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Before

The Senate Committee on Foreign Relations
Subcommittee on African Affairs

"Examining U.S. Counterterrorism Priorities and Strategies
Across Africa's Sahel Region"

November 17, 2009

Thank you, Mr Chairman, for the opportunity to testify on a set of issues that I believe is key to the stability of both the Sahel and greater Saharan region.

Today we face an uncertain, complex, ever-shifting situation across the nations that straddle the Sahel and Sahara. It is worth pointing out, however, that this is hardly new. While certain factors seem new, such as the discovery of and interest in natural resource exploitation, the emergence of a new Al-Qaida franchise in AQIM, and recent revolts in Niger and Mali, in many ways are simply newer threads of an older weave and belong to a much longer history.

Today the committee is focused on two related sub-themes, roughly the performance to date of U.S. counterterrorism efforts and especially the Trans-Saharan Counterterrorism Partnership (TSCTP) and emergence and prospects for violent extremism and criminality in Mali and Niger, with a particular focus on Al-Qaida in the Islamic Maghrib (AQIM). From a local perspective, neither GSPC nor AQIM have ever been considered major threats, nor has Salafism's more violent strain, per se. U.S. policy, on the contrary, has made these a priority and in doing so, has sometimes made worse local political and social dynamics in Sahel and worked to bolster, rather than suffocate, AQIM and the GSPC before it. To be sure, AQIM poses a certain kind of threat and the U.S. and its Malian and Nigerien allies have had important tactical successes over the last six years. But these successes have come at some cost, and it is unclear if U.S. officials appreciate that those continuing costs affect the overall success of such programs as the TSCTP.

The most critical regional issues are 1) environmental change 2) differential access to resources and extreme poverty 3) the growth of the value and volume in real terms of smuggling 4) and continued political disenfranchisement of northern populations, particularly the Tamashek (Tuareg). Yet U.S. policy has more narrowly focused on terrorism and extremism, and indirectly addressing these much more pressing concerns.

None of these larger issues – with one exception – is new. The southern Sahara has seen serious desiccation punctuated by severe periodic droughts over the last forty years, which has had a devastating impact on local livelihoods. Northerners (Arabs and Tamshek in particular) are, as ever, largely seen and treated as bandits by the southern majorities who control national politics, armed forces, foreign direct investment, and the foreign aid that flows into Mali and Niger. Informal trade remains a staple of economic activity through the desert – there are few others ways for people to sustain themselves in the Sahara's edge.

The one major exception to these longer-term dynamics is the changing nature and scale of smuggling. Over the past decade, and particularly in the last four to five years, the volume of trade has increased and cocaine has rapidly overtaken

other commodities (people, cigarettes, fuel) in the long distance cross-desert trade. Demand from Europe and the relative efficiency of South American cartels in moving drugs to and through West African ports has led an exponential growth in the value and volume of the trade. Less appreciated, however, is that this has affected social and political patterns that may be creating more opportunities for political disintegration as the sheer number of those involved in this new trade grows. In my view, this is the largest current threat to regional stability – rather than either AQIM specifically or reformist Islam more generally. I will return to this point, below.

GSPC and AQIM

The fortunes of AQIM and of Abdel-Wadoud (Abdel Malik Droukdal) have waxed and waned over the past five years since he rose to the head of GSPC (Groupe Salafiste pour la predication et le combat). His reputation in the community and related ability to command have relied on several discrete factors: 1) closeness (real and perceived) to the Al-Qaida leadership in Pakistan, 2) success in attacking Algerian military targets, the older focus of GSPC's ire, 3) attacks against Western civilian targets and 4) personal relationships between key lieutenants (called Emirs) located across the major Algerian provinces, and particularly the Emirs of Zone IX, the southernmost Algerian province, and other Saharan-based cells.

