, reason for treating as a unit that huge regional chunk of Africa lying between the Mediterranean and the Atlantic. (BTW this is a chunk that is larger in size than the US). That reason is the focus of this hearing. "The hearing will examine terrorism, drug smuggling, humanitarian concerns, human rights problems, and governance in Africa's Sahel region." So says the invitation letter. Each one of these five identified problems is transnational. To a great degree, then, addressing them must therefore be regional as well.

Of course there are limits to the usefulness of a transnational, regional approach anywhere. In the Sahel, the intensity of each of the five "complex challenges" varies across different countries.

And then, more importantly, there is the difference in responses. Even where a problem has afflicted several countries a similar degree, it is almost guaranteed that responses would differ from country to country. For example, it has been rightly and widely stressed for 18 months that, for whatever reason, the Issouffou government in Niamey responded more effectively than did the Toure administration in Bamako to the same dangerous contagion from post-Gaddafi Libya: the inflow of dangerous arms and even more dangerous Tuareg fighters and their jihadist allies.

Despite these limits, for this hearing, the regional cross-country approach remains the better choice. It is preferable to the alternative: in-depth, tunnel-vision focus on each individual Sahelian country in isolation from its neighbors.

There is a corresponding choice that I have made by testifying: greater pre-occupation with policy implication in general and with US policy options in particular.

Here is another way of putting this choice I have made. In this testimony, it is vital for invited witnesses to possess and present good, up-to-date understanding of how the five grave challenges are afflicting each country and the Sahel as a whole and of how well local people and leaders are responding. The relevant question is, "How hard has each crisis (terrorism, drugs, humanitarian problems, human rights abuses and weak government) hit each country and the whole Sahel?"

However, what is even more relevant in this hearing are the implications for the US—for its interests and for its policy options in reaction. This focus on implications for the US comes with its own questions as well. On Sunday, May 12, 2013, former Defense Secretary Robert Gates succinctly captured one, "If an international crisis has to be solved, why should it be the US?" Regarding the crises in the Sahel, related questions arise: What have increasing terrorism, drug smuggling, humanitarian catastrophe, human rights abuses, and weak governance in Africa's Sahel got to do with us in America? Why should we care? Are our interests affected? Have we not helped already? What more can we do? I believe these questions are so justified and so vital that it would be irresponsible for any elected official, let alone the US Congress, not to find answers.

Above all else my testimony is an attempt to offer my considered answers for the consideration of the three subcommittees. Therefore it is less of a diagnosis of what ails Sahelian countries (though that forms the foundation) and more of a recommended therapy—why and how the US protects its important interests in the face of the growing crises in the Sahel.

The rest of this written testimony has these sequential components:
A sketchy, summarized assessment of each of the 5 challenges across the region (the diagnosis);
Implications of the crises for American interests;
Outline of US strategy and activities in the region since 9/11;
Identification of apparent weaknesses in current US strategy;
A suggested three-prong strategy going forward;
Responses to select flawed policy arguments;
A summary of 10 recommended guidelines for US policy and engagement; and
Conclusion.

Terrorism: For the international community, especially the US, increasing terrorism is the most alarming development across the Sahel. And this growth is real and observable—notwithstanding outright arguments and subtle hints by some analysts that terrorism in Africa is a Western pretext. I differ with those analysts and offer as early evidence the bombings of the US embassies in Kenya and Tanzania which killed several times more Africans.

Across the region recently, three countries have been hit hardest by terrorism—Libya, Nigeria and Mali. In Libya the regime that succeeded Col Muammar Gaddafi remains extremely weak and is being pushed around by armed, extremist militias who perpetrate acts that can only be called terrorism. Libya also enjoys the dubious distinction of having inflamed terrorism far beyond its borders to a much greater extent than any other country in region. Besides the weak state and many strong defiant extremist militias, one other factor caused this to happen: Col Gaddafi's huge arsenal was left unsecured and sophisticated and deadly weapons gushed out into our region and beyond.

And then there is Nigeria. Just a week ago, President Jonathan's slapped an on-going state of emergency and federal military occupation on three states. This is the latest attempt to control Boko Haram terrorists, now into their fourth year of violent militant insurgency, ostensibly to get Sharia law imposed across Africa's most populous country. The president's action is the biggest domestic security action since the catastrophic Biafran secession war some four decades ago.

Undoubtedly, Mali has been the epicenter, hammered the worst by terrorism in the region. The terrorists in Mali came close to taking over the entire country. But for the French-led intervention, they would have grabbed a chance to implement the next phases of their war plans: use Mali's territory and state instruments as a base from which to attack the African neighbors, then Europe and finally the US.

Drug smuggling, manufacture and growing usage: For a few years now, US anti-drug officials have voiced concern about the growth of a drug culture along the West African littoral and northwards on to the Sahel, Sahara, and North Africa. Now two other significant institutions have added their voices to the warnings. One is the UN's Office on Drugs and Crime, UNODC. The other is the West African Commission on Drugs launched five months ago by Kofi Annan, former UN Secretary General. The story the three sources tell is alarming: The region has been engulfed by gushers of narcotics, especially cocaine (from South America on its way to Europe), meth (manufactured locally and smuggled into Asia), and heroin (from Asia being smuggled into Europe).

The impact has been frightening. Guinea-Bissau has slipped closer toward a narco-state according to experts. Critics have accused officials of both the ousted administration of ex-Malian President Toure and its Tuareg and jihadist nemeses of being implicated. Throughout the region, drug money is fueling corruption and therefore wreaking havoc on democracy and n state functioning. And the growing consumption of narcotics is producing public health problems.

Humanitarian problems: In one respect the regional humanitarian pattern is similar to the terrorism pattern: While all countries in the Sahel have been affected, Mali, since January 2012, has been hit hardest, especially in the northern 60% of the country. There, several reliable agencies have all reported the same dismal statistic: At least 50% of the residents have been uprooted. A slight majority are in the southern 40% of the country (especially around Bamako, the capital), making them IDPs. The rest are mostly in inadequately-resourced refugee camps in neighboring Mauritania, Niger, and Burkina Faso.

Three drivers sequentially forced out the northern Mali population. The first is environmental: unusually severe seasonal drought caused severe food insecurity which necessitated mass trekking toward areas in better shape. The second driver was war. The third was the brutal reign of terror unleashed by the war's jihadist victors.

Though not as severely hit as Mali, the neighbors too are still stressed by the humanitarian crisis. Chad, reportedly, has scores of thousands at risk of food shortage. And Mauritania, Burkina Faso and Niger, the three biggest hosts of Malian refugees, are displaying signs of distress.

Human rights violations: While such violations are widespread in the Sahel and indeed across Africa, the already-noted familiar pattern is repeated: During its 2012 war, Mali experienced worst violations than any other of Sahelian country. Corinne Dufka, investigator extraordinaire at Human Rights Watch has done an amazing job of meticulously investigating, documenting and comprehensively reporting abuses across Mali. From her reports--as well as from other sources--three sets of Malian culprits stand out: MNLA, the Tuareg secessionist fighters from Libya who started the war in January 2012; the Malian army, especially the faction loyal to coup-maker Captain Amadou Sanogo; and the three jihadist fighting groups (AQIM, MUJAO, Ansar Dine) who drove out their former ally, the MNLA, and then imposed Sharia law across northern Mali.

As mentioned above in the humanitarian section, the three jihadist victors in Mali's civil war exacted severe punishment for any violations of their newly-imposed strict Sharia law. The diversity of banned items was startling: cell phone ring tones; popular music; soccer; inappropriate dress; interaction of unmarried couples; thievery; and adultery. The punishments were even more staggering—floggings, amputations, and at least one stoning execution an unmarried couple.

Among several, one bitter irony stands out: While harshly brutalizing Malians for violating their strict imposed rules, the jihadists ignored their own rules with impunity and behaved licentiously. They not only stole residents' property and destroyed ancient cultural heritage but they committed sexual crimes. Here is one instance: In a single November 2012 night in

Timbuktu, six different jihadist fighters serially "married," raped, and then "divorced" the same teenage girl.

The jihadists' erstwhile ally, the MNLA, also stands credibly accused of serious human rights violations. For example a year ago, reputable global news organization (Reuters, AP, and VOA) reported that in Gao, the jihadists had been welcomed because the MNLA were seen as intolerably brutal. Still, the most notorious accusation against the MNLA may be what has become known as the Aguelhok massacre. According to GenocideWatch, this is what happened:

> On January 24, 2012, the NMLA recaptured Aguelhok and executed 82 prisoners from the Malian army. Two tactics were used: shooting a single bullet through the head or slitting the throat. The hands of the victims were tied. These summary executions were war crimes under both the Geneva Conventions and the Statute of the International Criminal Court, to which Mali is a State-Party. The ICC has, therefore, declared that it will consider claims from several sources in order to decide whether or not to open a war crimes investigation into the allegations of atrocities committed in Mali since January.

It could be argued that the Aguelhok massacre pushed Mali over the edge. Women marched in Bamako excoriating President Toure for allowing their husbands and brothers to be slaughters. Across southern Mali, especially Bamako, popular anger and reprisals against Tuaregs increased so quickly that President Toure gave a nation-wide address urging that they be spared. And, led by Captain Sanogo, soldiers in Bamako, enraged at their comrades' gruesome murder, overthrew the government, plunging Mali into even worse crisis.

The third serious violator of human rights in Mali is the army especially the coup-making faction. Soldiers loyal to Sanogo have been accused of executing Red Berets loyal to former President Toure, of beating up Interim President Traore, of disappearing dozens of civilian critics, and of summarily executing on the national highway about a dozen clerics journeying to a meeting in Bamako. And the international community has been quite vocal that in the aftermath of the French intervention, Malian soldiers have been carrying out revenge attacks against civilians, especially Tuaregs.

Governance: Reflecting much of Africa, the countries in our region of focus have weak institutions and are poorly governed, especially when vibrant democracy is the yardstick. Indeed the searing irony is that before it imploded, Mali for the last 20 years had been dubbed the most exemplary democracy in the Sahel region. With Mali's democracy up in smoke, only Niger, Senegal and Nigeria are led today by men who initially took power through free and fair elections.

This quick assessment of the hearing's 5 named threats around the Sahel and neighboring countries confirms the assertion that the region has serious growing crises.

But what does this mean for the US? What implications do these Sahel regional crises carry for important American interests?

Answer: The Sahelian crises pose significant dangers to American security and economic interests. If the identified crises go insufficiently addressed, the Sahel and much of the northern half of Africa would become seriously deteriorated.

