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Background
Paper

New Threats to Africa's Stability and Growth

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Preface

Dear participants,

This paper is one of ten papers which are expected to form a book focused on imagining Africa four decades from now. Of these ten papers, five will serve as background papers for sessions at the Fifth Africa Emerging Markets Forum:

- *Imagining Africa 40 Years from Now*
- *Demographics and Urbanization: Planning Cities That Work*
- *Building Human Capital: Improving Education Quality*
- *Transforming Rural Africa: Growing a Productive Agriculture Sector*
- *Africa's Infrastructure Deficit: Closing the Gap*

Another paper, *New Threats to Africa's Stability and Growth*, will also be distributed at the Forum. The remaining four papers are available on the EMF website:

- *The Impact of Commodity Terms of Trade in Africa: Curse, Blessing or Manageable Reality?*
- *Africa's Inclusive Growth Challenge*
- *Economic Diversification of African Economies*
- *Regional Economic Integration in Africa*

Following this Forum, the papers will be revised and published as chapters in a book which will be widely distributed to African leaders and policymakers, among other stakeholders. As such, we will welcome your comments and feedback during and after the sessions.

Harinder Kohli
Founding Director & Chief Executive
Emerging Markets Forum



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Executive summary

While Africa is obviously doing much better than 15 years ago, the continent is nevertheless confronting two major new threats: The first is the contrast between successful countries and those seemingly doomed to failure. The second is that even the successful countries have not always been able to prevent the emergence of deep social and geographic inequalities, which have often been accompanied by rising tensions and increasing insecurity. Since this last phenomenon often combines with an erosion of authority as the state loses control over some peripheral regions, these regions become lawless zones that eventually threaten the integrity of the states.

The most emblematic case is certainly Nigeria where the economic boom has not prevented the emergence of a “caliphate” in the north of the country. This new type of threat is arising in a global context, where radical Islam has replaced the secular ideologies of the twentieth century that had barely penetrated Africa. It provides the populations of these regions with simplistic explanations for the misery into which they are plunged and establishes in their minds the responsibility of the West for all their ills. This situation has become a very serious issue in many parts of Africa. The most serious problem has now arisen in the French-speaking Sahel, where despite regional alliances, external support from France and the US, and billions of dollars spent on military budgets, insecurity is still developing, particularly around Lake Chad and in the north and center of Mali.

The key causes of these developments are generally the coincidence of strong demographic growth, a narrow economic base principally focused on relatively unproductive agricultural activities, vast territories that are difficult to control, populations fragmented into multiple ethnic or religious groups, and the presence of a large Muslim population subjected for several decades to strong Salafist propaganda. These constraints translate into considerable underemployment of a large cohort of young men entering the labor market without prospects. In some cases, these difficulties are heightened by marginalization or by

economic or political discrimination. These countries or regions, described as “fragile,” are currently the target of attempts at destabilization carried out by jihadist groups on a sometimes mafia-like scale. These groups usually control specific economic circuits dealing with illicit trafficking (including weapons, cigarettes, drugs, and migrants).

While flashpoints threatening to spread very swiftly may require external military intervention, as was the case when French forces had to put a stop to a military offensive led by jihadist groups in Mali in 2013, this type of conflict can neither be settled by foreign armies nor definitively solved by military means alone. They require responding to the state’s shortcomings and, to this end, considerably strengthening not only the national armed forces but also consolidating—or in some difficult cases rebuilding—the entirety of the other state sovereign institutions, particularly the police, the judiciary and local administration. This type of consolidation can be part of an ambitious program of security sector reform, the scope of which must be expanded compared to current practice.

Since the poorest countries lack the fiscal resources to enable them to carry out this strengthening of their state apparatus, they are currently caught in a double impasse that is both budgetary and security-related. They risk falling into a conflict trap if they are not strongly supported in their efforts by donors, which up to now have carefully avoided involving themselves in security-related issues. The agenda of African governments facing these new threats needs to be ambitious, but it will be hard to implement.

Basically, these countries will have to (i) consolidate or rebuild their state apparatus and negotiate exceptional financial, technical, and political support from the West for this purpose; (ii) regain control of international aid spending so as to reorient it as far as possible toward the factors that fuel insecurity, particularly rural poverty, in order to create massive employment opportunities; and (iii) undertake wide-ranging reform of their education systems and vocational and technical training programs. (iv) In addition, the massive creation of jobs demanded by their exceptional

The success of such a comprehensive response to the security challenge presupposes that governments demonstrate the political will to act simultaneously on these various axes by building coalitions adapted to the exceptional scale of the challenges they face.

level of demographic dynamism also means facilitating the development of a dynamic private sector. (v) Finally, these multiple efforts will remain insufficient if the rate of population growth is not brought down to a level compatible with the countries' economic capacities. The implementation of such policies will require exceptional communication and pedagogical efforts.

The restoration of security throughout this region implies a very important ideological dimension. Therefore, it is imperative that governments engage in a courageous struggle against Islamic fundamentalism and jihadist ideology. The success of such a comprehensive response to the security challenge presupposes that governments demonstrate the political will to act simultaneously on these various axes by building coalitions adapted to the exceptional scale of the challenges they face.

New Threats to Africa's Stability and Growth

Africa is doing better than 15 years ago

It is highly reductive to speak of Sub-Saharan Africa while ignoring its great diversity. The various ecosystems of Africa are as diverse as its peoples and the different legacies of its colonial past. The continent is equally diverse in terms of the economic situation and income levels of its countries. The US\$20,000 annual income of an inhabitant of Equatorial Guinea, for example, contrasts starkly with the US\$400 of a resident of Niger.

Despite this diversity and the obvious differences across countries, the trends in Sub-Saharan Africa were fairly similar between 1970 and 1990. These years were marked by weak long-term economic growth, a chronic productivity deficit, mostly rentier-based economies, wide-ranging demographic changes, strong urbanization, stalled industrialization, and the difficulty of escaping poverty traps. However, it is often forgotten that these same countries enjoyed rapid growth after winning independence that lasted from the 1960s until the oil crisis of 1973. The focus is more often on the lengthy period of crisis and economic stagnation they experienced between the 1970s and the mid-1990s.

It is remarkable that since that period, many countries in Sub-Saharan Africa have experienced a rate of growth that stands in sharp contrast to the previous two decades of stagnation. Of the ten countries with the highest levels of growth in the world in the first decade of the new millennium, five (Angola, Ethiopia, Chad, Mozambique, and Rwanda) were in Africa, with growth rates above 7%, meaning that an economy doubles in size in ten years. In fact, almost everywhere on the continent, trade, mass distribution, construction, and services have seen spectacular growth. In 15 years, African market capitalization has almost quadrupled; private equity has boomed; and migrant remittances and foreign direct investment have far exceeded official development aid. The so-called

“awakening” of Côte d'Ivoire since President Ouattara's presidency in 2011, as a case in point, is stunning.

The reasons behind this widespread success are well established. They arise in the first place from the high prices for raw materials, stimulated by the extraordinary growth of China that prevailed until 2013, which increased revenues from exports. This economic success was reinforced by the implementation of major infrastructure projects, including the opening of highways and freeways, the expansion of ports, the rehabilitation of major railroads, and the commissioning of numerous power stations. The growth of new information and communications technologies and of the financial sector over the past two decades has been similarly spectacular. Today, even the smallest market trader has two, three, or even four mobile phones in his or her pocket. A scene from the remarkable film, *Timbuktu*, which depicts a Touareg child trying to get a signal at the top of a sand dune, underscores the importance of the mobile phone in even the poorest communities.

Africa's economic success is also grounded in the macroeconomic stability that was rediscovered following the instability of the 1970s and 1980s. Throughout the 1980s, brutal structural adjustments sometimes provoked social disasters leading, in particular, to a collapse in the public services responsible for education and health. In some countries, they also brought about a breakdown in state structures as well as spectacular increases in corruption. Yet the adjustments ultimately resulted in the restoration of balanced budgets and external accounts, which for over a decade had accumulated enormous deficits. The adjustments made it possible to lower inflation and to implement rigorous budgeting more widely, thanks to the coming to power of a new generation of technocrats accustomed to working with the Bretton Woods institutions. For the countries on this path, the cancellation of most of their external

Whole regions that have not benefited from economic growth now face long-run stagnation and the risk of entering alarming cycles of violence.

debt, which had risen to unsustainable levels, greatly facilitated these budgetary adjustments.

What are the threats?

Today, many observers agree that the growth of the past 15 years will continue, if less rapidly as a result of the decline in commodity prices and the slowdown in the Chinese economy. However, two new clouds loom on the African horizon.

