# Atlantic Council

**Prepared Statement of**

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**before the**

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# United States House of Representatives
## Committee on Homeland Security
### Subcommittee on Counterterrorism and Intelligence

**on**

## "Terrorism in North Africa:
## An Examination of the Threat"

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**House Capitol Visitor Center, Room 210**
**Washington, D.C.**

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

I would like to begin by thanking you not only for the specific opportunity to testify before you today on the subject of terrorism in North Africa, but also for the sustained attention the United States House of Representatives has, in general, given to this challenge. In its oversight capacity, the House has been very much ahead of the curve over the course of the last decade and half and it has been my singular privilege to have contributed, however modestly, to this important effort.

It was at a 2005 briefing organized by the Subcommittee on International Terrorism and Nonproliferation of the then-Committee on International Relations, that al-Shabaab was first mentioned as a threat not only to the security of Somalia, but also to the wider East Africa region and, indeed, the United States. The following year, a joint hearing of the same Subcommittee on

International Terrorism and Nonproliferation and the Subcommittee on Africa, Global Human Rights, and International Operations was among the very first instances of public recognition by one of the two political branches of our government of the expanding crisis in the Horn of Africa occasioned by the takeover of Somalia by Islamist forces, including al-Shabaab.

And, of course, it was this Subcommittee on Intelligence and Counterterrorism of the Committee on Homeland Security that, in 2011, convened the very first congressional hearing on Boko Haram. I also had the privilege of testifying on that occasion when, once again, the legislative branch used its oversight prerogatives to shine a light on what was then a poorly understood threat. At that time, Boko Haram was considered so obscure that the all the participants at the event, held to discuss a bipartisan report by the subcommittee staff on the threat posed by the militant group, could have convened in the proverbial broom closet. Sadly, our analysis proved prescient and, rather than fading away as some dismissively suggested that it would, Boko Haram went on to pose an even greater menace, not only to Nigeria and its people, but to their neighbors in West Africa as well as to international security writ large.

In each of these cases and, indeed, others that could be cited, there is a recurring trope that emerges time and again: terrorism in Africa generally gets short shrift and, when attention is focused on specific groups or situations that appear to be emerging challenges, the threat is either dismissed entirely or minimized—until the "unthinkable" happens and tragedy strikes.

**The Context of Terrorism in Africa and the Threat to the United States and Its Interests**
In considering the dynamic threat posed by al-Qaeda, the so-called Islamic State (ISIS), their various affiliates, and other jihadist groups in Africa, it is worth recalling that Africa had been a theater for terrorist operations, including those directed against the United States, long before the attacks of September 11, 2001, on the homeland focused attention on what had hitherto been regions seemingly peripheral to the strategic landscape, at least as most American policymakers and analysts perceived it.

If one takes as a definition of terrorism the broadly accepted description offered by the United Nations General Assembly one year after the East Africa bombings—"criminal acts intended or calculated to provoke a state of terror in the general public, a group of persons or particular persons for political purposes"—terrorism can be said to be widespread in Africa, although it has largely been a *domestic*, rather than transnational, affair. However, just because the majority of actors and the incidents they are responsible for are domestic to African countries does not mean that they cannot and do not evolve into international threats when, in fact, that is the trajectory many, if not most, aspire to and which quite a few have indeed succeeded in achieving in recent years.

The first post-9/11 iteration of the *National Security Strategy of the United States of America*, released a year after the attacks on the American homeland, raised the specter that "weak states…can pose as great a danger to our national interests as strong states. Poverty does not

make poor people into terrorists and murderers. Yet poverty, weak institutions, and corruption can make weak states vulnerable to terrorist networks and drug cartels within their borders."[1] Extremism, however, requires opportunity if it is to translate radical intentionality into terrorist effect. One leading African security analyst succinctly summarized the situation in the following manner:

