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THE CRISIS IN MALI: U.S. INTERESTS AND THE INTERNATIONAL RESPONSE

HEARING

BEFORE THE

COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN AFFAIRS
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

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THE CRISIS IN MALI: U.S. INTERESTS AND THE INTERNATIONAL RESPONSE

THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 14, 2013

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,
COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN AFFAIRS,
Washington, DC.

The committee met, pursuant to notice, at 10:06 a.m., in room 2172 Rayburn House Office Building, Hon. Edward Royce (chairman of the committee) presiding.

Chairman ROYCE. The committee will come to order. We meet today to review the continuing crisis in Mali.

After recognizing myself and the ranking member, Mr. Engel, for opening statements, I will then recognize the chairmen and ranking member of the Africa and Terrorism, Nonproliferation, and Trade Subcommittees for any opening remarks.

Over the past year and a half, northern Mali, a vast desert landscape, has fallen to jihadists. Al-Qaeda's regional affiliate and others, many coming from outside the region, capitalized on the country's weak government in order to take over this region.

Bolstered by weapons that they received from Ghadafi's stockpile, these forces have destabilized the entire region. Last month, scores of civilians—including U.S. citizens—were taken hostage at a remote Algerian energy facility. Those connected with the attack on our mission in Benghazi are thought to be connected to the militants in Mali. Militants in Somalia and northern Nigeria have received aid as well. They received training from these groups. As a matter of fact, this particular al-Qaeda franchise is the fastest growing al-Qaeda franchise in the world.

But it is Mali that has paid the highest price. Extremists have attempted to destroy much of its rich cultural heritage. At the center of ancient trans-Saharan trade, Mali is home to priceless Arab and Islamic literature and mosques of historical significance. Several of the most ancient of these mosques have been destroyed. A culture is under attack.

The militants sought to impose their radicalism onto Muslims they viewed as too liberal. Music was banned. Those who didn't obey faced hanging, stoning, or flogging. An already tough life became hell on earth.

With Mali's capital, Bamako, in jeopardy, and its interim government pleading for help, the French Government took decisive action. Malians have welcomed French forces with enthusiasm—ultimate proof of the extremists' brutality.

Six thousand French citizens live in Bamako. They had been used as pawns, captured by this extremist organization and held for ransom for some number of years as the organization used this as its resource for hard currency. AQIM, frankly, is a threat to France. It has a chapter. It has a cell in Paris. But it also has cells in London and other capitals around Europe. So Paris had an interest in intervening. But there should be no doubt that this militancy in northern Mali and the region threatens us all.

Yet, when France sought U.S. assistance, the administration was tepid in answering our ally's call. It seems the bureaucracy slowed our pace of support. And as Secretary of Defense Panetta put it, "Every time I turn around, I face a group of lawyers." This is a NATO ally fighting al-Qaeda-linked terrorists—it shouldn't be that hard.

While the French understandably would like to wind down their mission quickly, and have an abrupt turnover to United Nations forces that, frankly, would be a disaster. This militant threat remains too committed and too deadly to push this mission on to an ineffective, under resourced or hamstrung peacekeeping force at this time.

It doesn't help that the administration has been divided. According to a former senior administration official, U.S. policy toward the region has been hindered by divisions between a Defense Department that wanted to confront the threat—and a cautious State Department that sought to instead contain it. We'll hear from both Departments today. We hope everyone's working in unison now.

Testifying before this committee last month, then-Secretary Clinton noted that in this region, in her words, "we are in for a struggle, but it is a necessary struggle. We cannot permit northern Mali to become a safe haven. We have got to have a better strategy."

Today's hearing is a step toward achieving that better strategy.

I'll now turn to Ranking Member Engel for his opening remarks.

Mr. ENGEL. Mr. Chairman, thank you for holding this very timely hearing on the situation in Mali. I was on C-Span this morning and I was asked several questions about this hearing. I think it's very timely and very good that we're doing this now.

Last year, a coalition of Islamic extremists—including a regional affiliate of al-Qaeda—took control of northern Mali, an area larger than the State of Texas. Armed to the teeth with weapons plundered from neighboring Libya, they imposed a harsh form of Sharia law, amputating limbs, banning music and destroying priceless cultural artifacts.

These troubling developments raised fears that northern Mali would become a source of instability for the entire region, and possibly a safe haven for terrorists plotting attacks on the United States and other western interests. The situation became even more urgent in early 2013, just this year, when the extremists renewed their offensive, and began driving south toward the capital city of Bamako.

The international community was forced to act and France took the lead by launching airstrikes and putting boots on the ground. I'm pleased that we're now supporting France and other West African nations participating in this critical effort, but I was disturbed by early reports that we were planning to charge Paris for pro-

viding airlift. If we can find a way to pay for military flyovers at parades and professional sporting events, then surely we can cover the cost of aiding a close ally in an operation that supports U.S. national security interests.

France has made it clear that it doesn't plan to keep large numbers of troops in Mali on a long-term basis, and we must work with our allies and partners in the region to figure out next steps in terms of promoting security. Some have suggested that the West African troops now deploying to Mali should form the nucleus of a traditional U.N. peacekeeping operation. Is that the right approach, since efforts to dislodge the extremists from northern Mali will likely require offensive combat operations for some time to come? Should we explore alternatives to a blue-helmet peacekeeping mission, such as the model offered by the African Union force currently operating in Somalia? These are all questions that I hope we can discuss today.

While the immediate focus in Mali is on the military operation, we must recognize that this is a complex and multi-layered conflict. The French and African successes on the battlefield will not be sustained if we ignore the non-military facets of the conflict, and if the political situation in Bamako is not resolved.

Mali is now governed by an interim President that lacks popular legitimacy. The leader of last year's coup, Captain Sanogo, continues to play a role in Mali's political process. And it appears that elections, already postponed for a year until this April, will be postponed again until at least July. Clear steps must be taken toward having elections, Captain Sanogo must be marginalized, and the legitimate grievances of the entire population in the north must be addressed-not just those of the Tuareg minority.

We must also focus on the human rights and humanitarian situation in Mali. Hundreds of thousands of people have been displaced by the current conflict and by severe drought. And there have also been reports of serious human rights abuses by the Malian military, a force that received U.S. training before last year's coup, and which other countries are now supporting.

Unless these issues are addressed in a meaningful way, there is a risk of further radicalization in the north and prolonged conflict along ethnic lines, which will make it even more difficult to stabilize the country. As we consider the U.S. role in Mali and seek to increase cooperation with other countries in the region, it is critical that we learn the appropriate lessons from past efforts. In particular, I am interested to hear how the Departments of State and Defense plan to evaluate counterterrorism and governance programs in light of the failures we have seen in Mali, and whether you believe, our witnesses believe, some rebalancing of our assistance for the region is in order.

Mr. Chairman, I look forward to the testimony of the witnesses, and once again thank the chairman for holding this important hearing. I yield back.

Chairman ROYCE. Thank you, Mr. Engel. We're going to go now to Mr. Poe, who is the chairman of the Terrorism, Nonproliferation, and Trade Subcommittee for 3 minutes, followed by Mr. Sherman, the ranking member, for 3 minutes.

Mr. Poe.

Mr. POE. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mokhtar Belmokhtar is one of the rebel leaders in Mali. He leads a brigade called Those Who Sign with Blood. It is a spinoff group of al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb. It was his followers that attacked an Algerian gas plant last month in a kidnap plot that left 37 dead including 3 Americans. Belmokhtar is running loose somewhere in Mali. The French are looking for him in the mountains. Mali is not, as some have thought recently, or thought in the past, some island in the South Pacific. It is a country in Africa. It's even bigger than Texas. But I will say this, Mr. Chairman, Texas is bigger than France.

One of those Americans killed at the gas plant was Victor Lovelady from my congressional district. Victor Lovelady is an oil and gas worker. He's from Atascocita. He works in Nederland. That's an oil and gas refining community and he worked on assignment for ENGlobal, when he was in Algeria. He's a family man. He waited to go over to Mali until his kids were older and it was important to him that he was able to provide an income for his kids. He had 18 days left to go before he came back to Texas for his daughter's birthday. He was killed. Life was stolen from him by those who kill Americans because they are Americans. He was not a diplomat. He wasn't in the military. He was an American and that's why he was murdered.

Belmokhtar is a terrorist. The bandit of the desert must be brought to justice because really justice is what we do in this country. I yield back. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman ROYCE. Thank you, Mr. Poe. We're very saddened and very sorry for Victor's family's loss and all the other Americans who lost their lives there.

We'll go now to Mr. Sherman.

Mr. SHERMAN. We're engaged in a struggle against extremist terrorism. We've put our overwhelming effort into Iraq and Afghanistan. So Americans naturally would reach the conclusion that the vast majority of the threat is in those two places. The fact is, this is a worldwide struggle. In 2012, Americans were aware not only of Iraq and Afghanistan, but our concerns with Yemen, Libya, and Somalia. Now they've learned that Mali is not in the South Pacific.

I fear that Americans will become aware of dozens of other countries that so far have escaped our common knowledge and that we will be introduced to these countries and their locations and cultures because there will be a report that this is a new theater in the war that we are forced to wage against Islamic extremism. This is a worldwide effort.

As the ranking member demonstrated in hearings we held several years ago, it even involves the tri-border area of South America, and of course, parts of 9/11 were plotted in Hamburg, Germany. It's a worldwide effort and we cannot limit our scope to just one theater. We occupied Iraq and Afghanistan, but we cannot occupy every country where terrorists might find refuge or even support. This is going to last a long time. It has already lasted longer than any other conflict our nation has faced. In this effort, we need allies.

Now to the extent that foreign policy is an expression of our psychological needs and attitudes, we would say America should always be number one, macho, in the lead of every effort. And noth-

ing could be more disdainful than how some repeat the President's phrase that sometimes we lead from behind. But the fact is we need allies and we cannot always be in the lead in every theater in this conflict. In this case, we are behind and we should stand behind France and applaud their efforts in Mali. And we should know that as this effort continues—it will be long—that we need allies, that we cannot invest too much effort into any one theater, and that not only do we need to cooperate with allies, but there are times and areas where they will take the lead and we will play a supportive role.

I applaud France, and I yield back.

Chairman ROYCE. Thank you, Mr. Sherman. We're going to go to our ranking member of the Africa Subcommittee, Congresswoman Karen Bass.

Ms. BASS. Thank you, Chairman Royce, and Ranking Member Engel. I want to thank both of you for your leadership in moving swiftly to hold a hearing on the troubling situation in Mali.

Let me also acknowledge and thank Assistant Secretary Carson and Deputy Assistant Secretary Dory of Defense for your leadership and willingness to come before this committee.

Ambassador Carson, this week you gave an important talk at the Brookings Institution, not on Mali, but on the Democratic Republic of the Congo. You spoke of an Africa that is more stable today than it has been in decades. You said democracy is on the move.

In 2012 alone, we have seen peaceful transitions in power from countries like Ghana, Ethiopia, Malawi, and Senegal. For the first time in over 20 years, the Government of Somalia is once again recognized by the United States and in coming weeks, Kenyans head to the polls in an election that will be closely followed.

As an important U.S. strategic partner, there is a great hope that Kenya's election will be peaceful, transparent, and nonviolent.

I reference these examples because it is important that we place Mali within the context of what's taking place across the continent and this perspective is essential for our nation's Africa policy. The situation in Mali is unique and dissimilar to the remarkable progress taking place across the continent, sustained peace, stability, clear examples of democracy and governance. This future is possible in Mali with U.S. support and the support of the international community.

The current military intervention from France provides a backdrop to work to help Mali define, shape, and implement the current political dialogue. Mali's President should be encouraged to consult all key political actors on the composition, mandate, and work of the Commission on Dialogue and Reconciliation and seek a political agreement on ways to conduct a dialogue.

But let me be clear. The threat of AQIM and rogue fighters in northern Mali must not be ignored. These groups pose internal and external threats and must be held to account for their violent actions. There are reports that AQIM and others have recruited child soldiers, carried out executions, flogging, Taliban-style repression of women, and destroyed numerous religious shrines of cultural and religious importance.

While pressure must be kept to ensure these groups are disbanded and not able to reconstitute themselves, it is important

that the Government of Mali address accusations of human rights' abuses perpetrated by its own armed forces.

I am pleased to learn that President Obama has moved to release limited Defense funds to further support airlift and logistical support of African and French forces. I will be particularly interested to hear the witnesses today comment on the African-led support mission to Mali as part of the broader ECOWAS strategy and your thoughts on the possibility of sustaining gains made by French intervention.

I thank you and I look forward to your testimony. I yield back my time.

Chairman ROYCE. Thank you, Congresswoman. Ambassador Johnnie Carson is the Assistant Secretary of State for African Affairs. Prior to his appointment, he served as the national intelligence officer for Africa at the National Intelligence Council. Ambassador Carson's distinguished 37-year career with the Foreign Service includes ambassadorships to Kenya, to Zimbabwe, and to Uganda. And it's been my privilege over the years to work with Ambassador Carson on many difficult issues. And it is good to see you and to see you again, Ambassador Carson and have you with us.

We also have Ms. Amanda Dory. She serves as the Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense for African Affairs in the Office of the Secretary of Defense. Previously, she was the Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense for Strategy and the Assistant Secretary of Defense for Homeland Defense.

We welcome both of our witnesses back to the committee and I'll share with you that without objection we'll have your full statements put in the record if you could focus on a 5-minute address here today. And members may have 5 days to submit statements and questions for the record as well that we would ask that you respond to.

So we'll begin with Assistant Secretary Carson.

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

Mr. CARSON. Chairman Royce, thank you very, very much for that kind introduction. Thank you for your friendship. Thank you for your commitment to causes across Africa and your interest in the foreign policy of this nation. We look forward to working with you in the Africa Bureau in your new capacity as the chairman of the full committee.

Mr. Chairman, I would also like to recognize Ranking Member Engel as well as the other members of the committee who are here with you and us this morning. I am pleased to have a chance to testify before you on this very important topic.

The evolving crisis in Mali is one of the most difficult, complex, and urgent problems West Africa has faced in the past two decades. Mali's problems reflect the fragility of governance in the region, the lack of economic development, especially in northern Mali, the absence of meaningful opportunities for people to engage with their government, and the widespread desperation that exists in an unforgiving arid region with chronic food insecurity.

The March 2012 coup and subsequent loss of northern Mali to Islamic extremists demonstrates all too clearly how quickly terrorists prey upon fragile states. Poor governance, weak democratic institutions, and a lack of development and economic opportunity create fertile ground for terrorism and also political instability.

As the Malian Government, regional partners, and the international community continue to respond vigorously to the ongoing crisis in Mali, we must be mindful of the four underlying challenges Mali continues to face: The continued presence of al Qaida in the Islamic Maghreb, AQIM, in northern Mali; the restoration of democracy which is essential; the need to begin negotiations with northern groups especially the Tuareg that renounce terrorism and recognize the unity of the Malian state; and a significant and ongoing humanitarian and development crisis across the northern part of that country. Failure to address these four challenges, comprehensively and simultaneously, risks perpetuating the cycle of violence and insecurity that has plagued northern Mali for decades and that has also threatened stability across the wider Sahel.

First, the presence of extremists in northern Mali poses a threat to the entire Sahel region and beyond. The French are disrupting and dislodging terrorist enclaves and liberating northern towns and populations after more than a year of terrorist occupation. The United States strongly supports France's efforts and has actively engaged to assist France in Mali. As of February 13, we have conducted 22 refueling missions which have provided about 867,000 pounds of jet fuel to French aircraft. The United States Air Force has also flown 43 C-17 sorties moving French and Chadian personnel, supplies, and equipment into Mali and Niger. We have lifted 1,090 tons of equipment and supplies and over 830 passengers into the operational theater. We are also supporting the efforts of several African states who have contributed troops to AFISMA, the African-led International Support Mission to Mali. Subject to congressional notification, we intend to provide $96 million during Fiscal Year 2012 to support the AFISMA operation. This support includes training, equipment, and logistical assistance for the AFISMA troops.

Although AFISMA is currently an African regional intervention force, we believe a transition to a U.N.-authorized and a U.N.-led effort which brings to bear all the comparative advantages of a U.N.-integrated mission would be suitable under the right conditions to consolidate French gains on the ground. A transition to a U.N. peacekeeping force will take time, however, as French and AFISMA operations continue and as the U.N. develops its plans in consultation with the Malian Government and with its African partners, this is something that will take time, but it is important.

However, Mali's problems cannot be solved by military means alone. The gains achieved by French and African forces on the battlefield in northern Mali will be short-lived if not accompanied by democratic elections, strengthened institutions, and national reconciliation. We welcome the Malian national assembly's January 29 unanimous approval of a political roadmap and timetable to restore the country's democracy.

Now the interim Malian Government must implement the plan seriously and expeditiously and elections must be conducted free from intimidation and interference by military and security forces. We continue to unequivocally state that coup leader Captain Sanogo and the rest of the military junta members must remove themselves completely and permanently from Malian politics. We have imposed targeted sanctions on some 87 individuals who were involved in the March coup who supported its authors or who continue to impede the restoration of democracy.

Any continued interference in Mali's progress toward the restoration of democracy is unacceptable and risks the imposition of further sanctions from the United States, our partners, and international organizations. We also recognize that the indigenous populations of northern Mali who have a history of resisting foreign Islamic extremists and who have welcomed the arrival of French forces, have legitimate political, social, and economic grievances.

Stopping northern Mali's cycle of instability will require a serious and sustained effort by Malian authorities, non-extremist northern groups, regional actors and international partners to address the legitimate political and economic needs of non-extremist northern groups from Timbuktu to Gao to Kidal. We are encouraging the Malian Government to quickly establish the Commission for Negotiations as called for in Mali's political roadmap. We are also working closely with neighboring countries and the international community to lend support to the negotiating process. Any successful process must address the short-term need to restore Mali's territorial integrity while at the same time laying the foundation for long-term open dialogue needed to address legitimate political and social grievances and to build trust between northern populations and their government.

