THE TUAREG REVOLT AND THE MALI COUP

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THE TUAREG REVOLT AND THE MALI COUP

FRIDAY, JUNE 29, 2012

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,
SUBCOMMITTEE ON AFRICA, GLOBAL HEALTH,
AND HUMAN RIGHTS,
COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN AFFAIRS,
Washington, DC.

The subcommittee met, pursuant to notice, at 10 o'clock a.m., in room 2172 Rayburn House Office Building, Hon. Christopher H. Smith (chairman of the subcommittee) presiding.

Mr. SMITH. Good morning. The hearing will come to order. Today's hearing will examine current U.S. policy and U.S. policy options in response to the recent military coup in Mali and the larger revolt of the Tuareg people in Northern Mali.

The Tuaregs have been in conflict with the Central Government in Bamako, Mali for many years, but following the service of some Tuaregs as mercenaries for the late Muammar Ghadafi of Libya, the acquisition of more sophisticated weapons from the Libyan conflict and increasing ties to al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb, they now pose a danger, not only to Mali, but also to Algeria, Niger, Mauritania, Burkina Faso, and perhaps even Nigeria.

Meanwhile, Mali, in recent years, has been a model of African democracy, now finds itself struggling to resurrect democratic governance and put the military back in its proper role as part of the government. The downfall of Mali's democracy could have a negative impact on the future of Mali as well as the entire Sahel region of Africa.

Amadou Toumani Toure, popularly known as ATT, led a military coup in 1991 that created a transitional government and democratic elections in 1992. Mali's growing reputation for democratic rule was enhanced in 2002 when President Alpha Oumar Konare, having served the two terms permitted under the Constitution, stepped down, and ATT, running as an independent and leveraging his reputation as Mali's soldier of democracy, was elected President.

Unfortunately, two issues eroded ATT's initial popularity. The first was a political system in which there appears to have been incentives for corruption. Certainly, there was a growing public perception that the system was corrupt. The second was popular anger toward the government's handling of the Tuareg rebellion in the North. Weeks of protests at the government's response to the Northern rebellion dropped ATT's popularity to a new low.

On March 21, 2012, mutinying Malian soldiers displeased with the management of the Tuareg rebellion, attacked several locations

in the capital of Bamako, including the Presidential Palace, state television, and military barracks. The soldiers said they had formed the National Committee for the Restoration of Democracy and State, and declared the following day that they had overthrown the government. This forced ATT into hiding.

As a consequence of the instability following the coup, Mali's three largest northern cities, Kidal, Gao, and Timbuktu were overrun by the rebels on 3 consecutive days. On April 5, 2012, after the capture of the town of Duwenza, the National Movement for Liberation of Azawad, or the MNLA, said that it had accomplished its goals and called off its offensive.

The following day, it proclaimed independence of their homeland, Azawad, from Mali. The Islamic Group, Ansar al-Dine, was later part of the rebellion, claiming control of swaths of territory, although this control was disputed by the MNLA. On May 26, 2012, the MNLA and Ansar al-Dine announced that they had signed a pact to join their respective territories and form an Islamic state.

Will this alliance last? Perhaps not. The MNLA is an offshoot of a previous nationalist political movement and is dedicated to a separate homeland for the Tuaregs and Moors who comprise its membership. Ansar al-Dine, whose name means "Defenders of Faith," is an Islamic group believed to have links with al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb and other Islamic groups.

Ansar al-Dine is dedicated to establishing Shariah law, not only in Azawad, but also in the rest of Mali as well. Disputes between the two groups already have resulted in gunfire involving the supposed allies. As we hold this hearing, the Economic Community of West African States, the African Union, and the United Nations are discussing the viability of a peacekeeping mission in Mali.

Such a mission would look to secure and protect civilian institutions and help restructure the Mali military. However, it will also focus on the situation in the North, which will be a tremendously sensitive matter, especially if the mission of the peacekeeping force is to retake territory from the MNLA and Ansar al-Dine. To add further to the problematic nature of the response of the Mali coup, and the Tuareg revolt, there is the matter of providing humanitarian aid to the 210,000 Malian refugees in Niger, Mauritania, Burkina Faso, and Algeria.

Another 167,000 Malians are internally displaced. Many of them are in remote areas and are difficult to reach with food and medical supplies. There is the question of how effective our aid efforts will be in such a challenging situation. But no matter how difficult this matter is to address, there are too many people affected for the United States to fail to provide leadership in the effort to solve this political, and social, and humanitarian crisis.

To discuss this effort, to devise a satisfactory solution to a problematic situation, we have a very distinguished panel of leaders, and in a moment, we will introduce them, but it is my privilege and honor to yield such time as she may consume to the ranking member, Ms. Bass.

Ms. BASS. Thank you, Mr. Chair. I especially want to thank you for working with me today to hold today's hearing on the very serious developments that are unfolding in Mali and the Sahel. While we have held recent hearings on the economic growth and invest-

ment opportunities that exist across the continent as a result of AGOA, we turn our focus today to a country and region in the midst of a crisis and one that requires our focused attention.

Thank you as well for your continued leadership and I look forward to working with you on this and other issues as we touch upon, not only the continent's challenges, but the very real opportunities that showcase Africa's rise and continued emergence on the global stage.

Prior to the current crisis in Mali, many considered the country a bright star in West Africa. Mali had been holding free and fair elections since 1991 and Foreign Affairs extolled the Malian Government as a "reassuring symbol of Africa's commitment to democracy." The United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights has also made positive remarks on Mali's democracy, saying that Mali had a "good record of democratic elections over the last two decades." The U.S. Government developed a strong and positive relationship with Bamako, and our teams worked diligently on a range of efforts from development to regional security. This, unfortunately, all came to an abrupt and unfortunate halt in the brutal and bloody events in late March.

Before the coup, Mali was an important partner in the Trans-Sahara Counter-Terrorism Partnership. The Partnership was established to strengthen regional government capacity to address the growing threats posed by terrorists and extremist groups, particularly those in the northern part of Mali, including, and importantly, AQIM.

Our bilateral efforts through USAID were significant, focusing on good governance, agricultural development, health, education, and security assistance. The Millenium Challenge Corporation also had significant investments. The MCC compact was intended to serve as a catalyst for sustainable economic growth and poverty reduction through key infrastructure developments, including the Bamako-Sénou International Airport, a gateway for regional and international trade, and the Niger River for irrigated agriculture.

These and other programs have been terminated due to legal restrictions placed on countries that are experiencing, or have undergone, non-peaceful or non-democratic transitions, and I look forward to your testimony to see the impact of that interruption in support. This has resulted, of course, in the immediate halting of approximately $160 million in State Department and USAID-administered aid, a gap that adds negative pressure to an already dire situation.

Since the March coup, I have followed very closely what is an expanding and complex set of events that has involved numerous players and a constellation of actors and interests. If there is to be sustained peace and stability in Bamako, Northern Mali, and the broader region, I believe concerted diplomatic efforts must be brought to bear in response to this evolving crisis. All efforts must be made to get Mali back on track toward a democratically-elected government. This must include setting a realistic date for elections.

I urge our colleagues at the State Department and our international partners to redouble efforts toward a mediated solution, while working closely to preserve the unity and territorial integrity

of Mali. I believe Secretary Clinton and Ambassador Rice have been unequivocal on this point.

I also want to express deep concern for the conflict in the North, including what appear to be the advancing interests of AQIM as well as the emboldened Tuareg movement.

With the fall of Tripoli, the flight of hundreds of thousands from Libya, and the coup in Bamako, a political and military vacuum has created conditions that have taken a deadly turn. This includes the imposition of harsh Sharia law on local populations and I hope that our panelists will address that to the extent that that is happening and what is going on.

CRS reports that "increasingly brazen presence of AQIM commanders in Northern Mali, along with unconfirmed reports of fighters from Nigeria and Pakistan, have raised acute regional and Western concerns that Mali could become a launching pad for transnational terrorist attacks." Some of these groups appear ready to cut ties with AQIM and some of the more extreme elements. We must work with our international partners toward a solution that sees the disassociation of these ties and the start of negotiations.

ECOWAS, the U.N., and others are leading efforts toward addressing these very serious concerns extolled by various factions. In closing, let me briefly highlight my serious concern for the humanitarian crisis that is compounding a grim and difficult reality throughout the Sahel. Refugees International, Save the Children, Human Rights Watch reports claim that armed conflict in Mali has compounded an already desperate humanitarian situation in the Sahel, where over a 175,000 children are suffering from severe acute malnutrition.

To date, the political and humanitarian crisis has led 325,000 people to flee their homes and a 180,000 to cross borders to seek safety and basic access to food and water. Fifty-nine percent of these refugees are children. Various agencies have quickly scaled up its operations to address this crisis, but additional resources are critical for an effective and prompt delivery of aid, and hopefully also, you will address that in terms of the interruption and the potential impact on this.

I understand it is not supposed to be interrupted in this area, but maybe you could address that. Displaced persons in Northern Mali are particularly at risk as rebel groups have prevented aid groups from operating in the region. Protection and security concerns are also looming as frequent banditry, kidnappings, and attacks on displaced populations and their host communities threaten to undermine an already fragile coexistence.

Humanitarian assistance must be accompanied with long-term solutions that address the varied and complex threats that food insecurity, climate change, and regional instability presents in the Sahel region. Thank you and I look forward to today's witness panels.

Mr. SMITH. Ms. Bass, thank you very much. I would like to now introduce our very distinguished panel, beginning first with Johnnie Carson. Ambassador Johnnie Carson has been a frequent witness before this subcommittee. He currently serves as Assistant Secretary of State in the Bureau of African Affairs, a position he has held since May 2009. Ambassador Carson has a long and dis-

tinguished career in public service, including 37 years in the foreign service, including time as Ambassador to Kenya, Uganda, and Zimbabwe.

Ambassador Carson has also served as the staff director of this subcommittee and as a Peace Corps volunteer in Tanzania. Ambassador Carson is also the recipient of numerous awards for his service from the State Department.

We will then hear from Earl Gast, who is making his first appearance before our subcommittee since taking over his current post. He is USAID's Assistant Administrator for Africa and has a 21-year career working with USAID and leading development programming, especially in post-conflict in transitioning societies. Prior to his position, Mr. Gast served in Afghanistan, Columbia, Eastern Europe, and Rome. Mr. Gast was also one of the first USAID employees stationed in Iraq.

He played an equally important role in developing the post-crisis strategy for Kosovo, monitoring all mission operations, most prominently, he received the agency award for heroism and distinguished unit award. Thank you for your service and, Ambassador Carson, if you would proceed.

STATEMENT OF THE HONORABLE JOHNNIE CARSON, ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF STATE, BUREAU OF AFRICAN AFFAIRS, U.S. DEPARTMENT OF STATE

Ambassador CARSON. Mr. Chairman, thank you very, very much for the kind introduction and thank you also for holding this very important hearing. I also want to acknowledge the presence of the ranking member on the subcommittee, Congresswoman Bass, and also Congressman Turner. We appreciate your support, and assistance, and your interest in Africa.

Mali today is grappling with four overlapping crises that have compromised its stability as well as the security of neighboring countries in the Sahel. Mali is struggling to restore democracy and constitutional rule, to bring an end to the political rebellion of the Tuareg people, to actively combat the radical Islamic threat posed by AQIM and Ansar al-Dine, and to respond effectively to an expanding humanitarian crisis in the northern part of the country.

A military coup d'etat on March 21 broke Mali's 20-year tradition of democracy. In the aftermath, Tuareg groups that were leading a rebellion in the North of the country since January, used the political crisis to effectively partition the country in two. The terrorism threat with which Mali had been struggling prior to the outbreak of the rebellion has grown as al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb, known as AQIM, and other extremist groups have taken advantage of the power vacuum that exists in the northern part of Mali.

Finally, the fighting and resulting instability has exacerbated the situation of food and security in Mali and the Sahel, and more than 370,000 Malians have been displaced. These problems challenge not only the countries in the region, but also run counter to U.S. principles of good governance, civilian control over the military, and respect for human rights. In addition, the vast territory of Northern Mali provides a haven for AQIM and other extremist

groups that may prove increasingly effective at targeting Western interests.

These challenges are interrelated, yet the urgency of the situation demands that we address them simultaneously. Our engagement on Mali is based on two pillars of the administration's African policy—strengthening democratic institutions and advancing peace and security. We also support the principle of regional ownership in the belief that sustainable solutions can only be derived from communication and cooperation with those most directly affected by the problem.

On the political crisis, we are maintaining pressure on the coup leaders and the military to respect civilian leadership, to withdraw completely from politics, and to permit the full restoration of a democratically-elected government. At the same time, we are supporting the interim government in holding Presidential elections before the end of the interim government's mandate in May 2013, as no lasting solution to the problems in Northern Mali will be possible without a legitimate interlocutor in Bamako.

We believe the Tuareg rebellion is largely a political problem that requires addressing the legitimate and longstanding grievances of the Tuareg groups in Northern Mali. We support regional and international efforts to negotiate a resolution with these groups who have expressed a willingness to enter into dialog with the Malian Government. We reaffirm our commitment to the unity and the territorial integrity of Mali and will provide unequivocal support for a negotiated settlement along those principles.

The key to successfully containing the insecurity emanating from Mali will be to immediately strengthen regional partners, such as Mauritania, Niger, and Algeria, and in the longer term, to work closely on a common international political approach to legitimize, and then to strengthen the political and security forces inside of Mali itself.

The humanitarian crisis will require a sustained and coordinated response from the international community. We have provided more than $315 million in humanitarian and food assistance to those displaced by the conflict in the North and those affected by the region's food crisis. We have provided $13.5 million in support to the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, the International Committee of the Red Cross, and other U.N. agencies to address the needs of Malian refugees.

We are urging host countries to maintain their hospitality toward Malian refugees and to maintain the principle of first asylum. While the United States Government has made positive strides in working with regional neighbors to resolve this conflict, the ongoing and overlapping conflicts outlined above are far from being resolved. If Mali is going to effectively counter the Tuareg rebellion, the terrorist threats in the North, and return to a democratic example in the region, it will require sustained and dedicated efforts from the United States Government as well as those in the international community.

Specifically, we will need to provide assistance consistent with U.S. law to increase economic and development assistance, and provide economic opportunities to disaffected young populations across Northern Mali. We will need to continue to build the capacity of

Mali's neighbors to control and protect their borders. Finally, we will need to help build resilience in Mali's democratic institutions so that they are better able to represent the Malian people and to withstand the kinds of pressures that they have come under in the recent past.

Mr. Chairman, thank you for the opportunity to appear before you this morning. This is a summary of my longer statement, which you and the other committee members have.

Mr. SMITH. And without objection, it will be made a part of the record.

[The prepared statement of Ambassador Carson follows:]

Testimony of Ambassador Johnnie Carson
Assistant Secretary of State Bureau of African Affairs
House Foreign Affairs Committee Subcommittee on African Affairs
June 29, 2012
"The Tuareg Revolt and the Mali Coup"

Chairman Smith, Ranking Member Bass, and Members of the Committee:

Thank you for providing me with the opportunity to address the Committee on what is a very important and timely topic. The situation in Mali represents a microcosm of the complex problems challenging Africa as the country grapples with four distinct yet interrelated crises: a political crisis stemming from a military coup d'état that took place on March 21, a rebellion waged by armed Tuareg groups that has destabilized northern Mali, threats from terrorist and other extremist elements, and a humanitarian crisis in the Sahel exacerbated by the events in Mali. While each of these challenges requires a unique response, it is important that we address these concerns simultaneously within a broad context.

Mali Faces Four Challenges

On March 21, Mali, already beleaguered by a rebellion in the north, experienced a coup d'état carried out by elements of the armed forces dissatisfied with former President Amadou Toumani Touré's handling of the rebellion. Just one month before the scheduled presidential election, the coup broke Mali's twenty-year tradition of democracy, which, until then, had served as a model of democracy in West Africa. Mid-ranking officers seized control of the institutions

of government and deposed President Touré. Intensive mediation efforts led by the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) resulted in a framework agreement on April 6, which attempted to fully restore civilian-led, constitutional rule to Mali. Subsequently, ECOWAS heads of state on May 20 extended the mandate of the interim government to one year, during which it must organize presidential elections and put in place a new government. Bamako witnessed violence not seen in decades on May 21 when interim President Dioncounda Traoré, who is 70 years old, narrowly escaped an attack in the presidential palace by a mob manipulated by supporters of the coup. Although the situation has quieted since then, President Traoré, who left for France for medical treatment following the attack, has recovered physically but has not yet returned to Mali, citing fears for his safety. His absence remains symbolic of a lack of strong leadership by the interim government. Furthermore, the coup leaders have not definitively returned to the barracks, further threatening the transition process and efforts to reestablish stability.

Meanwhile, Tuareg rebel groups that had been fighting a rebellion in northern Mali took advantage of the political chaos in Bamako to mount southward offensives and effectively gain control over the three regions of northern Mali, an area the size of Texas. The National Movement for the Liberation of the Azawad (MNLA) declared independence, while another armed group, Ansar al-Dine, is fighting to impose Islamic law, or sharia in Mali. We have seen reports of the violent imposition of sharia law in some cities, including Timbuktu, which historically has been home to religiously moderate populations. The MNLA has indicated that it is ready to negotiate with a legitimate Malian government, and moderate elements of Ansar al-Dine recently stated the same to ECOWAS mediators. The feasibility of a lasting negotiated settlement will depend on the presence of a legitimate government interlocutor.

Furthermore, Al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM) is using the political chaos and power vacuum as an opportunity to reinforce its stronghold in northern Mali. AQIM has clearly benefited from the proliferation of arms from Libya and the movement of heavily armed and trained fighters from Libya to several already over-burdened Sahelian countries. It has also benefited from repeated sizable ransom payments received for releasing kidnapped Europeans. While AQIM has failed to mobilize a significant number of new recruits or generate popular support in the area, it has successfully maintained its foothold in northern Mali and resisted efforts to disrupt its supply lines. The coup d'état and Tuareg unrest have hampered counter-terrorism efforts in the area although the MNLA and the vast majority of Tuaregs in the region have resisted AQIM efforts to establish closer ties. While AQIM has not demonstrated the capability to threaten U.S. interests outside of West or North Africa and it has not threatened to attack the U.S. homeland we are nevertheless working to counter its influence. We have also warned American citizens traveling in the Sahel to avoid northern Mali due to AQIM's practice of kidnapping Westerners.

The human toll of these overlapping crises has been enormous. Since the start of the fighting, more than 370,000 people have been displaced. Of these, 167,000 people are displaced within Mali, and some 210,000 Malian refugees have fled to Niger, Mauritania, and Burkina Faso and southern Algeria. This has exacerbated an already precarious situation of food insecurity in the Sahel.

Peace and Stability in the Sahel are Vital to U.S. Interests

The political, security, and humanitarian crises in Mali threaten the stability of the countries of the Sahel and run counter to the U.S. principles of good governance, civilian control over the military, and respect for human rights. Mali

has been a strong partner of the United States in the areas of democracy and governance, economic development, and peace and security. Promoting the restoration of a democratically-elected government supports the Administration's first pillar in its Africa policy: build strong democratic institutions. In addition, the vast and ungoverned territory of northern Mali provides a safe haven for AQIM and other extremist groups who may prove increasingly effective at targeting Western interests or aligning themselves with those who do. We must help Mali and the countries of the Sahel counter this transnational threat.

U.S. Diplomatic Efforts on Mali's Political and Security Crises

We are addressing the complex crises in Mali separately yet simultaneously. On the political crisis, we are maintaining pressure on the coup leaders and their supporters to step aside and allow for the restoration of a democratically elected government. Following the March 21 coup, we terminated assistance to the Government of Mali (GOM) in accordance with U.S. law. We now principally provide bilateral humanitarian assistance (including food assistance), and some programs in the areas of elections support and health. The Millennium Challenge Corporation has terminated its programs. Peace Corps has removed its volunteers. We have imposed targeted travel sanctions on more than 60 individuals who were involved in the coup d'état or who continue to impede the restoration of democracy. We will maintain the pressure until Mali restores a democratic government. We are supporting the principle of regional ownership by encouraging ECOWAS-led mediation efforts, which resulted in the establishment of Mali's current interim government. I, personally, have worked to encourage further regional collaboration by traveling to Algiers to urge Algeria, a key stakeholder, to participate in regional efforts to resolve the crises in Mali. In an

effort to spur international collaboration on Mali, I met with European Union officials in Brussels on June 11, and have spoken recently with my counterparts in the French Foreign Ministry, the British Foreign Office and the Swiss Government.

I have spoken with Presidents of Cote d'Ivoire and Burkina Faso, Alassane Ouattara and Blaise Compaoré, to express support for ECOWAS's leadership and to discuss how the international community can best support these efforts.

Recently, I met with Burkina Faso Foreign Minister Djibril Bassolé in Washington, where we discussed ECOWAS's ongoing mediation efforts. The Department of State Spokesperson issued statements condemning the coup and declaring our support to ECOWAS-led mediation efforts.

We are coordinating closely with our mission in the United Nations to press the African Union and ECOWAS to define a clear mission for their proposed ECOWAS peacekeeping mission in Mali. That said, we think an ECOWAS mission to militarily retake the north is ill-advised and not feasible. We have been unequivocal in our messages to coup leader Sanogo and the Malian public about the need for Sanogo and the Malian military not to participate directly or indirectly in the political affairs of Mali or the interim government. They also encouraged the interim government to set an early date for elections. There is no reason why the interim government cannot build on the preparations for the aborted April elections and hold elections in six to nine months and certainly before the end of the 12 month extension of the mandate of the interim government in May 2013.