A deteriorated, crises-ridden Sahel would threaten and negatively impact US interests through several parallel channels. First to be jeopardized would be every important US interest and relationship in Africa—security, economic, diplomatic, medical and environmental.

There would also be an effect in South America to the detriment of US interests there. Unchecked drug trafficking through the Sahel will translate into a reverse flow of drug money and armaments into South America. This bodes ill for America's backyard.

The third channel of negative consequences from a deteriorated Sahel would empty into Europe, the most important of US allies. Narcotics and terrorism are the obvious dangers.

Finally, no one can guarantee that a Sahel in crisis will not find a way to impact the US directly. The example of Abdulmutallab, the underwear bomber, a Nigerian whose path of attack on the US went through Yemen should serve as a cautionary tale.

The implication of these dangers posed to the US by a deteriorated Sahel then is clear: The US protects important interests by engaging the Sahel and helping the region to squelch its emerging crises before they worsen. But such engagement must be built on and learn lessons from previous engagement. This makes the case for a quick review of how the US has engaged Africa in the security sector since 9/11.

This testimony now sketches the post 9/11 American security strategy in Africa by describing several of its component elements. They are: The US persuading Libya to abandon its nuclear weapons program and then rewarding it with closer, warmer ties; establishing the Combined Joint Task Force-Horn of Africa and acquiring Camp Lemonnier in Djibouti; creating AFRICOM with the stated purpose of training African armies to become better fighters; launching the activities that became the Trans-Sahara Counter-Terrorism Partnership; organizing the annual Operation Flintlock exercises; and privileging Mali, a Sahelian country, as the star pupil of this post 9/11 strategy in Africa.

This testimony believes and argues the following. The post 9/11 security strategy in Africa cries out for a thorough, top-to-bottom, full-blown review and evaluation. The passage of an entire decade is one rationale. Another is a series of important events and occurrences: the North African spring; the aftermath and impact of the Libyan intervention; and Mali's implosion.

The findings and lessons learned from the review must then be incorporated to design a new improved US security strategy in Africa, if called for.

However, even prior to that full review and evaluation being done, some improvements can be made. For example, over the course of the elapsed 10 years, observers have pinpointed perceived weak and undesirable features of the security strategy. As one such observer and as an Africa policy analyst, I have compiled my own list of perceived shortcomings of the US post 9/11

security strategy. They are five. In my opinion, the security strategy: has been too oblivious of local concerns, priorities and opinions; has over-relied on security measures to manage terrorism, while under-utilizing democracy as a potent terrorism prevention tool; has handled the training of African security personnel rather badly; dropped the ball several times **after** intervening in Libya, an intervention that was justified; and downgraded its Mali involvement far too hastily, a hasty withdrawal that mimics similar ones in Somalia, DRC and Libya;

A good way to correct these five weaknesses is to adopt the following new proposed security strategy. It has two arms. The much, much bigger arm aims to prevent terrorism democracy, inclusiveness, reconciliation and development, or DIRD. The smaller are would use effective security measures (intelligence gathering, police action and military force) to defeat violent, recalcitrant terrorists.

Dear Chairmen, since the Africa embassy bombings, a vigorous debate has long swirled about fighting terrorism in Africa. The debate intensifies around each major security event. In my opinion the debate is extremely valuable, especially for decision- and policy-makers such as you who must sift through the arguments and craft policy erected on the best ideas. To facilitate your decision-making, I will now paraphrase a few of the popular arguments that I disagree with and then make a counter-argument.

"Stay out of Mali; intervention would only make things worse:" This was a popular dominant view in the US throughout 2012. Even the State Department espoused this view in House Testimony last year. The successful French intervention exposes just how wrong this view was.

"Terrorism is a made-up pretext, not a real threat" I have come across this assertion frequently among friends who unfailingly see every US and European military operation in Africa as being motivated by a desire to cordon off African resources from the Chinese. I point out to them the many terror attacks which have killed thousands of Africans.

"Poverty justifies terrorism" Although these precise words are not spoken, this mind-set drives the oft-expressed position which argues that Boko Haram's violent campaign will persist until poverty in northern Nigeria is eliminated. Pointing out that other zones of Nigeria are also extremely poor but do not resort to terrorism is an effective response.

"Militarism is the entire solution to the Sahel's terrorism problem" The failure to embrace and use democracy to prevent terrorism suggests that this view holds sway among those in charge of C-T strategy. That it is false is suggested by the popular counter which says that we cannot kill our way out of the terrorism problem.

"Good governance is the name of the game" Using 'good governance' in place of 'democracy' sends the clear message that dictators are acceptable if they make the trains run on time. This message must be rejected and "good governance" must be discarded as a term.

"The US has limited influence and can do little against friendly tyrants" Ever since the height of the Cold War, Washington officials have trotted out this excuse whenever criticized for not

doing enough to move authoritarian allies toward democracy. The falsity of the excuse becomes obvious when the screws are rightly tightened on dictators who are no allies of Washington.

"MNLA's armed campaign in Mali is justified" This seems the implied argument of the very large global network of governments, institutions, pundits and analysts who talk endlessly about grievances and who press Bamako to make concessions, despite the MNLA's heavy baggage. These advocates seem oblivious to the dangerous message this sends to other Malian ethnic communities to pick up arms to get attention.

Scattered through the preceding analysis are several recommendations for improving US policy and activities in the Sahel region, and even the entire African. They are now compiled and listed here.

The US must stay the course especially when providing non-military partnerships will help African allies like Mali make it through difficult times.

The Sahel's "growing crises" must not be wasted. Instead the opportunity should be seized to undertake a thorough review and evaluation of US security strategy in Africa since 9/11.

The review's findings and lessons learned must be woven into an updated strategy.

Without first completing the exhaustive review called for, quick improvements can and should be made to correct obvious weaknesses in the current security strategy in Africa. Highly recommended is a revised US strategy that persuades partnering African governments to use democracy, inclusion, reconciliation and development (DIRD) to prevent the emergence of homegrown terrorism.

In operations across Africa, US entities must strike a nuanced balance. On the one hand, they must insist on adherence to non-negotiable universal norms and values. And on the other, they must not dismiss local concerns and customs without first understanding their purposes and motivations.

No authoritarian African ally of the US is indispensable. Learning from the North African Spring, especially Egypt, the US must therefore protect its longer term interests in Africa by heavily insisting on full commitment to democracy as a universal value (no hiding behind watered down "good governance").

While not compromising on universal norms, US entities must embrace working behind the leadership of locals during collaboration on African projects and they must be must be good guests who respect locals' knowledge of their history, their environment, their problems & their aspirations.

The US must quickly return to its previous top leadership position in Mali, although this time in the non-security sector during Mali's reconstruction.

Specifically, the US must quickly assist in drawing up a shovel ready contingency plan for Mali's July elections which can be speedily implemented to cope with undesirable developments. Call this an electoral insurance policy. It has become necessary because in the opinion of many observers, this witness included, the international community is rushing an unready Mali toward hastily organized elections.

Finally, the US should adopt Mali's Political Dialog and Reconciliation process and draw on its rich tradition of democratic diversity and equal rights aspirations to help Mali heal.

Once again I am grateful to all three subcommittees for the opportunity to share my opinions about important issues affecting Africa. And I will be glad to answer your questions. Thank you.

Mr. SMITH. Thank you very much for your testimony.

At least let me ask you on that last point about the elections, are you concerned about the July elections? Nothing focuses the mind like a deadline. And sometimes when deadlines are delayed, it leads to a certain ennui and a belief that things can spiral out of control again. So it seems to be positive if it is in July, but if you could elaborate on your concerns? Are there any other panelists who would want to touch on that?

Mr. AKUETTEH. Yes. And I am particularly grateful for that question, too, because I do see the need for elections. I mean, there is a lot of good that elections can do Mali. Even the issue of the MNLA and Tuaregs, you need to know who represents whom. Who does the MNLA speak for? Who are other people who speak for other communities? And elections will help with that.

You do the research, and you will see that a lot of people say that they want a government environment that the people themselves elected. So I am saying, on the one hand, it is important and good to have elections. At the same time, because elections are so important, we need to make sure that they are done right. And that means a lot of preparation from registering people. And the fact that you have so many displaced people in Mali causes me some nervousness.

So, thinking about it, I agree with you that there should be a deadline to make sure that we move quickly. But I also think we need what I will call electoral insurance policy. Given the difficulties that Mali has, it seems to me there should be contingency plans to say, what do we do if we run into this particular circle or that particular circle? So I think the election should be done. They should be done as fast as possible. But we should also be aware of the off circles and the dangers that bad elections can lead to.

Mr. SMITH. Dr. Nedelcovych?

Mr. NEDELCOVYCH. Chairman, I would agree that it is essential to have a deadline. I will draw from an example next door in Guinea. We are involved in a rice program. There the elections, we are halfway through the administration 2½ years later, we haven't had the legislature.

So I think the most critical thing is you will not have the perfect elections, clearly, but one must get on with having as good an election as you can. Is July too soon? One could argue perhaps, that it is important, that it is perceived as legitimate, and that people can, in fact, vote. But I certainly if it were to be pushed back would not push back very far because what is happening is, in essence, all of us who are on hold waiting for this to happen—and it is those very investments that will in the end stabilize the country and bring back the growth to make it go forward.

So I would argue better and imperfect elections sooner than a perfect one later.

Mr. SMITH. Thank you.

Mr. Atallah?

Mr. ATALLAH. Mr. Chairman, just briefly if I may comment? I agree with pushing for elections. However, there are some underlying issues in the country that have been festering now since the independence of Mali in 1960. And if we don't address local grievances in the divide between north and south, I think what we re-

turn to is a forced election and the continued problem sets that remain in the country. Those need to be addressed for fair elections going to the future. We have to address those, those internal dynamics. And those need to come right now, before the elections, in order to bring everybody together.

Thank you.

Mr. SMITH. Dr. Nedelcovych, you mentioned in your written testimony the old saying that capital is a coward and that it goes into flight, obviously, when there is a crisis. And, yet, you cite the examples of China, India, and other nations who continue to invest in Africa. Why are American companies so reluctant?

As you might know, I have introduced legislation. It is co-sponsored by my friend and colleague Ms. Bass. And we are building a co-sponsor base, hopefully a large group that would put a very heavy emphasis on exporting to Africa. Obviously, a rising tide raises all of the boats.

We know that AGOA is working, but it is only one initiative among what should be many. Why are we so reluctant?

Mr. NEDELCOVYCH. Thank you for the questions. I have been living the last 20-plus years since leaving the ADB.