The first is the contrast between successful countries and those seemingly doomed to failure. While certain countries have seen remarkable growth, others remain plagued by poverty, disastrous management of public affairs, and unresolved internal conflicts. The Central African Republic, Somalia, and South Sudan are well-known cases.

The second is that even the successful countries have not always been able to prevent the emergence of deep social and geographical inequalities, which have often been accompanied by rising tensions and increasing insecurity. In many cases, these phenomena combine with an erosion of authority as the state loses control over some peripheral regions which become lawless zones.

The continent's extraordinary economic successes led to the development of urban infrastructure, the proliferation of skyscrapers, traffic jams of Mercedes and SUVs, and the emergence of not only an opulent class of dollar millionaires but also an authentic middle class. But these impressive developments tend to be limited geographically to certain particularly dynamic regions and to the capitals. The businesspeople who invest there often forget that the peripheries of these capitals mostly comprise miserable shantytowns and poorly integrated neighborhoods that lack public services (roads, drainage, drinking water, and electricity) that have not benefited from economic growth now face long-run stagnation and the risk of entering alarming cycles of violence.

Without doubt, the case of Nigeria is the most emblematic. The Nigerian economic boom has not prevented the emergence of a caliphate in the north of the

country. Nigeria, whose economy largely stagnated from the late 1960s to 2000, experienced remarkable growth since that period until the 2014 collapse in oil prices. This growth coincided with the end of military regimes and, combined with a change in statistical procedures, made it the largest economy in Africa. Nigeria is currently the seventh most populous country in the world, with 187 million inhabitants. It is on track to become a global giant by 2050, the third most populous country (after China and India) with 399 million inhabitants, and one of the world's twenty largest economies. It recently had a non-permanent seat on the UN Security Council.

There is working democracy in Nigeria, and the most recent elections of March 2015 saw the replacement of President Goodluck Jonathan, from the south of the country, by General Buhari, a man from the north. The education system is of high quality, the administrative elites are for the most part highly qualified, and some institutions (though not all) function remarkably well. The country was also one of only two of the African countries affected by Ebola (together with Senegal) to rapidly and effectively contain the epidemic. However, it suffers from extraordinary regional inequality between a largely deprived north, where per-capita income is one of the lowest in the world, and the capital city and the south, which have both experienced an economic boom.

The worrying issue today is that despite its considerable financial resources, administrative structures, and billions of dollars in military budget, the Nigerian government is unable to guarantee security in the Niger River Delta, where mafia gangs rule, and has allowed maritime piracy to develop to the extent that the Gulf of Guinea is now a more dangerous area than the Somali coast. Meanwhile, in recent years, it has largely lost control of part of its national territory, which has been ravaged by the armed group Boko Haram.

The threat of destabilization is becoming regional. Naturally, the advances made by Boko Haram are of great concern to the neighboring countries of Chad, Niger, and

Boko Haram territory has come to pose a regional threat that puts its neighbors at risk.

Cameroon. Chad feared reaching a point of economic suffocation because Boko Haram was threatening its main access route to the sea via Douala and north Cameroon. At the end of 2014, Chad, Niger, and Cameroon decided to commit their own forces to loosening this stranglehold, with mixed success. This offensive resulted in the destruction of Boko Haram's military structure, especially its armored equipment and its ability to mount coordinated offensives. In spite of its claim to establish a caliphate, Boko Haram, unlike ISIS, is incapable of administering the regions under its control. None of its stated objectives—to (i) establish a caliphate covering all of northern Nigeria, southern Chad, southeastern Niger, and northern Cameroon, (ii) impose an extreme version of Sharia law, and (iii) eradicate all Western traces, in particular public education—was achieved. In fact, the nihilistic savagery apparent in this movement is reminiscent of the infamous LRA, the Lord's Resistance Army, which has long terrorized northern Uganda. It is difficult to imagine its sustainability as an organized movement as its activities are now largely confined to looting and massacres. But it is still active all around Lake Chad, and it is too early to consider that the threat has been conclusively removed. Such mixed results after a joint coordinated offensive by the armies of four countries supported by UK, the US and France justifies probing the reasons for the emergence and expansion of a movement of such magnitude in the richest and most powerful country in Africa.

Northern Nigeria was a land of jihad throughout the nineteenth century, and its impact was felt as far away as Mali and Senegal. The Sokoto Caliphate led by Usman dan Fodio, which emerged at the beginning of the 19th century, covered the whole of what is now northern Nigeria, southern Chad, and northern Cameroon. It even exercised nominal sovereignty over a group of emirates covering part of present-day Mali and Burkina Faso. In addition, the establishment of Pax Britannica gave rise to a series of revolts led by preachers throughout northern Nigeria, particularly in the northeastern states, where Boko Haram is

currently established. This rebellion thus has historical and religious roots.

It is surprising that the Boko Haram movement started out in 2000 as a very small Islamic sect comprising only a few dozen followers, all strongly influenced by the Wahhabi teaching disseminated by Saudi Arabia. This sect, then very marginal and even ridiculed by some for its isolationism and sectarianism, became progressively more radical after 2003 and adopted an ideology rejecting what it considered the remnants of colonial influence, in particular Western-style education and both national and local forms of government.

Although its aim is to establish an Islamic state “purified” of all Western influence, it is the deprivation of northern Nigeria that largely explains Boko Haram's success. The poverty of the north of the country, which stems from an exceptional population density, the consequent environmental crisis in the countryside, and the lack of prospects and employment for young people, allowed Boko Haram to prosper. Even seen from a plane, the overexploitation of the land in this region, with the disappearance of fallow land due to demographic pressure, is striking. As in many other countries, the struggle for access to land is often the source of violent conflict. Boko Haram skillfully played on such tensions over land as well as on inter-ethnic and inter-religious tensions and rivalries, all of which are heightened by demographic pressure. Since 2009, it has established links with the jihadist networks in Niger, Mali, Libya, Algeria, and even Somalia.

Boko Haram territory has come to pose a regional threat that puts its neighbors at risk. The linguistic and ethnic proximity between Niger and Nigeria along their 1,500-km shared border means that insecurity in northeastern Nigeria is gradually corrupting all of southeastern Niger in the Diffa region, which is of considerable concern to Niger officials, who consider it a serious threat that could jeopardize the unity of the country¹. They are also

1. In June 2016, the military base of Bosso close to Diffa was taken over by Boko Haram fighters and 32 soldiers from Niger were killed.

We may be witnessing the emergence in some parts of Africa of a new kind of threat that is likely to spread to the many regions that, like northeastern Nigeria, have lagged as development has left them behind.

well aware that this threat cannot be addressed by military means alone but demands a rapid acceleration of economic and social development programs at the local level.

The example of Boko Haram shows that a new type of menace is emerging in Africa. We may be witnessing the emergence in some parts of Africa of a new kind of threat that is likely to spread to the many regions that, like northeastern Nigeria, have lagged as development has left them behind. For a long time, the power elites in Africa considered that the main danger came from their armies or from the streets of their deprived neighborhoods. To deal with these dangers, they reinforced the presidential guards built on tribal basis and instituted populist policies ranging from low-cost cereal imports to subsidies for diesel fuel. Yet rural people in peripheral regions were largely forgotten; their political weight did not count, or their votes were bought by unscrupulous politicians. Their isolation was reinforced by such populist policies and by the lack of all-season highway infrastructure.

This new type of threat is arising in a global context, where radical Islam has replaced the secular ideologies of the 20th century (Marxism, fascism), which had barely penetrated Africa. It provides the populations of these regions with simplistic explanations for the misery into which they are plunged and establishes in their minds the responsibility of the West for all their ills.

Conflicts in Africa are not a new phenomenon: quite the contrary, in fact. There were many conflicts in the decades following independence, some of them devastating. These included attempts at secession (Biafra) or long secessionist struggles (South Sudan, Eritrea), or they arose in a context of difficult decolonization (Angola, Mozambique, Guinea Bissau). Many of them took place in the context of the Cold War and were supported by external players (Ethiopia, Somalia). Some of these conflicts were the consequence of an implosion of the economy and the state apparatus (DRC) or the outcome of ethno-political crises (Rwanda). The rarest type of all consisted of classic conflicts between

states, such as the one that once gripped Burkina Faso and Mali.

These wars and conflicts can be categorized according to various typologies, but their main characteristic is that, despite the role played by the external context, they were essentially the result of internal political clashes specific to the countries concerned and were only marginally exploited by an ideology with global ambitions. Even when regional coalitions were involved, as was the case, for example, in the DRC, each of these conflicts was in a sense unique because it was above all linked to the specific characteristics of a particular state and the internal political tensions that affected it.²

In this context, and with the end of the Cold War a quarter of a century ago, these countries felt secure against external threats and their military budgets remained at very low levels.³ However, for at least a decade now, new threats have developed from the depths of the forgotten countryside.

