

TERRORISM IN AFRICA: HOW US COVERT OPERATIONS HAVE SHAPED  
TERRORISM IN THE AFRICAN REGIONS

by

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A Capstone Project submitted to the Graduate School-Camden  
Rutgers-The State University

in partial fulfillment of the requirements  
for the degree of  
Master of Arts in Liberal Studies

under the direction of  
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Date

Camden, New Jersey

May 2014

## **Abstract**

The capstone examines the role United States plays in Africa through the avenue of covert operation and open military action since the 9/11 terrorist attack. It examines the new front of terrorism in Algeria, Mali, Niger, Kenya, Somalia and South Sudan and the role Western powers play. Al'Qa'ida is at the stem of the problem since all the terrorist groups in the region affiliate themselves and pursue the same objectives as their parent company. Finances play a big role into the successful operation of these terrorist groups and even though they fight under the banner of religious, they pursue some illegal means of support in order to survive.

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## Introduction

Almost thirteen years have passed since the 9/11 terrorist attack on the United States and not a day goes by where you don't hear something related to the "war on terror" in the news. The US military operations in Iraq are relatively over and Afghanistan is in a similar situation, so it seems the new focus is Africa. From Algeria and the Tiguentourin Oil and Facility attack, to the US Ambassador death in Benghazi, Libya and the mall attack in Kenya, the kidnapping of two hundred school girl by Boko Haram in Nigeria, terrorist activities are increasing exponentially. According to the National Consortium of the Study of Terrorism and Responses to Terrorism (START) there is a 69% rise in terrorist attacks in the Africa, Asia and Middle East. In 2013, there were more than 8,500 terrorist attacks with nearly 15,500 casualties<sup>1</sup>.

All corners of Africa are plagued by some terrorist group causing havoc. It seems to be the tactic of choice for small organizations. Most of the organizations are related to Al'Qa'ida and a few new ones have emerged. Terrorism no longer exists to just fund religious fanaticism; it exists because as Cindy Combs puts it, "it is a big business."<sup>2</sup> Under the

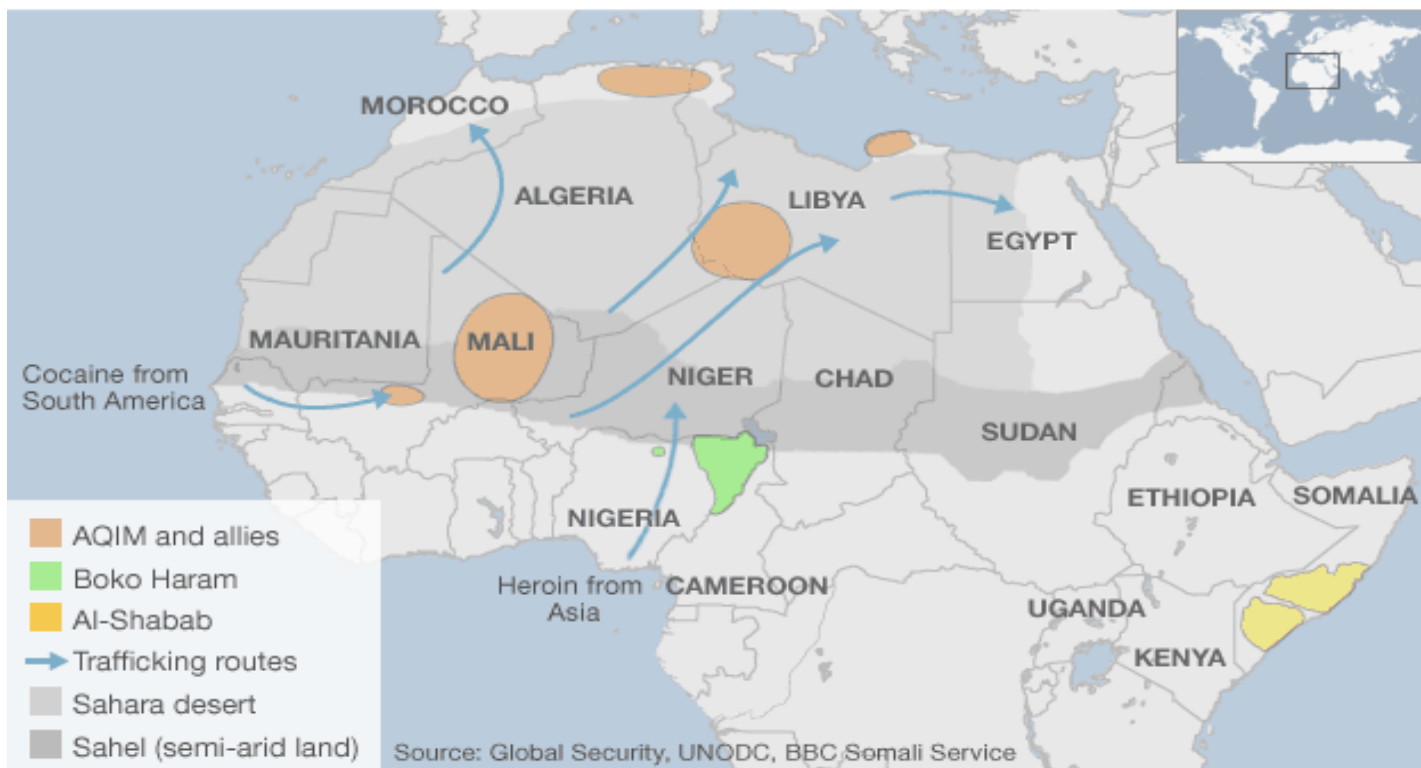
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<sup>1</sup> Burke, Daniel. *Terrorist Attacks Reach Record High*. 10 28, 2013. <http://religion.blogs.cnn.com/2013/10/28/terrorist-attacks-and-deaths-hit-record-high-report-shows/comment-page-3/>

