



**NAVAL  
POSTGRADUATE  
SCHOOL**

**MONTEREY, CALIFORNIA**

**THESIS**

**AN ALLIANCE BUILT UPON NECESSITY: AQIM, BOKO  
HARAM, AND THE AFRICAN “ARCH OF INSTABILITY”**

by

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June 2013

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<b>REPORT DOCUMENTATION PAGE</b>			<i>Form Approved OMB No. 0704-0188</i>	
Public reporting burden for this collection of information is estimated to average 1 hour per response, including the time for reviewing instruction, searching existing data sources, gathering and maintaining the data needed, and completing and reviewing the collection of information. Send comments regarding this burden estimate or any other aspect of this collection of information, including suggestions for reducing this burden, to Washington headquarters Services, Directorate for Information Operations and Reports, 1215 Jefferson Davis Highway, Suite 1204, Arlington, VA 22202-4302, and to the Office of Management and Budget, Paperwork Reduction Project (0704-0188) Washington DC 20503.				
<b>1. AGENCY USE ONLY (Leave blank)</b>		<b>2. REPORT DATE</b> June 2013	<b>3. REPORT TYPE AND DATES COVERED</b> Master's Thesis	
<b>4. TITLE AND SUBTITLE</b> AN ALLIANCE BUILT UPON NECESSITY: AQIM, BOKO HARAM, AND THE AFRICAN "ARCH OF INSTABILITY"			<b>5. FUNDING NUMBERS</b>	
<b>6. AUTHOR:</b> James D. Ryan				
<b>7. PERFORMING ORGANIZATION NAME(S) AND ADDRESS(ES)</b> Naval Postgraduate School Monterey, CA 93943-5000			<b>8. PERFORMING ORGANIZATION REPORT NUMBER</b>	
<b>9. SPONSORING /MONITORING AGENCY NAME(S) AND ADDRESS(ES)</b> N/A			<b>10. SPONSORING/MONITORING AGENCY REPORT NUMBER</b>	
<b>11. SUPPLEMENTARY NOTES</b> The views expressed in this thesis are those of the author and do not reflect the official policy or position of the Department of Defense or the U.S. government. IRB Protocol number ____N/A____.				
<b>12a. DISTRIBUTION/AVAILABILITY STATEMENT</b> Approved for public release; distribution is unlimited			<b>12b. DISTRIBUTION CODE</b> A	
<b>13. ABSTRACT</b> This paper examines numerous linkages between two influential terrorist organizations operating in Sub-Saharan Africa, Boko Haram and Al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM), and what would be the political and security ramifications on United States foreign policy toward Sub-Saharan Africa stemming from the enhanced partnership between these groups. I argue that containment of these groups and their current operations through overwhelming military supremacy does not project a sustainable way forward for not only the United States, but more importantly, for the international community. The ongoing instability in the Sahel could have enormous second- and third-order negative effects on the entire region. The threat both groups represent with their freedom of movement should not be underestimated. Both receive some form of active and passive support from their respected indigenous populations, and as they evolve, are becoming more sophisticated in their training, funding, and methods of employment. Regional Islamic safe havens could be created through the union of Boko Haram and AQIM as their modes of shared ideology, financing, and tactics move forward. Therefore, a strategy of moderate containment through enhanced engagement by leveraging all lines of operations, coupled with soft and hard power, will increase the likelihood of long-term stability.				
<b>14. SUBJECT TERMS</b> AQIM, Boko Haram, USAFRICOM, African Union, Nigeria, Mali, Maghreb, Arab Spring, U.S. Foreign Policy in Africa, Alliance, GSPC			<b>15. NUMBER OF PAGES</b> 83	
			<b>16. PRICE CODE</b>	
<b>17. SECURITY CLASSIFICATION OF REPORT</b> Unclassified	<b>18. SECURITY CLASSIFICATION OF THIS PAGE</b> Unclassified	<b>19. SECURITY CLASSIFICATION OF ABSTRACT</b> Unclassified	<b>20. LIMITATION OF ABSTRACT</b> UU	

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AFRICAN “ARCH OF INSTABILITY”**

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Submitted in fulfillment of the  
requirements for the degree of

**MASTER OF ARTS IN SECURITY STUDIES  
(MIDDLE EAST, SOUTH ASIA, SUB-SAHARAN AFRICA)**

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## **ABSTRACT**

This paper examines numerous linkages between two influential terrorist organizations operating in Sub-Saharan Africa, Boko Haram and Al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM), and what would be the political and security ramifications on United States foreign policy toward Sub-Saharan Africa stemming from the enhanced partnership between these groups. I argue that containment of these groups and their current operations through overwhelming military supremacy does not project a sustainable way forward for not only the United States, but more importantly, for the international community. The ongoing instability in the Sahel could have enormous second- and third-order negative effects on the entire region. The threat both groups represent with their freedom of movement should not be underestimated. Both receive some form of active and passive support from their respected indigenous populations, and as they evolve, are becoming more sophisticated in their training, funding, and methods of employment. Regional Islamic safe havens could be created through the union of Boko Haram and AQIM as their modes of shared ideology, financing, and tactics move forward. Therefore, a strategy of moderate containment through enhanced engagement by leveraging all lines of operations, coupled with soft and hard power, will increase the likelihood of long-term stability.

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## LIST OF ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

AFRICOM	U.S. African Command
AOR	Area of Responsibility
ANSF	Afghan National Security Forces
AQIM	Al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb
AQC	Al-Qaeda Central
AU	African Union
BCT	Brigade Combat Team
C2	Command and Control
CENTCOM	U.S. Central Command
CT	Counterterrorism
DoD	Department of Defense
DoS	Department of State
DRC	Democratic Republic of Congo
EURCOM	U.S. European Command
FARC	The Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GIA	Armed Islamic Group
GSPC	Salafist Group for Preaching and Combat
GWOT	Global War on Terrorism
IDF	Israeli Defense Force
METL	Mission Essential Task List
NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organization
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
PACOM	U.S Pacific Command
PRC	People's Republic of China
SALW	Small Arms and Light Weapons
SAMs	Surface to Air Missiles
TSCTP	Trans Sahara Counterterrorism Partnership
TTPs	Tactics, Techniques, and Procedures
UAV	Unmanned Aerial Vehicle

USAID  
VBIED

United States Agency for International Development  
Vehicle Borne Improvised Explosive Device

## **ACKNOWLEDGMENTS**

First and foremost I would like to thank both of my thesis advisors, Dr. Mohammed Hafez and Dr. Jessica Piombo, for their unwavering support, candid advice, and thorough scrutiny while writing this thesis. Their professionalism and academic knowledge base on matters pertaining to Africa dramatically assisted me in becoming a more well-rounded commissioned officer in the United States Army. I was also extremely fortunate to have had both professors for classes during the academic school year. Both professors forced me to tackle abstract ideas, and to approach complex problems from a completely different perspective. For this, I am profoundly grateful.

I would like to also thank my wife, Fakhrieh, and two daughters, Hannah and Yasmine, for dealing with all the uncertainty while I attended the Naval Postgraduate School and put in many long hours tucked away in the Dudley Knox Library. Without their loving concern and steadfast support, this thesis project would not have happened.

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# I. INTRODUCTION

## A. BACKGROUND

### 1. THE PROBLEM

Since the September 11, 2001, terrorist attacks on the United States, numerous global terrorist and criminal networks are under persistent threat from military force on many fronts. These networks, facing mounting pressure from mainly Western nations, have had to reassess their strategies and find different levels of coordination and corporation in order to survive. Some of these networks were thought to be on the verge of collapse, while others have actually grown and evolved into state-like organizations.

In just the past five years, two notorious terrorist organizations operating in Africa, Boko Haram and the Al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM), are morphing into organizations that are placing enormous pressure upon the African states of Mali, Algeria, Niger, and Nigeria. See map in Figure 1. In 2010 alone, AQIM, which derives the majority of its origin from the GIA in Algeria extends its reach well outside Algeria, was responsible for the deaths of more than 170 Algerian Security Forces, extensive bombing campaigns, kidnappings, and other acts of terror.<sup>1</sup> In 2012, while operating in Mali, AQIM attacked, captured, and then subsequently murdered more than 50 Malian soldiers who were on patrol in the northeastern part of the country, causing such turmoil within the Malian military, that a coup ensued from U.S. military trained Captain Amadou Haya Sanogo.<sup>2</sup> Additionally, AQIM as demonstrated by the kidnapping of the Canadian Ambassador Robert Fowler in 2009, while he was in Western Niger.<sup>3</sup>

In Nigeria, the terrorist organization Boko Haram, which operates predominantly in the northern region of the country, started out with no more than 16 members in the

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<sup>1</sup> Jane's World Insurgency and Terrorism, "Al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM) 2013," (n.d.).

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.

<sup>3</sup> *LRA, Boko Haram, Al-Shabaab, AQIM, and Other Sources of Instability in Africa*. 112th Cong. (April 25, 2012), <http://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/pkg/CHRG-112hrg73998/pdf/CHRG-112hrg73998.pdf>.

early 1990s, and as of 2013 now boasts more than 500 active personnel.<sup>4</sup> Boko Haram is an Islamic organization that believes the northern territory of Nigeria is corrupted by Christians and government security forces flowing in from the south. This organization claims responsibility for numerous terrorist attacks on an array of targets, including military and police forces, and places of Christian worship. These attacks, especially ones inflicted upon church congregations, are causing significant friction between the country's two main religions, Islam and Christianity, to the point that a civil war in Nigeria is of grave concern to its policymakers.

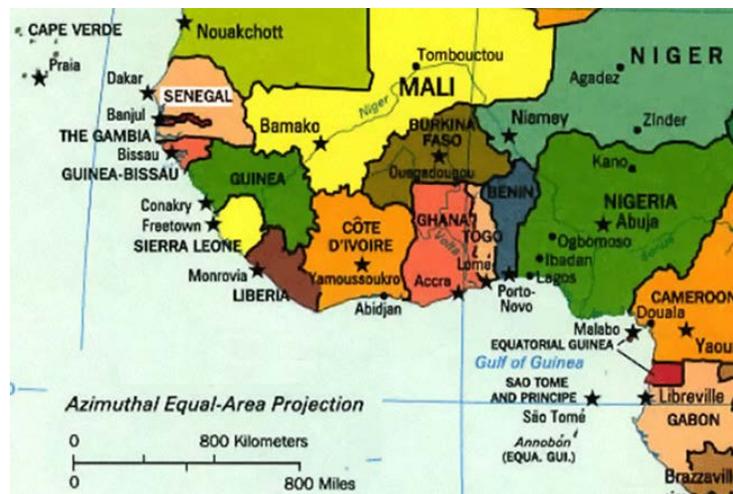


Figure 1. Depicted Problem Area<sup>5</sup>

The significance of the problem is the audacity and tenacious abilities of both Boko Haram and AQIM to possibly drive a psychological wedge between the legitimacy of the state and its ability to provide essential services, security, and prosperity to the affected region. The constant presence of inequality between relative deprivation and

<sup>4</sup> Abimbola O. Adesoji, "Between Maitatsine and Boko Haram: Islamic Fundamentalism and the Response of the Nigerian State," *Africa Today* 57, no. 4 (2011): 98–119, [https://muse.jhu.edu/login?auth=0&type=summary&url=/journals/africa\\_today/v057/57.4.adesoji.html](https://muse.jhu.edu/login?auth=0&type=summary&url=/journals/africa_today/v057/57.4.adesoji.html).

<sup>5</sup> Committee to Protect Journalists, "Map of West Africa," map, April 11, 2000, [http://cpj.org/Briefings/2000/Bekoutou/africa\\_pol98.jpg](http://cpj.org/Briefings/2000/Bekoutou/africa_pol98.jpg).

acute wealth in Algeria, Nigeria, Niger, and Mali is creating a cultural insurgency.<sup>6</sup> Of much importance is the fact that this populace is very technologically aware. The explosive nature of globalization and connectivity along with the advent of free trade, instant communication, internet usage, social media, and mass transportation systems are imposing extreme stress on state governments to weed out corruption in numerous African states and to deliver needed services. Failure in doing so is only helping to facilitate the population's appeal for rogue non-state actors who consistently win them over through a well-orchestrated public relations campaign. The two most predominant choices Africans typically have are to embrace capitalistic behaviors or models, which in developing nations translate into large groups of people suffering from wealth inequality, or embracing puritanical Islamic practices, which call for humans to turn their backs on self-gratification, over-consumption of resources, strict obedience to the literal meanings of the Quran, and to surrender oneself to God. The solution and approach I propose is for African nations to work diligently toward recognizing these rogue groups as organizations who should have some voice in their government's policies. This approach is a form of integration to quell ongoing instability and turmoil, while building a strategy of reconciliation and reintegration. These terrorist organizations will only halt their violent attacks on innocent civilians and government security forces when they know that their grievances are being addressed, their safe havens are not permanent, the populations over which they work to achieve dominion are not viable options, and that their policies have some kind of say in African politics.

## **2. RESEARCH QUESTION**

What are the political and security ramifications on United States foreign policy toward the Sahel region and beyond, emanating from the creation of an alliance between Boko Haram and AQIM? If this linkage is possible, what would be the impact and response from U.S. African Command (AFRICOM), and how would this possible alliance affect United States foreign policy initiatives in the region?

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<sup>6</sup> David Kilcullen, "Twenty-Eight Articles: Fundamentals of Company-Level Counterinsurgency," *IO Sphere* (2006): 29–35, [http://www.au.af.mil/info-ops/iosphere/iosphere\\_summer06\\_kilcullen.pdf](http://www.au.af.mil/info-ops/iosphere/iosphere_summer06_kilcullen.pdf).

### 3. IMPORTANCE

The scope of this thesis will focus on the factors that allow Boko Haram and AQIM to not only survive, but also create a way for these two organizations to merge into a regional alliance. This thesis will not only draw on persistent factors that are setting conditions for a closer partnership between these two groups, but will also analyze contrast and comparison versus case studies. The scope of this thesis is meant to draw out a few additional questions: How might the merger of Boko Haram and AQIM influence not only U.S. foreign policy in the region, but how would the entire region itself be impacted if these two organizations were to form a more sophisticated alliance? What is the current U.S. strategy toward both Boko Haram and AQIM? What strategy would the U.S. pursue if these two groups morphed into a regional state-like structure, and what U.S. strategy would most likely facilitate the end of these groups? These results may have implications for other persistent terrorist organizations worldwide, as more resources and approaches can be utilized against other similar factions or affiliates. An immediate strategy is to not just to allow U.S. policymakers and strategist to target these groups through a broad-based U.S. counterterrorism (CT) strategy, but also working with host nation affected countries, while simultaneously using the influence and resources of the African Union (AU) and its action arm, the African Standby Force. This strategy is intended to not only be a strategy against Boko Haram and AQIM, but is also one that can be emulated and used as a template against other non-state actors and terrorist groups globally.