You know, Mr. Chairman, when you say capital is a coward, it needs certainty. Okay? That certainty can be bad. Certainty can be good. I need to know what that certainty is so I can mitigate. This was actually the irony to some extent that, really, Mali, even we that have been operating all over, Angola, Sudan, I mean, you name it, we, are a bit surprised.

If you dig back far, you would say, "Well, but, in essence, as the colleague said, these were discrepancies from the north and the south and the country." Maybe why am I surprised that it boiled over? It is those uncertainties that are difficult for American companies. Now, at the same time—and I refer the patchwork—if you look at 60, 70, 80 percent of the countries, most of them, the trend is very positive.

I look at my own reactions here. At some point, I was about ready to hang up the boots. You know, I have been doing this for many years. And I said, "You know what? This is crazy." When the continent finally for 30 years—20 years, I have been scratching odds and ends sort of deals.

Now real deals are happening. There are real business deals happening, Mr. Chairman. And it is not just oil and gas. It is the growing middle class. There is a consuming substantive group. When you start speaking of Nigeria, you start speaking of Nairobi in Kenya, you start speaking of Tanzania, there are so many centers now of growth where investment is interesting.

What I hope the lesson will go back to both the political and society in the unstable areas is, you know what, ladies and gentlemen? If you want that capital, that capital needs to have some stability. Otherwise, it will very happily go elsewhere. So help us come because then we all win. That I think is the message that needs to come out.

Thank you.

Mr. SMITH. Thank you.

Let me ask you, Mr. Akuetteh. You mentioned that there is a great burden and stress being placed on Mali's neighbors because

of the refugees that are spilling over the border. Could you perhaps elaborate on what that burden is? And is there an expectation that those individuals will be able to be repatriated back to their homes?

Mr. AKUETTEH. Thank you again. I think it is connected to my answer to the elections question because, of course, these people, one of their fundamental rights, the displaced people, both in the southern part of Mali and in the other regions, is the right to vote. So if elections are being held, we have to think about how do we allow them to cast a vote?

In terms of the stress placed on the other countries, I am very glad that this hearing is about the region, not just about Mali. Mali's neighbors are also stressed. It just so happens that because of the Tuareg problem and the MNLA coming from Libya, Mali imploded. But the other countries are also at risk. And, therefore, it is a question of countries that are already at risk that now have had to play host to the refugees from Mali.

It seems to me it is clear that they are industrious in terms of food, in terms of water, in terms of the impact on very fragile agricultural communities.

Now, I am glad for the discussion in the previous panel. I think the one area where the U.S. has been doing a pretty good job is the humanitarian assistance, especially in the region. But I still think that these are countries that really do need help. And it will be good to increase that.

And, if I might, on the question of U.S. companies and their presence in Africa, which is an issue that concerns me, I would just add that, you know, Africans are also puzzled. I mean, I would echo your questions. We would like to see more involvement from the U.S.

The elephant in the room is the presence of the Chinese. And I will actually say that, I mean, I have been in the U.S. for quite a while, going into my fourth decade. And what I don't understand, I think that the U.S. has far more positive assets if you look at the Chinese versus the U.S. There are people like me, African-born, but, of course, there is the African community, the African-American community, here, which is a big asset.

So, frankly, it puzzles me that with all of those assets, with the U.S.'s democracy, as Ambassador Yamamoto said, the U.S. is very popular in Africa. So if you look at that, if you look at the experience with capitalism, if you look at the black community in this country, it seems to me the U.S. should have a much bigger presence.

And I, too, like you, don't understand why U.S. companies haven't made bigger progress into the continent.

Mr. SMITH. You know, on that point, our legislation would try to encourage the diaspora as part of a strategy to be more involved with reconnecting and certainly being part of an export strategy. So I thank you for your comment.

Just two final questions and I yield to my friend and colleague Ms. Bass. Mr. Akuetteh, you mentioned that in your testimony, the Government of Niger has handled the potential Tuareg threat much more effectively than the Government of Mali. Could you ex-

plain what they are doing differently and why it has worked better?

Mr. AKUETTEH. Thank you again.

A lot of this is from the analysis of experts in the area. What I do know for a fact, for instance, is that in the immediate aftermath of the Libyan problem and when people moved south into the countries bordering the south of Libya, one of the things that the Nigerian Government did was they said they insisted that everybody coming from Libya who wanted to go into Niger had to disarm and if they refused to disarm, they cannot get in.

Now, on the other hand, it is not clear how Mali handled that, but all of the experts and, in fact, Nigerian officials say, "This is what we did. We said nobody can come in who had arms. Otherwise, we are not letting them in." It is not clear how that was handled in Mali, but we do know that the MNLA, which was heavily armed—and I have seen statistics that say that some say there were 800 of them, others like 2,000 of them. One way or another, they happened to enter back into Mali and the rebellion started.

Mr. SMITH. Mr. Atallah, one final question. You testified that there was an underestimation of the jihadist intentions of al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb. Could you explain as to why that was the case? And are we repeating that mistake in your opinion anywhere else in the Sahel?

Mr. ATALLAH. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Yes, I think the issue has been festering for a very long time; in fact, for two decades. Specifically, if I look at northern Mali, GSPC, which is a precursor to AQIM, established itself in late 2002, early 2003. In fact, I was in the northern parts of Mali. At the time, I was still in uniform running around looking at the problem set.

Since then, they have intermarried within ethnic groups in the north. They have done the same thing across the region. And this is where AQIM becomes a threat. If you look across the region—and I am going to include north Africa in it—currently Tunisia, the fledgling government in Tunisia, is fighting affiliates of AQIM in the western side of their border. Southern Libya has AQIM. AQIM has direct connections with Boko Haram. And the current Government of Nigeria is involved in trying to push Boko Haram and Ansaru from the north, with a lot of refugees pulling across the border. We have AQIM operational in northern Niger and Mauritania and, of course, in Mali. So they are all across the region.

The problem is and what I find amongst peers, my colleagues is we try to quantify AQIM saying, oh, they are about 3,000 strong or 2,000 strong or whatnot. That is irrelevant. There can be 10 or 15. It doesn't matter. The fact is that every single time the Shura council, which exists in the northeastern part of Algeria, when one of their members speaks, they are able to incite and bring and leverage people into the fold. And this is where we have the issue.

Today there are over 800 Tunisians fighting on the militant side in Syria. Sooner or later, these guys are going to come back. Many of them have connections to AQIM.

So the problem set is not only within the African context but outside of that as well. And this is where we are literally missing the boat. I think we need to do more.

And those are the three small recommendations I made. There are several others. But we need to get involved in this issue across that region of the Sahara.

Mr. SMITH. Thank you so very much.

Ms. Bass?

Ms. BASS. Yes. Just following up on that when you were talking about AQIM—and you might have referenced it when I was running back and forth to committee to vote. So excuse me if I am asking stuff you already covered. But do you think that there is a degree of coordination between the different factions or is it similar to al-Qaeda, where there are spinoffs but they are not necessarily working in coordination?

Mr. ATALLAH. Thank you very much for your question.

As far as I understand so far, it depends on where, but there is definitely coordination. And it depends also loosely on how we define coordination. For example, there has been a lot of testimony on what happened in Benghazi, but it is understood, at least from experts, that the Sahara branch of AQIM, one member specifically, Mokhtar Belmokhtar, was getting feed of information, what was going on in Benghazi.

Currently what is going on in Tunisia, there are members there that are specifically battling Tunisian authorities that have directly links to the Shura council or to the emir of AQIM, Droukdel.

The same thing within Boko Haram. Boko Haram, for example, in Nigeria has had connections to AQIM for a very long time. In fact, Abubakar Shekau, the emir of Boko Haram, had one of his messages pushed on AQIM media back in 2011. It was an audiotape that AQIM kind of facilitated. So there are coordinations here and there. And that is part of the issue.

We know so little about the band of the Sahara Sahel. And some of these groups are linked to AQIM not out of ideological, you know, views but sometimes out of just necessity of survival because AQIM has become the wealthiest affiliate out of all the AQ affiliates around the world.

Ms. BASS. Wealthiest from drug trafficking?

Mr. ATALLAH. From kidnap for ransom. And I would say a lot of Western countries are to blame for that. You know, over the years, 2007, 2008, 2009, we see multiple kidnappings and, in return, payments that are provided in return for these.

The last one was more recently, not even a year ago. You had aid workers that were kidnapped from the Tindouf area. And, in return, two AQIM affiliates were released from a Mauritanian jail. And supposedly AQIM received 15 million euros.

I was in contact with friends in northern Kidal. They said that for the longest time, folks were no longer using the West African CFA but they were actually using euros to pay for things. That is indicative of how much, how deep-rooted this problem set is.

Ms. BASS. So you are saying the Western countries are to blame because they are paying the ransom?

Mr. ATALLAH. They are enabling. They are enabling.

Ms. BASS. What should they do?

Mr. ATALLAH. Well, again, this is where—and that is a fair question. This is where I think we need to stop enabling and we need to really focus on the problem sets. Messaging is important. You

know, the current recruits that AQIM is able to leverage, they have built this over time, but 12 suicide bombers never seen in the history of Mali, we are not messaging in these problem set areas. We are not dealing with the root causes of the problem. In fact, we just put, as I—and pardon the expression—a Band-Aid on a sucking chest wound. It just doesn't work.

Ms. BASS. Thank you.

And I am sorry. I am not going to attempt. Would you describe a couple of your businesses? Specifically what do you do? And where are you working?

And, actually, let me ask you about Mali because I have a big interest, especially as Mr. Akuetteh said, in promoting U.S. businesses and, in particular, you know, African-American businesses, their involvement on a continent. And so I am wondering, how you do work in Mali? What do you do?

Mr. NEDELCOVYCH. Thank you, Congresswoman.

We are in agro industry. We are primarily in the process side. So being out of Louisiana, it is sugar cane, cane processing. It is rice, rice milling. And it is always the co-generation of electricity from the agriwaste. So the Mali project, in fact, I believe Eric had a chance to speak with the people out there when you were in Bamako. It was to be 200,000 tons of sugar produced, 30 megawatts of electricity, and 10 million liters of ethanol, actually, for a 10 percent gasohol blend in all the gasoline——

Ms. BASS. And it is in Bamako or around Bamako?

Mr. NEDELCOVYCH. It is in Ségou and Markala in the Office du Niger. It is using the strength and the value of water. Agriculture is water. And this is why I say oftentimes while one looks at the Sahel, its very, very desperate region, from an agro-industrial standpoint, I would say quite the opposite. You have a major, major river that is coming through that needs to be properly harnessed in a sustainable way.