By 2005, serious rifts appear to have threatened Droukdal's authority and AQIM's ability to keep or attract members. His move to ally himself and the remnants of the GSPC with Al-Qaida in 2006 was likely a last-ditch effort at shoring up support among a core of harder-line, more ideologically-driven members of his organization and a perceived path to gaining newer, younger adherents. In some ways, the move has succeeded. From all accounts, the GSPC in 2005-6 was a broken, dysfunctional organization of loosely affiliated gangs, with those hiding in the Sahel seemingly more interested in smuggling and extortion rather than any particular Salafi Jihadiyya ideals. While Droukdal also likely expected a windfall of financial resources and perhaps equipment and advisors, AQIM has not done much better than GSPC did. It has attracted new members (who appear to be a mixture of everything from committed Salafis to common criminals), but also seen many of the older guard GSPC leave, retire, or take advantage of the periodic amnesty programs Algeria offers. It appears to have received a small sum of money from abroad in 2006-7 But it also appears that a combination of multinational, multi-agency counterterrorism efforts effectively put pressure on key transnational networks that could link AQIM

with other groups.[1]   It seems clear that today AQIM finds it difficult to effectively resource its operations from foreign donations.

The Algerian military establishment remained the main stated focus of GSPC violence throughout the 1990s and early 2000s. Droukdal's somewhat abrupt switch from Algerian military targets to mainly Western civilian in 2006 was carefully calculated to manage his new brand. At the same time, Droukdal purged much of the senior GSPC leadership, in a conscious effort to reject the semi-independence (particularly in an economic sense) of what he saw as less "pure" Salafists – mainly those south of the Atlas Mountains. The calculation also took into account the fact GSPC as a brand had a weak reach outside of Algeria proper, the fact that America and allies had begun the Pan-Sahel Initiative which had already stirred local anger in conservative Islamist circles across North and West Africa, and the hope that Al Qaida would reward the newly re-minted organization for its renewed commitment to proper Salafi credentials.[2]

But below the surface, Droukdal balanced a new commitment with older GSPC tendencies and principles. Fearful of alienating a large contingent of older GSPC members, Droukdal renewed tactically familiar hit and run attacks on Algerian military targets even while younger members of the AQIM blew themselves up in the hopes of gaining martyrdom (for example, the 11 April 2007 suicide bombings in Algiers that killed 30 and wounded 220).

In late 2008 and early 2009, however, AQIM scored important victories that have put them in a stronger position, and more importantly offered a path to financial independence. The committee is no doubt familiar with the spate of recent kidnappings in Mali and Niger. More than any other single factor, the willingness of governments and companies to pay ransoms for prisoners has been the decisive factor in bolstering AQIM and its growing network of semi-adherents and smuggler allies. It has created in the two several years a small-scale industry of targeting foreigners, mostly Westerners, and served to help realize some of Droukdal's larger ambitions in the region. While formal recruitment into the organization is still likely challenging, the organization has

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[1] Souad Mekhennet and Michael Moss, "Ragtag Insurgency Gain a New Lifeline from Al-Qaida", New York Times, July 1, 2008. Nicolas Schmidle, "A Saharan Conundrum" New York Times Magazine February 13, 2009.

[2] A fascinating example of this can actually be heard in a New York Times audio interview with Droukdal, where Droukdal uses carefully-chosen classical Arabic when explaining AQIM's Islamist credentials and goals, but inadvertently switches to his native Algerian dialect when asked about his opinions of Bouteflika and the Algerian government. He literally could not reframe the older, familiar anti-Algerian state GSPC rhetoric in the language of the global Jihad. Available at http://www.nytimes.com/2008/07/01/world/africa/01algeria.html?_r=2&hp&oref=slogin

been able to strengthen its ties with a number of local leaders, throughout the Sahara and Sahel – not on the basis of ideology, but mostly on the basis of shared economic interests. This does not mean an increase in the absolute numbers of fighters under AQIM command, but does mean that AQIM is developing a enabling support network for its larger interests.

Ideology and Violence

AQIM's stated brand of Islam is generally and quite often roundly rejected in the Sahel. There is something of a stereotype of "African Islam" being more "tolerant" and moderate than Islam as it is practiced elsewhere, and like most sterotypes it has a shade of truth to it. The vast majority of Muslims in the Sahel follow the generally more tolerant Maliki and Shafi'i jurisprudence rather than the Hanbali school associated with Wahhabism and Salafism. But the Sahel is generally a fairly conservative place; memory is strong (if fluid), customary practice matters, and there is a long history of Islamic intellectual production – the traces of which are on full display today in traveling exhibitions of unique manuscripts from places like Timbuktu, Gao, and Agadez.