> The opportunity targets presented by peacekeepers, aid and humanitarian workers, donors and Western NGOs active in the continent are lucrative targets of subnational terrorism and international terrorism. Africa is also replete with potentially much higher value targets ranging from the massive oil investments (often by U.S. companies) in the Gulf of Guinea to the burgeoning tourist industry in South Africa.[2]

Thus there is a very real terrorist risk to U.S. persons and interests—a risk that is increasing with time if one looks at its three constituent elements: *threat*, the frequency or likelihood of adverse events; *vulnerability*, the likelihood of success of a particular threat category against a particular target; and *cost*, the total impact of a particular threat experienced by a vulnerable target, including both the "hard costs" of actual damages and the "soft costs" to production, the markets, reputation, etc. In short, the combination of these three factors—threat, vulnerability, and cost—ought to elevate not inconsiderably the overall risk assessment in Africa.

And this last point is not lost upon those who wish us harm. Dating back to at least the period when Osama bin Laden himself found refuge in Sudan, the leading strategists of Islamist terrorism have speculated about the potential opportunities to establish cells, recruit members, obtain financing, and find safe haven offered by the weak governance capacities and other vulnerabilities of African states. In fact, it has been noted that al-Qaeda's first act against the United States came several years before the embassy bombings when it attempted to insert itself in the fight against the American-led humanitarian mission in Somalia. Moreover, one of the most systematic expositions of the particular allure of the continent to terrorists came from al-Qaeda's online magazine, *Sada al-Jihad* ("Echo of Jihad"). The June 2006 issue of that publication featured an article by one Abu Azzam al-Ansari entitled "Al-Qaeda is Moving to Africa," in which the author asserted:

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[1] The most recent iteration of the *National Security Strategy of the United States of America*, released February 6, 2015, by the previous administration couched U.S. strategic objectives in Africa largely in terms of broader development goals, rather than traditional security concerns which were emphasized in earlier documents: "Africa is rising. Many countries in Africa are making steady progress in growing their economies, improving democratic governance and rule of law, and supporting human rights and basic freedoms. Urbanization and a burgeoning youth population are changing the region's demographics, and young people are increasingly making their voices heard. But there are still many countries where the transition to democracy is uneven and slow with some leaders clinging to power. Corruption is endemic and public health systems are broken in too many places. And too many governments are responding to the expansion of civil society and free press by passing laws and adopting policies that erode that progress. Ongoing conflicts in Sudan, South Sudan, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, and the Central African Republic, as well as violent extremists fighting governments in Somalia, Nigeria, and across the Sahel all pose threats to innocent civilians, regional stability, and our national security."

[2] Jakkie Cilliers, "Terrorism and Africa," *African Security Review* 12, no. 4 (2003): 100.

> There is no doubt that al-Qaeda and the holy warriors appreciate the significance of the African regions for the military campaigns against the Crusaders. Many people sense that this continent has not yet found its proper and expected role and the next stages of the conflict will see Africa as the battlefield.

With a certain analytical rigor, Abu Azzam then proceeded to enumerate and evaluate what he perceived to be significant advantages to al-Qaeda shifting terrorist operations to Africa, including: the fact that jihadist doctrines have already been spread within the Muslim communities of many African countries; the political and military weakness of African governments; the wide availability of weapons; the geographical position of Africa vis-à-vis international trade routes; the proximity to old conflicts against "Jews and Crusaders" in the Middle East as well as new ones like Darfur, where the author almost gleefully welcomed the possibility of Western intervention; the poverty of Africa which "will enable the holy warriors to provide some finance and welfare, thus, posting there some of their influential operatives"; the technical and scientific skills that potential African recruits would bring to the jihadist cause; the presence of large Muslim communities, including ones already embroiled conflict with Christians or adherents of traditional African religions; the links to Europe through North Africa "which facilitates the move from there to carry out attacks"; and the fact that Africa has a wealth of natural resources, including hydrocarbons and other raw materials, which are "very useful for the holy warriors in the intermediate and long term." Abu Azzam concluded his assessment by sounding an ominous note:

> In general, this continent has an immense significance. Whoever looks at Africa can see that it does not enjoy the interest, efforts, and activity it deserves in the war against the Crusaders. This is a continent with many potential advantages and exploiting this potential will greatly advance the jihad. It will promote achieving the expected targets of Jihad. Africa is a fertile soil for the advance of jihad and the *jihadi* cause.