The key, the key, is absolutely the way you structure it. And this comes back to the question of why U.S. investments don't go in. Investments that are small are just going to be difficult for international investors to come in. So the key becomes sizing the investment.

For agri industry, if you don't scale up, you can't compete. Now, that does not mean you dislocate the small farmers. What it does mean is literally capture them in the scheme as outgrowers. In our case in the 15,000 hectare, 7,000 were going to be independent small farmers that are being brought into modern agriculture, if you will. The same happens with our rice schemes now in Nigeria. The key is always bringing in the community, bringing in the small farmer.

And guess what? In the end, that will be what is putting the Band-Aid on whatever——

Ms. BASS. Right.

Mr. NEDELCOVYCH [continuing]. It that you are placing it because then it is those people that will make sure that this doesn't get undermined.

Unfortunately, in Mali, we were about to start up the major operation. Had we been there a year or two, I am willing to bet the

region would act differently. Those would be the people protecting our aid workers going in there.

So I would continue to argue for that combination of larger investment, which is interesting foreign national groups, with schemes that bring in the smaller. And then there is one very important thing, coming back to what Congressman Smith was asking. That is, if you take out Nigeria, South Africa, Kenya, most of these economies are just simply too small to be interesting.

Ms. BASS. Right, which is why——

Mr. NEDELCOVYCH. And I hate to say it, but the ECOWASes and the economic committees have all spoken very nicely. But, in reality, those are not functioning as true common markets. And in our case, for example, on the sugar, the state and the Mali delegation, the Ambassador knows very well, it is ties to the point where now we have taken advantage of being landlocked. The advantage is you have got a huge population that grow the national markets.

We don't need to export the sugar. It is not even interesting. The price is a lot more interesting for sugar and rice in the region. Grow it. But what happens then is if those common markets are not functioning,——

Ms. BASS. Right.

Mr. NEDELCOVYCH [continuing]. You begin to have to start subsidizing the small factories that don't work. The reality of the world has to come back in. And that goes also on the African side.

Ms. BASS. Well, I really appreciate what you are saying. I mean, one of our challenges here in trying to work with businesses to go to the continent is they are afraid to death—well, I mean, basically, it is our own ignorance of the continent. So when we hear a conflict in Mali, we think that it is happening all over the place. And we have no geographic understanding as to where one country is, you know.

So you have been able to do this in Mali, in the middle of a conflict. And I think that is a really important perspective to bring. Even where there is a conflict, you can still successfully od business, let alone all of the nations where there isn't a current conflict. So I appreciate that.

And, Mr. Akuetteh, I wanted to ask you about a few things that you were saying. You talked about the U.S. playing a stronger role. And I wanted to know what your opinion was, how U.S. security activities in the region are perceived by the governments and populations in the Sahel. So I always worry about the U.S. playing a stronger role, but where is that fine line between playing that stronger role and then feeling as though we have overplayed our hand?

Mr. AKUETTEH. Thank you very much. I think it is a great question. And also, especially because you mentioned governments and people, sometimes I think that there is a split in how some particular U.S. programs may be looked at.

But it seems to me that, as I mentioned, the U.S. interests in the Sahel, West Africa and North Africa, really picked up, for understandable reasons, after 9/11. So the issue is terrorism and the potential for terrorism.

And I think it is important to underline that terrorism is a problem for Africans as well. I mean, Boko Haram has been killing Ni-

gerians. The Embassy bombings killed a lot of Africans. So Africans welcome the U.S.'s help in dealing with terrorism. I do think there should be dialogue about what particular approaches will work.

Ms. BASS. Right.

Mr. AKUETTEH. I think if there is that dialogue, then we don't overstep and don't do things that may make Africans nervous. I particularly think that a stress on democracy will be a very good way. Paradoxical as it may sound, it will be a very good way of dealing with terrorism and potential terrorism across Africa.

So, yes, I want the U.S. to say, "Look, this is very important to us. We want to be engaged," but then have a dialogue with the Africans, whether regionally or in particular countries, as to exactly what will work.

If I might mention one particular example; for instance, training African militaries. I think this is part of the strategy for dealing with terrorism in Africa, but in my mind, it has to be in three stages. I think the first thing that African soldiers need is respect for civilian authority to know that an elected President is really their Commander in Chief and it has chosen to turn a gun on him.

I think the second phase for training for African soldiers has to be respect for citizens; that is, citizens pay their salaries, pay for their uniforms, and it is not their job to abuse them. I think if they pass those two phases of tests, then for me, you go to the third level, which is how to make them better fighters.

So I would say again the U.S. needs to be involved with the Africans and particularly on the training of the soldiers. Make sure that they respect democracy and they respect civilian authorities.

Ms. BASS. So taking Mali for an example, do you think that what we did didn't work? I mean, because we trained the military there. And that is exactly what the military did. So is it that it didn't work? I mean, that is always the fine line. How do you determine when you have moved from one stage to the other?

Mr. AKUETTEH. I think it is a good question here. Without ducking the question, I need to display some humility, which is why, in fact, an important point in my testimony, and even last year when I was here, is that I think the U.S. needs to do the most thorough of reviews of their strategy over the 10 years and look at everything. Experts will have to do it. I think Congress will have a role. Experts in DoD will have a role so they can determine exactly what the training went to and what it was meant to achieve, where things may have gone wrong, and what lessons can be learned from it.

So in terms of if you look at just the results, of course, I think it is disastrous for Mali, but there was the coup and the role of the U.S.-trained soldier in that coup.

Ms. BASS. Right.

Mr. AKUETTEH. It doesn't make the U.S. look good. Even it is disastrous for Mali. My point is we need to do a very thorough review to find out exactly what happened. From this distance, that is all I can recommend because there are details I don't know.

Ms. BASS. Sure. And, you know, I wanted to know about what you thought about the people that are running right now for President. We have actually met a number of them. And I know we have a whole Malian delegation here that I look forward to meeting with

as soon as this meeting is over. But how many people were running for President? I think I have met two or three Presidential candidates who have come through the Capitol. And what is your opinion of the capacity?

Mr. AKUETTEH. You know, I think my definitive answer is I have heard of 12 running. I know that at least one is a woman, which is a good sign. On the other hand, as Chairman Smith had asked about the elections, I see the value of the elections. On the other hand, I am nervous because between now and July is not a lot of time.

Ms. BASS. Right.

Mr. AKUETTEH. And so the way I am linking this to your question is that there doesn't seem to be a lot of time to get to know the candidates, at least from people like us from the outside.

Now, the talk inside Mali is that many of the candidates are from the old political class. So they may be well-known. But from an activist like me, what I know is fairly superficial, which is that there are about 12 of them. And they are vying. And I wish there was more time to do things right.

Ms. BASS. Well, and I also think it is going to be interesting. And, Mr. Chair, maybe it is something that we could look at because after the election takes place, what is our role going to be supporting whoever it is that is elected to help to strengthen their capacity?

A final question for you. When I was making one of my runs back to another committee, you were talking about drug trafficking.

Mr. AKUETTEH. Yes.

Ms. BASS. And I wanted to know if you could expand on that? And I wanted to know your thoughts on how you think countries in the region can best counter the drug trafficking.

Mr. AKUETTEH. Oh, if I may take the back end of the question first? Because in preparing for this testimony and some of the research I was doing, one thing struck me which I think is a good sign. And I will underline that.

Former U.N. Secretary General Kofi Annan has actually just in January created the West Africa Commission on Drugs. And he is bringing a lot of Africans, including former President Obasanjo to deal with the drug problem in West Africa.

Now, what I was saying earlier is that the way I think it affects U.S. interests is that these drugs, the experts mentioned that you have cocaine, you have meth, and you have heroin. The cocaine is coming from Latin America. And, in return, what you are getting back into Latin America, of course, is drug money, but you are also getting some of the weapons that everyone agrees flowed out of Libya. So you are getting weapons going to Latin America. Now, I am saying that it seems to me that happening in the U.S. hemisphere should be of concern to the U.S.

But, apart from cocaine, the research—and the U.N. Office on Drugs has also done a lot of work in West Africa. And they are finding out that meth is being produced in some West African countries and then exported to east Asia. And the heroin is coming from Asia through West Africa into Europe. And the big problem this is having on the area, West Africa, is three. You have got cor-

ruption. You have got democracy being contaminated. And then you have got health problems because people involved in the drug trade, locals, sometimes they are being paid with drugs. And so consumption is also growing. And it is a health problem for the Africans. And they are very concerned.

I mean, one thing Kofi Annan said was that we really need the help of our friends in Europe and the United States to help us deal with the drug problem.

Ms. BASS. Thank you very much.

Mr. SMITH. Thank you very much.

You have been very patient with your time. If I could just ask a few follow-up questions? And anything you want to add, please do. In my walk as a lawmaker—and I have been in Congress now 33 years—I often differentiate between criticism that mocks, belittles, and takes cheap shots, and criticism that is constructive and leads to better outcomes. You did listen to the administration witnesses earlier in the first panel. You know and you understand the administration's policies vis-à-vis the Sahel. I wonder if you could offer this panel any constructive criticism that might lead to better outcomes.

Secondly, Mr. Atallah, in your testimony, you heard Nancy Lindborg say earlier that while the recent rise of violent extremism in West Africa cannot be directly attributed to drought, chronic food security, or weak governance, each of these factors can indirectly exacerbate instability in the region.

And you made three very specific recommendations at the end of your testimony. One is that USAID get back into the fight. And you pointed out that there are access restrictions which our Embassy imposes and others imposed. If you could elaborate on that?

Thirdly, talk about border security. I wonder if you might tell us, to what degree you are talking about. How much? Is it technical aid? Is it actual foreign aid that would beef up their ability to have a more secure border?

And, finally, you point out that to effectively counter the jihad narrative wielded by AQIM, a comprehensive and expertly crafted information operation campaign is necessary for the region. And that is, I think, a very profound recommendation, but I wonder if you might tell us how that might be done. And others might want to speak to that as well.

The first one would be on constructive criticism and then to speak to the three or elaborate on the recommendations that you made.

Mr. ATALLAH. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Yes. Constructive criticism, I think, sir, you asked the question as what is AFRICOM doing. A component of AFRICOM is SOCAF. I think SOCAF can be deeply rooted in the fight but with restrictions. We are not taking enough steps.

I know the command is ready. I know the command wants to go in. I know they have several plans to go in. However, there are some political dynamics that prohibit them from doing so. And my first criticism is I think we need to get in there.