Our outreach to Mali's international and regional partners has also focused on addressing the second of Mali's challenges: the Tuareg rebellion. We believe the Tuareg rebellion is a political problem that requires addressing the legitimate grievances of the Tuareg groups in northern Mali. We support regional and

international efforts to negotiate a resolution with those groups who have expressed a willingness to enter into dialogue with the Malian government. Through demarches and in our conversations, we are urging Mali's neighbors and international partners to reach out and contact representatives of the MNLA and other groups who are willing to resolve their grievances peacefully. We have encouraged ECOWAS, the African Union, and our international partners to structure their engagements on Mali in such a way that will incorporate Algeria and Mauritania. The participation of these two partners, which are not members of ECOWAS, will be crucial to a lasting solution.

On the counterterrorism front, we are supporting an outside-in strategy, working with Mali's neighbors, including Mauritania, Niger, and Algeria, to increase their capacity to patrol their borders, disrupt AQIM supply lines, and contain the spread of extremist groups until such time as the Malian army is able to undertake effective operations in the north. We are increasing our support for Mauritania and Niger through the Trans-Sahara Counter Terrorism Partnership (TSCTP), which is designed to support regional partner efforts in the Sahel to build long-term capacity to contain and marginalize terrorist organizations and facilitation networks, disrupt efforts to recruit, train, and provision terrorists and extremists, counter efforts to establish safe havens for terrorist organizations, and disrupt foreign fighter networks that may attempt to operate outside the region. Although they are among the poorest countries in the world, Mauritania and Niger have demonstrated critical political will to fight terrorism and will continue to benefit from U.S. assistance

In an effort to mitigate the effects of the complex humanitarian crisis threatening the Sahel, we are providing humanitarian and food assistance to those displaced by the conflict in northern Mali and those affected by the region's food crisis. To date, the U.S. government has provided more than $315 million in

assistance to the Sahel region, $60 million of which has gone to drought and conflict affected persons in Mali. We are working with the United Nations Regional Humanitarian Coordinator for the Sahel to ensure access to affected populations and to help coordinate the UN humanitarian response.

We will continue to support the interim government in its transition to democracy. We will continue to support the leadership of ECOWAS in its mediation efforts and its efforts to plan a peacekeeping mission with clear and achievable objectives. We will continue to work with our partners in the region through TSCTP to build an outside-in strategy to contain and degrade the threat of terrorism. Finally, we will continue to encourage greater collaboration in the region and with international partners within a structure that includes the region's key partners, Algeria and Mauritania, especially as mediation gets underway. We reaffirm our commitment to the unity and territorial integrity of Mali and will provide unequivocal support for a negotiated settlement on this principle.

While the U.S. government has made positive strides in working with regional neighbors to resolve this conflict, the ongoing and overlapping conflicts outlined above are far from being resolved. If Mali is going to counter effectively the Tuareg rebellion, the terrorist threats in the north and return to a democratic example in the region, it will require sustained and dedicated effort from the U.S. government and the international community. Specifically, we will need to provide assistance consistent with U.S. law to increase economic development and provide economic opportunities to disaffected youth populations in northern Mali. We will need to continue to build the capacity of Mali's neighbors to control their borders. Finally, we will need to help build resilience in Mali's democratic institutions so that they continue to represent and serve the Malian people. Thank

you for inviting me to testify today. I look forward to your questions and comments.

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Mr. SMITH. I have to announce there are two votes on the floor right now. We will take a very short recess and then come back and hear Mr. Gast. Mr. Ambassador, thank you for your testimony.

Ambassador CARSON. Thank you.

[Recess.]

Mr. SMITH. The subcommittee will resume its sitting. And, Mr. Gast, again, I apologize for the delay, but the floor is yours.

STATEMENT OF THE HONORABLE EARL GAST, ASSISTANT ADMINISTRATOR, BUREAU FOR AFRICA, U.S. AGENCY FOR INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Mr. GAST. Chairman Smith, Ranking Member Bass, and Congressman Turner, thank you for inviting me to speak with you today. We are deeply concerned about the ongoing situation in Mali, the immediate threat to human lives and safety, prospects for a peaceful and democratic society, and future opportunities for economic prosperity. I would like to provide an update on the current situation and how it has affected our development program as well as outline the key factors that are needed for development to progress.

Mali is facing a complex emergency that consists of a political crisis, a major drought, and threats to internal and regional security. These interrelated crises call for a careful and comprehensive response. It is important to emphasize that the situation in Mali is fluid and dynamic. Though we are closely monitoring the situation and consulting with other donors and key stakeholders, it is extremely difficult to get a complete picture of the situation in the North.

As of early-June, 4.6 million persons throughout Mali are facing food insecurity. It is estimated that more than 159,000 persons are displaced within Mali and an additional 182,000 have fled to neighboring Niger, Mauritania, and Burkina Faso. In the North, violence and division are exacerbating the food crisis and access to medicine and health services is practically non-existent. Government revenues are one-quarter the level they were just 1 year ago, and accordingly, government provision of basic social services has fallen sharply throughout the country.

Though USAID has made significant contributions to Malian development through its long engagement in the country, and the hard work and diligence of the Malian people, recent events stand to reverse these gains. Prior to the coup, USAID's broad development portfolio included activities to strengthen democratic institutions, grow the agricultural sector, support literacy and education, improve community health and health systems, and manage instability and threats in the North.

And Mali had made significant gains over the past decade. Annual economic growth had averaged more than 5 percent and poverty had been reduced from 56 percent in 2001 to 44 percent in 2010. In the same time period, child mortality had been cut in half, Mali liberalized its cereals market, opened up trade routes, and improved conditions for doing business. Agricultural production increased, particularly in areas where USAID has been active.

On April 10, 2012, the United States Government formally terminated assistance to the Government of Mali, consistent with coup

restrictions in the appropriations act. The activities that were terminated included public school construction as well as capacity building for the Government of Mali. However, USAID continues to address the emergency health, nutrition, and food needs of the Malian people. To date, in Fiscal Year 2012, we have provided more than $50 million to address humanitarian needs within Mali.

Other lifesaving health and food security programs are under consideration for resumption as part of a case-by-case policy and legal review. In evaluating which programs can move forward in light of the applicable legal restrictions, we consider whether they provide essential lifesaving assistance, whether they support children, whether they strengthen food security, or advance U.S. foreign policy. We also consider operational issues, including efficient oversight and management.

This case-by-case analysis ensures that there is careful consideration of the context, including how to protect previous U.S. Government investments. Before the coup, USAID was the largest donor supporting Mali's planned April 2012 elections, with activities that provided training of poll workers, political party strengthening, elections monitoring, and voter education. If the electoral support activities resume, assistance would help support a foundation for free and fair elections in Mali and a peaceful political exit from the current situation.

The only USAID-supported economic growth activities that are continuing in Mali are those that address food security. Agricultural assistance has focused on supporting farmers and herders to increase production in the current planting season. Particularly, in light of dire food needs, this assistance is critical to improve access to inputs, increase production, and increase resilience to drought. Some health sector activities have been approved to continue in order to provide lifesaving interventions.

These programs include preventing maternal and child mortality, identifying and treating malaria, and other critical community-based health interventions. The restoration of democracy with a return to a development focus in Mali is important to the region and to Africa as a whole. Lives and livelihoods are at great risk without the prompt resolution of the current political, security, and food crises.

Under the right conditions, Mali has the potential to be a major food producer for the region as well as advanced trade and economic growth. Its history of partnership with the United States to improve health, education, and living conditions is noteworthy. As the situation evolves, we remain vigilant to changes in the operating environment and the risks and opportunities involved. While USAID can provide immediate relief to the people, help set the foundations for democratic elections, and provide basic services in the interim, Mali's future development must be led by the Malian people.

This can only be achieved through a duly elected and participatory government along with peace and stability. Thank you for the opportunity to appear before you today and I welcome any questions you might have.

Mr. SMITH. Mr. Gast, thank you so very much for that testimony. And without objection, your full statement, and any other materials you'd like to have added, will be made a part of the record.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Gast follows:]

Testimony of Earl Gast
Assistant Administrator
Bureau for Africa
U.S. Agency for International Development

Committee on Foreign Relations
Subcommittee on Africa, Global Health, and Human Rights
U.S. House of Representatives
June 29, 2012

"Mali: Current Threats to Development Gains and the Way Forward"

Chairman Smith, Ranking Member Bass, Members of the Subcommittee, thank you for inviting me to speak with you today. We are deeply concerned about the ongoing situation in Mali, in terms of the immediate threats to human lives and safety, prospects for a peaceful and democratic society, and future opportunities for economic prosperity. I would like to provide an update on the current situation and how it has affected our programming, as well as outline the key factors that are needed for development to progress.

Complex Emergency Environment

Mali is facing a complex emergency: a political crisis, a major drought, and threats to internal and regional security. These interrelated crises call for a careful and considered development response. According to the World Bank, countries that have become characterized as fragile states require 20 to 25 years to recover, at great cost to their own people as well as to the international community in terms of resources diverted to stabilize and get those states back on the track of effective, transparent governance. While Mali is not currently a fragile state, it is in a fragile situation.

In West Africa's Sahel region, the underlying causes of hunger and malnutrition are complex and multifaceted. Underdevelopment, multiple droughts in recent years, and inadequate rainfall have left more than 19 million people at risk of food insecurity, nearly half of whom may require emergency food assistance in 2012, according to national governments and U.N. data. In fiscal year 2012, the U.S. Government has declared disasters and is responding in Burkina Faso, Chad, Cameroon, The Gambia, Mali, Mauritania, Niger, and Senegal. As the impact of the Sahel-wide drought continues, in Mali at least one in five households is facing large food consumption gaps, with the populations of the North suffering the highest level of food insecurity.

On March 21, 2012, a military coup led by Capt. Amadou Haya Sanogo, toppled the government of the elected president, Amadou Toumani Toure and suspended the Constitution. Though the rationale for the coup was ostensibly the failure of then-President Toure to effectively deal with the Toureg rebellion in the North, the political instability brought on by the coup left a vacuum that enabled the National Movement for the Liberation of Azawad (MNLA) and Ansar al-Din to take control of major areas of northern Mali. In March 2012, a separate disaster declaration was released in light of the violence and resulting population displacement that strained Malian host communities' limited resources, including those for water and sanitation, and exacerbated food insecurity.

As of early June, 4.6 million people in Mali are food insecure. It is estimated that more than 159,000 people are displaced within Mali, and an additional 182,000 have fled to neighboring Niger, Mauritania, and Burkina Faso. Shortfalls in crop production are anticipated, and an estimated 175,000 children under-five are at risk of severe malnutrition. In the North, violence is exacerbating the food crisis and access to medicine and health services is practically non-existent. Household food reserves in some of Mali's northern regions are nearly depleted due to poor production and high food prices, and livestock have been starved due to lack of fodder or abandoned due to conflict. The ongoing uncertainty has halted foreign and domestic investment in Mali, economic and tourism activity has slowed, and according to some estimates, 2012 economic growth projections have dropped from previous estimates of 6 percent to negative 1 percent. It is also estimated that government revenues are one-fourth the level they were just one year ago and accordingly, government provision of basic social services has sharply fallen.

Past Development Gains at Risk

Mali has been a strong partner, particularly in the area of economic growth through USAID's Feed the Future initiative and the Millennium Challenge Corporation program. The current threats to Mali's stability and development are all the more concerning given the cooperation that has characterized relations between our governments and Mali's past development gains.

Prior to the coup, in fiscal year 2011, the United States provided $137.9 million in bilateral foreign assistance to Mali. The broad development portfolio included activities to strengthen democratic institutions, promote inclusive and sustainable agricultural growth, support literacy and educational development, improve health status and health systems, and manage instability and threats in the North. Mali received funding for three Presidential Initiatives: Feed the Future, Global Health Initiative, including the President's Malaria Initiative; and Global Climate Change.

U.S. assistance has advanced significant development gains in Mali through our long-standing partnerships. I would like to outline just a few examples of the progress that has been made.

These development gains are precarious in the current situation, and underscore the promise of the Malian people and the importance of returning to democratic rule.

Over the past decade, annual economic growth has averaged more than five percent, reducing the incidence of poverty from 56 percent in 2001 to 44 percent in 2010. In the same time period, child mortality has been cut in half, and under-5 mortality rates dropped from 40 to 20 percent. Access to education has increased from 20 percent of primary school children in school in the 1990s to 80 percent of children in school in 2011. Prior to the coup, print and radio media were vibrant and largely independent with 230 stations, many established with USAID support, reaching more than 80 percent of the population.

Mali has liberalized its cereal markets, opened up trade routes, and improved conditions for doing business. The most vulnerable have survived drought and other disasters through the response and resilience provided by USAID's assistance. Agricultural production has increased in three regions where USAID has focused its assistance as a result of improved seeds and other inputs, extension services to improve farming methods and techniques, and farm-to-market linkages with greater private sector involvement.

In addition, Mali has been a central participant in the Trans-Sahara Counterterrorism Partnership (TSCTP) from the onset. Programs to address drivers of violent extremism were implemented in the Northern regions of Gao, Kidal, and Timbuktu, focusing on radio programming, basic education, microenterprise development, governance, and conflict prevention and peace-building. USAID established 10 FM radio stations reaching 385,000 people, and extended national interactive radio instruction to 200,000 students at 1,270 religious schools (*madrasas*). Prior to the coup, the program had just begun a significant expansion to increase the scope of activities and geographic reach in the north.

While USAID has made significant contributions to Malian development through its long engagement in the country and the hard work and diligence of the Malian people, recent events stand to reverse these gains.

Provision of Assistance in the Current Environment

We strongly condemn the military seizure of power and support ECOWAS's call for all parties to respect the right of the Malian people to determine their own rulers. Free and fair elections, the re-establishment of inclusive and accountable government, and protection of human rights are all critical elements for securing Mali's future.

As you are aware, Section 7008 of the Department of State, Foreign Operations, and Related Programs Appropriations Act, 2012 (SFOAA) states that no funds appropriated under titles III through VI of that Act can be, "obligated or expended to finance directly any assistance to the

government of any country whose duly elected head of government is deposed by military coup d'état." This restriction applies to assistance to the central, regional, and local governments of Mali.

On April 10, 2012, the United States formally terminated assistance to the Government of Mali, consistent with coup restrictions in the SFOAA. The activities that were terminated included capacity building programs for the Government of Mali Department of Health, public school construction, support for government efforts to increase agricultural production, and government capacity building to spur commercial investment.

Other assistance to Mali was also suspended on policy grounds, though certain forms of humanitarian assistance (including food assistance) were never terminated or suspended based on available legal authorities.

Programs that are life-saving, critical assistance in health and food security are under consideration for resumption as part of a case-by-case policy and legal review. These decisions will also be affected by the current political and security situation in Mali and how it develops, with recognition that these are complex challenges. The ability of the United States to resume full assistance, including military and security assistance, will depend on a democratically elected government taking office.

Programs that have resumed include activities to reduce child mortality, HIV/AIDS prevention and treatment, essential life-saving services for maternal child health, and preparation for the planting season to ensure food security.

USAID Continues to Provide Life-Saving Humanitarian Assistance

It is important to emphasize that the situation in Mali is fluid and dynamic. We are closely monitoring the situation and consulting with other donors and key stakeholders on the US Government response to both the food insecurity and nutrition crisis and in our response to the conflict in Northern Mali.

Beginning as early as January, USAID proactively supported early initiatives to mitigate the impacts of food insecurity in Mali through programs aimed at increasing agricultural production, improving diets, and strengthening livelihoods—all of which limited the impact of this year's shocks. Early FY 2012 programs also focused on mitigating the impact of food insecurity through local and regional procurement of food, support for livestock health, and cash-based assistance.

USAID continues to address the emergency health, nutrition and food needs of the Malian people. In mid-April, USAID deployed a humanitarian assessment team to the Sahel, including to Mali to evaluate humanitarian conditions and identify areas of need. Based on this

assessment, USAID is now addressing additional needs including nutrition, livelihoods, and agriculture and food security for both drought and conflict-affected populations in Mali; and providing additional support for communities affected by the influx of Malian refugees and displaced people.

To date in fiscal year 2012, USAID has provided more than $50 million to address humanitarian needs within Mali. In addition, the U.S. Department of State's Bureau of Population, Refugees, and Migration has provided approximately $10.8 million this year in humanitarian assistance for refugees in the region and individuals affected by the conflict in northern Mali.

Preserving the Foundation Needed for Democracy, Peace, and Prosperity

In addition to the delivery of humanitarian assistance, USAID recognizes the need in times of crisis to deliver basic social services and food security and thus preserve the foundation needed to resume a democratic, peaceful, and productive society. The continuity of carefully-provided development assistance in Mali is critical to supporting a return to constitutional and accountable governance. It is also important to protecting the sizeable development gains that Mali has achieved and encouraging economic and social conditions to rebound quickly following re-establishment of elected leadership. A weakened population and state is also more vulnerable to insurgent movements. It is imperative that the urgent needs of Malian society are met to maintain and raise its people's resistance to any such forces.

In evaluating which programs can move forward in light of the applicable legal restrictions, USAID and the State Department consider the policy importance of the activities—for example, whether the proposed activity provides essential life-saving assistance, supports children or strengthens food security, advances a strategic U.S. foreign policy objective—as well as operational considerations, including efficient management and oversight of funding. This case-by-case analysis ensures that there is a careful consideration of the context surrounding a proposed activity and the expected impact of such an activity if it is approved to move forward. The analysis also takes into consideration how to protect previous U.S. Government investments in the proposed activity.

- Before the coup, USAID was the largest donor supporting Mali's planned April 2012 **elections**, with activities that provided training of poll workers, political party strengthening, elections monitoring, and voter education. When the electoral support activities resume, assistance would help support a foundation for free and fair elections in Mali and a peaceful political exit from the current situation.
- The only USAID-supported **economic growth** activities that are continuing in Mali are those that address food security. Agricultural assistance has focused on supporting farmers and herders to increase production in the current planting season. Particularly in light of dire food needs, this assistance is critical to improve farmers' and livestock

producers' access to inputs, increase yields and production, strengthen market linkages, and increase resilience to drought.

- Some **health** sector activities have been approved to continue in order to provide life-saving interventions. These include programs aimed at preventing maternal and child mortality through the provision of basic community health services, support of malaria testing and treatment, and other critical community-based health interventions.
- USAID has currently suspended all **education** activities in Mali that benefited the Government of Mali, which included school construction, teacher training, and other forms of education assistance.
- USAID's **peace and security** programs, including those under the TSCTP, are generally on hold pending further analysis of the operating environment and policy considerations. Some community-based programs that address peace-building and youth engagement have been approved to continue.

Future Outlook

The restoration of democracy and the return to a development focus in Mali is important to the region and to Africa as a whole. As the situation evolves, we remain vigilant to changes in the operating environment and the risks and opportunities involved.

Lives and livelihoods are at great risk without the prompt resolution of the current political, security, and food crises. While these crises are complex and interrelated, they also vary with regards to their timeframes for resolution. Under the right conditions, Mali has the potential to be a major food producer for the region as well as advance trade and economic growth. Its history of partnership with the United States to improve health, education, and living conditions is noteworthy. While USAID can provide immediate relief to the people, help set the foundation for democratic elections, and provide basic social services in the interim, Mali's future development must be led by the Malian people. This can only be achieved through a duly-elected and participative government against a background of peace and stability.

I thank you for the opportunity for today's discussion and invite any questions you have on our assistance to Mali and its development outlook.

Mr. SMITH. Ambassador Carson, if I could just ask you with regard to the peacekeeping mission, the estimates are that some 3000 peacekeepers would be needed. You did speak about it to some extent in your testimony. If you could just elaborate on whether ECOWAS can provide a sufficient number of troops. Where will the money come from? How much do we expect that we might bear, or provide I should say, to that effort? And when it comes to the parameters of the mission, could give us some details as to what U.S. policy and U.S. hopes and recommendations would be for them, including the rules of engagement for such a peacekeeping mission?

Ambassador CARSON. Mr. Chairman, thank you very much for that question. We, ourselves, are waiting to hear from ECOWAS about precisely what they plan to do, and how they plan to do it, and how they intend to fund it. We have maintained an open mind about what they are going to do, although we do recognize that there are different scenarios of complexity that could be undertaken. The reality is that ECOWAS should not undertake a mission that is not properly planned, that is not adequately financed, and one that does not adequately consider the long term.

Generally speaking, I think that it is important for ECOWAS to think first about ensuring the safety and the integrity of those officials in Bamako who are responsible for leading a transition back to a full constitutional and democratically-elected government. And I think that would be a much more definable, limited, and supportable operation rather than looking at the complexities of immediately trying to do anything in the North.

One has to take into account that the government in the South has no effective military now. It lost over half of its equipment when it left the northern part of the country. And so any effort to look at retaking the North would be a significant undertaking for ECOWAS and for the states there. It must be thought out carefully, and planned well, and resourced appropriately. But I think the focus should be on the South at this point.

Mr. SMITH. Can I just ask you about rules of engagement? I will never forget on a trip to Darfur, meeting with a Major Ajumbo who was very upset with the rules of engagement of that deployment, it was early in the deployment, and he had also been deployed to Sarajevo during the Yugoslavian crisis, and said, for him, it was like deja vu. It was like we were not here to protect, we are here to provide the appearance of protection. I never forgot those words.

And given the fact that, the U.N., and even the AU, but especially the U.N., has had some major catastrophies, UNPROFOR in Yugoslavia, for example, the problems in Rwanda when General Dallaire certainly had sent that famous fax that went unattended to at the United Nations, and of course, the killing fields in Rwanda are infamous forever. And it might have been in whole or in part prevented by adequate interventions.

So the rules of engagement are something that I know you and all of us are very concerned about. What would be your sense as to where this peacekeeping mission would be when it comes to the rules of engagement?