The relationship between Boko Haram and AQIM is one that is currently being manifested through shared ideology, funding, grievances, future intentions, and overt resistance to globalization.<sup>7</sup> The linkages between Boko Haram and AQIM are becoming more profound and are causing the European and African Unions significant concern, which is understandable because of geographical proximity. In recent times U.S. counterterrorism efforts have had the majority of its focus and resources on the Middle East and Central Asia. This lack of focus on Africa is leaving portions of its population

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<sup>7</sup> Tore Bjorgo, *Root Causes of Terrorism: Myths, Reality and Ways Forward* (New York: Routledge, Taylor & Francis Group, 2005).

extremely vulnerable to the impact of terrorism, smuggling, arms proliferation, and power vacuums, while creating environments awash with fundamentally corrupt government officials.<sup>8</sup> Some of this has to do with large swaths of land in Africa classified as “ungoverned territory” making these two groups capable of affecting the region from Morocco in the west, to Libya in the east, and through to the northern region of Nigeria in the south.

The threats projected by both Boko Haram and AQIM are ones that are gaining in momentum, strength, and influence in the region. These factors are a direct result from the aftermath of the Arab Spring in Libya, Egypt, and Tunisia.<sup>9</sup> The fall of the Gaddafi regime in Libya and the subsequent mass distribution of small arms and light weapons to militia groups, non-state actors, bandits, and gangs will have lingering effects throughout Sub-Saharan Africa for possibly decades to come.<sup>10</sup> These missing weapons from large depots inside of Libya constitute a viable threat because a number of these states after the Arab Spring are still extremely vulnerable to large-scale instability. This coincides with areas of land that are ungoverned as in the case of Southern Algeria, Southern Libya, Southern Morocco, and even parts of Tunisia. Most recently the military coup that took place in Mali has links to the fallout of the Libyan debacle, because the fighters who were paid by the Gaddafi regime lost their livelihoods, and due to being black African were forced to leave Libya taking with them significant quantities of small arms and light weapons. The greater fear, though, is how many lightweight shoulder-fired surface to air missiles (SAMs) are being circulated in the Sahel, southern portions of the Maghreb countries, and quite possibly in West Africa. This unorganized non-regulatory movement constitutes an even graver threat because these disenfranchised mercenaries from Libya are now operating in the Sahel and West Africa with impunity while simultaneously forming ties to other groups such as AQIM and Boko Haram. A hybrid of rebel and Islamic militant groups are now consolidating their power and resources, and have recently announced a new Islamic state within Mali.

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<sup>8</sup> Bjorgo, *Root Causes*.

<sup>9</sup> LRA, *Boko Haram, Al-Shabaab, AQIM, and Other Sources of Instability in Africa*.

<sup>10</sup> Ibid.

If Boko Haram and AQIM become more coordinated and robust in their organization, they will have better opportunities to use human trafficking, illicit drug trade routes, and accumulate more influence through their acquisition of small arms and light weapons. Due to the nature of geographical proximity to the European continent, their influence will have a global impact. This threat equates to a refined operational capability as these groups learn, improve their procedures, and mature in command and control mechanisms. The larger concern is how to quell these organizations from mutating into a possible newly defined Islamic safe haven in the Sahel region. History has shown that when existing governments sense these kinds of threats and possibilities, their response is to escalate the use of force, to the point where this escalation plays right into the narrative of the rogue actors, creating an environment of hate and distrust for the established government. This then creates a perpetual cycle of conflict, which is what the established government is hoping to prevent.

Finally, it is imperative that the U.S., in concert with its NATO and AU allies, devise a strategy that is conducive and appropriate to the measured response emanating from an alliance between Boko Haram and AQIM. AFRICOM will undoubtedly play a larger role in the future as a combatant command, but the need for the AU to handle the bulk of the problems and issues involving the merger of Boko Haram and AQIM is more important than ever before. This will be inevitable as resources, capabilities, and force projection comes under increasing pressure due to budgetary constraints. The motto, “African solutions to African problems,” needs to be to pretext for the future of containment, intervention, and engagement on the African continent.<sup>11</sup>

## **B. METHODOLOGY**

The methodology of this thesis is to thoroughly research Boko Haram and AQIM through their geographical disposition, organizational constructs, mission statements, number of known passive and active members, how relative each organization’s threat is to stability in the region, and most importantly, are there any overt or covert intentions by these organizations to morph into a state-like organization in the Sahel. This thesis will

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<sup>11</sup> *LRA, Boko Haram, Al-Shabaab, AQIM, and Other Sources of Instability in Africa.*

consist of five major chapters of research and a final chapter for purposes of a conclusion and recommended strategy for both military planners and government policymakers. The methodology for this thesis is to first identify what the significance of the problem is, and then to define what Boko Haram and AQIM want, while understanding and determining how they have evolved. Using this historical construct, Boko Haram and AQIM can then be understood in how to predict future tactics and behavior that they might employ against government security forces, and other non-aligned ethnic groups. This approach and method will help future planners understand where weaknesses lie, and what and where effective means could be utilized to thwart possible modes of operation. Equipped with understanding the nature of these organizations, a sustainable way forward and a means to an end for breaking up an alliance between Boko Haram and AQIM can be undertaken. Taking a thorough look into how these two groups share common ideologies, funding, tactics, and resistance to current government strategies can then assess present U.S. policy to determine what approaches might work. The final chapter of this thesis brings all five chapters into a summary conclusion, with the intent to make recommendations for future military and policy planners to prevent the merger of Boko Haram and AQIM, and can be further used as a technique to manage other possible terrorist scenarios.

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## **II. THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE PROBLEM**

### **A. CHAPTER INTRODUCTION**

The significance of the problems confronting local African governments having to deal with grievances emanating from Boko Haram and AQIM are profound and layered. The problems associated with a more integrated coordination between the two groups in conjunction with the movement of illicit drugs, human trafficking, small arms and light weapons proliferation, the wasteful implementation of humanitarian aid, and the complete collapse of the Libyan regime are problems that are not going away, at least in the near term. Government corruption and the mismanagement of precious resources are only helping to legitimize the narrative from both Boko Haram and AQIM, and is further assisting their cause in spreading their ideology and frustrations. Disenfranchised youths, who are consistently being marginalized, suffer from acute wealth inequality while living in ungoverned territory that boasts no sustainable infrastructure, leaving them with little or no other viable options than to join these groups and help promote their cause.

### **B. LEVELS AND TYPES OF COORDINATIONS BETWEEN BOKO HARAM AND AQIM**

At the tactical level of operation, Boko Haram and AQIM build networks through campaigns of attacks on government security forces and innocent civilians. These attacks are becoming even more deadly as these two groups train with one another, and share up-to-date information in order to maximize their objectives. Some of the recent successes from Nigerian security forces, and most recently from the French intervention into Mali, are forcing Boko Haram and AQIM to have a more integrated operational relationship for basic means of survival.<sup>12</sup> Although under pressure from different fronts throughout the Sahel, both groups still have found adaptable ways to operate inside ungoverned spaces. The tactics mainly used by Boko Haram and AQIM focus on “hit and run attacks” are mostly on—but not limited to—what are considered “soft targets”: churches, schools, and

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<sup>12</sup> Conn Hallinan, “The U.S. and Africa: The Next Four Years,” *Foreign Policy In Focus, Institute for Policy Studies*, November 26, 2012, [http://www.fpif.org/blog/the\\_us\\_and\\_africa\\_the\\_next\\_four\\_years](http://www.fpif.org/blog/the_us_and_africa_the_next_four_years).

hospitals.<sup>13</sup> However, in recent years both groups are implementing more brazen attacks on fortified police and army outpost. The January 21, 2012, attack inflicted more than 200 fatalities from eight different explosions, targeting army barracks and immigration offices and state security offices in the northern city of Kano.<sup>14</sup> These attacks are more sophisticated and coordinated with the use of direct and indirect fire assets, coupled with the introduction of Vehicle Borne Improvised Explosive Devices (VBIEDs).<sup>15</sup>

Another important point of concern is that Nigerian security forces have better control of its border region—mainly with Niger. As a result, Boko Haram has had to seek help from AQIM. AQIM, knowing the pressure that group is facing, is using a form of “gang initiation” tactics. If Boko Haram can prove to AQIM that it has the ability to stage successful attacks, than AQIM will likely funnel more resources to Boko Haram, so without serious interdiction between the two groups, more attacks and kidnappings will be on the rise in the region.<sup>16</sup>

One of the cumbersome aspects in combating AQIM is the group’s ability to build a structure that is highly decentralized. AQIM structure is based on containing a supreme commander, a council of notables, and a Shura Council, so there are control measures within the organization that make it more centralized, but the group itself operates as decentralized, especially at the tactical level.<sup>17</sup> Although this structure is overly stated by the group, it gives its local subordinate commanders the luxury to commence attacks and kidnappings without serious oversight. This decentralization in how the group projects itself gives it the latitude to connect with other groups such as Boko Haram, and further helps the group survive after sustaining attacks from government security forces.<sup>18</sup> Although this method of operating lacks character in making it a traditional force, which

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<sup>13</sup> Adesoji, “Between Maitatsine and Boko Haram.”

<sup>14</sup> Ibid.

<sup>15</sup> Ibid.

<sup>16</sup> *LRA, Boko Haram, Al-Shabaab, AQIM, and Other Sources of Instability in Africa.*

<sup>17</sup> Andre Le Sage, “The Evolving Threat of al Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb,” *Strategic Forum* 268 (July 2011), *National Defense University, Institute for National Strategic Studies*, <http://www.ndu.edu/inss/docuploaded/SF%20268%20Le%20Sage.pdf>.

<sup>18</sup> Ibid.

profoundly impacts the strategic level of operation, it at a minimum ensures that the group remains a persistent threat.

Boko Haram and AQIM are increasingly more influential at the operational and strategic levels. Their effective tactical operations are now more sophisticated and coordinated with deadly results against high payoff targets, forcing the international community to pay more attention to their methods and objectives, while allocating more resources to fight the problem.<sup>19</sup> Most recently, AQIM declared a portion of northeastern Mali as their zone of isolation or breakaway state prompting the French to intervene on behalf of the Malian government. Before this intervention, both Boko Haram and AQIM were considered to be groups that were dangerous, but were weakened by the successes of various government security force crackdowns, but since the fall of the Gaddafi regime, and ongoing instability throughout North Africa, both groups have used this situation to regain momentum, and are now changing the dynamics at the strategic level.<sup>20</sup> What is of increasing concern is in how fast both groups have gained strength and lethality in recent years. Various governments, including the U.S., are now making comparisons to a merger between Boko Haram and AQIM to the events leading to the September 11 attacks, in that the Taliban and AQC were thought to be a threat, but not to the level in where they could launch attacks on mainland America.<sup>21</sup> In a recent speech, former Secretary of State Hillary Clinton stated that, “The situation in Libya with the downfall of Muammar Gaddafi, has opened up new linkages between groups like Boko Haram and AQIM. This new dynamic has opened up a whole new Pandora’s box of terror throughout the subcontinent.”<sup>22</sup>

The conditions that are generating an enhanced partnership between Boko Haram and AQIM are being manifested out of five different sets of issues: persistent African government corruption, large swaths of land termed as “ungoverned spaces,” the explosive and lucrative contraband trade involving intellectual property/movement of

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<sup>19</sup> *LRA, Boko Haram, Al-Shabaab, AQIM, and Other Sources of Instability in Africa.*

<sup>20</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>21</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>22</sup> *Ibid.*

humans, the recent downfall of Muammar Gaddafi's regime, and the proliferation of small arms and light weapons.<sup>23</sup> The irony of this growing alliance between these two groups is that what host nations are seeking to prevent, they are actually helping to create.

Boko Haram historically has never overtly stated that it wishes to become a transnational terrorist organization.<sup>24</sup> Its primary objective is more isolationist in nature, but it is being forced to work with other internationally recognized terrorist organizations, such as AQIM, in order to survive because of harsh Nigerian government security force crackdowns.<sup>25</sup> AQIM officially wants to become a transnational terrorist organization, and needs to develop alliances with groups like Boko Haram in order to fulfill its stated mission, which is the creation of an Islamic state in the Sahel region.<sup>26</sup> Both groups use ineffective and corrupt government policies to project their grievances upon the population.<sup>27</sup>

Mismanagement of government resources, heavy-handed and brutal government crackdowns in Boko Haram and AQIM's zones of operation, only play right into their public relations narrative. The populations in these areas suffer from wealth inequality and no real access to essential government services, while being in a constant state of insecurity. This in turn creates distrust for the government due to a lack of transparency, further fueling deep-seated frustrations. The ongoing turmoil and plight the populations in these areas must endure, gives them little opportunity to move out of their current state of living, thus making the appeal to join groups like Boko Haram and AQIM more inviting.<sup>28</sup>

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<sup>23</sup> LRA, *Boko Haram, Al-Shabaab, AQIM, and Other Sources of Instability in Africa*.

<sup>24</sup> Le Sage, "The Evolving Threat of al Qaeda."

<sup>25</sup> Abdulkareem Mohammed and Mohammed Haruna, *The Paradox of Boko Haram* (Nigeria: Moving Image, 2010).

<sup>26</sup> William Thornberry and Jaclyn Levy, "Al Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb," *Center for Strategic and International Studies*, September 2011, [http://csis.org/files/publication/110901\\_Thornberry\\_AQIM\\_WEB.pdf](http://csis.org/files/publication/110901_Thornberry_AQIM_WEB.pdf).

<sup>27</sup> LRA, *Boko Haram, Al-Shabaab, AQIM, and Other Sources of Instability in Africa*.

<sup>28</sup> Hallinan, "The U.S. and Africa."