The nature of the threats hanging over many African countries has changed. These new threats are emerging in countries subject to tensions that neither national institutions nor failing political processes are able to manage any longer. The tensions constitute large-scale challenges that weaken state structures created too recently to have developed deep roots. One striking characteristic is the similarity seen in the tensions and challenges that have appeared simultaneously in many countries, sometimes regardless of highly satisfactory rates of economic growth.

The causes are very often the coincidence of strong demographic growth, a narrow economic base principally

2. Francophone Africa was for the most part spared large-scale conflicts, if we omit the particular case of Chad as well as that of the former Belgian colonies of the DRC, Rwanda, and Burundi. The reasons probably lie in a relatively well-managed decolonization process, a concern on the part of the elites in power for appeasement of ethno-political tensions through diverse redistributions, and by the role played at the regional level by structured organizations such as WAEMU or the CFA franc zone. One final factor was the existence of defense agreements with France, which constituted de facto protection against external aggression but which until recently were perceived by local elites as insurance against internal uprisings.

3. To some extent, the situation is comparable to Western Europe, where the US shield and membership of NATO have led to a steady decline in military contributions.

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focused on fairly unproductive agricultural activities, vast territories that are difficult to control by a weak state apparatus, populations fragmented into multiple ethnic or religious groups, and the presence of a large Muslim population subjected for several decades to strong Salafist propaganda accompanied by small-scale social actions. These constraints translate into considerable underemployment of a large cohort of young men entering the labor market without prospects.⁴ In some cases, these difficulties are heightened by marginalization or by economic or political discrimination.

These countries or regions, generally described as “fragile,” are currently subjected to attempts at destabilization carried out on their poorly controlled peripheries by jihadist groups on a sometimes mafia-like scale. These groups control specific economic circuits dealing with illicit trafficking (including weapons, cigarettes, drugs, and migrants). Apart from the northeast of Nigeria described above, at present, these threats mostly concern the countries of the Francophone Sahel, which have currently grouped together to confront them as the G5 (Mali, Niger, Chad, Burkina Faso, and Mauritania), but also the other countries located near these at-risk areas, (including Senegal, Côte d’Ivoire, and Cameroon), as well as those close to the “failed” states of Somalia and South Sudan, including the border regions of Kenya and Ethiopia. Thus, the entire Sahel-Saharan belt and its neighboring areas to the south, from Senegal to Kenya, are affected.

A series of events brought to light the severity of these threats in 2012 and 2013. First with the collapse of the Malian army, the whole north of Mali was taken over by jihadist groups. Emboldened by their victory, they soon attempted to take control of the south of the country, but they were in extremis stopped by the intervention of the French army. At the same time, the well-funded Nigerian Army was unable to regain control of the area where Boko

Haram was active. Finally, during the same period, the ideological, financial, technical, and sometimes military links among these various groups became apparent, particularly Al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM), Ansar Dine and Mujao in Mali, and Boko Haram in Nigeria. Furthermore, the symbolic attachment of jihadist groups in the Sahel and Nigeria to Al-Qaeda or ISIS signaled a connection to similar centers of jihad in the Middle East and sometimes even in Afghanistan.

These new threats are evidenced by the presence of armed groups, often of foreign origin, which are linked to fundamentalist Islam and which take advantage of pre-existing local tensions to slip into lawless peripheral areas of fragile states. Concretely, these threats are characterized by the gradually rising occurrence of road blocks, cattle rustling, assaults and kidnappings of traders, and the charging of illicit taxation on road users; these are followed by targeted assassinations of hostile traditional local authorities and punitive attacks on recalcitrant villages. Together, these actions serve to demonstrate the breakdown of the local state apparatus.

This first phase is frequently followed by terrorist acts carried out by young suicide bombers in local markets or capital cities. Less spectacular but infinitely more serious is the everyday insecurity that is becoming widespread;⁵ this paralyzes travel and can lead to a collapse of the local economy. At the same time, attempts have been made to set up parallel “proto-state” structures, which provide justice and security but impose religious and social norms on the population.

These new threats are worrying for many reasons.

The threats primarily affect low-income countries with limited tax revenues. These countries have so far not faced major threats and have largely neglected their military structures as well as their overall security and state structures.

These threats emerge in regions facing the very serious problems previously described. The most disturbing are

4. Beyond the obvious cultural, historical, and geographical differences, it is the astonishing similarity in these characteristics that has led me to compare the conflicts that now affect much of the Sahel with the case of the Afghan conflicts.

5. We may recall here the transfer of the Paris-Dakar Rally to Latin America in 2009 for security reasons.

These zones of insecurity behave like metastasizing cancers—exporting terrorism, arms trafficking, and jihadist propaganda, and taking advantage of local ethno-political tensions and problems to insert themselves and grow in fragile neighboring countries.

the link between demography and natural resources, the weakness and sometimes serious dysfunctions in the state apparatus, the lack of agricultural modernization and associated environmental degradation, and the lack of jobs and opportunities for young people who, because of the lack of alternatives, easily become involved in illegal trafficking or armed actions.

These threats are also pernicious because the main victims are civilians, often unaccounted for in the absence of vital records. In practice, clashes between armed groups and local armed forces are limited because they are asymmetric; control of entire territories and the populations residing in them is achieved through a process that does not become visible for many years.⁶ For jihadist groups, controlling territories and evicting state structures in order to carry out their trafficking as well as to undermine the morale of local armed forces through harassment is more important than defeating these forces, which in any case is not within their capabilities. Many armed groups that threaten these fragile countries have support networks and sometimes logistical bases in neighboring countries that are subject to even greater insecurity and are virtually inaccessible, as is the case of Fezzan in Libya and parts of Somalia. These threats have a very strong ideological dimension based on a radical Islamism supported by the foundations and networks of the Persian Gulf as well as by skilled jihadist propaganda backed by considerable financial resources and expertise. They are part of an arc of crisis that runs from Afghanistan to Mauritania through Iraq, Syria, the Sinai, and Libya, where the failure of many democratic hopes, external interventions (Iraq, Libya), religious conflicts, misgovernment, economic failure, and mass unemployment or underemployment have accumulated in multi-ethnic or multi-confessional contexts.

These zones of insecurity behave like metastasizing cancers—exporting terrorism, arms trafficking, and jihadist

propaganda, and taking advantage of local ethno-political tensions and problems to insert themselves and grow in fragile neighboring countries. If they are not swiftly controlled, these threats risk spilling over from their areas of origin and causing regional destabilization, which can spread terrorism and above all give rise to widespread insecurity in neighboring countries, even if these have relatively well-structured state systems.

The ideological, religious, social, and ethnic dimensions of these conflicts make them particularly difficult to defeat. In the Sahel, as General Clément Bollée recently pointed out,⁷ “the deterioration of the situation has accelerated exponentially when the various threats have combined their interests. Thus, when traffickers, highway bandits, autonomists, jihadists, etc., could reconcile their interests, the scale of the threat dramatically increased, whereas the previous compartmentalization that existed between the threats helped to keep them at low intensity.” Just as the combination of a series of small waves can lead to a phenomenon of resonance, thus creating a monster wave, this overlapping of formerly isolated threats now causes an overall threat of unexpected magnitude and reach.

The ongoing decline in security in the north and now in the center of Mali clearly threatens the Malian state. But it also threatens western Niger, as evidenced by the October 2012 attack on the Tassalit camp where the Niger army lost 22 soldiers. The spreading insecurity in Mali is threatening Mauritania and potentially Senegal as well as Burkina Faso and northern Côte d’Ivoire. Boko Haram is likely to survive as a serious regional threat if the economic and social roots of the insurgency are not eradicated. The situation around Lake Chad is similar to the threat created in East Africa by the Shebabs, which are based in Somalia and maintain

6. To take the Afghan example, the calmest areas are those that are well controlled by the Taliban. As the Afghan state no longer has the means to challenge the Taliban in these areas, the Taliban have no interest in fomenting disorder.

7. Former commander of the French Unicorn force in Côte d’Ivoire in an exchange with the author.

Facing up to these new threats entails both extinguishing the flashpoints and also—and above all—neutralizing the powder kegs.

conditions of insecurity in northeastern Kenya and along the entire coast of the Indian Ocean as far as Tanzania.⁸

A significant part of the African continent is therefore being confronted with threats that take on a variety of forms but whose determinants are not only linked to local politics or specific to the continent but which are also found, for example, in other multi-ethnic or multi-religious countries in the Middle East, the Caucasus, and Central Asia. These threats reflect a dangerous mixture that combines the messianic ideology of jihadism with its hatred of the West and its values, and is fostered by poverty, mass underemployment, a loss of bearings and hope for young people, the absence of the state, and absent or inept local government.