Ambassador CARSON. Mr. Chairman, I am not going to prejudge what ECOWAS or what the AU will perhaps ask for as they go for-

ward, but I do want to underscore that undertaking a military operation in the North of Mali, an area that is the size of France, would require a major effort——

Mr. SMITH. Well, I am speaking, Mr. Ambassador, even about protection of other areas where hostilities could ensue. Remember Srebrenica, the so-called safe haven where, within the scope of a week, 8000 Muslims, in that case, were butchered as the Dutch peacekeepers handed off protection of those men to Mladic.

Ambassador CARSON. Yes. No, understood. Again, I am not going to presume even what the rules of engagement would be in the South, but I do believe that there is probably, at this immediate time, more of a role to be played in the South than there is in the North, leaving open the prospect, at sometime, that there will need to be an engagement in the North to help reconstitute the state and to deal with the terrorist problem that AQIM and Ansar al-Dine pose.

Mr. SMITH. You know, I do have about a dozen questions, but we do have votes at 12 o'clock and a second panel, so I will ask only one to Mr. Gast. You talked about the $50 million, and obviously, the situation in terms of protecting our own USAID people, you know, has to be a very high priority and a concern. How much are we providing for refugees and for IDPs? And what is the unmet need, perhaps according to you, or HCR or any other entity that has come up with a number?

Mr. GAST. Thank you for the question and it is difficult to target just the IDPs because what we have is a crisis throughout the——

Mr. SMITH. And the refugees too.

Mr. GAST. What we have is a crisis throughout the Sahel and I know, Congressman, that you are very concerned about the situation. And there are 19 million people who are in need of food aid throughout the Sahel. So before the coup had taken place, and before the security conditions had worsened, and before we had the refugees, the estimate of those who were food insecure in Mali was about 3 million. And now that figure has nearly doubled, about 5.5 million persons are food insecure.

Obviously, the IDPs who have remained in country, and roughly a 140,000 are food insecure, and part of that larger number. So part of our $50 million response, it is not just for the 140,000 who are displaced internally, it is for the larger population. PRM is supporting refugees, roughly a 160,000 to a 180,000, in Niger and Burkina Faso, and the amount of money that they have programmed to date is roughly $10 million.

Mr. SMITH. Thank you. Ms. Bass?

Ms. BASS. Thank you. Once again, I want to thank our two representatives here for your testimony today and as I mentioned to you, Mr. Gast, it was great to see you over here and I appreciate you hosting us when we were in Uganda. It was just a short time period, but it was very eye-opening; appreciate that. And also appreciate the time the Ambassador took the other day in giving me an overall briefing of the Africa section.

I wanted to ask you a few questions about the Tuareg. Ambassador, you mentioned that they are primarily a political problem and I wanted to know if you could describe a little bit more in de-

tail about what you mean. What is the political problem and then what might a solution be?

Ambassador CARSON. Thank you very much. The Tuareg are only one of many groups that occupy Northern Mali, but they are a nomadic group that has felt politically marginalized by a government which has been largely dominated by Southerners. They have felt that their economic, and social, and political needs have not been catered to. Not enough positions in government and in the civil service.

Ms. BASS. Were they restricted from running for office or anything?

Ambassador CARSON. No.

Ms. BASS. No?

Ambassador CARSON. No, they are not, but because they are nomadic, issues of education were a part of this. But there has also been a feeling that not enough development assistance has flowed into the Tuareg regions, not enough money put into education, not enough money put into health care, not enough money put into roads and to infrastructure, and not enough money put into economic development.

This is a political problem that has existed, not just since Mali's independence over the last 10 years, but is a problem that has existed going back to the era of French Colonialism. The Tuaregs felt disadvantaged, even under the French, and they have felt disadvantaged since independence. They have frequently rebelled and in 2006/2007, the government in Mali and the Tuareg came to an agreement called the Algiers Accord, negotiated by the Algerians, to address some of the many social, economic, and political marginalization issues of the Tuareg.

The Tuareg felt that this agreement was not honored and that led to a resumption of combat and fighting. But the reality is, is that, this is a political issue, a feeling of marginalization, lack of inclusion, and a lack of economic and social services in the northern part of the country.

Ms. BASS. So if it wasn't dealt with appropriately when Mali was doing well, what would you envision, you know, the future being? How would, or should, can, it be resolved?

Ambassador CARSON. Absolutely. Very good question. I think there need to be more guarantees from the international community to support those development projects, which the government in Bamako agrees to undertake with respect to the Tuareg. If, in fact, there is a political agreement that says that there are going to be X number of schools, hospitals, and kilometers of road built, X number of wells, I think that the international community needs to come forward to serve as one of the guarantors, one of the financiers of the projects that are undertaken.

On the political side, I think there needs to be more transparency to ensure that more Tuareg citizens, more citizens of the North who have Tuareg ethnicity, are included in the civil service and are included in government positions. But on the economic side, I think there is a way to ensure that money is allocated and is appropriately used for the North. And I do make a very sharp and clear distinction of the Tuareg issue as a political issue.

Ms. BASS. Right.

Ambassador CARSON. The issue of AQIM and Ansar is a terrorist issue. They need to be handled separately. And we should not, in the effort to respond to the Tuareg issue, drive them into the hands of Ansar al-Dine or into the hands of the Islamists.

Ms. BASS. Well, and it leads me to another question because I believe you, or it might have been Mr. Gast, mentioned that one of the things that needs to be done is we need to build resilience in the institutions, but yet at the same time, we are restricted, right? I mean, the aid that you talked about we are limited to, I know, is the humanitarian aid, and we are not allowed to contribute resources to the very thing that you said. So my additional question is, do you think it is too restrictive? Is there something that we need to do legislatively to provide more flexibility?

Mr. GAST. So we are authorized to work on food security and the big concern.

Ms. BASS. Right.

Mr. GAST. The problem that we have is one of access. Because it is so dangerous in the North because fighting continues, it is very difficult for us to have access.

Ms. BASS. But I wasn't referring to the humanitarian part because I understood that that was okay. It was the part about us building institutions, the schools, you know, whatever, that we are not allowed to now, right?

Mr. GAST. So we are not building schools.

Ms. BASS. Right.

Mr. GAST. We are not supporting government operations, which would include education, at this point. We are working in the health sector because that is providing lifesaving support. We are working, in addition to humanitarian assistance, food security and working with private farmers and associations to try and strengthen food security.

Ambassador CARSON. Congresswoman Bass, may I just add to that to say that we do have the capacity to use funding to help the government move back toward democracy. And if there is a roadmap and a timetable for the return to democracy, including for support to elections, we have the latitude to work in that democratic space. And certainly, after there is a return to a civilian and democratic government, then we would be able to do more beyond just support of elections and then look at ways to put money into strengthening the other democratic institutions, the independence of the judiciary, the capacity of the legislature, strengthening civil society, and media.

But we do have the capacity, even today, if there is an appropriate roadmap presented that is credible and that we believe will lead toward elections, we do have the flexibility to jump back in to that small democratic space to begin the process.

Ms. BASS. Okay. Thank you. I wanted to ask you about ECOWAS and I wanted to know your opinion if the U.S. should push for the formation of an international group on Mali that would allow actors from ECOWAS, from SENSAD, the EU, Organization of Islamic Conference, to all come together and engage on this? Do you think that that would be useful? What role should the United States play if it is?

Ambassador CARSON. Congresswoman Bass, again, thank you for the question. We believe that an international contact group of Friends of Mali, if one wants to use that term, or some kind of a grouping that helps to bring together key stakeholders and participants in the process of helping Mali return to democracy. We believe that ECOWAS needs to continue to play the primary role as the leading subregional organization, but ECOWAS does not, in fact, include several other very important partners; partners who have long borders with Mali, and share ethnic groups with Mali, who are not a part of this.

Two of the most important, of course, are Algeria and Mauritania. We also need to ensure that other international players who can play a supporting role can be a part of the discussions and in that group I include the United States, I include France, I include, particularly, the European Union. Those organizations and countries that can be instrumental in helping to facilitate and guarantee things like I mentioned before with respect to being able to help fund, perhaps, programs in the northern part of the country to deal with the grievances of the Tuareg.

So there needs to be a place where all of these groups can, in fact, come to the table and talk. I think this is something that the ECOWAS leadership and the AU, the African Union, leadership are working on and thinking about. And of course, the other major player in all of this has to be the United Nations. So what you are talking about does make sense and is something that we are constantly encouraging so that all important players and partners are at the table, with ECOWAS continuing to be a lead in all of this.

Ms. BASS. Thank you very much.

Mr. SMITH. Mr. Turner?

Mr. TURNER. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. A question for Ambassador Carson. We have had ethnic economic political factors here for many years. The one wild card, it seems to me, religious. Could you fill us in a bit on the background and what are the factors at work here and is this being address or should it be?

Ambassador CARSON. Many of the problems of radicalism in Northern Mali are a spillover from other countries. The AQIM, which is al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb, is comprised, not simply of Malians, but its leadership is largely drawn from individuals who have come from Algiers, from Mauritania, and from Libya, and from other countries in the region.

We know that a number of AQIM leaders and supporters have come down from Algeria, and as Algeria has effectively dealt with its Islamic extremists and terrorist problem, many of those people have drifted down across the Algerian border into Northern Mali, which is a very, very large territory and very, very sparsely populated, not traversed by many roads and not inhabited by many towns, and so those individuals have come into this large space.

Malians, as a whole, and especially including the Tuareg, are moderate Muslims not extremists, but individuals who have been open and tolerant toward Christians and others. So AQIM, again, is very, very different and its agenda and politics are quite different from those of the Tuareg as a whole.

Mr. TURNER. Is their ideology gaining any traction in other ethnic groups besides those that are coming down from the North?

Ambassador CARSON. I don't think so. I think that both AQIM and Ansar al-Dine are really relatively small groups. That doesn't mean that they are benign. They are, in fact, dangerous and lethal, but they are not representative of the vast overwhelming majority of Malians in the North and they certainly don't represent the majority view of the way Islam should be practiced in Mali.

Mr. TURNER. Thank you. I yield back.

Mr. SMITH. Thank you very much. We are joined by Ms. Jackson Lee, not a member of the committee, but we welcome her, if you have a question or two.

Ms. JACKSON LEE. Mr. Chairman, thank you very much and I recognize your courtesies of both you and Ms. Bass. I appreciate being a former member of the committee and appreciating the work. Let me say to the two witnesses, and I was delayed with business on the floor of the House, but I am delighted of your presence here, and I wanted to first, Ambassador Carson, wrap questions together that then will relate to Mali and the present status.

My initial question is to assess, basically, the health of Africa as it relates to U.S.-African relationships, and are we doing what we are supposed to do? And I will follow up now with the present situation in Mali, and I certainly appreciate that the Administrator Gast would also ask. As I recall, and I may not be correct, that the Malian population is somewhat nomadic, moving around, and so I am asking in this 2012 atmosphere whether or not this new uprising conflict has created population displacement, whether or not we are seeing a severe impact, a more sever impact, on women and children, and then lastly, it's a difficult role for the United States to play.

If you read the basis of the rebellion it is to suggest that the government in place was despotic and unfair. How conflicting is our position of supporting the existing sovereign government to the issues of the values that we promote, which are those of democracy? And I would appreciate, I think there are three wrapped in there, and I appreciate your answers. Thank you.

Ambassador CARSON. Congresswoman Jackson Lee, thank you very much for the questions. I will attempt to take a couple of those on and then allow my colleague to address those which concern humanitarian and refugee issues, but will also weigh-in if required. Your first question was about the health of the U.S.-Africa relations. I think that U.S.-Africa relations are strong and vibrant, that the United States remains well-respected and admired across the continent with the exception of a couple of rogue states and rogue leaders.

Consistent polling that we do through large established polling organizations as well as the polls that we do through the U.S. Embassies and U.S. Government, show that the United States is favorably liked by higher levels than almost any other nation in the world. And in Africa, our polling is consistently more favorable than it is in any other part of the world—Latin America, Europe, the Middle East, or South Asia. And that polling data is quite significant and we can share it with you, but the relationship is healthy.

Ms. JACKSON LEE. I would appreciate that. Thank you.

Ambassador CARSON. The relationship is healthy. I think that there is a great appreciation for what we do in the area of development assistance. Our overall development assistance to Africa amounts to somewhere in the neighborhood of $8.5 billion to $9 billion. This includes what we do in development assistance, humanitarian assistance, and food aid through the Millenium Challenge Corporation. And we continue to be the single largest provider of development assistance across the continent, and ours is open and transparent.

Equally, we have been very strongly engaged in advancing an agenda which has just been redefined by the President and the national security staff to do everything that we can to continue to promote democracy and good governance across the continent. And I would say that, despite the difficulties of a Mali, I would say that democracy is on the advance across Africa. One can look back over the last 3 years and identify, not just one, or two, or a half a dozen, but dozens of indications where this is, in fact, the case.

There have been successful elections in Nigeria, the largest country in Africa; the peaceful transition and handover of power in places like Senegal, where President Wade stood aside after losing; and in Zambia where President Banda stood aside to allow President Sata to come in; the movement away from military regimes into democracy; Niger, where we saw 2 years ago, the return to democracy after a sitting President attempted to hijack the Constitution, and then was overthrown by a military government, and then returned to power, a civilian government.

We also saw within the last 2 years, for the first time in its history, democratic elections in Guinea-Conakry, which had been under military and authoritarian rule since its independence from France in 1960. Across the continent, we see a commitment to democracy and we almost take for granted elections in places like Botswana, places like Ghana, places like Namibia, places like Mozambique and Mauritius, all of which have democratic foundations, and which are making great progress.

So the democracy agenda is moving forward. No question that there are hiccups out there. They are a problem. But a part of the second pillar of the administration's commitment is to do everything that we can do to spur economic growth, trade, and investment in Africa, recognizing that it is going to be the creation of economic opportunities, driven by private sector investment, that is going to create the jobs and create the factories that are going to grow economies. And we are committed in this area as well.

And I would argue that there is, in fact, a lot happening there. One can look at the McKinsey Study Report, one can look at reports from Oxford Analytica, the World Bank, which show the strong growth of Africa as a market and potential market. Everyone has heard that six of the ten fastest growing economies in the world are in Africa. The return on private investment in the African marketplace is higher than it is in any other part of the world. And I could go on and on about what is, in fact, happening there.

What we need to do is to sustain it and to push it forward. And we are also engaged in two other areas, and that is to do as much as we can to promote peace and stability across the continent, and

we are engaged in Sudan. We are engaged in Somalia, just as we are engaged with the ECOWAS leadership on Mali.

And then finally, the preserve of my colleague here, and that is to help to promote opportunity and to support the initiatives that the administration has underway in promoting greater food security, the green agricultural revolution that Africa needs, and also to support global health. I think the relationship is healthy.

I think that, despite what we see as the drumbeat of the occasional headline of a distressing situation in one African country, we need to reorient our thinking to not focus on the one, or two, or three problems that we see in the 55 different states across Africa, but to focus on the promise and potential that we see in Africa, and recognize that this Africa is a continent with 55 different states, and quite honestly, some of those states have never been in turmoil, and some of those states have always been democratic, and some of those states are doing quite well.

Mr. GAST. Congresswoman, Mali, over the last 10 years, has had significant growth; 5 percent, on average, year-on-year growth. And that has helped to lift a sizable portion of the population out of poverty, which is significant. Unfortunately, a majority of the population has benefitted from that, but a minority has not. And the minority that has not is in the North. As Ambassador Carson mentioned, the size of the North is approximately the size of France and the population of the North, before the displacement, was roughly 1.5 million persons.

So access is extremely difficult; opportunities for employment, very few; opportunities for growth, given the harsh terrain of the Sahara Desert, also very, very few; and that has helped exacerbate the crisis in the North. Now, the problem is that this crisis also threatens to undermine the progress that has been made in the South with agriculture and with growth. With the displacements and the inability of the government to continue financing services that it would normally finance the economy is going to contract.

As I mentioned in my opening statement, government revenues are down considerably from last year. So it, at a time when it is not being financed by external actors, cannot finance its own needs. So we are very concerned about that. You raised the issue of women and children, and unfortunately, women and children do suffer far more greatly than the men in times of crisis. And Mali has made significant gains over the last 10 years. It has been able to cut child mortality rates and maternal mortality rates by half, but still, it ranks near the bottom. Only Somalia has higher maternal and child mortality rates. So we are concerned about that.

It is very, very difficult in this environment for us to have access in the North. There are only a few actors, international NGOs, that are operating in the North, and each has to negotiate access with each community and rebel group operating in the North.

Mr. SMITH. Thank you very much, both of you, for your testimony and we do have——

Ms. JACKSON LEE. Thank you.

Mr. SMITH [continuing]. Several members of the committee, a number of questions we will submit for the record, and again, I thank you.

I would like to now invite our second panel to the witness table, beginning with Nii Akuetteh. Mr. Akuetteh is an independent policy researcher and analyst who specializes in U.S. foreign policy, African development, and international relations. He's often published in American journals on Africa and appears on Aljazeera, Voice of America, the BBC, and other television and radio outlets analyzing African issues.

He has done a stint as a Georgetown professor, a journal editor, and leader of advocacy organizations working on three continents. He created and led two organizations focusing on democracy and the conflict in Mali.

We will then hear from Mr. Rudolph Atallah, who is a 21-year veteran of the United States Air Force who retired as a lieutenant colonel. He served in the Office of the Secretary of Defense as Africa Counter-Terrorism Director, where his responsibilities, included advising the Secretary of Defense and other senior officials on counterterrorism policy and strategy, and serving as an advisor to the State Department and numerous Embassies across Africa.

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

We will then hear from Mr. Dave Peterson, who is the senior director of the Africa Program for the National Endowment for Democracy. Since 1988, he has been responsible for NED's program to identify and assist hundreds of African non-governmental organizations and activists working for democracy, human rights, press freedom, justice, and peace. He was the former executive director of the Project South Africa of the A. Phillip Randolph Educational Fund, and a freelance journalist in Africa as well as in Turkey.

He has visited more the 40 African countries since '84 and has published numerous articles on African politics. Mr. Akuetteh, if you could begin.

STATEMENT OF MR. NII AKUETTEH, INDEPENDENT AFRICA ANALYST (FORMER GEORGETOWN UNIVERSITY PROFESSOR OF AFRICAN AFFAIRS)

Mr. AKUETTEH. Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman. Ranking Member Bass, Congresswoman Jackson Lee, I very much appreciate this opportunity to appear before you and share my opinion, but I am particularly grateful that you have taken the time to consider an issue in Africa that I think is extremely important and has a lot of dangerous potential and requires attention and assistance. My full written statement I would like to request to be part of the record.

Mr. SMITH. Without objection, so ordered, as well as all of your full statements.

Mr. AKUETTEH. So I just want to summarize the main points. My recommendation, looking at the Mali situation, is that the U.S. should respond with two initiatives. One is that I believe the situation is very urgent and dangerous, and the regional body ECOWAS has stepped up. As I look at the situation and also watch the news, I am reminded of the fires going on in Colorado and the image that jumps to my mind is that the Pentagon, it seems to me, will rush

to the aid of the firefighters because the Air Force Training Academy is threatened.

I do believe that this is an analogy for what is going on in Mali. A lot of Malians are affected, a lot of West Africans are affected, but I also think that important American interests can be harmed if the situation deteriorates. And therefore, it seems to me it is both ethical and very good for the United States to help ECOWAS deal with the situation.

My second recommendation, and I listened carefully to the presentation by the preceding panel, the Federal officials, it seems to me that the elephant in the room is the potential for terrorism in Africa, and United States' response, and U.S. policy since 9/11, and the creation of AFRICOM. Now, I think AFRICOM had a strong presence and programs with the democratic government of Mali, and therefore, I think the U.S. Government should take this as an opportunity to review the policies followed since 9/11 to see areas that require improvement so that Africa policy and U.S.-Africa relations can be stronger.

Good policy review, in my view, will require a comprehensive exercise, but I do think there are things that one can see even now. And among those is that, democracy should play a much bigger role in U.S. policy, even when it comes to dealing with issues of terrorism. The 55 African countries are extremely complex, so of course, you always have grievances, but it seems to me that democracy is the way to go rather than strengthening Africa militaries. So I think U.S. policy should emphasize democracy and de-emphasize, particularly, military assistance except in emergency situations, and of course, the thing to be avoided is that no U.S. troops required anywhere on the continent except in very rare cases.

Also, I think the training that the United States gives African soldiers, militaries, need to start with training that asks them to respect the democratic institutions of their countries. I do think that too many Africa militaries take for themselves the right to determine who should govern their countries or not. The continent has been moving away from that and it will be good if U.S. military assistance and training pushes soldiers to understand that they must respect the democratic choices of their populations, that it is not their job to select who runs their countries.

And I think that the United States' AFRICOM, there is a question of where its headquarters are to be located. I think that it would be a good idea if the headquarters are brought to the United States because there is worry in many African countries as to whether there will be large bases and military headquarters. And therefore, I think to deal with those worries, it would be good if, like some other U.S. commands, they are based in the United States. I think that will go a long way to ease worries about the U.S. military presence, because the relationship between the two areas, the U.S. and Africa, will thrive on civilian bases.

Mr. Chairman, I want to end here and I will look forward to expanding on any of my points in the question period. I thank you very much, again, for the opportunity.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Akuetteh follows:]

Testimony on Mali by Mr. Nii Akuetteh, Independent Policy Analyst

House Committee on Foreign Affairs,
Subcommittee on Africa, Global Health, and Human Rights

Hearing Entitled "The Tuareg Revolt and the Mali Coup"

FRIDAY, June 29, 2012;
Washington DC

Introduction

Chairman Smith, Ranking Member Bass, for this Hearing on Mali, I thank you and the entire SubCommittee. Twice. First because it is a personal honor and privilege to be asked for my views. Far more important though, you deserve sincere thanks for delving into the grave problems afflicting Mali and the role US policy has and might play.