### C. CORRUPT AND INEFFICIENT AFRICAN GOVERNMENTS

The horrific aftermath of the colonial slave industry, followed by the “scramble for Africa” from 1870-1914, left huge psychological scars upon Africans.<sup>29</sup> Africa was carved up without any regard to how it would impact the people living there. International boundaries and lines were established and drawn right through historical tribal and ethnic areas, causing profound hardship and conflict between local populations.<sup>30</sup> Since the end of the Cold War, numerous African nations found themselves at a unique crossroads; whether to carry on with socialistic methods of governance, while maintaining strict control over their populace, or to embrace and change to multi-party and democratic modes of governing. This was mainly caused by the demise of the Soviet Union, which subsequently dried up an enormous amount of funding for African regimes. This vacuum of resources forced African governments to make significant structural changes in ways of governing. When the thrust of ethnic nationalism and mass independence movements took their roots in Africa starting in the late 1950s through the 1960s, Africans generally regarded capitalism as a derivative of colonialism, so they were quick to embrace socialism.<sup>31</sup> In many respects this made development prospects in Africa cumbersome, while simultaneously setting the stage in making Africa one gigantic battleground between the Soviet Union and the United States. This Cold War fight only made matters worse for Africans, and in the end, when the Soviet Union fell, the U.S.—outside of using Africa as a vehicle for resource extraction—lost its desire to stay heavily involved in the building up of regimes and institutions, even to the point of where humanitarian aid and funding dropped by 50 percent.<sup>32</sup> This disengagement by the U.S. left African leaders on their own to deal with

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<sup>29</sup> Thomas Pakenham, *The Scramble for Africa: White Man's Conquest of the Dark Continent from 1876–1912* (New York: Random House, 1992).

<sup>30</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>31</sup> George B.N. Ayittey, *Africa Unchained: The Blueprint for Africa's Future* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2004).

<sup>32</sup> Dambisa Moyo, *Dead Aid: Why Aid Is Not Working and How There Is a Better Way for Africa* (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2009).

nation states that were subjected to human and resource extraction, persistent conflict between superpowers, and finally being awash with substantial stockpiles of weapons.<sup>33</sup>

In contemporary times, African governments are making profound changes in ways of governance. Much of this change is from the creation of multi-party systems, and forcing elected officials to abide by term limits. The electoral processes in areas where Boko Haram and AQIM operate have generated mixed results. On one hand the elections give Africans a voice into which party or leader they want to lead their country, while on the other hand tends to leave minority groups marginalized. Additionally, an acute patronage system has taken root further enabling rampant corruption. Internationally, Nigeria is currently ranked 136th out of 176 nations in overall corruption.<sup>34</sup> As patronage systems become more established, and large amounts of revenue and donor aid end up missing, or being stowed into offshore bank accounts, Boko Haram and AQIM use this corruption as a way to connect with the population.<sup>35</sup> As long as African nations remain thoroughly corrupt in not accounting for funds while marginalizing distinct minorities from having a voice into policy-making, Boko Haram and AQIM will use these problems as a way to drive a wedge between the power of the state to deliver on promises, to its people, while offering an alternative to join in their cause.

#### **D. THE ILLICIT DRUG SUPER HIGHWAY**

##### **1. The Transnational Drug Trade in Africa**

Over the past twenty years, drug trade in Africa has increased exponentially. This trade originates from Latin America by way of “Highway 10” (in reference to the 10th parallel).<sup>36</sup> Geography plays a pivotal role in this relationship in that Dakar Senegal is only 2,575 kilometers away from the Brazilian town of Fortaleza.<sup>37</sup> In light of this close geographical proximity, West Africa is now a significant hub/staging base for drugs,

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<sup>33</sup> Moyo, *Dead Aid*.

<sup>34</sup> Transparency International, “Annual Report 2010,” July 6, 2011, [http://files.transparency.org/content/download/76/303/file/2010\\_AnnualReport\\_EN.pdf](http://files.transparency.org/content/download/76/303/file/2010_AnnualReport_EN.pdf).

<sup>35</sup> Adesoji, “Between Maitatsine and Boko Haram.”

<sup>36</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>37</sup> *Ibid.*

especially cocaine being sent into Europe.<sup>38</sup> This might not directly impact America's security interest, but it does impact some of America's closest allies in Europe. Large sums of money procured from drug sales go directly into the hands of some of the most dangerous drug dealers in the world. Thus, these funds are completely unaccounted for, and supply huge payoffs for terrorist organizations like Boko Haram and AQIM to find quick and easy money, in order to purchase arms, logistical resources, and to finance its operations while bringing in more recruits. More importantly though, are the negative effects inflicted upon Africans. In Senegal alone, cocaine sales to Europe are more than six times the country's Gross Domestic Product (GDP).<sup>39</sup> A 2005 United Nations report on West Africa highlighted this ongoing problem stating the following:

The sub-region continues to be confronted by the phenomenon of violent military adventurism to seize power. Within the last 12 months, for instance, several West African countries have had coup attempts: Burkina Faso, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, and Mauritania. Moreover, it has emerged that some members of the security and armed forces are associated with or otherwise involved in such illicit activities as smuggling of arms, drugs and natural resources, human trafficking, extortion at roadblocks and money-laundering.<sup>40</sup>

This new shift in moving drugs to Europe by way of Africa is primarily due to the decline in cocaine usage in North America. "Cocaine usage in the U.S. is down by more than 50 percent since 2008."<sup>41</sup> Transnational drug trafficking in Africa now accounts for more than \$2 billion as of 2010.<sup>42</sup> The overall volume of drugs being sold in Europe consistently places a large strain on its internal police and military forces. The spike in drug trade from West Africa has now reached historic levels. Drug seizures by security forces have dramatically climbed since serious tracking was implemented. In the year

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<sup>38</sup> Adesoji, "Between Maitatsine and Boko Haram."

<sup>39</sup> Antonio L. Mazzitelli, "The New Transatlantic Bonanza: Cocaine on Highway 10," *Western Hemisphere Security Analysis Center*, Paper 22 (2011), <http://digitalcommons.fiu.edu/whemsac/22>.

<sup>40</sup> Ibid.

<sup>41</sup> Ibid.

<sup>42</sup> Ibid.

2000, European security forces seized 97 kilograms of cocaine. Comparatively, in 2007, 60 times that amount, (6,000 kilograms) were seized.<sup>43</sup>

#### **E. GUNS, GUNS, EVERYWHERE: THE THREAT OF SMALL ARMS AND LIGHT WEAPONS PROLIFERATION**

The proliferation and distribution of small arms and light weapons in Africa, dating back to the beginning of the Cold War to the present, has reached unprecedented levels. There are now an estimated 500 million small arms distributed throughout the world, 150 million of those on the African continent.<sup>44</sup> Small arms and, more specifically, the AK47, are now “Africa’s Weapon of Mass Destruction,” according to the Carnegie Endowment for peace.<sup>45</sup> Most recently, the fall of the Libyan government and its longtime dictator Muammar Gaddafi, highlights the importance of how real the threat of instability is to the region of North Africa, and what this vacuum of power means for the international community. In the wake of the Arab Spring, the second- and third-order effects from governmental regimes collapsing as in the case of Libya, constitute a legitimate focus on international law in order to limit small arms and light weapons distribution throughout the world.<sup>46</sup>

In a technologically underdeveloped society, in the twentieth century, ultimate power resides not in those who control the means of production, as postulated by Marx, but in those who control the means of destruction, captured by the soldier/bandit with an AK47.<sup>47</sup>

During the Cold War, much focus was placed upon negotiations for the control and management of nuclear, chemical, and biological weapons, but small arms and light weapons were not given the same attention because the nature of the threat to instability

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<sup>43</sup> Mazzitelli, “The New Transatlantic Bonanza.”

<sup>44</sup> Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, “Nuclear-Weapon-Free-Zones: Past Lessons and Future Prospects,” April 7, 2009, [http://carnegieendowment.org/files/npc\\_nwzf3.pdf](http://carnegieendowment.org/files/npc_nwzf3.pdf).

<sup>45</sup> United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research, *Combating the Proliferation of Small Arms and Light Weapons in West Africa: Handbook for the Training of Armed and Security Forces*, edited by Anatole Ayissi and Ibrahima Sall (Geneva: United Nations, 2005), <http://www.unidir.org/files/publications/pdfs/combating-the-proliferation-of-small-arms-and-light-weapons-in-west-africa-handbook-for-the-training-of-armed-and-security-forces-326.pdf>.

<sup>46</sup> Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, “Nuclear-Weapon-Free-Zones.”

<sup>47</sup> Ibid.

was not viewed as a profound problematic factor.<sup>48</sup> The result in this lack of enforcement through the implementation of treaties, now creates a major challenge and yet a possible opportunity for the entire world. The events resulting from the Arab Spring in North Africa, especially Libya, coupled with the mass distribution of small arms and light weapons in its aftermath, creates a whole new dynamic for the U.N. to contend with. In light of the ongoing uncertainty throughout North and Sub-Saharan Africa, implementing swift and broad changes on how nations build, buy, and sell small arms and light weapons should now be at the forefront on issues in dealing with transnational terrorist organizations. The importance of this issue cannot be underestimated and is paramount for the prospects of stability in developing nations.<sup>49</sup>

One of the most cumbersome aspects for the U.N. involving small arms and light weapons distribution will be the implementation of control mechanisms through treaties and oversight with legitimate state actors. Enforcement through U.N. Security Council resolutions will be a key starting point. The invasion of Iraq in 2003 and the subsequent pilferage of large weapons depots in that country are now being repeated in Libya.<sup>50</sup> Both of these countries are examples of what happens after the state system collapses and what this insecurity does to their applicable regions. When people understand and feel their state security system will have no real means to provide support and protect them from threats within or externally, fearing for their very lives they naturally seek out whatever means possible to provide their own security. When there is an overabundance of small arms and light weapons, as was in Iraq, and now with Libya, simultaneously possessing acute tribal factions, the byproduct becomes a powder keg for mass instability and sheer violence. The fallout over the war in Libya also brings heightened concern to its neighboring countries, most notably Algeria and Egypt, because these countries have long and porous borders that are difficult to control and manage.<sup>51</sup> With the advent of

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<sup>48</sup> United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research, *Combating the Proliferation*.

<sup>49</sup> Ibid.

<sup>50</sup> Jon B. Alterman, "Seeing Through the Fog: Transitional Governments in Libya and Elsewhere," *Center for Strategic and International Studies*, October 6, 2011, [http://csis.org/files/publication/111011\\_MCU\\_Libya\\_Talk.pdf](http://csis.org/files/publication/111011_MCU_Libya_Talk.pdf).

<sup>51</sup> Alterman, "Seeing Through the Fog."

globalization emanating from the end of the Cold War, non-state actors are finding it much easier to transport large quantities of small arms and light weapons.<sup>52</sup> This illicit trade pays huge dividends to these small-scale organizations, but fuels instability in developing nations. Nation states throughout the world and especially in Africa are rapidly losing their monopoly over the use of armed violence and strict control over the flow of arms. Making matters worse is the fact that not only do some developing governments condone small arms and light weapons transfers, but they are also profiting from these sales to non-state actors.<sup>53</sup>

A recent United Nation Panel of governmental experts on small arms and light weapons underscored the reality that conflicts are NOT caused by the small arms and light weapons themselves; rather the conflicts are caused by complex political, socio-economic, cultural and ideological factors. However, the supply of these weapons plays a major role in intensifying and prolonging both interstate and internal conflicts, increasing crime rates, violence and insecurity.<sup>54</sup>

In Libya it is now estimated that more than 20,000 surface to air missiles, capable of shooting down civilian passenger jets, are missing, and are possibly in the hands of non-state actors.<sup>55</sup> Richard Clarke, a former White House counterterrorism advisor recently stated, “I think the probability of al Qaeda being able to smuggle some of the stinger-like missiles out of Libya is probably pretty high.”<sup>56</sup> The dark reality of this statement brings with it a nightmarish scenario for the entire world. Small groups of AQIM and Boko Haram operators possessing these weapons, could essentially walk out to airfields in multiple countries where civilian passenger jets are taxiing, and within minutes a number of them could be targeted and destroyed. The possibility of bringing commercial air flights all over the world to a sudden standstill is highly likely, with these attacks crippling the global economic system. Compare a series of these terrorist attacks

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<sup>52</sup> Ibid.

<sup>53</sup> Ibid.

<sup>54</sup> United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research, *Combating the Proliferation*.

<sup>55</sup> Conway Waddington, “The arms proliferation threat of post-Gaddafi Libya,” *Consultancy Africa Intelligence*, December 19, 2011, [http://www.consultancyafrica.com/index.php?option=com\\_content&view=article&id=917:the-arms-proliferation-threat-of-post-gaddafi-libya-&catid=60:conflict-terrorism-discussion-papers&Itemid=265](http://www.consultancyafrica.com/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=917:the-arms-proliferation-threat-of-post-gaddafi-libya-&catid=60:conflict-terrorism-discussion-papers&Itemid=265).

<sup>56</sup> Ibid.

to what happened to the airliner industry in the wake of the 2010 volcano eruption in Iceland. It is estimated that this one volcanic eruption forced commercial airline companies around the world to lose more than \$1.7 billion in business.<sup>57</sup> This is not even taking into account the large losses in human capital due to people being stranded all over the world, not being able to work as efficiently as usual. This one single volcano brought an essential piece of globalization to a halt, and affected billions of people worldwide. A series of well-rehearsed and planned terrorist attacks of this magnitude would undoubtedly strike extreme fear into a population's ability to not only fly on a regular basis, but would drastically undermine the legitimacy of some of the strongest state run governments in the world. This threat is real, but is not getting the attention needed to push government leaders to make fundamental changes to commercial airliners, save Israel. Israel recognizing this new reality recently started equipping commercial airliners with surface to air missile countermeasures, not strictly different what their military fighter jets are equipped with.<sup>58</sup> The horrific terrorist attacks on September 11, 2001, killed more than 3,000 people, but also caused massive monetary hardship on a number of nations. In the aftermath of these attacks it is estimated that more than \$100 billion was lost.<sup>59</sup> In addition, this forced the U.S. into a 10-year-plus war in Central and Southwest Asia, resulting in the deaths of more than 6,000 U.S. service members, wounding another 30,000, and costing through implicit and explicit means of more than \$1 trillion, while of the same importance leaving tens of thousands of Iraqi and Afghani civilians dead or wounded.<sup>60</sup>

## **F. CHAPTER CONCLUSION**

When taking an objective look into the problems facing governments that are attempting to contend with a more integrated union between Boko Haram and AQIM, it

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<sup>57</sup> "Iceland volcano cloud: The economic impact," *BBC News*, April 20, 2010, <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/8629623.stm>.

<sup>58</sup> Waddington, "The arms proliferation threat."

<sup>59</sup> "One 9/11 Tally: \$3.3 Trillion," *New York Times*, September 8, 2011, [http://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2011/09/08/us/sept-11-reckoning/cost-graphic.html?\\_r=0](http://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2011/09/08/us/sept-11-reckoning/cost-graphic.html?_r=0).