<sup>2</sup> Combs, Cindy C. *Terrorism in the Twenty-First Century*. Charlotte: Pearson, 2009.

religious banner terrorist groups operate but because all of the western involvement they have adapted its focus and finances. A lot of the funding also comes from drug trafficking. As seen in the map below, each trafficking route brings is supported by different terrorist organizations and the country's local corruption in order to keep the flow of cash for the few in charge and to fuel further terrorist actions. A depiction of the multiple Islamist militant groups and how intertwined they are is shown below in the "Islamist militant groups and their areas of influence in Africa" map:

### Islamist militant groups and their areas of influence in Africa



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<sup>3</sup> BBC. "Belmokhtar's militants 'merge' with Mali's Mujao." *BBC*. 05 22, 2013. <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-us-canada-23796920>

The following paper will examine the different Islamic militant groups in Africa, as well as some of their actions. Along the way the U.S. and other western powers have responded to the terrorist threat in the region either through covert operations or open military combat. These actions have impacted the way terrorist groups operate and in some instances they have fuelled even more terrorist activities. Terrorist organizations are fueled by hate toward western civilizations but they operate like any other organization, and at its core money is the reason they are still functioning. Covert operations have undermined some terrorist organization but overall they are still going strong, and attacks keep on happening.

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## **Economic Factors, Drugs and Terrorists**

Taking in consideration that finances play such an important role within terrorist organizations, the U.S. began to use a Foreign Terrorist Asset Tracking center (FTAT), designed to dismantle terrorists' financial bases. "The FTAT examines terrorist organizations worldwide, not just pinpointing financial data relating to a single crime. The information gathered will be used to identify and disrupt terrorists' funding, according to U.S. officials.<sup>4</sup>" This is very important because it attempt to trace financial transactions used by these groups. Islamic groups use an ancient system called the hawala's. "In the wake of 9/11, it received much attention as an "underground", "shadow", or "black" channel for terrorist funds across the Muslim world. Why it continues to persist into the present day despite efforts to regulate, disrupt, or replace the system.<sup>5</sup>" Because of all the covert operations the U.S. has taken on, there are many conspiracy theories, which seem plausible due to the nature of the business and the unpredictability of terrorism. This is just one of the covert operation the U.S. is involved in, and many go undetected to protect the privacy of the ones involved and the intentions of the covert operations.