Your staff did a remarkable and reassuring job in guiding me through the process and I thank them as well.

Mali's Dire Situation & Pessimistic Prognosis

"Twin, inter-connected national explosions."

That is one metaphor for seeing Mali, especially the events pinned down in the title of today's Hearing, "The Tuareg Revolt and the Mali Coup." Together, these national explosions, which were less than a month apart, have grievously wounded the country.

There exists another way to see today's Mali. African diplomats on the scene say that today, the country is afflicted by three simultaneous crises.

Most call the first a crisis of constitutional rule; I call prefer crisis of democracy deficiency. Its telling symptom include the fact that on March 22, renegade soldiers and putschists halted a promising, uplifting democracy project. They have humiliated the admirable democracy-building president (a former general affectionately dubbed soldier for democracy) and bundled him out of the country—two months from the end of his term-limited 10-year tenure.

The renegades next allowed their thugs in mufti to walk into the presidential palace and assault the unprotected elderly replacement president. He was so badly hurt that he is still receiving treatment far away, on another continent. Today they still refuse to fully cede power to or obey civilian leaders—despite overly-generous concessions made to them.

Mali's second crisis concerns the country's sovereignty and territorial integrity. This is what most outsiders understand as the revolt by Tuareg ethnic rebels. Back in January, brimming with weapons and fighters from Libya, they launched yet another war against the central government. It quickly bogged down—until the undisciplined renegades turned their arms on the civilian bosses. Within weeks the Tuaregs had sliced off the contested northern seventy percent of the national territory from the capital's control. It must be reattached.

The final crisis is terrorism and violent insecurity in the temporarily lost north. The Tuareg militia exercise little real control and a myriad of declared terrorist and Islamist organizations hold sway.

Whether seen as twin explosions or triple crises, the Malian people are suffering, especially in the lost northern territories. More than hundreds of thousands there have been displaced and have fled. 145,000 have headed south into the rump 30 percent to be internally displaced persons, IDPs. The remaining 180,000 went into neighboring countries (west into Mauritania or east into Burkina Faso and Niger) to eke out difficult existence as refugees. And yet those who fled may be the fortunate ones.

The suffering is worse for people left behind in Northern Mali. It may not be too much of an exaggeration to say that they are being held hostage. Consider the experiences and stories that a few have managed to get out through a single American news organization, Congressionally-funded VOA. Here is just one story told by a father and husband to VOA's correspondent last week, ***"They came into my house and started firing. Then they took two of my cars. Then they ordered everyone out and took away everything, even stuff belonging to my wife and children."*** He is talking about the various armed groups who claim to have liberated northern Mali. More on them shortly.

The father's story is not unique, as the VOA correspondent discovered, ***"People in Gao say the rebels looted shops, homes and the local hospital as soon as they arrived…"*** and ***"Electricity remains one of the central problems. Whole neighborhoods are going without power. One housewife told [reporter] Fall that food spoils quickly, and her family suffers."***

So there is no way to escape, spin or dismiss the bad news: Since March, Mali has quickly and badly deteriorated into today's sad condition.

Mr. Chairman, you, the Ranking Member, and the rest of this Subcommittee are to be commended. By holding this hearing and examining the two proximate events that triggered Mali's dizzying descent, you are doing the right thing.

As bad as its current circumstances are, I believe a worse catastrophe is about to afflict Mali—unless and until serious interventions are made. The very last thing I want to do in my career and the last image I want to leave in the US foreign policy establishment is to leave a reputation as an alarmist, or a Chicken Little. And yet these days I am regularly having nightmares about the plagues about to be visited on Mali. But not just on Mali. A good way to appreciate the danger is a worst-scenario exercise: to sketch how the interests of the many stakeholders could be hurt, if nothing is done and the three crises fester. The threatened interests include those of the US.

Residents of northern Mali can expect this: more illegitimate rule, chaos, insecurity, religious, gender and ethnic discrimination, lawlessness, and the disappearance of the basic amenities for living. Terrorist attacks and retaliation cannot be ruled out either.

In the southern rump nation around Bamako, increased rule by the gun is what can be expected if Mali's crises are not solved quickly. The young, fragile, already wilting democratic institutions will succumb altogether. This is likely to invite more violence as opponents attempt to end military rule. And the standard of living will worsen since ECOWAS' neighbors are likely to re-impose sanctions to make the soldiers really give up power.

Mali's neighbors, ECOWAS members and non-members alike, will also be hit hard. More refugees will flow in—with resulting pressure on scarce food, water, land and other resources. Such refugee flows will predictably cause health problems as well as spontaneous small-scale conflicts. Additionally, we will see planned, politically motivated larger conflict—war. They could be uprisings by emboldened Tuareg populations in neighboring countries. Or they could jihadist insurgencies aimed at imposing religious rule.

What about the interests of the US and its European allies? In a worst case scenario--a situation where Mali's three crises are allowed to fester--how will Western interests be impacted? This is a crucial consideration. Doing it even minimal justice must start with sketches of those Western interests. Put differently, in what ways are Mali and the Sahara-Sahel-ECOWAS swath of Africa important to the US and Europe? One set of ways, i.e. one set of Western interests, is that the area is a source of important natural resources—uranium, oil, diamonds and gold, among others.

Another set of Western interests must be termed the strategic location. The nearby Atlantic Ocean in the Gulf of Guinea is a major international sea lane whose vulnerability to piracy already causes concern. Moreover, virtually all air traffic between Europe and Africa passes over or through the area. Increased terrorist capabilities must give Western officials sleepless nights.

The remaining set of Western interests is the most crucial in my opinion. I have in mind these security-related interests that could be addressed should Mali become more of a failed state. They include theocratic rule, which will pose mortal danger to democracy and stability; increased proliferation of weapons, from missiles to small arms; the area serving as a transit corridor for narcotics (cocaine from Latin America and heroin from Afghanistan) being trafficked to Europe; terrorist kidnapping of Westerners in the area for ransom; and of course terrorist attacks inside the U.S. and Europe that are planned and mounted from Mali and its neighborhood.

The bottom line of all this is clear: The U.S. and Europe have a great deal to lose from a worst-case scenario Mali. And a great deal to gain from a Mali that recovers and heals quickly.

First US Response: Assist ECOWAS In Solving Mali's Crises

Mr. Chairman, it is equally clear to me that in the aftermath of Mali's descent, the U.S. best protects its interests with two major policy responses. Here is the first: Washington must give ECOWAS all necessary assistance and encouragement to reverse the recent horrific trajectory in Mali since a continuation of that trajectory puts important American interests at risk.

Some may insist on a further elaboration of the why and the what. The strong argument for Washington's assistance may be laid out as follows. What ECOWAS is doing in Mali could be described as battling a huge fire. In other words, ECOWAS is the fire brigade that is doing a difficult, dangerous, frustrating task in order to protect an entire neighborhood of stakeholders from getting seriously burned. The U.S. is one such neighbor. And if ECOWAS did not battle that fire, the U.S. may have to. Furthermore, ECOWAS, the fire brigade, could use that help. Badly. And the U.S. can afford to give the help. Easily. Additionally, a decent case exists that American policy missteps added fuel to the dangerous fire (more on this point shortly). Clearly it is both ethical and smart to give such a fire brigade the affordable help it need to put out the dangerous fire.

The dimensions of the Mali crises come nowhere near World War II. Still, the rationale for the U.S. today helping ECOWAS is not dissimilar to FDR's Lend-Lease maxim uttered in 1941. I paraphrase it thus, "They are risking a lot to fight our fire. The least we can do is let them use our effective hose."

The what refers to outlining the type of assistance that ECOWAS is likely to need from the U.S. Determining the precise assistance required is properly a collaborative job for professional teams on both sides who are experienced in diplomacy, military operations, etc. It is not for foreign policy campaigners like me. Still, a few types of U.S. assistance for ECOWAS seem obvious. An important one is rhetorical: American officials should issue strong public support and praise for what ECOWAS is doing. Conversely, they should publicly condemn individuals, groups and entities opposing ECOWAS, from putschist like Captain Sanogo to secessionists like MNLA to jihadist and Islamist groups like AQIM, Ansar al-Dine, and MUJAO. Of course such public praise or condemnation may have to be avoided in instances where they jeopardize delicate tasks. The second form of help the U.S. must provide is diplomatic by exerting influence multilaterally inside the UN Security Council and bilaterally with such key role players as Algeria. Some analysts have also called for more effective U.S. policy on refugees and on terrorism—both in Mali's Sahel-Sahara neighborhood.

Clearly, the most vital form of help ECOWAS needs is from the US is military assistance that excludes American boots on the ground. It bears stressing that no American troops must be requested or granted. Rather, what should be asked for and given is help on improving West African military capabilities in intelligence, in logistics, in planning and in operations.

And of course assistance means money.

Undoubtedly the U.S. as a whole and its key segments (the Obama Administration, and Congress's two chambers) will have to expend valuable capital—political and otherwise--to

provide ECOWAS the needed assistance. However, given the many important American interests—humanitarian, economic, and counter-terrorism—being protected, I remain convinced that Washington metaphorically giving a hose to the ECOWAS fire brigade is the ethical and smart thing to do. And it is the first of my two recommendations of how the US must respond to Mali's disastrous decline.

Second US Response: Africa Policy Must Be Reviewed and Reformed

My second recommendation is this: The US should use the Mali debacle as an opportunity to thoroughly review and then change significant aspects of its Africa policy which is dominated by the struggle against terrorism.

It is generally accepted that the 9/11 terror attacks in 2001 triggered lasting changes in U.S. foreign relations. In U.S.-Africa relations, the dominant status of AFRICOM, created in 2007, reflects this change. Without a question, the U.S. military has focused on Egypt and on the Horn more than any other region of Africa. Beyond those two, however, Mali is a good candidate for Washington's closest African partner in the post-9/11 fight against terrorism.

Mali's spectacular implosion due to security weaknesses, therefore, makes the case for a thorough review of the new post 9/11 Africa policy.

Only days ago, AFRICOM Commander General Carter Ham made an interesting confession about Africa's three most notorious terrorist groups, Al-Shabaab, Boko Haram and AQIM, "What really concerns me is the indications that the three organizations are seeking to co-ordinate and synchronise their efforts – in other words, to establish a cooperative effort amongst the three most violent organisations ... And I think that's a real problem for us and for African security in general." The general's concern bolsters the argument reviewing the post-9/11 policy for defeating terrorism in Africa.

As an important component, the review must thoroughly examine five issues and incidents that critics insist are Africa policy blunders or something similar. One criticism is that Africa's vastness makes prioritizing AFRICOM and the find-and-kill approach an ineffective strategy for rolling back terrorism across the continent. A superior alternative approach, critics argue, would put large emphasis on democracy, development and reconciliation that defuses intra-African quarrels and grievances. This would aim at prevention, with AFRICOM and its hard power the last resort. And budget allocation would reflect this.

Conspicuous military assistance—from loudly trumpeted multi-million dollar grants to shiny vehicles and equipment to annual military exercises to overseas training for officers—dominated the close relations that the U.S. forged with Mali after 9/11. This was another policy move severely criticized by some Africa policy analysts. They worried that bribing Mali in this manner to go chasing after AQIM while ignoring its own priorities (democracy, development and solving the Tuareg quarrel) would end badly. Mali's implosion seems to say they were prescient.

The inability to prevent heavily armed Tuareg fighters moving from post-Gaddafi Libya into Mali and re-igniting an even deadlier revolt is the third apparent policy failure that the review must investigate.

That Tuareg revolt re-ignition began in earnest in January. Reportedly, Bamako's response was so poor that it led to the two explosions mentioned—the March 22 coup by soldiers incensed at losing battles against the Tuaregs, and the Tuaregs' lightning fast conquest of northern Mali, which they announced on April 6. These events raise a question: Given that the Toure Administration had appeared to be such a close partner in counter-terrorism, why did the U.S. and AFRICOM not do more to help a close ally being attacked by fighters from Gaddafi's Libya. That question must also be answered by the Africa policy review being advocated in this testimony.

The State Department exhibited a strange initial reaction to Captain Amadou Sanogo's March 22 coup in Bamako. After an inter-agency meeting, the Department's spokesperson spent days refusing to condemn it as a coup and claiming it could not be determined how much of the $140 million in aid could be cut as the law required. Most alarming, she more or less justified the coup with this March 23 comment, "***. . . this situation arose as a result of a number of grievances that the military had . . . So clearly, there's going to have to be some mediation between the government and the military. Its grievances are going to have to be addressed . . .***"

Mr. Chairman, it must be observed that this was justifying the treasonous action by a soldier that the U.S. trained repeatedly. And that the former School of the Americas caused many Third World observers to wonder whether Washington deliberately trained foreign soldiers to overthrow their governments and abuse their populations. I believe the policy review must also get to the bottom of this puzzling initial reaction to the Sanogo coup.

To assist in getting to the bottom of the five concerns, I have taken the liberty of suggesting questions that could be asked. They are:

> Who (from U.S. officials all the way to contracted entities and persons, regardless of nationality) had responsibility for monitoring and tracking the spread of fighters and weapons from Colonel Gaddafi's Libya starting from the start date of the UN Security Council Resolution 1973?
>
> Did they pick up the flows into northern Mali?
>
> If yes, what actions did they take?
>
> If no, were they asleep at the wheel, and what reprimands and other sanctions are called for and have been applied?
>
> What detailed data capture American engagement with Mali throughout the tenure of the Amadou Toumani Toure government in Mali?

> What did the US expect of the Toure government, and how satisfied was the US with how the Toure government played its expected role?
>
> What precise sessions of training did the U.S. give Captain Amadou Sanogo whether in the US, in Mali or elsewhere?
>
> Which courses did Captain Sanogo take and how well did he perform in training?
>
> Which other Malian military personnel have received which U.S.-funded training since Amadou Toumani Toure was first elected president?
>
> What is the Obama Administration's current attitude and view of Captain Sanogo's coup?
>
> Has this attitude and view changed since March 21, 2012?

Admittedly, a good policy review will involve more than investigating the five concerns of critics just cited. However even when perfectly done in a perfect world, the review will still be a tool, a means to an end. That end is policy reform. My working environment of foreign policy advocacy is less than perfect. Therefore, without a formal review first, I have developed reforms and changes that must be made in U.S. policy for fighting terrorism in Africa. They derive from my instincts, long experience and observation of what has befallen Mali. I believe they would reduce the chance that other African countries will suffer Mali's fate. You could describe my suggested policy reforms as hypotheses that will be tested by the formal review. Below I present them as catchy, Africa policy dos and don'ts:

Don't site AFRICOM's headquarters in Africa; bring them stateside—to Florida or Virginia, or Georgia or South Carolina, all of whom have expressed a desire to get the HQ.

The first and most important training given to African soldiers must be attitudinal. Subordination to democracy and constitutional rule and respect for civilian leaders as Commander in Chief must be deeply inculcated.

Bend over backwards to avoid training soldiers to serve and bolster dictators.

Conclusion

Mr. Chairman, I hope you have found some merit in the case I make for the two policy responses that I believe the U.S. must make to respond to the disaster that has struck Mali and the dangers posed to many stakeholders—Malians, West Africans, Europeans and Americans.

The first recommended policy response is that ECOWAS deserves all the help that the US can give it.

The second is that U.S.-Africa policy in general, and counter-terrorism in particular, begs for a thorough review. Followed by reform away from over-reliance on military approaches.

I thank you again for the privilege.

Mr. SMITH. Thank you very much Mr. Akuetteh. I would like to ask Mr. Atallah if he would proceed.

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

Mr. ATALLAH. Mr. Chairman, Ranking Member Bass, distinguished members of the subcommittee, thank you for this opportunity to come before you today and speak about this important topic. And thank you for adding my analysis and summary into the records. While I come today in a personal capacity, the analysis and views, which are my own, were shaped by my 21 years of military service. Between 2001 and 2003, I spent extensive time with the Tuaregs in the North, specifically in Gao, Kidal, and Tessalit. As a native Arabic speaker I got the chance to sit down and speak with many of the senior Tuareg leaders and local imams, so my ideas are shaped by that time. Also, more recently, with my private company, White Mountain Research, I have spent extensive time in the region keeping track of the current situation.

To fully understand what is going on, I would like to just dive into a brief history. The January 17, 2012, Tuareg uprising is the fourth since Mali's independence in 1960 and a continuation of, basically, a half a century of ongoing differences between the Tuaregs and the Government of Mali. The differences are between a Tuareg, whose identity is in their Tamasheq language, and Bamako in the South. To understand how we arrived at the current crisis in Mali, it is important to briefly mention the third Tuareg rebellion, which was launched in 2006 by a defiant Tuareg leader named Ibrahim Ag Bahanga.

The rebellion lasted for 3 years while Algeria attempted to broker peace between the government and the rebels. In 2009, Mali dispatched troops to the North to stop Bahanga and he was exiled to Libya. He returned in January 2011. During his time in Libya, Bahanga made contact with Tuareg officers and tribesmen from Ghadafi's military. When Ghadafi's regime began to fall, Bahanga convinced his tribesmen to abandon their military posts and go after Ghadafi's weapons. Tuareg defectors raided the large stockpiles of Ghadafi's arms and ammunitions, loaded trucks, and jumped in convoys, and headed South.

Bahanga's ambitions to fuel another uprising in Northern Mali took root among a well-trained and a well-equipped Tuareg force. Bahanga was killed in a mysterious car accident in the summer of 2011. And in October of that same year, in the oasis town of Zakak, near the border of Algeria on the Malian side, Tuareg youth, intellectuals, Malian Army deserters, Libyan-trained Tuareg soldiers formed the Mouvement National pour la Liberation de l'Azawad, or MNLA as we like to call it today; Azawad being the land, or the northern part of Mali.

During this meeting, another Tuareg named Iyad Ag Ghaly, who was leader in the first rebellion in the 1990s, and had also joined Bahanga in the third rebellion in 2006, tried to join the MNLA but they rejected him. And they rejected him for many reasons. One, he plays both sides of the fence, and he has done that before. He is one of AQIM has deep relationships with them, and he has got very radical beliefs. So he went on to form his own organization,

of Salafist Islamic group called Ansar al-Dine, or Defenders of the Faith.

MNLA's primary objective for liberating Azawad, as they like to call it, was the creation of a secular democratic state that represents all ethnic groups in Northern Mali, not just the Tuaregs. It was fighting, basically, for culture, pride, and self-determination. Despite its swift victory, MNLA's agenda was quickly undermined by the threat of militant Islamic dominance. At the helm of the threat was the Ansar al-Dine of Ag Ghaly. And so with Ansar al-Dine putting a Tuareg face on AQIM, if that didn't exist, there would be more resistance to the Salafist presence and a broader support for MNLA.

In recent weeks, Tuaregs tolerant of Ansar al-Dine began to learn the truth about the organization. Reports conveyed on 26 June from Tuareg families living in Timbuktu said that local boys as young as 11 and 12 years old are being deceived and lured into Salafist training camps over promises to receive food and money in return for doing odd jobs. One father went to one of these camps to bring his son back and was told by the leader of Ansar al-Dine running the camp that he can have his boy back after he had fulfilled his duties to Allah.

The harsh reality is, people without money rely on handouts from Ansar al-Dine, which has full support of AQIM, is well-funded, and well-equipped. In return, families have to send their sons to newly militarized madrasas where they are taught to fire AK–47s and are indoctrinated into harsh interpretation of Islam. Two days ago, fighters from an AQIM splinter group clashed with MNLA in the city of Gao. Reports indicate that 20 people were killed, and a day after the clash, leaders of the various Islamist groups got together, took over Gao, and had discussions that are still unknown. If the information is accurate, we are getting down to a showdown between the MNLA and the Islamists, which is unfolding as we speak.

Although the international community would never entertain the idea of an Azawadian independence, efforts need to be made to support MNLA and Tuaregs who oppose the extremist groups from operating in the Sahel. Tuaregs are masters of their environment. They can play a key role in stabilizing the region by driving out these groups. And they have the will to do so, but they can't do it on their own. Unfortunately, the present situation is getting bleak. Mali is becoming a magnet for foreign fighters who are flocking in to train recruits to use sophisticated weapons pilfered and taken from Ghadafi's arsenal.

So what is the endgame for the extremist groups? AQIM leadership wants to take advantage of the shifting political landscape in North Africa. To accomplish this goal, it has to rely on its regional affiliate AQIM. However, the setbacks AQIM has suffered over the last few years are significant. Its ability to recruit is, basically, down to zero. To survive and remain effective, AQIM needs money and soldiers. The Sahel has become an ideal ground for both and the Tuareg function as collateral.

Until now, Mali's military has been ineffective to drive out AQIM from the northern part of the country. The international community and Mali's neighbors should not support the current Bamako

regime to conduct military intervention on its own. This will be counterproductive and could force locals to support Ansar al-Dine and AQIM. The best approach to counter the crisis is to create a buffer zone around the areas where the Salafists operate. The buffer zone should restrict movement by air and ground of illegal goods entering and leaving the area.

On a larger scale, a systematic regional approach aimed at targeting illegal drug trafficking, tobacco, and weapons should be addressed to curb terrorists' access to money, and diminish their cashflow to recruit, and buy more weapons. Further, an effective information campaign is indispensable to discredit AQIM and Ansar al-Dine and reinforce local distrust of their motives. However, direct intervention by Western states will reinforce the extremists' raison d'Etat and will exacerbate the crisis. The solution must be brokered by regional actors and guided by regional experts.

There also must be support for border control and counterterrorism programs for the Sahelian states, where intelligence collection and info sharing requires significant improvement. Furthermore, these states do not have the ability to respond to security threats in remote areas distant from their capitals. This is the reason why Mali has been ineffective at maintaining control of the North. Although AQIM's southern zone battalion is no more than 300 strong, the vast operational area makes it very difficult to target these individuals absent of regional state collaboration.