While much has been made by some academics about the supposed lack of appeal which the jihadist ideology and approaches of al-Qaeda and ISIS exercise among different African peoples and communities, it is my contention that this analysis underestimates the attractive power of the reputation of these jihadist movements, especially when the extremist doctrine—for which years of ample propaganda by missionaries funded from abroad has prepared the terrain, however intentionally or unintentionally—is associated with the apparent battlefield success—as was the case, for example, early on for ISIS—and harnessed to local grievances. In fact, the conflation of local concerns and global narratives has been an important milestone in the evolution of various African militant groups, providing the leaders with a platform whereupon to seek support and legitimacy above and beyond the confines of the struggle they had hitherto been engaged. This has clearly been the case with the transformation of the Algerian *Groupe Salafiste pour la Prédication et le Combat* (GSPC, "Salafist Group for Preaching and Combat") into al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM)[3] and Boko Haram's decision to pledge allegiance to

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[3] See J. Peter Pham, "Foreign Influences and Shifting Horizons: The Ongoing Evolution of al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb," *Orbis* 55, no. 2 (Spring 2011): 240-254; and idem, "The Dangerous 'Pragmatism' of Al-Qaeda in the Islamic

ISIS and brand itself as *Wilāyat al Sūdān al Gharbī* ("[Islamic State] Province in the West Land of the Blacks," or "Islamic State West Africa Province," ISWAP).[4]

It was clearly a mistake for many a decade ago to have dismissed Abu Azzam's analysis as devoid of operational effect and it would certainly be foolhardy to do so now. In fact, we are here today not only because this Subcommittee has been commendably diligent in maintaining its vigilance, but because, in point of fact, Abu Azzam was very correct: Africa is indeed "fertile soil for the advance of jihad and the *jihadi* cause."

**The Current Threat from North Africa**

Since my esteemed colleagues whom the Subcommittee has invited will delve deeply into the threat *in* North Africa posed by al-Qaeda, ISIS, and the affiliates, I will concentrate primarily on the threat *from* North Africa, focusing on the danger posed by these groups in and of themselves as well as in their competition with each other.

With respect to North Africa itself, the Maghreb is home to some of the longest-running terrorist campaigns on the African continent, a situation that has become all the more combustible in recent years with the emergence of ISIS "provinces" amid the disintegration of Libya, alongside preexisting groups like AQIM and still other Islamist bands which emerged in the wake of the collapse of Muammar Gaddafi's dictatorship. The presence of jihadist entities on the very shores of the Mediterranean Sea is not just happenstance but also serves to emphasize—as, no doubt, the terrorists intend to underscore—not only the threat posed to the vital, but narrow, sea lanes nearby, but also the proximity of the violence to Europe itself. It is certainly a point that America and the other top advanced economies, when they convene for the Group of Seven (G7) summit in May, which meeting is focused on Africa this year, would do well to recall—and not simply, as some of our European partners would like, discuss the challenges of migration.

Fortunately, commensurate with the challenges in this region, the international community also has solid allies with which to work on not just combatting terrorism, but countering its extremist roots. Notable among these partners is Morocco, a longstanding "major non-NATO ally" of the United States, whose aggressive, multipronged approach to countering radical ideology and terrorism has much to commend it as does the kingdom's efforts to assist other countries in North and West Africa in the same fight. The potential of the U.S.-Morocco Framework for Cooperation, signed during the U.S.-Africa Leaders Summit in 2014 and aimed at developing Moroccan training experts as well as jointly training civilian security and counterterrorism forces with other partners in the Maghreb and the Sahel in recognizing a "triangular" approach, needs to be better appreciated and developed.