Economically Africa should be in a much better situation. Africa has a

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<sup>4</sup> Combs, Cindy C. *Terrorism in the Twenty-First Century*. Charlotte: Pearson, 2009;

<sup>5</sup> Thompson, Edwina A. "An Introduction to the Concept and Origins of Hawala." *Journal of the History of International Law* (EBSCOhost) 10, no. 1 (2008): 83-118.

lot of natural resources, especially oil and diamonds but due to the constant turmoil created by terrorist organizations and also because it does not properly manage what it has, these resources are not being used to prosper the African nations. Another aspect that is sometime overlooked is tourism. According to Keenan's article in *New Internationalist* Mauritania had 173 tourist visitors in 2011, compared with 72,500 in 2007. This aspect is important because lack of jobs pushes people into finding alternate means of income like drugs. With the decrease of tourism, and the increase of terrorism Tuaregs (Mali's indigenous population) have succumbed to "criminal" endeavors to make ends meet. So between the lack of acceptable economic and social standards, endeavors such as drug trafficking do nothing but perpetuate terrorist activities. Drugs are becoming very prevalent throughout Africa that "From the United States' perspective, it fears the existence of several anti-American terrorist groups operating in Africa coupled with drug revenues that could cultivate anti-American terrorist groups operating in Africa coupled with drug revenues that could cultivate a crime-terrorist nexus, thus threatening its interests in yet another region."<sup>6</sup>

There is a strong vicious circle between drugs, corruption, terrorist activities and hate towards the west. From a historical perspective the U.S.

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<sup>6</sup> Bybee, Ashley Neese. "The Twentieth-Century Expansion of the Transnational Drug Trade in Africa." *Journal of International Affairs* (Business Source Premier) 66, no. 1 (2012): 69-84.



has not always acted in the best interest of the locals, but more from a strategic/ economic gain. It is hard to see what the U.S. has to gain from all this conflict, even though they seem to be involved in many aspects of African politics.

“Despite some short-term modicum of success like the flow of oil from strategic allies such as Nigeria and Angola or the killing of leading terrorists figures in Africa, U.S. militarization policy has elicited backlash against its strategic interests on the continent. Defense Secretary Gates warns against the risk of a “creeping militarization” of U.S. foreign policy and recommends the State Department lead U.S. engagement with other countries. Ambassador Ronald E. Neumann denounces the progressive militarization of U.S. foreign policy over the past 20 years and underlines the perils it has wrought. According to Mark Malan “The danger is this strategy will not achieve the security objectives of addressing the root causes of terrorism, and it certainly won’t address the developmental objectives of U.S. foreign policy.” We observe mounting adverse ramifications for U.S. geo-strategic security interests in Africa.<sup>7</sup>”

By all accounts, to include high placed U.S. officials as Defense Secretary Gates, the U.S.’s continuous involvement is not seen as positive on the home front or away. It often acts as the forerunner for many foreign actions in countries like Algeria, Mali, Niger, and Somalia to name a few but it fails to reach a true objective or at least one understood by the public.

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<sup>7</sup> Nsia-Pepira, Kofi. "Militarization of U.S. Foreign Policy in Africa: Strategic Gain or Backlash?" *Military Review* (EBSCOhost) 94, no. 1 (2014): 50-59;

## Terrorist Groups and Western Involvement

U.S. partakes in numerous covert actions, on many different levels. The U.S. law defines covert actions as "An activity or activities of the United States Government to influence political, economic, or military conditions abroad, where it is intended that the role of the United States Government will not be apparent or acknowledged publicly."<sup>8</sup>

In an article published in the Washington Post, it is reported that the U.S. is concealing an entire network of spies in Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso. Burkina Faso is quite a strategic place for the US troops, especially due to the proximity to the "problem" areas (Mali, Algeria, and Mauritania). The classified surveillance program code is called "Creek Sand" and it houses dozens of US personnel and contractors for the purpose of establishing a small air base. An air base is needed here because it houses several spy planes which " fly hundreds of miles north to Mali, Mauritania and the Sahara, where they search for fighters from Al'Qa'ida in the Islamic Maghreb, a regional network that kidnaps Westerners for ransom."<sup>9</sup> The U.S. has not denied African operations, in fact Army General Carter F. Ham,