Lastly, the United States continues to work to mitigate the effects of the humanitarian crisis in Mali and in Sahel which has resulted in chronic food insecurity in the region and has left more than 400,000 individuals homeless and displaced since the start of the fighting in Mali in March of last year.

In Fiscal Year 2012, and to date in Fiscal Year 2013, the United States has provided more than $120 million in humanitarian assistance to address the emergency in Mali. This is part of more than $467 million in humanitarian assistance we have provided to the Sahel region in Fiscal Years 2012 and 2013. We must remember that any military success will be fleeting without a democratic and creditable government that is responsive to the needs of all Malians. We will continue to work to ensure that military success can be translated into long-term political stability by encouraging expedited elections, marginalizing the military junta, holding accountable all perpetrators of human rights' abuses and violations including those who were in the Malian army and supporting a national reconciliation process that addresses the long-standing and legitimate grievances of northern populations including those of the Tuareg.

By continuing to address Mali's multiple challenges simultaneously and comprehensively, we aim to break the cycle of conflict in favor of a just, lasting, and prosperous peace for Mali and for the region.

Mr. Chairman, thank you. I have a longer statement that has been submitted for the record. And I will be happy to take questions.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Carson follows:]

Testimony by Assistant Secretary Johnnie Carson,
Bureau of African Affairs, U.S. Department of State
House Committee on Foreign Affairs
February 14, 2013
"The Crisis in Mali: U.S. Interests and the International Response."

Thank you very much Chairman Royce, Ranking Member Engel, and Members of the Committee for the chance to testify before you on this important topic. The evolving crisis in Mali is one of the most difficult, complex, and urgent problems West Africa has faced in decades. Mali's problems reflect the fragility of governance in the region, the lack of economic development -- especially in northern Mali – the absence of meaningful opportunities for people to engage with their governments, and the widespread desperation that exists in an unforgiving, arid region with chronic food insecurity. The March 2012 coup and subsequent loss of northern Mali to Islamic extremists demonstrates all too clearly how quickly terrorists prey upon fragile states. Poor governance, weak democratic institutions, and a lack of development and economic opportunity create fertile ground for terrorism and instability.

As the Malian government, regional partners, and the international community continue to respond vigorously to the ongoing crisis in Mali, we must be mindful of the four underlying challenges Mali continues to face: al Qaida in the Islamic Maghreb's (AQIM) continued presence in northern Mali, the restoration of democracy, the need to begin negotiations with northern groups that renounce terrorism and recognize the unity of the Malian state, and a significant ongoing humanitarian crisis. Failure to address these challenges – comprehensively and simultaneously – risks perpetuating the cycle of violence and

insecurity that has plagued northern Mali for decades and threatened stability across the Sahel.

1. Threats from Terrorists in Mali and Beyond

The presence of extremists in northern Mali poses a threat to the entire Sahel region – and beyond. While the security situation in northern Mali has changed over the last month due to French intervention, we remain concerned about the continued presence of terrorist and extremist groups, including AQIM and the Movement for Unity and Jihad in West Africa (MUJAO). The French are disrupting and dislodging terrorist enclaves, and liberating northern towns and populations after more than a year of terrorist occupation. Neutralizing the full scope of the terrorist threat in Mali, however, is a long-term effort.

We also must remember that terrorism is a threat that knows no boundaries. We are partnering with countries throughout the region to support their efforts to strengthen border security and their capacity to respond to threats. Our regional counterterrorism support is coordinated through the Trans-Sahara Counterterrorism Partnership (TSCTP). The primary goal of this program is to address the threat of AQIM. As AQIM has expanded its reach through the flow of arms, supplies, and fighters from North Africa into the region, our assistance and support through the partnership continues to evolve to meet the changing threat.

We continue to work with regional and international partners to deny terrorists safe haven wherever they attempt to operate. And while a security response is critical, we must not forget the underlying causes that drive regional instability and create opportunities for violence to thrive. Terrorists and extremist

groups exploited the political chaos created by the northern rebellion in Mali and the coup to expand their safe haven and impose their radical ideology on populations who have long considered such ideology abhorrent. Weak or nonexistent governance and a lack of development throughout the region make many countries vulnerable to such exploitation. We must therefore work collectively with the countries in the region to not only mount a strong and coordinated security response, but we must also reduce the underlying vulnerabilities to extremism by strengthening good governance and promoting economic development.

We commend and strongly support the ongoing French and African military operation in northern Mali. On December 20, the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) adopted Resolution 2085, co-sponsored by the United States, which recognized Mali's overlapping challenges; underscored the international community's support for restoring peace, security, stability, and territorial integrity to Mali; and authorized the African-led International Support Mission in Mali (AFISMA). On January 10, extremist groups, including AQIM and Ansar al Dine, mounted a surprise attack into government-held territory and captured the village of Konna north of Mopti in central Mali. Responding to a request by the Malian government, France launched Operation Serval to prevent AQIM from moving further south. From the very beginning and at the request of the Malian government, we worked closely with the French to support their efforts and those of our African partners. We continue to support their efforts by sharing information, providing airlift support for personnel and equipment, and aerial refueling. My colleague Amanda Dory will go into more detail on Department of Defense support. We continue to coordinate closely at the highest-levels with the

French on a wide-range of military and political efforts to promote long-term stability in Mali.

Following the start of French operations on January 11, AFISMA began expediting the deployment of African troops to Bamako. Troops from Nigeria, Niger, Benin, Togo, Senegal, Burkina Faso, Ghana, and Chad are already in Mali. Subject to Congressional notification, the Department of State intends to provide up to $96 million during Fiscal Year 2013 to support AFISMA. As part of this assistance effort, we provided strategic airlift for the deployment of the Togolese contingent to Mali and are providing logistics support for AFISMA troops deployed in Mali. We have sent teams from our Africa Contingency Operations Training and Assistance (ACOTA) program to those ECOWAS states that have pledged troops to AFISMA to identify gaps in training and equipment and to accelerate training and equipping of deploying troops.

We welcome the continued progress of French and African operations in Mali. And we agree that the challenge now is to stabilize northern Mali and protect civilians and human rights while maintaining pressure on terrorist groups and advancing the political track. We believe a transition to a UN-authorized and UN-led effort – which brings to bear all the UN comparative advantages of an integrated mission – would be suitable under the right conditions to solidify French gains on the ground. Such a transition will take time, as French and AFISMA operations on the ground continue, and as the UN plans, in consultation with Malian and African partners, for an integrated UN mission in Mali. But the goals of any UN mission would include helping to stabilize those parts of Mali where the French have successfully pushed out extremist and terrorist elements, supporting

the Malian political transitional government in its efforts to implement a comprehensive political roadmap and build effective governing institutions, monitoring and reporting on human rights, and supporting regional and international efforts to address the humanitarian crisis.

It is critical that the Malian Defense and Security Forces be adequately trained and equipped to effectively partner with the international force. Consistent with applicable legal restrictions, we terminated our foreign assistance programs with the government of Mali following the March 2012 military coup, including foreign assistance activities with the Government of Mali; with a few limited exceptions in election support, humanitarian work, and life-saving health programming, our full assistance programming with the government cannot resume until a democratically-elected government is in place. The European Union (EU) is leading efforts to reform and rebuild the Malian military through an EU Training Mission which has already begun deploying to Mali. Many other countries have stepped up to provide support. During a January 30 donors' conference attended by over 90 countries and international organizations, and organized by the African Union in Addis Ababa, countries pledged over $455.5 million in support for Mali, AFISMA, and regional development.

2. *Restoring Democratically-Elected Government*

The gains achieved by French and African forces on the battlefield in northern Mali will be short-lived if not accompanied by elections, strengthened institutions, and national reconciliation to restore Mali's tradition of democratic governance. Democratic elections will give the Malian government the credibility

it needs to effectively partner with regional militaries, negotiate with northern populations, and reassert civilian rule. We welcomed the Malian National Assembly's January 29 unanimous approval of a political road map to restore democracy and promote national reconciliation. We also welcome interim Malian President Dioncounda Traore's commitment to implement this roadmap and hold presidential elections by July 31, 2013. The road map is a critical first step towards legitimate and inclusive governance; an absolute necessity for any durable solution. We urge the interim Malian government to implement the plan seriously and expeditiously.

The road map provides a framework to quickly move the political process forward, and clearly states that members of the current transitional government are not eligible to run for office, as called for by the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS). While the road map reflects an important commitment by many of Mali's political actors to hasten the return to constitutional rule, we call on the Malian authorities to provide greater detail and clarity on the sequence of steps necessary to prepare for credible, free, transparent, and inclusive elections. We also urge the Malian government to move ahead in developing the necessary legislation called for in the road map, including amendments to the electoral law.

Elections must be conducted free from intimidation and interference by military and security forces. We continue to unequivocally state that coup leader Captain Sanogo and the rest of the military junta members must remove themselves - completely and permanently - from Malian politics. We have imposed targeted travel sanctions on 87 individuals who were involved in the coup, who supported its authors, or who continue to impede the restoration of democracy. Any continued interference in Mali's progress towards the restoration

of democracy is unacceptable and risks the imposition of further sanctions from the United States, partner counties, and international organizations.

We have strongly condemned all human rights abuses in Mali by any group and call for the perpetrators to be held accountable. We support the statements from Malian officials and civil society leaders that that there will be no impunity for human rights abuses. All actors – military, rebel, and otherwise – in Mali have an obligation to adhere to applicable international law and respect human rights. We support the African Union's commitment to send human rights monitors to Mali and welcome the Swiss government's pledge of $1 million to support the team's deployment. Ensuring the protection of its own citizens must be the foundation of any credible and legitimate government.

3. Negotiations with the North

We condemn those in northern Mali who continue to align themselves with terrorists. There can be no dialogue with those who support terrorism. We also recognize that the indigenous populations of northern Mali, who have a history of resisting foreign Islamic extremists and have welcomed the arrival of French forces, have legitimate political, social, and economic grievances. The Tuareg rebellion that started in northern Mali in January 2012 is part of a longstanding cycle of rebellion and failed attempts to address these grievances. Stopping northern Mali's cycle of instability will require a serious and sustained effort by Malian authorities, non-extremist northern groups, regional actors, and international partners to address the legitimate political and economic grievances of non-extremist northern groups from Timbuktu to Gao to Kidal. We applaud the political roadmap's support for long-term negotiations and its openness to dialogue

with those groups that renounce armed struggle, adhere to the principles of democracy and the rule of law, and accept without condition Mali's territorial integrity. We call on Malian authorities to follow through on this commitment to address the political and economic needs of northern populations that reject terrorism and accept Mali's territorial integrity.

We strongly support the resumption of negotiations with all parties who have cut ties to terrorist organizations, have renounced violence, and who recognize, without conditions, the unity and territorial integrity of the Malian state. We are encouraging the Malian government to quickly establish the Commission for Negotiations, as called for in the roadmap. We commend Burkinabe President Compaore, the ECOWAS-appointed mediator, for his leadership in the negotiation process and support his continued efforts in this regard. We are also working closely with neighboring countries and the international community to lend support to the negotiating process. Any successful process must address the short-term need to restore Mali's territorial integrity, while at the same time laying the foundation for the long-term, open dialogue needed to address legitimate grievances and build trust between the northern populations and their government.

4. Humanitarian Crisis

Mali and the rest of the Sahel region have long suffered from chronic food insecurity. The conflict in Mali exacerbated an already difficult humanitarian situation caused by drought and poor harvests followed by flooding. Since the start of the fighting in Mali, more than 400,000 people have become refugees or internally displaced. This includes over 240,000 people displaced within Mali and nearly 170,000 refugees in Mauritania, Niger, Burkina Faso and Algeria. These

numbers also include the more than 22,000 new refugees who have fled Mali and the more than 14,000 newly displaced persons within Mali since the extremist offensive and French counter operations began last month. We commend the neighboring countries that have welcomed Malian refugees despite their own food security challenges.

The United States continues to work to mitigate the effects of this humanitarian crisis. In fiscal year 2012 and to date in fiscal year 2013, the United States provided more than $120 million in humanitarian assistance to address the emergency in Mali. This is part of the more than $467 million in humanitarian assistance we have provided to the Sahel region in fiscal years 2012 and 2013. The humanitarian situation is and will likely remain very fluid, requiring strategies and programs to adapt in order to meet changing conditions on the ground.

We continue to call on the international community to support a comprehensive humanitarian response, including assistance for the displaced and conflict-affected in Mali and in the broader region. The U.N. Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs recently issued its 2013 consolidated appeal, seeking more than $370 million to assist 4.3 million vulnerable Malians countrywide. We are also urging the international community to respond comprehensively and adequately to the humanitarian needs across the whole Sahel region.

In closing, we must remember that any military success will be fleeting without a democratic and credible government that is responsive to the needs of all Malians. We will continue to urge the interim Malian government to implement the political road map seriously and expeditiously. We are asking our partners to

urge the same. Any military gains will be eroded if political instability and uncertainty return. The French and African intervention has created a valuable opportunity that must not be missed. We will work to ensure that military success can be translated into long-term stability by encouraging expedited elections, marginalizing the military junta, holding perpetrators accountable for human rights abuses, and supporting a national reconciliation process that addresses the longstanding and legitimate grievances of northern populations. By continuing to address Mali's multiple challenges simultaneously and comprehensively, we aim to break the cycle of conflict in favor of a just, lasting and prosperous peace.

Chairman ROYCE. Thank you very much, Ambassador Carson.

We're going to go now to Amanda Dory, Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense.

STATEMENT OF MS. AMANDA DORY, DEPUTY ASSISTANT SECRETARY FOR AFRICAN AFFAIRS, OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY OF DEFENSE, U.S. DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE

Ms. DORY. Thank you. Good morning, Chairman Royce, Ranking Member Engel, members of the committee. Thank you for your time this morning and the opportunity to come to speak to you about what the Department of Defense is doing as it pertains to the crisis in Mali.

DoD is very concerned about the conflict in Mali and is working with international and interagency partners to counter extremists and restore Malian sovereignty. Since January 11th, France has been operating in Mali following a request from Bamako to counter the threat posed by al-Qaeda and affiliates and to help the Malians regain control of their territory, consistent with the U.N. Security Council Resolution 2085.

We are supporting the French through intelligence, air refueling services, and airlift as Ambassador Carson has already mentioned. The counterterrorism effort in Mali complements parallel U.S. strategic objectives that relate to the transition back to the democracy addressing legitimate northern grievances and ameliorating the humanitarian situation there.

France's intervention in Mali has contributed to our shared strategic objectives in multiple ways. These include shrinking AQIM safe haven, contributing to the restoration of Malian territorial integrity, and setting the conditions that will enable elections and a return to democratic governance.

As you know, DoD engagement with the Malian armed forces is restricted by law and by policy as a result of the coup last March. There's no consideration of putting U.S. combat forces on the ground in Mali. However, we continue to support Mali's neighbors to contain and degrade shared threats. We're working closely with the State Department to support the African-led International Support Mission in Mali, or AFISMA, authorized by U.N. Security Council Resolution 2085.

Africa Command and the Department of State are engaged with AFISMA to refine the requirements for that mission and match them with international contributions. AFISMA will host its next planning conference next week. Currently, 13 different African nations are deployed to Mali and supported by 22 countries from outside the region including the United States.

DoD's broader efforts in North and West Africa are focused on building the capacity of partners to counter shared threats and provide for security for their people. We incorporate military professionalism, ethics, and human rights training throughout our engagements and that training yields positive results. As you well know, intervention by the military in politics is anathema to our values and the importance we place on civilian control of the military.

The military coup in Mali was an outgrowth of the January 2012 rebellion and the Malian Government's response to it. This is the

fourth such rebellion with Malian independence in 1960 and was the result of long-standing, unresolved conflicts between the government in Bamako and its northern populations. This time, unlike previous rebellions, northern Tuaregs began working with hardened and armed extremists, some associated with AQIM. Drawing on weapons and fighters from North Africa, this new rebellion resulted in an armed advance on northern population centers, destruction of world heritage sites and the imposition of brutal rule.

DoD was actively engaged in Mali prior to the coup. Part of the challenge we encountered was that the Malian Government was less focused than we on countering AQIM and significant levels of narcotics and other trafficking in the region. From Fiscal Year 2009 to 2012, DoD spent approximately $41 million in training and equipping a limited number of units of the Malian armed forces to enable them to put pressure on AQIM. However, rather than moving against AQIM, despite indications that the terrorist threat was growing, the Government of Mali focused primarily on the perceived threat posed by zoned Tuareg population. As a result, we began to shift our efforts to countries like Mauritania and Niger which were more focused on the counter terrorism mission.

In the period following the rebellion and coup, northern Mali became a safe haven for AQIM and affiliates that made it easier for these groups to recruit supporters and connect with other extremists. This is part of a growing terrorist presence in the region that threatens U.S. citizens' interests and partners as we saw in Benghazi, Libya and in Amenas, Algeria.

While we have not seen indications that AQIM is capable of attacking the United States directly, the group maintains the ability to attack western interests and to attack or kidnap westerners for ransom. AQIM is part of a network of violent extremist organizations in Africa that stretches from Egypt to Libya to Somalia to Nigeria and Mali. The risk of cross fertilization and cross pollination between affiliated groups is one we're very concerned about. The threat is dynamic and evolving and our efforts to counter it must be as well.

As the French transition from combat operations against extremists to a stabilization mission, it will be critical that the international community help Mali and its neighbors craft a sustainable African-led solution and address legitimate grievances, maintains pressure on extremists and ensures protection of civilians. We should also anticipate a dynamic situation in the north with some groups forswearing violence to engage in political dialogue, while hard-core extremists retreat to the mountains and desert, refocusing their efforts on asymmetric attacks.