Beyond the Maghreb itself, the Sahel, the belt connecting North Africa and West Africa,

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Maghreb," *Journal of the Middle East and Africa* 2, no. 1 (January-June 2011): 15-29.

[4] See idem, "Boko Haram: The Strategic Evolution of the Islamic State's West Africa Province," *Journal of the Middle East and Africa* 7, no. 1 (2016): 1-18.

stretching from the Atlantic Ocean to the Red Sea and straddling ancient trade and migration routes, is an almost ideal environment for extremist groups with transnational ambitions, whether ISIS fighters smarting from defeats on the battlefields of Iraq and Syria or al-Qaeda militants seeking to reassert the preeminence of the organization within the global jihadist movement. The region is strategically important for several reasons, including its role as a bridge between the Arab Maghreb and black Sub-Saharan Africa as well as its important energy reserves, both renewable and nonrenewable, and other natural resources. Moreover, the Sahel touches several countries—including Algeria, Nigeria, and Sudan—with serious security challenges of their own that could easily spill over their borders. In fact, some scholars have argued that the Sahara and the Sahel form "a single space of movement" which, for purposes of the geography of terrorism, "should be considered as a continuum, something that the territorial approach of states and geopolitics prevents us from understanding"[5]—a point which policymakers and analysts would do well to take to heart. In point of fact, not only has the Sahel been for centuries literally the conduit over which arms, fighters, and ideologies have flowed back and forth across the Sahara, but it has clearly emerged in recent times as a battlespace in its own right.

The continuing threat posed by the various jihadist groups operating in the Sahel is the result of their exploitation of local conflicts, including social, economic, and political marginalization, as well as the fragile condition of many of the states affected, which is often manifested both in low capacity to resist overall and a tendency towards ham-fisted responses that aggravate grievances. In some cases, defeat spurs the extremists to adapt new strategies that result in renewed vigor, a good example being the fragmentation of AQIM's organization in the Sahel in the wake of the French-led intervention in Mali and the subsequent multiplication of factions, some of which, like the ethnic-Fulani (or Peul) Macina Liberation Front which freed nearly a hundred detained militants in a jailbreak in early December, are organized along ethnic lines that facilitate both the members' blending into local populations and their making further inroads among them.[6] In other instances, the manifest failure to achieve political settlements propel the resurgence of otherwise weakened militant groups.

Arguably the Sahel, rather than the Maghreb where, with the exception of Libya, there are strong states that have shown their ability to resist not only al-Qaeda, but also ISIS, encroachments, is the region in Africa most at risk, especially if hordes of battle-hardened fighters return to the continent from the short-lived "caliphate" in the Levant and link up with others of their ilk displaced from Sirte and other places on the Mediterranean littoral and increasingly making their way to the Fezzan and other points south.

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[5] Olivier Walther and Denis Retaille, *Sahara or Sahel? The Fuzzy Geography of Terrorism in West Africa* (Luxembourg: CEPS/INSTEAD, 2010), 11.

[6] The rise in militancy among some Fulani is not limited to the Sahel proper. There is growing evidence of a significant acceleration in attacks in Nigeria's Middle Belt. See 21st Century Wilberforce Initiative, *Nigeria: Fractured and Forgotten* (2016), available at http://www.standwithnigeria.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/06/NIgeria-Fractured-and-Forgotten.pdf.

It is no accident that the Sahel is, if not the poorest, certainly one of the poorest majority-Muslim regions in the world. It is also home to the largest expanse of contiguous ungoverned spaces on the African continent: many of the governments in the region are weak and their capacity to assert authority—much less provide real services—beyond their capital cities and a smattering of urban centers is extremely limited. These fragile states present the jihadists both a vulnerability to exploit in the short term and an opportunity to create a new hub for operations over the long term.