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<sup>8</sup> Peritz, Eric Rosenbach and Aki J. " Confrontation or Collaboration? Congress and the Intelligence Community ." *Belfer Center, Harvard University*. 06 2009. <http://belfercenter.ksg.harvard.edu/files/covert-action.pdf>

<sup>9</sup> Whitlock, Craig. "U.S. Expands secret intelligence operations in Africa." *Washington Post*. 06 13, 2012. [http://www.washingtonpost.com/world/national-security/us-expands-secret-intelligence-operations-in-africa/2012/06/13/gJQAHyvAbV\\_story.html](http://www.washingtonpost.com/world/national-security/us-expands-secret-intelligence-operations-in-africa/2012/06/13/gJQAHyvAbV_story.html);

the AFRICOM general,

“responsible for military operations on the continent, hinted at the importance and extent of the air bases while testifying before Congress in March. Without divulging locations, he made clear that, in Africa, he wanted to expand “ISR,” the military’s acronym for intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance. “Without operating locations on the continent, ISR capabilities would be curtailed, potentially endangering U.S. security,” Ham said in a statement submitted to the House Armed Services Committee. “Given the vast geographic space and diversity in threats, the command requires increased ISR assets to adequately address the security challenges on the continent.<sup>10</sup>”

Burkina Faso is not the only place the U.S. has established a presence in Africa. Camp Lemonnier, Djibouti is another such place, strategically placed in the Horn of Africa. Camp Lemonnier also houses spy places in place to keep an eye on the local terrorist group, Al-Shabab in Somalia and another Al’Qa’ida group in Yemen. According to the AFRICOM general, the U.S. is seeking another place to get established in South Sudan, to help the new small nation from being taken over by Sudan because “they are on the verge of war again, in part over potentially rich deposits valued by foreign investors.<sup>11</sup>” South Sudan is considered untapped territory from a mining perspective because there has been no mining done in the last 50 years and the country is rich in the following minerals: mineral deposits of gold,

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<sup>10</sup> Whitlock, Craig. "U.S. Expands secret intelligence operations in Africa." *Washington Post*. 06 13, 2012. [http://www.washingtonpost.com/world/national-security/us-expands-secret-intelligence-operations-in-africa/2012/06/13/gJQAHyvAbV\\_story.html](http://www.washingtonpost.com/world/national-security/us-expands-secret-intelligence-operations-in-africa/2012/06/13/gJQAHyvAbV_story.html);

<sup>11</sup> Whitlock, Craig;

uranium, copper, manganese, marble, rare earth, and gemstones<sup>12</sup>. Most of the covert operations in the region are not run by U.S. soldiers but by hired private military contractors (hired by the United States government). The Pentagon is using the Joint Operations Command (JSOC) as their lead agency in Somalia and some CIA presence. <sup>13</sup>

According to documents revealed by the Bureau of Investigative Journalism, JSOC has been carrying drone strikes in Somalia, and they have also "its own fleet of armed Reaper drones, which are flown from various bases in the region. <sup>14</sup> A Reaper drone is an unmanned aircraft system designed to do remote surveillance but also to carry ammunition and strike on a very specific target. They have been used by the U.S. military primarily because they are unmanned; they have a quick response time and very precise targeting equipment. Drones have been proved to be an effective strategy for stealth operations in previous conflicts (i.e. Afghanistan, Iraq) and the U.S. in Somalia is using them again. They are effective means of reaching a target but have had devastating consequences to the morale of the local population. The following chart gives an account of covert operation in Somalia, to include drones and other attacks:

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<sup>12</sup> Ministry of Petroleum and Mining. "South Suda Mining & Mineral Sectors." *Ministry of Petroleum and Mining*. n.d.