There could be some assistance in targeting key AQIM, MUJAO, Ansar al-Dine leaders, Iyad ag Aghali, Mokhtar Belmokhtar. I can go on and on. There are several of them that are still floating

around the region. And we have experience in other parts of the world that we can bring to bear in this area. That is number one.

Number two, although USAID is doing some work, a lot more can be done. Again, in the band of the Sahara—and when I talk about northern Mali, northern Niger, southern Libya, southern Algeria, all the way across the northern Chad, the peoples of this part of the world are really marginalized by their host governments. A call from Kidal, for example. A person was telling me that there are very little food resources and medical resources. Médecins du Monde, which is an NGO that provides some medical aid, has a couple of workers up in Kidal but not enough to meet all of the needs. We need to get those folks up there. In order to do so, it requires, of course, soft elements to provide that security. So that is in a sense a criticism of the lack of involvement in the region.

In answer to the questions you asked specifically to my statement, I have flown across the entire band of the Sahara. I used to do that for the Defense Intelligence Agency. I have landed on every dirt strip in the northern parts of the Sahara from Mali, Niger, and Chad. There is no radar. Movements of aircraft can go back and forth. People can land, say, in Kidal. They can land in Tessalit. They can land in other parts of the Sahara, literally without anybody knowing about it.

Number two, the movements across the Sahara in some of these areas is difficult because of the geography. If you take the highest peaks of the mountains in, say, southern Algeria, the Ahaggar Mountains, into the Adrars in Mali and the Iron Mountains in Niger, that band over there has some very treacherous terrain. And people move very freely within those areas. It is very difficult for the host countries to have any visibility or control. So we need to do that, in effect.

In terms of messaging, AQIM is very apt. Like I said, they have a Twitter account. And they have used Facebook continuously. There was a Facebook page. And I mentioned that in my written statement. That popped up after the attack on the gas plant in Algeria. Mokhtar Belmokhtar, the guy who crafted the strategy for its face, went on Facebook on a site called the Derna Media Center, which stands for Derna, Libya. Within a matter of weeks, it was taken down. But the number of people that joined that literally in a 2-week span was 4,000 basically, counting Mokhtar Belmokhtar as a hero of what he did in Algeria.

It doesn't mean all of these people are joining AQIM. However, it means that they are getting an audience, whether it is through Twitter, it is through Facebook, or whatnot. What we need to do is counter that in order to prevent additional recruits in the future and to prevent things like we are seeing right now in Mali: Suicide bombers.

Ms. BASS. You mentioned Mokhtar Belmokhtar. I thought he was killed.

Mr. ATALLAH. Ma'am, he wasn't killed. That was a mention from the Chadian side. The Chadian President came out and said that he was killed, but Mokhtar Belmokhtar is still alive. In fact, jihadi forums came out and did say publicly that he is still alive.

The only person who is confirmed killed—and the French had to confirm it publicly—was Abou Zeid. There are several others, but Mokhtar Belmokhtar is still around.

Ms. BASS. Thank you.

Mr. ATALLAH. Thank you, ma'am.

Mr. NEDELCOVYCH. I think we just really have to ask ourselves the very basic question. And that is, is it the illness we are going after or the symptoms? You know, fighting terrorism, fighting the mokhtars by whatever name is a little bit like that game you have, the groundhog that comes up. You smash its head here, and it pops up here. You smash it here. It pops up there. It is never ending. I mean, if one does not get in there and treat that hunger and that poverty and that desperation, you just simply cannot win the war. You cannot.

So the question then becomes, why, yes, this has to be done. Can we and how do we get to the real root issues so that in the end, it is the people living in that area? It is their leaderships that have to come back forward and say, "Okay. What are we going to do? We are not going to stabilize. They are going to have to stabilize." I mean, let's be honest in the end. What is the only answer there?

I was chuckling earlier. I visited my grandmother when I was studying political philosophy. And, you know, she was the grandmother from the old society. "This is very brilliant. You guys are all very wise, but can I spread this on bread and eat it? Can I do that, that wisdom of yours?" And there is too much, at times, focus elections. And there is going to be a discussion.

I mean, I don't even want to count how many national dialogues have gone on in various countries on this continent, but when do we get on? When does the civil society and the people all say, "What about us? We want to eat. We want to grow up like the rest of the world is going forward."

But, really, I think that focus has got to come also from the people themselves, their own national leadership to pull out what is in the end the absolute necessity. And that is treat the disease, not the symptom. It is poverty. It is hunger. It is desperation. And that is where if there is a positive criticism, it is a realization from the development agency and others. There are no surprises.

It is about every so many years. There is instability and so many years. We could have predicted everything that has been happening. The issue is recognize it and then deal with it with the amount of time that is necessary. If it is 20 years, if it is these kinds of resources, recognize where it is and do it or say, "You know what? We can't do it." That is the reality to me.

Over. Thank you.

Mr. AKUETTEH. Thank you again, Mr. Chairman. In terms of constructive, if I might, my colleague's construction suggestion, you know, if you look, Mali, Mali was very important in terms of U.S. security activities in the region prior to the war and the coup. And since then, clearly, the French and the Europeans have a heavy presence.

My suggestion then will be for the U.S. to say, "Look, we weren't in here just to kill our enemies. And if some other soldiers are here, then we are not interested." It should be, actually, I would like the U.S. to send a message to the Malians and the regions that

"We want to play a big role in your reconstruction and your recovery." So that will be that the U.S. shall have a bigger presence.

I did a little calculation of the pledges in Brussels. And from what I can tell, based on what the U.S. has already put down in their request that they have made to Congress—and I could have gotten some things wrong, but it is about a 5-percent contribution to what has been pledged for Mali. I wish it was more.

And, secondly, in terms of specific things, again, I think Mali because it is the test, what the U.S. does with Mali sends a message to the rest of the region—and I will say the elections. Again, there are already some signs. I don't think the elections can be stopped or rolled back, but I do think that there should be a contingency plan for quickly reacting and helping the Malians make sure that it goes well.

And, finally, my big point, which is that we need to do a review, to say, "Over these years and with Libya and Mali having happened, what have we learned? How can we reengage the region to have security? Because security comes first and good governance comes first and other things will follow."

Thank you again.

Mr. SMITH. Thank you very much for your testimonies. Thank you for your insights and counsel. It is very helpful to the committees that have met to receive it. And we will follow up on it. So I thank you so very much.

I would also ask unanimous consent that a written testimony from Shari Berenbach, President and CEO of the United States African Development Foundation, be made a part of the record.

I want to thank Speaker Touré for being here for the entire day of the hearing. We often have visiting diplomats and even Speakers like yourself. This is the first time—and this is about my 400th hearing—that we have ever had a Speaker come and stay and listen to the entirety of the proceeding. You do us a great honor by doing so. I want you to thank you for your Ambassador, Maamoun Keita, who has been a great help over the years and will continue to be, I am sure. And again I want to thank our witnesses. Your testimonies were extraordinary.

The hearing is adjourned.

[Whereupon, at 4:51 p.m., the committees were adjourned.]

APPENDIX

Material Submitted for the Hearing Record

JOINT SUBCOMMITTEE HEARING NOTICE
COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN AFFAIRS
U.S. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
WASHINGTON, DC 20515-6128

Subcommittee on Africa, Global Health, Global Human Rights, and International Organizations
Christopher H. Smith (R-NJ), Chairman

Subcommittee on the Middle East and North Africa
Ileana Ros-Lehtinen (R-FL), Chairman

Subcommittee on Terrorism, Nonproliferation, and Trade
Ted Poe (R-TX), Chairman

May 17, 2013

TO: MEMBERS OF THE COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN AFFAIRS

You are respectfully requested to attend an OPEN hearing of the Committee on Foreign Affairs, to be held jointly by the Subcommittee on Africa, Global Health, Global Human Rights, and International Organizations, the Subcommittee on the Middle East and North Africa, and the Subcommittee on Terrorism, Nonproliferation, and Trade in Room 2172 of the Rayburn House Office Building (and available live on the Committee website at www.foreignaffairs.house.gov):

DATE: Tuesday, May 21, 2013

TIME: 2:00 p.m.

SUBJECT: The Growing Crisis in Africa's Sahel Region

WITNESSES:

Panel I
The Honorable Donald Y. Yamamoto
Acting Assistant Secretary of State
Bureau of African Affairs
U.S. Department of State

The Honorable Nancy E. Lindborg
Assistant Administrator
Bureau for Democracy, Conflict and Humanitarian Assistance
U.S. Agency for International Development

Panel II
Mr. Rudolph Atallah
Senior Fellow
Michael S. Ansari Africa Center
Atlantic Council

Mima S. Nedelcovych, Ph.D.
Partner
Schaffer Global Group

Mr. Nii Akuetteh
(Former Georgetown University Professor of African Affairs)

By Direction of the Chairman

The Committee on Foreign Affairs seeks to make its facilities accessible to persons with disabilities. If you are in need of special accommodations, please call 202/225-5021 at least four business days in advance of the event, whenever practicable. Questions with regard to special accommodations in general (including availability of Committee materials in alternative formats and assistive listening devices) may be directed to the Committee.

COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN AFFAIRS

MINUTES OF SUBCOMMITTEE ON *Africa, Global Health, Global Human Rights, and International Organizations; the Middle East and North Africa; and Terrorism, Nonproliferation, and Trade* HEARING

Day *Tuesday* **Date** *May 21, 2013* **Room** *2172 Rayburn HOB*

Starting Time *2:00 p.m.* **Ending Time** *4:52 p.m.*

Recesses [*1*] (*2:44* to *3:18*) (____ to ____) (____ to ____) (____ to ____) (____ to ____) (____ to ____)

Presiding Member(s)

Rep. Chris Smith

Check all of the following that apply:

Open Session [✓]
Executive (closed) Session [ ]
Televised [✓]

Electronically Recorded (taped) [✓]
Stenographic Record [✓]

TITLE OF HEARING:

The Growing Crisis in Africa's Sahel Region

SUBCOMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT:

Rep. Bass, Rep. Connolly, Rep. Cook, Rep. Deutch, Rep. Kennedy, Rep. Kinzinger, Rep. Lowenthal, Rep. Poe, Rep. Ros-Lehtinen, Rep. Schneider, Rep. Sherman, Rep. Weber, Rep. Cotton

NON-SUBCOMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT: *(Mark with an * if they are not members of full committee.)*

HEARING WITNESSES: Same as meeting notice attached? Yes [✓] **No** [ ]
(If "no", please list below and include title, agency, department, or organization.)