In Mali, for example, what started in late 2011 and early 2012 as a rebellion by the disaffected Tuareg population led to the overthrow of state authority in the country's three northernmost provinces with a combined territory the size of France and, following the marginalization of the ethnic separatists by their erstwhile allies from several jihadist groups, the entire area falling under the sway of AQIM. Only a timely French-led military intervention in early 2013 forestalled the total collapse of the Malian state, although again, the situation remains fragile as the fact that the United Nations peacekeeping mission in the country is the deadliest ongoing blue-helmeted operation in the world underscores. Despite being mauled by Operation Serval and, subsequently, hounded by French and U.S. Special Operations Forces in the region, AQIM has bounced back to stage a series of deadly attacks last year, including spectacular hits on luxury hotels in two neighboring countries, Burkina Faso and Côte d'Ivoire, that had previously not been hit by terrorists. Burkina Faso suffered another attack in mid-December, with twelve members of the country's special anti-terrorism unit killed in an assault on a military base near the Malian border. Even where they may not currently pose an existential threat to the states affected, these attacks from deep in the Sahel can nonetheless have a disproportionate impact on their fortunes. Côte d'Ivoire may be heralded as Africa's new economic powerhouse, with a diversified economy and growth in 2016 of 8.5 percent, the second-highest in the world, but more attacks like the one in last year by AQIM can still scare off foreign investors who are just beginning to discover the country's potential.

The stakes are even higher for country like Nigeria. Africa's most populous country slipped into recession last year, losing the distinction it gained only three years ago as the continent's biggest economy, and continued insecurity from jihadist threats certainly do not help. After years of ceding ground to Boko Haram, so much so that by 2014 the group had consolidated its hold over a territory larger than Belgium and proclaimed a self-styled "emirate," the Nigerian armed forces adopted a new strategy and began fighting back. While the counterattack began in the waning days of former President Goodluck Jonathan's administration, things really began to change after Muhammadu Buhari, a retired major-general and former military ruler, won a historic (and decisive) election victory over the incumbent in March 2015, in part by promising to defeat the militants. Cashiering his predecessor's military chiefs shortly after taking office, Buhari installed new commanders, including a chief of army staff, Lieutenant-General Tukur Yusuf Buratai, who is a native of Borno, the epicenter of the insurgency, and moved command headquarters close to the fighting. Since then, in concert with a multinational force from neighboring countries, the Nigerian military has pursued an aggressive strategy, combining an intensive air campaign with a surge of troops on the ground, that gradually pushed Boko Haram out of the towns it had

previously occupied and, increasingly, in remote hideouts like "Camp Zero," the base in the remote Sambisa Forest that fell to government forces two days before Christmas last year.

Along the way, as I had the opportunity to witness firsthand last November when I toured the battlefront, the Nigerian army also took on the task of not only providing security to the populations it liberated from the militants' dominion, but also, until aid groups and development organizations returned, providing humanitarian relief, medical assistance, and even education and livelihood training. For example, the civil-military operations carried out by battalion I spent time with in Pulka, a key crossroads town just a few kilometers from what were at the time Boko Haram positions in the Sambisa Forest, were critical not only to the well-being of the community, but served to rally the population to support the government's push against the militant group.

Nevertheless, notwithstanding the success of the military operations, Boko Haram remains a force to be reckoned with. In response to the military defeats it has suffered, the militants shifted tactics, expanding their use of suicide bombings, most of which have targeted the civilian population. Meanwhile, the schism within Boko Haram, formally aligned with ISIS since early 2015, between those loyal to longtime leader Abubakar Shekau and those following Abu Musab al-Barnawi, whom ISIS appointed as the new "governor" (*wali*) of its "province" last August, may be contributing to the intensification, rather than diminution, of violence as both factions try to outdo each other in staging attacks. In fact, there are strong indications that Barnawi's faction may be gaining momentum, aided not only by the defeats Shekau's factions have suffered at the hands of Nigerian forces, but also by fighters and other resources flowing to it thanks to the ISIS affiliation. Furthermore, to the extent that the militants have been weakened in Nigeria, they have spilled into neighboring countries, causing Cameroon and Niger, for example, to rise in the 2016 edition of the Global Terrorism Index to 13th place and 16th place, respectively.