<sup>60</sup> David Wood, "Iraq, Afghanistan War Wounded Pass 50,000," *Huffington Post*, October 26, 2012, [http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2012/10/25/iraq-afghanistan-war-wounded\\_n\\_2017338.html](http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2012/10/25/iraq-afghanistan-war-wounded_n_2017338.html).

is important to note what this merger and union are doing to the structure of African economies along with their political leaders, which subsequently impacts America's foreign policy initiatives in the region. When a nation derives the majority of its wealth from criminal activities, and is one-dimensional in natural resources, it then becomes a slippery slope for political and military leaders to align themselves with criminals, because the payoffs are fast, hard to trace, and lucrative. This only breeds more erratic instability, which then accelerates the momentum of terrorist organizations, while escalating their public relations appeal.<sup>61</sup> This coupled with a significant amount of a nation's wealth being predominantly used for consumption purposes and personal gain, culminates into an acute patronage system that takes root, resulting in funds that are less likely to produce large investments in better education, infrastructure improvements, and well-rounded health care initiatives. Political leaders become bought commodities by drug traffickers, giving way to a perpetual cycle of greed, which in the end depresses real sustained incentives for economic growth, drastically hurting the average African on the street. Drug and human trafficking and weapons proliferation cannot be totally eradicated in Boko Haram and AQIM's zones of operations, but can be managed to an extent in which it is at a reasonable level. Until this is accomplished the U.S. strategic landscape in Africa will continue to face unforeseen challenges.

Boko Haram and AQIM's tactics are changing at all levels of operations. The attacks and kidnappings, along with methods of training, while working through a contraband market of drugs, guns, and human trafficking are impacting the entire North and West African regions. Both groups were assessed recently to be groups that were a somewhat minor threat, but now possess the ability to project their operations across many different borders. What is troublesome is that as both groups evolve and merge with each other, they are placing substantial amounts of stress upon an array of African governments, forcing them to seek assistance from foreign powers. As these two groups build upon recent successes, and learn from each other, the typical response by African governments is to launch broad and indiscriminate security sweeps in zone on possible Boko Haram and AQIM strongholds, causing many innocent civilians to be caught in a

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<sup>61</sup>Adesoji, "Between Maitatsine and Boko Haram."

large internal crossfire. This approach, in conjunction with the interjection of foreign powers, is creating an environment of profound instability. More focus from international governments on capacity building and partnership training needs to be linked forward in dealing with this growing threat. Otherwise the population within the confines of Boko Haram and AQIM will more than likely give more passive and active support to these groups and their operations.

As Nigeria continues to gain strategic importance due to its large proven oil reserves, and boasting the largest populous nation in all of Africa, the linkages between Boko Haram and AQIM are becoming more than just a problem nuisance for outside powers to be concerned about. Given the reality that Nigeria is now the tenth-largest producer of oil in the world, contributes the most peacekeepers to the U.N in Africa, and possesses the ability to impact events not only within West Africa but throughout the subcontinent, the country finds itself in a situation where outside actors need it to be able to stabilize events within its own borders. In order for Nigeria to truly quell the spread of radical Islam from Boko Haram, and the probability of further linkages between it and AQIM, the Nigerian government must focus more energy on combating some of the major driving forces, which are creating a thorough alliance between the two groups. According to the Bureau of African Affairs,

Nigeria still ranks as one of the world's poorest nations, with 75 percent of its population living off of \$1.75 a day. The poverty rate in the Muslim north is stuck around 75 percent, compared to 27 percent in the Christian south, and most contentious is the fact that Nigeria now has a population where two thirds are under the age of 30.<sup>62</sup>

The internal friction within Nigeria is causing enormous strain the entirety of the region.

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<sup>62</sup> *LRA, Boko Haram, Al-Shabaab, AQIM, and Other Sources of Instability in Africa.*

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### **III. BOKO HARAM**

#### **A. CHAPTER INTRODUCTION**

Boko Haram is a terrorist organization that recently evolved out of northern Nigeria. The literal translation of Boko Haram means, “Western education is forbidden.” The group started out its original mission in 2002 with no more than a band of 15 fighters with its leader Mohammed Yusuf. Mohammed Yusuf sought to use armed jihad against Nigerian government and security forces, in a series of deadly attacks. Yusuf was subsequently captured and killed by government security forces during a prison break in 2003. The events leading up to his death are not widely known, leaving the possibility that he was murdered while in custody. Yusuf’s death quickly made him a martyr, further igniting already lingering tensions in the region, and dramatically increasing the number of Boko Haram followers. As of 2013, the number of Boko Haram operational fighters are estimated to be as high as 500.

#### **B. ORGANIZATIONAL CONSTRUCT OF BOKO HARAM**

The organizational construct of Boko Harm is contested, though, by various intelligence sources. This is partially due to information being gathered by Nigerian security forces, the concealment of operator identities, and ongoing efforts by international intelligence agencies. What is clear is that Boko Haram is gaining in strength and lethality. Since 2009, Boko Haram has forged stronger ties and links to AQIM. These ties are grounded in ideology, funding, and illicit trading through arms, drugs, and humans.<sup>63</sup> These connections are being refined through operationally armed sects in the north by the group maintaining robust training camps in five different Nigerian states: Bornu, Kano, Kaduna, Adamawa, and Yola—see Figure 2.<sup>64</sup> While the group is training and conducting attacks, its organizational construct is working to overcome constant reprisals from government security forces. As government forces

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<sup>63</sup> LRA, Boko Haram, Al-Shabaab, AQIM, and Other Sources of Instability in Africa.

<sup>64</sup> J. Peter Pham, “Boko Haram’s Evolving Threat,” *Africa Security Brief*, no. 20 (April 2012), [http://africacenter.org/wp-content/uploads/2012/04/AfricaBriefFinal\\_20.pdf](http://africacenter.org/wp-content/uploads/2012/04/AfricaBriefFinal_20.pdf).

launch security sweeps in their zone, Boko Haram fighters have had to improvise their movements outside their normal zones of operation, including interstate movement of personnel through Niger and Mali. Changing tactics, organizational construct, operational design, and the identities of the fighters, are becoming the mainstay in how the group has eluded destruction from government forces. Although there is speculation by Western intelligence forces that foreign fighters have infiltrated Boko Haram, there is no tangible evidence to prove this theory.<sup>65</sup> The group remains a homegrown entity that seeks (so far) to remain this way, outside of working and dealing with other terrorist organizations to receive funding, training, and other resources. Although this is the case for the time being, the aftermath of the Arab Spring, coupled with the Tuareg rebellion in northern Mali are changing the dynamics rapidly.<sup>66</sup> These changes are of increasing concern to government policymakers, because the levels of coordination and cooperation could bring about a new set of problems to contend with, such as a unionized consolidation of numerous non-state actors to the point where declaring statehood is possible, if not probable.<sup>67</sup>

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<sup>65</sup> Patrick Meehan and Jackie Speier, “Boko Haram: Emerging Threat to the U.S. Homeland,” U.S. House of Representatives Committee on Homeland Security Subcommittee on Counterterrorism and Intelligence, November 30, 2011, <http://homeland.house.gov/sites/homeland.house.gov/files/Boko%20Haram-%20Emerging%20Threat%20to%20the%20US%20Homeland.pdf>.

<sup>66</sup> Alexis Arieff, *Crisis in Mali*, CRS Report R42664 (Washington, DC: Library of Congress, Research Service, January 14, 2013).

<sup>67</sup> Meehan and Speier, “Boko Haram: Emerging Threat.”

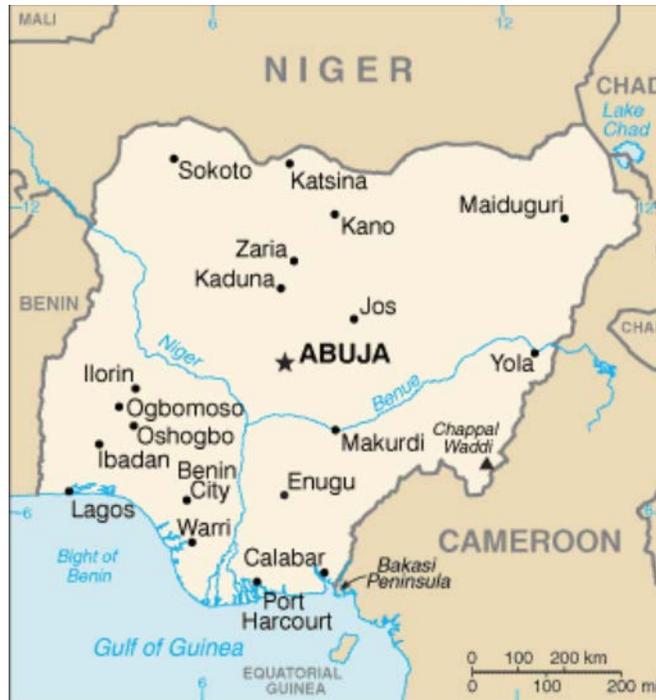


Figure 2. Predominant Area of Operation for Boko Haram<sup>68</sup>

Boko Haram’s organizational construct is developing more in numbers as fighters volunteer or are recruited. As the group’s operational forces continue to gain in numbers, the disposition of its forces changes according to its operational capabilities and requirements. One of these requirements is to ambush government forces and Christian followers from the northern region by waging indiscriminate attacks upon places of worship. The intent is to create one regional Islamic state in the north, by purging anything and everything viewed as “un-Islamic.”<sup>69</sup> In order to achieve this desired end state, Boko Haram needs AQIM for training, advising, and funding, and since both groups have a shared vision and ideology, the threat that these groups project by an alliance, cannot be taken lightly.

<sup>68</sup> Central Intelligence Agency, “Map of Nigeria,” map, <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/graphics/maps/large/ni-map.gif>.

<sup>69</sup> LRA, *Boko Haram, Al-Shabaab, AQIM, and Other Sources of Instability in Africa*.

### **C. WHAT DOES BOKO HARAM WANT?**

Boko Haram seeks to purge the northern region of Nigeria from anything considered Western, especially education. The group desires Sharia law in all 12 northern states, and actively pursues this through a highly developed campaign of violent attacks and suppression against its indigenous population. Since 2002, the group has modeled itself off Taliban preachings and modes of operations in Afghanistan. It officially referred to its original base as “Afghanistan.”<sup>70</sup> The group sought to resist all Western ideologies, systems of economics, and strictly forbid any semblance of Western-style education to its children.<sup>71</sup> Although initially it was a terrorist group with isolationist ambitions, it had to make significant changes to its modes of operations due to effective Nigerian security force countermeasures. However, these countermeasures did not totally weed out the hardliners within the group, and after Muhammad Yusuf’s death, the group reorganized itself underground, and seized upon the emotions of the local populace, then subsequently regrouped while waging an unprecedented wave of brutal attacks upon Nigerian security forces and its large Christian minority.<sup>72</sup>

### **D. LINKAGES BETWEEN BOKO HARAM AND AQIM**

One of the chief concerns with Boko Haram is not knowing if the group has any substantial linkages and direct connections to al-Qaeda. From its original conception, there is little tangible evidence to prove that Boko Haram intended to establish links to al-Qaeda.<sup>73</sup> The group sought to void itself from Western-style democratic systems of governing. Although its original manifesto preached along the same lines as al-Qaeda, there are no real connections of noteworthy significance documenting a linkage between Boko Haram to al-Qaeda.<sup>74</sup> In recent years though, the group has had to change its tactics, techniques, and procedures (TTPs) in order to survive. These changes are a direct

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<sup>70</sup> Shannon Connell, “To Be Or Not To Be: Is Boko Haram a Foreign Terrorist Organization?” *Global Security Studies* 3, no. 3 (2012).

<sup>71</sup> Ibid.

<sup>72</sup> Meehan and Speier, “Boko Haram: Emerging Threat.”

<sup>73</sup> Andrew Walker, “What Is Boko Haram?” *Special Report* 308 (June 2012), *United States Institute of Peace*, <http://www.usip.org/sites/default/files/resources/SR308.pdf>.

<sup>74</sup> Ibid.

result from the harsh and repressive government crackdowns on members of the group and their bases of operations. As the group becomes more efficient in carrying out targeted killings, kidnappings, and mass suicide bombing attacks, Nigerian government security forces consequently use disproportionate large-scale security sweeps in those zones in order to disrupt any efforts for Boko Haram to reconstitute its forces.<sup>75</sup> These broad security force sweeps have created a conducive environment for the group to become more transnational in nature. The group, being fully aware on where the international borders are, then uses these boundaries to their advantage. The border of Nigeria and Niger are a case in point. Boko Haram uses Taliban methods of operation and employment, staging cross-border hit-and-run attacks as they did in Pakistan to attack U.S. and Afghan National Security Forces (ANSF).<sup>76</sup> The problems associated with fighting AQIM and Boko Haram, are that they then become compounded, in that there has to be a more concentrated effort from both host nation governments to bolster their borders with a better security apparatus. The border between Niger and Nigeria are ones in particular that need better enforcement, in order to efficiently counter the flow of fighters moving back and forth.<sup>77</sup>

The fact that Boko Haram has been forced to improvise its tactics because of effective Nigerian security forces initiatives brings about concerns of a new dynamic in how the group operates. The group's initial intention was to remain isolationist in nature. From its conception no real undertaking was architected to forge international ties. This evolution chartered a different course as Boko Haram suffered setbacks against overwhelming military and police advantages. As a result, the group is now aligning itself more methodically with AQIM and other affiliates. The group has had to become more transnational in order to survive. The problem associated with ungoverned territory has only helped Boko Haram in a survival sense. The group uses these empty and non-regulated spaces to its advantage, and only when host nation governments build adequate

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<sup>75</sup> LRA, Boko Haram, Al-Shabaab, AQIM, and Other Sources of Instability in Africa.

<sup>76</sup> Amir Ramin and Nadia Siddiqui, "Afghanistan and Pakistan Unspoken Border Dispute," *World Policy Institute*, January 14, 2013, <http://www.isn.ethz.ch/Digital-Library/Articles/Detail?lng=en&id=157013>.