It is vital that we not lump reformist-oriented Muslims together. Following a more or less conservative interpretation of Islamic law (in comparison to what?) does by no stretch necessarily mean sympathy with AQIM or even with non-local interpretations of Islam such as Wahhabism. Do Wahhabi and Salafi ideas find some purchase in the Sahel? To a certain limited extent and in some communities, yes. But so do the ideas of the Pakistani Jama'a al-Tabligh as well as the Libyan Da'wa (both of which opened missions in northern Mali in the past several years). More importantly, there exists a long, rich and local history of quite conservative interpretation of Islamic law; whether within the Songhai, Arab or Tamashek populations, sources of reformist thought and education are readily at hand.

The question about the "spread" of Salafism/Wahhabism/Qutbism as it has so often been posed within U.S. analyst circles (each of which is distinct) is both distracting and unhelpful. It presumes both a kind of ideological epidemic and weakness of mind on the part of local actors. It also presumes a causal connection between ideology and violence in the Sahel that does not exist. In any case, countering ideology is fraught with difficulty, and carries the burden of neocolonialism that makes it nearly impossible to succeed. More importantly, however, the presumed spread of Salafi al-Jihadiyya is not nearly as important to the stability of the region as more prosaic problems of smuggling, differential resource access, and the changing natural environment.

The U.S. has the opportunity to avoid making similar mistakes and becoming perceived as a neo-colonial power in the region. But this will take not just

reframing questions and avoiding easy stereotypes of entire populations as "tribal" and susceptible, but also taking a substantively different tack in addressing deeper regional challenges. And it will take a level of coordination and commitment that we have so far been unwilling or unable to muster.

Smuggling

One key variable in the political stability of the Sahel remains control of informal capital flows and markets, which, next to aid dollars, bolster the wider Saharan region (Keenan 2006: 286-287). The question over who gets access to capital of differing types – to a more expansive sense of capital that includes social prestige, *baraka*[3], authenticity, rightful claims to privilege as well as property, goods, and currency—and the extent to which local leaders establish their own social positions as providers of this capital directly reflect the social power they can wield.

Particularly since 2001, smuggling has become a major site of struggle between various interest groups, including U.S. military, national governments, and local authorities, as the main way (outside foreign donations or investments) for many northern leaders and their communities to remain self-sufficient and autonomous. American pressure to completely shut down illicit market networks completely in order to starve potential terrorist networks has largely backfired so far. Here again, Kel Ifoghas and Kunta leaders have told me that the U.S. is increasingly characterized as working with corrupt government lackeys against the interests of everyday people in the Saharan fringe, the vast majority of whom rely on informal economies to get by every day.

These informal marketing activities include important social practices by which communities in desert-side societies not only cope with environmental degradation and social change, but also shifting formal sector markets that continue to put northern populations at a disadvantage. Smuggling remains a long-cherished symbol of autonomy and control and an important part of both social practices (ideas of protection, blessing, or right of passage) and shifting political alliances. Here, religious authority and memory may be mixing in ways akin to the nineteenth century Sahara when the Kunta, for instance, used their religious authority to legitimate the tobacco and slave trades, partially as a way of competing with reformist Massina leaders in the south. Today's struggle over illicit trafficking bears resemblance to the ways in which leaders established and deployed Islam both before and during the colonial era. The rhetoric of this social process may differ, but the outlines of that past remain powerful. This is not to make excuses for illicit trafficking, but it does point up that there's more to smuggling than outright banditry.

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[3] Literally, "blessing" or divine presence.

While analysts rightly point out how ransom revenues has allowed AQIM to purchase an ever-more sophisticated array of weaponry, there is a far more productive way of putting that capital to work for longer term growth: smuggling drugs. The older smuggling operations in people, fuel, cigarettes, and other commodities still exist but the potential profits simply cannot compare to cocaine. This is relatively new. When I first lived in Timbuktu over a decade ago, smugglers favored cigarettes as the preferred commodity and had constructed sophisticated and relatively efficient mechanisms that included import, remanufacture and repackaging, forgery, a secure system of exchange and a network that spanned from the ports of West Africa through the Sahara to Eastern Europe. The new cocaine operations, bankrolled now by a number of stakeholders from major South American cartels to AQIM to Eastern European mafia, make the cigarette trade seem quaint.