In closing, DoD strongly believes in the need to address the parallel political, security and humanitarian crises and will continue to provide requested support to international and inter-agency efforts to do so. Thank you.

[The prepared statement of Ms. Dory follows:]

The Crisis in Mali: U.S. Interests and the International Response

Testimony before the House Foreign Affairs Committee
February 14, 2013

Amanda Dory, Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense for African Affairs
Office of the Secretary of Defense

Mister Chairman, Members of the Committee, thank you for the opportunity to speak with you today about the crisis in Mali and how the Department of Defense is working to secure our interests there.

The Department of Defense is concerned about the conflict in Mali and is working with international and interagency partners to counter extremists and restore Malian sovereignty. The French are operating in Mali following a request from Bamako to counter the threat posed by al Qaeda and affiliates and to help the Malians regain control of their territory, consistent with UN Security Council Resolution 2085. We are supporting the French by providing intelligence, aerial refueling services, and airlift, and are pursuing a range of funding options for our contributions. The counterterrorism effort in Mali complements the parallel U.S. strategic objectives to support a sustainable solution to northern grievances, help Mali transition back to democracy, and ameliorate the humanitarian situation.

As you know, DoD engagement with the Malian Armed Forces is restricted by interagency policy agreement as a result of the coup last March. However, we continue to work to support Mali's neighbors to contain and degrade shared threats. We are also working with the State Department to support the African-led International Support Mission in Mali (AFISMA) authorized by United Nations Security Council Resolution 2085 on December 20. AFRICOM and the Department of State are engaged with AFISMA to refine the requirements for the mission and match them with international contributions.

DoD's broader efforts in North and West Africa are focused on building the capacity of partners to counter shared threats and provide security for their people. We incorporate military professionalism, ethics, and human rights training throughout our engagements and that training yields positive results. As you know, intervention by the military in politics is anathema to our values and the importance we place on civilian control of the military.

The military coup in Mali was an outgrowth of the January 2012 rebellion and the Malian government's response to it. This rebellion is the fourth since Mali gained its independence in 1960 and was the result of long-standing, unresolved conflicts between the government in Bamako and its northern population. Unlike in previous rebellions, northern Tuaregs with legitimate political grievances began working with hardened and armed extremists, some associated with AQIM. Drawing on weapons and fighters from North Africa, this new rebellion resulted in an armed advance on population centers, destruction of world heritage sites and the imposition of brutal rule.

DoD was actively engaged in Mali prior to the coup, but part of the challenge we encountered was that the Malian government was not as focused as we were on countering AQIM. From Fiscal Years 2009 to 2012, the USG spent approximately $41M in training and equipping a

limited number of units in the Malian Armed Forces to enable them to put pressure on AQIM. However, rather than moving against AQIM – despite indications that the terrorist threat was growing – the Government of Mali focused primarily on the threat posed by the Tuaregs. As a result, we began to shift our efforts to countries like Mauritania and Niger, which were more focused on the counterterrorism mission.

In the period following the rebellion and coup, northern Mali became a safe haven for AQIM and affiliates, that made it easier for these groups to recruit supporters and export extremism. This is part of a growing terrorist presence in the region that threatens U.S. citizens, interests, and partners, as we saw in Benghazi, Libya and In Amenas, Algeria. While we have not seen indications that AQIM is capable of attacking the United States directly, the group maintains the ability to attack western interests, and to attack or kidnap westerners for ransom. AQIM is part of a network of violent extremist organizations in Africa, from Egypt to Libya to Somalia to Nigeria. The risk of cross-fertilization and cross-pollination between affiliated groups is one we're very concerned about. The threat is dynamic and evolving and our efforts to counter it must be as well.

France's intervention in Mali has contributed to shared strategic objectives in multiple ways. These include shrinking AQIM's safe haven, contributing to the restoration of Malian territorial integrity, and setting the enabling conditions for elections. We support the French military action, but there is no consideration of putting U.S. combat forces on the ground in Mali. We are also continuing U.S. capacity building activities to enable regional partners. Notwithstanding the setbacks DoD faced in Mali, our model of building the capacity of African partners to take responsibility for their own security remains appropriate, and has been successful with other states in the region. We have built strong security relationships with Mauritania, Niger, Burkina Faso, Chad, and elsewhere, and believe that persistent engagement with these partners will continue to yield benefits.

As the French transition from leading combat operations to a stabilization mission, it will be critical that the international community help Mali craft a sustainable African-led solution that addresses legitimate grievances, maintains pressure on extremists and ensures protection of civilians. The DoD strongly believes in the need to address parallel political, security, and humanitarian crises, and will continue to provide requested support to international and interagency efforts to do so.

Chairman ROYCE. Thank you.

Ambassador Carson, as I understand it, discussions are now underway to transition quickly into a U.N. peacekeeping operation and I also understand the administration is supportive of this move.

As I noted in my opening statement, I am worried about prematurely taking that step. I think that might lead us right back to square one because, frankly, I don't think there's a peace at this point to keep in Mali. We met with the U.N. Secretary General yesterday. I know that he agrees with the Foreign Minister of Mali in terms of the situation on the ground that there isn't a peace to be kept at this moment.

So why push for the U.N. peacekeeping mission at this time? I think we've got plenty of examples on the continent where the conditions for a successful peacekeeping mission did not exist, but were authorized anyway and we've dealt with some of the challenges as a result.

Quite frankly here what we need are some battle-hardened soldiers like the French Foreign Legion that are engaged there right now and that can root out these very violent jihadists before we end up deploying a hamstrung peacekeeping force.

And I would ask, have we set on the ground conditions, the benchmarks that must be met prior to deploying this envisioned peacekeeping force? And if so, what are they? And again, just in concept, why push for a U.N. peacekeeping mission at this time?

Mr. CARSON. Mr. Chairman, thank you very, very much for an excellent question. As I stated in my testimony, we believe that in time that the AFISMA force should transition to a U.N. peacekeeping force. We do not want to do that hastily. We don't want to do it prematurely. We want to do it at a point at which it is timely, appropriate, and likely to be successful. We want to do it in conjunction with any decisions by the French in their departure, any decisions by the Africans in what they are prepared and want to do, as well as conditions which exist on the ground. But planning is important to help us get a sense of what may be required so that we are not surprised in the future by a sudden French withdrawal and a collection of African forces who might be better managed and organized under a U.N. peacekeeping regime.

We think that over time the U.N. does have peacekeeping norms and standards which would be applicable and useful in Mali.

I would add one other thing, Mr. Chairman, and that is that there's going to be an on-going need for a counterterrorism operation in northern Mali. And that probably will always reside in the hands of the French and not in the hands of the United Nations.

Chairman ROYCE. I just wanted to raise our concerns because as we read about the push for the quick transition, you and I, I think, concur on some of the downsides if we make that too quick.

Let me go to a question to Ms. Dory because in my opening statement I raised this issue that we were a bit slow in our response to our French ally. We've got multiple news outlets around the world that reported week after week on this story and we're exactly a month now, I think, into when the French began the operation. But it's only this week that we see that the administration re-

sponded affirmatively on some of the provisions of assistance to the French such as the draw-down authority for refueling and airlift.

As I understand it, the French put in the request as soon as the mission started. So if we were to contrast this and this is what's gleaned from the reporting on this, if we were to compare it to the assistance to NATO allies with Libya, those requests for assistance took days. This takes a month. What's the hold up here? And could Congress help speed up this process? Is there something we could do affirmatively to let you know that yes, we do want to support our ally in this mission?

Ms. DORY. Thank you, Congressman. Secretary Panetta made very clear, as soon as we began to receive French requests, that we would be responsive to those as quickly as feasible as befitting allies. The first French request related to intelligence support, ISR coverage to airlift and to refueling. And each of those was met as quickly as feasible. Some of them came almost instantly and the others followed within days.

The reference to paperwork this week, signed by the President that approved drawdown authority has to do simply with reimbursement, and the actual services have been provided since much earlier on. The intelligence, all of the channels available to us were fully opened as soon as the French made that request consistent with sharing guidelines that we have in place. That happened instantly in Paris, in Bamako, and in Senegal. So we were in a position to be very swiftly sharing intelligence. The Department of Defense quickly provided——

Chairman ROYCE. I don't disagree with you on the intelligence front.

Ms. DORY. Right.

Chairman ROYCE. But you know the issue. You know the issue with respect to support for the French operation and you know some of the consternation that is created.

Ms. DORY. In terms of the priorities that we were presented, the first priority was intelligence and ISR support and that is what—we worked on the priorities that we received. The airlift followed second and has been very wholesome. Ambassador Carson gave the statistics to you. We've moved a mechanized battalion at this point from France into theater and are now working on a company that will provide IED support. The refueling services came third. Each of these was subject to legal review. That worked relatively smoothly and swiftly. Is never as quick as one might like when you're on the waiting end, but it did move. And the French have expressed their gratitude and their support in multiple different conversations with DoD officials, with State Department officials, and with the White House. So we believe we're in good shape in terms of our support to the French and our appreciation for what they are doing in Mali in terms of our shared interest there.

Chairman ROYCE. I appreciate the attention to this because obviously, the Secretary of Defense Panetta was quite concerned about the length of time and the fact that, as he said, every time he turned around he was facing a group of lawyers that were holding up the process. So we appreciate the attention to this.

My time has expired. I'm going to go to the ranking member, Mr. Engel. Thank you.

Mr. ENGEL. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I'd like to ask both of you, we've spent tens of millions of dollars, almost 10 years of training African troops in Western Africa and particularly in Mali which I think obviously is a good idea, but it seemed to fall apart in the face of hostile forces. So how we're looking to increase security assistance to Mali's neighboring countries to deal with the spillover effects.

Could you let us know what steps your two Departments are taking to evaluate your security assistance programs in light of some of the failures we've seen in Mali?

Mr. CARSON. Congressman Engel, again, thank you for the question. We are constantly reviewing and reevaluating our programs and our security assistance programs and our relationships with governments. And we believe that much of the money that we have spent in the Sahel region has been put to good effect.

There is no question that Mali is a political and military disappointment. Its military failed to perform on the battlefield and then it turned around and undertook a military coup dislodging a democratic government. But I would also take a look at the West African response to this crisis where we have had over a dozen African states, most of them associated with ECOWAS, all of them recipients of U.S. support and military assistance, responding with alacrity to a crisis in a neighboring state.

The response from the government, a democratic government and a military in Niger, trained by the U.S. has been very positive. We've seen the same kind of response from governments in Burkina Faso. We've seen responses from Benin, Togo, Nigeria, Chad, and Mauritania; all of whom have received great military assistance from us and have benefitted from our programs. And in fact, they are responding in the way that we would want them to do, helping a neighboring state in trouble, dealing with a problem that is both national and sub-regional, and doing it in a collaborative fashion among themselves while also reaching out to the international community and the A.U.

Yes, Mali is in trouble. Yes, they did not perform well, but the others in ECOWAS have stepped up to the plate and demonstrated that what we put in to their hands is doing precisely what we want it to do and that's to respond to a crisis.

Mr. ENGEL. Thank you. Ms. Dory?

Ms. DORY. Thank you. I think I would simply add to that two different dimensions. In terms of our overall strategy of building partnership capacity, when we're working with partners, we focus on the capacity, but we also need to focus on the will and the shared sense of security objectives. And as we look back with Mali, I referenced this in my statement, we focus in terms of our training on increasing their capabilities with select units. But over time, there was a divergence in terms of their perception of the security environment and the threat environment and our own. So I think one of the lessons learned as we move forward is in terms of the partners with whom we're engaging is the shared sense of will there alongside the development of capacity and capability.

The second lesson I would point to is our view that in addition to tactical and operational engagements, it's critically important to engage at an institutional level as well to ensure that the strategic

approach that the ethics and the professionalism are there throughout in an institution and not simply with a unit that you may be engaging with. This is something our British and French colleagues do in terms of having advisors that are on site in different security institutions, ministries, and it's something that we're beginning to do at DoD outside the Afghanistan theater as well, and we're looking to do that in the African context.

Mr. ENGEL. Let me just very quickly, because I know my time is up, ask you if you could briefly tell us what your current evaluation is of the threat that AQIM and the other jihadi groups, which are active in northern Mali—what threats do they pose to the U.S. homeland and our interests abroad?

Ms. DORY. I mentioned briefly in my statement—in a different setting we could go into much more detail, but I think it suffices to say they do not at this point pose a direct threat to the U.S. homeland or territory. They certainly pose a threat to American citizens overseas, U.S. interests in the region, western interests, and African interests in the region.

Mr. ENGEL. Thank you. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman ROYCE. We'll go down to Ileana Ros-Lehtinen.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Thank you so much, Mr. Chairman. Thank you for convening this meeting. I have two questions. One is on funding for the Trans-Sahara Counterterrorism Partnership, and the other one has to do with the AFRICOM; and let me lead up to those.

The situation in Mali, as we have seen, does not exist in a vacuum. When analyzing the crisis in Mali, we've got to examine the spillover effect emanating from northern Africa, from the Maghreb to the Sahel region to Egypt, Algeria, Libya, and beyond. Last month, former Secretary Clinton testified in front of the Senate and said there is no doubt that the Algerian terrorists had weapons from Libya. There is no doubt that the remnants of AQIM in Mali had weapons from Libya. So for years, radical Islamists and extremist organizations have been aggressively expanding their operations in Africa.

Since 2001, we have witnessed a dramatic increase in attacks by al-Qaeda and its affiliates all across the continent, most notably in Maghreb and the Sahel regions. The recent attacks on our consulate and Embassies in Libya, Tunisia, and Egypt underscore this harsh reality. If al-Qaeda becomes entrenched in Mali, the country that has been one of the most susceptible to al-Qaeda's influence, it will eventually create a safe haven there, and this may cement the opportunity for terrorist organizations to further organize globally and have an even stronger trans-national reach.

How did we get there? Did we not see this threat coming? And has the administration been naive to these growing threats?

[Response follows:]

WRITTEN RESPONSE RECEIVED FROM THE HONORABLE JOHNNIE CARSON TO QUESTION ASKED DURING THE HEARING BY THE HONORABLE ILEANA ROS-LEHTINEN

For several years, Al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM) used camps in the mountainous regions of northern Mali to support attacks against Algeria and launch kidnap for ransom (KFR) operations in the northern Sahel. Recognizing that Mali and its neighbors did not have the adequate capacity to prevent AQIM from exploiting this large swath of remote territory or protect their porous borders, the United

States took lessons from the earlier Pan Sahel Initiative and launched the Trans-Sahara Counterterrorism Partnership (TSCTP) in 2006 to assist countries in the Sahel and North Africa, including Mali and Algeria, to improve their long-term defenses against the evolving threat. Long-term success of counterterrorism (CT) efforts in the region depends on the ability of the countries in the region to take responsibility for their own defenses, and consequently our programming focuses on building host-nation capacity to counter violent threats. The United States, France, and other countries focused on multi-year, multi-sector initiatives to enable Mali and its neighbors to improve their CT capacities. The approach reflected a common understanding that short-term CT approaches could not address the vulnerabilities that AQIM and other groups attempt to exploit.

The TSCTP approach has proven successful in Mauritania, Niger, Chad, and Burkina Faso, where willing CT partners have intensified their efforts to confront the AQIM threat over the years. In Mauritania, for example, U.S. assistance has enabled military and law enforcement (police and Gendarmerie) to deploy and sustain units in the extremely austere frontier. Mauritania has also deployed U.S.-supplied aircraft to support its operations along the Malian border and is using U.S. assistance to improve the infrastructure of forward operating areas along the same border. Similarly, Niger has benefited from U.S. training and equipment to bolster its efforts to protect in borders and interdict terrorists attempting transit through its territory.

By contrast, Malian security forces, including units exposed to U.S. training, failed to adequately respond to AQIM's use of northern Mali as a safe haven. The flow of Libyan arms and fighters into northern Mali in the security vacuum after the 2011 Libyan revolution exacerbated this situation by significantly bolstering the capabilities on AQIM and other groups. The January 2012 rebellion in northern Mali overwhelmed the ability of Malian security forces to respond, and the military coup in March 2012 further spoiled the political environment and impeded the government's ability to effectively respond to the crisis in northern Mali. The performance of Mali's security forces is disappointing and demonstrated its institutions' fragility. Notwithstanding Mali's performance, our assistance to regional partners in their long-term defenses against AQIM and other extremists is consistent with U.S. national security objectives.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. On numerous occasions, the President has gone so far as to say that al-Qaeda has been "decimated and that it is on the path to defeat." These sentiments illustrate that the administration has avoided the grim reality of the situation. Al-Qaeda is like the mythical hydra. It's a beast with many heads, which if you cut off one head, two grow in its place. Weak governance has left these nations vulnerable to infiltration by radical groups like AQIM, Boko Haram, and other U.S.-designated terrorist organizations that are seeking refuge from the increased pressure that we're putting to bear in the Middle East.

Have the recent tragic events in Benghazi and Mali and Algeria finally gotten the attention of the administration? And for the many criticisms that the George W. Bush administration has gotten, he started a key counterterrorism initiative to fight this expansion, and it's the Trans-Sahara Counterterrorism Partnership. It was created with the purpose of addressing these rapidly-evolving threats in Sahel and Maghreb regions by supporting partner countries in an effort to eliminate the terrorist organizations from getting a foothold in Africa. And although this important program has had successes, it comes as a surprise that combined funding for this partnership administered through State and USAID has decreased every year since 2009.

So my question is: How would you assess the efficacy of the Trans-Sahara counterterrorism partnership today? And given that the situation facing our frontline posts, our personnel, our interests in the region, the situation is not new. Why were programs like

this partnership reduced on an annual basis under the administration when the threats were so apparent?

And lastly, on U.S. Africa Command, AFRICOM, this is another key partner in assisting our allies in the region and leading our counterterrorism efforts. How can we best equip AFRICOM to play a more constructive role in fighting these threats from AQIM and other extremist groups? And do the African nations have the willingness and the capacity to assist and support U.S. security objectives in the region?