The collapse of the great secular ideologies of the 20th century was thus succeeded—and in spectacular fashion since September 11, 2001—by a new religious ideology that clearly identified its enemy: apostates, the West and its education system and culture, and local elites corrupted by Western culture. This ideological phenomenon is combined with an ethnic dimension and heightened by the rise of tensions linked to conflicts over land and access to water. Conflicts between individuals (such as the one illustrated in the film *Timbuktu*, mentioned above, in which a farmer bumps heads with a breeder whose cow had eaten the farmer's lettuce) now easily take on an ethnic dimension, for example, setting Fulas and Bambaras against each other in central Mali.

Throughout the Sahel, this new situation gives rise to what can be described as multiple flashpoints, places of ongoing or recent conflict. However, these occur in regions that are powder kegs—places that are ripe for conflict as a result of poverty, the despair of young people, and the proliferation of ignored economic and social problems in a context of increased circulation of information. The question now facing both the countries directly affected by this

phenomenon and their neighbors is how to deal with these new threats.

How should the new threats be confronted?

Facing up to these new threats entails both extinguishing the flashpoints and also—and above all—neutralizing the powder kegs. Essentially, extinguishing the flashpoints requires military means. Dismantling the powder kegs requires the implementation of complex strategies combining security measures, political action, social actions, ambitious development programs, and ultimately a vigorous ideological struggle. Let us first consider the problem of how to deal with flashpoints.

Existing flashpoints must be extinguished as quickly as possible. Flashpoints threatening to spread very swiftly may require external military intervention, as was the case when French forces conducted high-impact operations to put a stop to a classic military offensive led by jihadist groups in Mali in 2013. This case is probably exceptional as the fighting took place in a semi-desert environment where air support and heavy weaponry could be used without the risk of collateral damage. The military forces involved in this intervention are the first to point out that this type of conflict can neither be settled by foreign armies nor definitively solved by military means alone. “Winning the war is not enough to win the peace,” as the Chief of Staff of the French armed forces, General de Villiers, wrote recently.⁹ Clearly, the destruction of the main rebel armed forces alone does not resolve the conflict. On the contrary, the cancer is likely to spread and expand if the underlying problems, the powder keg, are not addressed in parallel. Moreover, experience shows that these conflicts are rarely resolved in a few months but rather require decades. And it is illusory to expect that foreign forces should remain involved in a conflict of this kind for decades.

What can be expected for these countries is much more like what is currently taking place in central Mali and around Lake Chad. In these regions, various small

8. The Ethiopian army, which is essential to the maintenance of minimum order in Somalia, is currently withdrawing many of its troops from the country to deal with rural uprisings in Ethiopia itself.

9. leMonde.fr, January 20, 2016.

Defusing these powder kegs involves the implementation of complex strategies that combine political action, security measures, social actions, ambitious development programs, and ultimately an ideological struggle.

armed groups take advantage of the local weakness of the state to exploit economic, social, and political difficulties to establish a foothold in densely populated areas; if foreign armies were to intervene, they would ultimately be perceived as occupying forces. Clearly, an action limited to extinguishing flashpoints quickly by “neutralizing” jihadists (to use the official wording) though necessary is insufficient; a powder keg that is not defused will produce more jihadists than the armed forces will be able to eliminate. This is what occurred in Afghanistan.

Defusing the powder kegs cannot wait for political consensus. Defusing these powder kegs involves the implementation of complex strategies that combine political action, security measures, social actions, ambitious development programs, and ultimately an ideological struggle.

Politically, it will be necessary sooner or later to reach balanced political agreements designed to reduce as far as possible the tensions that have accompanied or contributed to the conflict. These tensions are very often linked to perceptions of marginalization and, in some cases, to severe discrimination. This was the case of some Touareg revolts in both Mali and Niger, and it seems clear that this sense of political and economic marginalization is behind the recent formation of the Macina Liberation Front by Fula groups in central Mali.

The sooner political agreements can be concluded, the easier it will be to resolve the conflict. But if these political agreements drag on, as is currently the case in Mali, the conflict—or conflicts—have every chance of becoming entrenched, especially if, as is often the case, certain actors benefit from them. It is indeed generally very difficult to reach a political consensus at the outset or during a conflict, as hoped by many observers and by impatient public opinion from the international community, which underestimates the depth of the political tensions affecting these countries.

Unfortunately, it is often necessary to wait until the conflict unfolds like a Greek tragedy before a political agreement can be reached. This also means that political

agreements can in no way constitute a prerequisite for the launch of security, social, or development actions. This is very important because reaching political agreement or relative consensus is always very difficult, if not impossible in the case of acute conflicts, whereas a stabilization strategy cannot wait.¹⁰

Beyond political agreements, defusing these powder kegs also requires addressing the multiple challenges faced by the regions concerned. This can sometimes be difficult or even impossible in the absence of security. Actions of a combined civilian and military nature, the execution of which is entrusted to specialized military teams or mixed civilian and military teams, can then be envisaged, as was the case in Afghanistan with the Provincial Reconstruction Teams (PRT). However, it should be noted here that the lesson that can be drawn from this inconclusive experience is that this type of action can only be carried out on a very temporary basis until normal development programs can be implemented. The two main lessons are (i) that these civilian-military programs must secure the strengthening of local governance structures and not replace them, and (ii) that the financial resources made available to them must be significant without being excessive.¹¹ The objective must always be to hand over social and development programs to development agencies and local civilian authorities as soon as possible.

In addition, while insecurity constitutes a major obstacle to the work of development agencies in the field, it is very important to start addressing the key problems in regions close to the areas of greatest insecurity to halt the spread of the conflagration. There will be an opportunity to return to these issues, which involve major changes to

10. In Côte d'Ivoire, in 2011, when the tensions and oppositions between the parties to the conflict were still extreme, priority was given to disarmament, demobilization, and reintegration programs as well as an ambitious reform of the security sector even as politicians were still involved in discussions. Where the external partners strive to obtain the agreement of all parties before acting (as in the case of Mali and the CAR), the situation solidifies, then degrades.

11. The resources were strongly insufficient in the early years in Afghanistan and subsequently excessive, resulting in a great deal of wastage and in complete marginalization of the local authorities. Today, they are ridiculously low for the Barkhane operation at €300,000 for 2016.

On the security front, it is important to first regain control of regions and populations that are partially or completely outside the authority of the central state.

the objectives and working methods of the principal aid donors. But first, it is necessary to specify the actions that must be taken in terms of security.

Are United Nations peacekeeping forces the solution to restoring security? Assessment of the performance of UN peacekeeping forces in the face of these new threats is necessarily severely critical. These forces can contribute to maintaining a minimum level of security during the early years of insecurity in a region if the situation has not become too degraded, but their operational capacities are low. For example, the main concern of the MINUSMA force in Mali today is the protection of its own bases and of a number of roads to ensure their own supply chain.¹²

It is thus reasonable to question the cost-effectiveness of these forces, whose cost in Mali exceeds US\$1 billion per year, especially if their maintenance over 15 years proves necessary, as is the case, for instance, in the DRC. In addition, the mandate of these forces is often an inadequate response to the local situation and may also give rise to varying interpretations on the ground resulting in culpable inaction.¹³ These constraints do not allow these

forces to carry out pre-emptive actions or even engage in aggressive responses if they are attacked.¹⁴

On the other hand, as General Lamine Cissé¹⁵ pointed out to the author, if this type of force is exclusively made up of regional African contingents, their involvement allows them to equip and train themselves while incorporating rules concerning respect for fundamental rights as well as training in operations involving forces of diverse origins. These assets would then give them greater efficiency both on the spot, where they are easier to motivate than when they return to the armies of their countries of origin, or in future African regional permanent forces.

The rapid strengthening of all the sovereign structures of the threatened countries is essential. On the security front, it is important to first regain control of regions and populations that are partially or completely outside the authority of the central state. Beyond any external military intervention, this requires responding to the state's shortcomings and, to this end, considerably strengthening not only the national armed forces but also consolidating—or in some difficult cases rebuilding—the entirety of the other state sovereign institutions. This type of consolidation can be part of an ambitious program of security sector reform, the scope of which must be expanded compared to current practice.¹⁶

It is very often the weakness, the absence, sometimes even the decay and the irresponsible behavior of these state institutions that led to the insecurity in the first place and, in some cases, to the establishment of parallel authorities. The objective of strengthening the state apparatus is easy to identify, but the implementation of

12. One reason for the weak capabilities of these forces stems in part from their heterogeneity (29 countries were represented in MINUSMA in Mali in 2016—many of them with a merely symbolic force). But the main reason for their weak capability is the poor quality of the troops sent by the countries providing these forces. They receive a tangible income from the United Nations while sending personnel who are untrained and unmotivated and sometimes not fully equipped. A country that sends a battalion as part of a United Nations peacekeeping operation receives about US\$50 million. The salaries it pays to its soldiers must be between US\$2 million and US\$4 million, or sometimes less if expatriation and risk premiums are not paid, as has been known to happen. This demonstrates the profitability of what for some countries becomes a business. Note that these discrepancies between billed and actual costs mean that private security companies (which are also interested) could offer a much better service for less.