As pressures have grown on smugglers since 2002, increased risk seems to have recently helped push some key commodity prices higher in major Saharan markets, and touched off violent competition between major merchant groups operating in and around the desert (Cissé 2003; Sylla 2004).[4] But with the newer cocaine trade there is a qualitatively and quantitatively different phenomenon. The stakes and scale of both the extended trade networks supporting it and the levels of violence are growing at an alarming rate. And trying to kill off the entire regional informal economy without viable short- and long-term livelihood alternatives would likely have the opposite effect to what most American strategists and Bamako or Niamey politicians intend: that is, it would increase political instability in the north and ire against the governments of both Mali and Niger.[5]

The rise of the cocaine trade, fueled by South American cartels' credit and transport from West African ports, has grown exponentially over just the past five years. The United Nations Office of Drugs and Crime estimated that West Africa handled 40 to 50 tons of cocaine, worth an estimated $1.8B at European wholesale prices, in 2007.[6] The real volume is likely much higher.[7]

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[4] The recent bitter feud between prominent Kunta and Moor families, particularly since 2003, are apparently linked to these market shifts – again with echoes of competition that are, in this case, well beyond a century old.

[5] Certainly the recent history of the unintended consequences of trying to quash black markets can provide lessons, most particularly in Afghanistan and Columbia.

[6] Douglas Farah, "Confronting Drug Trafficking in West Africa" Testimony before the Senate Committee on Foreign Relations Subcommittee on African Affairs, June 23 2009.

[7] Thomas Harrigan of DEA estimates between three and five times higher than the UN estimate in 2007. See his "Confronting Drug Trafficking in West Africa" Testimony before the Senate Committee on Foreign Relations Subcommittee on African Affairs, June 23 2009.

This growth has worked to both destabilize authority (both central government authority and that of local leaders) and catalyze or concretize networks that support the trade. If the trans-Saharan cocaine trade develops as other cocaine smuggling routes have, we can expect to see an explosion of violence as different gangs, groups, and factions vie for control and a share of the profits. Distribution networks will be paid in drugs, which will likely fragment competition and gradually draw more people into the traffic. Again, if history is any guide, this will likely infect police and military forces and could eventually lead to the Sahel to become a fragmented narco-region.[8] And in fact, the phenomenon is currently on full view in places such as Senegal, where drug money is reportedly fueling a building boom in Dakar. [9]

So far it remains unclear how deeply involved the AQIM organization is in these networks, but anecdotal evidence suggests that individual AQIM members – particularly operating in Mauritania, Mali and Niger– are already directly involved.[10] It seems clear that at least sections of AQIM are not just willing to engage in drug smuggling, but are also looking for additional ways to support their future operational activities. Their expansion in the Sahel will depend less on finding those who share their ideology and more on where economic opportunities coincide with other groups. Again, this highlights the importance of the larger shifts in informal markets, protection rackets, and money laundering rather than the particular attitudes and ideologies in the future of AQIM in the region.

Pan-Sahel Initiative and TSCTP

In 2002, the U.S. government's goal was simply to watch and monitor activity in and around the Sahara, since at that point there was little consensus within the American administration as to what next steps should be. What began as an extension of intelligence gathering, however, became an important campaign to quash what at that time was loosely referred to as 'Al Qaida in Africa'. In late 2002, this culminated in the formation of the Pan Sahel Initiative (PSI), the U.S. State Department-funded, Defense Department-run program meant to provide training and equipment to regional militaries as well as to develop military-to-military relationships with key regional military commanders.[11] American

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[8] Farah, "Confronting Drug Trafficking in West Africa".

[9] Christopher Thompson, "Fears for stability in west Africa as cartels move in". Guardian U.K. March 10, 2009.

[10] Cf. the blog Moor next Door, "AQIM-Mauritania – Quite Saharan, if fact". Sept 21, 2008. Accessed 11/10/09 at http://themoornextdoor.wordpress.com/2008/09/21/aqim-mauritania-quite-saharan-in-fact/

[11] See the State Department's official announcement at http://www.state.gov/s/ct/rls/other/14987.htm.

military advisors spent time in Mauritania, Mali, Niger, and Chad between 2003 and 2005, training security forces in weapons and communications technologies, small unit maneuvers, and mobile warfare.

