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**EXAMINING THE ROLES OF THE EUROPEAN
UNION, FRANCE AND THE UNITED STATES IN
COMBATING TERRORISM IN THE SAHEL.**

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DECLARATION

I hereby declare that this dissertation is the result of an original research conducted by me, under the supervision of Dr. Ken Ahorsu. I further declare that no part of it has been submitted anywhere else for any other purpose, and that all sources referred to have been duly acknowledged.



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DATE...19/11/2020.....

DATE...19/11/2020.....

DEDICATION

This work is dedicated to my entire family, especially to my parents; Isaac Abraham and Rebecca Abraham for their immense contribution to my education.

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I want to first of all express my profound thanks to God for the enablement to complete this work. I also would like to appreciate my supervisor, Dr. Ken Ahorsu for his immense guidance and direction that has enabled me to complete this research.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

AFRICOM	-	African Command
AMT	-	Technical Military Aid Agreements
AQIM	-	Al-Qaeda in Islamic Maghreb
AU	-	African Union
CSDP	-	Common Security Defense Policy
CT	-	Counter Terrorism
ECOWAS	-	Economic Community of West African States
EU	-	European Union
EUCAP	-	European Union Capacity Building Mission.
EUTM	-	EU training mission in Mali
IS	-	Islamic State
MNJTF	-	Lake Chad Basin Commission Multi-National Joint Task Force
MOJWA/MUJAO	-	Movement for Oneness and Jihad in West Africa
NATO	-	North Atlantic Treaty Organization
NGOs	-	Non-Governmental Organisations
OASIS	-	Organizing to Advance Solutions in the Sahel
OPEX	-	Opérations Extérieures
PARSEC	-	Programme d'Appui au Renforcement de la Sécurité dans les régions de Mopti et de Gao et à la gestion des zones frontalières
PIP	-	Priority Investment Program
PSC	-	Peace and Security Council
RAP	-	Regional Action Plan
TSCTI	-	Pan Sahel Initiative
UNECA	-	United Nations Economic Commission for Africa

USA - United States of America

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ABSTRACT

Global security has taken a new dimension since the horrific incident that took place during the September 11, 2001 terrorist attack in the United States of America. The global war against terror took effect after this incident in order to put an end to the threats terrorism poses. The African continent has not been spared in the rise of terrorism. The Sahel region of the continent has become a hotspot of terrorism for almost a decade now. Countries like Mali, Nigeria and Burkina Faso have been the major crisis corridors of the region. This has drawn global attention and interventions from the international community even outside the continent. After almost a decade of foreign interventions in the region, the situation seems unchanging. For this reason, the study analyzes the situation in the region and the reason for a prolonged crisis in the midst of several interventions. It investigates the root causes of terrorism in the region as well as what causes further exacerbations even in the midst of interventions. The investigations reveal that most of the so-called terrorist groups in the region are mostly aggrieved interest groups, either ethnic or religious in nature, who use radical means to register their plights when their grievances are unaddressed. The involvements and interventions of foreign players especially through military means is resulting in further worsening the situation in the region as these groups retaliate even more. The major international players at the fore-front of the fight in the region are; the European Union, France and the United States. Even though these players have played some positive roles, these radical groups keep carrying out operations in the region in a form of retaliation to these players. The research also reveals that resource reserves such as uranium, oil, ore, etc...which are in large deposits, are the major reason for not only the interventions of these players but their prolonged stay in the region. Their personal interests are tied to the vase supply of these resources and thus use their interventions in the region as a means to also secure a share of these reserves. The research recommends some of the necessary steps that could be taken in order to deal with the situation in the region. A major means is to strengthen focus more on negotiations with aggrieved groups rather than the current focus on military means. It also recommends that regional bodies such as the African Union (AU), the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) should be at the forefront with the United Nations (UN) in dealing with the situation in the region, rather than leaving them in the hands of individual countries and other regional bodies who may fall prey to their personal interests in the region.

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the Research Problem

After the horrific terrorist attack that occurred in the United States of America (USA) on September 11th 2001, terrorism has become a global crisis that has caused relative uncertainty of security amongst many nations in the world. It has gained global attention through the years, and many countries all across the continents of the world have been hit by uncertain terrorist attacks. Global security has become a major problem of concern among the nations who have tried to collectively deal with this menace.

On a Tuesday morning of 9th September, 2001 four planes were hijacked, namely; American Boeing 767, United Airlines Flight 175, American Airlines Flight and United Flight 93 and committed suicide attacks in a sequential manner (History.com Editors, 2010). This was perpetuated by 19 terrorists sponsored by Islamic extremist group-al Qaeda out of retaliation to the United States' presence in the Middle East, her involvement in the Persian Gulf as well as her endless support of Israel. Two of the planes first crashed into the twin towers and resulted in the collapse of the World Trade center, with many people trapped underneath. There was an obvious uproar and just before tensions could be calmed, there was a third attack this time to the Pentagon at the United States Department of defense in Washington D.C about an hour after the very first.

The last plane, United Flight 93 which was bound for California crashed in Pennsylvania about 30 minutes later. This attack claimed the lives of close to 3000 people. Since then, the United States of America declared a global war on terror and has since attracted global attention. Because terrorism is viewed as a global security threat, efforts by several nations, international bodies and organizations are evident in the global fight against terror. International cooperation is viewed as the best alternative in this fight as every continent in the world has had to deal with this crisis.

The United Nations multilateral framework through the General Assembly and its member states have provided the necessary initiatives in effectively fighting against terrorism. The United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy has enhanced national, regional and international efforts in this fight (Rosand et al., 2008). The European Union since 2001 has also been actively involved in the fight against terrorism by facilitating cross border cooperation by national law enforcement authorities and intelligence agencies (Vries, 2005). The list goes on and on as other individual nations have been dedicated to this fight on a global scale.

Africa as a continent has had a fair share in dealing with the rise of terrorism. In recent times the continent has become a breeding ground for terrorist groups. As a continent consisting of fairly developing countries, there is an inadequate capacity in dealing with terrorism. As a result, the rise of terrorism on the continent poses challenges to development; ranging from the destruction of human resources, to a halt in economic progression. Lack of the necessary capacity to effectively counter-terrorism by most countries in the continent has led to regional and international efforts. The African Union (AU), Economic Community of West African States

(ECOWAS), the European Union (EU), North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) as well as other developed countries are at the forefront in the global fight against terror on the continent.

The Sahel region of Africa has been the hotspot for security concerns for more than a decade. This region has unfortunately become a breeding ground for terrorist groups and their activities. The African Union through its peace and security architecture has been monitoring and working to ensure relative stability. On February 2014, the G5 Sahel which consists of Burkina Faso, Chad, Mali, Mauritania and Niger, was formed to strengthen the combat against jihadist activities in the region as well as ensuring economic development through security and regional cooperation. The continuous rise of terrorism in the Sahel has also attracted global attention from the broader international community. The European Union (EU), North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) and other individual nations like the United States (US) and France have shown great interest in the region.

Though there were many antecedents to the crisis in the Sahel, the Malian crisis in 2012 turned the world's attention to the region. Since then, there have been major interventions by the international community in the Sahel region not only in the fight against the spread of terrorism, but also in tackling the humanitarian crisis that has resulted. However, after almost a decade of these interventions the situation in the region looks fairly the same and the fight against terrorism seems unwinnable. This problem has raised questions as to what the main issue in the region is. There have been some suggestions that some of these international players have their own interest in the region and their presence has exacerbated the crisis.

This research will seek to examine the issues of interests in the region as well as examine the roles of some of these international players in combating terrorism in the Sahel region of Africa

1.2 Problem Statement

The Sahel is a “semi-arid region of western and north-central Africa extending from Senegal eastward to Sudan. It forms a transitional zone between the arid Sahara (desert) to the north and the belt of humid savannas to the south” (Encyclopædia Britannica, 2014). As mentioned earlier, the Sahel is the hotspot of security in Africa because of organized crime, and violent extremism; but has at the same time been confronted with economic, environmental, natural and social problems such as climate change, rapid population growth, food insecurity which have earned it a status as one of the poorest regions in the world (Giuseppe, 2018, p. 3).

Political instability has been a major problem in the region which is as a result of state and political weakness and the need for change with regards to unsettled issues, like ethnic and religious grievances and marginalization. This has instigated terrorist activities by some insurgent groups or Jihadist-Salafist organizations close to Al Qaeda or Islamic State (IS) (European External Action service, 2017). Jihadist operations in the region took an upward surge as a result of the uprisings that took place in the Maghreb; the Arab Spring, the war in Libya and subsequently the crisis of Mali in West Africa. These conditions have set a foundation of strife for local and global grievances, giving rise to transnational non state actors (Cooke & Sanderson, 2016). Most of the cases of terrorism are perpetuated by these non-state actors in the region and is transnational in nature; owing to the porous nature of their borders. For example, the operation of Boko Haram are not limited only in Nigeria but have extended operations to other countries in the region; the attacks carried out in Diffa in Niger and in the far North of Cameroon are notable

examples. Furthermore, poor security systems are a major bane in most of the countries in the region, as they lack the necessary logistics, communication and intelligence in the fight against terrorists.