13. It is for this reason that the head of UNMISS in South Sudan has recently been relieved of his duties after allowing a massacre of civilians to take place before his eyes.

14. In these conditions, what can the level of motivation be for, for example, the Bangladeshi soldiers locked up in their bastion in Kidal in northern Mali or traveling in the desert on impossible roads without ever coming across the enemy but who witness the death of their brothers in arms who stepped on improvised mines or who are subjected to incoming mortar shells at night? In any case, the MINUSMA force has suffered significant losses in Mali, with more than 100 deaths since it was set up in 2013, which reveals the inadequacy of its mandate and of the structure of forces relative to the enemy they are expected to fight and its modes of action.

15. Former chief of staff of the Senegalese army and former commander of the United Nations office in West Africa.

16. Often, this type of reform covers only the army and sometimes the police.

A major difficulty is that Least Developed Countries (LDCs), which include the Sahelian countries, cannot finance both their development and a state apparatus able to meet the threats they now confront, aware that this state apparatus must also be deployed throughout their territory.

such programs poses many difficult technical, political, and financial problems.

At the technical level, taking in hand the relevant institutions generally requires much more than training and equipment programs.¹⁷ The process may require the reintroduction of the principles on which the effectiveness of institutions has always been based: rigorous selection of management at all levels on the basis of merit, promotion based on merit and performance, and the introduction of modern human resource management methods, based on results-oriented management, job definitions, and skills reviews to eliminate unfit managerial personnel. All of this often requires targeted salary increases to attract and retain specialized or managerial staff.

The greatest obstacle is of a political nature because this type of reform requires abandoning the practices that are frequent in these sensitive institutions, where loyalty and clientelism often take precedence over capability. A true reform of the security sector requires a profound reform of the human resources management practices in the pillars of security (armed forces, police forces, local government). No lasting results can be expected where clientelism, ethnicism, and corruption reign supreme.¹⁸ The quality of every institution—and the institutions responsible for security are no exception—depends above all on their personnel and especially on the quality of those who lead them.

A final difficulty is the financing of such programs, which are anathema to international aid. The statutes of some multilateral aid organizations prohibit them from funding anything connected to military and security matters, and their internal rules sometimes even prohibit them from funding the local civil administration. These multilateral

organizations have long funded such institutional restructuring programs in their usual areas of intervention, and ministries of finance and of education or energy companies have been made operational again thanks to these major aid institutions. The present paradox is that these aid institutions recognize the fact that there can be no development without security and no security without development. Yet they apply rules and practices that clearly contradict their own observations.

Among multilateral bodies, only the European Union (EU) is beginning to get involved in these issues and, in particular, to fund training programs for security forces such as the EUTM program in Mali. However, if funding is confined to this type of expenditure or, as is currently envisaged, to non-lethal equipment without providing for proper military equipment, soldiers' pay, the construction of satisfactory barracks and, above all, the means of maintaining civilian control over the military forces, such funding remains inadequate. For now, the EU remains hesitant, and its expertise in this field is very limited.¹⁹

The poorest countries lack the resources to enable them to carry out this strengthening of their state apparatus. A major difficulty is that Least Developed Countries (LDCs), which include the Sahelian countries, cannot finance both their development²⁰ and a state apparatus able to meet the threats they now confront, aware that this state apparatus must also be deployed throughout their territory. In the characteristic case of Niger,²¹ the country

17. The limits of such programs have been seen in the case of the Afghan police, which after 15 years of programs of training and provision of equipment remains the mafia it was in early 2002.

18. For example, the vehicles bought at great expense are plundered (as was the case in Iraq) or their tires found for sale in the market (as is still the case in Mali), arms and ammunition are resold, and the units that on paper are ready to fight are in fact only ghost troops, like those that fled before the jihadists in Mosul in 2014.

19. Bilateral aid (US, UK, France, and Germany) is similar. Through the mobilization of the human resources of their own state institutions, they have the best expertise in this field. But with the exception of the US, which is far less concerned than Europe with security in Africa, and of Great Britain, which has little interest in Francophone countries and has largely abandoned the Anglophone countries of West Africa to strengthen its presence in East Africa, they have limited resources with which to finance this type of support for capacity building and institutional restructuring.

20. With social expenditures currently exploding because of their demographics: 40% to 50% of the population is under 15 years of age.

21. This is the first country in the world to have benefited from a detailed analysis by the World Bank of the sustainability of its security spending based on various assumptions about its pace of growth. This analysis, which was carried out in 2015 based on data from 2013, showed that if the level of security expenditure were to increase over the period 2013-2016 at the rate for 2009-2012 (corresponding to an increase of 154%), the budget deficit would become intolerable. However, the country's security spending in 2016 has already exceeded the World Bank's most pessimistic

Responsibility for at least part of the security costs of these countries by the European Union or a group of donor countries is the most urgent measure to prevent the deterioration in security from paralyzing the massive development effort that lies ahead, especially in the rural sector.

was forced to multiply its military spending by a factor of 3.7 between 2009 and 2015. Neither Niger nor Mali nor the other countries of the Sahelian sub-region possess an economy or a tax base that would enable them to meet the immense needs bearing on them in social and economic terms as well as the emergencies they are forced to face in terms of security.

These countries have a fiscal capacity that rarely exceeds 17% to 18% of their GDP. Faced with these threats, they are forced to reduce their development spending to finance overall security spending, which is now approaching 6% to 7% or, in some cases, as much as 9% of GDP in Chad. Even this level of security expenditure is insufficient to cope with the new threats they are facing. These exceptional costs tend to reduce the resources allocated to economic and social development spending, thus increasing future risks without guaranteeing security. These countries are, therefore, caught in a double impasse that is both budgetary and security-related.²² As a result, they risk falling into a conflict trap. Altogether, only countries with significant oil or mining revenues (as was the case of Chad prior to the collapse of oil prices, which largely explains its army's capabilities) or a strongly dynamic economy can finance the security costs to meet these types of threats.

International responsibility for the security expenditure of the poorest countries is essential but currently impossible. Responsibility for at least part of the security costs of these countries by the European Union or a group of donor countries is the most urgent measure to prevent the deterioration in security from paralyzing the massive development effort that lies ahead, especially in the rural sector. This support should not be limited—as it is now—to training and supplying miscellaneous equipment. Instead, it should include paying wages, reforming human

expectations.

22. Recall that it was the American refusal until the arrival of General Petraeus in 2008/2009 to accept financial responsibility for the Afghan army and the lack of seriousness of their attempts to reform the police that now make the latter a mafia enterprise. It is, therefore, the entire state apparatus of these Sahelian countries, including the army, police, local administration, justice, and customs, that it is urgent to consolidate and fund.

resources management, fully equipping the units with the appropriate equipment and, most frequently, reforming the governance of the security forces.

The problem for the international community is not financial. With sound management, equipping, training, and funding a Sahel battalion for one year costs about US\$15 million.²³ Instead of setting up high-cost peace-keeping forces, the United Nations would be better off funding local security forces on the condition that it oversee their complete reorganization. The rehabilitation and reconstruction of, for example, the Malian army would certainly not cost the billion dollars a year mobilized for the UN peace keeping force. Moreover, the conditions likely to accompany funding from aid institutions—of the order of one quarter of this amount—intended for such a reconstruction could be very helpful in reordering the governance of these forces, an outcome the provision of training courses and the donation of a few armored personnel carriers can never hope to achieve.

The international community's responsibility for a large part of the security costs of these countries can be justified for three reasons: (i) financially, it would be far less expensive than a foreign military intervention,²⁴ (moreover, the political cost would be much lower because the international community does not take kindly to the return of its children in coffins); (ii) the security of these vast regions constitutes a regional or even global public good and therefore justifies a mutual assumption of responsibility; and (iii) this is the only credible way to ensure the security

23. Recall that the cost of MINUSMA for Mali alone is in the order of US\$1 billion per year, that the cost of the Barkhane operation is over US\$650 million, and that the budget of the 11th European Development Fund (EDF) covering the 2014–2020 period is €30 billion.