<sup>77</sup> William Ehwarieme, "The Military Factor in Nigeria's Democratic Stability, 1999–2009," *Armed Forces & Society* 37, no. 3 (July 2011): 494–511, doi: 10.1177/0095327X10382217.

security zones in concert with better control measures over their borders, will the real likelihood of defeating Boko Haram become a reality.<sup>78</sup>

## E. CHAPTER CONCLUSION

Boko Haram seeks to create a breakaway state from Nigeria. Its intentions are specific; resist all forms of Western education and influence, implement Sharia law, establish an Islamic state, and finally, if conditions warrant itself for future survival, help establish a larger extension of statehood in Northern Nigeria and the Sahel, by forging alliances between AQIM along with other affiliates, such as al-Shabaab in East Africa.<sup>79</sup> Boko Haram inherently believes that the current state of Nigeria is infected and corrupted by Western and Christian governments, whose intent is to infringe on the rights of all Muslims and to extract its country's abundance of petroleum.<sup>80</sup> Although the group started out with a low number of operatives, it has evolved from an annoyance to a sizeable threat against the legitimacy of the Nigerian state. The organization proves that it possesses the wherewithal to withstand setbacks from government countermeasures, and learns how to adapt as it continues its operations. It does this while launching a well-thought out public relations campaign against the government, by latching on to the grievances of the population. Such grievances are large-scale wealth inequality, government corruption, and indiscriminate government security force crackdowns. All this leads to more frustrations and anger toward the Nigerian state, while increasing its numbers by the recruitment of disenfranchised youths.<sup>81</sup>

Boko Haram linkages are becoming more profound with AQIM. Boko Haram uses transnational borders to achieve support in logistics, operations, intelligence, and public relations. Although the group originally did not start its operations and methods with the intention to become a transnational terrorist organization, it has been forced to in

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<sup>78</sup> Angel Rabasa et al., *Ungoverned Territories: Understanding and Reducing Terrorism Risks*, MG-561-AF (Santa Monica, CA: RAND, 2007).

<sup>79</sup> *LRA, Boko Haram, Al-Shabaab, AQIM, and Other Sources of Instability in Africa*.

<sup>80</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>81</sup> A.I. Ajayi, "'Boko Haram' and terrorism in Nigeria: Exploratory and explanatory notes," *Global Advanced Research Journal of History, Political Science and International Relations* 1, no. 5 (2012): 103–107, <http://garj.org/garjhpsir/pdf/2012/july/Ajayi.pdf>.

order to survive. It uses models from other known terrorist organizations, such as The Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC), AQIM, and the Taliban in Afghanistan by way of drug and human trafficking, small arms and light weapons proliferation (SALW), training, and money laundering. The paradox that hampers policymakers in Nigeria is that the harsh security measures executed against Boko Haram have created an environment for the group to become even more powerful and influential, while establishing more sustainable links to AQIM.<sup>82</sup>

Nigeria is a nation that is dramatically split along ethnic and religious lines. Its constitution states, “that the office of the presidency will be rotated between Muslim and Christian citizens.”<sup>83</sup> This adoption under constitutional law has recently come under intense friction because the current president is a Christian, who took over a Muslim president who died prematurely. This untimely death, and a replacement Christian president, only helped to ignite more complexities involving ethnic fault lines. Boko Haram continues to use this as an example of one of its major grievances against the state. This ethnic and religious friction is also compounded by the fact that the country’s vast oil reserves are located in the south of the country, causing internal competition and distrust between the north and south. This is even more prevalent throughout the region of the country where state governors tend to exert more influence because they are overseeing the extraction and sale of the petroleum to foreign mega corporations, and since these governors tend to be of Christian faith, they wield more influence over the office of the presidency.<sup>84</sup> Until the Nigeria policymakers in the south can come to a reasonable and sustainable way forward in how to incorporate members of the north more thoroughly into the strategic decisions the country makes, no real tangible results will occur involving the ceasing of hostilities.

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<sup>82</sup> Oluwaseun Bamidele, “Boko Haram Catastrophic Terrorism—An Albatross to National Peace, Security and Sustainable Development in Nigeria,” *Journal of Sustainable Development in Africa* 14, no. 1 (2012), <http://www.jsda-africa.com/Jsda/Vol14No1-Spring2012A/PDF/Boko%20Haram%20Catastrophic%20Terrorism.Oluwaseun%20Bamidele.pdf>.

<sup>83</sup> Robert Ruby and Timothy Samuel Shah, “Nigeria’s Presidential Election: The Christian-Muslim Divide,” *The Pew Forum on Religion & Public Life*, March 21, 2007, <http://www.pewforum.org/Politics-and-Elections/Nigerias-Presidential-Election-The-Christian-Muslim-Divide.aspx>.

<sup>84</sup> Bamidele, “Boko Haram Catastrophic Terrorism.”

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## IV. AQIM

### A. CHAPTER INTRODUCTION

AQIM, which evolved from a Salafist Group for Preaching and Combat (GSPC), was a branch off the Armed Islamic Group (GIA). The GSPC lost the majority of its legitimacy from its indigenous population due to its brutal tactics against those who posed any type of resistance, while simultaneously being pushed out of its operating environment from successful Algerian government's counterterrorism initiatives in the 1990's.<sup>85</sup> As a result, the GSPC had to change trajectory and then morphed into its current platform, AQIM.<sup>86</sup> The linkages forged through time and space in the region are grounded on numerous operational capabilities, which include the movement of foreign fighters, illegal drugs, small arms and light weapons proliferation, human trafficking, and reminisces from sponsors across the world.<sup>87</sup>

### B. ORGANIZATIONAL CONSTRUCT OF AQIM

AQIM is structured and organized into battalions. The total number of AQIM operators is estimated around 1,000.<sup>88</sup> Each battalion is assigned to a "zone of operation" and inside each zone are approximately 300 fighters. See Figure 3.<sup>89</sup> Although these battalions are fairly compatible in numbers with standard conventional military battalions, they operate in decentralized methods of operation. Most of these fighters consist of small cohesive teams that focus on quick hit-and-run tactics against the critical infrastructure of host nation states. Kidnapping, drug/human trafficking, and acquiring small arms and light weapons is predominant in their intent and objectives.

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<sup>85</sup> Ricardo René Larémont, "Al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb: Terrorism and Counterterrorism in the Sahel," *African Security* 4, no. 4 (2011): 242–268, November 29, 2011, doi: 10.1080/19392206.2011.628630.

<sup>86</sup> Ibid.

<sup>87</sup> Ibid.

<sup>88</sup> Ibid.

<sup>89</sup> Ibid.

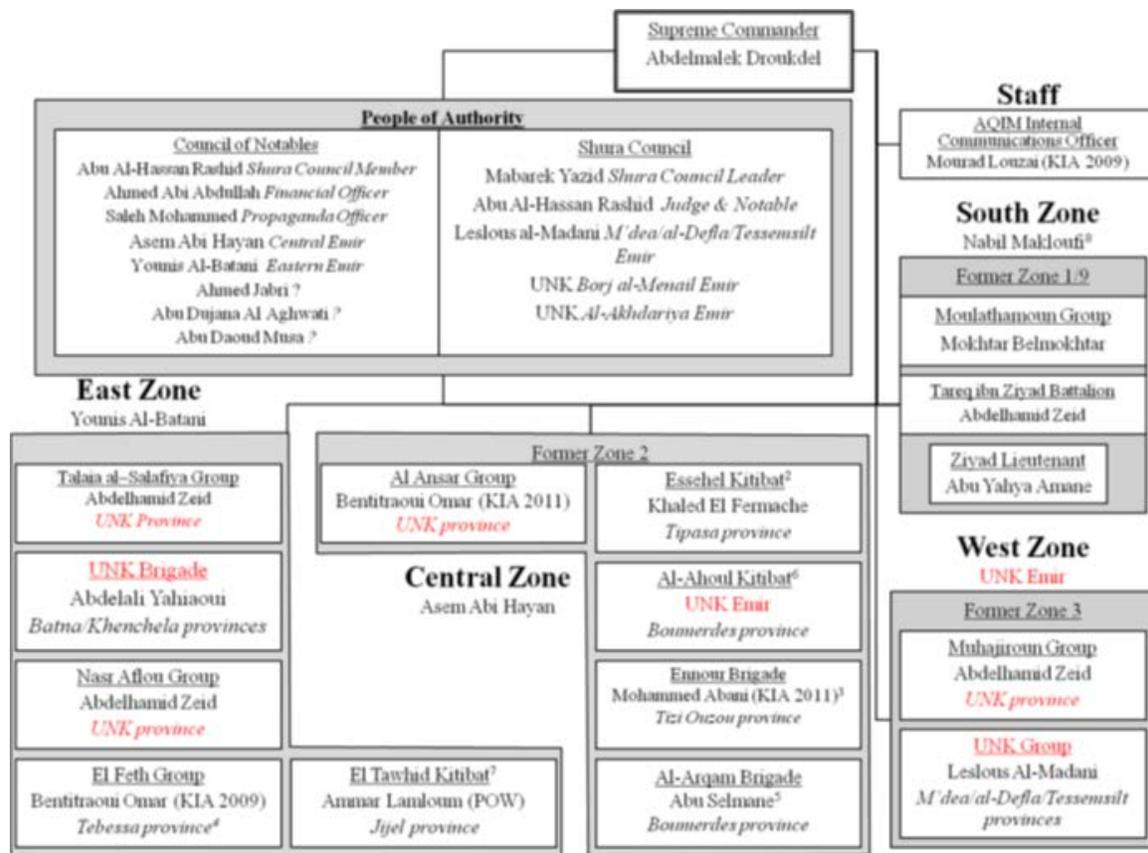


Figure 3. AQIM's Current Structure, Jane's Defense (2010)<sup>90</sup>

The official formation of AQIM was formally announced in January 2007.<sup>91</sup> The group's intent in doing this was to build a formal alliance with al-Qaeda Central (AQC). The objective of this alliance would be twofold. First, by announcing this alignment, it would then garner support in the form of resources from AQC. Second, this overt alignment would provide a venue for a public relations campaign for the targeted audience in the Maghreb. AQIM was created from an offshoot of GSPC, but evolved into a different construct due to grievances against the GSPC from other Islamist groups who sanctioned the GSPC for their brutal tactics against the population during its struggle with the Algerian government. The GSPC had a notorious history of decimating entire villages in their zones of operations. Anyone who remotely did not follow the GSPC's

<sup>90</sup> Jane's World Insurgency and Terrorism, "Al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb."

<sup>91</sup> Le Sage, "The Evolving Threat of al Qaeda."

ideology or platform faced harsh penalties. These methods and tactics led the Algerian government to respond swiftly, and as a result the GSPC was forced to retreat into the Sahel, mainly in Northern Mali, Niger, and Chad.<sup>92</sup>

Once AQIM found refuge in the Sahel, as seen in Figure 4, it was able to reorganize and reconstitute its forces. Along with this reconsolidation, the group became particularly aware of the shortsightedness of its extreme tactics against the local populace, and subsequently embarked on establishing linkages with the population through intermarriages in the local clans, building confidence with tribal elders through better social service initiatives, and finally ensuring that the people in these ungoverned lands were given adequate security against the encroachment of government and foreign forces.<sup>93</sup> This change in tactics, and establishment of deeper linkages with the population in the Sahel, in particular the Tuaregs, helped the group to evolve into the current AQIM organization.<sup>94</sup>

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<sup>92</sup> Laurence Aïda Ammour, “Regional Security Cooperation in the Maghreb and Sahel: Algeria’s Pivotal Ambivalence,” *Africa Security Brief*, no. 18 (February 2012), <http://www.ndu.edu/press/lib/pdf/Africa-Security-Brief/ASB-18.pdf>.

<sup>93</sup> Ibid.

<sup>94</sup> Le Sage, “The Evolving Threat of al Qaeda.”

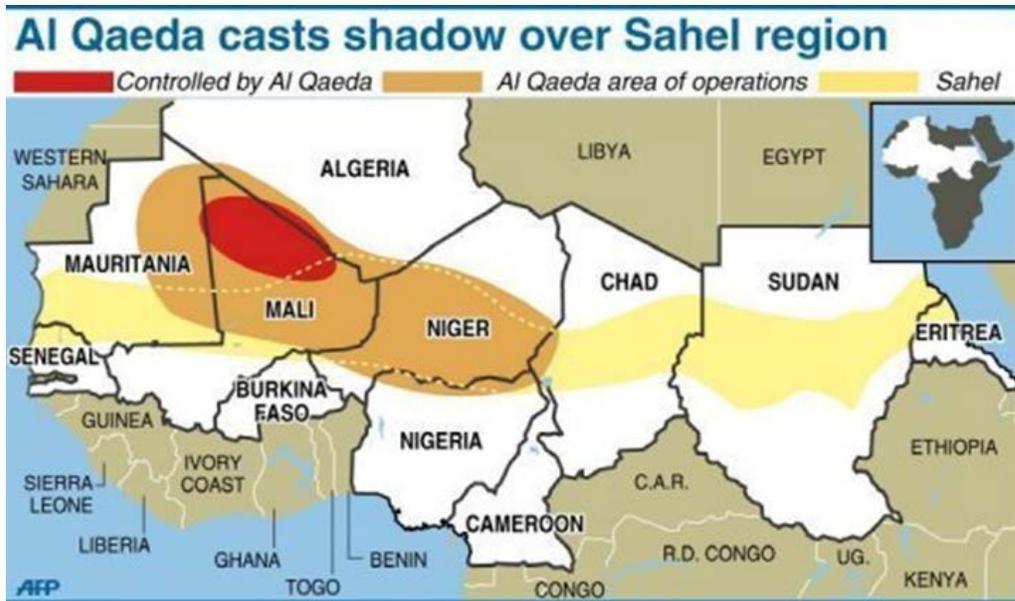


Figure 4. AQIM Area of Operation (2012)<sup>95</sup>

### C. WHAT DOES AQIM WANT?

AQIM seeks to obtain a regional area or Islamic state inside Africa. It bases its beliefs and projected ideology as an offshoot to AQC. As the group becomes more centralized, and builds upon its stated platform, it works aggressively to rid the Maghreb region of Africa from any foreign involvement. AQIM believes that any government established in what it believes to be their area of operation must implement Sharia law, and if these governments refuse, they are therefore apostate “unbeliever” governments. Its main focus areas are to direct operations in Algeria, Libya, Mali, Mauritania, Morocco, and Tunisia. However, as AQIM is targeted by area governments and international or Western-style governments, the group has had to change bases of operations, and continues to shift forces inside various territories.

From a survival perspective this shifting of forces is compelling the group to merge with groups like Boko Haram and even al-Shabaab in Eastern Africa.<sup>96</sup> From a

<sup>95</sup> Agence France-Presse, “Al casts shadow over Sahel region,” map, August 14, 2010, <http://www.google.com/hostednews/afp/media/ALeqM5gMsHJnLtONrYVI9NIP8Km9QzG2XA?size=l>.

<sup>96</sup> LRA, Boko Haram, Al-Shabaab, AQIM, and Other Sources of Instability in Africa.

broader perspective, AQIM uses Islamic history in Africa as a method to justify its legitimacy, in that it believes that the people of the Maghreb region have an internal right to take back what was taken from them in Spain, referring to the spread of Islam all the way into Spanish territory. This objective appears to be out of reach for the time being, but should be understood that the group has not forgotten its history in the region, and uses Islamic history to further generate grievances.