Another factor that has aided terrorism in the region is the weak governmental structures which have resulted in ungovernable spaces especially in the Northern parts of some countries in the Sahel. The root cause of the situation in Northern Mali for instance, is the clash of civilizations between Christian or western civilization and Islamic civilization. This clash in civilization is traced from colonial antecedents. When the French arrived, the indigenous populations that were Christians availed themselves to western education and were empowered to become elites thus were also promoted in the society. On the other hand, the Tuaregs who were predominantly transhumance and affiliated to the Arabs did not subject themselves to this western system of education, but to the Arabic education. At independence, better opportunities such as employment, political involvements etc... were based purely on the qualification attained from the French western education and not the Arabic.

Furthermore, those who were sedentary in nature like the farmers often had their rights and privileges protected than the Tuaregs, who were as mentioned, transhumance. Several natural factors in the region such as climate change have introduced further challenges like the co-existence between these groups in the North. In a particular instance Fulani herdsmen accused Dogon farmers of stealing their cattle while the farmers accused the Fulanis of overstepping boundaries to feed cattle on their farmland (Vanguard News, 2019). When tensions arose between the two factions, the state took sides with the farmers thus sparking more grievances by

the herdsmen. The herdsmen feel their interest is not sought by the state and so rather appeal to Islamic fundamentalist or those addressed as terrorists to protect them, thus resulting in several clashes in the North where there is a limited reach of control from the central government.

Following the collapse of the Libyan regime which saw the demise of Muammar Al- Gadhafi, the Turaegs who were ex-fighters in Libya returned and witnessed some of these grievances and tensions. They were not necessarily interested in being terrorists or Islamic fundamentalists but sought for change by addressing their grievances.

The activities of these groups have sparked a new war on terror in the region by major international organizations and players such as the European Union (EU), France and the United States. The involvements of some of these international players have become problematic. These radical groups have viewed these involvements as obstacles in their quest towards having their grievances addressed. For this reason there are recurring radical retaliations causing terror and instability. These recurring retaliations are interpreted by the international community as a continuous rise in terrorism in the region and hence give them more reason to maintain their presence in there to continue to fight these radical groups. In addition, there are conflicting interests on the ground as to whether there is still a war against terrorism or peace to keep in the region. A United Nations (UN) high level review has revealed that peace keeping operations often occur where there is little or no peace to keep (United States Institute of Peace, 2018). This could be said of Mali after almost a decade of foreign military interventions in the country. Others also question whether it is the new scramble for Africa's natural resources. For whatever reason, these foreign players seem to be keen on continually establishing their presence in the

region. The major problem in the region is that the presence of these international players is causing further retaliations from aggrieved groups thus exacerbating the crisis; this study seeks to investigate how true this claim is.

1.3 Research Questions

- What are the antecedents to the contemporary Sahel crisis?
- Who are the main actors and their interest in the Sahel crisis?
- What are the roles and impacts of the European Union (EU), and France and the United States on the Sahel Crisis?

1.4 Objectives of the Study

- To identify the antecedents to the contemporary Sahel crisis
- To identify who are the main actors in the Sahel crisis.
- To examine the roles and interests of the European Union (EU), France and the United States in combating terrorism in the Sahel.

1.5 Scope of the Study

This research first looked at the antecedents to the situation in the Sahel and to an extent, the effects it has had in the region. It examined the roles the European Union (EU), France and the United States (US) are playing in combating terrorism in the Sahel region, with relevant examples in the region. The work centered on accessing the impacts of the roles of these international players in the region, examining whether their efforts are improving the

conditions in the region or further worsening tensions. It also examined what the real interests of these international players are in the region.

1.6 Rationale of the Study

Terrorism in the Sahel has become a major problem of concern. The spread of the operations of armed groups in the region that seek to pursue their interests is resulting in an extreme instability in the region. Although there have been efforts by some international players to ensure stability, the situation seems unchanging.

There are various questions that have arisen concerning the conditions in the Sahel and the presence of particular international players such as the European Union (EU), France and the United States. What this work seeks to add to the public and academia is to address the concern as to whether their presence is actually exacerbating the situation, as well as whether there are any other interests which has accounted for their prolonged presence in the region even when there seems to be no major cause for peace keeping.

1.7 Theoretical Framework

This study is based on the securitization theory which is prominent over the years in the application of security processes. This theory emerged at the end of the Cold War as a result of a debate between what has been known as the wideners and the narrowers (Eroukhmanoff, 2018, p 1). The latter viewed the security of a state as an important priority and centered it on the analysis that came with monitoring the nature of military and political stability that existed between the United States and the Soviet Union (Ibid.)

Securitization was developed from the Copenhagen school of security studies in the 1990s and is associated with Ole Waever and Barry Buzan. It borders around the debate between the belief that security is objective on one hand and subjective on the other hand (Waever, 1989). According to Ole Waever, who is known to be the main proponent of this theory, securitization is seen as a speech act of how states define security, providing a more subjective assessment of a state's security interests, rather than an objective assessment based on traditional elements of national power. In this wise, the Copenhagen school sees security as a speech act where the central issue is not the reality of threats but rather takes into consideration how an issue can be socially viewed as a threat (ibid.). It seeks to explain the politics through which the security characters of public problems are established. It also explains how the social commitments resulting from the collective acceptance that a phenomenon is a threat are fixed and the possibility that a particular policy is created (Šulović, V. 2010).

This speech act especially by world leaders, political elites, or international organizations triggers certain responses because their words are viewed as reality. This cements the point that threats are constructed by language. Therefore, a phenomenon becomes securitized when the audience to whom it is communicated to collectively agree on the nature of the threat, and the need for pragmatic measures to be put in place in order to severe and neutralize these threats. "In this usage, security is not of interest as a sign that refers to something more real; the utterance itself is the act, by saying the word, something is done" (Weaver, 1995). Barry Buzan adds further to this theory by focusing on institutional securitization, in which the actor, who securitizes a given issue (politically, economically or socially) through a speech act, has the ability of desecuritization by communicative action (Ibid.). The theory looks at five areas of

securitization, including; political, economic, societal, military and environmental. Every threat in each of the areas is said to be directed to a particular referent object apart from the state.

Clara Eroukhmanoff buttresses this by an example in her work *'Securitization Theory: An Introduction'* that in the societal sector for instance, the referent object will be identity, whereas in the environmental sector the ecosystem and endangered species could be seen as the referent object (Eroukhmanoff, C. 2018, p2). In the context of referent object she looks at; security for whom? Security from what? And security by whom? She goes on to explain that existential threats are not objective, but instead relate to different characteristics of each referent object. Viewing from the contextual nature of security and threats, suicide bombing for example creates a greater level of anxiety to a group of people than to another (Ibid.). She argues that suicide terrorism should not be spoken of as a global threat, indicating that securitization shows that it is incorrect to talk about terrorism as a phenomenon that affects everyone on the globe equally (Ibid.). The securitization theory strengthens the basis for the social constructivist assumption that security threats do not exist independently from the discourse which marks them as such (Sulovic, 2010).

The securitization theory has been, however, criticized for having ruled out that the meaning of security can vary contextually (Ciută, 2009). The theory is also narrow in a larger sense, through the speech act element. It has been limited to the influential roles in constructing security to only political elites and leaders. (McDonald, 2008) argues that the element of the speech act centers on political elites and excludes a focus on other forms of representations such as images or material practices. With this established, securitization is not only limited to a speech act, it must

be understood as a long process of continuous social negotiations between the speaker and the audience. Any security issue can be presented at different levels, from it being non-politicized; meaning the issue has not reached public debate. It can also be politicized; where the issue has raised public concerns and is on the agenda. Then to the level where it is finally securitized implying that the issue has been framed as an existential threat (Eroukhmanoff, 2018, p 2).

The securitization theory is relevant to this study as terrorism has been widely accepted as a social threat as a result of the continuous speech act by many world leaders and organizations. Terrorism is viewed as a high security issue worldwide and thus the crisis of terrorism in the Sahel has been viewed as a threat to the region, hence the securitization of the region by many regional and international players.

1.8 Literature Review

In the last few years, there has been a rise of interests in Sahel because of the constant cases of terrorism which has resulted in an urgent humanitarian crisis in the region. The situation has also generated a lot of scholarly interests such as the causes and effects of terrorism in the region as well as the possible measures to put in place to control the situation.