24. A Western military intervention would in any case lead to an impasse in view of the available forces, the size of the territories in question, their populations, and the inevitable friction between the population and the armed forces from very different cultures, sometimes representing the former colonial power. The Sahel represents about 7 million km² and will have a population of 150 million in 10 years. The Barkhane force consists of 4,000 men.

Funding the military and security expenditures of the low-income countries subject to these new threats can be carried out indirectly without involving the direct funding of military expenditure by aid partners.

of these areas and to avoid what can be termed a process of “Afghanization.”

Opposition to this reasoning is considerable: (i) Within multilateral aid organizations, legal experts rely on 70-year-old statutes, which challenge any involvement of donors in the security sector; (ii) officials at these agencies fear that the resources devoted to security will reduce those devoted to traditional development activities and take a dim view of new demands on budgetary resources they know are limited; and (iii) public opinion and representatives of civil society argue that aid is not meant to fund security expenditure, security budgets also have a reputation for being particularly opaque, and funding them in these conditions represents a gift to corruption. Given these conditions, it will clearly take time and considerable lobbying if there is to be any hope of altering the practices of the principal donors.

In spite of this pessimistic observation with regard to the short term, it is important that the governments of the countries concerned, especially the Sahelian countries, exert pressure on the multilateral aid institutions via the international community to demonstrate the obvious contradiction between their analyses, which show that there can be no development without security, and their practice of ignoring this question. The OECD Development Assistance Committee (DAC) is already well aware of this contradiction and is conducting work on this subject,²⁵ which makes it possible to anticipate some progress, even if it remains very timid for the time being.

In the World Bank study of the sustainability of security spending in Niger, the first of its kind in a country facing particularly serious threats, the goal was to achieve an agreement within three to five years among the major multilateral partners to fund at least non-military security spending, focusing primarily on local administration and

justice, followed by equipping the police forces and similar forces such as the “garde nomade”.

Provision of international funding for local security costs implies their rationalization and transparency.

Funding the military and security expenditures of the low-income countries subject to these new threats can be carried out indirectly without involving the direct funding of military expenditure by aid partners. The solution would be to show these costs in terms of their actual amount and to fund the increased deficits as budget support, whether unallocated (ideally) or even allocated to social or development expenditure, which would generate room for maneuver in the budget. In this case, the fungibility of budgetary resources allows for the indirect funding of security spending.²⁶ However, this mechanism involves finding a solution to various problems.

First, to reassure donors, it is important that these countries abandon the purely reactive approach to emergencies that currently holds sway and introduce mechanisms for the rational programming of security expenditure based on accurate threat analyses. Second, it is necessary to introduce a satisfactory level of transparency into the security sector by preparing security analyses or white papers that accurately identify new threats and how to deal with them.

This effort should result in multi-year military programming that sets out requirements for both the military and the other state security institutions.²⁷ Subsequently, it is important to move away from an accounting approach to security that leads most of the countries concerned, all of which are under IMF supervision, to scale their security budgets in line with their own available resources and not according to the nature and extent of actual threats.²⁸

25. See Annex 2 of the declaration issued by the high-level DAC meeting of February 19, 2016 entitled “ODA boundaries in the field of peace and security.”

26. For example, the Algerian government met the budgetary cost of a large part of its security expenditure linked to the outbreak of the civil war in 1993-1994 with indirect financing through the IMF.

27. It is desirable that the countries concerned validate the importance of this work by the partners who support their military efforts, in particular France, the US, Germany, and the UK, depending on the case. However, this approach requires still greater transparency in security budgets—including the military budget—which must be capable of being audited by the financial partners, as is commonly the case with the education and health budgets that receive budgetary funding.

28. Following this accounting reasoning, the Afghan army was sized to

To be properly addressed, these challenges require a kind of “Marshall Plan” aimed at the social and economic upgrading of these countries and especially of their deprived rural areas.

They tend to respond to security emergencies by means of supplementary budgets that widen unfunded deficits and lower development spending. This budgetary approach, which is highly constrained and unplanned, does not provide an effective response to real security needs.

Implementation of these principles requires a high level of awareness among bilateral partners (in particular France, Germany, the UK, the Nordic countries, and the US) as well as EU bodies. They must recognize the crucial problem of security in these regions, the inevitability of increased budget deficits linked to the military and security effort required, and the need for external funding of these deficits on a multi-annual basis in order to avoid financial gaps and security impasses each year.

Once such an agreement in principle has been reached in the Sahelian countries' negotiations with the leading European governments, but it is also desirable that these countries raise awareness among the governments with influence in both the IMF and the World Bank (in particular the US, Canadian, Japanese, and Chinese governments). It would then be easier in negotiations with the Bretton Woods institutions to integrate the real cost of security expenditure into budgets and anticipated financial operations with greater transparency. If the corresponding financial gaps can be covered by bilateral aid or by the European Union, the agreement of the IMF and the World Bank should then be easy to obtain.

The restoration of security is impossible without seriously addressing the full range of social and development challenges. The cases of Boko Haram and Mali clearly show that the control of insecurity cannot be ensured solely by reinforcing security measures and that it was essential to respond at the same time to the immense social and development challenges. In the description of the Nigerian case, the rapid expansion of Boko Haram was first of all linked to poverty, the lack of employment

prospects and social integration for the very large cohorts of young men who, lacking any alternative may become involved in illegal trafficking or enlist in armed groups. Even a superficial examination of the social and economic situation in most of the rural areas of the Sahel reveals the magnitude of the challenge confronting this region.

To be properly addressed, these challenges require a kind of “Marshall Plan” aimed at the social and economic upgrading of these countries and especially of their deprived rural areas. This effort implies the simultaneous launching of vigorous sets of development programs, in particular for rural and municipal development, education and basic technical training, infrastructure development, and access to drinking water and electricity. Most of these will have to be financed by international aid, at least in the poorest countries. Yet their implementation will require that local politicians pay them much greater attention than they have in the past and focus on effectiveness and results on the ground rather than with the fanfare associated with project launch.

Donors are beginning to respond to this need; development aid to the Sahel now reaches about US\$4 billion per year. Does this increased development aid represent a magic weapon for lowering insecurity? There is a tendency to mock aid and to minimize its importance, and most African leaders would like to do without it. At the global level, at about US\$130 billion a year, it has become almost marginal compared to private investment flows to developing countries or remittances from migrants. Yet these figures mask the very particular role it still plays in LDCs and all very poor countries; as in the case of the Sahel, apart from the mining and oil sectors, private investment has been noted by its absence.

For the very poor countries of the Sahel, international aid easily represents 8% to 10% of their GDP, about 60% to 90% of their investment budgets, 60% to 70% of their net foreign revenues, and close to 40% of their tax revenues. Well-targeted and well-managed, these transfers should significantly contribute to facilitating the economic

very insufficient levels (about 30,000 men until 2006 and 50,000 until 2007/2008), leaving foreign forces with the responsibility of fighting the rebellion, when in view of the extent of this rebellion, in 2008 General Petraeus estimated the need to urgently build a local force of 350,000 men.

It now seems clear that aid to Afghanistan has been characterized by a serious lack of coherence linked to a total lack of strategic direction in the allocation of aid resources at both the sectoral and the geographic level.

development of beneficiary countries, which is important to occupy young people as quickly as possible and thus reduce the temptation to join the ranks of traffickers linked to jihadist groups, thus contributing to social stability.

However, the example of aid in Afghanistan is inconclusive. The evolution of insecurity in that country is instructive as it has been linked to factors similar to those found in the Sahel. Yet the total volume of aid to that country has been colossal, exceeding in some years the GDP of the whole country; aid strictly reserved for development between 2009 and 2012 exceeded 50% of GDP. Despite levels of development aid that in some years exceeded the amounts disbursed by the World Bank for all Sub-Saharan Africa, the results are disturbing. After 15 years of sometimes massive aid efforts, Afghanistan still ranks 171st out of 190 on the Human Development Index. Insecurity reigns even in the embassy district at the heart of Kabul. Kunduz, an important provincial capital, has been occupied twice by the Taliban. No road can be traveled safely, and the government truly controls little more than the cities. Given its instability, what lessons can Africa learn from this clear failure of aid in Afghanistan?

Donors follow their own logic, and their actions rarely respond to the priorities arising from the security situation. In Afghanistan, the need to combine the four most urgent tasks—establishing security, maintaining it, simultaneously building a state apparatus, and promoting rural development to create jobs—had, at the time of the US intervention in 2001, not been conceptualized at all. The aid needs were immense and the donors largely did as they pleased. Until the arrival of General Petraeus, there were no clear common objectives between military and development groups. It now seems clear that aid to the country has been characterized by a serious lack of coherence linked to a total lack of strategic direction in the allocation of aid resources at both the sectoral and the geographic level. As in many Sahelian countries, the Afghan population was 75% rural. Yet of the US\$15 billion disbursed by donors between 2002 and the end of 2007,

only about US\$500 million over 6 years was spent on agriculture, or roughly 3.3% of the total. At a press conference in Paris at the end of 2010, General Petraeus openly recognized this problem and assured the meeting that civilian aid spending in rural Afghan areas now exceeded US\$800 million a year.