#### **D. LINKAGES BETWEEN AQIM AND BOKO HARAM**

From its inception, AQIM has sought out aggressively to become a transnational terrorist organization.<sup>97</sup> In order for the group to fulfill its mission and intent, it needs to recruit members from all over the Sahel, and West Africa. Boko Haram's original intention is to form a breakaway nation in Northern Nigeria. This separatist movement is in conjunction with its intent as an isolationist group, in that it wishes to form its Islamic state, and be left to exert its influence over the predominate Muslims in the 12 states.<sup>98</sup> It seeks to do this through forced expulsions of its large Christian minority back to the south.<sup>99</sup> What is changing Boko Haram's isolationist model is the ever-growing importance of AQIM in the region. Boko Haram's recent setbacks are a direct result from effective Nigerian government security force operations in the Northern region, pushing Boko Haram into other areas outside and inside the Sahel, including Niger, Chad, Ivory Coast, and Burkina Faso.<sup>100</sup>

In aftermath of the conflict in Libya during the Arab Spring, a large number of black Africans were forced out of Libya. These Africans were on the payroll of dictator Muammar Gaddafi. When the Gaddafi regime fell, with Gaddafi himself executed, these African mercenaries lost their livelihoods, leaving them with no option but to return back into the Sahel. These fighters, mainly from Tuareg ethnic dissent, returned home only to find their situation even more dire, because in the region of northern Mali, southern

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<sup>97</sup> Le Sage, "The Evolving Threat of al Qaeda."

<sup>98</sup> Walker, "What Is Boko Haram?"

<sup>99</sup> Ibid.

<sup>100</sup> *LRA, Boko Haram, Al-Shabaab, AQIM, and Other Sources of Instability in Africa.*

Algeria, and portions of Niger, no sustainable form of infrastructure was in place to provide the means necessary for these fighters to earn a living.<sup>101</sup> This gave way to large-scale relative deprivation, while simultaneously building up grievances toward the established government.

AQIM was already operating in the region and seized upon this vacuum by recruiting a number of these disenfranchised fighters.<sup>102</sup> As AQIM gathered these fighters into their fold, the group's influence and strength gained momentum. This contributed to AQIM's rise in strength and influence. The vast numbers of weapons of which the Libyan army lost control compound the problem that local African governments face in confronting these groups.<sup>103</sup> Enormous amounts of munitions bunkers were pilfered by fleeing fighters, bringing these weapons back to Sub-Saharan Africa. It is estimated that more than 20,000 shoulder-fired SAMs are still missing from weapons caches in Libya, causing a heightened concern that they may be used to shoot down civilian airliners.<sup>104</sup>

With these new weapons and fighters, AQIM now has the means to further its intent on creating regional Islamic safe havens by the merger of various criminal networks and terrorist organizations, including Boko Haram.<sup>105</sup> These linkages are being further forged by the growing dominance of globalization. The penetration of mass and social media, global transportation systems, economies of scale, internet usage, and global illicit trade, are making drug trafficking, weapons proliferation, the stealing of intellectual property, and forced migration of non-aligned ethnic groups even easier in order to help establish deeper ties among one another.<sup>106</sup>

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<sup>101</sup> Arieff, *Crisis in Mali*.

<sup>102</sup> Arieff, *Crisis in Mali*.

<sup>103</sup> Religions for Peace, *Small Arms and Light Weapons: Africa, A Resource Guide for Religions of Peace* (New York: United Nations, 2009).  
[http://www.un.org/disarmament/education/docs/SALW\\_Africa.pdf](http://www.un.org/disarmament/education/docs/SALW_Africa.pdf)

<sup>104</sup> Ibid.

<sup>105</sup> Bookwright, "The African Caliphate," 2009, <http://www.bogvaerker.dk/wordpress/?p=280>.

<sup>106</sup> Moisés Naím, "The Five Wars of Globalization," *Foreign Policy* (January/February 2003): 28–37, <http://web.clas.ufl.edu/users/zselden/Course%20Readings/Naim.pdf>.

The linkages being formed between Boko Haram and AQIM are becoming more widespread for distinct reasons resulting from an array of dynamics. AQIM needs more resources, contraband trafficking, and operatives in order to become a transnational terrorist organization, making an alliance with Boko Haram helpful in its desired end state. Boko Haram is facing even more pressure from effective government-backed incursions on their bases of operations. These two groups are increasingly finding attractive the opportunities to work with each other for a common cause, even if their methods and specific modes of operations have a different approach. Both groups want an Islamic state with strict obedience to Sharia law implementation, and both groups resist Western influences and encroachments on Muslim lands, while simultaneously having the need for funding, training, and other resources.<sup>107</sup>

#### **E. CHAPTER CONCLUSION**

AQIM is a terrorist organization that is gaining substantial influence not only in the Maghreb, but also throughout the Sahel and into West Africa. The Libyan debacle emanating from the Arab Spring is only increasing the magnitude of the problem in containing AQIM. The areas where AQIM is operating are ripe for insurrection, and compounding this problem is those areas are oversupplied with a massive amount of small arms, light weapons, and SAMs. What makes matters worse is the onset of a new dynamic; a more robust integration between AQIM and Boko Haram. This alliance built around common interests and ideology are increasing the probability of a breakaway region for both groups to form a possible state-like zone of operation consisting of ungoverned spaces in areas of Niger, Mali, Northern Nigeria, portions of Burkina Faso, and small areas in southern Algeria.

The linkages between AQIM and Boko Haram are becoming more acute. This is despite ongoing efforts from host nation states and the international community, hence the 2013 French and AU invasion of Northern Mali. The fact that more military and security force suppression and projection are taking place in vicinity of their bases of operation, could possibly be only prolonging a conflict that needs to be suppressed more

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<sup>107</sup> Meehan and Speier, "Boko Haram: Emerging Threat."

thoroughly through a better state sponsored information operations campaign. This is not to state that interdiction measures should be adopted by host nation governments or the international community, but the longer these entities impose the use of harsh and repressive tactics, they are actually assisting both groups in their indirect desire to become more integrated.<sup>108</sup>

AQIM has openly stated it wishes to become a transnational terrorist organization, and in order to do this more cohesively, it needs to consolidate resources, arms, contraband trade, and personnel. Disenfranchised groups operating near AQIM present a lucrative opportunity to merge an alliance into an organization that has more efficient and effective means in their stated missions and intents. An Arab Spring awakening in Sub-Saharan Africa similar to the Arab Spring of the north, but stoked by the grievances of both AQIM and Boko Haram, is a possibility that should be of concern to leaders all over the world. Otherwise, the aftermath of such a tumultuous event could have drastic repercussions for the entire continent.<sup>109</sup>

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<sup>108</sup> Arieff, *Crisis in Mali*.

<sup>109</sup> *Ibid.*

## **V. U.S. COUNTERTERRORISM EFFORTS IN AFRICA: A DIFFERENT STRATEGY TO LINGERING PROBLEMS**

### **A. CHANGING THE STATUS QUO IN DEALING WITH BOKO HARAM AND AQIM**

One of the main issues in confronting and combating a more unionized merger between Boko Haram and AQIM is first and foremost understanding what the nature of the grievances are in keeping these groups viable. In Africa, most of the problems local governments must contend with is their populace believes they cannot provide essential services and security. In areas where there is hardly any government interaction or reach, Africans must build their own version of localism in order to insure that their basic needs are met.<sup>110</sup> However, the normal response from external actors in fighting Boko Haram and AQIM is capacity building through military training exercises.<sup>111</sup> Military exercises are a good way forward in building partnership and finding military solutions to combat possible security threats, but the vast majority of the issues associated with AQIM and Boko Haram stem from political and social problems.<sup>112</sup> Both groups need support from local populations to survive, yet the majority of the local inhabitants in Boko Haram and AQIM's are not loyal global jihadist, rather they are disenfranchised with their governments, and are desperately in need of assistance in their plight.<sup>113</sup>

If the U.S. and other nations that are heavily involved in Africa want sustainable change, then the focus needs to be more on the building of African institutions. This is paramount over capacity-building military exercises. Additionally, if and when military exercises are being performed, external actors should highlight that the military's main purpose is to uphold the country's constitution, and protecting the welfare of its citizens,

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<sup>110</sup> Jessica Piombo, "Perspectives on African Security Challenges: Cross Cutting Issues and Policy Implications, Summary of Capstone Project and Findings," *U.S. Naval Postgraduate School, Center on Contemporary Conflict*, September 2012, [http://mercury.ethz.ch/serviceengine/Files/ISN/155506/ipublicationdocument\\_singledocument/4b2c1106-7625-48a4-8947-8531f10f27d6/en/2012\\_011\\_African\\_Security\\_Challenges.pdf](http://mercury.ethz.ch/serviceengine/Files/ISN/155506/ipublicationdocument_singledocument/4b2c1106-7625-48a4-8947-8531f10f27d6/en/2012_011_African_Security_Challenges.pdf).

<sup>111</sup> Ibid.

<sup>112</sup> Ibid.

<sup>113</sup> Ibid.

versus propping up the presidential regime.<sup>114</sup> If more focus can be placed on the building of civilian institutions, it is reasonable to assess that more long-term positive effects by way of industry and education will be the byproducts of change further in assisting a broader sector of the society. This will then hopefully lead to the establishment of a middle-class, giving way to a population that has the ability to make ends meet, and not relying on false government promises and turning to groups like Boko Haram and AQIM to assist them. Good governance needs to be at the forefront of U.S. interaction. Military partnership and exercises should be secondary.

## **B. AFRICOM'S COUNTERTERRORISM STRATEGY**

The creation of The United States African Command (AFRICOM) was a fundamental reaction and acknowledgement by the U.S. Government that Africa was gaining in strategic importance. Prior to the creation of this command, Africa was divided between CENTCOM, PACOM, and EURCOM. It was believed that by creating this new command, military and policy leaders could streamline their efforts toward Africa in a more fluid manner, in that having one four-star general reporting directly to the Secretary of Defense (SECDEF) on matters of strategy and operations, as opposed to being divided among three different commanders. AFRICOM would be labeled the “Command Plus” because it would be the first major command to have a fully integrated civilian component.<sup>115</sup> AFRICOM’s commander would now have a Department of State (DoS) counterpart to help advise and implement DoS initiatives on the continent.<sup>116</sup> This change in command structure promoted AFRICOM to be a command that was rooted more in its ability to connect with Africans through humanitarian efforts and other important issues like security cooperation and disaster relief.<sup>117</sup> This approach was somewhat different than typical combatant commands, which are more grounded in military operations and security sector reform.

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<sup>114</sup> Jessica Piombo, “Perspectives on African Security Challenges.”

<sup>115</sup> Lauren Ploch, *Africa Command: U.S. Strategic Interests and the Role of the U.S. Military in Africa*, CRS Report RL34003 (Washington, DC: Library of Congress, Congressional Research Service, July 22, 2011).

<sup>116</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>117</sup> *Ibid.*

Since AFRICOM's inception, the command has been fighting a public relations campaign on all fronts. Much of the friction and resistance toward AFRICOM ironically came from inside the U.S. government.<sup>118</sup> U.S. policy leaders felt as though the command was created hastily and without any real oversight.<sup>119</sup> Congressman Donald Payne from New Jersey even stated that he was "shocked and dismayed that [he] basically woke up one morning only to find out that he and his staff were not even notified, or consulted on the creation of this new command."<sup>120</sup> The DoS was also initially angered by the fact that it was hardly briefed by the White House on its new role, and knew that by creating this "Command Plus," the department would have to provide what scant personnel and precious resources it could toward this effort, while being fully engaged heavily in the rebuilding of Iraq and Afghanistan.<sup>121</sup> In the backdrop of this homegrown resistance from U.S. leaders, Africans predominantly were not at all thrilled by this new command either.<sup>122</sup> Much of the resistance from Africans was rooted in painful memories from their colonial experiences.<sup>123</sup> Africans looked at this new command with distrust, and believed that AFRICOM, with its focus primarily on humanitarian and partnership initiatives, was nothing more than one large sales pitch for the international community.<sup>124</sup> America's real intentions were to establish deeper ties to the continent in order to extract resources, slow an expansive and projecting China, while also fighting their "Global War on Terrorism" (GWOT).<sup>125</sup> Another issue for U.S. policymakers to contend with was where to establish this new command. The vast majority of leaders and strategic planners felt as though the command should be

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<sup>118</sup> U.S. Government Accountability Office, Force Structure: Preliminary Observations on the Progress and Challenges Associated with Establishing the U.S. Africa Command: Testimony Before the Subcommittee on National Security and Foreign Affairs, statement of John Pendleton, Director Defense Capabilities and Management Issues, GAO-08-947T, July 15, 2008, <http://www.gao.gov/assets/130/120611.pdf>.

<sup>119</sup> Ibid.

<sup>120</sup> James J.F. Forest and Rebecca Crispin, "AFRICOM: Troubled Infancy, Promising Future," *Contemporary Security Policy* 30, no. 1 (April 2009): 5–27, doi: 10.1080/13523260902759753.

<sup>121</sup> Ibid.

<sup>122</sup> Ibid.

<sup>123</sup> Ibid.

<sup>124</sup> Ibid.

<sup>125</sup> Forest and Crispin, "AFRICOM: Troubled Infancy."

positioned on the continent. Liberia almost instantly proposed to have the command established in its country, while other nations such as South Africa deeply resisted the idea in that establishing AFRICOM in Africa was a direct violation of sovereignty.<sup>126</sup> Nevertheless after much debate and scrutiny from the U.S. Senate, AFRICOM was formally flagged and established at Kelly Barracks in Stuttgart Germany, February 1, 2008.<sup>127</sup>

Africa holds growing geo-strategic importance. We are committed to working with African nations to strengthen their domestic capabilities and the regional capacity of the African Union to support post-conflict transformations, consolidate democratic transitions, and improve peacekeeping and disaster responses.<sup>128</sup>

As AFRICOM worked through an array of complex public relation dynamics, the command found itself wrestling with how to project itself upon the continent without fanning the flames of external discontent, namely from Africans. The command spent more than a year pushing forth an agenda that would harness all the action arms and lines of effort from not only the military but from a wealth of governmental agencies. The United States Agency for International Development (USAID) would take the lead on developmental projects and efforts, while the DoS would work in concert with the military to propose diplomatic solutions. In a testimony before congress, Teresa Whelan, who was Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense for African Affairs, stated the following, “AFRICOM is about helping Africans build greater capacity to assure their own security to support a variety of security and economic assistance initiatives.”<sup>129</sup> It was apparent that the intent of AFRICOM was to help Africans find solutions to their problems without any large-scale involvement from U.S. military forces. However, this intention and undertaking changed dramatically when the Arab Spring erupted in the nation of Libya.