Edward Newman in his work, "*Exploring the Root Causes of Terrorism*" focuses on clarifying what is meant by root causes of terrorism and what these root causes are. He states that 'some analysts are reluctant to consider root causes because they refuse to accept that there may be any legitimate causes or grievances behind terrorism' (Newman, E. 2006). He further states "certain conditions provide a social environment and widespread grievances that, when combined with

certain precipitant factors, result in the emergence of terrorist organizations and terrorist act." These grievances may include, poor standard of life, marginalization and inequality in the society. The element of root causes intends to aid in explaining how, where and why terrorism occurs.

He further categorizes some underlying factors such as poverty, demographics and urbanization as Permissive Structural Factors. In addressing poverty as an underlying factor, Newman viewed it from the individual and state level. At the state level, he views poor societies as lacking the necessary capacity to deal with terrorism and views the individual as being in support of violent extremism in a bid to register resentment. Demographically, Newman implies that an aggrieved society is often birthed as a result of factors such as poor living standards, high unemployment rates, a rapid population bulge and urbanization. This can lead to serious hostility when extremist groups manage to recruit and mobilize many of these unemployed.

In considering other underlying factors such as human right abuses, alienation, exclusion and social inequality, dispossession, humiliation and clash of values, Newman categorizes them under direct root causes. Clash of values is one of the predominant causes of terrorism, as Newman indicates it as a major contribution to Islamic fundamentalism. The paper further explains that the immediate triggers of terrorism such as political upheavals are known as precipitant factors which only trigger off the already existing root causes. Finally, Newman explains that inasmuch as various military facilitations can be made to fight terrorism, it will not be enough to bring it to end except the root causes are addressed. This perfectly describes the situation in most Sahel countries.

With the Sahel in view, many scholarly writings tend to address mainly the factors that aid terrorism rather than exploring of the root causes of terrorism. Newman's work however addresses these root causes as relevant in the context of the Sahel. It is however important to note that not only poor countries experience terrorism as implied in Newman's work. Developed countries like the United States and France have been hosts to terrorist attacks. Newman's work helps describe the common situation in the Sahel and can aid in finding the best means to address the complex issues of interests in the region.

The United Nations Economic Commission for Africa in the book '*Conflict in the Sahel and the developmental consequences*' indicates that the region is in crisis. The Sahel has been prone to armed conflict and terrorism as a result of factors like the environmental situations in most of the countries in the region. It states, 'the Sahel has attracted international research and policy attention, on account of its environmental challenges, often linked to factors such as drought, famine and desertification' (United Nations Economic Commission for Africa, 2017). These conditions have resulted in crises such as internal tensions, displacement of population and refugee influx which is due to migration resulting in internal clashes, and subsequently aggravating into political instability. An example is the reigniting of the Tuareg irredentism. The book states that the situation in the region has been largely also traced to sect marginalization like in the case of the Tuaregs in Niger and Mali, the Haratine in Mauritania and the majority of the Muslim community in Nigeria by the historic colonial policy. It has resulted in instigating the rebellion of the Northern Muslim states against the Southern states. These environmental conditions coupled with the rise in terrorism have provided enough reason to be concerned with

the humanitarian crisis situation in the region. It states Mali and Nigeria as the two conflict corridors crucial to the rise in terrorism in the region. The book further outlines the major factors that have caused terrorism specifically in the region. They were categorized into structural causes, and the proximate and conflict-sustaining causes of armed conflict and insecurity in the region. In terms of the structural causes; it indicates factors like environmental stress, historical grievances, fractured state making processes, and youth bulge. These factors were considered to have cut across most of the Sahelian countries. In terms of environmental stress, the problems of desertification, droughts and variations in rainfall, food insecurity and the likes have resulted in internal tensions, such as clashes between pastoral farmers leading to inter-communal wars. Historical grievances such as the marginalization of the Tuaregs have been a major problem in Niger and Mali. The same can be said of the exclusion of Northern Muslims in Nigeria.

In agreement to Newman, the book further explains that the inability of the state to respond to these grievances has escalated into the rise and spread of terrorism, criminality and Jihadism in the region. With regards to the fractured state making processes, some communities are alienated from the state's reach in terms of developmental exclusions as well as control. This has resulted in what is referred to as ungovernable spaces where armed groups exploit as breeding grounds. This is in agreement to Israel Nyaburi Nyadera, and M. Hamani Massaoud in the book, *'Elusive Peace and The Impact of Ungoverned Space in the Sahel Conflict'* which explains that 'Border porousness in the region is ideal for the strategy of these groups as it has simplified their access to ungoverned regions where they have promptly occupied the political vacuums by exploiting the deep resentment of the communities residing in the Sahelian regions toward their respective central governments'(Nyadera, N 2019).

The book describes factors such as migration, food insecurity, politicized military, the rise of jihadi and criminal networks, regional linkages, regional and cross border conflicts as the proximate causes and conflict-sustaining causes of armed conflict and insecurity in the Sahel. In addressing the issue of politicized military, it explains that Mali's dealings with armed conflicts and terrorism was triggered by a military coup. The same can be said of Burkina Faso and Niger which has seen four successful military coups, four political transitions, seven republics and seven constitutions. It states 'the exclusionary policies and political repression associated with politicized security establishments is an important trigger for instability and other insecurities in the Sahel.' The rise of Jihadi and criminal networks has been very prominent in Mali and Nigeria and has a massive impact in Niger. These criminal and jihadi groups have settled much in these two conflict corridors especially in the northern regions where there is little or no control by the central government. The spillover effects on other neighboring countries in the region are clearly obvious. The book further explains that these groups such as Al-Qaeda in Islamic Maghreb (AQIM), the Movement for Oneness and Jihad in West Africa (MOJWA/MUJAO) and Boko Haram are sustaining factors of insecurity in the region as a result of collaborations and carrying out cross border operations.

The book also explains some of the impacts of terrorism in the Sahel which has caused it to become a region in serious humanitarian crisis. These include economic impacts such as the disruption of agriculture and cross border trade, displacements resulting in refugees, worsening poverty and socioeconomic vulnerability. Other impacts of terrorism in the region is the impact

on governance which include; the displaced public administration and disrupted democratic governance, stifling of civil liberties and human rights, and complex humanitarian emergencies.

In his article, *'Terrorism in the Sahel Region: An Evolving Threat on Europe's Doorstep'* Giuseppe Dentice argues that the conditions in the Sahel poses a threat to Europe. He states that 'The Sahel is a land of multiple crises in which numerous drivers have created the conditions for the growth of new threats in the region as a whole and its Euro-Mediterranean neighbourhood' (Dentice, G. 2018, p. 1). He further mentions that as a result, the EU is facing significant challenges from the Sahel, with many of these challenges linked to a triangular nexus between the security dimension, the flow of migrants and violent extremist threats. The paper further addresses the causes of militancy in the Sahel, owing to the Arab geopolitical consequences of the uprisings in the Greater Maghreb and Mali, which encouraged connections between political and security dynamics in North Africa and the Sahel, and laid foundations for a convergence of local and global grievances and the rise of transnational non-state actors.

Just as Israel Nyaburi Nyadera, and M. Hamani Massaoud, Dentice indicates that transnational armed groups exploited the permeability of the region's borders and filled the political vacuums existing in many areas in the Sahel, taking advantage of deep resentment of local ethnicities like the Tuaregs, Moors, Puels, Songhai and Fulani communities in Mali, Niger, and Burkina Faso towards central authorities. Indications from this work are that from the European perspective, the persistent weakness of North African governments opened a high-way for security threats from the Sahel region to easily reach European borders. This argument is debunked in the book, *'Militancy and Violence in West Africa: Religion, Politics and Radicalism'*, edited by James

Gow, Funmi Olonisakin and Ernst Dijkhoorn which dispute this sort of view that terrorism in Africa will turn their activities to western targets; in this case Europe. It cites the focus of Boko Haram operations as an example, that it focused primarily on domestic targets (Gow, J . 2013). Dentice overemphasizes the fact that the crisis in the Sahel is a threat to Europe but fails to give relevant proofs of such claims, and justifies the involvement of the European Union and its member states in the handling the crisis without analyzing the possibility of any hidden interests. Thus, the article appears to be limited hence requires further study to ascertain, which this study attempts to achieve. Though he focuses mostly on the increase in the crisis in the region, his paper provides good information in understanding the roots of instability in the Sahel as well as the new trajectories like jihadism in the region.

Brice Didier also introduces another important view to the situation in the Sahel. In his article '*The regionalisation of counter terrorism strategies in the Sahel: the G5 as a challenge for transatlantic relations*' states that the issue of terrorism in the Sahel is a geographically diffused problem. It states, 'Africa's continental crossroad, the Sahel was a propitious ground for a security crisis under the pressure of jihadi groups and unbridled weapon flows originating from North Africa' (Didier, B. 2018, p. 2). Didier argues that Libya has played a role as a strategic hub for terrorist groups which operate in the Sahel since the collapse of the Gaddafi led regime. The rise of terrorism and the subsequent collapse of already weak states of neighboring countries in the Sahel was an evident result. For the period of time Libya was without state control, Didier points out that small arms and weapons were circulated to most of the fragile Border States in the Sahel giving terrorist groups easy access to these weapons.