Thank you for your attention. I look forward to your questions.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Atallah follows:]

Prepared Statement of

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and
Chief Executive Officer, White Mountain Research LLC

before the

United States House of Representatives
Committee on Foreign Affairs
Subcommittee on Africa, Global Health, and Human Rights

on

"The Tuareg Revolt and the Mali Coup"

Friday, June 29, 2012,
10:00 a.m.
Rayburn House Office Building, Room 2172
Washington, D.C.

Mr. Chairman, Ranking Member Bass, Distinguished Members of the Subcommittee:

I would like to thank you very much for the opportunity to testify today at this important examination of the Tuareg revolt in the northern part of Mali and the military coup in the south that overthrew that country's elected government.

While I come to you today in my personal capacity, the analyses and views which I will offer being my own, it goes without saying that my perspectives were shaped by the twenty-one years I had the privilege of wearing the uniform of the United States Air Force, during which time I served in a variety of capacities, including Director of the Sub-Saharan Orientation Course at the Joint Special Operations University, Air Force Defense Attaché accredited to six West African countries, and, during the last six years before my retirement, as Africa

Counterterrorism Director in the Office of the Secretary of Defense.

Between 2001 and 2003, I spent extensive time with the Tuaregs in Northern Mali, especially in Kidal, Tessalit, Timbuktu, Gao, and several other locations across the Sahara. During this period, the first kidnapping of European tourists by an extremist named Abdel Rezak Al Para took place, and in Kidal, Pakistanis activists—allegedly from Jamaat al Tabligh—made attempts to recruit young Tuaregs for activities abroad, possibly including militancy. As a native Arabic speaker, I had several opportunities to interview Tuareg leaders and local imams about these issues, and about their perspectives on 9/11, terrorism, and tribal beliefs. Subsequent work in the region through my company, White Mountain Research, has also afforded me many contemporary insights concerning the rapidly evolving security dynamics in this region. The testimony I will offer today is on based these experiences. Hence, while I am more than willing to answer questions insofar as I can regarding the coup in Mali, I will focus my testimony on the Tuareg revolt as this is the area which I believe I have the most unique knowledge and perspective to contribute.

Introduction: Contextualizing the Current Tuareg Uprising

The 2012 Tuareg uprising is not new. This conflagration should be viewed as a continuation of a half-century of conflict-promoting dynamics that historically have sullied relations between Tuaregs and the various states that attempted to subjugate or delimit their social, political, and economic practices. Understanding the current rebellion necessitates coming to terms with this history, which started long before Mali's independence in 1960.

The following testimony—a snapshot of a rapidly evolving and complex problem set—provides this historical context, while shedding light on contemporary Tuareg social, political, and economic dynamics that critically impact security in the Saharan and Sahelian regions of Africa. Of particular interest to US policymaking is the complicated relationship between the Tuaregs and Al Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM), the North African affiliate of Al Qaeda (AQ)—a relationship driven by a convergence of interests, not ideology. In the end, it will become evident that those seeking to promote stability in the region and confront violent extremism—including AQIM—should not ignore the Tuaregs given the integral role they play in regional security and economic growth.

The Tuaregs and decolonization

The Tuaregs are a semi-nomadic people that live in the Saharan and Sahelian regions of southern Algeria, western Libya, northern Mali, northern Niger and northeast Burkina Faso. They number approximately 1.5 million today, although actual census data is unavailable. Their worldview is constructed from a combination of Islam and traditional tribal practices that cannot be separated from their culture. They believe both in Allah and in spirits, differing from pure Islam, which teaches belief exclusively in a monotheistic God. All Tuaregs belong to one of three social classes: nobles (camel herders), vassals (goat herders), and black African slaves

originally from southern ethnic groups (although slavery was officially outlawed by the French colonial authorities in the early part of the last century).

When decolonization took root across Africa in the 1950s, the peoples of the Sahara—especially the Tuaregs—pushed for political autonomy, often sparking conflict. During the colonial era, the Tuareg regions had been peripheral to, and thus isolated from, influence within the capitals. Over time, the colonial powers imposed a series of conventions regulating and limiting nomadic movements to specific territories for each federation, further restricting Tuareg movements and increasing their isolation from centers of power. Tuaregs repeatedly clashed with the French colonial authorities over these issues, but were subdued owing to French military superiority and tactics of divide and conquer, which turned the Tuareg tribes against one another.

The first post-independence Tuareg uprising began in 1962, barely two years after Mali gained its independence. Initially, this conflict featured small hit-and-run raids, but these escalated in subsequent years to include sophisticated attacks. However, the overall Tuareg effort lacked unified leadership and a coherent strategy. Nevertheless, the Tuaregs' grievances were poignant enough to encourage some to take up arms. The sum of their concerns focused on three main issues:

1. Discrimination from southern ethnic groups, which governed Mali following independence.
2. Fear that land reform would threaten their privileged access to agriculture.
3. Concern that national elites would destroy Tuareg culture under the guise of "modernization."

By 1964, Mali had crushed the rebellion and the northeastern part of the country became a no-go area ruled by martial law. The fledgling government's heavy-handed approach alienated many Tuaregs who had not been supportive of the insurgents.

The 1970s and 1980s were decades of extreme drought and suffering in the region. This period saw many Tuaregs flee Mali and take refuge in Algeria, Libya, Niger, Mauritania, and Burkina Faso. Over-grazing combined with drought and a lack of response by the Malian government caused further deepening resentment among many Tuaregs. Younger Tuaregs were also lured by jobs in Algeria and Libya's oil industries and moved there to earn a living. However, the collapse of oil prices in the mid-1980s sent many of these Tuareg migrants back to their homes in Mali. Algeria expelled over 10,000, and Libya, which had created specialized military regiments composed of Tuareg recruits, disbanded most of them. This set the stage for the second Tuareg rebellion, which started in June 1990 and lasted until 1992. Iyad Ag Ghaly, current leader of the Salafist group, *Ansar El Dine*, led the second rebellion. Similar to the 1960s, the Tuaregs were not united as one insurgent group, although this time they were better organized and equipped.

Then Malian President Moussa Traoré, to his credit, recognized very early after the rebellion started that a military solution was untenable, and accepted Algeria's offer of mediation. In 1991, after serious discussions between the government and Tuareg leaders, the Accords of Tamanrasset were signed. Unfortunately, not all Tuaregs were represented at the table, especially those from Gao and Timbuktu who felt betrayed and left out of the deal. The Traoré regime refused to publicize the terms of the Accords, fearing that the South would interpret it as a capitulation. In fact, regime spokesmen even denied on national radio that there would be any "*Statut particulier*" for the North, although this was a key aspect of the deal. Such duplicity underscored the basic lack of trust that remains the impetus behind today's continued conflict. Key provisions from the Accord included:

1. A cease-fire and exchange of prisoners.
2. Withdrawal of insurgent forces to cantonments.
3. Reduction of the Army presence in the north, especially Kidal.
4. Disengagement of the Army from civil administration in the north.
5. Elimination of selected military posts (considered threatening by the Tuareg communities).
6. Integration of insurgent combatants into the Malian army at ranks to be determined.
7. An acceleration of ongoing processes of administrative decentralization in Mali.
8. A guarantee that a fixed proportion of Mali's national infrastructural investment funding (47.3 percent) would be devoted to the north.

Most Tuaregs feel that these commitments were never fully met by the Malian state and thus the failure to honor them has become the justification for seeking independence. In fact, Mali had a coup two months after the Tamanrasset agreement, ending President Traoré's 23-year rule abruptly. In 1992, national elections took place and leaders from all the communities signed a "National Pact," which addressed a wide range of issues, from integration of former insurgents into the Malian military, to the allocation of resources for national development.

One significant result of the Tamanrasset Accords was the formation of temporary security forces to garrison the North. These forces contained a mixed percentage of Malian Army and rebel combatants—both a confidence-building measure and a way to reduce the problem of unemployment of armed Tuareg youths. Promises of material benefits were also made by the government without having the resources in place to fulfill them. The result was a painfully slow application of the National Pact.

A third Tuareg rebellion took place in 2006 and lasted until 2009. This was led by Ibrahim Ag Bahanga. Algeria once again stepped in to broker peace by restating demands made in the National Pact; however, the lack of trust by all parties kept northeast Mali in a state of uneasy peace. In 2009, Mali dispatched troops to stop Bahanga, and he was exiled to Libya that same year, where he remained until his return in the summer of 2011. Bahanga's Libyan exile proved an important milestone on the way to the current Tuareg insurgency.

During his time in Libya, Bahanga made contact with Tuaregs from his tribe who served in Muammar Gadhafi's military. One of these was Mohammed Ag Najm, commander of Gadhafi's elite desert units. In a 2011, interview with the Algerian newspaper *Al Watan*, Bahanga said, "The disappearance of Al-Qaddafi is good news for all the Tuareg in the region...His departure from Libya opens the way for a better future and helps to advance our political demands. Now he's gone, we can move forward in our struggle." While Bahanga was killed in a mysterious car accident that summer, his desire to spark another uprising and gain control of Northern Mali took root among many Tuaregs.

Bahanga's vision was fulfilled later that autumn. In September 2011, when it was evident that Gadhafi's regime was going to collapse, Tuareg fighters began to cross into Mali after emptying several Libyan arms depots. In October 2011, in the oasis settlement of Zakak, Mali, near the border of Algeria, Tuareg youth, intellectuals, Malian Army deserters, and Libyan-trained Tuareg soldiers merged two movements together—the *Mouvement national de l'Azawad* (MNA) and the *Mouvement Touareg du Nord Mali* (MTNM)—to form the *Movement National Pour La Liberation de l'Azawad* (MNLA), "Azawad" being the name of the Tuareg homeland. The France-based spokesman for the new organization, Hama Ag Sid'Ahmed (Bahanga's father-in-law), elaborated on the significance of this new, more organized approach to Tuareg aspirations: "This year we have all the generations together."[1] He elaborated on this novel Tuareg approach in a subsequent statement on the MNLA's formation:

> We talked about where things had gone wrong and tried to agree on a plan and on some common objectives. We created a ruling council, a military *état-majeur*, commanded and coordinated by Mohammed Ag Najim and other senior officers. There are about 40 of them. And we also created a political bureau, which set about analyzing and considering all the political aspects including how to raise awareness among the international community, especially regional powers.[2]

While this new Tuareg approach strengthened military strategy, enhanced tactical war-fighting capabilities, and generally augmented the Tuareg political thought, disunity remained their biggest obstacle.

Recent developments

In a period slightly longer than two months from mid-January until early April this year, the MNLA took control over an area greater than the size of France and called it "Azawad." The word "Azawad" is an Arabic corruption of the Berber word "Azawagh," which in the lexicon refers to a region that straddles Mali, Niger, and Algeria. However, at least its press

[1] Quoted in David Lewis and Adama Diarra, "Arms and Men Out of Libya Fortify Mali Rebellion," Reuters, February 10, 2012, http://www.reuters.com/article/2012/02/10/us-mali-libya-idUSTRE8190UX20120210.

[2] Quoted in Andy Morgan, "The Causes of the Uprising in Northern Mali," available at http://afrique-europe-interact.net/index.php?article_id=693.

communications, the MNLA has been careful to define it as being the northern part of Mali in order to reassure neighboring states that expansion was not in the cards—at least for now—and thus to prevent a unified backlash from those governments. Unlike other tribal conflicts, the Tuaregs are not fighting for resources, fertile land, or geographical expansion of territory; they are fighting for culture, pride, and self-determination.

When Tuareg youth saw the world rally behind South Sudan's struggle for independence, they hoped the same would happen for their people. However, history shows that the world did not react that way. To de-escalate potential retaliation against its newly formed organization and galvanize support, the MNLA made a public statement that it was not an extremist organization, but rather a secular representation of northern ethnic groups.[3] The Executive Committee of the MNLA then asked the international community to "recognize, in a spirit of justice and peace, the independent state of Azawad."[4] This plea for support was over-shadowed by the March 22 coup in Bamako and a list of plaguing questions, not least of which were "Why now?" and "How did this happen?"

Despite recent military successes, the MNLA faces many challenges. First and foremost is the threat of militant Islamist dominance. However, this threat originates perhaps more from the ultra-pragmatic Tuareg desire to play for the "winning team" than it does from a worldview pre-disposed to violent extremism. According to reports from Timbuktu, some Tuaregs have sons that joined both Ansar Al Dine, the violent regional Salafist group linked to al-Qaida in the Islamic Maghreb, and the MNLA in hopes of having a family representative on a winning side. As one Tuareg said to a colleague, representative of wider confusion over these organizational dynamics, "They are two arms of the same body." However, without Ansar El Dine putting a Tuareg face on AQIM, there would be more Tuareg resistance to the Salafist presence and broader support for MNLA.

Nevertheless, Tuaregs see flirtation with militant Islamism as temporary. There is broad resentment within Tuareg society, for example, to Salafist conceptions of a Shari'a ban on soccer, smoking, and unveiled women. And while Timbuktu has a long tradition as a devout Muslim city, residents feel that no one should tell them how to act or practice their faith. Nevertheless, the grievances that comprise the latest backbone of Tuareg insurgency push some into Tuareg Islamist factions, which share the same grievances and hatred for regional governments, especially those in Niger and Mali, but tap into a deeper Islamic frame to promote activism.

One contact that met with several Tuareg army officers last summer in Timbuktu described to me these grievances, which sparked the flow of Tuareg fighters coming in from Libya, and also

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[3] See Mossa Ag Attahar, Statement on Behalf of the Political Bureau of the MNLA, January 22, 2012, http://www.mnlamov.net/english/101-they-are-not-mercenaries.html.

[4] Quoted in Michael Rundle, "Mali Unrest: British Embassy Staff withdraw by Foreign Office Amid Violence," *Huffington Post*, April 6, 2012, http://www.huffingtonpost.co.uk/2012/04/06/mali-unrest-british-embassy-closed-foreign-office_n_1407825.html.

predicted a new rebellion. These officers said that the lack of jobs, economic and infrastructure development, and decent paved roads in northern Mali topped their list. All had family members connected to trade and tourism, and most said the fact that the only paved road to the North ends in Mopti embodies the government's betrayal of the people. Whether secular pragmatists or Islamists, Tuaregs do not trust the Malian government, which in their eyes has more than once sent forces to "cleanse" them. Tuaregs are quick to point out that since Mali's independence there was never a full, independent investigation by the outside world of the atrocities committed against them.

Nevertheless, despite these grievances, Tuaregs in general do not broadly support the Salafists. They see them first as foreign interlopers and second as Arabs or Moors, both of which have long been their ethnic rivals for supremacy in the Sahara.

Iyad Ag Ghaly and Militant Islam

This year's uprising saw the return of Iyad Ag Ghaly, a Tuareg leader who led the second rebellion in the early 1990s and started the third rebellion, which ran from 2006 until 2009. He is a seasoned 57-year-old warrior who embraced militant Salafism and is known to be unpredictable and manipulating. Ag Ghaly plays a key role in promoting conflict in the Sahel, and his manipulative, radical approach—not to mention his rolodex and connectivity to AQIM—is worthy of serious examination.

Ag Ghaly's biography as a militant reflects a clear desire to play for the winners. In 2007, during the middle of the third rebellion, Ag Ghaly switched sides. He left his cause (fighting for Tuareg autonomy) to help negotiate settlements between the Tuaregs and the government of Mali. This was a move that, until this day, causes resentment among his tribesmen, many of which no longer trust him. In 2008, as part of his "golden parachute," President Amadou Toumani Touré sent Ag Ghaly to Jeddah, Saudi Arabia, as Mali's consul. However, his time was cut short when he was declared *persona non grata* by the Saudi government when it found that the alleged diplomat spent his time in the kingdom consorting with extremist elements tied to Al Qaeda. In October 2011, Ag Ghaly was asked by President Touré to head a delegation and bring Tuareg soldiers returning from the conflict in Libya back into the fold of Malian society. He returned to the North to resume his old role as leader of the Tuaregs, but the MNLA rejected him. He then formed his own group, Ansar Al Dine ("Defenders of the Faith"), and fought alongside his people until the territory of Azawad was taken.

Once this happened, Ag Ghaly began to show his cards. He agreed to work with the MNLA, but on condition that Azawad would follow strict Shari'a. On June 16, 2012, he rejected MNLA independence and publicly announced, "Ansar Dine wants the unity of all brothers and sisters in Mali around Islam, which is the foundation of our life."[5] For now, he appears resolute in his

[5] Quoted in Adama Diarra, "Mali Islamist Leader Rejects Independence," Reuters, June 16, 2012, http://www.reuters.com/article/2012/06/16/us-mali-crisis-ansardine-idUSBRE85F0MD20120616.

long-term goals to capture the Tuareg leadership and institute rigid Salafism as the Tuaregs' brand of Islam. The MNLA leadership rejected Ag Ghaly's June 16 pronouncement and reaffirmed its claim to secularism. Despite the impasse over the fate of Azawad, some members of the MNLA favorably consider Ag Ghaly and his Ansar El Dine members to be Azawadis, a perception that is not shared about AQIM.

Ag Ghaly has a long history of successfully playing all sides of the Tuareg conflicts. In previous years, he was easily influenced by Algeria and Libya, which successfully "managed" him. However, Ag Ghaly's patrons, if any, are unidentified at this point. In this current stalemate over the fate of Azawad, Ag Ghaly seems to be methodically undermining his MNLA tribesmen. The question is, why? There are many unanswered questions, especially about the source(s) of his funding. Further, did Ag Ghaly know about the rebellion and plan to undermine it? Is a state, organization, or individual behind his success? Indeed, the MNLA has no money or outside support other than Tuaregs living abroad that want an independent Azawad. Ansar Al Dine, on the other hand, has funds and is well equipped, in addition to possessing the ethnic and tribal makeup to be successful. Ag Ghaly, who is no stranger to GSPC/AQIM because of his initial involvement with the group in 2003, also seems to have full support of Abdelhamid Abou Zeid, one of AQIM's leaders in Northern Mali. Taken together, Ag Ghaly's streamlined success does not square.

In summary, against the backdrop of the current crisis, Ag Ghaly has positioned himself very well. He managed to get MNLA bickering, and now formally has AQIM's southern fighters and resources under his command. His approach to undermine Tuareg leaders opposed to his rule began in April, after MNLA declared the independence of Azawad. Looting, rape and abductions in Gao, Kidal, and Timbuktu broke out, and according to Human Rights Watch reports, MNLA rebels were responsible for the crimes. However, those accusations were denied by the organization, which put the blame on escaped prisoners and criminals. Eyewitnesses said that Ansar El Dine responded by taking protective measures to insulate the population and curb crime. Since, Ansar El Dine has been proselytizing door-to-door and implementing Shari'a on the population. Overall, Tuaregs are confused about Ansar El Dine, but are quickly learning the truth about the organization. Just this week, a friend conveyed to me the following report from a Tuareg family in Timbuktu:

> *Ansar El Dine is recruiting local boys as young as 11-12 years-old with promises to give them food and cash if they work in their camp at Fort Bekaye, the old Malian base inside the city. The boys are being told to do odd jobs. One Tuareg man found out that his 13-year-old son had gone to the camp to work so he went there to talk to his son at the base. He asked him why he had joined Ansar El Dine, and the boy told his father that he was only suppose to work for one month. So the man went to the Ansar El Dine leader in charge of the base and said respectfully that he would like his son to leave with him, that he was needed at home. The head of the base told the father that his boy couldn't leave, that he was now permanently part of Ansar El Dine and that the family could have his*

> *body back after he had fulfilled his duty to Allah and that he should be proud of him for bringing Muslim honor to his name.*

It appears that this is not an isolated case. Two other families have relayed similar stories. People without money rely on handouts from Ansar El Dine, which in return demands that they send their sons to newly militarized *madrasas* (Islamic schools). One man described how his old mosque is now home to one such *madrasa* where all the boys are forced to dress exactly alike, are taught to fire Kalashnikovs, and indoctrinated with a harsh interpretation of Islam. In sum, Ag Ghaly's determination seems to be slowly forcing the population to submit to his rule, leaving the future of Northern Mali in the hands of extremists and the fate of the Tuaregs in question.

AQIM in Northern Mali

Al-Qaida in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM) is very active in northern Mali, despite a very tenuous relationship with the Tuaregs. Algerian nationals run AQIM, but its fighter composition is made up of Mauritanian, Moroccan, Libyan, Malian and Nigerian nationals. From 2003 until present, AQIM gradually took advantage of Mali's weak security infrastructure to supplant itself in the northern part of the country. This created an economic development shift in which tribal elements (particularly the Arab tribes and to a lesser degree, the Tuaregs) had no other alternative but to do business or join the organization, as it is flush with cash (estimates vary from 70 to 150 million Euros in total). This money originates from ransoms paid for the release of kidnapped Westerners. Over the years, the local Arab-Tuareg population slowly learned to tolerate its presence, in part due to the organization's ability to develop the local economy and provide basic services in an impoverished region that felt abandoned by its host government. Local leaders forged business relationships with AQIM that mutually benefitted the two. These relationships were cemented through marriages to local women. One such example is Mokhtar Belmokhtar, an influential AQIM leader from the group's southern zone *katiba* (battalion), who took a Tuareg wife from Timbuktu.

Although AQIM seems to impact the local population for the better with respect to quality of life, the reality is the opposite, especially over the long term. The organization exerts a negative influence on the economic development of the whole region and promotes the growth of organized crime, especially among the Tuareg and Arab people. AQIM is responsible for spreading violent extremism to countries like Nigeria, where the radical organization Boko Haram dramatically stepped up its attacks over the last year against Christians and government targets. Over the years, the government of Mali's feeble response to AQIM's attacks and kidnappings decimated the smallest positive economic developments in the poorest region of a country where 77 percent of the population lives on less than $2 per day. Violence and insecurity deterred NGO's, outside investors, and tourism in critical areas plagued by chronic under-development, drought, and extreme poverty.