<sup>13</sup> Drones Team. "Somalia: reported US covert actions 2001-2014." *The Bureau of Investigative Journalism*. 02 22, 2012. <http://www.thebureauinvestigates.com/2012/02/22/get-the-data-somalias-hidden-war/>;

<sup>14</sup> General Atomics Aeronautical. "Predator B UAS." *General Atomics Aeronautical*. 02 15, 2014. [http://www.ga-asi.com/products/aircraft/predator\\_b.php](http://www.ga-asi.com/products/aircraft/predator_b.php);

<b>Covert US operations, Somalia 2001-2014</b>		
	US drone strikes	Additional US attacks
Total reported strikes:	<b>5-8</b>	<b>8-11</b>
Total reported killed:	<b>10-24</b>	<b>40-141</b>
Civilians reported killed:	<b>0-1</b>	<b>7-47</b>
Children reported killed:	<b>0</b>	<b>0-2</b>
Total reported injured:	<b>2-3</b>	<b>11-21</b>

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As accurate as these drone strikes are at some point they do kill civilians. In the above chart the civilian death toll is limited but that does not stop terrorist groups from using videos to capture an aftermath of the attacks to instill hatred towards Americans. It is sufficient ammo for at least a few of the recruits.

The CIA is another agency, which operates a base at Mogadishu Airport, according to a detailed investigation by Jeremy Scahill at The Nation.

"At the facility, the CIA runs a counterterrorism training program for Somali intelligence agents and operatives aimed at building an indigenous strike force capable of snatch operations and targeted "combat" operations against members of Al Shabab, an Islamic militant group with close ties to Al Qaeda.

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<sup>15</sup> Drones Team. "Somalia: reported US covert actions 2001-2014." *The Bureau of Investigative Journalism*. 02 22, 2012. <http://www.thebureauinvestigates.com/2012/02/22/get-the-data-somalias-hidden-war/>;

As part of its expanding counterterrorism program in Somalia, the CIA also uses a secret prison buried in the basement of Somalia's National Security Agency (NSA) headquarters, where prisoners suspected of being Shabab members or of having links to the group are held. Some of the prisoners have been snatched off the streets of Kenya and rendered by plane to Mogadishu. While the underground prison is officially run by the Somali NSA, US intelligence personnel pay the salaries of intelligence agents and also directly interrogate prisoners.<sup>16</sup>

These covert operations do not always garnish the support they need even though they are approved by Congress, because their nature is usually unorthodox as seen by the CIA operation in Somalia. These type of operations are also seen as drawn out financial burdens supported by the U.S. taxpayer because "they [State Department officials] have argued that most terrorist cells in Africa are pursuing local aims, not global one, and do not present a direct threat to the United States."<sup>17</sup> Several other projects involving high output from the U.S. side include but are not limited to: \$10 million runway upgrade at the Manda Bay Naval Base in Kenya; \$8.1 million upgrade to operating base and airstrip in Mauritania; \$22.6 millions invested in buying a Pilatus PC-6 aircraft and a turboprop plane so Mauritanian security forces can conduct surveillance missions themselves<sup>18</sup>. These costs are not even a fraction compared to what the U.S. has invested so far in

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<sup>16</sup> Scahill, Jeremy. "The CIA's Secret Sites in Somalia." *The Nation*. 08 11, 2011. <http://www.thenation.com/article/161936/cias-secret-sites-somalia>;

<sup>17</sup> Whitlock, Craig. "U.S. Expands secret intelligence operations in Africa." *Washington Post*. 06 13, 2012. [http://www.washingtonpost.com/world/national-security/us-expands-secret-intelligence-operations-in-africa/2012/06/13/gJQAHyvAbV\\_story.html](http://www.washingtonpost.com/world/national-security/us-expands-secret-intelligence-operations-in-africa/2012/06/13/gJQAHyvAbV_story.html);

<sup>18</sup> Whitlock, Craig;

Africa, but the belief is that the more we invest and keep peace, we have a higher chance to finally overcome terrorist organizations that take over in the area. Several local conflicts targeting Westerners and some Americans have increased the plight to have a higher presence of U.S. operations in Africa.