Brice Didier further states that the influence of terrorist groups originating from bordering North African states played a significant part in triggering the rise of terrorist groups in the Sahel. Al-Qaeda in Islamic Maghreb (AQIM) for instance was created in Algeria in 2003, as the Salafist Group for Preaching and Combat. Their failure to firmly establish themselves in Algeria left them with the option of imposing themselves in Northern Mali because of the weak control of the Malian government over the territory and Tuareg populations' separatist aspirations.

1.9 Sources of data

This research will be mainly relied on secondary sources of data. The secondary sources of data collection will border around the analysis and review of books, journals, papers and unpublished works. The study also reviewed major communiqués of the European Union (EU) and G5 Sahel meetings on the state of the situation in the Sahel respectively.

1.10 Research Methodology

This research adopted the qualitative study. Qualitative analysis gathers and analysis information on people's attitudes, feelings and behaviors. It focuses on character, meanings and concepts in greater depths of study. This form of study will be important because it can be used to explore social interactions, systems and processes as well as analyzing the way individuals or organizations act. This study is vital to the research as it examines the roles of the European Union (EU), France and the United States in combating terrorism in Sahel. It also examined the issues of interest regarding their presence in the Sahel which cannot be quantified. The study also used a deductive approach because information generated was used to draw a conclusion that addresses the issues of concern. Sample size is not clearly stated however the study was

conducted in view of the African population. The study also examined contemporary phenomenon in the context of occurrences in some sahelian countries.

1.10 Arrangement of Chapters

The study is arranged in four chapters;

Chapter one constitutes the Introduction, Problem statement, Study objectives, Literature review, Theoretical framework, Sources of data and Research Methodology.

Chapter Two is; the overview of the crisis in the Sahel.

Chapter Three discusses; A Critical Examination of the roles of EU, France and the United States in combating Terrorism in the Sahel.

Chapter Four provides: Summary of findings, conclusions and recommendations

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CHAPTER TWO

OVERVIEW OF THE CRISIS IN THE SAHEL REGION

2.0 Introduction

This chapter focuses on understanding the conditions of the crisis in the Sahel region. It begins with taking a look at the Sahel from a security complex position. It points out some of the root causes of the crisis in the region as well as the conditions of some of the countries in the region to give a clearer picture of the real issues on ground.

2.1 The Sahel as a Security Complex Region

The Sahel is an expanse of land that stretches from Senegal in the west to Sudan to the east. The area consists of the areas of southern Mauritania, Senegal, Mali, Burkina Faso, southern Algeria, Niger, northern Nigeria, Chad, and Sudan. It has over the years been viewed as a region with complex issues of great concern to human security, and for this reason, it has gained international attention for more than two decades. These issues of security range from droughts, famine, and desertification to the spread of small arms/ light weapons and terrorist activities. Areas around Northern Mali and Northeast Nigeria (Lake Chad Basin) play host to armed conflicts and terrorism and are the crucial corridors in determining the conditions in the region. The conditions of armed conflicts and terrorism in the corridor of northern Mali have spread to areas such as Mauritania, Burkina Faso and Niger. The same can be said of areas extending from north-east Nigeria into Niger, namely; Chad and Cameroon, which have been subject to the terrorist activities of Boko Haram. The region is connected based on the need for peace and security.

A security complex refers to “a set of States whose major security perceptions and concerns are so interlinked that their national security problems cannot be reasonably analyzed or resolved apart from one another”(Buzan et al., 1998). The Sahel best describes a regional security complex because the states collectively interdepend and respond to common threats and vulnerabilities. The region possesses a distinctive feature of state interdependence resulting in military responses to security concerns, as well as group and individual cooperation below the level of the state on human security concerns. External states and their concerns in the Sahel especially in the combat against terrorism and armed conflict have also facilitated an emphasis of viewing the region as a security complex (United Economic Commission for Africa, 2017).

2.2 Crisis in the Sahel

The Sahel is a region with a host of complex crises. Over the years, food security has been an issue of concern in the region with millions going hungry. About eighteen million people were at a high risk of malnutrition in 2012 and about ten million in 2013. Even after six years, the situation has not changed with the number of people who are food insecure; around 10million were still food insecure in 2019 (Food and Agriculture Organization, 2019). The situation is a result of severe droughts and famine in the region. Records have it that there had been about a twenty year period of drought between 1970 and 1993 (Essoungou, 2013). The region has been subject to hostile environmental conditions, for instance 80% of the land in the region is degraded. Other conditions such as climate change and irregular rainfall patterns have contributed more to food insecurity. This is because most of the food production depends on agricultural means. Food insecurity and malnutrition prevails especially in the conflict prone

areas because of limited access to food (Food and Agriculture Organization, 2019). One out of seven people are food insecure and one out of five children is malnourished in the region.

The situation in the region is further worsened by the overexploitation of land by overgrazing pastoralists contributing to land degradation; also, inadequate agricultural equipment to enhance productivity has led to the destruction of the natural resources and a rise in poverty conditions. According to the United Nations Environment Program, “over the last half century, the combined effects of population growth, land degradation, reduced and erratic rainfall, lack of coherent environmental policies and misplaced development priorities, have contributed to transform large portions of the Sahel to barren land, resulting in the deterioration of the soil and water resources” (United Nations Africa Renewal, 2013). These conditions have led to poor economic growth in the region especially in the agricultural sector which employs much of the region’s human resource.

Another prevalent issue in the region in addition to food and agricultural setbacks that has worsened conditions is rapid population growth. According to the initiative towards Organizing to Advance Solutions in the Sahel (OASIS) “Africa’s share of the global population is projected to rise from 17% (1.0billion) over the last decade to 24% (22.2billion in 2050), and to 35% (3.6 billion) in 2100, and much of this growth will be driven by the Sahel” (Potts, M. et al 2013). The rise in population growth in the region owes to lack of family planning methods and teenage pregnancies. Increased population growth in the region hinders economic growth and development. The conditions of food shortage, agricultural inefficiencies, resource (land) deterioration, climate change and a rise in the population raises questions pertaining to the future of the Sahel.

In addition to these harsh environmental conditions, the region has been prone to political instability which has led to gross insecurity, armed conflicts and terrorism, causing most of the weak states to eventually become failed states. This has been the major problem of security in the region. After the Mali coup in 2012, terrorist groups from the north Islamic Maghreb under al-Din and al-Qaeda began invading the country in a bid to control all of it; Niger also experienced four coups and two armed rebellion groups. Armed rebellion groups and terrorists in Sudan caused security issues as well for Chad.

Going forward in this study, it is important to note that most of the activities of these terrorists have been as a result of several factors such as inter -group grievances. The terrorist activities of Boko Haram in Nigeria for instance had been as a result of the perception of the exclusion of the Northern Muslims by colonial policy. Tuareg rebellion in Mali and Niger had also been as a result of their marginalization. All these owe to ethnicity politics and a lack of collective national identity (United Nations Economic Commission for Africa, 2017).

Furthermore, the issue of rapid population growth has also contributed to terrorism and extremism. The inability of the fragile governments in the region to provide jobs and education for the increasing youth population has made many of them vulnerable to influences and lured into armed conflicts and terrorism. These entire crises in the region have had a huge toll on the economic and governmental frontiers of most of the states in the region. Terrorism has had a huge impact in terms of the macroeconomic strengths in the region. Huge chunks of finances are allocated to compensate victims in case of attacks; also, economic and trading activities are at a low rate as those involved seek their security first.

On the international front, foreign investors are discouraged from hugely investing in the region as they are uncertain of future security. The conditions have triggered poverty and socioeconomic vulnerability as there remains large influx of refugees between the countries in the region. Most of the refugees become an extra burden to the countries that host them, and a loss of human resources to their home countries. Political and government instability has further worsened as a result of the rate of terrorism in the region. The prevalent rates of armed conflicts and terrorism have constantly disrupted democratic governance and weakened government institutions. Insurgent groups have largely displaced government officials and institutions.

2.2.1 Factors of terrorism in the Sahel

The Sahel region is in crisis, but one needs to understand what factors promote terrorism and jihadist operations in the region. It will be imperative to understand that most of these Islamic fundamentalists do not have it in mind to become terrorists. One of the main factors includes historical colonial inheritances. Before colonialism in Mali the Tuareg population had much control in the Northern region in the ancient city of Timbuktu.