Thank you.

Mr. CARSON. Congresswoman Ros-Lehtinen, let me take the first question. First of all, we believe that the Trans-Sahel counterterrorism program is important. The administration strongly supports it and endorses it. The very existence of this program for the last decade is a reflection of the fact that we did see terrorism emerging as a potential threat in the region and therefore we're spending money in some ten different African countries across the Sahel in order to help them to enhance and boost their counterterrorism capacity, their border security, and their militaries.

So the program, its very existence for more than a decade now, is a reflection of the fact that we were looking ahead, that we saw problems on the horizon. The fact that it continues to exist is a recognition of this.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. I don't want to take up more of the time I'm allotted. If you could give me those answers in written form, I would appreciate it. Thank you, sir.

Mr. CARSON. I will.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Thank you, ma'am.

Chairman ROYCE. Will go now to Mr. Faleomavaega.

Mr. FALEOMAVAEGA. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I certainly want to commend you and the ranking member for calling this important hearing before the committee. And I do want to personally again offer my strongest commendation to Ambassador Carson in the many years of tremendous service that he has given for our country, and Secretary Dory as well.

I also wanted to thank my good friend and colleague from Texas in giving a great lesson in geography to our colleagues and to remind them that Mali is not a little island somewhere in the South Pacific. In fact, a couple of years ago, I was introduced on the floor of the House by one of our colleagues saying that I was from Somalia. I can fully appreciate and understand the concerns of my friend from Texas about sometimes the members of this committee and the Congress need to have a little better understanding of the geography of the regions of the countries and what we're talking about.

I do want to warn my good friend from Texas that there was a little joke that we from the Pacific have learned. The gentleman from Alaska was warning the gentleman from Texas to quit bragging about Texas being the largest state of the Union because when they divide Alaska in two, Texas will be only the third largest state in the Union. At least that's what I understand it to mean.

Secretary Carson and Secretary Dory, thank you so much for your testimony and trying to help members of the committee to understand better the crisis that we're now faced with in Mali.

There are two things that I wanted to certainly seek your understanding and clarification on. I know we keep throwing this word al-Qaeda all over the place as if al-Qaeda is only one little bunch. It's my understanding that there's basically two al-Qaeda functioning groups going on. And in Mali, one is the al-Qaeda Maghreb group and the al-Qaeda Osama bin Laden.

And I wanted to ask Secretary Carson if you can make those distinctions, because there's a little suggestion that I might offer to my colleagues of the complexity of the situation among the African countries. It's not as simple as we think it to be. And always the danger of thinking that we know more or we know what we should do to help these countries with historical—things that we know nothing about hardly.

[Response follows:]

WRITTEN RESPONSE RECEIVED FROM THE HONORABLE JOHNNIE CARSON TO QUESTION ASKED DURING THE HEARING BY THE HONORABLE ENI F.H. FALEOMAVAEGA

Al-Qa'ida in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM) is an affiliate of al-Qa'ida Core. Al-Qa'ida Core most likely does not have any operatives in Mali at this time and has never operated there as a group. AQIM has its own goals and reasons to pursue extremism based on its history as an Algerian-based terrorist group. While AQIM officially affiliated (or "publicly aligned") with AQ in 2006, AQIM's activities are often not in line with AQ guidance. AQIM does not represent a threat to the U.S. Homeland or U.S. Vital National Interests at this time.

Mr. FALEOMAVAEGA. Secretary Carson can correct me that you're talking about a society that historically has had tribal rivalries for centuries. This is true in other countries, not just in Africa, but in other regions as well. So now we've got this situation developing whether it's in the Tuareg ethnic group, that seems to be the dominant group that's having all these difficulties and trying to set up this democratic Government of Mali. But if I could ask Secretary Carson, is there a distinction between these two al-Qaeda functions or groups right now in Mali?

Mr. CARSON. I'll be prepared to provide you with a longer answer. Let me just say this. Mali is comprised of a population which is probably 98 percent Muslim and they have always been, for the most part, moderate Muslims. The AQIM that we know of is an extension of the GSPC from Algeria. Over the last decade and a half, as the Algerians have been successful in eliminating the jihadist and terrorist threat in the urban areas and in some of the rural areas, they have pushed jihadist Salafists down into the barren expanses of northern Mali.

That AQIM leadership today, including Mokhtar Belmokhtar who Congressman Poe pointed out, is not a Malian. Mokhtar Belmokhtar is an Algerian and much of the leadership of AQIM which operates in northern Mali is, in fact, Algerian and Mauritanian. What we have tried to do in defining what the situation is is to not allow the long-standing, historical, and legitimate, political and social grievances of the Tuareg, in particular, to be hooked up to the jihadist Salafist and Islamist agenda of AQIM coming in from the north.

Mr. FALEOMAVAEGA. I'm sorry, Secretary Carson, my time is up. I will appreciate getting a submission in writing. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

[Response follows:]

WRITTEN RESPONSE RECEIVED FROM THE HONORABLE JOHNNIE CARSON TO QUESTION ASKED DURING THE HEARING BY THE HONORABLE ENI F.H. FALEOMAVAEGA

In 2012, elements of the Tuareg ethnic group, fueled by arms proliferation and returning mercenary fighters from the Libyan Revolution, launched a fourth Tuareg Rebellion with the avowed aim of establishing independence for northern Mali, underscoring their perceived marginalization and lack of development from the central government in Bamako. Early fighting with Malian security forces was not decisive, and, in the previous three revolts, the Tuareg and Malians had fought each other to stalemate and worked out their differences in negotiation. However, this time AQIM and the more extremist Tuareg-based Ansar al-Dine group provided more fighters, including returning mercenary fighters with arms from Libya. This tipped the balance in favor of the extremists who marginalized or recruited with money the other Tuareg factions, seizing the rebellion as their own. Malian security forces faced four shocks: the initial Tuareg rebellion; the addition of extremist forces to that rebellion that made it more effective; the lack of will power and capabilities on the part of the Malian government to effectively counter the rebellion; and the subsequent coup d'état by disgruntled elements of the Malian military.

The Tuareg, in fact, are not the most populous group in northern Mali and there are other major ethnic groups there to contend with. The non-extremist Tuareg have given up on their demand for independence and are prepared to negotiate with the Malian government, and at least one group claims to have severed any ties with extremist groups. AQIM, MUJAO and what still exists of the more extremist Ansar al-Dine are under severe pressure by the French and African intervention and are beginning to disaggregate and become much less effective.

Chairman ROYCE. We go now to Mr. Smith.

Mr. SMITH. Mr. Chairman, thank you for convening this very important and timely hearing. Welcome, Bill Delahunt, who just popped into the room, former Member of the House and friend.

I regret missing the opening statements, Mr. Chairman. I would ask that my full statement be made a part of the record.

Chairman ROYCE. Without objection.

Mr. SMITH. I was co-chairing, along with Steve Israel, a meeting on adoptions from Russia, Americans adopting, with Sergey Kislyak, the Ambassador, and it went over, so I apologize.

Ms. Dory, let me ask you exactly what is the United States Government doing to implement the humanitarian and human rights elements of Resolution 2085 so that forces in Mali are trained in and are compliant with internationally human rights law including and especially sex trafficking training? And can we stem, in your opinion, the ethnic and religious reprisals by the forces that we support?

Ms. DORY. Congressman, at this point, Department of Defense is not engaging at all with the Malian armed forces since the coup that took place last year. So through law and by policy the cutoff of security assistance to the Malian armed forces means that we are not actively engaged in training with them at the present time.

Mr. SMITH. That doesn't apply to AFISMA though.

Ms. DORY. Exactly, it does not apply at all to AFISMA.

Mr. SMITH. So what are we doing especially on the sex trafficking? Because we know with DR Congo and in other deployments in the past, there have been huge problems of exploitation, particularly of women and children.

Ms. DORY. I think Ambassador Carson will want to speak to this as well, but what is currently happening with AFISMA is a process with the State Department and Department of Defense evaluating the different troop-contributing countries to see what their training needs are, what their equipment needs are and then to determine, along with the other elements of the international community who

will train which forces. Those forces that will be trained by the U.S. will, of course, have the requisite ethics and human rights training included alongside their operational training. But that training has not yet begun.

Mr. SMITH. So there won't be uniformity. Particularly on the sex trafficking piece, there has been terrible, terrible abuse, as you know, and there has been a diminution of enforcement by the U.N. itself. I know this is going to be an African-led force when it comes to investigating allegations that had been made on other deployments.

Ms. DORY. One of the other—we spoke earlier before your arrival about a potential U.N. operation operating in Mali at the appropriate time. And one of the benefits of that will be having the full complement of human rights observers, the political dimensions that the U.N. operation would bring to bear alongside a peacekeeping operation. That's one of the reasons why we believe that that shift at the appropriate time from AFISMA—currently, Mali and France operating together, you'll add in the AFISMA forces as they're deployed and then employed into different locations in Mali and then eventually a U.N. peacekeeping.

Mr. SMITH. I am always concerned it's a matter of emphasis. I believe it will be done, but how robustly it will be done is always the question.

Let me ask you, Ambassador Carson, in your testimony to my subcommittee on June 29 on Mali, you said, "We are coordinating closely with our mission in the United Nations to press the African Union and ECOWAS to define a clear mission for their proposed ECOWAS peacekeeping mission in Mali. That said," you testified, "we think an ECOWAS mission to militarily retake the north is ill-advised and not feasible."

Is that still your belief that it's ill-advised and not feasible? What will be the mission of AFISMA peacekeeping force?

Mr. CARSON. Let me——

Mr. SMITH. And if you could touch on the rules of engagement very briefly, too.

Mr. CARSON. Yes. Let me do and I'll be very brief. First of all, we take seriously our responsibilities for implementing U.S. law with respect to human rights violations. The Leahy amendment, which is a part of that law, requires us to vet and approve any units that we supply, train, and support to make sure that they have clean human rights records. We are attentive to charges and allegations of these units. We do not want to be associated with or endorse any military units that have human rights violations.

Most of the units deployed now moved in before there was any training and support, but units that we support moving in will be Leahy vetted and if, in fact, there are any violations, including sexual trafficking by these units, we will cut off our assistance to them, and we will expose them and certainly bring it up with government. So it is important to us. Leahy vetting is critical.

The second thing that I would say is that I'm not sure that I said ill advisable in those stark terms. What I—and I'll be glad to look at it, Congressman Smith. What I was saying is what we thought at the time that before ECOWAS moved in, we thought it should be an African-led force. We thought it should be well planned. We

thought it should be well managed and integrated and that it also should be well resourced.

What we did not want to do is to have an African force move in prematurely and be defeated by the very enemy they were trying to fight.

[Additional information follows:]

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION RECEIVED IN WRITING FROM THE HONORABLE JOHNNIE CARSON TO QUESTION ASKED DURING THE HEARING BY THE HONORABLE CHRISTOPHER H. SMITH

The intervention by the French has changed the state of play on the ground in Mali and all of our previous planning assumptions about the role of an ECOWAS force have been overtaken by recent events. The French are conducting offensive air and ground operations to clear northern population centers of armed terrorist groups' control. After the French retake of the northern cities, Malian and the ECOWAS-led African-led International Support Mission to Mali (AFISMA) forces are falling in behind the French by holding the recovered northern cities and maintaining security. Because the timeline for deploying ECOWAS troops to Mali was significantly abbreviated in response to the intervention, some of the currently deployed troops lack adequate training and equipment. State, largely through our African Contingency Operations and Training Assistance (ACOTA) program, has accelerated the timeline for training troop contributing countries and will be providing training and equipment to the AFISMA troops that will begin to rotate into the mission this summer. The State Department is providing logistics support and equipment to the AFISMA forces. The European Union has begun deployment of its training teams to work with the Malian forces.

At the time of the June 29 testimony, there was no plan for a French intervention and ECOWAS had not developed a sufficiently planned and financed concept of operations for a peacekeeping mission in Mali. Because there was no well-defined plan at that time, an ECOWAS mission to militarily retake the north was ill-advised and not feasible. We did not want an African force to move in prematurely and be unable to succeed. Since then, the situation on the ground has changed, and it continues to evolve. Now that France and its African partners have militarily retaken key population centers in the north, ECOWAS can play a role in stabilizing Mali through peacekeeping and not offensive operations. U.S. planners are currently in Bamako working with ECOWAS and the AU to develop a new concept of operations that will address the role of ECOWAS in the changed security environment in Mali. The French have stated that they intend to remain in Mali until AFISMA has demonstrated effective command and control, established logistics support, and is deployed throughout the entire country.

Chairman ROYCE. Thank you, Mr. Ambassador. We're going to go to Mr. Sherman.

Mr. SHERMAN. Ambassador Carson, I want to thank you for coming, along with your colleague, to tell us about Mali. I want to drift a little bit away from that and ask you to kind of lay out what other countries in the Sahel and West Africa are of security concern to the United States with the global effort against Islamist extremists and terrorism. What other countries might you be here testifying, along with Ms. Dory, about in the next year or two? And focus on West Africa and Sahel.

Mr. CARSON. Congressman Sherman, I hope I'm not here testifying about any of them, and I don't have a crystal ball, but let me just say that in my testimony I mention that there are criteria that make states in the region susceptible to terrorism: Weak governance, poor development, no borders, or very poor borders, and communities that feel that they have legitimate grievances that are not being responded to by central government authorities.

But I would say that there is a growing awareness on the part of governments across the Sahel region that AQIM does constitute a serious threat, that they need to work with one another to com-

bat this threat, and that they also need to respond to the economic and social needs of their people in a way that ensures that terrorist groups cannot make them vulnerable.

Mr. SHERMAN. There are many West African Sahel countries that want to thank you for not naming them individually in your response to my question.

Ms. Dory, it has been widely reported that the U.S. is eager to build a drone base in Niger. To the extent you can tell us in an open hearing, has that base begun construction or even been completed? Are drones being launched from that base and how many U.S. personnel are there?

Ms. DORY. To start, we do not have a drone base in Niger, so hopefully that is helpful. What I can say is that commensurate with the growing threat in the region, Africa Command, as well as the intelligence community is very interested in increasing resources that are focusing on the region to improve our understanding of what is happening there and we are seeing a growth in intelligence resources of all kinds to include ISR.

What you're referring to in part, I believe, is news that stemmed from the recent conclusion of a status of forces agreement with the Government of Niger. This is the type of foundational agreement that we pursue in many different countries in Africa that have regular relationships with Africa Command for purposes of exercises and other activities. So that was what made it into the news and then an extrapolation about a drone base from there. But we are certainly——

Mr. SHERMAN. A news report that was an exaggeration. Unusual.

Ms. DORY. It does happen.

Mr. SHERMAN. Ambassador Carson, resolving the on-going conflict in northern Mali is obviously critical to maintaining the stability and integrity of the Malian state, along with setting a date for elections, the roadmap for transition, adopted by Mali's Parliament on January 30 that lays out a need for opening negotiations to separatists in the north. What is your assessment of this roadmap and does it provide a good path, a clear path toward reconciliation and unity?

Mr. CARSON. I think the roadmap is a significant and important document. It demonstrates and underscores a consensus of the Malian political class and the Parliament to stand behind a rapid transition to elections and a new democratic dispensation.

I think that it is incumbent upon all of us in the international community to encourage as strongly as possible the Malian Government to follow this roadmap and live up to the time table that's outlined there.

Chairman ROYCE. We'll go to Mr. Rohrabacher.

Mr. ROHRABACHER. Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman, and Ambassador Carson, I want to thank you for your many years of service and your great contributions to our country over your life, and those of us who know about it really respect you, and you are providing us good information today as well and thanks for that.

I'd like to get a little bit of understanding about this conflict and about why we have to be involved or even France has to be involved. Is this essentially an ethnic or tribal conflict in this coun-

try? Do we have black Africans in the south and Arabic Africans in the north? Is that the nature of this conflict?

Mr. CARSON. Congressman, the situation is a very complex one. There are historical disagreements that divide the Tuareg, in particular, who were mostly northern Berber and Arab descendants from those who live in the southern part of the country. The Tuaregs were a political and security problem for the French long before independence in——

Mr. ROHRABACHER. Ambassador Carson, it sounds like this was a real caldron before al-Qaeda actually ever existed and perhaps we are superimposing today's definitions on to an ancient conflict. I will tell you, the Pushtans in Afghanistan have been at war with the various ethnic groups in Afghanistan forever and we are finding it very difficult to get out of that country when we got in after we are attacked. It seems to me that—are you confident that the West can come into a situation like this that sounds like it has historic, ethnic, and tribal roots and actually make a difference?

Mr. CARSON. Let me say, as I've tried to say in my testimony and in other comments, there are several things happening simultaneously here. This is a very complex problem. I do not want to in any way diminish the threat and concern that we should all have, particularly the French in the region, about AQIM.

It is also true that the issues of the Tuareg are decades and decades old and they certainly predate the arrival of AQIM. But AQIM and its existence in the region is a fact and they have to be dealt with. I think it is important to make sure that we don't conflate the historical and legitimate grievances of communities in the north with the ideological and jihadists who are part of AQIM.

And I would say, if I could, that my colleague said that we may not have an immediate threat to our own homeland, but the region and the French do have serious concerns.

Mr. ROHRABACHER. Let me note, Mr. Ambassador, I remember hearing stories about Khartoum and Sudan and sending down Colonel Gordon during the last century and there have been these upheavals and these conflicts between southern central black Africans and the Arabic Africans in the north have been going on for centuries. It seems to me that the United States does not need to get itself involved in trying to create stability which seems like almost an impossible task because this instability has been going on for centuries. I'm as upset and concerned about radical Islam and their association with terrorism as anyone else, but simply to have them superimpose themselves in a conflict like this, we could be just getting involved in a quagmire that we will never get out of. I mean Afghanistan is complicated enough.