A characteristic shared not only by ISIS-aligned groups in Africa like Boko Haram, but also al-Qaeda affiliates on the continent like AQIM and, further afield, Somalia's al-Shabaab, is their almost uncanny resilience, founded in part on the flexibility with which they can put aside differences and join forces in ever-shifting combinations. Just earlier this month, for example, several jihadist factions operating in Mali—*Ansar Dine* ("defenders of the faith"), the Sahara and *al-Murabitun* ("people of the garrison") branches of AQIM, and the Macina Liberation Front—announced their merger and pledged their allegiance to al-Qaeda leader Ayman al-Zawahiri. The new group, named *Jama'at Nusrat al-Islam wal-Muslimeen* ("group for the support of Islam and Muslims"), is to be headed by an "emir," Iyad ag Ghaly, formerly leader of Ansar Dine and, before that, a leader in Tuareg rebellions against the Malian government going back to the 1980s. A week later, al-Zawahiri issued a statement of "approval and blessing" on the new group and expressed his hope that it would constitute "an impregnable fortress against the enemies of Islam who have seen a reversal of the fortunes of the partisans of Islam and jihad."

While al-Qaeda-linked groups in the region have resisted ISIS incursions into territory they have long viewed as their own, there have been instances in which factions within the former have sought to align themselves with the latter. In late October 2016, for example, ISIS confirmed that

it had accepted the allegiance of Abu Walid al-Sahrawi, a former commander within al-Murabitun, who, along with forty of his fighters, pledged themselves to Abubakar al-Baghdadi, who designated them his "Greater Sahara" division. What is interesting is that al-Sahrawi first made *bay'a* to the self-styled caliph more than a year earlier, but his oath of fealty was only accepted after he carried out string of attacks in the borderlands of Burkina Faso, Mali, and Niger. Thus an increase in violence could be the result as al-Qaeda and ISIS literally compete to outdo each other in the Sahel in the hopes of attracting recruits and other resources.

**Recommendations for a Comprehensive U.S. Response**

This broad survey permits the drawing of several conclusions about the U.S. response to terrorism in Africa and the possible threats posed to U.S. persons and interests abroad as well as the American homeland, especially from jihadists coming out of North Africa.

First, time and again, the mistake has been made to underestimate—if not to discount entirely—the threat faced. Part of this is attributable to an analytical bias to limit future possibilities to extrapolations from the past, a hermeneutical choice which ignores the dynamic potential which many terrorist organizations, especially in Africa, have exhibited time and again. Another part of the explanation is even more basic: the sheer lack of resources for Africa-related intelligence and analysis across the whole of the U.S. government. Given the geopolitical, economic, and security stakes, the failure to invest more in dedicated institutions, personnel, training, and strategic focus as well as materiel and other resources is incredibly shortsighted.

Second, with the exception of the Department of Defense, across the U.S. government there is an artificial division of the continent that, quite frankly, is rejected not only by Africans, but is also unhelpful, a point I have consistently made.[7] If one looks, for example, at the North African states which are usually grouped with those in the Near East, there are few compelling geopolitical, economic, or strategic reasons to do so except perhaps for Egypt. In point of fact, the overwhelming majority of the regional political, security, and commercial links extending to and from the other four countries of the Maghreb go north-south across the Sahara, not east-west towards the Levant. The adhesion of Morocco to the African Union earlier this year—itself the culmination of a longtime diplomatic effort and economic engagement—as well as the kingdom's request to join the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) further reinforce the case for treating Africa as a whole within the U.S. government. The reorganization of the National Security Council in the current administration, with the transfer of responsibility for the Maghrebi countries to the senior director for Africa, is a commendable move that needs to be followed across the whole of government.