During colonialism, the Tuaregs were marginalized by the French, as a result of their opposition to colonial rule. In 1917, they went to war with the French and lost, in effect losing most of their lands, and taken into forced labor (Thurston, 2013, p. 18). Just before independence; the French demarcation of West Africa resulted in the Tuareg population being dispersed into multiple states. Also, most of the Southerners had undergone the French western education while the

Northern Tuaregs went through Arabic schooling. As a result, the French gave more opportunities to the Southerners in terms of jobs and social statuses.

These treatments on the Tuaregs did not change at independence but continued to be meted out by the newly born Malian State. The result of this has been prolonged grievances because of their marginalization from power and economic development programs which eventually sparked rebellions against the state in 1963-1964, that of 1990-1996 and 2006-2009 (Thurston & Lebovich, 2013, p. 22-24). Subsequently the Tuaregs gave in to Islamic fundamentalist groups like the Wahhabis and Salafists in the north who took advantage of the situation and presented themselves as saviors for protection against the state (Dentice, 2018, p. 2).

The poverty situations in the region also led to religious affiliations with the belief that doing the will of God will ultimately lead to His blessings; this is one of the primary beliefs amongst most West Africans. Islamic NGOs settled in the region as a result of the increased poverty levels in order to provide help to fulfill the zakat (giving of alms). However, the basis for such help is for the people to be faithful to the Islamic faith in return. (International Crisis Group, 2005, p.10).

Most of these NGOs are being financed from the middle-east by the gulf Arab states and run by Wahhabis and Salafist movements. Subsequently, the Muslim clergymen, and leaders of these NGOs began to impose sharia law to give an impression to the sponsors in the Middle East that the Islamic religion was spreading in the region. This was also promoted a strong sense of unity among the community of Muslims globally (Ibid.).

The quest to establish the sharia law and wipe away Christianity especially in the south like in the case of Boko-Haram has led to radicalism which is classified as terrorism but in their view, it is a sign of dedication to their faith. Some of these NGOs have been investigated by western intelligence since the global war on terror took effect after the 11th September, 2001 attacks in the United States, and were found to be instigating terrorist activities; for example, Benevolence International Foundation was discovered to have had in its possession documents proving their affiliation as donors to al Qaeda (International Crisis Group, 2005, p. 11).

Another factor that has aided in terrorism in the Sahel region is the effects of ungoverned spaces and has given rise to regional insecurity. Ungoverned spaces refer a physical territory and non-physical policy space where there is no effective state sovereignty (Piombo 2007; Hazen 2010). The United States department has viewed these ungoverned spaces as the security lexicon of policy makers and researchers. These territories are linked to terrorism or have become terrorist safe havens and a home to multiple security threats (State Department 2012:180). This situation in the region reflects the conditions of state failure, and this has categorized the Sahel region as a breeding ground of terror; “it is no longer just the strong, aggressive and authoritarian states that provoke concern, but the opposites: those which allow their territories to appear chaotic cut off, ungoverned or ungovernable” (Mitchell, 2010).

The view of state sovereignty is that there should be legitimate and easy movement of people goods and services, as well as providing security, welfare and development to citizens in every area on their territory. However in the Sahel, certain areas are excluded from the reach of the state, as a result anarchy and violence have become the order of the day. These areas have been

taken over by violent non-state actors who eventually settle there, raise funds through crimes as well as building rebel forces by recruiting people to attack major cities and capture more space (Nyadera et al, 2019). Most governments in the Sahel have struggled to superimpose themselves through the use of force. As a result many of these violent non-state actors have emerged as alternatives to the state (Cluman and Trinkumans 2010; 15-9). These spaces eventually become the breeding ground for indoctrination and the rise of religious extremism (Traub, J. 2011).

The political geography plays an important role in determining the degree to which the state has control over its territories (Herbst, 2000). Large territorial areas may be difficult in policing even though there are such cases of similar violence in smaller states (Naydera et al, 2019). Again, these territories have given the liberty to armed groups to roam around and abroad in the execution of their operations. Multiple and overlapping authorities in the region has also created an ideal environment for the growth and development of these armed groups.

The socio-economic conditions in the region have somehow triggered terrorism as well. Long period of droughts, climate changes and food security have been a major headache. Poverty levels are high as a result of the crisis as well as the low level of literacy and thus gross unemployment. This has especially affected the youth, and has even led to the easy mobilization and recruitment of the youth into radical and terrorist groups in pursuing their cause in demanding their deprived interests. This has led to a generational handing down of violent pursuits of their interests; thereby resulting in a prolonged period of terrorism as we have in the region today. For example, in Northern Mali, conditions such as underdevelopment, poverty and social exclusion triggered fundamentalist ideas (Lohmann, 2011).

Political instability has been one of the major banes in the Sahel and can directly and indirectly lead to terrorism. The situation of instability creates the environment for terrorist groups who take advantage of the chaos. The Mali coup in 2012 is a perfect example; Tuareg rebels took advantage of the Coup and seized the cities of Timbuktu, Kidal and Gao. This situation in Mali coupled with the porous nature at the northern borders, created the opportunity for other terrorist groups such as AQIM, Ansa Al Dine and MUJAO to gain access and establish themselves in northern Mali (Bamba, R. 2014).

Another common factor that can be traced as an aid to terrorism in the region is the pursuit of strong beliefs and ideologies by these radical groups and fundamentalists. It is worth noting that they stand strongly by these beliefs treating them as a matter of life and death. Several groups like Boko Haram, Ansar Al Dine AQIM are strongly associated with the Islamic belief for the establishment of Islamic Sharia states, and have radically sought to pursue this agenda. The National Movement for the Liberation of Azawad (MNLA) which is a separatist group based in Mali, has also been driven by nationalistic beliefs and ideologies. They have been in constant radicalism towards the pursuit of an independent Azawad state in Mali.

2.2.2 Terrorist Groups Operating in the Sahel/Lake Chad Basin Regions

Most of the religious and ethnic groups in the region who are tagged as terrorist as mentioned are more focused on registering their prolonged grievances and eventually resort to violent means when they feel they their grievances are not being addressed. Some of the terrorist groups carry

out their operations in the region as well as the spread to the Lake Chad basin area. The Lake Chad basin consists of the areas such as Cameroon, Chad, Niger and Nigeria.

Boko Haram began their operations as a peaceful Islamic political movement driven towards the establishment of an Islamic sharia state in Nigeria in 2002 by basically overthrowing the Nigerian government. The introduction of Sharia law in some parts of the country has been the main excuse for Boko Haram's insistence that the same system should be adopted throughout the country (United Nations Economic Commission for Africa, 2017, p. 35). Most of their concerns have been to address the marginalization of the Northern states of Nigeria who are usually prone to poverty. Their activities have gone beyond the borders of Nigeria by working hand in hand with other terrorist groups in the Sahel to push their religious agenda. The dynamics have drastically changed and it has evolved into a violent and radicalized movement raising militant jihadi soldiers. In 2009, they launched attacks on the Nigerian police and government facilities. Subsequent clashes occurred with the military and the police resulting in the deaths of many people in Maiduguri, the capital of the northeastern state of Borno (The Guardian, 2012). The operations of Boko Haram continued to intensify from 2013 to 2015, following numerous atrocious acts such as burning of churches, abduction of about 276 school girls from Chibok, bomb attacks which resulted in the displacement of many people numbering up to 23 million with over 200 churches damaged (United Nations Economic Commission for Africa, 2017 p .74).

In Kaduna for instance 988 people had been killed since 2011 to 2017 and 71 villages (with Christian majority) had been destroyed along about 2,712 homes and 20 churches. The

operations and influence of Boko Haram spread to the Lake Chad Basin area thus caused a response by the governments of Chad, Cameroon, Niger, Nigeria and Benin to launch a multilateral military effort under the auspices of the African Union against Boko Haram to combat their activities (International Crisis Group, 2020). Though the Nigerian government claims to have defeated Boko Haram, they still execute their ploys, for instance they are thought to have about 1,500 fighters currently in the region.

Another group operating in these regions is the Islamic State West Africa (ISWA) which is a faction that broke away from Boko Haram. Their activities have been carried out from ungoverned spaces in Nigeria where they even tax residents and have spread their reach to Niger. In December 2017 they attacked United States and Nigerian forces which resulted in the death of 100 soldiers; subsequently they killed 80 Nigerian soldiers and abducted school girls in February 2018 (BBC, 2018).

On 9th June 2020 the group called for a religious gathering in the village of Foduma Koloram where they claimed to be preaching at. The group asked the villagers to surrender their weapons and eventually began shooting at those who tried to escape. This is said to be its deadliest attack after killing 81 people in six hours. Four days later, on 13th June they carried out two attacks in Goni Usmanti where thirty eight people were killed and in Monguno with rocket launchers (Council on Foreign Relations, 2020). As at late 2019, Islamic State West Africa (ISWA) had fighters numbering up to 3,500.