STATEMENTS FOR THE RECORD: *(List any statements submitted for the record.)*

Information from USAID on faith-based programming
Summary of Recommendations from the Corporate Council on Africa, submitted by Chairman Smith
Statement of Shari Brenbach of the U.S African Development Foundation, submitted by Chairman Smith

TIME SCHEDULED TO RECONVENE _____
or
TIME ADJOURNED *4:52 p.m.*

Gregory B. Simpkins
Subcommittee Staff Director

QUESTION FOR THE RECORD POSED BY THE HONORABLE CHRISTOPHER H. SMITH, A REPRESENTATIVE IN CONGRESS FROM THE STATE OF NEW JERSEY, AND CHAIRMAN, SUBCOMMITTEE ON AFRICA, GLOBAL HEALTH, GLOBAL HUMAN RIGHTS, AND INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS, TO THE HONORABLE NANCY E. LINDBORG, ASSISTANT ADMINISTRATOR, BUREAU FOR DEMOCRACY, CONFLICT AND HUMANITARIAN ASSISTANCE, U.S. AGENCY FOR INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Question:

Please provide a breakout of the extent that we are partnering with faith-based groups in the Sahel.

Response:

No response was received prior to printing.

MATERIAL SUBMITTED FOR THE RECORD BY THE HONORABLE CHRISTOPHER H. SMITH, A REPRESENTATIVE IN CONGRESS FROM THE STATE OF NEW JERSEY, AND CHAIRMAN, SUBCOMMITTEE ON AFRICA, GLOBAL HEALTH, GLOBAL HUMAN RIGHTS, AND INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS

Executive Summary

> *More than ever, foreign policy is economic policy. The world is competing for resources and global markets. Every day that goes by where America is uncertain about engaging in that arena, or unwilling to put our best foot forward and win, unwilling to demonstrate our resolve to lead, is a day in which we weaken our nation itself.*
>
> *Secretary of State, John Kerry, January 24, 2013*

Nowhere is this truer than in Africa. Despite the Administration's strengthened efforts, our economic, trade, and investment position is declining relative to competitors who have raised their game. China, India, Turkey, Brazil, and others are aggressively expanding trade and investment. Trade between China and Africa has overtaken that of the U.S., growing to over $100 billion per year. The European Union (EU) is pursuing commercial advantage through Economic Partnership Agreements (EPAs) and reviving traditional relationships. Some countries are offering concessional financing in addition to innovative combinations of government assistance and private sector contracting that the U.S. government (USG) has been increasingly unable to match. The move to create a BRICS infrastructure bank is an indicator of how emerging powers are shifting focus towards Africa.

If the U.S. does not work to reverse the trend, long-term opportunities for U.S. business will be greatly limited. A substantial additional commitment of human, financial, and policy resources is needed to support our national interests in Africa. At the bare minimum, the United States should be matching the support provided by other governments to their private sectors.

A MORE INTEGRATED ECONOMIC STRATEGY

Philanthropy and corporate investment in Africa now exceed official development assistance. Garnering more private investment is a top priority for many, if not most, African governments. It should be a U.S. policy objective to create a better-integrated commercial and economic development relationship with African nations that includes recognition of the key role played by U.S. business. The aim should be to involve U.S. business, including our African diaspora, more extensively in Africa's economic growth, and specifically in the development of the African private sector. CCA sees the growth of Africa's private sector along with an expanded role for the U.S. private sector as key to graduating African countries from foreign assistance. Over time, this will liberate resources currently committed to classic development activities.

U.S. industry is well-equipped to bolster the ability of African business to contribute to sustainable growth. Furthermore, building links, including through our African diaspora, between the U.S. and African private sectors and companies will also support market-based development strategies. This should reduce the appeal of statist models and provide substantial job and tax revenue benefits for the U.S.'s African partners – and, ultimately, for U.S. business.

GENERAL RECOMMENDATIONS

A shift of attention and resources is urgently needed from other areas to expand support to the U.S. private sector's activities in Africa. The shift in focus should include programs that help build African private sector capacity and an enabling business environment.

Specific actions would include:

- Expand senior level commercial diplomacy, including a Presidential trade mission.
- Establish a target at the Presidential level for $10 billion in funding for infrastructure projects, focused on areas that promote growth and in which the U.S. private sector is competitive, such as agriculture, health, information and communications technology (ICT), energy, and heavy machinery.
- Make support for U.S. business a central element of U.S. foreign and development policy.
- Expand formal and informal consultations with the private sector to ensure that private sector concerns are incorporated in policy, program, and project planning and execution.
- In consultation with the private sector, evaluate the current whole of government approach to working with business, including public-private partnerships, and revamp programs and policies to provide timely and integrated support to the U.S. private sector.
- Ensure, so far as possible, that official policy positions do not obstruct industry efforts to strengthen Africa's role in U.S. and global supply chains and distribution channels.
- Offer technical assistance for market development policies, including expansion of domestic and regional capital markets.
- Expand technical assistance in rule of law, anti-corruption, and transparency activities, including via developmental assistance programs.
- Support responsible energy development and effective regulation, including the multi-stakeholder Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative (EITI).
- Consider modifying the Dodd-Frank legislation and final SEC rule requiring unilateral payment disclosures at the project level, since they may have the effect of weakening the sanctity of existing contracts and putting U.S. firms at a competitive disadvantage.
- Expand the Foreign Commercial Service (FCS) presence in Africa and provide more training and support to State Department commercial officers where FCS is not present.
- Intensify support for the efforts of the AU and the regional economic commissions to improve their infrastructures and better integrate their markets.

PROGRAMMATIC CHANGES

We urge a re-design of the USG's interagency processes and program structures, in consultation with the private sector, to permit a more coordinated approach on major projects. Ideally, there should be an effective "one-stop shop" bringing together relevant agencies in an accessible and responsive format that provides the information and support that businesses need to compete more effectively. This would entail changes in the way that USTR, USAID, MCC, OPIC, Commerce, Export-Import Bank (EXIM), and other agencies conduct business, which places a partnership with the private sector at the core of their planning and programs. CCA welcomed the June 2012 U.S. strategy towards Sub-Saharan Africa and its heightened focus on a whole of government approach to spurring economic growth, trade and investment, but more needs to be done.

INFRASTRUCTURE

Improving infrastructure is crucial to Africa's growth and is a major priority for its governments, but is an area in which the U.S. lags behind. It should be a top priority for U.S. agencies such as EXIM, OPIC, MCC, and others to expand support for infrastructure projects, in terms of both policy advocacy and creative, flexible use of existing funding. For example, EXIM should be authorized to devote more funding to offset U.S. competitors' tied aid credits.

POWER

There are nearly one billion Africans, yet they consume only four percent of the world's electricity. Africa's growth and its expanding middle class imply a major shift in new demand for power. Improving health, agriculture, industry, and education will require huge investments in generation, transmission, and distribution facilities, including renewable and off-grid power. Africa's potential for renewable resources and creative application of technologies is as great as the shortfall in meeting Africa's demand for power. The power sector is ripe for greatly expanded attention from the Administration and the U.S. private sector as well as from African governments and businesses.

EXPANDED EFFORTS BY ADMINISTRATION AND CONGRESS

CCA's members greatly appreciate the Administration's increased attention to Africa's economic and commercial potential through programs like the National Export Initiative, the Commerce Department's Doing Business in Africa campaign, USAID's Development Credit Authority, USTR's work on Trade and Investment Agreements, Bilateral Investment Treaties and the East African Community Trade and Investment Partnership Initiative. We specifically appreciate the day-to-day support in Washington and by Embassies in the field, as well as a series of high-level trade missions. The June 2012 Strategy towards Sub-Saharan Africa and its heightened focus on a whole of government approach to growth, trade, and investment was a superb example of the kinds of policies CCA favors and hopes to expand. CCA also acknowledges and supports the many existing programs and activities that are already underway that are congruent with or highlighted as recommendations in this report.

CCA equally welcomes and applauds the bipartisan efforts by many Senators and Representatives to expand the congressional focus on Africa, especially the renewal of the African Growth and Opportunity Act (AGOA) and its 3rd country fabric provision. CCA particularly welcomes efforts in Congress to expand the legal framework and provide additional support for our economic and commercial interests in Africa.

These efforts have laid the foundation for increased opportunity for economic growth and development on the African continent. On behalf of the U.S. private sector, CCA stands ready to continue its collaboration with the Administration and Congress to build an even stronger U.S.-African partnership in the public and private sectors. By working together, our efforts will be a promising investment in future jobs, economic growth and opportunity for both Africa and the United States.

SECTOR-SPECIFIC RECOMMENDATIONS:

NOTE: The individual chapters in this report place these recommendations in context and provide additional detailed recommendations.

- Promote open and transparent legal and regulatory frameworks in Africa that will open markets to U.S. exports, protect intellectual property, and ensure that local content requirements are not used to discriminate against U.S. companies.
- While maintaining and enhancing AGOA's duty-free, quota-free preferences, examine ways to develop a more comprehensive trade and investment strategy that will link trade and investment opportunities, build value chains, and strengthen participation in African regional markets.

- Renew AGOA expeditiously, with benefits extended to additional products (the private sector recommends a comprehensive ITC study to determine which markets could be developed through enhanced preferences) and secured in place for a period of time long enough to establish meaningful investment opportunities.
- Prioritize support for African regional integration, focus on initiatives to facilitate regional customs cooperation, establish better standards and encourage regional infrastructure development, which includes methods through the US-EAC Trade and Investment Partnership initiative.
- Working with USTR, enhance use of TIFAs, which includes the expansion of ongoing business dialogues and a more formal system for notification and input.
- Expand use of BITs, with a particular emphasis on key markets (e.g. Nigeria and Angola) and a stronger process for private sector input.
- Work closely with other trading partners, including the European Union Member States through the proposed Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership, African Institutions and RECs, and multilateral institutions, including the WTO, to encourage development of a coordinated approach to supporting development and deeper integration of the African market while avoiding initiatives that hamper this effort.
- Carefully study any proposals for reciprocal trade commitments, which must include private sector input and analysis in order to actively avoid models that could limit economic diversification and regional and continental development, such as EPAs.
- Continue to place a priority on technical assistance and capacity building, and focus, in particular, on activities that will support private sector development and increased investment and trade.
- Use technical assistance and capacity building to strengthen value chains, and tie this into private sector activities and market demand.
- Improve the USG's coordinated system of trade finance, advocacy and business support, including approaches through USAID, OPIC, EX-IM and the Departments of Commerce and Treasury, in order to meet or exceed similar support offered by other countries, putting U.S. companies at a competitive advantage.