Mr. CARSON. Congressman, I don't think that we are engaged, involved directly ourselves. We are assisting the French and we are assisting the Africans. But we have no intentions of putting boots on the ground or engaging our forces militarily there.

Mr. ROHRABACHER. My time has run out, but let me just say that we are not saying boots on the ground, but it sounds like to me we're trying to be the king makers. We're trying to be the decision makers and in the end everyone is going to end up hating us in no-win situations like this. Thank you very much again, Ambassador Carson, for your insights and we deeply appreciate it.

Chairman ROYCE. Karen Bass?

Ms. BASS. I'm oh so tempted to respond to my colleague, but I think I'll do that after the hearing. Let me thank you for your testimony again.

I wanted to ask a few things leading up to talking about the elections, but I'm wondering and the chairman mentioned also about our delay in getting involved after the French. I'm wondering whether Section 7008 that prohibits the State Department and USAID from participating because of the coup and until there is an election, if that, one, was a contributing factor to any delay, and if there's any change that should be made in that section. Two, I know that elections are scheduled for June, and I would hate to see them postponed, but on the other hand I'm very concerned as to whether or not Mali is going to be ready for elections. And if there's efforts to push them prematurely, I want to know what you know about the process, what's going on, who might be the candidates beyond the current President, what we might be doing to support their efforts? And then if there can be credible inclusive elections, especially considering that over 300,000 persons are displaced and are we providing any resources for the election?

Mr. CARSON. Congresswoman Bass, again, thank you very much for your question and also for your interest and support on the Africa issues that we face.

First of all, I would just underscore all the points that my colleague, Deputy Assistant Secretary Amanda Dory made with respect to whether there was delay or not. I think that we tried to respond as expeditiously and in serial fashion to the French requests as they came in, and we certainly support and are assisting them to the best of our ability.

The legislation that you referred to requires the U.S. Government to cut off assistance to any government that comes to power as a result of a military coup d'etat, and so as a result of the March 23 coup in Mali, we did cut off all but emergency help and food assistance.

Ms. BASS. Right.

Mr. CARSON. I don't think that the legislation needs to be changed. I think it is a strong affirmation of the U.S. support for democracy and against coup d'etat. So I would say it has not had an impact on our relationship in terms of providing support to the French and others.

That legislation does have a carve out that allows us to support elections. And we do have the capacity through State Department and USAID to help the Malian Government with technical and financial support to run elections as they have outlined in their roadmap. And it is our intention to join others in the international community in providing them with support probably through IFES, probably through NDI or IRI here in the United States. So we will go ahead to do that.

I believe that it is possible for the Malian Government to hold inclusive, credible, free, and transparent elections by July 31, which is the date that is outlined in the timetable and the roadmap.

As I said before, I think it's incumbent upon the regional states and ECOWAS for the international community, for the U.S.,

France, Britain, and the European Union to push as hard as possible to make these elections——

Ms. BASS. Since that's so soon, do you know anything about the process? I mean I am assuming, but not sure that the current President might run. Are there any other candidates? I mean that seems like such a short timeline.

I also wanted to throw in a question about AFRICOM.

Mr. CARSON. Let me just say on that, neither the current President nor Prime Minister will be candidates in the election.

Ms. BASS. Okay.

Mr. CARSON. I point out that Mali was scheduled to have democratic elections in April about a month before the coup d'etat. There are a number of individuals who would be candidates for the presidency. There are formed political parties. And the one thing I think is important to remember is that although Mali is the size of both Texas and California combined, some 90 percent of all Malians live in the southern part of the country and have not been affected at all by the military operations in the north.

The Tuaregs and others, the Malian Arabs comprise only 10 percent of the population, and there are ways now that major cities have been recaptured to hold elections and also to hold elections in refugee camps and among displaced people. So it should not be an impediment. They can do it.

Ms. BASS. Thank you.

Chairman ROYCE. Mr. Chabot.

Mr. CHABOT. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The U.S. has put a lot of resources into this region through counterterrorism programs including training security forces and attempting to secure porous borders and promoting democracy. Arguably, these haven't gone so well. Overall, the amount of aid to this region with a particular focus on Mali has reached $1 billion over the last 7 years.

We've also heard testimony that the level of support has actually been inadequate and not commensurate with the threat.

However, it seems, as usual, the U.S. bears most of the burden on these initiatives and, in some cases, because world leaders are not as well equipped or don't want to get involved and thus take a back seat, expecting the U.S. to take the lead. Now in this case, we welcome France's initiative to take action so quickly. Regardless, the U.S. is expected to supply cargo planes, surveillance aircraft, airlift support, and other things. The U.S. also recently pledged to contribute approximately $96 million to support the African-led international support mission in Mali, as you had indicated Mr. Ambassador, while China and India together contributed $1 million. So $96 million from the U.S., $1 million from China and India, and the African-led force expects another $50 million to $60 million in U.S. support. In this time of economic constraints and sequestration, if I might add, we've got to look at every U.S. taxpayer dollar being spent.

Are other nations planning to provide assistance to this operation? What are we doing to see that other countries take a bigger assistance role, especially financial-wise, and share the burden to build up the capacity of regional forces? China has been a big player in the region for many years, so why isn't China, for example, offering more assistance? One million dollars from China and

India, compared to $96 million from the U.S. I'd ask either one to address that particular issue.

Mr. CARSON. Congressman, thank you. I would say that there are others in the international community who have stepped up to the plate, particularly our colleagues in the European community. They have initially pledged some 50 million euro. They have also agreed to put on the ground a European military training mission which has the purpose of retraining, rebuilding, and rehabilitating the Malian military.

I would also add that across Europe from the U.K. to Denmark to Germany to Canada, all of those countries have also come to the assistance of the French and have provided transport aircraft and assistance as called upon. We are not out there alone with the French. Others are there as well.

Mr. CHABOT. What about China, in particular, though? And India? First and second most populous nations on earth and growing economies and everything, yet China especially does not—well, you don't have to answer that, but it's a question that I think we should emphasize more and more.

Let me mention one other thing because I'm going to run out of time. As Chairman Royce had mentioned in his opening remarks, Mali boasts some of the richest cultural heritage in the world today. It's been a center of religious mysticism, its mosques and mausoleums have been named world historical sites. Its tombs of Muslim saints and warriors date to the 15th century, and its libraries hold 700,000 ancient manuscripts. This heritage has been systematically targeted by the Islamists laying claim for the country's northern towns. Malians were forbidden to worship as they did before. They were restricted from playing music, an integral part of society there. Limbs, as the chairman mentioned, have been hacked off. These Malians were specifically targeted because their practice of Islam was too liberal for these extremists.

Ambassador Carson, you talked and emphasized, I think, Mali's lack of development, but what about this radical ideology being imported from outside the region as a source of their woes? Your formula had emphasized elections and development and national reconciliation. How do we make sure that we're pushing back against this violent ideology as well? It seems that's really what the average Malian is concerned and worried about.

Mr. CARSON. Thank you. Two quick comments on that. First, we here in Washington and in the administration were deeply, deeply shocked and appalled by the destruction of historical manuscripts that date back over several centuries that were in Timbuktu. In the past, we have put money into the preservation of those documents through our Ambassadors Cultural Fund.

The second thing that I would say is that we recognize that radicalism is a problem and we do have programs that are jointly run by the State Department, USAID, and our colleagues in the Defense Department to counter violent extremism, reaching out to vulnerable communities and vulnerable population groups especially young men who are unemployed and who could be susceptible to a radical message and agenda.

Mr. CHABOT. Thank you. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman ROYCE. Mr. Cicilline.

Mr. CICILLINE. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Thank you, Ambassador Carson and Assistant Deputy Secretary Dory for your testimony today.

Ambassador Carson, I'd like to follow up a little bit on Congressman Bass's questions about the likely political future in Mali and ask you to comment on. It seems as if the presence of these extremist organizations, these terrorist organizations is really happening at the ground level in the delivery of services and responding to economic conditions on the ground. I'm wondering whether you have an opinion as to whether or not that terrorist organization will be reflected in the outcome of the elections in any way.

Secondly, what is the path for some reconciliation with the separatist Tuaregs in the north, if there is one and whether or not since so much of the political legitimacy is going to be the outcome of this election? Do we have a sense of who is likely to prevail in those elections and what the relationship might be going forward with the United States?

Mr. CARSON. Congressman, thank you. I think AQIM does not have the popular support across northern Mali, and I do not think that they will gain in any way from democracy and elections. As I say, people like Mokhtar Belmokhtar and the leadership of AQIM are actually not Malian. They're Algerian. They're Mauritanians. And those individuals don't have the kind of popular following that will allow them to become elected officials.

Second, I would say that the overwhelming welcome that the French troops received across northern Mali is a reflection of the fact that they too felt deeply oppressed by what AQIM was doing to impose Sharia law: Cutting off hands and limbs, and banning things like cigarettes, beer, and television. These are things that did not sit well with the Malian community.

Third, I would say is that there have been formed political parties. There are political leaders who will contest elections, and I believe that those elections can go well. Prior to March of last year, Mali had had 20 years of democracy and had had several Presidential and parliamentary elections that had gone well. I think this can be restored. There is the democratic tradition that we want to help to restore. Reconciliation can take place.

Again, I'll refer back to my colleague who made a slight reference to a point that I think has to be underscored. In Bamako, many people had a different perception than we did of what the threat in the north was. We have always been deeply concerned about the AQIM threat, about the jihadists and the old GSPC people who came down from Algeria. In Mali, the government in Bamako through the threat was the age-old traditional enemy, the Tuareg. The Tuareg have had legitimate grievances that go back to the 1860s, 1870s, and 1880s, and they're about political representation, about a fair share of the development projects that are there. So there has to be a solution overall that accommodates their political grievances as long as they renounce violence, territorial secession, and any jihadist tendencies.

Mr. CICILLINE. Thank you. Ambassador, I'm also going to ask you to respond in writing—because my time is running out—to two other issues, and I'd ask the Deputy Secretary to do that as well. One is the current capabilities of this terrorist organization in light

of the French military action. What's your assessment of their capabilities today?

And the second issue which I would like you to address is: General Ham raised concerns that the Malian army had not spent sufficient time focused on human rights and rule of law. I'm interested to know what we're doing to be sure that that is corrected and your assessment of what the current deployment of West African troops is on that issue of human rights and rule of law and whether you're satisfied that we are engaging or other troops from other countries are being engaged with sufficient sensitivity to important human rights and rule of law issues. So I could invite written responses on that. And again, thank you for your testimony.

Mr. CARSON. I'll take the first part and let my colleague take the second part. I think AQIM has been degraded, but not defeated and we should expect asymmetrical activities rather than face-to-face combat.

Chairman ROYCE. I think we can do that in writing. I think that will satisfy the member.

Mr. CARSON. Okay.

[Responses follow:]

WRITTEN RESPONSE RECEIVED FROM THE HONORABLE JOHNNIE CARSON TO QUESTION ASKED DURING THE HEARING BY THE HONORABLE DAVID CICILLINE

Al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM) has been degraded, but not defeated. AQIM, the Movement for Unity and Jihad in West Africa (MUJAO), and affiliated groups continue to pose serious challenges to our interests in Mali, especially our efforts to promote democracy, civilian security, economic prosperity and regional stability and cooperation. These extremist groups' goals and methods remain antithetical to Malian populations, leaving the extremists with little room to expand over the long term. These groups exploited the political chaos created by the northern rebellion and coup d'état to expand their safe haven in the north and impose their extremist ideology on local populations. Although they have been largely pushed out of key towns in northern Mali, they still have the ability to launch asymmetric attacks, as we have seen in the recent violence in Gao and Kidal.

Although the coup d'état and subsequent division of the country have hampered Malian, regional and international counter-terrorism efforts in the Sahel, we continue to enhance our work with Mali's neighbors to increase their capacity to secure their borders, disrupt AQIM supply lines, and contain the spread of extremist groups. The Trans Sahara Counterterrorism Partnership (TSCTP) has bolstered capacity, fostered regional cooperation and combated violent extremism in the region. Lasting resolution to the terrorist threat will require that the countries in the Sahel develop the capacity to counter this threat, along with other transnational threats such as drug smuggling and human trafficking. In addition, we believe it is critical to enhance the stability, governance, economic prospects and inclusivity of nations in the region in order to undermine the foundation of extremist philosophies. This is only possible in an environment that is secure enough for programs that work to achieve these objectives can operate. Although such an environment has been lacking in northern Mali, we are confident that extremism in this region can ultimately be defeated.

WRITTEN RESPONSE RECEIVED FROM MS. AMANDA DORY TO QUESTION ASKED DURING THE HEARING BY THE HONORABLE DAVID CICILLINE

General Ham has noted that we didn't pay "requisite attention" to military professionalism, civil-military relations, and the rule of law. A key word there is "requisite"—how do we adjust the quantity and/or quality of our focus on these critical topics? What are appropriate measures of effectiveness? And at the most fundamental level, how can outsiders best support the forward progress of democracy and the appropriate role for militaries on the African continent? With all that said, each military training mission that we undertake with our partner militaries does include human rights training as a part of the curriculum.

Looking back, DoD has identified areas for improvement in our partnerships with foreign militaries. These include: additional engagement at an institutional level in addition to operational training (e.g. the Defense Institute Reform Initiative and the Ministry of Defense Advisors Program) as well as an increased focus on building political will and a shared understanding of the threat.

Many of the West African countries deploying to Mali have already received training in proper military conduct from the United States and will receive additional training either from us or from European partners. That training is not a guarantee of appropriate behavior, but we believe that appropriate efforts are being taken to encourage professional military conduct.

Chairman ROYCE. We're going to go to Mr. Poe.

Mr. POE. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. My understanding is that Qatar delivered weapons to Libya probably with the green light of the United States before Ghadafi failed. After Ghadafi met his maker, some of those weapons were sent into Algeria. Belmokhtar even said in a press statement that he used some of his money to buy those weapons. According to General Ham, his group is the richest of all the al-Qaeda operatives because they have $50 million they've gotten from kidnappings and ransoms primarily of Europeans and tourists.

My question is do we have any understanding that the weapons used by Belmokhtar or other al-Qaeda groups had that traffic flow from Qatar, Libya and then these al-Qaeda operatives?

Do you want to weigh in on that, Ms. Dory?

Ms. DORY. Sure. I'd be glad to. I can't specifically say what the connection would or wouldn't be. I think what we do know is a tremendous amount of weapons trafficking in the region, much of it related to the access to weapons in Libya after Ghadafi's fall, they have moved in all different directions. It's very difficult to track for the regional states themselves in terms of the vast distances we've referred to already, and the limited amount of border security capabilities they have. And if you layer on top of that the limits to the amount of intelligence focus and assets that we have in that area, so you can—the theory is clear in terms of the connection of the weapons and other traffic moving through the region. But whether there's a direct connection back to UAE weapons, I cannot tell you.

Mr. POE. You wouldn't argue with—or would you?—Belmokhtar's statement that he bought weapons for AQIM that came into Libya. Would you argue with that statement?

Ms. DORY. I would not argue with his statement.

Mr. POE. I have two other questions. I'll try to get to them. As of right now, today, February 14, starting with the Embassy attack in Benghazi, is there anybody anywhere that we have held or believe to be accountable for those actions, and are they in custody some place?

Ms. Dory, do you know that the bad guys have been apprehended?

Ms. DORY. I am not aware of the current status of the FBI investigation in terms of who is in custody.

Mr. POE. So you don't know that there is anybody?

Ms. DORY. I do not know.

Mr. POE. Mr. Ambassador, did you want to weigh in on that?

Mr. CARSON. The response is the same. I don't have any information that I can provide you. I'll get some if we've got it.

Mr. POE. I would accept your statement you'll get us some.

[Response follows:]

WRITTEN RESPONSE RECEIVED FROM THE HONORABLE JOHNNIE CARSON TO QUESTION ASKED DURING THE HEARING BY THE HONORABLE TED POE

The State Department defers to the FBI on any updates regarding their ongoing investigation into the September 11, 2012 attacks on our facilities in Benghazi.

Mr. POE. The other comment or question I had is about AQIM, foreign terrorist—labeled foreign terrorist organization. They seem to roam Africa at will. Borders are poor.

But Ms. Dory, you made the comment that you don't think that they are a threat to the American homeland. I know the Ambassador made a comment that they're kind of on the way down, but tell me what you see the future holds for AQIM?

Ms. DORY. I think the future for AQIM depends on how sustained the intention of the international community is to addressing the problem set and continuing to dedicate resources to putting pressure on the organization. As we've seen, the French intervention has certainly set them back tremendously. They no longer hold territory, key cities, in the northern part of Mali. They are now on the run. They have moved into different parts of Mali that are less beneficial in terms of ability to hold terrain, more difficult terrain.

I think it will depend on the continuation of French operations going forward, the ability to rebuild the Malian defense forces to take action within their own territory. It also depends on the neighbors and the actions that they take. We are helping——

Mr. POE. Let me interrupt you real quick. Do we know the policy of the French? Is it France's policy that they're going to root them out and get them or do we know what their long-term goal is with AQIM and what they're doing in Mali?

Ms. DORY. The French strategic approach at this point is to in response to the actions taken by terrorist organizations moving south in Mali they took immediate action and that's what we've seen the last month. They're now looking to have African partners, the AFISMA forces and Malians, to step forward and help stabilize in the key population centers and the——

Mr. POE. Excuse me. If you have anything else to add, please put it in writing. I appreciate it, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman ROYCE. Mr. Grayson.

Mr. GRAYSON. Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman.

Ambassador, your testimony alluded to the grievances of the northern populations including the Tuareg. And I'd like to ask you some true or false questions in that regard.

The civil war in Mali started as a Tuareg tribal revolt, sort of an independence movement. Is that true or false?

Mr. CARSON. I never like to do true and false. I would say partially correct.

Mr. GRAYSON. Partially correct. I'll go with that. Now the Tuareg independence movement, that actually dates back for decades, true or false?