From the beginning in 2003, key Tamashek and Arab populations were largely left out of PSI-sponsored activities, exacerbating the long-standing ill-will between these groups and the national governments of Niger and Mali. This fact, combined with the rhetoric U.S. officials and their local allies used at the time very quickly brought out older tensions and suspicions, and linked them to the U.S. military.[12]   Fearful, highly speculative language remains a common element in reports and public statements from the American government – statements which are widely published and easily accessible across Mali and Niger, including the north (Fisher-Thompson 2004; USAID 2005: 3-4; Keenan 2006: 274-275). Part of this self-fulfilling prophecy stems from the outlook of U.S. analysts and other personnel, who have tended to lump reformist leaders and organizations in the Sahel as undifferentiated Salafist-oriented threats to regional peace and stability. On a trip into the north of the Mali, for example, former U.S. Ambassador to Mali Huddleston warned with alarm: "With the Dawa [al-Tabligh], we're dealing with something even more worrisome because they're in the north. The Salafists are in the north and they are terrorists. And there are connections between them." (Anderson 2004) This attitude, along with the Malian government's responses, had the effect of driving Islamic missionaries and at least some Muslim community leaders closer together (Kimbery 2005).

Rumors of inappropriate conduct of U.S. personnel also began to spread across the southern Sahara over 2004, and public statements by American military leaders and interpreted and rebroadcast by northern political leaders added to resentment among northern leaders (ICG 2005: 31; US House of Representatives 2005: 22-27). The rhetoric on the American side often continues to repeat allusions to the Sahara as a lawless, traditionally violent place; a breeding ground for terrorists, and a swamp that needs draining (For example, Powell 2004; CBSNews 2004; Motlagh 2005; McKaughan 2005). Political pundits and armchair analysts in the West have used the repeatedly same imagery and even phrases repeatedly – imagery that some political clients in Mali and Niger in the Sahara have since adopted in their own statements as way of attracting and maintaining American aid (Diarra 2006; Takiou 2006). On the desert side, stories about these stories and about U.S. forces began to spread both informally among trade networks and in radio broadcasts – at a time (in 2003) when the American military in Iraq had become the daily focus of every Middle East media outlet in the world.

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[12] Gutelius, "U.S. Creates enemies where there were none", *Christian Science Monitor*, June 11, 2003

For its missteps, PSI also had clear and important successes, most notably in helping to capture El Para and a number of accomplices when they kidnapped several dozen European tourists in 2003. But these strategic successes have come at some cost. In Mali and Niger, PSI money and programs acted to widen the perceived gulfs between north and south, as well as between northern nomadic and sedentary populations. The U.S. has funneled millions of aid dollars to the Malian and Nigerien governments since 2003 under PSI and subsequently under TSCTP. Northerners complain that these new monies have remained solidly within the hands of the Bambara-dominated government, taking both local political and economic opportunities away from local people. It seems that whatever the case, the PSI program aid – and to a lesser extent, TSCTP aid -- quickly became a politicized symbol of a contest for power in the North. It is unclear to what extent this affected the dynamics of the most recent (but separate) Tuareg rebellions in Mali and Niger in 2007-2009, but infighting and claims of economic and political oppression became core rallying cries of both movements.

Ways Forward

In assessing the effectiveness of U.S. counterterrorism activities and particularly the TSCTP, I can only speak from the perspective of a) what I see first hand and through local French and Arabic press and b) what locals and NGO practitioners in Northern Mali, and less directly, in Niger tell me --- and less from any privileged government view.

Partnering with the Malian and Nigerien governments, while without a doubt necessary, has had a mixed record, in my view. The emphasis on working with national-level institutions, while necessary, creates a preset friction in the northern Sahel that is difficult to overcome without balancing those efforts with more local society outreach, sustained local presence and specifically non-military programming. PSI's initial execution increased local resentment of both national armies and their U.S. backers. Over time and with TSCTP, the U.S. began to alter the approach and although TSCTP programs are showing the first signs of progress, more needs doing. Related, TSCTP programs appear as overly executed by proxies, whether those are NGO subcontractors or Malian and Nigerien government institutions.

Agencies involved in TSCTP should consider increasing their presence where establishing long-term local relationships are key to the success of its programs. There continues to be a severe lack of information about ongoing programs and their effects at the local level, in large measure because we have few people on the ground and few specialists with relevant languages and training interfacing with local communities. Funding for local data gathering and analysis, including

survey instruments, should be a part of the TSCTP toolkit (and in fact exactly such a capability has inexplicably been removed from AFRICOM's FY 2010 budget). This may also mean opening staffed offices in Timbuktu, Agadez, and perhaps even Kidal. At the same time, more concerted non-military efforts to visit effected communities on the desert edge, support of local cultural programs and institutions, and above all addressing local economies' viability are all requisite to addressing the larger issues of stability in the Sahel. In this connection, appropriate diplomatic pressure should be brought to bear on both Bamako and Niamey to ensure that aid and other resources are reliably reaching populations in the north of Mali and Niger and that U.S.-funded programs are having some expected local impact.