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<sup>126</sup> Forest and Crispin, “AFRICOM: Troubled Infancy.”

<sup>127</sup> Ryan Henry and Walter L. Sharp, “Stand Up Of U.S. Africa Command,” Department of Defense Special Briefing, Arlington, VA: Pentagon Briefing Room, February 7, 2007.

<sup>128</sup> Hallinan, “The U.S. and Africa.

<sup>129</sup> Edward Newman, “Securitizing vs. desecuritizing African problems,” *Contemporary Security Policy* 30, no. 1 (April 2009): 67–71. doi: 10.1080/13523260902760132.

In February 2011, intense civil unrest escalated all over Libya. The aftermath of the Arab Spring in Egypt spilled over into Libya, and as a result heavy fighting between those loyal to Muammar Qaddafi and members of the National Transitional Council (NTC) took place on a scale as never seen in the history of that nation.<sup>130</sup> Mass atrocities from both sides were commonplace. Libya, the second-richest nation on the African continent and the region's second-largest producer of oil, generated enormous concern and outrage from the international community.<sup>131</sup> The nations of NATO immediately convened and began planning options and contingencies on how to intervene there. Likewise, AFRICOM was given at least initially Command and Control (C2) of this international intervention, and on February 26, 2011, backed by UN Security Council Resolution number 1970, *Operation Odyssey Dawn* commenced. This was to be AFRICOM's baptism of fire.<sup>132</sup>

During *Operation Odyssey Dawn* AFRICOM maintained command and control for no more than nine days, subsequently relinquishing its authority to the NATO command located in Brussels, Belgium.<sup>133</sup> This quick handover by AFRICOM was twofold in intention. The first was to show the international community that *Operation Odyssey Dawn* was not an American unilateral undertaking; rather it was a coalition of NATO members and willing participants from members of the Arab League.<sup>134</sup> Second, the policy and military leaders that created AFRICOM were extremely wary about how this operation would be perceived by Africans. The leaders were concerned that it would legitimize the Africans' argument that AFRICOM was no different from any other combatant command; all the public relations salesmanship leading up to the creation of the new command was nothing more than a facade concocted by U.S. planners who, from the beginning, had ulterior motives and aspirations about gaining a foothold into Africa.<sup>135</sup>

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<sup>130</sup> John CK Daly, "Libya: AFRICOM's Combat Christening," *Geopoliticalmonitor Intelligence Corp*, March 28, 2011, <http://www.geopoliticalmonitor.com/libya-africoms-combat-christening>.

<sup>131</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>132</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>133</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>134</sup> Mary Stata, "No Silver Bullet to End the LRA," *Third Way Café*, December 4, 2009, <http://www.thirdway.com/WV/?Page=5206|No+Silver+Bullet+to+End+the+LRA>.

<sup>135</sup> Stata, "No Silver Bullet."

### C. OIL, TERRORISM, AND NON-STATE ACTORS

While giving a speech in February 2007, former President Bush announced the creation of a new unified combatant command, stating

U.S. African Command (AFRICOM) would promote U.S. national security interest and objectives in Africa and the surrounding waters. This new command will strengthen our security cooperation with Africa and help to create new opportunities to bolster the capabilities of our partners in Africa. AFRICOM will enhance our efforts to help bring peace and security to the people of Africa and promote our common goals: good development, health, education, democracy, and economic growth.<sup>136</sup>

The creation of AFRICOM was derived from strategic planners who finally recognized the growing importance and impact of Africa on the international system. Some of this strategy was a byproduct and reaction from the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001, which made fighting transnational terrorism even more important anywhere in the world. Other issues involved the discovery of large oil reserves in the Gulf of Guinea, and China's involvement on the continent. In the past, the African continent was divided among three different commands: United States Central Command (CENTCOM), United States Pacific Command (PACOM), and mostly overseen by the United States European Command (EURCOM). Creating AFRICOM was seen as a way to streamline U.S. foreign policy initiatives, and military objectives in a more fluid manner.

AFRICOM was created with original understanding from senior military planners that the continent was gaining significant importance in the strategic realm of geopolitics. The possible changes on approach and engagement toward Africa are grounded in three fundamental areas: newly discovered oil, predominantly located in the Gulf of Guinea, competition with the People's Republic of China (PRC), and the growing threat and rise of rogue non-state actors.<sup>137</sup> "Africa now exports over 60 percent of its oil to China, and 17 percent to the United States."<sup>138</sup> What is important about these figures is that Africa is

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<sup>136</sup> Ploch, Africa Command: U.S. Strategic Interests.

<sup>137</sup> Carmel Davis, "AFRICOM's Relationship to Oil, Terrorism and China," *Orbis* 53, no. 1 (January 2009): 122–136, [http://www.relooney.info/SI\\_Oil-Politics/China-Energy-Oil-Africa\\_31.pdf](http://www.relooney.info/SI_Oil-Politics/China-Energy-Oil-Africa_31.pdf).

<sup>138</sup> *Ibid.*

viewed by many to be a safety net for importing oil and as an alternative to the Middle East, which suffers from constant internal volatility. The nations of Equatorial Guinea, Angola, and Gabon are undergoing fundamental economic structural changes due to recent discoveries of large oil reserves in the past ten years, and are being invested in heavily by China.<sup>139</sup> The Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), which possesses enormous amounts of mineral wealth, is widely viewed as a priority for resource extraction initiative from China, possibly pushing General Ham, in making DRC the “main effort” target country for AFRICOM’s projection.<sup>140</sup>

#### **D. BOKO HARAM AND AQIM: AFRICOM’S ENDURING CONFLICT**

The rise of non-state actors on the African continent is causing AFRICOM to change its priorities and how it projects itself. As previously stated AFRICOM’s original intent was to be a command not grounded in typical combatant command TTPs. Its original construct was slated to approach the continent with an array of action arms from not just the military, but also from civilian entities, and center its mission essential tasks list (METL) around humanitarian efforts.<sup>141</sup> As AFRICOM became more engaged in Africa, the command is finding itself having to focus much of its effort on combating groups like Boko Haram and AQIM. The following is AFRICOM’s original draft mission statement as briefed in a congressional testimony on the 8<sup>th</sup> of December 2007:

U.S. Africa Command promotes U.S. National Security objectives by working with African states and regional organizations to help strengthen stability and security in the Area of Responsibility (AOR). U.S. African Command leads the in-theater Department of Defense (DoD) response to support other U.S. Government (USG) agencies. In concert with other USG and international partners, U.S. Africa Command conducts theater security cooperation activities to assist in building security capacity and improve accountable governance. As directed, U.S. Africa Command conducts military operations to deter aggression, and respond to crises.<sup>142</sup>

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<sup>139</sup> Ibid.

<sup>140</sup> Henry and Sharp, “Stand Up Of U.S. Africa Command.”

<sup>141</sup> Ibid.

<sup>142</sup> Henry and Sharp, “Stand Up Of U.S. Africa Command.”

## **1. The Difference Three Years Makes**

Less than three years later, the incoming commander, General Carter Ham briefed Congress and other U.S. government affiliates the following:

Africa Command protects and defends the national security interests of the United States by strengthening the defense capabilities of African states and regional organizations and, when directed, conducts military operations, in order to deter and defeat transnational threats and to provide a security environment conducive to good governance and development.<sup>143</sup>

## **2. The Commander's Intent for U.S. Africa Command 2011**

To protect the U.S. homeland, American citizens abroad, and our national interests from transnational threats emanating from Africa; and through sustained engagement, to enable our African partners to create a security environment that promotes stability, improved governance, and continued development. Should preventive or enabling efforts fail, we must always be prepared to prevail against any individual or organization that poses a threat to the United States, our national interests, or our allies and partners.<sup>144</sup>

## **3. Key Tasks for U.S. Africa Command**

- Deter or defeat al-Qaida and other violent extremist organizations operating in Africa and deny them safe haven.
- Strengthen the defense capabilities of key African states and regional partners. Through enduring and tailored engagement, help them build defense institutions and military forces that are capable, sustainable, subordinate to civilian authority, respectful of the rule of law, and committed to the well-being of their fellow citizens. Increase the capacity of key states to contribute to regional and international military activities aimed at preserving peace and combating transnational threats to security.
- Ensure U.S. access to and through Africa in support of global requirements.
- Be prepared, as part of a whole of government approach, to help protect Africans from mass atrocities. The most effective way in which we do this is through our sustained engagement with African militaries.

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<sup>143</sup> Ibid.

<sup>144</sup> Ibid.

- When directed, provide military support to humanitarian assistance efforts.”<sup>145</sup>

By taking an objective look at these two different mission statements and key tasks, one might observe that the nature of the missions and priorities for AFRICOM have dramatically changed from having a center of focus on humanitarian assistance, to working with African partners in order to disrupt, dismantle, and to destroy rogue non-state actors. This shift in focus is mainly due to the mounting pressures Boko Haram and AQIM are inflicting upon the legitimacy of the state. The aftermath of the Arab Spring in North Africa is also resonating with other groups throughout the continent such as the Lord’s Resistance Army in Southern Africa, and al-Shabaab operating in Sudan, Kenya, and Somalia.<sup>146</sup>

An alliance between AQIM and Boko Haram is of chief concern for AFRICOM planners and policy-makers. As these groups become more organized and effective in their operations, they will continue to drive changes in how external governments engage with host nation governments. Africans will use these changes in approach to say, “We told you so,” and that the creation of AFRICOM was more of a front for other intentions.<sup>147</sup> However, to look at the problem from a holistic perspective, it is quite cumbersome for AFRICOM to focus the majority of its priorities of humanitarian assistance programs when there are threats from groups like Boko Haram and AQIM materializing at a rapid rate. It is only natural for military commanders to shift priorities to be centered around security operations, when the threat of attacks is highly likely. What is significant is how much emphasis is placed upon combating terrorism as opposed to providing things like humanitarian assistance, security corporation, and security sector reform.

## **E. CHAPTER CONCLUSION**

The U.S. foreign policy changes toward Africa stemming from the conclusion of the Cold War are being driven by several factors. These include but are not limited to: the

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<sup>145</sup> U.S. Africa Command, “2011 Exercises Fact Sheet.”

<sup>146</sup> *LRA, Boko Haram, Al-Shabaab, AQIM, and Other Sources of Instability in Africa.*

<sup>147</sup> Stata, “No Silver Bullet.”

recent discovery of large proven petroleum reserves in the Gulf of Guinea, China's growing influence on the continent, the explosive and lucrative contraband trade involving the illicit sale of narcotics, the large movement of humans, the mass proliferation of small arms and light weapons, and finally and equally important, the rise of rogue terrorist groups that are becoming more sophisticated and organized.<sup>148</sup> The creation of an African Command was not just a reaction by U.S. political leaders to build more bureaucracy or to legitimize their current employment. This command was created as recognition that Africa cannot be approached in the same context as it was in the past. Africa now boasts more than one billion inhabitants, and is a continent that has the geography that can encompass the continental U.S., Europe, China, and India all together.<sup>149</sup> Just traveling by air from Paris to South Africa is an 11-hour flight. All of these factors combined with the growing influence by groups like Boko Haram and AQIM will force the U.S. and China to pay more attention to what transpires on the continent. As African nations mature in political structure and gain a firmer grasp on geopolitics, they will play a more decisive role in the international community through their voting powers at the UN. Although the Obama administration recently stated in its new defense strategy that the Pacific Rim nations will influence American foreign policy initiatives for the foreseeable future, the presence of numerous non-state actors and the threat of them becoming more unionized in Africa will force the region to stay at the forefront of priorities for current and future administrations.<sup>150</sup>

One lingering question: what will the future be for AFRICOM and its mission toward the continent? This question should not just be answered from the National Security Strategy; it also comes down to how important Africa will be to U.S. international interest. Even with slated budget constraints looming that will subsequently have a large impact on America's armed forces in the future, Africa will continue to play a major role in U.S. foreign policy. This is not just due to oil, terrorism, and China, but more importantly, the other comparative changes that are taking place in Africa. Africa's

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<sup>148</sup> Hallinan, "The U.S. and Africa."

<sup>149</sup> Ibid.

<sup>150</sup> Ibid.

GDP is growing sharply compared to the rest of the world, and as a result a large proportion of Africans are being pulled out of poverty.<sup>151</sup> This even with acute wealth inequality will result in better opportunities for Africans to achieve higher levels of education, while helping to facilitate and to establish a middle class. The security issues on the continent will almost always drive AFRICOM's approach because although AFRICOM is a command that integrates other civilian entities and agencies, it will always maintain a military posture.

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<sup>151</sup> Ayittey, *Africa Unchained*.

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## VI. THESIS CONCLUSION

*“When fighting an insurgency, killing the enemy is easy. However, finding the enemy is damn near impossible.”<sup>152</sup>*

Finally, it is imperative in understanding the importance behind the motives of groups like AQIM and Boko Haram. An alliance between these groups will change the dynamics on how different nations in Africa are perceived by the international community. AQIM and Boko Haram are not just some annoyance that countries like Mali and Nigeria have to put up with. These groups are a legitimate threat to the stability of the West and North African regions.<sup>153</sup> As these groups learn to adapt and morph their TTPs, they will likely become even more of a threat as long as they are not thoroughly dealt with. The international community needs to help assist the AU in not only combating these groups, but building trusted networks in AQIM and Boko Haram’s zones of operation. Using a constant heavy-handed approach against these groups cannot be the predominant course of action in suppressing a merger between them. What needs to be built upon is for the AU working with North and West African nations to develop an enhanced strategy of partnership combined with targeting the problem, in order to kill the disease, versus treating the symptoms. The problems and questions that need to be addressed are why are Africans continually being won over by terrorist organizations to join their cause, and what are the conditions that are driving people to support them in the areas where they operate?

Defining success by fighting AQIM and Boko Haram from the standpoint of numbers of fighters killed or captured are limited victories that will only help governments win at the tactical level of warfare. In order for AQIM and Boko Haram to be destroyed at their core, host nation governments must take on an entirely new approach. This approach needs to be formed on the basis of understanding that destroying AQIM and Boko Haram could take at least a decade, if not longer, because governments

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<sup>152</sup> Kilcullen, “Twenty-Eight Articles.”

<sup>153</sup> *LRA, Boko Haram, Al-Shabaab, AQIM, and Other Sources of Instability in Africa.*

are not just fighting people, they are fighting an idea. Coupled with this understanding of time versus conditions, fighting AQIM and Boko Haram will require a broad-based public relations campaign. AQIM and Boko Haram have their message. The nations that are impacted by a relationship between AQIM and Boko Haram also have their message, and fighting a message can be much more complicated than fighting a kinetic conflict.