- Revamp the system of financing for U.S. exports so that it competes on an equal basis with other countries, is much faster and more flexible, much better funded, and includes an annual targeted benchmark of deals to be funded in Africa.
- Expand and better coordinate U.S. government programs that support U.S. private investment in Africa (including human and financial resources).
- Invest in technology-focused projects where the U.S. has competitive advantage.
- Expand support to African governments so that they can more effectively access international financial markets and develop their own domestic markets.
- Incentivize projects that promote investment across borders and support creation of larger regional markets.
- Enhance cooperation between traditional and new allies to finance projects in Africa. U.S. agencies and the private sector should identify strategic partners already present or seeking to invest in Africa to raise and put capital in common, develop projects together, and share the benefits.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY (ICT)

- In close collaboration with African Governments, U.S. funding and investments should be made in local vocational institutions and institutions of higher education.
- Promote regulatory frameworks and legal systems that ensure the value and protection of U.S. intellectual property assets.
- The USG should increase its focus on reducing protectionist policies, legislation and/or regulations and encourage African governments to promote local economies in a manner that supports and ensures open and pro-market conditions.
- Collaborate with industry and stakeholders to apply internationally recognized privacy principles to current technology and cultural realities.
- Create incentives for securing private infrastructure and advance information sharing that includes appropriate liability protection for disclosure of cyber threat information.
- Promote an international privacy and security regime that allows for data transfers across borders; allowing countries to recognize one another's data protection laws.
- Recognize and support the role of multi-stakeholder processes as an alternative to intergovernmental standard setting.

AGRICULTURAL DEVELOPMENT AND AGRIBUSINESS

- Coordinate USG support for agricultural development and agribusiness in Africa by ongoing efforts under the USAID Feed the Future/Grow Africa/New Alliance Initiatives.
- Expand programs that provide direct financial support to private sector investments, including the USAID Global Development Alliance and Development Innovation Ventures. Link the private sector with Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Program (CAADP) efforts to advance the most promising value chain opportunities.
- Expand use of PPPs to drive innovation in agriculture, with an emphasis on bringing the private sector into project design at the earliest possible stage.
- Support the increased provision of agricultural finance by encouraging land ownership reforms and the creation of programs that will expand access to collateral for small and medium farmers.
- Increase investment in programs that support capacity building and provide technical assistance, including the White House's Young African Leaders Initiative (YALI), USAID's Africa LEAD program, and USDA's Norman E. Borlaug International Agricultural Science and Technology Fellowship Program.
- Cooperate with the private sector and partner governments to convene a "youth in agribusiness" forum under the auspices of YALI.

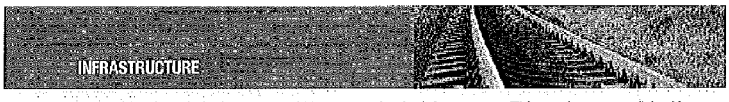
ENERGY: OIL AND GAS AND POWER

- A pro-trade and international investment agenda is essential to promote energy development by encouraging trade flows and ensuring investment rules that help manage risks.
- Expand support for the new Bureau of Energy Resources at State Department, which is important to integrating energy and foreign policy and maintaining U.S. leadership in this area.
- Improve USG support to U.S. companies, which involves more flexibility on terms, faster turnaround on project issues, and more integrated, holistic, programmatic approaches that move U.S. companies closer to a level playing field versus foreign competitors.
- Prioritize power generation and distribution in USAID and MCC assistance both because of the key role power plays in long-term economic growth and to leverage U.S. capacity to provide this type of assistance.
- Encourage African governments to adopt gradually market-based pricing to leverage private investment in the power sector and improve the foundation for long-term economic growth. Additionally, encourage African governments to utilize currently flared gas for power generation as well as off-grid and distributed power mechanisms, when appropriate.
- Strengthen the ability of African governments to create credit-worthy, power-producing entities that honor power purchase agreements. Help governments establish and maintain a business-friendly environment. Both elements are key to mutually beneficial progress in this sector.

HEALTH

- Advocate pro-market policies that protect private investment and promote U.S. exports, enabling new investment in health infrastructure and the introduction of new technologies and services (e.g., U.S. Bilateral Investment Treaty (BIT) program).
- Work to achieve greater regulatory harmonization across Africa. The continent is a patchwork of regulations governing the registration of medicines, vaccines, medical devices and diagnostics, and performance of these systems is greatly varied. Establish a public-private commission to put together an action agenda on specific regulatory bottlenecks and how they could be eliminated, working together with existing initiatives by the African Union and regional economic organizations.
- Encourage procurement standards that create a level playing field for companies to invest and increase adoption of models of standardization at the country level (as seen at the World Bank). Convene a private sector advisory group to provide clear recommendations to the relevant USG agencies, which could serve as the basis for bilateral discussions with the African Union, African regional economic organizations and individual African governments.
- Strengthen core capacity of the health sector to address health system constraints (e.g., adequate training, standards, regional collaboration and information sharing) by working with local and regional partners. These partners include health ministries and service providers on the ground, ready to strengthen their capacity to support and the health system. Increase resources for technical assistance to address constraints.

- Leverage existing resources in the U.S. to help African governments improve the African health workforce. The USG can foster mechanisms to help professional organizations and universities in partnering with African health ministries to address situations like the lack of qualified personnel, in addition to driving standards of quality care. There is also an opportunity to combine United States Government efforts (e.g., PEPFAR's partnership initiatives with medical and nursing schools in Africa) with the range of private initiatives sought to help strengthen human resources for health in Africa.
- Consult members of the private sector, review and revise the process and mechanisms for PPPs and develop a simple, transparent, and replicable platform and design structure for PPPs. Build on the leading practices of the Millennium Challenge Corporation, PEPFAR, and the Global Development Alliance (USAID) to create a harmonized approach to engaging private sector partners in addressing development cooperation for health in Africa.
- Invest in innovative approaches to engage the private sector. For example, USAID Programs like Saving Lives at Birth, the Development Innovation Ventures, or Saving Mothers, Giving Life, could be adapted for similar initiatives geared specifically to new models of collaboration to strengthen African health systems.
- Place greater priority on non-communicable diseases in the USG's health and development agendas, utilizing the findings of the Global Burden of Disease Study 2010 to understand present and future health challenges when shaping and determining resource allocations priorities in partnership with African countries
- Establish coordinating mechanism to bring together public and private expertise in the U.S. and Africa to develop integrated approaches to health, nutrition, water and sanitation and environmental issues that together affect the health and well-being of Africans.



- Strengthen MCC's technical support to African countries for infrastructure. This can be accomplished by incorporating a technical unit within the various compact countries, enabling ministries to facilitate contracting and project development.
- Create an office within OPIC to coordinate infrastructure support, staffed by individuals with significant private sector experience in emerging markets.
- Provide U.S. technical assistance to strengthen regulatory frameworks that promote infrastructure investment.
- Provide technical support for land and private property rights legislation and tax laws that encourage foreign direct investment (FDI).
- Encourage the international donor community to prioritize infrastructure financing, including rail and road transport.
- Expand support for technical exchanges between U.S. and African infrastructure-focused institutions to improve tenders and life cost cycles.
- Expand programs to support maritime infrastructure activities, including safe ports and ships programs.
- Continue support and expand funding and scope of the U.S. Department of Transportation's technical assistance and training programs.

CAPACITY BUILDING, EDUCATION, AND TRAINING

- Expand consultation and coordination between the USG and U.S. private sector officials on capacity building to better target resources devoted to this effort to promote Africa's sustainable economic growth and further involvement by the U.S. private sector in that growth.
- Expand the public-private partnership (PPP) process so that USG capacity building programs can more easily and directly support U.S. business priorities, including programs that promote sustainable job creation in Africa - a top priority for U.S. African partners. To the extent possible, PPP's should address issues germane to the African and U.S. for-profit sectors for sustainability and maximum impact.
- Expand and deepen programs that promote good governance and a sound framework for business. This includes promoting accountable fiscal, regulatory, tax, trade, intellectual property rights (IPR), and governance policies, as well as sound project management, procurement programs, and anti-corruption programs in partner nations.
- Expand long-standing U.S. exchange and educational programs and incorporate U.S. educational and vocational training institutions so that they can establish deeper relationships with African institutions. International exchange and broad development assistance programs have played key roles in deepening the U.S. relationship with Africa.

SECURITY

- Expand, or at a minimum, maintain government funding to the U.S. Department of State Bureau of African Affairs' Africa Peacekeeping Program (AFRICAP) and Africa Contingency Operations Training and Assistance (ACOTA) Program. These have played a vital role in building Africa's capacity and capability to ensure its own regional security.
- Sustain and increase funding to AFRICOM. Security engagement builds institutional capability and capacity, resulting in increased stability.
- Work with U.S. security businesses to support U.S. sales of security services and equipment to African governments. These efforts should include mounting a security trade mission to key African Countries; organizing a security roundtable in conjunction with CCA trade missions, and coordinating with African Ministers to provide opportunities to discuss security projects/programs in specific counties.
- Coordinate with CCA to organize a Security Forum for increased U.S. business engagement in Africa.
- In discussions with African government officials, highlight the interconnectivity of the training, equipping, and other security services U.S. companies have provided in Africa. Mention the security gains that have been made and the relevance of U.S. security companies' expertise for the further development of African armed forces and police services.

Please note: *The following pages are chapters composed of introduction/context statements for each sector as well as more detailed recommendations. Please note that each chapter has been written by sectoral working groups and will vary in style accordingly.*

The full report can be accessed on the Corporate Council on Africa's Web site, http://www.africacncl.org/

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Hearing on "The Growing Crisis in Africa's Sahel Region"

House Committee on Foreign Affairs

Subcommittees on Africa, Global Health, Global Human Rights, and International Organizations, on Terrorism, Nonproliferation, and Trade, and on the Middle East and North Africa

Written Testimony from Shari Berenbach, President/ CEO, United States African Development Foundation

May 20, 2013

Chairman Smith, Ranking Member Bass, and Members of the Subcommittee on Africa, Global Health and Human Rights:

Thank you for the opportunity to provide written testimony on the growing crisis in Africa's Sahel Region. I appreciate the opportunity to share with you the United States African Development Foundation's experience in Africa's Sahel region, and our response to the evolving situation through our economic development work in Burkina Faso, Mali, Mauritania, Niger, and Senegal.