Third, the U.S. Africa Command (AFRICOM), the geographic command responsible for implementing whatever military operations, including counterterrorism operations, are

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[7] See J. Peter Pham, *A Measured US Strategy for the New Africa*, with a foreword by James L. Jones, Jr. (Washington, DC: Atlantic Council, 2016), available at http://www.atlanticcouncil.org/publications/reports/a-measured-us-strategy-for-the-new-africa.

eventually deemed necessary on the African continent, whether by assisting African partners or taking direct action, has since its establishment been hampered to varying degrees by not-quite-adequate resources to carry out its ordinary assigned mission, to say nothing of extraordinary challenges which have arisen in recent years within its area of responsibility. While the successive AFRICOM commanders have stewarded what they had heroically, often adroitly juggling resources and priorities, clearly a more sustainable approach is required, even in the current challenging fiscal climate.

Fourth, even accepting the necessary economies in areas other than military and homeland security as signaled in the administration's recent budget blueprint, it is still nothing short of mind-boggling that in Nigeria there is no US diplomatic presence north of the capital of Abuja, which is located in that country's geographical center. Thus, the northern part of the West African country, home to more than ninety million predominantly Muslim people who would, by themselves, constitute Africa's third most-populous country—and in the middle of the geopolitically sensitive Sahel region at that—has been entirely bereft of U.S. diplomatic presence (and the ongoing intelligence and other monitoring capabilities that come with such a mission) ever since the consulate in Kaduna was closed in 1991, the exception being on those rare occasions when, with appropriate security assured, ad hoc forays from the embassy are authorized.

Fifth, closely related to terrorism is the danger posed by lack of effective sovereignty that bedevils many African governments. Often the challenge first manifests itself in criminality, whether in the form of piracy and other brigandage or in that of trafficking, human or material. Moreover, the Sahel has seen an explosion in narco-trafficking, both in terms of transshipments bound for Europe and other destinations and, even more worrisome, of deliveries for local consumption. For the United States, all this means that increasing vigilance against terrorism in Africa also requires greater investments in law enforcement capabilities focused on the continent, including enhanced analytical resources at home, more liaison personnel posted abroad, and stepping up efforts to build the capacity of our partners on the continent.

Sixth, as America's relationships—diplomatic, security, economic, and cultural—with Africa as a whole and the individual countries on the continent expand and deepen—a positive development to be sure—an unfortunate downside is that the potential risk to U.S. persons and interests as well as to the homeland necessarily increases. Quite simply, the threats are there and, by its very nature, more engagement also increases exposure and vulnerability. The answer is not to curtail engagement since there are clear strategic imperatives for seeking to build these links, but to ensure that adequate resources are mustered to cope with the meet the rising demand across a whole range of sectors from civil aviation to ports to customs and immigration, etc., for intelligence about and security against threats originating in this dynamic region.

Seventh, the challenge of African terrorism, especially out of North Africa, and any derivative threat to the United States cannot be addressed except in an integrated fashion, with solutions that embrace a broader notion of human security writ large—encompassing social, economic,

and political development—which, often enough, also must transcend national and other artificial boundaries. This obviously is not and should not be a task for the United States alone, but is one which it is in America's strategic interest to play its part.


**Conclusion**

There is no doubt that ISIS- and al-Qaeda-affiliated groups in the northern part of Africa are poised to wreak considerable havoc across the continent as they seek to regroup in the ungoverned spaces of the Sahel, threatening not only the countries immediately impacted, but also affecting the interests and security of the United States and its allies across the region.

Ironically, this comes at a time when the narrative on Africa in the United States has increasingly shifted towards a greater focus on the extraordinary opportunities on the continent. However, if this momentum is to be maintained and those opportunities grasped, the United States needs to redouble its own efforts and also work closely with its African partners to manage the challenges and overcome terrorism and other the threats to security which stand in the way to an incredibly promising future. As the President has repeatedly declared, halting the spread of radical Islamism and jihadist violence should be a cornerstone of the foreign policy of the United States and that "all actions should be oriented around this goal, and any country which shares this goal will be our ally."