Despite AQIM's gains, the Tuaregs remain traditionally moderate and are not lured by the

Salafist brand of Islam. Their identity lies with their dialects of Tamashek (a southern Berber language) and not in religion. The autumn of 2006 saw multiple clashes between Tuareg and AQIM fighters, which resulted in distrust and animosity between the two sides. Some MNLA members continue to discuss the idea of driving AQIM out of the region because it is considered an outside influence that corrupts Tuareg traditions and way of life. For this reason, Iyad Ag Ghaly took center stage and now has AQIM's undivided attention and support. His ethnic make-up as a Tuareg allows AQIM to operate while he manages the negative Tuareg rhetoric. Despite significant differences and a history of animosity towards radical Islam, Tuaregs are opportunists. The allure of money is their sole attraction to AQIM to keep them relevant in the region.

Because Tuaregs are vehemently opposed to Salafism, and to win popular support, Abdelmalek Droukdal, the emir of AQIM, told his followers to gradually impose Shari'a on the people of northern Mali and create the first Islamic State in the region.[6] Like Iyad Ag Ghaly, he does not want to lose control of the situation. Maintaining a strong grip on Northern Mali provides AQIM the resources it needs to remain effective and expand.

Conclusion: Implications for the United States

Although the international community would likely never entertain the idea of recognizing the independence of Azawad, efforts need to be made to support MNLA and Tuaregs who oppose militant Salafists in the region, including AQIM. Tuaregs are masters of their environment; they can play a key role in stabilizing the Sahel by driving violent extremist groups out—and they have a will to do so—but they cannot do without assistance.

Unfortunately, the present situation in the region is bleak. Time is not on the Tuaregs' side and Northern Mali is becoming a magnet for foreign Islamist fighters that are now helping train recruits. Further, violent extremists have an ideal environment in which to move weapons, bring in more foreign fighters and make money from drugs and other contraband, given the large quantities of Gadhafi's arsenal in their possession and control over airstrips near the towns of Gao, Timbuktu, Tessalit, and Kidal. This region is becoming a strategic nightmare for the US and its European allies.

What is the end game for Ansar El Dine and AQIM? According to regional experts, Ag Ghaly wants to be the leader of the Tuaregs, and he will use any means necessary to obtain this position. However, AQIM's long-term goals are different and more in-line with AQ's plans for North Africa. Analysis by West Point's CTC of the declassified Abbottabad letters shows that AQ's leadership desires to take advantage of the "Arab Spring" to convert jihadi activities into missionary activities, the primary objective being to regroup and come after the United States.[7]

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[6] See "Rencontre entre groupes islamistes du nord à Tombouctou," AFP, May 28, 2012, http://www.jeuneafrique.com/actu/20120528T200938Z20120528T200936Z/.

[7] See The Combating Terrorism Center at West Point, "Letters from Abbottabad: Bin Ladin Sidelined?" available at www.ctc.usma.edu.

To accomplish this goal, it has to rely on its regional affiliate, AQIM. However, the setbacks AQIM has suffered over the last few years are significant. Its ability to recruit from North African countries is down to zero. Internal ideological disagreements that started in 2006 when it swore allegiance to Al Qaeda continue to challenge the organization. Further, effective counter-terrorism measures taken by the U.S. and its allies have been very damaging. To survive and remain effective, AQIM needs money and soldiers. The Sahel has become an ideal ground for both, and the Tuaregs function as collateral. In a way, AQIM has hijacked the heart of the great Saharan trade routes, which is the indispensible lifeblood of economic growth along a vast 3,400-mile belt stretching from the Atlantic Ocean in the west to the Red Sea in the East, where goods and commodities move between Europe, the Middle East, and Sub-Saharan Africa. Left unchallenged, terrorists and drug dealers will exploit these routes for their long-term gains using the only people who know how to navigate the harsh terrain, the Tuaregs.

Recommendations

Until now, Mali's military has been ineffective and unable to control the North and drive out AQIM. The international community and Mali's neighbors should not support the current unelected regime in Bamako—one in which the leaders of the recent coup still exercise not insignificant influence—to conduct a military intervention in the North. This will be counter-productive and will alienate any local support against Ansar El Dine and AQIM. Instead, regional governments need to work together to address economic and social needs across the Sahel. This will protect livelihoods and create opportunities that will keep Sahelian communities, especially the Tuaregs, from falling victims to Salafist groups.

The best approach to counter the current crisis in Northern Mali is to create a buffer zone around the areas where the Salafists operate. This buffer zone should restrict movement by air or ground of illegal goods entering the area. On a larger scale, a systematic regional approach aimed at targeting illegal drug trafficking, tobacco and weapons should be addressed to curb terrorists' access to money. Diminishing cash flow will dry up funds to recruit and expand.

Further, an effective information operation (IO) campaign is indispensable to discredit AQIM and Ansar El Dine, and reinforce local distrust of their motives. This IO campaign should be aimed not only at Northern Mali, but the Sahel as a whole to discredit all militant Salafist groups and activities. However, direct intervention by Western states will only reinforce the extremists' *raison d'être* and exacerbate the crisis. A solution must be brokered by regional actors, and guided by regional experts.

There must also be greater support for border control and counterterrorism programs for Niger, Mauritania, Libya, Tunisia, Morocco, and Algeria. These states still lack for sustainable and effective coordination on these matters, and regional intelligence collection and sharing requires significant improvement. Further, Sahelian states do not have the ability to respond to security threats in remote areas distant from the capitals. This is the reason why Mali has been ineffective at maintaining control of the North. Although AQIM's southern zone *katiba*

(battalion) is no more than 300 strong, the vast operational area makes it very difficult to find and target individuals absent regional state collaboration.

Addressing poor governance, corruption, and poverty issues, especially among the Tuaregs and other peoples of the Sahel, is also a must. Initiatives that improve food and water security, health care, education, and employment will incentivize the population to resist militant Salafist groups and refrain from working with them. In the case of the Tuaregs in Northern Mali, better infrastructure and effective security is something that remains at the heart of their grievances. This must be addressed head-on to support their economy and preserve their way of life—a culture at odds with militant Islam.

Finally, effective Western and local intelligence sharing and regional coordination to root out Salafist activities are top priorities that must take center stage to reverse the threat that plagues this region.

Mr. SMITH. Thank you, Mr. Atallah, for your very extensive recommendations and the wisdom, I think, you bring to this committee given, especially, your contacts in the North. Thank you so much for that. I would now like to ask, Mr. Peterson, if you would proceed.

STATEMENT OF MR. DAVE PETERSON, SENIOR DIRECTOR, AFRICA, NATIONAL ENDOWMENT FOR DEMOCRACY

Mr. PETERSON. Thank you. Chairman Smith, Ranking Member Bass, and members of the subcommittee. It is a great privilege to testify before you this morning regarding the recent crisis in Mali. In the 5 minutes I have been given this morning I would like to make two essential points. The first emphasizes the political importance of Mali. The second describes the Endowment's efforts to contribute to the restoration of democracy. I congratulate the committee for demonstrating its concern about Mali by holding this hearing. Although I am not able to speak to the strategic threat of al-Qaeda in the Maghreb, and the Tuareg rebels to American interests, I would like to emphasize the grave setback the military coup and division of Mali has made to the democratic movement in West Africa, and indeed, for the entire continent.

Mali was among the very first African countries to lead the second wave of independence in 1991 when a popular uprising and the military's refusal to fire on protestors led to the downfall of the longtime dictator Moussa Traore, followed by a sovereign national conference and free and fair elections in 1992. Although one of the poorest countries in the world, Mali remained at the forefront of democratic reforms in the region, pioneering a vibrant independent broadcast media and civil society, adopting democratic innovations such as the public democratic questioning space for government officials, implementing one of the first decentralization reforms in Africa, and leading ECOWAS and the AU in promoting democratic government throughout the continent.

In 2007, aided by modest NED support, Mali hosted the world conference of the Community of Democracies. Mali seemed to disprove the contention that only rich countries can be free and its relative stability for two decades served as a touchstone for the slow, but steady democratic progress we have seen throughout West Africa. This is not to say that Malian democracy was perfect. Participation in elections has rarely been above 30 percent. Corruption has grown steadily as a problem, undermining faith in democratic government. Terrorist activity and discontent among the Tuareg have repeatedly plagued Mali. Yet, those of us working to support democratic development in Africa were caught off-guard by the sudden reversal of democracy's fortunes in Mali.

The coup was a huge blow to democracy, although the resolute opposition of ECOWAS and the international community has been encouraging. Unfortunately, the coup leaders seem to be controlling the agenda and the capacity of ECOWAS to intervene in a forceful way seems limited. Even worse, is the secession of the North. Not only has the sovereignty of Mali been abandoned, but the new rulers don't even pretend to respect democracy. According to Sanda Ould Boubama, Ansar al-Dine's spokesman in Timbuktu, I quote, "Sharia has to be applied whether the people like it or not. We will

enforce it. We are not asking anybody's opinion. We are not democrats. We are servants of Allah who demand Sharia."

In recent years, NED has supported programs by the International Republican Institute to strengthen Mali's decentralization and by the National Democratic Institute to support the Malian legislature. USAID funding has also been provided to NDI to assist the electoral process, but due to the coup, that is currently suspended. Nevertheless, based on our assessment that Mali was a reasonably stable and functioning democracy prior to the coup, until recently, that country has not been a high priority, given the vast needs across the region. Obviously, this is no longer the case.

And with the blessing of the NED's Board of Directors, it will be necessary to shift funding from programs budgeted for other parts of West Africa to address the new situation in Mali. Mr. Chairman, the Endowment does not design projects here in Washington and attempt to implement them on the ground, rather, we provide funding for proposals that are not formally solicited that we receive from indigenous NGOs. We have already received proposals and I expect staff to travel to Mali in the coming months to assess the situation and meet with potential partners.

Indeed, the outlines of our strategy for Mali are already beginning to take shape. First, we will support the restoration of democratic legitimacy in the South, and second, we will seek ways to help Malians engage with the North to promote reconciliation and ultimately, reunification and democracy. At this stage it is difficult to estimate our budget for Mali, but I would hope it would amount to at least several hundred thousand dollars by next year.

The transitional government in Mali has agreed to hold elections within a year and my colleagues at NDI who had been working on the elections before the coup suggests that it would be better for these elections to happen within the next 6 months rather than at the end of that time frame. Past elections have been troubled by boycotts, fraud, and poor management. And NED will seek to support domestic election observation efforts and other transparency initiatives. Disaffection with politicians and corruption has contributed to low voter turnout and NED will also support projects that provide voter education, advocate accountability, and promote popular participation.

Malians were shocked and confused by the sudden disappearance of their democracy and NED will seek to support efforts to rebuild their understanding and commitment to democratic values. Public opinion polling and focus groups can probe what happened to Malian citizens' commitment to democracy, and could serve as a basis for designing such civic education programs. Mali has had a vibrant women's movement. NED will particularly target programs mobilizing women as voters and political leaders. Mali has had nearly 200 radio stations, eight daily newspapers, and 40 periodicals, but recent attacks against the press are troubling. NED will seek to address this problem.

Human rights abuses have also reportedly escalated and NED will consider support to Mali's well-established human rights movement for human rights monitoring, education, and advocacy. Finally, given the apparent problems with the Malian military, notwithstanding the assistance it has received from the U.S. military,

NED will consider innovative proposals from civil society organizations assisting with security sector reform.

In the northern part of the country, as has been noted, the new rulers have little regard for democracy. Yet the Tuareg, who have led the rebellion, represent an ethnic minority in the North, and even among the Tuareg, the separatist's agenda has a questionable level of support, and the radical Islamic agenda of Ansar al-Dine and AQIM, even less. Few of the rebels seem to have experience with governance and are more comfortable with their nomadic traditions than the settled culture of towns and villages. Although the presence of civil society and independent media is thinner in the North than in the South, NED will seek to support those organizations and radio stations that do exist in the North on a range of initiatives.

Our experience in Somalia, for example, has found considerable traction supporting radio broadcasts promoting democratic values. Projects strengthening the capacity of traditional leaders and other community authorities, vis-à-vis extremists, have also had some success. Hundreds of thousands of Malians are fleeing the North due to drought, locusts, and the repression and bizarre edicts of the rebels. Projects helping these internally displaced persons can protect their rights in the vulnerable conditions in which they now find themselves, enable them to participate in democratic processes such as elections, as well as lay the foundations for their eventual return home.

Mr. Chairman, the Malian crisis may be more effectively resolved through the battle for hearts and minds than through military confrontation. NED is not so presumptuous as to pretend that our modest resources alone can fix what ails the country. We trust that other international donors will also become more involved. The crisis in Mali is unlikely to be resolved easily, it may take many years, but as I hope I have convinced you this morning, much can be done to address the many challenges faced by its people.

There is already much in recent Malian history and institutions that can provide the basis for democratic renewal. Thank you and I would be pleased to answer your questions.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Peterson follows:]

"The Tuareg Revolt and the Mali Coup"

Statement of Dave Peterson

Senior Director, Africa Program, National Endowment for Democracy

Before the House Subcommittee on Africa, Global Health, and Human Rights of the

House Committee on Foreign Affairs

June 29, 2012

Chairman Smith, Ranking Member Bass, and members of the Subcommittee:

It is a great privilege to testify before you this morning regarding the recent crisis in Mali. In the five minutes I have been given this morning, I would like to make two essential points. The first emphasizes the political importance of Mali. The second describes the Endowment's effort to contribute to the restoration of democracy.

I congratulate the committee for demonstrating its concern about Mali by holding this hearing. Although I am not able to speak to the strategic threat of Al Qaeda in the Maghreb and the Tuareg rebels to American interests, I would like to emphasize the grave setback the military coup and division of Mali has made to the democratic movement in West Africa, and indeed for the entire continent. Mali was among the very first African countries to lead the second wave of independence in 1991 when a popular uprising and the military's refusal to fire on protesters led to the downfall of the longtime dictator, Moussa Traore, followed by a sovereign national conference and free and fair elections in 1992.

Although one of the poorest countries in the world, Mali remained at the forefront of democratic reforms in the region, pioneering a vibrant independent broadcast media and civil society, adopting democratic innovations such as the public "Democratic Questioning Space" for elected officials, implementing one of the first decentralization reforms in Africa, and leading ECOWAS and the AU in promoting democratic government throughout the continent. In 2007, aided by modest NED support, Mali hosted the world conference of the Community of Democracies. Mali seemed to disprove the contention that only rich countries can be free, and its relative stability for two decades served as a touchstone for the slow but steady democratic progress we have seen throughout West Africa.

This is not to say that Malian democracy was perfect. Participation in elections has rarely been above 30 percent. Corruption has grown steadily as a problem, undermining faith in democratic government. Terrorist activity and discontent among the Tuareg have repeatedly plagued Mali. Yet, those of us working to support democratic development in Africa were caught off-guard by the sudden reversal of democracy's fortunes in Mali. The coup was a huge blow to democracy, although the resolute opposition of ECOWAS and the international community has been encouraging.

Unfortunately, the coup leaders seem to be controlling the agenda, and the capacity of ECOWAS to intervene in a forceful way seems limited. Even worse is the secession of the north. Not only has the sovereignty of Mali been abandoned, but the new rulers don't even pretend to respect democracy. According to Sanda Ould Boumama, Ansar Dine's spokesman in Timbuktu, "Sharia has to be applied whether the people like it or not, we will enforce it. We are not asking anybody's opinion. We are not democrats. We are servants of Allah, who demands Sharia."

In recent years NED has supported programs by the International Republican Institute to strengthen Mali's decentralization and by the National Democratic Institute to support the Malian legislature. USAID funding for NDI to assist the electoral process has been suspended.

From 2005-2010[1], NDI worked with Malian political parties and legislative caucuses to enhance the capacity of the legislature to reform policy targeting the needs of citizens and enabling it to perform its oversight role. NDI regarded Mali as an important test-case for West Africa to demonstrate that the democratic process could be used to ensure that a country's natural wealth delivers benefits for its citizens. NDI's current USAID-funded project to support transparent and credible elections in 2012 was placed on hold as the U.S. government revised its assistance programs in Mali[2]. IRI focused its NED-funded activities in Mali from 2005 to 2009 on decentralization efforts by building local governance capacity and strengthening political parties in rural communes. NED also supported the Center for the Research and Study of Democracy and Economic and Social Development (CERDES) in 1992, and the *Comité d'Action pour les Droits de l'Enfant et de la Femme* (*CADEF*), strengthening women's political participation, from 1993 to 2000. Finally, NED supported the Communities of Democracy meeting in Bamako in 2007.

Nevertheless, based on our assessment that Mali was a reasonably stable and functioning democracy, until recently the country has not been a high priority given the vast needs across the region. Obviously, this is no longer the case, and with the blessing of the NED's Board of Directors, it will be necessary to shift funding from programs budgeted for other parts of West Africa to address Mali's new situation. .

Mr. Chairman, the Endowment does not design projects here in Washington and attempt to implement them on the ground. Rather, we provide funding for proposals that are not formally solicited that we receive from indigenous NGOs. We are already receiving proposals, and I expect staff to travel to Mali in the coming months to assess the situation and meet with potential partners. Indeed, the outlines of our strategy for Mali are already beginning to take shape: first, we will support the restoration of democratic legitimacy in the south, and second, we will seek ways to help Malians engage with the north to promote reconciliation and ultimately reunification and democracy. At this stage it is difficult to estimate our budget for Mali, but I hope it would amount to at least several hundred thousand dollars by next year.

The transitional government in Mali has agreed to hold elections within a year, and my colleagues at NDI who had been working on the elections before the coup suggest that it would be better for these to

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[1] NDI has had a field presence in Mali since 2002, and has provided technical assistance in Mali since 1996
[2] http://www.ndi.org/mali

happen within the next six months rather than at the end of that timeframe. Past elections have been troubled by boycotts, fraud, and poor management, and NED will seek to support domestic election observation efforts and other transparency initiatives. Disaffection with politicians and corruption has contributed to low voter turnout, and NED will also support projects that provide voter education, advocate accountability and promote popular participation. Malians were shocked and confused by the sudden disappearance of their democracy, and NED will seek to support efforts to rebuild their understanding and commitment to democratic values. Public opinion polling and focus groups that can probe what happened to Malian citizens' commitment to democracy could serve as a basis for designing such civic education programs. Mali has had a vibrant women's movement; NED will particularly target programs mobilizing women as voters and political leaders. Mali has had nearly 200 radio stations, 8 daily newspapers and 40 periodicals, but recent attacks against the press are troubling; NED will seek to address this problem. Human rights abuses have also reportedly escalated, and NED will consider support to Mali's well-established human rights movement for human rights monitoring, education and advocacy. Finally, given the apparent problems with the Malian military, notwithstanding the assistance it has received from the US military, NED will consider innovative proposals from civil society organizations assisting with security sector reform.

In the northern part of the country, as has been noted, the new rulers have little regard for democracy. Yet the Tuareg, who have led the rebellion, represent an ethnic minority in the north; and even among the Tuareg, the separatist agenda has a questionable level of support and the radical Islamic agenda of Ansar al Dine and AQIM even less. Few of the rebels seem to have any experience with governance and are more comfortable with their nomadic traditions than the settled culture of towns and villages. Although the presence of civil society and independent media is thinner in the north than the south, NED will seek to support those organizations and radio stations that do exist in the north on a range of initiatives. Our experience in Somalia, for example, has found considerable traction supporting radio broadcasts promoting democratic values. Projects strengthening the capacity of traditional leaders and other community authorities vis-a-vis extremists such as Al Shabab in Somalia have also had some success.

Hundreds of thousands of Malians are fleeing the north due to drought, locusts, and the repression and bizarre edicts of the rebels. Projects helping these internally displaced persons can protect their rights in the vulnerable conditions in which they now find themselves, enable them to participate in democratic processes such as elections, as well as lay the foundations for their eventual return home.

Mr. Chairman, the Malian crisis may be more effectively resolved through a battle for hearts and minds than through military confrontation. NED is not so presumptuous as to pretend that our modest resources alone can fix what ails the country. We trust that other international donors will also become more involved. The crisis in Mali is unlikely to be resolved easily; it may take many years. But as I hope I have convinced you this morning, much can be done to address the many challenges faced by its people. There is already much in recent Malian history and institutions that can provide the basis for democratic renewal.

Thank you, and I would be pleased to answer your questions.

Mr. SMITH. Mr. Peterson, thank you very much for your testimony and thank you for the great work that NED does throughout Africa and around the world. Let me just ask you, we have about 14 minutes left and then there is 1 hour and 20 minutes worth of votes, so I thought we would propose questions, and as best you can, answer rapid fire, from the three of us. Very quickly, to Mr. Atallah, you mentioned that Tuaregs have seen flirtation with militant Islam as temporary, when does this friendship, this alliance, break apart? Does it become armed?

You heard the earlier question that I had asked about the ECOWAS peacekeeping, is 3000 enough? How quickly do they need to be deployed to be efficacious in mitigating all this horrible bloodshed and danger? Rules of engagement, could you want to touch on that one as well? The issue of the Tuaregs who have felt disenfranchised and discriminated for so long, have we blown it? Has the West, the United States and others, not taken their concerns adequately into consideration or were we doing much on that? And finally, I have lots of questions, but we are running out of time. Ms. Bass, if you could offer your questions.