Jama'at Nusrat al-Islam wal Muslimeen (JNIM) is another Islamic radical movement in the region founded in Mali in 2017. It is an established branch of al-Qaeda and a combination of two other terrorist movements namely; Ansar Dine, Macina, Liberation Front, Al-Mourabitoun and al-Qaeda in the Islamic Magheb (AQIM). Though these sub groups have operated separately, the coalition occurred in order to fight against western influence. This major group has carried out attacks in Mali in 2017 and Burkina Faso in 2018 (US department of State, 2019). They subsequently launched out attacks on Mali and French military soldiers as well as an attack on a United Nations (UN) camp in Bamako that killed ten peace keepers from Chad in 2017 and 2019 respectively (Council on foreign relations, 2020). It currently has 2,000 fighters in the region. The last to look at is the ISIS in the Greater Sahara (ISIS-GS) with strong connection with ISIS and also operates in Mali. The group has carried out attacks in Burkina Faso and Niger killing four United States soldiers at Tongo Tongo in Tillabery.

2.3 Overview of Terrorism in the Sahel States

In looking at the rise of terrorism in the Sahel, it is important we take a look at the real happenings in some countries in the region. In these examples, we look at some of the antecedents of terrorism in individual countries as well as the activities of terrorist groups and Islamic fundamentalists who operate in the various states. These details are essential in enhancing an understanding of the region as a whole.

2.3.1 Mali

Mali is located in heart of the region, it shares borders with Mauritania at the north-west, Burkina Faso in the south, Niger at the east, and Senegal at the south-west. It is made up of a population of about 18million consisting of the Mande (Bambara, Malinke, Soninke) Peul ,Voltaic, Songhai, Fula, Senufo, Tuareg and Moor groups. Mali is rich in agriculture which consists of almost 90% of its labor force. The country also has vast riches in mineral resources with large deposits of bauxite, iron ore, base metals, phosphate deposits, gold, salt and uranium; yet with poor living standards and ranked as one of the poorest and most vulnerable countries in the world with declining levels of its GDP per capita (United Nations, Economic Commission for Africa, 2017, p. 24).

Mali has had to deal with armed conflict and terrorism which is a result of irredentism and a rise in jihadi activities. Political instability has been the bane of this country with coups interrupting democratic governance. The year 2012 was a destiny defining moment for the nation; the insurgency which involved clashes with the national army by the National Movement for the Liberation of Azawad (MNLA); a Tuareg rebel movement, and the coup that overthrew President, Amadou Toumani Toure destabilized peace and democracy in the nation. Further tensions in the country resulted in an attempted armed invasion by jihadi and irredentists groups, as a result of the political vacuum created after the coup. The Jihadi activities coupled with the creation of criminal networks resulted in multinational peace keeping efforts like operation Serval by France. Mali has since played host to the most insurgencies, irredentism, drug trafficking, kidnappings and terrorism in the Sahel region, making it the security crisis hotspot in the region.

The Tuareg rebel groups gained an upper hand immediately after the coup and broke the peace accords which ended the 1990 and 2006 insurgencies and declared the independence of the Azawad which was a long term goal after independence in 1960. The Afella rebellion of 1962 was driven towards the imposition Sharia law and the demand for independence of semi-nomadic Tuaregs and the Northerners from the Malian state (Keita, K. 1998).

During this rebellion, the Tuaregs were suppressed by the military, and the state still failed to address their grievances. This led to subsequent rebellions that were ended through the peace accords in 1995 which stated an all inclusion of the Northern region to main stream Mali in order to address the grievances of mostly the Tuaregs. After a few years the government failed to fulfill these agreements and have instigated Tuareg radicalization. The Tuareg rebellions had been deeply rooted in the method of state construction that gave dominance to the south after decolonization. This has resulted in prolonged marginalization of the north in economic and political fronts. The northern regions of Mali formed a greater part of the country's economic history before colonization; however, as stated earlier, the new developments saw the dominance of the south as they were marginalized from power and economic development programs.

Subsequently, poor governance and a huge slack in constitutional advancements led to a limited response to the situation which was brewing since 2012 and eventually led to the establishment of a stronger foundation for the Islamic fighters in the terms of control, recruitment. A broken state-making structure has resulted in the failure of the Malian government in creating a common Malian identity. For example, during the creation of six regions; there whole northern part was

considered as one region, which is larger than the rest of the five other regions (United Nations Economic Commission for Africa, 2017, p. 25). This results in a limited reach from the central government even in terms of development and control because of the centralized system of government and a socialist orientation.

Islamic fundamentalist and radical groups have infiltrated the Northern region and have taken advantage of the weak government control; for instance, Wahabbist and Salafist groups radicalized Islam and implemented strict sharia law in the north. Several young people in the North have been recruited into armed terrorist groups as a result of the ever growing youth population. Environmental conditions such as droughts and famine have pushed some of these young ones to migrate the north to the south and eventually spread criminal networks and jihadi activities in other regions. The Northern region is being largely controlled by Jihadi groups such as Ansar Deen, MUJWA, the Unified Council for Azawad, the Arab Azawad Movement and the Popular Movement for the Salvation of Azawad.

The crisis resulted in several macroeconomic effects in the country. The GDP growth rate fell and inflation rose to about 5.3 per cent in 2012 as compared to 3.1 per cent in 2011. Food shortages also resulted from the economic situation (Vlavourou, 2014). The democratic administration was disrupted for a long period of time resulting in the violation of human rights on a large scale. This situation resulted in the displacement of most of the citizens as they have become refugees in other countries. The crisis in Mali not only had an effect on the country alone but on the entire region of the Sahel.

2.3.2 Nigeria

Nigeria is arguably one of the most crucial countries under this study of the crisis in the Sahel. The country has the most buoyant economy in West Africa and one of the best in Africa, owing to the great wealth of oil which serves as the highest national revenue. It has the highest population on the continent of an estimated 200 million people consisting of the Muslim Hausa Fulani in the north and Christian Yoruba and Igbo in the south. It shares borders with Cameroun, Chad and Niger and is located partly in the Sahel at its north-eastern border. It consists of thirty six (36) federating states under the federal system of government and divided into six (6) geo-political regions; North-Central, North-West, North-East, South-South, South-East and South-West.

Nigeria is important to this study because the rise of Boko Haram resulted in spillover effects in the Sahel as a result of its crucial location as one of the corridors in the region. North- East region of Nigeria is the area of emphasis because it is the hotspot for the Sahel- related conflict. For example Boko- Haram operations have surfaced in parts of the region like Yobe, Adamawa and Borno since 2002 (United Nations Economic Commission for Africa, 2017, p. 33). The rise of terrorist activities can be traced to the colonial factors as with Mali.

In 1914, there was a division of the Southern and Northern protectorates with power configuration concentrated in the south. The Muslim population has long claimed that colonial rule favored Christianity and the South and has since sought to change the dynamics. Early Islamic radicalization emerged like the Maitatsine insurgencies in the 1970s to register these grievances and became antecedent references for future radicalization like that of Boko Haram in

recent times (ibid). Also, the formal introduction of Sharia law in some Northern states in 1999 sparked the determination by Boko-Haram to insist its introduction in other parts of the country.

The view that the South and Christianity were given preeminence instigated the move by the Muslims in North to expand in an attempt to take over the country, by introducing Sharia law and wiping out Christianity. The insurgency of Boko Haram has been tied to largely religious and ethnic tensions which had been also influenced by the global rise in Islamists revolution rallied in Iran, but has also been rooted in the demand for social inclusion, political representation, socioeconomic fairness and control of natural resources.

The effect of the Boko Haram crisis despite the obvious economic repercussions has been devastating for the country; their activities have led to further marginalization of North-Eastern regions by the government thus resulting in underdevelopment and the socioeconomic vulnerability of the region. Further displacements have resulted both internally and externally as potential victims seek their own security. Large scale attacks on government and public facilities such as police stations, training academies and schools have hindered government administration and displacement of public officials to an extent, especially in places like; Dikwa, Gworza, Damboa, Gonjiri (Ibid.) .

2.3.3 *Mauritania*

Located at the North and West Africa, the country shares borders with Algeria and Western Sahara in the North, Mali in the east and south-east and Senegal in the south-west with a

population of about 4.4million (38). As with most African countries, it is endowed with many natural resources including gold, copper, fish and an immense agricultural potential.

Mauritania has played host to most of the spill overs of terrorist crisis in neighboring countries. It shares borders with Mali, and has also played host to armed and terrorist groups who carry some of their activities on Mauritanian territories and hence victimize some of the citizens. The failure of the government to ensure a common national identity has resulted in tensions between the Arabs and black Africans in the country.