Mr. CARSON. Elements of the Tuareg community have had desire for greater autonomy for many years.

Mr. GRAYSON. All right, and the Tuaregs actually represent a majority in some parts of northeast Mali, particularly the desert areas. True or false?

Mr. CARSON. The Tuareg are a minority within a minority. They are not the dominant group in northern Mali. They are the most

publicized group. They are also the group that's willing to stand up and fight. The north of Mali has Berber. They have Malian Arabs, Berber. They have Songhag and Fula.

Mr. GRAYSON. Now the Tuaregs have never associated themselves as a tribal group with al-Qaeda or any other terrorist group. True or false?

Mr. CARSON. The grievances of the Tuareg and the political and economic aspirations of the Tuareg go back to, as I said, back to 1870, 1880, when the French came in direct contact with them. I don't think al-Qaeda was around in those days.

Mr. GRAYSON. All right, now you mentioned that there's an interesting mix of people in northern Mali and northeast Mali. And in fact, it is true that the Tuaregs have been discriminated against by other Mali groups including up to mass killings of Tuaregs. Is that a fair statement?

Mr. CARSON. I think that there's a lot of truth to that.

Mr. GRAYSON. All right, and in fact, the Tuaregs and the AQIM are mortal enemies. Isn't that true?

Mr. CARSON. Let me just say they have had different historical and political trajectories. As I said before, the Tuareg have not traditionally been jihadists or radical Muslims. They have, like many of the people across the Sahel in Mali, going all the way from Senegal to Niger and Burkina, have been moderate Muslims who have not been jihadists or Salafists.

Mr. GRAYSON. But in fact, even in the past 12 months we've seen Tuaregs and AQIM forces fight each other to the death.

Mr. CARSON. They have come together, and they've also split apart, and they've come together. As I've said, one of the things we've been trying to do and to underscore is that we don't want to have these linkages created. I think both groups found at one point it was opportunistic to work together, but I think many of the Tuaregs did not find some of the things that were being done by AQIM as acceptable.

Mr. GRAYSON. You mean the torture?

Mr. CARSON. Sharia law has never been practiced in northern Mali. Cutting off hands and limbs has been anathema.

Mr. GRAYSON. You mean to the Tuaregs and to other reasonable people?

Mr. CARSON. To Tuaregs and other communities who are also Muslim.

Mr. GRAYSON. And the Tuaregs have sometimes been the victims of that, correct?

Mr. CARSON. I think in terms of the internal and ethnic conflicts, they have been the victims of political violence, but they also have inflicted political violence as well.

Mr. GRAYSON. Now whether the Tuaregs have independence or not really has no impact on us here in the United States, right? It's no threat to us in the United States if the Tuaregs were independent, correct?

Mr. CARSON. Let me just say that we support the territorial integrity of Mali. We do not support the dismemberment or the vulcanization of that country. We do not support the aspirations of some Tuareg to have an independent state of Azawad. We support the territorial integrity of that country.

Mr. GRAYSON. I understand that, but the question was if there were such a state, it would be more no more of a threat to us than south Sudan is to us today, correct?

Mr. CARSON. Again, it's hypothetical. I don't even want to try and answer what I can't see.

Mr. GRAYSON. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman ROYCE. Thank you. We will go now to Mr. Marino.

Mr. MARINO. Thank you, Chairman. As a prosecutor, I prefer leading questions with short answers. So I have two questions here and I'm going to ask each of you to respond.

Madam Deputy Assistant Secretary, I'd like to start with you, if you would, please? The Ambassador said we have no intentions for boots on the ground in Mali, and I take him at his word. However, the best intentions often head south at warp speed. How confident are you about the degree of support we will get from the Mali people?

And question number two, and equally important, what is the probability that the U.S. wades deeper into this, and where are we when the French bail out?

Ms. DORY. So your first question, sir, was how we would be received by Malians. You said we would not have boots on the ground, but then you said how would we be received by the Malians?

Mr. MARINO. Yes, how would we be?

Ms. DORY. Hypothetically, again, I said the same thing in my statement. We do not envision U.S. combat forces on the ground in Mali. I do think the reception of the French in Mali is instructive in terms of the welcome that French forces have received, in terms of the overwhelming reception the French President received when he visited Mali, and in terms of the liberation of the northern cities and their support for the assistance rendered in ejecting the extremists from the cities in north Mali.

Mr. MARINO. And what about the probability of us wading deeper into this disaster in Mali, and what happens when the French bail out?

Ms. DORY. I wouldn't want to give a probability in terms of a crystal ball what our future support will entail. I think what we can say is that we are strongly supporting the French at this point and we are strongly supporting African partners in terms of their ability to deploy forces into Mali and their ability to employ them going forward.

Mr. MARINO. Mr. Ambassador, do you have a response?

Mr. CARSON. I'm tempted to say, Mr. Marino, that I am not a lawyer.

Mr. MARINO. I'm a prosecutor. I draw a distinction there. We talk about hypotheticals, and this is more of a statement than a question, so I'm not looking for a response unless you want to. I just hope and pray that as we go through this process in Mali, and any other country, that we try to anticipate as much as possible what the ramifications would be, and what the negative aspects would be down the road. I think sometimes we get caught up in the emotional part of situations like this and really do not pragmatically sit down and say what happens if? So just please bear that in mind. I yield back my time. Thank you.

Chairman ROYCE. Thank you, Mr. Marino. Now we go to Mr. Vargas.

Mr. VARGAS. Mr. Chairman, I also want to thank you for putting this hearing together so quickly. I appreciate it. I think we all do. I think if there was any surprise to the international community it was how swiftly and effectively the French intervened. I mean it was pretty amazing how quickly they decided to put boots on the ground and to intervene and do so effectively. In fact, I'm 51 years old and I can't recall a time when I could say that the French intervened swiftly and effectively. And yet, they have. And of course, they're well received by the population there. I appreciate that very much.

I would ask this and some statements were made about our assistance to them. I don't want to put words in anyone's mouth, but that we have done basically all that we could. Have they asked for anything that we have not assisted them in?

Ms. DORY. No.

Mr. VARGAS. Is there any assistance that they would ask for? I know drones were brought up and I know that we do have a reluctance to put boots on the ground, but we do have capabilities now that other nations do not have. If they were to ask for assistance from our drone capability, would we be willing to assist them in that?

Ms. DORY. We are providing very full support across all the different elements of intelligence sharing.

Mr. VARGAS. I guess I would ask not in intelligence sharing, but actually as a weapon, not so much to gather intelligence, but to actually eliminate the threat to either French troops or to civilian populations and use it as an effective weapon, not simply to gather intelligence. Would we be willing to share that capability with them?

Ms. DORY. Those are not the types of platforms that we have in the theater. The intelligence surveillance for constant assets that we have are just that. They are focused on intelligence.

Mr. VARGAS. There was an issue that was brought up earlier. Maybe you could answer this that there was a conflict, supposedly, between the State Department and the Defense Department here that there was an awkwardness, maybe lawyers in between. So we weren't acting as expeditiously as we possibly could. Is there something to that that notion? That we were delayed in any way because of maybe a lack of coordination between the Defense Department and Department of State?

Mr. CARSON. I think the level of inter-agency collaboration between State and Defense with respect to Mali has been close, continuous, tight, and uniform. And we have worked together on this issue in a very collaborative and, I think, in a very aggressive fashion.

Ms. DORY. I would second that.

Mr. VARGAS. I guess I would just conclude by saying I think this has been a very successful operation. Certainly to applaud the French. I think that from all I can tell we were with them as allies and continue to be allies and help them in any way that we possibly can.

I do think that al-Qaeda is a threat around the world and I do think that when other nations like France and the French take the lead, we ought to applaud them. Maybe we can get some French fries back in this building. But in fact, that was one of the things that was pretty interesting about this whole thing. I think there is a notion that the French, in fact, quotes that the French are going to bail out. So far they seem to have been quite effective and quite aggressive. I'm not sure that we would have moved as quickly as they did, but they did it, I think, fantastically and we should applaud them for that.

I yield back my time, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman ROYCE. Thank you, and Mr. Ambassador, that was good to hear, Ambassador Carson. That's not what we read in the press or understood from some quarters who talked to us about this, but it's good to know that Department of Defense and Department of State are working together to resolve these problems quickly and that some of the hurdles maybe that were faced because of the legalistic barriers have been overcome.

Let's go now to Mr. Meadows.

Mr. MEADOWS. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. And thank you for coming to testify. As we've heard your testimony and obviously looked at some of your previous testimony, there are four components as you see it that must happen at the same time. My question to each one of you is as we start to look at that, taking the lead, obviously, the French have taken the lead in some components of that, but how do we make sure that we have all of those issues addressed and that we're just not throwing money at a particular situation, whether it's humanitarian relief or whether it's intervention, boots on the ground, whatever the case may be? Who is going to manage that process, and how best can we address that?

Mr. CARSON. Let me say that that is the work of our diplomatic establishment. I think that we have to remain diplomatically engaged on a bilateral basis with the Malian Government. We have to remain diplomatically engaged on a multilateral basis with our colleagues in New York, at the U.N., at the Security Council, and also with our European colleagues, particularly the French and the European Union, who take the greatest amount of interest.

We have to, to the greatest extent possible, have a shared set of outcomes that we want to achieve and we need to be consistent in pushing those forward. But it's not all the time public work, and it's not all the time visible work but it's that continuing diplomatic engagement at every level, not only in terms of what we do at State, but also our colleagues in the military as they interact with their military colleagues in Africa and Europe as well.

Mr. MEADOWS. So you would say more the State Department taking more the diplomatic lead in this than DoD?

Mr. CARSON. At this juncture I would say yes, because this is—the problems in Mali will not and cannot be exclusively defined as security and terrorist problems, and there must be solutions beyond the military and security and terrorist framework in order to make Mali a strong and stable country again. So there have to be both military and political solutions.

I think the French have advanced the agenda on the anti-terrorist side and the security side. We have to advance the agenda

on the political, diplomatic, and economic and development side. And also the reconciliation side between Tuaregs and those in the south.

Mr. MEADOWS. Ms. Dory, would you agree?

Ms. DORY. I would agree. I would add to what Ambassador Carson is discussing, that we have the State Department clearly leading the overall foreign policy direction, that we are working closely together at the strategic and policy level here in a very robust inter-agency process. We do so at the operational level in terms of Africa Command and the robust State Department participation on staff there and then the same thing repeats at the—in DoD we would call it the tactical level, but at the Embassy level in terms of the country team, the participation by attaches and supplemented planners who are working alongside the State Department colleagues. So it's happening at all three levels very robustly.

Mr. MEADOWS. And both of you have put an emphasis in terms of democratic elections and the critical nature of both of those, but without a respect for the rule of law. We've seen in other regions that democratic elections don't necessarily translate into a sound government. How does Mali differ in that regard?

Mr. CARSON. Elections are only one step in the democratic process. Strengthening democratic institutions is critical, creating political will, political space and political——

Mr. MEADOWS. Who does that? Who does that?

Mr. CARSON. Again, I think we engage as diplomats with government and political elites and political power, political parties and we encourage our other democratic partners around the world to also do so in a very active fashion.

Mr. MEADOWS. So do we have other success stories where we can see where that's actually happened in the region?

Mr. CARSON. I think we've got lots of success stories out there. Liberia, Sierra Leone, Somalia, Cote d'Ivoire, and Niger. The number is quite substantial. I think there is a positive trajectory for democracy and a positive trajectory for stability. These are challenges, but there are also lots of successes.

Mr. MEADOWS. Thank you both.

Chairman ROYCE. Mr. Castro?

Mr. CASTRO. Thank you, Chairman. I want to say first of all thank you to Ambassador Carson and to Ms. Dory for the work that each of you do on behalf of the nation on these issues.

I have a question regarding AQIM and its relationship with core al-Qaeda. Earlier, we heard Mr. Rohrabacher ask or suggest that we may be superimposing certain labels on these terrorist groups. How do we go about distinguishing whether they have a strong and true connection to core al-Qaeda or whether they are simply imposters, so to speak, who are just adopting that brand name?

Mr. CARSON. I may want to come back to you with a response from our colleagues in the intelligence community on this and how they define them, but there is a linkage between AQIM and core al-Qaeda, but I would rather have them define the strength of this relationship.

[Response follows:]

WRITTEN RESPONSE RECEIVED FROM THE HONORABLE JOHNNIE CARSON TO QUESTION ASKED DURING THE HEARING BY THE HONORABLE JOAQUIN CASTRO

Al-Qaeda in the Lands of the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM) originated as an armed Islamist resistance movement to the secular Algerian government. The Groupe Islamique Armé (GIA) was formed after Algeria's military regime canceled the second round of parliamentary elections in 1992 when it seemed that the Islamic Salvation Front, a coalition of Islamist militants and moderates, might win and take power. In 1998, the Salafist Group for Preaching and Combat (GSPC) was formed, declaring its independence from the GIA, due to the GIA's brutal tactics against civilians. The GSPC declared its allegiance to al-Qaeda as early as 2003, but al-Qaeda senior leader Ayman al-Zawahiri did not officially approve GSPC's merger with al-Qaeda until September 11, 2006. Zawahiri's videotaped acceptance of the merger marked the group's public re-branding as an al-Qaeda affiliate. The group officially changed its name from GSPC to "Al Qaida in the Lands of the Islamic Maghreb" in January 2007.

In a July 2008 interview with the New York Times, the Emir of AQIM Abdemalek Droukdal, who also had been the emir of GSPC since 2004, stated that "Our general goals are the same goals of Al Qaeda the mother." Since its merger with al-Qaeda, some of AQIM's attacks have reflected core AQ goals. In 2007, AQIM bombed the UN headquarters building in Algiers and the Algerian Constitutional Court, killing 60 people. AQIM also has conducted kidnap for ransom operations against Western citizens and participated in the most recent Tuareg rebellion in northern Mali.

Mr. CASTRO. Sure. That's no problem. Also you all have spoken about, I think you specifically, said that there are certain conditions in a nation that make it more susceptible to terrorism activity, including poor governance and poor development. I don't think we've covered that yet. Can you give a description of the poverty and desperation that exists in this nation and others in that region?

Mr. CARSON. I don't know the precise number where Mali falls on the U.N. human rights development index. And I'll find that number out for you.

Mr. CASTRO. Sure.

[Response follows:]

WRITTEN RESPONSE RECEIVED FROM THE HONORABLE JOHNNIE CARSON TO QUESTION ASKED DURING THE HEARING BY THE HONORABLE JOAQUIN CASTRO

Mali is among the 25 poorest countries in the world as measured by the U.N. Human Development Index (HDI). The HDI is a composite that measures the average achievement of a country in three basic human dimensions of human development—a long and healthy life, knowledge, and a decent standard of living. Of the 187 countries ranked in the HDI, Mali placed at 174th. Its neighbors Niger, Burkina Faso, Cote d'Ivoire, and Mauritania respectively placed 186th, 181st, 170th, and 159th.

Mr. CARSON. But I'm almost certain that it ranks probably in the bottom 10 to 15 percent of the poorest countries in the world with the per capita income of the country probably being no more than $200 to $300 a year.

Mr. CASTRO. But you would agree generally the better the standard of living, the harder it is for these terrorist organizations to coax folks to join their forces?

Mr. CARSON. Yes, sir. And I would also add one other thing. Political engagement and the fact that people believe they have a stake in the country, the government, and that the government has a stake in delivering services to them. In northern Mali, the big problem that precedes many years before al-Qaeda is that the Tuaregs have felt that they've gotten the short end of the development stick: No roads, no schools, no clinics, and that promises made by

the central government have not been lived up to. These are political grievances that also have an economic element to them as well.

Mr. CASTRO. And then my final question, do you have any insight into the goals and future military presence of French forces?

Ms. DORY. We are in constant discussions with the French at all different levels at this point. They are in the midst of conducting on-going combat operations while also looking ahead to the transition to the next phase as we've talked a little bit today. The stand up and force employment of the AFISMA force and then the eventual possibility of a U.N. peacekeeping operation. So we are in very robust dialogue with the French at senior leader levels, at operator levels about how they see this unfolding, conversations about when different transitions will happen.

It's very important for us to understand their intentions and vice versa and to connect with the on-going process of developing the AFISMA force so it's available to be employed. The French are certainly not going to lose the gains that have been accomplished over the last month or so by a hasty transition to a force that's unprepared to stabilize the government.

Mr. CASTRO. And Representative Vargas asked you about whether we had ever said no to a request to our allies, the French, and your reply was no, that we haven't. So I want to say thank you very much for that. I yield back.

Chairman ROYCE. Mr. Connolly.

Mr. CONNOLLY. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and welcome, both of you.

Mr. Ambassador, in your previous responses to questions from my colleagues, did I understand you to say that we're all of one mind in the United States Government with respect to how we should respond to the terrorist threat in northern Africa or in Africa?

Mr. CARSON. I was talking about Mali and the specificity of the question about whether there was collaboration and cooperation between DoD and State. And I said that the collaboration and cooperation was very good and synergistic.

Mr. CONNOLLY. I'm looking at an article, Mr. Ambassador, from the Washington Post, published exactly 10 days ago. It quotes Charles Wald, the former Four Star Air Force General in charge of operations. He's quite explicit about his critique of various folks including Vicki Huddleston, the U.S. Ambassador to Mali at the time, about conflicts and their approach to terrorism or figures associated with terrorism including Belmokhtar and what to do about him. Are you aware of that article, published 10 days ago?

Mr. CARSON. I am aware of it.

Mr. CONNOLLY. And do you find it accurate?

Mr. CARSON. I think it's out of context. I think the most important thing to remember there is that I think General Wald, who was the Deputy Commander of EUCOM, and Ambassador Huddleston were there, I think, probably 15 years ago. Much has changed. I think one has to look at the context in which they were talking and operating.

Mr. CONNOLLY. So this article is describing something from your point of view that's way in the past?