Yet how much time was wasted! In Afghanistan, as in the Sahel, the inadequacy of efforts in agriculture, the only sector in which massive job creation is possible, at least in the short term, has been very unfortunate, despite the efforts of some donors.²⁹ Just as in the Sahel, young people cannot find employment where they live. They stream into the cities, where they join the masses of the urban unemployed. Following the departure of the international forces and the jobs that were linked to their presence, their only options are to participate in the networks of the opium economy³⁰ or to enlist with the Taliban, which offers attractive wages. As noted in 2009 by an Afghan tribal chief quoted in the *New York Times*: “The vast majority of the Taliban in my area are young men who need jobs. We just have to give them work; if we can put them to work, we will weaken the Taliban.”³¹

The lesson to be learned is that in a country where agriculture is the main provider of employment, any security stabilization process must be accompanied by a massive investment of international aid in rural development including small-scale irrigation projects, roads, soil protection and restoration, rural electrification, and the like. In

29. These include the World Bank, which financed a remarkable small-scale irrigation development program over a period of 12 years as well as a successful community development program. Despite the sometimes astonishing efforts of villagers, many Afghan valleys are still faced with a Malthusian tragedy heightened by the return of many of the 5 million refugees in Pakistan and Iran.

30. The drug economy is now deeply rooted in the Afghan countryside and is one of the sources of funding for the rebellion and the local power structure. Drug networks have also penetrated the upper levels of the political hierarchy. Today, this represents a turnover of between US\$3-5 billion depending on the year, employing over 400,000 farmers. The phenomenon is similar to that in the Sahel, where due to the lack of employment in the rural sector, young men are increasingly attracted to illicit trafficking in cigarettes, cars stolen in Europe, cocaine imported from Latin America and destined for Europe, and the transportation of migrants attracted by the European mirage.

31. Hajji Fazul Rahim, quoted by the *New York Times*, November 28, 2009.

African leaders need to learn to discipline donors and to guide funding toward their own priorities.

this respect, community-driven development approaches have produced effective results in many countries. However, steering international aid in these countries toward this sector and multiplying such investments in the rural sphere requires a capacity to strategically guide and direct international aid resources.

African leaders need to learn to discipline donors and to guide funding toward their own priorities. Those responsible for delivering aid in the Sahel clearly have not drawn conclusions from the consequences of donors' forgetting agriculture and rural development in Afghanistan. Nor have they perfected methods for strategically steering flows of aid so that they respond to the urgent needs in the countryside. According to Professor Brunet-Jailly's analysis of the aid that was promised at the donor meeting for Mali (Paris, October 2015), of the US\$3.4 billion pledged by donors, only 3.7% was allocated to the development of agriculture and livestock,³² this in a country that is 80% rural, a repeat of what happened in Afghanistan.

This example (among others) shows that donor coordination does not work in fragile countries that may more often prefer to receive aid they know is useless over conducting frank negotiations with these donors to impose their own priorities. These countries are often in a situation of such dependency with regard to aid that they do not dare to challenge donor choices. Whole forests have been pulped to print reports on the problem of aid coordination, and myriad experts have been mobilized on this subject at the major international conferences (Paris in 2005, Accra in 2008, and Busan in 2011). These conferences defined a set of best practices; these practices have rarely been followed in fragile countries with weak and largely disorganized governments.

Some countries are very well structured administratively and politically, for example Côte d'Ivoire, Morocco, or Vietnam, and local authorities take a dim view of any

attempt at coordination on the part of the donors that support them. They see this as a donor syndicate trying to dictate their policies. These countries are already coordinating the donors, and this is a very good thing.

In fragile countries with little administrative structure, and especially in the case of "failed" states, the situation is clearly much worse. There, coordination is supposed to take place first among donors to avoid duplication, errors, and the omission of specific sectors, and above all to place their actions within the framework of an overall strategy. But experience shows³³ that this coordination is limited mostly to exchanges of superficial information and is only very rarely reflected in real strategic direction designed to guide resources to where they will be most useful. In countries where budget planning mechanisms are failing, the laudable principles developed at the above-mentioned international conferences are ineffective, especially as the problem of coordination of aid is difficult to solve without serious involvement by local political authorities at the highest level.

The dispersal of local centers of responsibility seriously undermines the effectiveness of aid. In fragile countries, the first difficulty arises as a result of the dispersal of decision-making centers concerned with international aid. These consist of central actors, where the responsibilities are already divided among the Ministries of Finance, Budget, Planning, and Foreign Affairs. There are also at least a dozen peripheral actors, namely the sectoral ministries. Amidst the greatest disorder, each of these actors interacts with certain donors from among the dozens of major donors and the thousands of small NGOs, ignoring others, while each of the sectoral ministries tries to attract donors to finance what it sees as its own priority operations.

As could be expected, putting a senior national official in charge of directing aid was the recommendation of the international conferences, but this very rarely occurs.

32. Joseph Brunet-Jailly, blog dated January 18, 2016: <https://blogs.mediapart.fr/joseph-brunet-jailly/blog/180116/34-milliards-deuros-pour-quoi-faire?>

33. And the recent case of Mali, where only 3.7% of resources are devoted to agricultural development, provides further proof.

African governments must organize the strategic planning of aid resources.

This problem must involve African leaders. One option is for the Prime Minister to take responsibility for coordinating aid. However, in many countries, either this is a key position and the Prime Minister is already overwhelmed, or the position does not exist or is purely political, filled by a major figure who does not envisage getting involved in mere stewardship. Sometimes this position is even entrusted to an opponent and then endowed with a merely symbolic power.

In these common situations, finance ministers often try to impose some order. But unless their role in this area is clearly defined in the organic framework that sets out the functions and responsibilities of members of the government, they should expect trouble. This was precisely the case of Afghanistan's Ashraf Ghani, Minister of Finance in 2002–2004,³⁴ who, thanks to his background at the World Bank, had the experience required for this task. A document that should be cited in this connection is a book written by Ashraf Ghani (with Clare Lockart) after his departure from the Ministry of Finance, published in 2008. In the extraordinary chapter devoted to the role of aid he wrote:

From the user's perspective, the fragmented system is costly. Ministers who are responsible for coordinating policy must create consensus not only with other cabinet ministers but also with dozens of donors and hundreds of NGOs, each with their own budgets, priorities, rules, and preferences. In Afghanistan, the Minister of Finance in the post-Taliban period spent more than 60 percent of his time on coordination. Had the aid system united around a single flow of financing and rules, the number of reforms carried out within the government's core systems would have risen exponentially. Moreover, each donor agency tends to build alliances with different ministries, further fragmenting cabinet unity. Instead of becoming catalysts for orderly policy

*management, donors become instruments of division and chaos.*³⁵

What he did not say is that any Minister of Finance who attempts this coordination risks attracting the wrath of his colleagues, who find it difficult to accept that one among them would grant himself the considerable power arising from control of flows of international aid. This happened to Ashraf Ghani, who had to leave the government in December 2004 after seriously falling out with his colleagues. In the absence of a Prime Minister truly concerned with the issue of coordination of aid policy, such as Kablan Duncan in Côte d'Ivoire whose teams followed these issues week after week and provided him with updates, the institutional and political problems impede the management of aid according to the precepts emerging from the international conferences. Instead, aid is dispersed according to the donors' preferences rather than focusing on the critical problems.

African governments must organize the strategic planning of aid resources. The currently widespread solution, which also does not work satisfactorily, consists of the preparation of a Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper, to which the actions of the various donors must conform. In countries lacking the capacity to carry out this process, this work is often entrusted to teams of foreign consultants. All this most often results in formal actions aimed at donor conferences, which throw up so many priorities that there is no priority. Moreover, establishing the fight against poverty as the sole objective does little to solve the security problems.

This approach leaves donors free to hunt around for projects, choosing from the long list presented to them one that best corresponds to the preferences of their backers and their pressure groups. As a result, their institutional and political constraints—and not the most obviously urgent needs of the country—decide their programs of action. Typically, they focus on social sectors that are rarely

34. Currently President of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan.

35. Ghani, A. & Lockart, C. (2008). *Fixing Failed States*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

The availability of significant resources is necessary but not sufficient; the resources must be put to good use.

controversial. Along the way, they forget the urgency of rural employment and the importance of rural infrastructure and services. Ultimately, each donor acts as it pleases and, in the words of an ambassador in Kabul in 2007, “managing international aid is like herding cats.” Sometimes a donor representative assumes the role of aid coordinator—in practice, it is often the UNDP representative—and holds coordination meetings to which the aid agencies often send their most junior staff.