Mauritania is also affected by the historic tensions that exist between Morocco and Algeria over the Western Sahara of which the government lacks the administrative muscles in coping with these tensions. The Algerian civil war resulted in terrorist movements (Salafist group/ AQIM) which also had spill overs in Mauritania (Ibrahim, I. Y. 2014). The country has played host to refugees from neighboring countries in the Sahel as a result of insecurity; this has resulted in pressure on the government as it has to deal with extra populations and increasing economic burdens.

2.3.4 Niger

Niger is located between Mali and North- East Nigeria and has a population of 24.5million in 2020. The major economic ventures are subsistence agriculture, animal husbandry and the recent production of crude oil. Climate change in the Sahel has been a major cause for a less thriving agricultural sector and as a result, food security has been a problem following the regional food shortages.

Niger has been in the midst of the two major terrorist corridors in the Sahel; Mali and North-Eastern Nigeria. With that, this country has played host to insecurity, conflict and terrorist spillovers from these neighboring countries. The government has had to deal with the regional security challenges from the spillovers from other countries, such as the operations of Boko Haram, the insurgencies in Mali, the crisis in southern Libya and the Central African Republic (United Nations Economic Commission for Africa, 2017, p. 36). Along with her own internal problems, Niger has had to deal with huge refugee influx into her territory because of escalated tensions in neighboring countries. By implementing strict border closures to limit the increasing influx of these refugees, cross border trade between these same neighboring countries have been affected.

Just as Mali and Nigeria, tensions in Niger that have resulted in armed terrorist rebellions have been centered on historical grievances of marginalization. The Tuareg population was marginalized by France during the colonial period. As mentioned, the French were antithetical to the nomadic way of life of the Tuareg. According to the United Nations Commission for Africa 2017 (Ibid, p. 38), ‘The colonial and post-colonial State structures resulted in the Tuareg loss of control of trans-Saharan trade routes as well as by the relocation of State power to the south to Zinder and subsequently Niamey’. The Tuaregs concluded that their interest was not considered by the government and these claims of marginalization led to radicalization, leading to armed attacks and clashes with military. For example, the May 1990 Tchintabaraden massacre of Tuareg communities by the Nigerien army which left many dead and a lot more displaced (Ibid, p. 38)

2.3.5 *Burkina Faso*

Burkina Faso is located right along the Sahelian belt and shares borders with Mali to the North-West, Niger to the North-East in the Sahel and in the south and eastern regions with Ivory Coast, Ghana, Benin and Togo. Just as with fellow counter parts in the region, the country has experienced political instability and coups resulting in weak governance systems. It is also confronted with mass internal insecurity and conflicts caused by the unleashing of grievances of unfair resource allocation, and a weak and unstable government system.

With the conditions in the nation worsening daily, many share the same sentiments that soon enough this nation will become the hotspot for the security crisis in the Sahel. Despite having to deal with its own internal crisis, the government has also had to deal with the huge influx of refugees into the country as a result of the tensions in other countries in the Sahel. In the 2012 crisis, about 125,000 refugees from Mali sought safety in Burkina Faso, which resulted in burden on the government as they were experiencing droughts (Oxfam Briefing, 2013).

Jihadist crisis started in Burkina Faso back in 2015 and since then have recorded close to 1,100 fatalities with about 620 attacks. Hundreds more have been killed by government forces, community based militias and local defense groups (Raleigh, 2020). Further reports claim that the Burkinabe state does not operate in some parts of the country and have lost most of these areas to Jihadist groups composed of local militants; Ansaroul Islam, AlQaeda in the Islamic Maghreb and Islamic State in the greater Sahara (Quartz Africa, 2019). The security minister of Burkina Faso Ousseni said ‘We are facing an asymmetrical war and our army was not prepared for that’ (Quartz Africa, 2019).

Most of the crisis began after the removal of Blaise Compaore from office in 2015. The new government not only saw out the Blaise Compaore regime but also put a halt some unpopular policies that existed before, such as “negotiating with terrorist groups and allowing northern Malian separatists with ties to terrorists free access to Burkina Faso in exchange for no attacks on Burkinabe soil” (Ibid). With this act, the agreement was broken and a weak security system which had not gained grounds resulted in fresh attacks from the terrorists thus victimizing the civilians of Burkina Faso.

2.4 Regional Impact of the Sahel Crisis

The crisis in the Sahel has continued to have growing impacts in the region; these impacts have largely been economic in nature ranging from the local to national levels. The crisis in Mali in 2012 resulted in a fall in government resources and expenditure by about 30 percent and resulted in a recession the following year. The agricultural sector of Nigeria was affected following the prevalence of armed conflicts and terrorism in the North. The GDP contribution of this sector declined from 23.96 per cent to 21.97 per cent in the period between 2010 and 2013 (United Nations Economic Commission for Africa, 2017, p. 41).

Furthermore, border trades between the countries in the region have been limited, causing further economic down turns. Most of the agricultural farmlands which contribute to their gross domestic product have been destroyed by bomb attacks, farmers have been displaced, clashes between refugees (largely cattle herders) and indigenous farmers have occurred with farm produce destroyed on a large scale. These conditions have resulted in panic and drastically reduced agricultural produce and further trade between them.

For instance, in Niger, the insecurities at the border with Nigeria and Mali have disrupted cross-border trade in goods and services which have resulted in food shortages. Border closures and have further disrupted trading activities in Diffa and Tillaberi, and limited the movement of goods in Nigeria and Mali, respectively (United Nations Economic Commission for Africa, 2017, p.43).

The limitation of the inflow of goods, also affects livelihoods, through the limited export of animals and farm produce, and disrupts seasonal migration of labor and remittances (Ibid). These conditions lead to poverty and socio-economic vulnerabilities in the region. High unemployment and loss of livelihood have been the direct result of the conditions in the region. For example, the conflict-affected areas of Koulikoro, Kayes, Sikasso, Mopti, Gao, Kidal and Timbuktu according to the United Nations Economic Commission, have the highest unemployment rates in Mali due to low demand and insecurity due to the closure of most businesses.

Another impact of the crisis in the Sahel is the displacement of people who migrate from the insecurities that exist in their countries. The result is a decline in the human resource strength of most of the countries in the Sahel. On the other hand, the host countries especially in the region are confronted with extra burdens with the influx of refugees. Pressure is exerted on social amenities and natural resources such as land. Continuous clashes between these refugees and local indwellers have been on the rise thus disrupting the peace of the host countries; for example, the clashes that existed in Burkina Faso between Tuareg Mali pastoralists and Burkina Faso farmers resulted in loss of lives and injuries in 2012 (Ibid, p. 45)

According to United Nations Refugee Agency the Lake Chad Basin region for instance is confronted with a complex humanitarian crisis as a result of the operations of Boko Haram. Further records have shown that through these attacks there has been a displacement of over 3.3million people with about 2.5million persons displaced internally in north-eastern Nigeria (UNHCR, 2019). Again, over 550,000 people have also been displaced in Cameroon, Chad and Niger. The challenges of protecting the displaced is evident because the poor security situation as well as socioeconomic fragility.

Other regional impacts are the displacement of central government and its public administration machinery. Terrorism and armed conflict in the region has resulted in the mass disruption of democratic governance and processes. Terrorist groups take over most of the public administration machinery of the governments usually after their attacks are launched and seek to control most areas in the country.

For example, Boko Haram of Nigeria took over government institutional and administrative machineries and instituted the Sharia law in the communities they took control over. It was estimated that by 2014, at least 20 local government areas were taken over by the group in Borno, Adamawa and Yobe States in the north-east region. State government functionaries were forced to relocate and many State governments and executive councils in the north-east region operated from Abuja (United Nations Economic Commission for Africa, 2017, p. 50). The traditional emirate administrative system, including emirs, Lanwani (village heads), Bulamas (ward heads) and Aja/ Hakimai (district heads) were also displaced. By 2014, the Borno Emirate

Council had lost many of its kingmakers, district heads and at least 13 ward heads, following Boko Haram attacks (Ibid).

As a result of the rampant terrorist activities in the Sahel region, it has been a center for human right concerns. Citizens in the region especially in the two major conflict corridors of Mali and Nigeria have been subjected to constant human right abuse and torture. Insurgent groups as well as government officers in the case of widespread tensions and revolts victimize the civilians. The introduction of the Sharia law by jihadi groups in countries like Mali and Nigeria stripped civilians off some basic human rights such as the persecutions against Christianity and other ethnic groups. Young girls have been abducted like in the case of the Boko Haram and the Chibok girls with others subject to rape and torture and forced marriage. The region of Mpoti in Mali had a record of 28 percent of the women forced into marriages, and 53 percent being victims of rape and female genital mutilation out of 120 women and girls. The press and mass media have also been victims of these terrorist attacks thus hindering press freedom.