Can innovative technology help in addressing these questions? Yes, particularly in better information gathering, coordination, and decisionmaking. At Ishtirak, for example, we are working with NGOs and corporate social responsibility programs on a series of tools that can track development projects, lessons learned, and metrics, and assist with program planning and resource allocation. This can be coupled with lightweight data collection applications that work on any modest mobile or satellite phone, providing a near-real time picture of what's happening, who's involved, and how to improve outcomes. Technology, appropriately designed and deployed, can provide transparency, accountability, and coordination at a much higher level than we see today. As most of this technology is based on free open source software, there is no excuse not make the most of it.

USAID, at its best, is one of the most effective ways to change minds on the ground about the U.S. and its motives. It needs a larger presence in the region, and should make program and infrastructure investments in concert with other U.S. agencies, development NGOs, and local partners. We should increase commitments to local livelihood programs and environmental monitoring and training programs and target more specifically fragile communities scattered across the Sahara's southern edge. GeekCorps and other creative USAID communications programs should be focused to improve communications networks in these areas, and should create a cadre of Malians and Nigeriens who can help sustain these networks on an ongoing basis. Most importantly, sustainable, small-scale businesses are needed to counteract the growing influence of illicit trafficking.

AFRICOM must work in concert with USAID and other agencies in both meeting the demands of the TSCTP and its own mission. While the command is still in its early days, General Ward has a chance to shape an innovative, nimble organization that works cohesively with both local African partners and other U.S. government agencies. AFRICOM is making headway and this should be commended and fully supported. But there is also a great deal of suspicion on

the part of those who have not seen direct benefit from its military-to-military exchanges. AFRICOM should consider extending its outreach activities directly to those in northern Mali and Niger, in ways that also align with bettering lives in the region. And of course, working closely with USAID and the Department of State here can help in a number of ways.

Many of these ideas are recognized within U.S. policy circles already. The GAO completed an assessment of the TSCTP in July 2008 and found a number of aspects of the program that needed improvement.[13] There is no comprehensive, integrated TSCTP plan. TSCTP lacks both coherent high-level goals and metrics for assessing progress against those goals over time. This holds true for U.S. government activities and with Malian and Nigerien partners. While interagency coordination seems to have improved over time, it is clear that cooperation needs improvement. Continued tensions over State Department's authority over Defense Department personnel under TSCTP reflect this need.

Beyond this, however, TSCTP needs to shift its frame of reference from terrorism per se to the context that makes a sustained AQIM possible. It must more directly address the deeper, more immediate threats to Mali and Niger: Environmental degradation, systematic disenfranchisement of Northerners, and the new smuggling economy. TSCTP in its current form will likely never have more than tactical successes against what is in reality small, loosely-organized, opportunistic terrorist franchise – because addressing the larger threats are largely secondary to its focus on terrorism.

We must be clearer about what the stakes are in the Sahel and what our national interest is. I can tell you that the local perception, based on PSI and the initial activities under AFRICOM and the TSCTP is still strongly that the U.S. is first concerned with protecting and expanding American economic interests followed by controlling an Al-Qaida threat that exists mostly in the minds of American government analysts and some European allies. The more we ignore the region's larger issues, the more this misperception gets reinforced.

In summary, the threat of instability in the Sahel is real, but the source of that threat is more directly linked to economic desperation, criminality, and differential access to political and economic control rather than Al-Qaida or Salafist ideology. AQIM and its allies still pose a real threat. But we tend give the group more credit than it deserves. U.S. counterterrorism efforts should provide a well-planned, integrated programmatic focus on those larger regional challenges and hold itself and its partners accountable for outcomes. The stakes

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[13] GAO, GAO-08-860 "Combating Terrorism: Actions Needed To Enhance Implementation of the Trans-Sahara Counterterrorism Partnership", Report to the Ranking member of the House of Representatives Committee on Foreign Affairs, July 2008

related to the growing criminality in the region that feeds violence and erodes societal institutions are high and growing – not just for African governments, but for the U.S. and Europe as well. We ignore these at our collective peril.

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