Mr. CARSON. It's historical and it is dated. I think that one has to look at the context in which they were operating at the time.

Mr. CONNOLLY. Well, I just, I mean, ancient history, it quotes a 2008 GAO report, talking about the lack of comprehensive, integrated strategy among the Pentagon, the State Department, and USAID. You're saying that in the intervening 4 years that report is also now OBE?

Mr. CARSON. Sir, I'm not aware of that report and so I can't comment on it. I'm not aware of it.

Mr. CONNOLLY. Well, in light of your testimony, whether you're aware of the report or not, you obviously would disagree with that characterization, at least as it would apply in today's context?

Mr. CARSON. Yes, because I think that as we both said here this morning, there is a robust inter-agency process that brings us together, both in a formal setting, but we also talk quite frequently. I meet with and see very frequently General Ham from AFRICOM. We travel together from time to time. There's a robust amount of discussion and engagement there.

Mr. CONNOLLY. Obviously, you can understand the sensitivity here. The fight against terrorism is very much on our minds. Our country has been badly victimized by terrorism. Much of the locus of terrorist activity or planning, and even deployment of capability, is now shifted to the African environment. And it's imperative—vigorous debate is one thing, but fundamental disagreement about approach and what to do by way of response would be of great concern, obviously to those of us here, especially on this committee, and we would want to know about it. So thank you, Mr. Ambassador.

Mr. CARSON. Yes, I agree.

Mr. CONNOLLY. Ms. Dory, in the brief time I have left, could you tell us a little bit about our sense of the French military capability? Hollande was just there. Seemed to be announcing we're pulling out. It looked like the insurgents kind of melted away in front of French-Malian troops as soon as they appeared in Goa or Timbuktu or wherever it might be.

What is the French capability vis-à-vis the insurgents? Should we worry that they just melted away, and they'll return once the occupation or the military advance ceases, and what is our sense of what the French military intention is at least in the short term if not the long term in Mali?

Ms. DORY. Thank you. I would at the outset point out a comment made by Deputy Secretary Carter when he was recently visiting in France. He made the point there is a number that you can count on one hand of countries that are able to project power and employ force the way the French have in the past month, very impressive capability. And we have supported them along the way, as I've mentioned earlier, in terms of airlift, the refueling capability, intelligence, et cetera. So we feel very confident in French capabilities in the intervention in Mali.

You're highlighting the conflict inevitably will shift. They have made the point and we agree that the initial intervention can sometimes be the easiest part and then things get very complicated. Ambassador Carson has highlighted the complexity of the situation. I think we see that as the extremist exit from population

centers and will pursue a variety of asymmetric tactics going forward.

So I don't think there's an ability to say mission complete any time soon. It's really entering into a new phase going forward. We're confident in French capabilities, and we will continue to assist them.

Chairman ROYCE. Alan Lowenthal.

Mr. LOWENTHAL. Thank you, Mr. Chair, and thank you for holding this important hearing.

According to the congressional—and I think you've touched upon this and actually the Ambassador mentioned it a little bit in his earlier statements, that according to—but I want to kind of dig deeper to the period that really occurred before the coup. According to the Congressional Research Report entitled "Crisis in Mali," there are indications that prior to the coup last March, the Malian public was growing increasingly resentful of perceived government corruption and cronyism, and the corruption arguably left Mali vulnerable to instability, especially what we've talked about in the north and to terrorist insurgency.

The U.S. was one of the largest bilateral donors to Mali prior to the coup with eight programs focusing on food security, health, education, governance, counterterrorism and military professionalization. And yet, our efforts failed to create a stable, transparent government protective of humanitarian rights.

The question I have is going forward how can we assess our intelligence and practices to ensure that the U.S. foreign aid is administered most appropriately and effectively? And really, another way of saying it is how do we better support strong democracies that truly serve the people of their country? And how do we make those distinctions?

Mr. CARSON. Thank you very much for the question. The short answer is that we take a hard look and reevaluate what went wrong as well. We try to calibrate our policies to both successes to replicate them and failures to prevent them. And so we do look.

Again, I'm not aware of this report, "Crisis in Mali," but I'm going to get a copy of it very quickly and read it and see what it says. Mali did have problems. It's an enormously poor country. It had only had democratic leadership for 20 years. There was, in fact, a concern about growing corruption, and as I've pointed out, certainly people in the north and particularly Tuaregs felt that they were not getting the kinds of services from the central government that they thought they should be. So obviously therein is a problem that had not been sufficiently addressed.

Mr. LOWENTHAL. Thank you. I yield my time back.

Chairman ROYCE. And lastly, to the most patient, Lois Frankel.

Ms. FRANKEL. Thank you, Mr. Chair, and you are very kind. I'm learning the tricks of going in and out, but I've been here the whole time. And it's been very interesting to hear the questions of my colleagues and your answers. Thank you very much for being here, and it's obvious that many of my colleagues have a very intricate familiarity with this issue.

I'm going to ask a more basic, a "living room" question which is my constituents sitting in a living room if they were listening to this what they would ask basically which is—and you can answer

this in a general term, which is what are the immediate and long-term consequences to the United States and/or our allies if we just ignore Mali and the region and what's going on?

Mr. CARSON. We live in a very small and now very closely-knit, global, and interconnected community, and absolutely nothing overseas, not even in places in Africa that are confused between the Pacific and Africa itself, can be dismissed as something that we should not be worried about. We have had, and I'll say this very quickly, enormous success in one part of the world where we turned out back on the issues of state failure—and we suffered the consequences of it—and that is Somalia.

We walked away from Somalia in a relief effort after Blackhawk Down in 1993. And as a result, we saw Somalia as a country burn, and we saw its fragmentation and then we saw the impact on the region and we saw the impact on the global community. The global community impact was unprecedented levels of piracy along the Red Sea. The regional impact was the huge refugee crisis and food crisis. One hundred thousand, sorry, 700,000 refugees in Kenya alone, and for us in the United States, it was the terrorist events of August 7, 1998, when we lost not one, but two Embassies in Nairobi through something called Al-Qaeda East Africa that we don't talk about very much these days because the foundation stones of it have been significantly weakened. But we forget that there was an Al-Qaeda East Africa that also did in Nairobi what was a precursor to 9/11.

So we do have to keep our eye on these things and when we turn our backs on them the international community turns their backs on them. But these are global.

The French acted not only because they were concerned about what was happening in Mali and the region, but for one other reason and that is that the largest Malian community outside of Mali resides in France. And these are second and third generation Malians who were French men who can get on the plane as disgruntled youth, French youth, who happened to be black, whose families are Malian, and go back to Paris and potentially start to undermine French security as well.

We can't turn our backs on it. It doesn't mean we have to lead the effort, but we must always be conscious about the effort and we must contribute wherever we can to its solution, which is why we work with the French and this is why we work with the Africans. We don't have to lead it, but we can support it because if we turn our back on it, it might become powerful enough like events in Somalia to come back and haunt us.

Chairman ROYCE. I think Ambassador Carson expressed well our concern. I will add that over the years, over the last 6 years, this particular franchise of al-Qaeda, in just the money that they raised by taking hostages and ransoming them, had raised $50 million, enough money to allow them to establish cells not only in France, but also in Switzerland, in Britain, Italy, and Germany. And if we look at the growth of this franchise, we begin to realize why the French took action and why the international community is appreciative of that. I think our Secretary of State put it well when she noted that we are in for a struggle, but it is a necessary struggle.

We cannot permit northern Mali to become a safe haven. We've got to have a better strategy.

This hearing today with Ambassador Carson and with the representative from the Department of Defense is an attempt to get the agencies to work more closely together and to work with us and Congress in order to implement a more effective strategy.

I did want to recognize the Ambassador of Mali and the Ambassador of Niger who are with us and ask them to stand for a minute so that we might recognize you both. We thank you very much for your participation as well. We appreciate the work of the diplomatic corps.

And with that we stand adjourned. We thank our witnesses very much.

[Whereupon, at 12:29 p.m., the committee was adjourned.]

APPENDIX

Material Submitted for the Hearing Record

FULL COMMITTEE HEARING NOTICE
COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN AFFAIRS
U.S. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20515-6128

Edward R. Royce (R-CA), Chairman

February 14, 2013

TO: MEMBERS OF THE COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN AFFAIRS

You are respectfully requested to attend an OPEN hearing of the Committee on Foreign Affairs, to be held in Room 2172 of the Rayburn House Office Building (and available live via the Committee website at http://www.ForeignAffairs.house.gov):

DATE: Thursday, February 14, 2013

TIME: 10:00 a.m.

SUBJECT: The Crisis in Mali: U.S. Interests and the International Response

WITNESSES: The Honorable Johnnie Carson
Assistant Secretary
Bureau of African Affairs
U.S. Department of State

Ms. Amanda Dory
Deputy Assistant Secretary for African Affairs
Office of the Secretary of Defense
U.S. Department of Defense

By Direction of the Chairman

The Committee on Foreign Affairs seeks to make its facilities accessible to persons with disabilities. If you are in need of special accommodations, please call 202/225-5021 at least four business days in advance of the event, whenever practicable. Questions with regard to special accommodations in general (including availability of Committee materials in alternative formats and assistive listening devices) may be directed to the Committee.

COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN AFFAIRS

MINUTES OF FULL COMMITTEE HEARING

Day *Thursday* Date *02/14/13* Room *2172*

Starting Time *10:06 a.m.* Ending Time *12:28 p.m.*

Recesses *0* (____to ____) (____to ____) (____to ____) (____to ____) (____to ____) (____to ____)

Presiding Member(s)

Chairman Edward R. Royce

Check all of the following that apply:

Open Session ☑
Executive (closed) Session ☐
Televised ☑

Electronically Recorded (taped) ☑
Stenographic Record ☑

TITLE OF HEARING:

The Crisis in Mali: U.S. Interests and the International Response

COMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT:

See attached sheet.

NON-COMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT:

None

HEARING WITNESSES: Same as meeting notice attached? Yes ☑ **No** ☐
(If "no", please list below and include title, agency, department, or organization.)

STATEMENTS FOR THE RECORD: *(List any statements submitted for the record.)*

Statements for the Record: Smith

Questions for the Record: Ros-Lehtinen, Poe, Kennedy, Holding, Cicilline

TIME SCHEDULED TO RECONVENE _____
or
TIME ADJOURNED *12:28 p.m.*

Jean Marter, Director of Committee Operations

Hearing/Briefing Title:

FULL COMMITTEE ***"Crisis in Mali: U.S. Interests and the International Response"***

Date: *FEBRUARY 14, 2013*

Present	*Member*
X	Edward R. Royce, CA
X	Christopher H. Smith, NJ
X	Ileana Ros-Lehtinen, FL
X	Dana Rohrabacher, CA
X	Steve Chabot, OH
	Joe Wilson, SC
	Michael T. McCaul, TX
X	Ted Poe, TX
X	Matt Salmon, AZ
X	Tom Marino, PA
X	Jeff Duncan, SC
X	Adam Kinzinger, IL
X	Mo Brooks, AL
	Tom Cotton, AR
X	Paul Cook, CA
X	George Holding, NC
	Randy K. Weber, Sr., TX
X	Scott Perry, PA
	Steve Stockman, TX
X	Ron DeSantis, FL
X	Trey Radel, FL
	Doug Collins, GA
X	Mark Meadows, NC
X	Ted S. Yoho, FL
X	Luke Messer, IN

Present	*Member*
X	Eliot L. Engel, NY
X	Eni F.H. Faleomavaega, AS
X	Brad Sherman, CA
	Gregory W. Meeks, NY
	Albio Sires, NJ
X	Gerald E. Connolly, VA
X	Theodore E. Deutch, FL
	Brian Higgins, NY
X	Karen Bass, CA
X	William Keating, MA
X	David Cicilline, RI
X	Alan Grayson, FL
X	Juan Vargas, CA
X	Bradley S. Schneider, IL
X	Joseph P. Kennedy III, MA
X	Ami Bera, CA
X	Alan S. Lowenthal, CA
X	Grace Meng, NY
X	Lois Frankel, FL
X	Tulsi Gabbard, HI
X	Joaquin Castro, TX

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Congress of the United States
House of Representatives

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DEAN, NEW JERSEY DELEGATION

"The Crisis in Mali: U.S. Interests and the International Response"

Excerpts of Remarks by Rep. Chris Smith
House Committee on Foreign Affairs
February 14, 2013

Today's hearing on the crisis in Mali comes at a critical time in U.S. policy toward Africa. Many of us in Congress have long argued that events in Africa have a strong bearing on U.S. interests, and the coup in Mali and resulting loss of two-thirds of the country's territory to Islamic extremists last year only proved our point.

When my subcommittee held a hearing on Mali last year, the State Department view was that Mali had some concern for the United States, but the Administration was content to wait for the Economic Community of West African States to create a peacekeeping mission. When that didn't work as hoped for, the United Nations got involved to facilitate such a mission. France, seeing an advance by the jihadists into southern Mali, later intervened directly.

The French have a direct stake in halting the advance of jihadists in the region. There are an estimated 6,000 French citizens in Mali alone. Al Qaeda in the Islamic Mahgreb, or AQIM, has its origins in Algeria and may have ties to jihadists in France itself. Consequently, France has a more immediate stake than other Western nations in preventing AQIM and its jihadist allies from using northern Mali as a permanent base of operations.

Prior to the French intervention, Administration officials quietly criticized France for pushing for a more immediate reaction to the Mali jihadists. State Department officials said donor nations should train African troops and allow them to stem the tide of Mali's armed groups in the north. Unfortunately, the jihadists refused to cooperate with the timetable that could have delayed military action until summer at the earliest. Whether the longer term plan would have been better is now moot. A military operation is underway, and we must determine the best course for American interests.

Co-Chairman of: Task Force on Alzheimer's Disease • Bi-Partisan Coalition for Combating Anti-Semitism • Lyme Disease Caucus
Coalition for Autism Research and Education • Global Internet Freedom Caucus • Bi-Partisan Congressional Pro-Life Caucus
Spina Bifida Caucus • Vietnam Caucus • Poland Caucus • Bosnia Caucus
Ad Hoc Congressional Committee for Irish Affairs • Congressional Caucus on Human Trafficking

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It is vital that we work with the French and African military now engaged in liberating northern Mali. The United States has agreed to train the non-Malian African forces and to contribute logistics for this mission. We also must transfer our experience in fighting in a guerilla war because it seems that with the recent suicide bombing in Gao and the retreat of the jihadists into more familiar regions, we can expect hit and run attacks over a long period. Money from arms and drug trafficking will allow jihadists to prolong this conflict.

However, we must at the same time consider how to stabilize the situation in all of Mali now and in the future. A nation that was close to elections before the March 2012 coup that ousted the outgoing Mali president is certainly ill-prepared to conduct elections now. Hundreds of thousands of Malians are scattered in refugee camps in southern Mali, Niger, Burkina Faso and Mauritania. Furthermore, Captain Amadou Haya Sonogo and his fellow coup leaders are poisonous not only to the establishment of democratic governance in Mali, but also to discipline and cohesion in the Malian army itself.

Supporters of the coup leaders last year attacked interim President Dioncounda Traoré and forced him to withdraw to France for medical treatment and later forced out the first Prime Minister. Similarly, Green Beret elements tied to Sonogo have clashed with Red Beret elements that supported former President Touré. Meanwhile, the various jihadist groups are splintering.

All of these factors complicate our efforts moving forward in Mali and the Sahel-West Africa region. I look forward to any light our witnesses can shed on this complex and difficult mission in this region.

Questions for the Record Submitted to
Assistant Secretary Johnnie Carson by
Representative Ileana Ros-Lehtinen
House Committee on Foreign Affairs
February 14, 2013

Questions:

- How would you assess the efficacy of the Trans-Sahel Counterterrorism Partnership today?
- Given that the situation facing our front-line posts, personnel, and our interests in the region is not new, why were programs like this partnership reduced on an annual basis under the Administration, when the threats were so apparent?

Answer:

The United States remains committed to working with our African partners to address immediate terrorism threats in North Africa and the Sahel region and build durable security sector and development institutions required to achieve counterterrorism objectives over the long term. The key countries in the affected regions must lead – and be seen leading – efforts to address the AQIM challenge. We cannot rely on shortcuts when confronting terrorism in Africa and will work closely with our partners to build the long-

term capacity of regional governments to frustrate al-Qaeda and other terrorists groups.

The Trans-Sahara Counterterrorism Partnership (TSCTP) plays an important role in assisting the countries in West and North Africa to take responsibility for their own defenses against AQIM and its associated groups. It is the U.S. Government's primary vehicle to support the long-term capabilities of West and North African countries to address the AQIM threat. TSCTP is a multi-year commitment by the State Department, Department of Defense, and USAID to improve individual country and regional capabilities to defeat terrorist organizations, disrupt efforts to recruit and train new terrorist fighters, particularly from the young and rural poor, and counter efforts to establish safehavens for domestic and outside extremist groups. TSCTP programming reflects our recognition that sporadic one-dimensional engagements without adequate sustainment will fail to achieve meaningful long-term results in a region with a low industrial baseline. In addition to our initiatives to bolster the capacities of regional military and law enforcement, several TSCTP programs have worked to counter the pull of violent extremism on youth, including educational and training courses in Algeria and Morocco in the Maghreb, and extensive

youth employment and outreach programs, community development and media activities in Niger, Chad and Mali (though the programs in Mali are currently suspended).

Funding levels since the launch of the Trans-Sahara Counterterrorism Partnership (TSCTP) in 2006 reflect our strong commitment to an effective and sustainable counterterrorism effort in the region. Funding levels are adjusted during each fiscal year to reflect specific programmatic requirements, partner country priorities, ability of partner countries to effectively absorb outside assistance, and the overall budget environment. The State Department's TSCTP activities are supported by resources from several primary accounts. The State Department supports TSCTP with Economic Support Funds (ESF), Peacekeeping Operations (PKO), International Narcotics Control and Law Enforcement (INCLE), and Nonproliferation, Anti-Terrorism, Demining and Related Programs (NADR). In past years, we supplemented those resources at times with Section 1206 and 1207 funds and NADR funds from the Regional Security Initiative (RSI) overseen by the Department's Bureau for Counter-Terrorism (CT). The Department of Defense and USAID also fund TSCTP activities.