Ms. BASS. Sure. My questions center on AFRICOM and really are directed to the first two speakers, because I kind of heard, maybe something different, and I am not really sure, because you were referring to difficulties within AFRICOM. You mentioned that AFRICOM, maybe, should be centered here as opposed to Stuttgart. You talked about, you know, the role of the U.S. in terms of beefing up militaries, and maybe that isn't the best way to go. Then on the other hand, you described the serious security concerns. And so I am just wondering, kind of, from both of you, if you could address AFRICOM, where you feel it could be better; what could it do differently?

Mr. ATALLAH. Mr. Chairman, Congressman Bass, thank you for your questions. I will try to address them as quickly as possible just from my experience. First of all, let me start off with the ECOWAS question. I completely agree with Ambassador Carson. We need to take care of the South first before we look at the—I mean, the North is obviously an incredibly important question, but the South needs to get its act together in order to effectively, you know, answer the problems in the North.

Speaking specifically of the Tuareg, they are a secular people. I have spent enough time with them to know. As an example, back in 2002, there were militant Islamists coming in from Pakistan that were trying to recruit from within the ranks of the Tuaregs, primarily focused on the youth. The Tuareg leaders that were with me said, "This will never happen in our culture. We are a tolerant people. We accept everybody. If they are going to take the backbone of our people, our youth, then we are going to fight them."

The case still stands today, although you have an anomaly right now, a guy named Ag Ghaly, who is on the Salafist side of the house, he is the only one projecting an extremist face within the Tuareg. Not a lot of Tuaregs support that. As a matter of fact, recent days are showing a major rift between them. So have we blown it? I think we could do a lot more for them. Typical grievances that Ambassador Carson covered are spot on. If you talk to Tuareg in the North, they say the fact that paved roads end up

Mopti, in the center part of the country, embodies how we are left alone and nobody really cares. They rely on tourism. That is part of their culture.

And so now it has all been hijacked by the extremists and, you know, they have never had anything. They don't have, you know, good health care, no infrastructure, all the things that Ambassador Carson addressed. So in terms of how do we address the North and what can AFRICOM do, I think we need to step up the regional involvement. Better intel sharing. It has been very weak; very, very weak. States don't trust states. Algeria doesn't trust its neighbors and vice versa. We have to crack the code on that because, actionable intelligence to go after these individuals is key.

AQIM and al-Qaeda want to take advantage of what is going on politically in North Africa and the region. I don't want to eat up all the time, but one more point is, if you look at the letters that came out of the Bin Laden compound, 17 of them were already translated by CTC and West Point. Bin Laden was very focused in working with AQIM as to hijack the Arab Spring and start making missionaries. Their sole goal, essentially, is to regroup, reinforce, make enough money, bring enough recruits, and come back after the United States and its allies. Something we have to pay attention to. AFRICOM can play a big role.

We need to tighten that noose around where the radicals are working and take away, primarily, their cashflow, which comes through drugs, extortions, kidnappings, and whatnot. And so, effectively, not only intelligence, but having all state actors work together, and I will leave it at that.

Mr. AKUETTEH. Thank you very much. To begin with AFRICOM, it is true that the problems in Mali just deteriorated very fast since January, but some of us who have been admiring and looking at Mali were concerned that before this time, for the past few years, a lot of U.S. relations and activities with the Amadou Toumani Toure government was largely military assistance and military exercises. Nobody's prescient, but if you look at that government's record, and as has been said, the problem with the Tuaregs has been there for a long time. There were eruptions even before independence.

So some of us thought that U.S. relations with Mali should have emphasized democracy, should have emphasized ways to deal with the Tuareg problem. I would call that democracy reconciliation and development. Now, I am not unmindful of the terrorism problems in Africa. I think terrorists have caused havoc in Africa from the Embassy bombings, Boko Haram, and others, but the idea is that, given the complexity of African countries, perhaps emphasizing democracy, and development, and reconciliation would quiet down problems in the area and then you isolate extremists who have to be dealt with.

So frankly, some of us were concerned that, for the past few years, the Amadou Toumani Toure government was incentivized to ignore some of the internal problems and focus on military engagement against the AQIM and the other groups in the North. That has been the concern.

Mr. SMITH. Mr. Akuetteh, in your testimony you suggested that the U.S. military training is not providing respect for democratic

institutions, could you provide the committee the information on that and does that also apply to human rights training and anti-human trafficking training? Is the U.S. military training sufficiently inculcating that attitude that human rights matter; respect for democratic institutions? I would love to get the evidence of that if you could provide that for us.

Mr. AKUETTEH. I would be glad to provide what I can come up with. My concern has been that African soldiers, number one, if I had anything to do with who gets trained, we would prioritize soldiers in democracies, rather than soldiers who are serving unelected strongmen, because that causes a problem. That is my first concern. And then, of course, what exactly are they being trained about? They should be trained to respect their democratically-elected leaders.

If I might make a quick comment on how quickly the problem in Bamako gets resolved versus the problem in the North. I did hear and listen carefully to what Ambassador Carson said, and what Mr. Atallah has said, but part of my worry is the security concern that, by the time the problem in the South, if we take too much time, the problem in the North would have become much bigger. And I do think, therefore, that ECOWAS needs the support to get up to speed to make sure that things don't deteriorate quickly in the North before the South gets its act together.

Mr. SMITH. Okay. We do have, again, as I said to our outstanding panel, a number of written questions we would like to convey to you and if you could get back to us as quickly as possible.

And thank you for your extraordinary insights. It provides this committee a very, very useful way forward. Thank you so very much. I am sorry that we do have to break. There is 1 hour and 20 minutes worth of votes on the floor. The hearing is adjourned.

[Whereupon, at 12:05 p.m., the subcommittee was adjourned.]

APPENDIX

Material Submitted for the Hearing Record

SUBCOMMITTEE HEARING NOTICE
COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN AFFAIRS
U.S. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20515-0128

SUBCOMMITTEE ON AFRICA, GLOBAL HEALTH, AND HUMAN RIGHTS
Christopher H. Smith (R-NJ), Chairman

June 26, 2012

You are respectfully requested to attend an OPEN hearing of the Subcommittee on Africa, Global Health, and Human Rights, to be held in Room 2172 of the Rayburn House Office Building **(and available live via the Committee website at http://www.hcfa.house.gov)**:

DATE: Friday, June 29, 2012

TIME: 10:00 a.m.

SUBJECT: The Tuareg Revolt and the Mali Coup

WITNESSES:

Panel I
The Honorable Johnnie Carson
Assistant Secretary of State
Bureau of African Affairs
U.S. Department of State

The Honorable Earl Gast
Assistant Administrator
Bureau for Africa
U.S. Agency for International Development

Panel II
Mr. Nii Akuetteh
Independent Africa analyst
(Former Georgetown University Professor of African Affairs)

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

Mr. Dave Peterson
Senior Director, Africa
National Endowment for Democracy

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, and Human Rights* HEARING

Day *Friday* **Date** *June 29, 2012* **Room** *2172 Rayburn*

Starting Time *10:00 a.m.* **Ending Time** *12:05 p.m.*

Recesses [*1*] (10:23 to 10:46) (____ 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 Tuareg Revolt and the Mali Coup

SUBCOMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT:

Rep. Chris Smith, Rep. Karen Bass, Rep. Robert Turner

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

Rep. Shelia Jackson Lee*

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.)*

Prepared statement from Dr. Michel Gabaudan

TIME SCHEDULED TO RECONVENE _____
or
TIME ADJOURNED *12:05 p.m.*

Subcommittee Staff Director

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, AND HUMAN RIGHTS

"The Tuareg Revolt and the Mali Coup"

Subcommittee on Africa, Global Health, and Human Rights
Committee on Foreign Affairs
U.S. House of Representatives

Written Statement by
Michel Gabaudan, MD
President
Refugees International

June 29, 2012
2172 Rayburn House Office Building

The severe humanitarian crises in the Horn of Africa and Syria have claimed much of the world's attention in recent months. Nevertheless, the Sahel region is suffering through its third food crisis in seven years, and the conflict and political instability in Mali are only exacerbating a serious and deepening humanitarian emergency that has received scant attention and funding.

While I understand that the focus of this hearing is the Tuareg revolt and the Mali coup d'état, I believe it is imperative that Members of the committee also appreciate the human dimension of the events unfolding in West Africa. A mission by our experts to Niger and Burkina Faso last month affirmed that Congress must take steps to address the immediate human suffering of the Malian refugees and support the host communities that are receiving and caring for the displaced. Beyond the immediate humanitarian concerns, I urge the Committee to view the current political crisis in Mali within the context of the broader challenges the countries of the Sahel are facing including chronic underdevelopment and food insecurity, changing climactic conditions, and dramatic population growth. More and more often, we are relying on humanitarian funding as a band aid to address deeper development gaps. Going forward, the United States – in cooperation with Europe and other major donors – must develop a comprehensive, long-term assistance strategy for the Sahel that addresses the manifold threats of food insecurity, climate change, and political instability present to the region.

Submitting this statement to the record is yet another demonstration of the continued attention Chairman Chris Smith and Ranking Member Karen Bass give to the world's most urgent humanitarian emergencies.

Background

In the Sahel, poverty and malnutrition are chronic. Poor rainfall, low agricultural output, and high food prices have left an estimated 18 million people without enough food and placed more than a million children at risk of dying from severe acute malnutrition. The current crisis falls on the heels of droughts in 2005 and 2010, rendering households even more vulnerable.

Compounding this crisis, in January 2012 armed conflict broke out in Mali when Tuareg separatists and an Islamic militant group with links to Al Qaeda took control of large areas of northern Mali. Since then, the situation in Mali has deteriorated. The rebel groups are seeking to consolidate their control of the north, leaving most of that part of the country inaccessible to aid agencies. Meanwhile, a coup in the capital Bamako has left a power-vacuum. More than 325,000 Malians have been displaced, 180,000 of whom have sought refuge in neighboring countries. Initially, the displaced populations fled to escape violence and conflict. But as the rebellion continues to restrict trade and severely limit humanitarian access within Mali, thousands more have been forced to flee in search of food.

A Poorly Resourced Response in a Challenging Environment

The Malian refugees have fled to remote areas near the border where food and water are extremely scarce, and banditry and kidnappings present security risks. Setting up camps and delivering life-saving assistance present significant operational challenges. The refugees – many of whom are pastoralists – are spread out over wide distances. Road access is limited and will grow worse when the rainy season begins in late June and early July. Because the UN Refugee Agency (UNHCR) had virtually no presence in Niger and Burkina Faso prior to the Mali crisis, it has had to scale up operations quickly.

UN agencies and partner organizations are prioritizing the delivery of life-saving services, such as food, water, health, and shelter. But even those basic services are stretched thin. For example, in the Mangaize refugee camp in Niger, now home to several thousand refugees, there are only 50 tents available. These are reserved for the most vulnerable. The remainder of the camp population is making do with sticks and plastic sheeting which are unlikely to withstand the upcoming rainy season. Many refugees arrive malnourished. There is concern that without sufficient food, their condition will deteriorate. In the Abala camp in Niger, numerous refugees expressed concern about the quality and quantity of food distributions, highlighting the inadequate availability of nutrient-rich food for their children. The lack of potable water in these

desert areas is a constant challenge. Aid agencies truck water to many of the sites and have begun to drill wells to provide water to the refugees and their animals.

UNHCR's Revised Appeal (released in late May) for $153.7 million is only 13 per cent funded. The weak donor response is reason for concern. Without additional financial resources, refugees are at risk of not receiving even basic assistance. Donors should provide host governments with sufficient support as they respond not only to the needs of refugees, but of their own populations as well. An adequate governmental response is essential to reduce security concerns and the potential spillover of violence from Mali.

At present, the U.S. State Department's Bureau of Population, Refugees, and Migration (PRM) has no dedicated staff based in the region. This hampers the ability of the U.S. to effectively monitor this complex crisis and to coordinate with UN agencies, host governments, and USAID (which is responding to the food crisis). I urge an immediate appointment of a refugee coordinator to the region.

Of equal concern is the need to address broader protection needs in the camps and to provide a safe and secure environment, especially for women and children who comprise the majority of refugees. It is troubling that the vast majority of children in the camps do not receive any educational support, even though many have been in camps since January. This includes secondary school-level children aged 12 to 18, who are at risk of recruitment by armed groups. It is unlikely that these children will return to Mali any time soon. To ignore their educational needs not only limits their future opportunities, but also threatens their immediate welfare and well-being.

There are broader protection needs that also must be adequately addressed, including maintaining a peaceful coexistence both within the camps and between refugees and host communities. At present, the environment in the camps is generally peaceful. However, there are intergroup dynamics among some of the refugees, who do not feel comfortable living in close proximity to one another. UNHCR and its partner organizations are addressing these sensitivities by negotiating the spacing of tents and the placement of water points.

However, additional protection staff is needed to ensure a safe and peaceful environment. This is particularly true in Burkina Faso, where, at the time of RI's visit, UNHCR did not have a Senior Protection Officer assigned to the field base. Some protection assistants are supporting the Field Coordinator to manage protection issues; but the staff is stretched beyond its capacity to address the needs of the tens of thousands of refugees spread out over hundreds of miles.

Increasing Support for Host Communities

The areas of Niger and Burkina Faso where Malians have taken refuge are among the hardest hit by the current food and nutrition crisis. The arrival of tens of thousands of refugees into these

areas has added pressure on regions where food, water, and vegetation are already extremely scarce – especially now, during the leanest months of the year. The significant numbers of livestock that refugees brought with them are placing additional demands on limited supplies of water, animal fodder, and pasture land. The impact of the refugees is also being felt on local markets, where food prices (which were already alarmingly high) have reportedly increased. Deforestation and other environmental impacts are also a serious concern. Women and children in the Abala refugee camp in Niger now spend up to three hours per day in search of firewood. A proposed project to deliver efficient cook stoves and fuel to the camp – if implemented – should mitigate the problem somewhat, although not entirely.

Several of the agencies assisting refugees were already operational in these areas in response to the food and nutrition crisis, and are aware that the needs of struggling local populations must be met. For example, several agencies have adopted a policy to increase local public services available to both refugees and host communities by increasing staff at local health clinics, rather than building separate health clinics for refugees only. In several host communities, local schools have integrated a limited number of refugee children. Additional schools will likely be asked to accept refugee children.

These and other efforts aimed at encouraging local integration and peaceful coexistence are strongly encouraged. But without sufficient financial resources from donors, it will be impossible to ensure that assistance for refugees does not come at the expense of vulnerable host communities. For example, in one of the regions of Niger hardest hit by the food crisis, there are now over 9,000 refugees living next to a town (Abala) with a local population of 10,000. Initially, the World Food Programme made blanket food deliveries to both refugees and host populations. However, dwindling resources has forced the agency to limit food distributions to only the most vulnerable local households. There are concerns that these distributions might be cut off all together. If this occurs, tensions will rise.

A central component of the refugee response strategy must be to ensure that host communities' needs are met, by providing vulnerable, local households with equal access to water points, food distributions, and cash programs. In addition, UNHCR must minimize environmental impacts on refugee receiving areas. I strongly support UNHCR's plan to hire an environmental officer in Niger and encourage the hiring of additional environmental staff in Burkina Faso and Mauritania. In addition, programs to provide efficient cook stoves and fuel should be extended to all refugee camps in the region. UNHCR and other agencies must work closely to ensure that local public services that extend services to refugees (such as health clinics and schools) are provided with sufficient financial and human resources to do so. Finally, UNHCR and other agencies must work to ensure a continued peaceful coexistence through the implementation of conflict mitigation/resolution measures. They must also provide mechanisms by which local communities may participate in decisions regarding refugees that may affect them.

Developing a Long-term Strategy for the Sahel

The crisis in Mali cannot be viewed in isolation, but must be seen in the context of the broader challenges facing the countries of the Sahel. The eruption of violence in Mali has exacerbated stress and placed additional burdens not only on populations that were extremely vulnerable to begin with, but also on national governments struggling to tackle a litany of other challenges.

Failure to address the underlying, systemic problems facing the Sahel – including chronic food insecurity and malnutrition, poverty, environmental degradation, population growth, and political turmoil – will likely result in a recurring humanitarian crises and regional insecurity. Humanitarian funding is important, of course, in terms of both early interventions and providing life-saving assistance. During the most recent food crisis, smart, well-timed, and well-targeted interventions by both national governments and aid agencies proved effective in mitigating the situation (e.g., cash-for-work programs followed by cash distribution during the planting season, and blanket and supplementary feeding programs). Yet, short-term humanitarian assistance cannot address deeper development gaps.

The recurrence of humanitarian emergencies in the Sahel (and elsewhere) have led many to call for increased funding to help vulnerable populations increase their "resilience" – in other words, their ability to withstand and recover from recurrent droughts, food shortages, high prices, and other "shocks." With climate change likely to increase the frequency and force of droughts, desertification, floods, and other climate-related events in the Sahel, many donors and NGOs see increased resiliency as an important solution.

To be effective, resiliency programs must be implemented at a scale and within timeframes sufficient to overcome the countervailing pressures of climate change, environmental degradation, and population growth. However, these programs in the Sahel are implemented by USAID's Office of Foreign Disaster Assistance (OFDA), which is responsible for implementing disaster risk reduction programs. The short time frame of OFDA programming is not suitable for the types of multi-year programs that are necessary to make resilience a reality.

Programs to increase agricultural output are essential to address food insecurity, yet they must be coupled with more comprehensive strategies aimed at supporting other livelihoods including pastoralism, and access to basic services like education, healthcare, child nutrition, and family planning. This will require more direct budgetary support to national governments.

The international community has long ignored the chronic issues facing the Sahel region. One donor government official recently noted, "[we] accept chronic levels of food insecurity in the Sahel because that is what is 'normal.' But what level of suffering can we honestly consider normal?" The U.S. must not accept the current level of suffering. Ending the cycle of

humanitarian crisis and instability in the Sahel will require addressing food insecurity and climate change in a much more systemic and sustainable fashion.

Questions for the Record Submitted to
Assistant Secretary Johnnie Carson by
Representative Sheila Jackson-Lee (#1)
Subcommittee on Africa, Global Health and Human Rights House
Committee on Foreign Affairs
June 29, 2012

Question:

Could you provide polling data that shows the extent to which the United States is viewed favorably?

Answer:

As I indicated during my testimony, public polling of Africans attests to the generally positive view in which the United States is held in Sub-Saharan Africa. Below is the polling data which I referenced. The Office of Opinion Research in the State Department's Bureau of Intelligence and Research (INR) compiled the data. According to INR, Africans hold these favorable attitudes because of the foreign assistance and aid we provide and/or because they think the United States exemplifies democracy and development.

Opinion of the United States

Country	Favorable	Unfavorable	Month/Year
Angola	69	20	10/10
Burkina Faso	76	23	11/11
Cameroon	76	20	1/11
Congo (DRC)	54	41	3/11
Ghana	70	29	5/11
Ivory Coast	70	29	7/11
Kenya	79	15	4/12
Liberia	74	18	9/11
Mali	75	18	11/11
Mozambique	82	12	10/10
Mauritania	40	48	10/11
Niger	55	23	11/11
Nigeria	73	23	2/12
Senegal	82	8	4/12
South Africa	52	16	4/11
Tanzania	69	26	5/11
Uganda	60	15	6/12

Questions for the Record Submitted to
Assistant Secretary Johnnie Carson by
Chairman Chris Smith (#2)
Subcommittee on Africa, Global Health and Human Rights
House Committee on Foreign Affairs
June 29, 2012

Question:

You stated at the hearing that you didn't think the United States should support a mission to retake northern Mali unless it was well planned. To what extent is the United States prepared to work with ECOWAS in conducting such planning to create a viable operation? Do you consider it to be in the interest of the United States to get involved in the planning stages of this mission?

Answer:

There are two distinct challenges emanating from the north of Mali. The first involves the long-standing social, economic, and political grievances of some Malian citizens in the north, to include some Tuaregs and the other ethnic groups in the region. These are political problems that require a negotiated settlement between citizens in the north and the government in Bamako. The coup in Mali has set all of this back politically and now Mali's first priority must be a return to democracy.

The second challenge is the growing presence of foreign extremists in the north of Mali, a challenge that became more serious with the coup in Bamako which diverted Bamako's attention from the north and led to the near total collapse of the Malian military there. That power vacuum has allowed these groups to forge relations with Malian rebels and establish control of the three key cities in the North. Combating the presence of extremists will most likely require a security response, one that in the short term will necessarily involve regional, and possibly international, support. That support must be undertaken in concert with the Malian government.

The United States is prepared to work closely with the government of Mali, ECOWAS, the African Union (AU), and the United Nations (UN) to plan a response to combat the Islamist threat in the north of the country. It is in our interest to ensure that any response appropriately meets the challenges and is well-planned. In addition to advising on the planning of any potential action, we are continuing our efforts to build security sector capacity and enhance border security in Mali's neighboring countries, including Mauritania, Niger, and Algeria.

Questions for the Record Submitted to
Assistant Secretary Johnnie Carson by
Chairman Chris Smith (#3)
Subcommittee on Africa, Global Health and Human Rights
House Committee on Foreign Affairs
June 29, 2012

Question:

The United States is often blamed for training African militaries when they are later involved in coups as in Mali or invasions as in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. Nii Akuetteh believes the United States should review our policies on such training. Do you believe there are serious flaws in how we select or train African militaries? What would you recommend be done differently?

Answer:

Improving security sector governance in Africa is critical if we are to achieve our objective of a freer, safer, and more prosperous Africa. Professional, capable military and police forces that respect human rights and democratic control of security forces are needed to restore order in post-conflict situations and safeguard the fragile political and economic institutions that have been built on many parts of the continent.

Many of our African partners are struggling from the legacies of civil strife, dysfunctional civil-military relations, corruption, ethnic imbalances, and predatory institutional cultures. Given this reality, we should not expect our security sector reform efforts to produce immediate dividends. Security sector reform often is a slow and painstaking process that will require many years of sustained commitment and resources in order to alter the dynamics within our partner nation security forces permanently.