About USADF: The U.S. African Development Foundation, known as USADF, has worked in the region since the 1980s, providing development assistance at the grassroots level to support African-designed and -driven solutions to economic challenges. Founded by an Act of Congress in 1980, USADF operates as a public corporation in the United States Government (USG) to support the economic development of marginalized, underserved populations. USADF directly funds African cooperatives, small- and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), community-based organizations, and African implementing partner organizations. Together, they work to increase economic activities, improve livelihoods, and establish sustainable businesses.

USADF, as the sole USG agency focused exclusively on Africa, has an ever-increasing role to play in the Sahel, as it faces political instability, conflict, and environmental distress. USADF is helping to foster resilience and new economic opportunities, critical for restoring peace, stability, and economic independence.

Reach: USADF's portfolio has 89 active project grants in these five (5) countries in the Sahel, representing $13.6 million in funding for capacity building and expansion of economic development business activities. The current footprint in the Sahel includes:

Sahel Projects - U.S African Development Foundation

	Active Grants			People Impacted	
	USD $	#	New Economic Activity	Direct - members	Indirect - family + dependents
Burkina Faso	$2.5M	19	$7.5 M	30,096	150,480
Mali	$2.6 M	16	$7.8 M	8,320	41,600
Mauritania	$2.9 M	20	$8.7 M	13,040	65,200
Niger	$3.3 M	18	$9.9 M	29,484	147,420
Senegal	$2.3 M	16	$6.9 M	1,856	9,280
total	*$13.6 M*	*89*	*$40.8 M*	*82,796*	*413,980*

As of April 2013

The producer groups funded are comprised of nearly 83,000 people, and the impact of USADF's project grants at the community level is much higher. Nearly 414,000 people are benefiting from the economic activity generated by the USADF project grants that are working to reduce poverty, improve food security, increase regional and international trade, create more opportunities for women and youth, and build sustainable, resilient business entities. All of these improvements contribute directly to peace and security in the region. When people can support themselves and their families, they are at less risk to be adversely impacted by destabilizing political forces in their countries and across the region.

The economic reach of these projects also goes beyond the numbers, because USD $1 awarded in USADF project grants achieves three (3) times the impact. Current funding in the Sahel is generating nearly USD $41 million of new economic activities in local communities.

USADF's reach extends far beyond the capitol cities to areas where most other government or non-governmental organizations have not gone before. This reach is due to USADF's focus on marginalized, underserved populations, and its model that relies on African staff and partners. Specifically, USADF utilizes African professional staff in country to develop pipelines and monitor ongoing projects. In addition, USADF works with African implementing partner organizations to conduct due diligence, help develop marketing and business plans, implement project goals, mitigate risk, and monitor and oversee the projects. Facile with local languages and cultures, these African staff and partners are able to access hard to reach locations and travel to communities where access to economic development resources would otherwise not be available such as the southern half of Mali, outlying parts of eastern Niger, northern Mauritania, and extremely rural areas in Casamance, Senegal. *See attached Map for USADF's projects in the Sahel.*

Programming in Mali: Following the March 22, 2012 coup in Mali, USADF suspended activities in the Timbuktu and Gao Regions. New project development and disbursement of funds to implement ongoing projects ceased. This freeze included three active projects with $159K remaining to be disbursed.

However, because all of USADF's assistance bypasses the Government of Mali, and instead goes directly to cooperatives, SMEs, and community-based organizations, USADF has continued to implement active projects and identify potential new projects focused on food security in the southern half of Mali. This work has been carried out in alignment with the U.S. foreign assistance policy for Mali, and in dialogue with officials at the Department of State and on the National Security Staff.

In April 2012, USADF had 10 active projects with less than $500K remaining to be disbursed, including three small businesses in the Bamako area employing substantial numbers of people and purchasing from hundreds of smallholder farmers. The remaining seven projects in the Kaye, Segou, Bankass and Sikasso areas were with Women's groups, Cooperatives of smallholder farmers, and a microfinance institution; their work was focused on growing, processing and marketing crops to improve their members' food security and increase the sustainability of their business activities.

Project Examples: In **Mali**, USADF put on hold or closed-down 2012 projects in the northern half of the country, given the turmoil and in line with the recommendations of the National Security Staff and the Department of State. This included rice expansion projects north of Timbuktu, and grain and other projects around Gao. Nevertheless, USADF was allowed to continue its programming in the southern half of the country, with a focus on food security projects that are directly benefiting thousands of Malians adversely impacted by the unrest and uncertainty in their midst.

In April 2012, the Tchiri Rice Growing Cooperative in Bourem Sidi Amar, in the Timbuktu region, saw its town fall to rebels. This brought a sudden end to Malian government assistance for inputs and access to local technical services and to banks for financing that supported the yearly rice crop, an economic lifeline for farmers relying on rice production for consumption and local and regional sale. The traditional supply chain was disrupted, which could then bring about food shortages and displacement of thousands of villagers. ***USADF's ongoing grant award was applied to breach the gap.*** The 260 members of the cooperative had funding to cover only 15 percent of their productive land. But, USADF worked with them to disburse funds to local vendors, pay for short-cycle rice seeds, fertilizer and fuel, and have the inputs to plant and harvest a significant rice crop – despite the insecurity and threats brought about by the conflict.

Chief Mahamadou Siddeye Toure, who works closed with the Tchiri's members, said, ***"My villagers and I would have had no choice but to leave our homes and flee to refugee camps, without support from USADF's grant. This assistance ensured access to rice inputs that gave us the ability to grow enough rice to feed everyone in our village."*** Members were also able to plant wheat and other crops for consumption and sale, and have been able to remain at home throughout the conflict, not adding to the displaced persons in the region.

In **Niger**, USADF is supporting market garden projects in several areas, including southwest of the capitol Niamey. By directly funding community-based groups and cooperatives to grow and sell high value crops such as lettuce, tomatoes, and okra, USADF is providing the catalyst to generate income in areas where previously there has been little economic activity. In this semi-arid region, USADF funding provides for local appropriate technologies and technical assistance – such as customized drip irrigation systems and improved crop varieties, and soil fertility management. This has resulted in increased yields and year-round cultivation, and thus year-round reliable income.

The Yobbi Women's Group six hours southwest of Niamey have said, ***"We don't want to depend on aid. With USADF's help, we are independent."*** The Yelou Cooperative closer to the capital have said, ***"For the first time in our villages, we can see 'money move' " – which means that young men can stay home to support their families, rather than move seasonally or permanently to major cities outside of Niger."*** USADF's grassroots economic development projects are contributing to social and economic stability in the region.

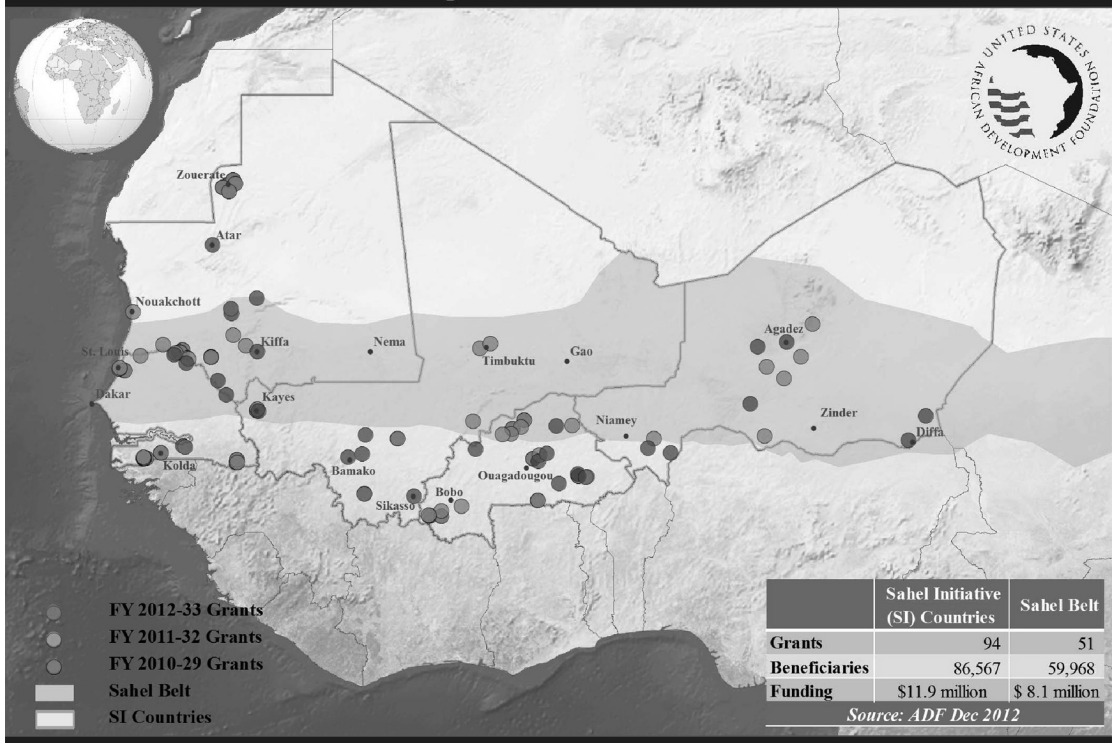
North and west of Agadez, amongst Tuareg populations and others, USADF continues to support the rehabilitation and utilization of wells projects in the desert that provide water resources to herders for themselves and their animals. Pastoralists have been able to maintain their way of life, and thousands refugees from across the border in Mali have been able to rely on these known sources of fresh water as they deal with displacement from their own communities.

Future: Going forward, the U.S. African Development Foundation continues to identify the economic development needs for cooperatives and community groups who do not otherwise have access for financial and technical resources to build up the capacity of and expand their business activities. Sectors in demand include irrigated agriculture, high value crop production, sesame seed for export, cereal grains, and wells projects.

In 2013-2014, USADF has designated over $6.3 million of new funding to impact the people of the Sahel. This United States Government funding will result in more than 40 economic development projects directly impacting over 21,000 people, and ensuring that via the United States African Development Foundation, marginalized and underserved communities impacted by uncertainty in the region are benefiting and moving to greater income independence and more secure lives.

For further questions and information on USADF's work in the Sahel, I am available.

ADF Funding in the Sahel 2010-2012



	Sahel Initiative (SI) Countries	Sahel Belt
Grants	94	51
Beneficiaries	86,567	59,968
Funding	$11.9 million	$ 8.1 million

Source: ADF Dec 2012

70% of Direct Beneficiaries are located in the Sahel