On September 11, 2012 the US Embassy in Libya was attacked and as a result four Americans lost their lives, to include the US Ambassador to Libya. Even though intelligence suggests this was a terrorist attack, it was not proved to be related to Al'Qa'ida because no one has taken claim yet publicly. The perceived reason for the attack is in retaliation against an anti Islamic movie on Youtube called "Innocence of Muslims." The US has not been forthcoming with information about this event but the following sources point to an Al'Qa'ida involvement since:

"According to the January 15, 2014, report by the Senate Select Committee on Intelligence ("SSCI"), those repeated warnings began with a June 12, 2012 Defense Intelligence Agency report that noted growing ties between al Qaeda in the Benghazi area and local Libyan terrorists. Another report, less than a week later (June 18), said that conditions were "ripe" for more attacks and that Libya was becoming a "safe haven" for terrorists. Such reports continued in steady stream. One, in August, noted that the "safe havens" were covering more and more territory and warned that terrorist operations might even be strong enough to attack European targets from Libyan bases.<sup>19</sup>"

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<sup>19</sup> Babbin, J and Tyrrell Jr., R. "Whitewashing Benghazi." *American Spectator* 47, no. 2 (2014): 24-27;

Another recent atrocity happened in Kenya, where Al'Shabaab "carried out the deadly assault on a shopping center in Nairobi on 21 September, in which at least 68 people were killed. (Gardner).<sup>19</sup> Al'Shabaab is an extension of al'Qa'ida in Somalia, however this is not how it began. Originally, Al'Shabaab was the militant wing of the Somali Council of Islamic Courts,

"that took over most of southern Somalia in the second half of 2006. Despite the group's defeat by Somali and Ethiopian forces in 2007, al-Shabaab—a clan-based insurgent and terrorist group—has continued its violent insurgency in southern and central Somalia. The group has exerted temporary and, at times, sustained control over strategic locations in those areas by recruiting, sometimes forcibly, regional sub-clans and their militias, African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM) peacekeepers, and nongovernmental aid organizations.<sup>20</sup>"

This organization is starting to cross borders more often and the incident inside the Mall in Nairobi has drawn more attention to its plight and purpose. Other notable accounts of terrorism are suicide car bombing in 2008, which killed 26 people and two more suicide bombings in Kampala Uganda, which killed 70 people. Their ammo is suicide bombs, kidnappings and killing of westerners.

Another similar organization is Al-Murabitoon Brigade, which emerged after its leader Mokhtar Belmokhtar, separated his group from AQUIM (Al'Qa'ida in the Islamic Maghreb) and united with MUJAO (Movement for Oneness and Jihad in West Africa), another small terrorist group. They

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<sup>20</sup> The National Counterrorism Center. *The National Counterrorism Center*. [http://www.nctc.gov/site/groups/al\\_shabaab.html](http://www.nctc.gov/site/groups/al_shabaab.html);



operate in Mali, Mauritania, Niger and Algeria and they emerged to revenge France's military campaign in Mali<sup>21</sup>. Their ammo is kidnapping but they have been attributed with violent attacks at the Tiguentourine Oil and Gas facility near Amenas, Algeria, the Agadez military camp in Niger , and a French - run uranium mine in Arlit, Niger<sup>22</sup>. Although this area had been colonized by France until they each reached their independence, it seems the United States has played a bigger role than France in its dealings with terrorism.

In 1999, Abdelaziz Bouteflika became president of Algeria. At the time, Algeria had a lot of turmoil and so Islamic groups saw an opportunity to corrupt its systems. President Bouteflika saw the United States as a potential savior especially after the 9/11 incidents. Once Bush took office in the United States, the two presidents met many times to create new US-Algerian associations especially in the realm of terrorism. Bouteflika's interest was to get his country under control but Bush's interest was much more strategic because it involved perfect military placement in the African militarization against "the War on terror" and protection of natural resources, mainly oil<sup>23</sup>. This association led to a very important placement

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<sup>21</sup> BBC. "Belmokhtar's militants 'merge' with Mali's Mujao." *BBC*. 05 22, 2013. <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-us-canada-23796920>;

<sup>22</sup> US Department of State: Bureau of Diplomatic Security. *Mokhtar Belmokhtar and al-Qa'ida in the Islamic Moghreb*. 11 27, 2013;

<sup>23</sup> Keenan, Jeremy. "How the US has been sponsoring terrorism in the Sahara." *New Internationalist* , 2013;

of US troops in Africa, the creation of US combat command for Africa – AFRICOM. “African citizens and civil societies also objected to AFRICOM. Ezekiel Pajino of the Center for Empowerment in Liberia calls AFRICOM “a deadly plan of U.S. military expansion on African soil.”<sup>24</sup>”