This does not mean that we cannot improve how we implement our programs, or how we select participants for the programs. We are constantly engaging in lessons-learned exercises, and adjusting our programs to address deficiencies and shortcomings when identified. For instance, one lesson learned has been the need to better balance our security sector reform efforts between African militaries and other important elements of the security sector, particularly law enforcement and civilian oversight structures. Another important lesson learned is the paramount importance of securing host nation buy-in and political commitment for any security sector reform initiatives. It is clear that, without a strong commitment from the host country to build-upon, sustain, and utilize the training and assistance provided by the United States, we will not be successful in securing our objectives.

Selecting individual participants for training and assistance programs is a collaborative process between our embassies and the host nation governments. As a matter of law, we perform human rights vetting on each participant in these programs. It is impossible to anticipate every case where a recipient of U.S. assistance may later engage in actions inimical to United States interests or values, but this system of vetting minimizes this risk while allowing us to engage with those partners who are best placed to apply what they have learned toward our mutual interests. Notwithstanding these concerns, it is in the interest of the United States to promote the values we hold important, such as respect for civilian control of the military and human rights and consider our security assistance a valuable tool for doing so.

Questions for the Record Submitted to
Assistant Secretary Johnnie Carson by
Chairman Chris Smith (#4)
Subcommittee on Africa, Global Health and Human Rights
House Committee on Foreign Affairs
June 29, 2012

Question:

Failure to devote proper attention to Malian military forces fighting a Tuareg revolt in the North played a major role in the ouster of President Touré earlier this year. Colonel Atallah says that Touré some time ago came to the conclusion that a military solution to the Tuareg revolt was unlikely, but why was a former military leader so blind to the impact on his regime of government neglect of the military in this latest engagement?

Answer:

The military junta deposed President Toure less than two months prior to presidential elections which would have selected a new president. The coup leader stated publicly that the reason for the coup was President Toure's failure to provide adequate support for the military forces fighting in the north. The coup only worsened the situation. The junta's use of force to depose a democratically elected leader is unjustifiable.

The Malian military has faced significant challenges and experienced significant losses in carrying out its constitutional responsibilities to protect the citizens of Mali and its territory. It is unfortunate that the actions of a few military officers in disregarding their commitment to civilian rule of the military launched a coup d'etat that led to a security vacuum in the north and the termination of U.S. security assistance to Mali.

Answers by Mr. Nii Akuetteh, Independent Policy Analyst, Responding to Subsequent Written Questions on Mali

Submitted by Subcommittee on Africa, Global Health, and Human Rights House Committee on Foreign Affairs,

As Follow-up of June 29 Hearing Entitled "The Tuareg Revolt and the Mali Coup"

SATURDAY, September 15, 2012; Washington DC

Dear Mr. Chairman, Ranking Member, and Committee Members:

I am pleased to provide below written answers to your follow-up questions in the wake of the June 29, 2012 Hearings on Mali's still boiling multiple crises.

Before spelling out my answers, I want to once more thank you for focusing the moral and institutional authority of the US Congress on a grave African challenge which admittedly could hurt US interests. I also appreciate the honor of soliciting and considering my paltry analyses. I hope you find them useful.

Question cluster 1: *"Could you provide information on U.S. military training not providing respect for democratic institutions? Are the U.S. military trainers sufficiently inculcating the attitudes that support human rights and oppose human trafficking? (Requested by Mr. Smith; pgs. 67-68)"*

Response to Question 1: Following the Hearing, Congressional staff kindly shared a transcript for copy-editing. On pages 67 and 68, that draft transcript captures the Chairman's precise request/question,

> *"Mr. Akuetteh, in your testimony you suggested that the US military training is not providing respect for democratic institutions, could you provide the committee the information on that and does that also apply to human-rights training and anti-human trafficking training? Is the US military trainers sufficiently inculcating that attitude that human rights matter; respect for democratic institutions? I would love to get evidence for that if you could provide that for us."*

A confession, an admission, is appropriate here: I have forever obsessed and hoped that American trainers would inculcate into trainee African soldiers the same disciplined respect for democratic civilian leadership that is so evident across the US military and which forms an indispensable essence of America's greatest asset, democracy.

Unquestionably this strong desire suffuses all my thinking about the US role--past, present and future--in Mali's current crises.

Still, within my testimony submitted into the Congressional record, the following paragraphs are what I did write,

> The State Department exhibited a strange initial reaction to Captain Amadou Sanogo's March 22 coup in Bamako. After an inter-agency meeting, the Department's spokesperson spent days refusing to condemn it as a coup and claiming it could not be determined how much of the $140 million in aid could be cut as the law required. Most alarming, she more or less justified the coup with this March 23 comment, ***". . . this situation arose as a result of a number of grievances that the military had . . . So clearly, there's going to have to be some mediation between the government and the military. Its grievances are going to have to be addressed . . ."***
>
> Mr. Chairman, it must be observed that this was justifying the treasonous action by a soldier that the U.S. trained repeatedly. And that the former School of the Americas caused many Third World observers to wonder whether Washington deliberately trained foreign soldiers to overthrow their governments and abuse their populations. I believe the policy review must also get to the bottom of this puzzling initial reaction to the Sanogo coup.

- What precise sessions of training did the U.S. give Captain Amadou Sanogo whether in the US, in Mali or elsewhere?
- Which courses did Captain Sanogo take and how well did he perform in training?
- Which other Malian military personnel have received which U.S.-funded training since Amadou Toumani Toure was first elected president?

Minutes after Chairman Smith's request, my immediate verbal reaction was this,

> My concern has been that African soldiers, number one if I had anything to do with who gets trained, we would prioritize soldiers

> in democracies rather than soldiers who are serving unelected strongmen, because that causes a problem. That is my first concern. And then of course, what are they being trained about? They should be trained to respect their democratically-elected leaders.

Jammeh & Sanogo, two examples of US-trained soldiers who mounted African coups: In direct response to Chairman Smith's request, I cite two for examples of US-trained African soldiers who overthrew their governments.

President Jammeh of Gambia: During 1993-1994, the US trained Lt. Yahya Jammeh at Fort McClellan in Alabama. In August 1994--seven months after completing his training--Jammeh overthrew his commander-in-chief, Gambian President Dauda Jawara. Today, 18 years later, Mr. Jammeh remains Gambia's strongman. Most informed observers regard him as among Africa's most bizarre and repressive dictators.

Captain Amadou Sanogo of Mali: Over the course of 12 years (between 1998 and 2010), the US gave Mr. Sanogo six bouts of military training. These took place inside four of America's most prestigious military schools: Fort Benning, Georgia; Lackland Air Force Base, Texas; Quantico, Virginia; and Camp Pendleton, California.

On March 22 2012, Captain Sanogo mounted a coup and pushed Mali over the edge. Specifically, he overthrew President Amadou Toumani Toure, Mali's democratically elected leader who was 6 weeks away from completing his 10-year term. This derailed the climaxing elections to choose the next president and otherwise shattered Mali's globally admired 20-year democratic experiment.

My considered opinion is that the Sanogo coup is the greatest catastrophe in the history of independent Mali, with dire repercussions far beyond Mali's borders. In addition to creating a democracy and constitutional quagmire, in short order, the coup precipitated the military loss of over 60 percent of the national territory in the north; shattered cohesion and morale within the army; unleashed violence and disorder in the rump 40 percent of the country; created a haven for violent foreign-led religious extremists; exacerbated a serious regional environmental and refugee crisis; further destabilized the northern half of Africa; and increased the probability of serious terrorist attacks against Europe and the US.

Does US human-rights training provide African trainees with respect for democratic institutions? I do not know for sure. However, I would be surprised if none is provided at all, given that human rights are inseparable from democracy. Still it might be a great idea to scrutinize the training curriculum and to guarantee that trainees graduate with robust respect for democracy.

Does US anti human trafficking training provide African trainees with respect for democratic institutions? I simply do not know. But I would recommend strongly that the training curriculum be scrutinized with the goal of ensuring that trainees graduate with robust respect for democracy.

"Is the US military trainers sufficiently inculcating that attitude that human rights matter; respect for democratic institutions?" I believe this to be the essential, crucial question. And I further believe that Congress must ensure that this question is answered firmly in the affirmative for all future relevant US military training sessions and projects.

Regarding past American training of African soldiers who then overthrew governments, I again cite as evidence the examples of President Jammeh and Captain Sanogo. The message of that evidence is unequivocal: there have been some instances where African soldiers trained by the US have not displayed the desired attitude of deep respect for democracy.

And regarding Latin America, the case of the School of the Americas strongly suggests that the Latin American instances were much more numerous than the African ones.

Question cluster 2: *Mali was once a model for African democracy, but now the military refuses to accept civilian authority, and the future of democracy in Mali is in serious question. How could things go so badly so quickly, or were they much worse than we thought all along?*

Response to Question 2: It cannot be denied that Captain Sanogo's catastrophic March 22 coup found it shockingly quick and far too easy to decapitate Mali's admired democracy. Still, in my opinion, the proper lesson and conclusion must not be that Mali's democracy had been a mirage undeserving of admiration and support.

Rather, I believe four realities shine a strong light that must be used for a nuanced reading of Mali's debacle: A) Though ancient as a society, Mali, when scrutinized as a unified, independent state making its way in today's modern world, that state is only 50 years old—ie a mere infant. B) At 20 years, the democratic experiment in Mali was an even younger baby. And rather fragile. Despite this extreme fragility, the Malian democratic experiment was arguably ahead of the curve when compared with all democratic experiments, including the path-breaking US experiment, which was frighteningly fragile too at only 20 years of age in 1796. C) I do not claim prescience. And yet, more than two years ago, I published an essay that began with a small side warning: Certain unbalanced international inducements and pressures (especially after 9/11, significant military aid and demands to commit more vigorously in the global war against terror) would distract Mali from focusing on important domestic challenges. Consequently, such external incentives posed a danger to Mali's fledgeling democracy. D) Negative domestic and regional developments (especially the Tuaregs' recurrent irredentist rebellions as well as the vicious civil war in rich, over-militarized Libya) dealt body blows that weakened Mali's young democracy, so that the Sanogo putsch proved a coup de grace.

Question cluster 3: *You recommend strongly that U.S. troops not be involved in the Mali conflict, presumably partly because of the impact on our country's image in the country and the region. How would the other options for U.S. involvement in this conflict impact the U.S. image?*

Response to Question 3: The premise of this question is very true: I do continue to counsel vehemently against one US option in Mali—putting American combat boots on the ground. It must be rejected out of hand.

Equally strongly, I reject a second option—that the US must turn its back on Mali and do nothing. This option would impact America's image negatively--by embedding into world opinion a false narrative of the US as a fair weather friend who cares about its narrow short-term interests only and who abandons its wounded partners. To repeat, this would be a false and damaging impression—which is why the US must pre-empt it by rejecting the do nothing option.

There remains a third option which I passionately support and advocate. This calls for the US to move with alacrity and help Mali in an appropriate manner by supporting the rescue mission of the neighbors, especially ECOWAS. Here is how I elaborated this in my testimony,

> A few types of U.S. assistance for ECOWAS seem obvious. An important one is rhetorical: American officials should issue strong public support and praise for what ECOWAS is doing. Conversely, they should publicly condemn individuals, groups and entities opposing who are ECOWAS. Examples include putschist like Captain Sanogo, secessionists like MNLA, and jihadist and Islamist groups like AQIM, Ansar al-Dine, and MUJAO. Of course such public praise or condemnation may have to be avoided in instances where they jeopardize delicate tasks.
>
> The second form of help the U.S. must provide to ECOWAS is diplomatic. Washington should exert influence multilaterally inside the UN Security Council and bilaterally with such key role players as Algeria.
>
> Some analysts have also called for more effective U.S. policy on refugees and on terrorism—both in Mali's Sahel-Sahara neighborhood.
>
> Clearly, the most vital and urgent form of help ECOWAS needs from the US is military assistance that excludes American boots on the ground. It bears stressing: no American troops must be requested or granted. Rather, what should be asked for and given is help in improving West African military capabilities in intelligence, in logistics, in planning and in operations.
>
> And of course assistance means money.
>
> Undoubtedly the U.S. as a whole and its key segments (the Obama Administration, and Congress's two chambers) will have to expend valuable capital—political and otherwise--to provide ECOWAS the needed assistance. However, given the many important American interests—humanitarian, economic, and counter-terrorism—being protected, I remain convinced that Washington

> metaphorically giving a hose to the ECOWAS fire brigade is the ethical and smart thing to do.

And what would be the impact of this option--the US strongly assisting Africans to heal Mali? In my opinion, the positive impact on US interests would be priceless. Put another way, America's image would be burnished across Africa if Washington is perceived to have assisted ECOWAS in making Mali a territorially-restored, democratic and prospering country.

Question cluster 4: *You have stated that U.S. military aid to Mali, as in other countries, has contributed to coups. Can you provide any examples of how U.S. military assistance directly contributed to a military takeover of an African government?*

Response to Question 4: I must here take responsibility and must self-criticize for conveying a viewpoint that I do not hold, a false message. For the record, I do not recall ever stating that "U.S. military aid to Mali, as in other countries, has contributed to coups." What I did write in my submitted testimony was this,

> Conspicuous military assistance—from loudly trumpeted multi-million dollar grants to shiny vehicles and equipment to annual military exercises to overseas training for officers—dominated the close relations that the U.S. forged with Mali after 9/11. This was another policy move severely criticized by some Africa policy analysts. They worried that bribing Mali in this manner to go chasing after AQIM while ignoring its own priorities (democracy, development and solving the Tuareg quarrel) would end badly. Mali's implosion seems to say they were prescient.

Admittedly the above paragraph expresses unhappiness with US military assistance to Mali. Alternatively, that critical opinion could be accurately rephrased thus: US aid to Amadou Toumani Toure's Mali contained too many guns and too little butter; and this overemphasis on military assistance may have pulled Bamako's gaze from domestic grievances and development concerns and turned that gaze toward external, security and terrorism concerns.

However, the quote contained in the final question, "U.S. military aid to Mali, as in other countries, has contributed to coups" would NOT be an accurate representation of what I wrote.

Thank you again.

Nii Akuetteh
Washington DC
SATURDAY, September 15, 2012

Questions for Rudolph Atallah asked for the record of the hearing, "The Tuareg Revolt and Mail Coup."[1]

29 June 2012

Question 1. You say that the Tuareg should not be ignored by anyone who seeks stability in the Sahel, but that seems like exactly what has happened over the years. Why do you think the plight of the Tuareg has received such little attention by U.S. and other Western policymakers until now?

My sense is that the Tuareg have received little attention from US and other Western policymakers owing to their geographic dispersal, the diminution of their status by regional governments, and because they are often popularly associated with criminality and terrorism. In a sense, the Tuareg are like the Kurds—spread over five countries and largely been ignored by their host governments. In the cases of Mali and Niger, the Tuareg are also marginalized as an ethnic group. US aid and assistance is always handled at government levels, and these governments have largely ignored Tuareg grievances. Further, terrorism and narco-trafficking, for which regional Arab groups are responsible, also plague Tuareg territory. The narco-traffic from South America goes right through Tuareg lands in the central Sahara, where the business is monopolized and controlled by certain Arab families. The Tuareg never chose terrorism and narco-trafficking; both threaten their way of life. However, they have become inextricably associated with both illicit activities in the popular media.

The Tuareg are our natural allies in the war against terror and drugs and should not be ignored.

Question 2. We are told that Mali is the focus of the Tuareg revolt and that Tuareg elsewhere in the region are not a part of this rebellion. However, the name "Azawad", as you point out, refers to a region that straddles Mali, Niger and Algeria. While the MNLA is not laying claim to any territory outside Mali, is there a realistic chance that their success could lead Tuareg elsewhere in the region to want to annex territory to enlarge Azawad?

Tuareg aspirations in the northern region of Mali, which they call "Azawad," will likely be contained to Mali. Both geography and altogether different socio-political dynamics in Algeria and Niger support this conclusion.

The Tuareg situation in Algeria is fairly stable, as the Algerian government began to integrate them increasingly into the Algerian state system soon after Independence. Today, there are few nomadic Tuareg left, given decades of altered economic and social behavior. Algeria has provided good education, salaried jobs, and assistance with farming, making economic

[1] My expertise on the Tuareg and conflict in Mali derives primarily from time spent on the ground in the Sahel while serving with the US Government, and as a businessman with White Mountain Research. Through the years, I have benefited greatly from the counsel and academic expertise of many, though perhaps none more so than **Dr. Barbara Worley of the University of Massachusetts**. I shared these Questions for the Record with Professor Worley to insure well rounded, properly contextualized and multidisciplinary responses. Professor Worley has a Ph.D. in anthropology from Columbia University in New York and 38 years of experience working with Tuareg in Niger, Mali, and Algeria. Her current research is focused on the 2012 Tuareg crisis. She is also writing a book on Tuareg culture and identity, soon to be released.

opportunities and a fairly decent standard of living possible for the Tuareg within its borders. Further, in Algeria, the Tuareg are not racially discriminated against to the extent that they are in Mali. As such, there are few structural economic or socio-political catalysts for enlarging Azawad into Algerian Tuareg regions.

The situation for Tuareg in Mali is also much more instable than that in Niger. In the main, this is because the conflict between the Tuareg in Mali—the predominant ethnic group in the North—and the peoples of South has become severely "racialized." Indeed, the volume of racial hatred of the southern so-called "blacks" against the northern "whites" has reached alarming proportions, to the extent that a highly racialized, genocidal conflict could erupt. As with Algeria, the situation with Tuareg in Niger remains manageable and relatively stable.

Understanding the name "Azawad" also helps to further contextualize Tuareg aspirations for the region. Technically, the Tuareg word "Azawad" refers to an extensive drainage valley. The valley is between two mountain ranges, one in Mali and the other in Niger. The Azawad Valley is where many nomadic Malian Tuareg herd their livestock, as it produces good pasture after the rainy months. This large drainage valley does not extend into Algeria—certainly not into the region around Tamanrasset and Djanet, where Algerian Tuareg live. This region is hundreds of miles north of the border. The country that the Malian irredentists call Azawad therefore takes its name from this major valley. It covers the northern regions of Mali, defined by existing Malian national borders, and includes traditional grazing grounds and trade routes that the Tuareg have used for thousands of years.

Question 3. In Sudan, the Arab identification of northerners has created a stark divide with more African identified southerners. To what extent has a similar identity split between northerners and southerners in Mali created a difficult to overcome a divide that makes reconciliation more unlikely?

This is a critical question, deserving of a more comprehensive answer than what brevity permits here. In summary, the division between North and South Mali is based on Southerners' perceptions of Northerners' skin color. The latter view Arabs and Tuareg (Northerners) pejoratively as "Whites," levying acute blame on the Tuareg population for Mali's problems, given the history of Tuareg rebellions. The Tuareg have rebelled four times to break away from Bamako, hoping to gain independence and outside support. Simply put, because the Tuareg comprise the majority ethnic group in the North (roughly 50-70% of the population), tension runs deep with the South. This problem started during the colonial period and became more pronounced after the second Tuareg rebellion in the 1990's. The racial tension between the North and South is extremely serious, and is a primary reason why the Tuareg remain marginalized today.

In reality, the Tuareg and Arabs of the North are also ethnically and culturally very different form each other, and often at odds as well. The Tuareg are an indigenous people of North Africa, while the Arabs originate from the Arabian Peninsula, bringing Islam with them. This distinction is important in the context of today's issues because certain members of the Arab tribes are the Dons of the drug trade and exploit the Tuareg to facilitate it. Some of these same Arab individuals have also been involved with past GSPC/AQIM kidnappings, which the Tuareg also recognize (along with the drug trade) as being ultimately detrimental to their interests. Iyad

Ag Ghaly and his Ansar Dine militant group, of which approximately 5% is Tuareg, should therefore be viewed as the exception rather than the rule.

For more on Tuareg identity and culture, please refer to Professor Barbara Worley's (University of Massachusetts) web site: http://tuaregcultureandnews.blogspot.com.

Questions for Dave Peterson asked for the record of the hearing "The Tuareg Revolt and Mail Coup."

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There are no NED programs in Mali currently. How soon might NED fund a program in Mali from proposals now submitted? Are these only proposals from Mali, or are there U.S.-based organizations such as IRI and NDI seeking to conduct programs there?

Response:

The next meeting of the Endowment's board of directors will be held September 7. We have a couple proposals on Mali. One is from the Institute for Security Studies based in Dakar and will do an assessment of security and governance problems in Mali and a couple other countries in the Sahel. The other is from a Malian domestic election observers group. We are still trying to get more information about it, and may not be able to go forward until a NED program officer can meet with the group, probably in October or November. This would also be an opportunity to identify other good partners in Mali. NDI and IRI have not submitted proposals on Mali to NED, but we are encouraging them, and hope to see something in time for our January board meeting. Before then, NDI may be able to re-commence its Mali election support program currently funded by USAID.

You have stated that NED is interested in programs that would impact the North in Mali. With the tense and chaotic situation in the North, would NED more likely fund programs such a radio broadcasts into that region or work with Tuareg refugees outside of the North?

Response:

NED would consider both radio broadcasts and refugee civic education and human rights programs. My impression is that the radio programs would be more likely, however.

Elections were supposed to take place in Mali mid-year had there not been a coup, although large parts of the North probably would have been unable to participate due to longstanding security issues. Is the election system still intact outside the North? Could this system be assisted to hold elections for a legitimate government in Mali before too long a period of time?

Response:

My colleagues at NDI have told me they think elections should be held within six months. There is a strong need to re-establish a legitimate government in the south as soon as possible. The election system may still be intact, but it could be undermined with time, and will likely need some assistance.

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