Questions for the Record Submitted to
Assistant Secretary Johnnie Carson by
Representative Ileana Ros-Lehtinen
House Committee on Foreign Affairs
February 14, 2013

Questions :

Lastly, on U.S. Africa Command, AFRICOM -- another key partner in assisting our allies in the region and leading our counterterrorism efforts:

- How can we best equip AFRICOM to play a more constructive role in fighting these threats from AQIM and other extremist groups?
- Do the African nations have the willingness and the capacity to assist and support U.S. security objectives in the region?

Answer:

The radical ideology and violent tactics of al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM) are antithetical to the vast majority of people in the region and the group's ability to mobilize significant popular support for its objectives has been largely frustrated. Governments in the region have intensified their counterterrorism efforts within their own borders during the

past several years and have responded quickly and proactively to the threat in northern Mali with diplomatic efforts and deployments of peacekeepers. African leaders have repeatedly emphasized that Africans must ultimately take responsibility for Africa's defense and they have demonstrated that they will take responsibility for security and will partner with the United States, France, the European Union, and the United Nations to address a range of security threats.

U.S. Africa Command (AFRICOM) has a vital role in building more professional militaries on the continent—militaries that operate under civilian control and democratic norms, and that are used to defend the nation and not an individual leader or political party. In addition to sharing U.S. military knowledge and technical expertise, AFRICOM can help instill the importance of civilian control of the military, respect for human rights and civilian security issues, and broader adherence to the rule of law. In the Sahel, there is a clear role for AFRICOM in supporting regional efforts to build and sustain the capabilities of professional militaries to more effectively monitor, control, and defend their territories against trans-national threats including terrorism. AFRICOM currently implements the bulk of the military CT training in the Sahel including on intelligence,

logistics, and combat medical treatment. In addition, AFRICOM will provide training to Nigerien troops to better enable them to participate in the African-led International Support Mission in Mali (AFISMA) and is currently providing embedded planners to AFISMA Headquarters in Bamako.

We continue to recognize that our actions to respond to immediate security concerns must be balanced with vital recognition that a gradual militarization of U.S. policy on the continent could work against our national interests and strategic partnerships. The State Department and AFRICOM are working together to ensure that our words and actions do not contribute to a counterproductive imbalance in our engagement in the region.

Furthermore, our security engagement cannot be separated from our long-term goals of good governance, civilian control over security forces, and respect for civilian security and human rights. Al-Qaeda and other extremist groups are drawn to those locations where they can take advantage of political and economic vulnerabilities to safeguard their operations, cross borders with impunity, and attract recruits. They benefit when security forces and border guards lack the necessary training, equipment,

intelligence, and mobility to disrupt their activities. Their cause is advanced when human rights violations and corruption undermine the credibility of security forces. Terrorists and criminal organizations also take advantage of weak or corrupt criminal justice systems unable to effectively investigate, prosecute and incarcerate criminals.

CHARRTS No.: HFAC-01-007
Hearing Date: February 14, 2013
Committee: HFAC
Member: Congresswoman Ros-Lehtinen
Witness: DASD(AfAf) Dory

Question: How would you assess the efficacy of Trans Sahara Counterterrorism Partnership today?

Answer: I assess the Trans Sahara Counterterrorism Partnership (TSCTP) to be a mixed success. Although our efforts have helped build the capacity of regional partners to undertake counterterrorism operations, the massive area involved and limited state capacity in the region present challenges. The TSCTP has proven to be a useful and effective mechanism for enabling a whole-of-government effort in the region.

The problem in Mali, in part, was that we did not have a strong partner in the Malian government. The Department realized over time that Mali was willing to accept our training and equipment but lacked the willingness to put them to use against shared threats. Instead, the U.S.-trained Malian units were split up in order to create a guard force for the nation's president. As a result, we increased our efforts in neighboring countries like Mauritania and Niger, where we saw better returns on U.S. investment.

It's also important to note two additional factors that limit our ability to build regional capability. The first is the inherent lack of capacity that characterizes many governments in the region. Their ability to address shared threats – and to absorb U.S. support – is often quite limited. We work with them to find areas where we can enable partner units, but it is a slow process. The second factor is the prevalence of military coups d'état in the region. Despite the U.S. Government's efforts to promote democracy and military professionalism, coups do still occur and they oblige us to suspend our security relationships. This pattern of engagement and dis-engagement limits our ability to maintain our investments in the region and results in partners with less capability to counter shared threats.

Question: Given that the situation facing our frontline posts, personnel, and our interests in the region is not new, why were programs like this partnership reduced on an annual basis under the Administration when the threats were so apparent?

Answer: The Department has been focused on the threat posed by terrorism in the region and has been a consistent advocate of robust engagement through a variety of funding sources. The level of our efforts is regulated by our ability to engage, and the ability of partners to absorb our support. As you know, coups d'état in the region and human rights abuses have limited our ability to engage some key partners.

Question: Lastly, on U.S. Africa Command, AFRICOM - another key partner in assisting our allies in the region and leading our counter terrorism efforts:

Answer: USAFRICOM is at the forefront of providing much-needed capability to partners that are confronting shared threats. Unfortunately, the threat has grown considerably and we are assessing what additional efforts may be necessary in the region. These are likely to include additional institution building, advisory support, and additional training and equipping support. The Department continues to assess its priorities and to ensure that those priorities are adequately resourced, even in the current fiscally-constrained environment.

Question: How can we best equip AFRICOM to play a more constructive role in combating these threats from AQIM and other extremist groups?

Answer: Yes, many do, and the Department continually assesses the progress that partners make in building and employing their capacity, and calibrates our assistance accordingly.

With Mali, in the years prior to the coup, DoD realized that the Touré regime was not using the assistance we provided as actively and effectively in countering AQIM as we expected. Despite indications that the terrorist threat was growing, the Government of Mali focused primarily on the perceived threat posed by its own Tuareg population. As a result, we increased our efforts in surrounding countries like Mauritania and Niger, which were more focused on the counterterrorism mission.

Questions for the Record Submitted to
Assistant Secretary Johnnie Carson by
Representative Joseph P. Kennedy, III (#1)
House Committee on Foreign Affairs
February 14, 2013

Question:

Assistant Secretary Carson:

The Sahel region faces unique challenges in the years ahead as it confronts the increasing threat of AQIM's expanding sphere of influence compounded with limited economic opportunities for the next generation.

Assistant Secretary Carson, in your testimony, you discuss the need to address underlying vulnerabilities in Mali by strengthening and promoting economic development. Deputy Assistant Secretary Dory, in your testimony, you mention that the United States continues to work to support Mali's neighbors to contain and degrade shared threats.

In considering your testimonies, one thing that struck me about Mali is the incredible youth of its population, and of the surrounding populations. The median age in Mali is 16.4 years. In Algeria it is 28.1 years; in Cote d'Ivoire, 19.8 years; and in Niger, the median age is only 15.2 years. At the same time, many of the countries in the region face alarmingly high unemployment.

The dramatic number of young people facing limited economic opportunity provides fertile ground for terrorist organizations looking to take root and recruit new members. Based on each of your testimonies, it seems that a critical part of deterring these organizations – and of preventing the exploitation of disaffected and unemployed youth after France withdraws its troops – must be strengthening Malian civil society through measures like education and infrastructure.

I am curious to hear how you believe the United States can effectively promote economic stability in Mali as form of counterterrorism. What is the appropriate role for us there, and are there specific initiatives around education, family planning, healthcare or other sectors that you believe

deserve our focus? Beyond Mali, do you see a role for the U.S. in confronting global youth unemployment and the effect it can have on economic and political stability, especially in our most conflicted regions?

Answer:

Numerous studies highlight the complex nature of drivers that lead to extremism and demonstrate that there is no overarching "root cause" and that poverty is often just one of many factors that contribute indirectly to radicalization. A number of factors often work together and require a comprehensive approach to succeed.

The U.S. government's counterterrorism (CT) approach in the Sahel accounts for the interrelated nature of the drivers by anchoring our efforts to the goals of promoting democracy and good governance, economic opportunity, civilian control over security forces, and respect for human rights. Meaningful progress in these areas is crucial to the success of ongoing efforts against Al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM) and associated networks. Violent extremists are drawn to areas where they can take advantage of political and economic vulnerabilities to safeguard their operating spaces and lifelines, cross borders with impunity, and attract recruits. They benefit when security forces and border guards lack the necessary training, equipment, intelligence, and mobility to disrupt their activities. Their cause is advanced when human rights abuses undermine the

credibility of security forces. Terrorists and criminal organizations also take advantage of weak or corrupt criminal justice systems unable to effectively investigate, prosecute and incarcerate all forms of criminals.

The programming designed to address these drivers in Mali is currently suspended since July 2012, based upon restrictions required by Section 7008 and additional policy restrictions on assistance. However, the United States has focused on these problems in other potentially vulnerable areas in neighboring countries in the Sahel and elsewhere in Africa. These programs provide tangible benefits to youth at risk for recruitment by violent extremist organizations and communities in at-risk regions through youth employment and outreach initiatives and community development and media activities. In addition to delivering tangible benefits, such as vocational skills training, programs under the Trans-Sahara Counter Terrorism Partnership (TSCTP) gathers beneficiaries from different communities, ethnic groups, and countries together through outreach events on topics related to religion and tolerance.

The US has provided $120 million in humanitarian assistance to date to food-insecure and conflict-affected people in Mali, as well as Malian refugees in neighboring countries. These programs are critical for

humanitarian relief efforts. Development programs that are not considered life-saving are currently suspended. Upon the restoration of a credible democratically-elected government in Mali, we will look for opportunities to restart our historically strong partnership to build on previous work to improve health, education, economic livelihoods and living conditions. With improved governance, Mali has the potential to be a major food producer for the region and achieve meaningful economic growth. While the United States can provide immediate relief to the people, help set the foundation for democratic elections, and provide basic social services in the interim, Mali's future development must be led by the Malian people. This can only be achieved through a duly-elected and inclusive government against a background of peace and stability. Accordingly, it is critical that the Government of Mali and the Malian people be encouraged to pursue a simultaneous, dual-track approach directed toward the return of democratic accountability and a negotiated peace. Neither will be sustainable over the long-term in the absence of the other.

The TSCTP program described above is but one example of how, engaging youth is a vital policy priority as delineated by the USG's *Youth in Development Policy* released in November 2012. This Agency-wide guidance recognizes young people as a driving force in global development

and promotes youth participation as partners and leaders. The policy's guiding principles support US efforts to mainstream youth in development, carry out effective programs, and elevate youth participation throughout the world. A main objective of the policy is to promote the contribution of youth to more stable, democratic, and prosperous communities and nations.

The Department of State's Office of Global Youth Issues has made the economic and political empowerment of youth, including African youth, a priority. The Office, led by a Special Adviser to Secretary Kerry, coordinates policy and programs that deal with youth unemployment. The Office is proactively coordinating responses that leverage public-private partnerships and a whole-of-government approach to this issue. The Department officially launched the Youth Livelihoods Alliance (YLA), a public-private partnership that convenes foreign governments, the private sector, multilaterals, and civil society to address and find solutions to the underlying causes of youth unemployment by promoting practical and innovative solutions and the exchange of best practices in workforce development, skills training and job creation through entrepreneurship.

Questions for the Record Submitted to
Assistant Secretary Johnnie Carson by
Representative Ted Poe (1)
House Committee on Foreign Affairs
February 14, 2013

Question:

The U.S. Department of State has imposed targeted sanctions on AQIM (a U.S.-designated Foreign Terrorist Organization), the MUJWA ("Movement for Unity and Jihad in West Africa" - a "Specially Designated Global Terrorist"), along with some of their members. To what extent, if at all, have these designations had an impact in curbing these groups' activities and available resources?

Answer:

Designations are a key counterterrorism tool, as they assist with legal actions, cutting financial flows, and garnering international cooperation. In 2009, as a result of the Department of State's Foreign Terrorist Organization (FTO) designation of al-Qa'ida in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM), two Malian citizens, Harouna Toure and Idriss Abdelrahman, were sentenced in a Manhattan federal court for conspiring to provide material support to AQIM and the Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionaries de Colombia (FARC).

The Executive Order 13224 designations of AQIM and MUJWA provide the Department of Treasury an ability to sanction individuals for providing support to AQIM and MUJWA. Treasury's derivative

designations play a key role in cutting off terror finance and deterring potential donors from providing support to designated terrorist groups.

The Department of State also designates individuals under E.O. 13224 to highlight the global threat posed by terrorist operatives. For example, on December 7, 2012, the Department of State designated MUJWA leaders Hamad el-Khairy and Ahmed el-Tilemsi. The domestic designations of AQIM, MUJWA, and affiliated individuals, such as el-Tilemsi and el-Khairy, provide the basis for the United States to support United Nations 1267 listing requests. In the case of MUJWA, the United States worked closely with the international community to impose multilateral sanctions on the organization, demonstrating international resolve in eliminating MUJWA's violent activities in Mali and the surrounding region.

CHARRTS No.: HFAC-01-004
Hearing Date: February 14, 2013
Committee: HFAC
Member: Congressman Poe
Witness: DASD(AfAf) Dory
Question: #4

Question: It is reported that Belmokhtar is hiding out in caves in the mountainous region of northern Mali. So far, the 4 drones and some 4,000 French troops in Mali have been unable to capture him. Please describe to me what the United States government is doing to bring Belmokhtar to justice. Why is Belmokhtar not on our "capture and kill" list? Will he be added to it?

Answer: Northern Mali's enormous size (it is double the size of Iraq) and the limited assets collecting against the threat network there make the effort extremely challenging. That said, we are actively working to increase our collection and to enable our sharing agreements so that Belmokhtar and his affiliates are brought to justice.

The Department continues to work closely with other departments and agencies to ensure the appropriate designations are assigned to Belmokhtar and the myriad extremist groups resident in North and West Africa.

Question: What are we doing to bring the perpetrators of the Benghazi attack on our consulate, the Egyptian attack on our Embassy, and the Algerian attack on the gas plant to justice? Are our special operations forces involved in any way? Have we apprehended anyone?

Answer: DoD continues to support the ongoing FBI investigation of the attack in Benghazi, Libya, and is prepared to provide additional support if requested. We are additionally prepared to provide any requested support as may be necessary to help bring perpetrators of the In Amenas attacks in Algeria to justice. The Governments of Algeria and Libya have reaffirmed their commitment to protect our embassies. The Government of Egypt is also committed to the protection of U.S. diplomatic personnel and facilities. Since the September 11, 2012 attack at the U.S. Embassy in Cairo, Egyptian security forces have increased protective measures around the perimeter and regularly coordinate with U.S. officials.

In the aftermath of the Benghazi attacks, Secretary Panetta authorized a series of actions by US military forces to identify and locate the perpetrators of the attacks, and to assist other US agencies in their efforts to do the same.

As Secretary Panetta has previously stated, the DoD is committed to bringing the perpetrators of those attacks to justice. However, the DoD has not yet captured any suspects involved in the attacks on our Embassies in Libya and Egypt in September 2012, or in In Amenas, Algeria in January 2013.

Questions for the Record Submitted to
Assistant Secretary Johnnie Carson by
Representative George Holding
House Committee on Foreign Affairs
February 14, 2013

Question:

We know there are trained terrorists in Mali and know they are well armed from the fall of Qadhafi. We know Mali has already undergone one military coup recently and scheduled democratic elections are being pushed back. We know splinter terror groups are committing violent and horrific acts against innocent civilians. This is not a stable nation or region by any stretch of the imagination.

a. Can you please explain in detail what the State Department or State Department in conjunction with USAID is doing to ensure the humanitarian dollars we send to Mali are being used for their intended purpose?
b. Are there any additional steps that should be taken to strengthen this oversight?
c. Is there a point at which we should stop sending over humanitarian aid?

Answer:

Consistent with the legal restriction on assistance to the government of Mali following the March 2012 military coup, and to ensure that the humanitarian dollars we send to Mali are being used for their intended purpose, all humanitarian aid to Mali is being distributed through non-governmental partners and public international organizations. We are not

partnering with the transitional government of Mali to distribute our humanitarian assistance.

The State Department and USAID work closely together and with implementing partners to monitor and ensure that vital programming in Mali can continue and that implementing partners are taking appropriate steps to mitigate the risk of diversion to terrorist organizations or those acting on their behalf. All USG-supported partners working in Mali must undertake a careful analysis of the risks of interventions, such as the possibility of assistance reaching terrorist organizations. Our partners base all proposed activities on viable, professional assessments of the situation on the ground and monitor targeted populations to ensure that they have received assistance.

As one example of the monitoring and coordination of current USG-supported humanitarian assistance that takes place in Mali, USAID-funded food assistance is implemented through the UN World Food Program (WFP), reaching up to 564,000 food-insecure Malians annually. WFP's partners have national staff on the ground to identify vulnerable groups, organize distributions, and conduct post distribution monitoring. WFP complements this with a third-party monitoring system that conducts independent, monthly post distribution monitoring. A USAID officer in

Bamako works closely with WFP and implementing partners to monitor and ensure accountability of activities, and to date there has been no evidence of misuse of food resources.

Funding for programs that provide humanitarian assistance, life-saving, critical assistance in health and food security is considered on a case-by-case basis. The only humanitarian assistance being provided is critical, life-saving assistance to fill immediate and serious needs. There are currently more than 270, 000 IDPs in Mali and 179,000 Malian refugees in the Sahel region. We believe it is critical to continue this limited assistance to address this severe, ongoing humanitarian crisis.

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