One of the first documented US-Algerian terrorist operation in the region was in 2003 when “a group led by an ‘infiltrated’ DRS (the Algerian intelligence service) agent, Amari Saifi (aka Abderrazak Lamari and ‘El Para’), took 32 European tourists hostage in the Algerian Sahara. The Bush administration immediately branded El Para as ‘Osama Bin Laden’s man in the Sahara’. (Keenan) According to Keenan this terrorist operation is known as a “false flag” in which a terrorist act takes place under the influence of a nation (in this case the US) in order to justify military operations, hence the later creation of AFRICOM in 2008. This event also prompted the creation of a ‘Proactive, Preemptive Operations Group’ (P20G) - “a covert organization that would carry secret missions to ‘simulate reactions’ among terrorist groups by provoking them into undertaking violent acts that would expose them to ‘counter-attack’ by US Forces”<sup>25</sup>. “ The El Para operation happened, according to Keenan in order to operationalize P20G plan in Africa and later on the formation of AFRICOM. Unfortunately, I am not able to verify this information, as it seems this was an information slip up and later all traces

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<sup>24</sup> Nsia-Pepira, Kofi. "Militarization of U.S. Foreign Policy in Africa: Strategic Gain or Backlash?" *Military Review* (EBSCOhost) 94, no. 1 (2014): 50-59;

<sup>25</sup> Keenan, Jeremy. *The Real Story behind the terrorist attack on the Algerian gas plant*. Vol. 64. EBSCOHost. 04 01, 2013;

of its existence were removed. However these operations get started their impacts are tremendous in the region.

The Tiguentourine terrorist attack is no different from the ammo the U.S. used in relation to El Para. According to Keenan,

“we have not been told the truth about the attack on the Tiguentourine gas plant. The incident has been used to justify Western involvement in a long-term ‘war on terror’ in North Africa, including the French intervention in northern Mali. Britain’s prime minister, David Cameron, flew to Algiers with his spy chief to promise intelligence sharing’ with the Algerian secret service.<sup>26</sup>”

Furthermore, Keenan attributes this attack to a collision between Algeria’s secret police and the Department du Renseignement et de la Securite (DRS) and local terrorists<sup>27</sup>. DRS is Algeria’s secret service. Apparently, soon after the incident very little information was released to the west and therefore it created some confusion when survivors of the attack had a different story to tell once they were freed.

One of the main confusions is how the terrorists entered Algeria. Initially it was reported they came via Libya, but when Libyans denied this occurrence it was rectified to say the terrorist used the northern Mali border. This scenario seems unlikely due to the fact the trip is about 1000 km and it is heavily militarized with many security forces on the ground therefore implying the security forces may have had something to do with the terrorist

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<sup>26</sup> Keenan, Jeremy;

<sup>27</sup> Keenan, Jeremy;

getting to the plant. It is believed that since 2003, "the majority of 'terrorist' incidents in the country (and its Sahelian neighbors) have involved some degree of collusion between the DRS and the terrorists."<sup>28</sup> The mastermind for this operation is believed to be Mokhtar Belmokhtar but the ground operation was led by Mohamed Lamine Bouchneb whom was reported to have died in the attack.

Mokhtar seems to have a great connection to the DRS "Indeed, many locals residents in the Sahara, as well as other who know how 'security' and 'terrorism' in Algeria is manipulated by the intelligence service there, regard Mokhtar as a DRS agent."<sup>29</sup> Because of the terrorist influence on the security forces it is believed to have been the cause of the problematic response the government forces exercised during this attack. The Algerians responded by having 450 men, part of three different organizations, to deal with this attack. The response to the terrorist hostage taking does not seem to be tactically sound, because instead of protecting hostages, part of the operation was to just attack and it resulted in the bloodshed of the hostages near the terrorists. Even considering the poor tactical calculation the "U.S. AFRICOM commander General David Rodriguez then hailed the Algerian army's intervention at Tigentourine as 'a success.'<sup>30</sup> This dichotomy is important because it seems this is yet another event the international

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<sup>28</sup> Keenan, Jeremy. *The Real Story behind the terrorist attack on the Algerian gas plant*. Vol. 64. EBSCOHost. 04 01, 2013;

<sup>29</sup> Keenan, Jeremy;

<sup>30</sup> Keenan, Jeremy;

community (especially U.S., Britain and France) is using to justify counter terrorist actions and involvement in Africa possibly lasting many more years justified only by the economic gains.