Given donors’ distrust of national financial circuits, a good intermediate alternative would be for donors to agree to pool their resources into a fund under a specific governance structure. This pooling could take the form of what is commonly referred to as a “trust fund,” and which corresponds to one or more parallel budgets jointly managed by a group of donors and the ministries directly concerned. Donors contribute to the financing of this parallel budget pending the strengthening of local capacities. The government’s objectives could then be clearly defined and the use of aid brought under control. This formula, which responds to Ashraf Ghani and Clare Lockart’s³⁶ desire to see a unified flow of resources and common rules, was used very effectively in Afghanistan with the creation of the Afghanistan Reconstruction Trust Fund. Unfortunately, it dealt with only a very small fraction of international aid.

African governments must rebuild their failing administrations so that they can drive ambitious social and development programs. The availability of significant resources is necessary but not sufficient; the resources must be put to good use. We must not be deluded: Governments in insecure countries will also have to rebuild their failing public administrations if they are to make effective use of both international aid and their own budgetary resources. The transformation of weak Sahelian governments into genuine administrations for development on the

Singapore model is a difficult undertaking, which often fails as a result of being riven by clientelist practices.

It is indeed necessary to resolve various cross-cutting issues such as the statute of civil servants, salary scales, or the possibility of using contractors or regular local consultants for highly specialized tasks. Above all, it is necessary to make profound changes in the rules and practices of personnel management relating to recruitment, promotion and remuneration and to align them with the general principles of merit and performance. Such reforms inevitably upset the existing hierarchies but also ultimately determine the effectiveness of any public or private institution.

One easy alternative is to rapidly reinforce certain key functions within the administration such as administrative and financial departments, information technology, or certain technical departments. However, experience says that this approach produces mixed results and that it is infinitely more efficient to transform some essential administrations into institutions of excellence, addressing them one after another. This type of transformation is possible within a reasonable time frame if the political will is clear and significant technical and financial resources are mobilized. Attention must also be paid to limiting the ambitions of such reforms to a few key institutions whose functioning will be critical for the implementation of reforms and development programs. These are usually the financial ministries (Finance, Planning, and Budget), the Ministries of Agriculture and Rural Development, Energy, Infrastructure, and Education and Technical Training.

The agenda for facing these new threats is ambitious and hard to implement

- 1. African governments will have to consolidate or rebuild their state apparatus and negotiate exceptional financial, technical, and political support from the international community for this purpose.**

To ensure the security of their territories, they will have to extinguish the flashpoints, as far as possible through

36. Ghani & Lockart (2008)

The massive creation of jobs demanded by their exceptional level of demographic dynamism also means facilitating the development of a dynamic private sector.

their own strengthened military means without expecting to rely excessively on foreign or United Nations forces. They will also have to complement this purely military approach by considerably reinforcing their entire state apparatus. It will be necessary to overcome the double fiscal and security impasse that currently forces them to choose between security and development spending. They must not only rebuild their failing state institutions, but they must also reconstitute a strong nucleus of institutions with economic and social mandates if these are revealed, as is likely the case, to be largely failing. In the absence of reorganization of key administrations, countries may find themselves in a situation where they are unable to launch the necessary investment programs and impose the necessary reforms.

2. They will have to regain control of international aid spending so as to be able to reorient it as far as possible toward the factors that fuel insecurity, particularly rural poverty.

Given that the vast majority of those with the lowest incomes live in rural areas and make a living from agriculture or livestock raising, any effort to create massive employment and reduce poverty in these countries will require the stimulation and modernization of agro-pastoral systems and the rural world. This goal must be both long-term and ambitious as these countries also suffer the effects of global warming. They urgently need to revitalize and intensify their traditional rain-dependent cereal crops. This requires significant public investment in soil defense, protection, and restoration, rural roads, market organization, agronomic research, extension of adapted farming practices, more widespread use of animal-drawn cultivation, and more ecological agricultural practices. They will also need to pursue and accelerate investments in irrigation, especially small-scale systems, and restructure their transhumant and sedentary livestock systems.

The aim should be twofold: to ensure food security in the medium term and to increase the number of jobs in more intensive agriculture and livestock farming and associated support functions upstream and downstream.

Achieving these goals will require enormous efforts in many areas, including literacy, targeted training, legal and regulatory measures, and significant investment in public goods in rural areas in parallel with a sustained effort in human drinking water infrastructures and rural electrification. This type of action will require innovative decentralized approaches that have been successfully implemented in other countries.

3. These countries will have to undertake wide-ranging reform of their education systems and vocational and technical training programs.

The aim must be to facilitate the vocational integration of young people in their own country, in the sub-region and, where appropriate, in migration outside the continent. It is also to enable these countries to have the necessary human capital to secure an economic upswing. They will most likely need to focus on the quality of primary education; reorient secondary and tertiary education toward vocational, technical, and scientific subjects; launch ambitious adult literacy programs associated with basic skills training programs for artisans in the informal sector; and revitalize their post-primary education. Such programs constitute huge challenges for the countries concerned; they will not be able to fund them alone. It will therefore be necessary to remobilize development partners in this area.

4. The massive creation of jobs demanded by their exceptional level of demographic dynamism also means facilitating the development of a dynamic private sector.

This objective will require a radical rethinking of the generally restrictive business environment and rapidly enhancing the availability, quality, and cost of using basic infrastructure. These cross-cutting measures will have to be supplemented by various specific programs that may give rise to a ripple effect, such as the implementation of support programs for training and equipment in the informal services sector and urban and rural handicrafts.

5. These multiple efforts will remain insufficient if the rate of population growth is not brought

It is imperative that governments engage in a courageous struggle against Islamic fundamentalism and jihadist ideology.

down to a level compatible with countries' economic capacities.

In this respect, the demographic dynamism is so high in all these regions and the natural resources so limited that these countries cannot expect economic growth, urbanization, income growth, and girls' education to spontaneously reduce the birth rate. They have no choice but to implement population policies.

The implementation of such policies will require major changes in current norms and values in the sub-region, which in turn will require exceptional communication and pedagogical efforts. Programs aiming to control demography have been prepared and adopted in the past but have never really been implemented. Yet other equally poor countries with a rural majority and of Muslim faith, such as Bangladesh, have found a way to achieve this. The countries of the Maghreb but also Egypt, Saudi Arabia, and Iran have all succeeded. As in all these countries, several levers that are immediate determinants of fertility are available to the authorities. These principally include access to modern contraceptive techniques, dissuading the practice of early marriage, and the lengthening the period of breastfeeding. They should be used simultaneously.

6. Finally, it is imperative that governments engage in a courageous struggle against Islamic fundamentalism and jihadist ideology.

The restoration of security throughout this region implies a very important ideological dimension, which cannot be underestimated. For over 30 years, Salafist preachers returning from the Haj have traveled across the rural Sahel. Throughout that period, funding from Saudi Arabia has enabled the proliferation of mosques and Koranic schools, which thanks to the building of major works and prestige investments, has bought the support—or at least the neutrality—of the political elites for this expansion in a conception of Islam that does not reflect in any way the tolerant tradition of local Sufism.³⁷ African leaders must

regain control of this phenomenon and halt the process of radicalization and intolerance that prepares young people for jihadism. This task may well be the most difficult of all because the political leaders with the courage to engage in this ideological battle will have to confront the hatred of the preachers of intolerance in the mosques and the markets and at the poll booths. They may even have to fear for their lives. However, this struggle, which must necessarily accompany any demographic reduction and control program, cannot be evaded.

The success of such a comprehensive response to the security challenge presupposes that these programs of action constitute an interdependent and indivisible whole. These ambitious programs must therefore be implemented almost simultaneously and cannot be approached in a selective manner. In fact, the interconnections among these programs constitute the key to initiating a chain of virtuous circles. This type of comprehensive response to the security challenge is inevitably a lengthy undertaking that will require the mobilization of significant additional resources from financial partners over the long term. Such a mobilization does not involve excessive amounts and is perfectly possible and realistic. Yet it is also necessary that government officials demonstrate the political will to act simultaneously on the various axes by building coalitions adapted to the exceptional scale of the challenges they face. These challenges are considerable, and the agenda for action is extraordinarily difficult. Nonetheless, this program of action is essential.

³⁷. Classic reference works such as *L'Islam Noir* by Vincent Monteil or *L'Islam au Sénégal* by Moriba Magassouba are no longer representative of

the reality of Islam in the Sahel.



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