The threat of a merger and more thorough integration between AQIM and Boko Haram is underway. Currently, there are military assessments and academic debates on the nature and size of the threat, and whether the union between AQIM and Boko Haram constitutes a clear and present danger for North and West Africa, in conjunction with Europe, and the U.S. homeland.<sup>154</sup> In the early stages of AQC it was believed by international policymakers and strategists that AQC was more of a regional threat, and the possibilities of a spectacular attack on the U.S. homeland was written off as possible, but not probable.<sup>155</sup> After the embassy bombings in Kenya and Tanzania in 1998, AQC picked up momentum in their operations and proved to be a legitimate threat to be understood and taken seriously. What makes matters more alarming is that the current state of CT initiatives in the Sahel region from the AU, host nation countries, and most recently the French with their deployment of forces to Mali, have been met with stiff resistance, and have not achieved the necessary objectives in order to stabilize the region for long-term security and prosperity.<sup>156</sup> Without a projected campaign strategy to establish an environment that builds prosperity in the region, coupled with a partnership union of the affected states, no sustainable future of peace will be achieved. The way forward is for the region and the international community to first understand that this threat is real, and will likely get much worse in time if immediate conflict resolution methods are not implemented. Additionally, as peacekeepers surge into the area to help fight off the escalation of operations and attacks from AQIM and Boko Haram, a concerted effort needs to be adopted on how to build upon short-term gains. Otherwise the likelihood more protracted violence with instability will be the result.

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<sup>154</sup> LRA, *Boko Haram, Al-Shabaab, AQIM, and Other Sources of Instability in Africa*.

<sup>155</sup> Ibid.

<sup>156</sup> Arieff, *Crisis in Mali*.

## **A. THESIS SUMMARY**

The final chapter of this thesis will summarize how the findings were acquired in conjunction with a way forward for U.S. military policy-makers and planners in order to build a strategy to prevent an alliance between AQIM and Boko Haram. The major take away from this thesis is to build an understanding behind the history of AQIM and Boko Haram, what the factors and nature of the problems are in dealing with a more organized merger between the two groups, and what needs to be done in the future from AFRICOM, NATO, EU, AU, with various host nations in the affected regions. Most of the problems discussed are not just African problems. The motto “African solutions to African problems” should be the preferred and desired end state for fixing complex issues, but cannot be the excepted political mantra, when some of the big problems that are manifesting in Africa are external in origin.

## **B. THE WAY FORWARD**

### **1. AFRICOM’s Current Strategy in the Sahel**

The U.S. foreign policy against AQIM and Boko Haram bases the majority of its strategy on using the Trans-Sahara Counterterrorism Initiative (TSCTP) which was established shortly after the September 11, 2001, terrorist attacks.<sup>157</sup> This initiative has had mixed results, and needs refinement. The TSCTP focuses entirely too much off CT initiatives on kill or capture missions versus building capacity for African security forces. Also, the TSCTP still places the majority of its focus on its original target countries, Mali, Mauritania, Niger, and Chad.<sup>158</sup> Nigeria has been recently included, but is secondary in order of precedence.<sup>159</sup> The real dilemma is defining what previous operations from the TSCTP were successful, and what needs to be the future approach of the TSCTP. External actors are quick to gauge TSCTP successes through a Western lens. Yet, if the TSCTP is such a proven success, then why is the AQIM and Boko Haram threat growing in scope, why are there persistent attacks, and why are the French now

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<sup>157</sup> Jessica Piombo, “Perspectives on African Security Challenges.”

<sup>158</sup> Ibid.

<sup>159</sup> Ibid.

deployed to disrupt and dismantle AQIM threats in Mali? What needs to be the priority is for external actors to create more funding and training that should be centered around building capacity for African partnership nations with the understanding of taking control of the situation on the ground, where AQIM and Boko Haram typically operate.

During this current period of fiscal austerity for military forces across Europe and the U.S., operations in Africa will probably take a secondary role against other threats like North Korea, continued volatility in the Middle East, and competing interest such as the new Pacific Rim strategy, so a new model of military projection in the Sahel needs to be framed with even better imagination. Doing less with less, will more than likely be the motto for U.S. military and policymakers for the foreseeable future in Africa. With this stated, though, this should not at all underestimate the nature of the threat in the Sahel. Without a comprehensive 10 plus year strategy in dealing with the complex and layered problems in AQIM and Boko Haram's zones of operations, the possibility for larger and more dangerous outcomes are real.

## **2. Doing Less with Less**

*"He who tries to defend everything, defends nothing."*<sup>160</sup>

With current ongoing debates over massive defense cuts, a possible complete overhaul of the current structure of the COCOMs could be forthcoming. These budget cuts, which by some estimates of \$1.2 trillion over the next 10 years to the U.S. Military, are going to force strategic planners and commanders to reevaluate the current structure now more than ever. As funding dries up, commanders will have to fight harder to gain access to resources and personnel, and selling the importance of their command to DoD officials will be the mainstay. Africa has never received the attention it needs in order to deal with the host of problematic issues confronting governments there. In this new age of financial austerity, projecting and putting forth security policies that have an impact on the continent will be cumbersome.

The strategic landscape around the world is changing dramatically. The Arab Spring in the Middle East and North Africa was not predicted by many foreign policy

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<sup>160</sup> Tzu, Sun. *The Art of War*. Translated by Lionel Giles. 1910.

think tanks or military planners. Over the course of one year starting in December 2010, the world has had to deal with a new reality in that the status quo of numerous authoritarian regimes are being eliminated one by one. China and India together now constitute 30 percent of the world's total population, and have economies of scale growing at accelerating rates. In late 2011, President Obama announced a new grand strategy focused on the Pacific, while withdrawing from Iraq and Afghanistan. Just these few monumental changes, coupled with the strong probability that there will be acute budget cuts, has policymakers, strategic planners, and military commanders reassessing where the U.S. needs to really focus its time, resources, and energy. The U.S. Navy could be forced to readdress its obligation on having a 365-day a year forward presence throughout the world, mainly protecting the global trade sea-lanes. The amount of spending needed to keep the US Navy in a constant forward presence posture will likely come under considerable scrutiny from U.S. policymakers and American taxpayers. This will more than likely have an impact on operations focused on Africa, because of limitations on force projection capabilities and platforms.

### **3. Recommendations for a New Way Forward**

#### ***a. Designed U.S. African Integrated Standby Force***

The U.S. Army is currently creating regionally aligned brigades with the intent to rotate units responsible for different regions around the world. One brigade from the 1<sup>st</sup> Infantry Division out of Fort Reilly, Kansas, is now being designated to be the brigade in support of AFRICOM.<sup>161</sup> Although this is a step in the right direction, to date, no units have been formally assigned under the C2 of AFRICOM, and the fact that these units will be on a rotational basis does not build for long-term success. Although AFRICOM has put forth a campaign that is more humanitarian centric in its interactions and operations on the continent, the command needs to have assigned a permanent Brigade Combat Team (BCT) that is in close proximity to the command headquarters. Placing a brigade eight time zones away on a rotational basis to be surged into theater,

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<sup>161</sup> U.S. Army, "2012 Army Strategic Planning Guidance," April 19, 2012, <http://usarmy.vo.llnwd.net/e2/c/downloads/243816.pdf>.

should not be the preferred method of operating. Additionally, this brigade needs to focus its alignment with the African Standby Force from the AU, and should not be building its force projection or training on its own. Everything it does should be geared toward building capacity for the African Standby Force. This twofold approach will help both DoD and the AU, in that funding and training can be pooled together. As funding gets restricted for U.S. military forces in this age of sequestration, partnership and building capacity will help meet mission requirements, and establish better relationships between the AU and the U.S.

***b. Help African Governments Establish a Resource Pension Fund***

Resource-rich nations in Sub-Saharan Africa face a distinct paradox. If a particular African nation has no natural resources to export or even use internally, then what other viable means does it have to prosper? However as pointed out by Paul Collier, “In more recent times, resource-poor countries such as Korea, Taiwan, Hong Kong, and Singapore have been able to build strong economies at the same time that their resource-rich counterparts like Mexico, Nigeria, and Venezuela have been beset with economic calamities.”<sup>162</sup> The contemporary history of resource-rich nations in Africa has proven to be extremely problematic.<sup>163</sup> The exploitation of natural resources in Africa has ushered in an environment of authoritarian regimes that are reluctant to give up power through an electoral process, while consolidating revenues for them and their clientele. What makes matters worse for these nations is the lack of state structure and the weakness of political corporate governance.<sup>164</sup> The amount of resources in much of these Sub-Saharan countries, if managed well, are enough to provide for the whole of their populations. However, significant corruption tends to take hold with large sums of money disappearing into offshore bank accounts. This cycle of corruption breeds frustration and anger on the local populace, leading them to become more and more disenfranchised.

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<sup>162</sup> Darko Kwabena Opoku, Review of “The Bottom Billion: Why the Poorest Countries Are Failing and What Can Be Done About It,” by Paul Collier, *Africa Today* 55, no. 4 (2009): 134–136.

<sup>163</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>164</sup> Alex de Waal, *Islamism and Its Enemies in the Horn of Africa*. (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 2004).

Ethnic rivalry takes hold, creating an environment ripe for conflict and instability.<sup>165</sup> The lack of leadership in Africa also makes the situation even worse than it already is. Africans at the local level have been using Western style of governance techniques for hundreds of years, but this form of localism did not move from the bottom up to the regional and nation level fast enough. After independence, a large number of African leaders became neocolonialist, and instead of liberating their people and embracing democratic reform, they chose the route of brutal suppression and oppression.

The most problematic issue in relationship to resource abundance in Sub-Saharan Africa and how this abundance escalates and extends conflict, is the combination between this lack of decent leadership in African governments in conjunction with an international community that lacks the moral intestinal fortitude to enact policies that could bring about fundamental positive change. The discovery of precious resources needed in newly developed technologies—such as cobalt used in cell phones and large finds of commodities by the way of oil—have changed Sub-Saharan Africa extremely fast. However, with this change over the past thirty years, protracted and persistent civil wars have been the mainstay, and if drugs are considered a precious resource than the likelihood of more African civil wars in the future are probable.<sup>166</sup> This is due to the exponential increase in drug smuggling through West Africa into Europe. The crux of the resource issue goes back to the correlation in having an abundance of resources and the likelihood of having an increase in civil wars. The number of civil wars in Africa versus the rest of the world since the 1990s should cause African leaders to take notice, and make swift changes in how they distribute capital within their borders. Having resource abundance will not last forever, and by reinvesting the revenue back into a nation's society by ways of infrastructure, education, security sector reform, and health care initiatives will only help a nation to become more prosperous for the long-term.<sup>167</sup>

America and other nations such as China need to help resource-rich nations in Africa form the establishment of resource pension fund, not unlike what the

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<sup>165</sup> de Waal, *Islamism and Its Enemies*.

<sup>166</sup> Bjorgo, *Root Causes*.

<sup>167</sup> *Ibid.*

nation of Norway has adopted, or the Alaskan oil fund. Either one of these approaches would be much better than what is currently being implemented. One of the major reasons that African nations suffer from acute relative deprivation is that there is no real method to distribute funds being generated from the exports of precious resources. In Norway, once it was verified that large proven reserves of oil were found, the government immediately established a pension fund for its people with the intent to stave off “Dutch Disease.”<sup>168</sup> Norwegians now get to share the profits that are being produced from oil in the form of a retirement fund, which in the long run builds a social safety net for the people there. In Alaska, a resident of that state gets a yearly stipend from the total profits generated, which at a minimum helps its economy through consumption purposes. Both programs at least give people residing in these areas the ability to reap the benefits of having resources.<sup>169</sup>

By not having any type of resource-backed program that can be filtered to the local populations in Africa, initiated to distribute wealth accumulated from the exports of resources, rogue non-state actors like AQIM and Boko Haram will continue to build a public relations campaign discrediting government actions. The locals inhabiting these countries where AQIM and Boko Haram operate will continue to see the rich getting richer, while having them live in poverty with no real chance of escape. Hope will be an afterthought. DoS and DoD leaders should at least help sovereign nations in Africa devise a plan that addresses these issues, in order to give them different options. Trying this program could help alleviate some of the major frustrations Africans feel toward their governments, and could possibly help to dry up future prospects/recruits for AQIM and Boko Haram.

### **C. THESIS CONCLUSION**

At the time of writing this thesis, conditions are being driven and built upon for the merger of AQIM and Boko Haram into an alliance that will constitute a significant

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<sup>168</sup> Tom Fearnley, “Norway’s Government Pension Fund: Investing for the long run,” Presentation at Allianz-Oxford Pensions Conference, Oxford, September 27, 2012, <http://www.geog.ox.ac.uk/news/events/120927/ao2012-tfearnley.pdf>.

<sup>169</sup> Ibid.

threat to stability in the Sahel. Other terrorist organizations are watching the development of these two groups and are learning from their success and mistakes. AQIM and Boko Haram have openly stated that they are willing to share their methods and doctrine to other aspiring terrorist organizations in order to spread their ideology across the entire African continent. Much of this merger is due to the Arab Spring, which started in December 2010. The impact from the collapse of the Tunisian, Egyptian, and Libyan governments are creating enormous and sweeping changes throughout the sub-continent. The dynamics that are being played out at an accelerating rate are making it extremely difficult for state governments to gain a grasp on. As governments respond, they are finding the problems that have beset them are layered and complex. Large-scale security sweeps and crackdowns from host nation militaries and from the international community will not be the precursor for success. Helping Africans to build prosperity through the establishment of industry and economies of scale should lead to a better way forward for not just Africa, but for the whole of the international community.<sup>170</sup>

If the U.S. and other nations that are heavily involved in Africa want sustainable change, then the focus needs to be more on the building up of African institutions. This is paramount over capacity-building military exercises. Additionally, if and when military exercises are being performed, external actors should highlight that the military's main purpose is to uphold the country's constitution, and protecting the welfare of its citizens, versus propping up the presidential regime.<sup>171</sup> If more focus can be placed on the building of civilian institutions, it is reasonable to assess those more long-term positive effects by way of industry and education will then be the byproducts of change further in assisting a broader sector of the society. This will then hopefully lead to the establishment of a middle-class, giving way to a population that has the ability to make ends meet, and not relying on false government promises, while turning to groups like Boko Haram and AQIM to assist them. Good governance needs to be at the forefront of U.S interaction. Military partnership and exercises should be secondary.

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<sup>170</sup> Bjorgo, *Root Causes*.

<sup>171</sup> Tatab Mentan, *Dilemmas Of Weak States: Africa And Transnational Terrorism In The Twenty-First Century* (Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2004).

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