Since the situation is dire in these regions, France and United States have been working on creating a partnership to support the Sahara region and by emphasizing the importance of US -AFRICOM. Secretary of State John Kerry "reaffirmed the commitment to Africa, stating that the US will continue to back efforts by the African Union, regional leaders and our French allies to disarm all armed groups."<sup>31</sup> The current military makeup in the region is limited to 1000 French troops in Mali and another 3000 in the Sahel region; 200 American troops in Niger and another 120 in Uganda in support of different missions. Le Drian, the French Defense Minister, "noted that the French intervention in Mali had possibly worsened the situation in Libya by pushing extremist groups to the north."<sup>32</sup>

We live in a world where money rules. Terrorism is no exception, and is ruled by costs and benefits as seen in the research done by Arce and Sandler<sup>33</sup>:

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<sup>31</sup> Sisk, Richard. "US Steps Up African Al-Qaida Fight." *Military.com*. 01 28, 2014.

<sup>32</sup> Sisk, Richard;

<sup>33</sup> Elu, Juliet U. "Terrorism in Africa and South Asia: Economic or Existential Good?" *The Journal of Developing Areas* (Project Muse), 2012: 345-350;

“More recent economic analyses of terrorism suggest even more convincingly that terrorism is conditioned on costs and benefits. Arce and Sandler (2009) examine an evolutionary model of conflict in a society containing fundamentalist terrorist and others...They find that the number of fundamentalist terrorist in equilibrium is inversely related to the degree to which fundamentalist behavior is ostracized. If individuals value the esteem of others, to being ostracized by others increases the cost of terror, suggesting that for individuals, engaging in terror does impose costs that condition the decision to engage in it.<sup>34</sup>”

This study shows the extent terrorist rely on funding to ensure their actions are carried out even though from a religious standpoint they go against their preached beliefs.

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<sup>34</sup> Elu, Juliet U;

## **Conclusion**

The conflicts in Africa are not new but they are spinning out of control. Lack of education, economic and social shortfalls lead many young Africans to affiliate themselves with terrorist groups in the region for mere survival. They get indoctrinated to hate the western ideals and use tactics, which don't always justify the means. In order to exercise some control the U.S. has many covert operations in the region, many not shown in this paper. Their means are also in the end justified by economic gain. Their ammo is not always orthodox but necessary because this "war on terror" is getting dirtier. It seems the more involved the western powers get, the more terrorist activities happen. If a drone strikes a civilian target, it is almost a guarantee that survivors of the drone attacks will turn into terrorists to avenge their family's deaths. Drones may be justified means of operation but they are not helping the morale of the civilians affected, even if they result in precise attacks on terrorist groups and their leadership.

The U.S. involvement seems to have grown a lot ever since the creation of AFRICOM and the same is applicable to the growth of terrorist activities in Africa. There is a direct correlation between these events and the U.S. should reconsider its involvement. According to Dr. Nsia-Pepra, "America's military involvement in Africa, despite some strategic gains, has backfired due to the inherent contradiction of the use of realist means to

achieve liberal ends.<sup>35</sup> " Involvements in Afghanistan and Iraq have proved equally unsuccessful for the U.S. so it makes no sense to continue with the current policy of fighting terrorism in a new region. The U.S. foreign policy seems to not have focus and has very few results even after many years and money spent in the above-mentioned countries. Nonetheless the U.S. continues to spend money and resources to protect African resources by perpetuating the creation of terrorist groups and not dealing correctly with terrorist attacks. One can't justify using violent means to fight violence, because it simply does not work, even U.S. Secretary Gates stresses that "We cannot kill or capture our way to victory."<sup>36</sup>

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<sup>35</sup> Nsia-Pepira, Kofi. "Militarization of U.S. Foreign Policy in Africa: Strategic Gain or Backlash?" *Military Review* (EBSCOhost) 94, no. 1 (2014): 50-59;

<sup>36</sup> Nsia-Pepira, Kofi.



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