2.5 Regional Responses to Terrorism in the Sahel

The situation in the region has gained regional attention and that of the broader international community. Regional organizations have taken the responsibility to try and curb the menace of terrorism. The situation in the Sahel region as discussed is one of an urgent security concern hence approaching it as a regional security complex situation.

One of the most immediate responses to terrorism has been efforts from the central governments. For example, the Nigerian government through military operations established a Joint Task force

in 2011. Their mission was to ensure peace in Northern Nigeria where Boko Haram had taken control over. On 24 September, 2012 the Joint Task force succeeded in arresting 156 members of the Boko Haram terrorist group and killed about 35 members including Boko Haram leaders in Adamawa and Ayobe states (Zenn, J. 2012). The successes by the special task force that were characterized by high casualties from the Boko Haram even further intensified the government's resolve to continue with its anti-terrorism operations against the group.

The Burkinabe government also withdrew its soldiers from the UN peacekeeping to aid in the internal fight against terrorism (Reuters, 2016). These national responses have not been any different in Mali; in July 2012 an initiative was undertaken by the interim President to foster dialogue between stake holders and the rebel groups to find a common and agreeable solution to the crisis. It also included the reconciliation among Malians to foster national unity. The goal was driven toward an all inclusion of all ethnic groups and peoples in the distribution of the national cake in terms of development of communities. The parliament subsequently approved of a road map adopted by the government. This was set to facilitate an establishment of a new authority in the North as well as the re-establishment of constitutional rule which also included the periodic elections (Perry, C. 2013, p. 5).

The situation of terrorism in the Sahel has also resulted in a regional response. The Sahel- G5 joint force for instance has been very active in curbing the crisis in the region. The G-5 Sahel has a military goal to stabilize the region. Earlier this year the Sahel G5 countries of Mali, Burkina Faso, Chad and Mauritania met with French President, Macron to discuss new measures to combat terrorism in the region (United Nations News, n.d). In response to the situation, the

Sahel- G5 in collaboration with the French government decided to set up a common command structure established to make arrangements between the 4,500 French forces and the 5,000 troops for G5 Sahel army.

The French intervention in Mali became very critical in the response to the crisis. An initial plan to negotiate a constitutional solution to the crisis if failed was going to be replaced by an aggressive military involvement with the overall aim at disintegrating armed groups (Ibid).

ECOWAS as a regional body reacted to the coup in Mali by suspending them from the organizational bloc with sanctions as with the African Union (AU), but also began to facilitate a mediation process; by the signing of an agreement by the military government to restore constitutional rule. With the restoration of a constitutional rule there was a facilitation of further dialogues between the armed groups notably the Tuareg rebels as well as MLA, AQIM, Ansar Dine and MUJAO. With the fervent work Said Djinnit who was the special representative of the United Nations (UN) secretary general to West Africa, hand in hand with ECOWAS, Mauritania and Algeria in November 2012 were successful in a dialogue with the MLNA and Ansar Dine who actually announced their disassociation from terrorist activities from that time (Perry, C. 2013, p.7)

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CHAPTER THREE

CRITICAL EXAMINATION OF THE ROLE OF THE EU, FRANCE AND THE US IN THE SAHEL

3.0 Introduction

The regional efforts have been important in the fight against terrorism but there have been other interventions by non- regional international bodies and other individual states in the broader international community which will be discussed in this Chapter. For the purpose of this study, the chapter will focus on the European Union, France and the United States involvements in the situation in the region. It will further critically examine these roles in terms of the real motives behind their position at the fore-front of the fight in the Sahel. Some have raised questions as to whether there is really a crisis to continue dealing with, or the presence of these foreign players are tied to various interests such as the natural resource reserves in most of these Sahelian countries. The presence of these players is continuously causing tensions which exacerbate the situation in the region. This chapter seeks to examine these issues of interest, with respect to the European Union, France and the United States presence in the Sahel.

3.1 The EU Presence in the Sahel

As stated earlier, the EU has stated reasons for being active in dealing with terrorism in the region. Europe has claimed to be largely affected by terrorist activities in the region calling it a treat to her doorstep (Dentice, 2018). The involvement of the EU has been attributed to the long standing inability and weakness of the governments in the Sahel and the Northern territories to deal with terrorism, leading to the growth of new threats to the Sahel region's Euro-

Mediterranean neighbors. Further concerns as stated earlier are that jihadist movements and migration have developed into challenges and threats to European security and stability (Ibid). With this reiterated, we can really come to terms with understanding the EU's reason for being active in the Sahel.

The EU has been at the fore front in the fight against terrorism in the region and has been concerned in particular with the issues of terrorism and violence in the nations of Mali and Burkina Faso. In the conclusions drawn and adopted at the 3688th meeting of the Council of the European Union, it made a call to governments and the various levels of authorities to bring to book various terrorist and violence based crimes to enforce justice on them. The call is further to ensure government and the various levels of authority to remain accountable to the people and create bonds of trust. This process includes the disbanding and disarming of militia groups in the various territories, as well as political dialogues for reconciliation of regions in a bid to improve social cohesion between the population and the Armed Forces (Council of European Union, 2019).

The EU encourages the G5 Sahel and each of its Member States to give priority to the most critical areas of instability, without neglecting areas which are stable, and to address the underlying causes of instability in an integrated manner, in order to prevent violence and meet the needs and aspirations of the population, including women and young people (Conclusions on the Sahel, 2019).

According to the EU Global strategy, the EU is dedicated to invest in African peace and development as an investment to the security and prosperity of its own member states. Some of the notable steps to this commitment have been centered largely on the Sahel, and include the partnerships with regional bodies in the continent as well as with individual EU countries. The EU prepared a Strategy towards security and defense in Mali, Mauritania, Niger, Burkina Faso and Chad between 2011 and 2014 with one of the major goals targeted at countering violent extremism and terrorism. The Counter Terrorism (CT) Sahel is a regional program by the EU that has delivered trainings and exchanges to law enforcements agencies and judicial institutions in Mali, Mauritania, and Niger, with the view to supporting regional cooperation

3.1.1 The EU Common Security and Defense Policy

The following year, as part of the EU foreign affairs Council's initiative in the Sahel, the adoption of the Regional Action Plan (RAP) between 2015 and 2020, saw the facilitation of key priorities which includes preventing and countering radicalization. The establishment of the Common Security and Defense Policy has also seen to the establishment of missions in the continent of Africa towards regional capacity building; three of which are in the Sahel (Venturi, 2017, p. 4).

The Common Security and Defense Policy was triggered by the crisis in Northern Mali where there was no State control over the situation. The fight against terrorist threats is the most basic and underlying prospect between EU internal policies and external action in Mali (Ibid). The Sahel strategy has been fully centered on counter-radicalization programs and projects driven towards preventing the recruitment of the youth by terrorist organizations.

Essentially, the war against terrorism factors in a leading role of supporting the fight against impunity and strengthening justice systems. The EU has been active in this cause in Mali as an important project towards vocalizing its support for decentralization and state reform. The initial stage of this agenda was met with limited support from member states majorly from Mali, especially in pertinence to the use of military interventions.

However, by time the Tuareg returnees from Libya came back, there was a reigniting of the need of such external assistance. Subsequently, the EU's focus was turned towards Niger which was the most supportive member state towards the agenda. Multiple levels of coordination have been facilitated by the EU delegation to coordinate with the Capacity building mission (EUCAP) toward Staff stability; with the government; with the member states; and with the external partners.

Through working with Niger, the EU sought that an example could be set in getting other Sahel countries involved in this policy. The goal became broader in undertaking and reinforcing regional security capabilities in the Sahel, working hand in hand with the African Union. By 2012, Niger was on course and set to host a CSDP mission to provide assistance and training to the gendarmerie and other law enforcement agencies in Niger, towards strengthening border control and government interventions in the worst case scenarios.

This included working with other regional partners as well as EU member states in providing the necessary infrastructure and equipment, coupled with the reinforcement of some existing EU funding programs. Its expenditure was budgeted around €24,355,000 between 16 July 2012 and

15 July 2015. (Yazbeck et al, 2018). The Foreign Affairs Council approved the Crisis Management Concept for a civilian CSDP Advisory in March 2012, and an assistance and training mission in the Sahel (Council Conclusions on Sahel 2012, cf. Gros-Verheyde 2012b).

The conditions in Mali led to the immediate deployment of the mission and the establishment of missions namely; EUCAP Sahel Niger, EUCAP Sahel Mali and the EU training mission in Mali (EUTM). The goal of the mission in Niger was dedicated to fighting terrorism and organized crime and to strengthen the security capacities of Niger. Over 100 international experts, the majority of whom are from European security forces and justice departments, are permanently deployed in Niamey to support this effort. The missions were also deployed as a means of offering advice and training to other G5 Sahel countries.

The training mission in Mali (EUTM Mali) as well as the EUCAP Sahel Mali is the military architecture of the EU's strategy mission in Mali with the aim of strengthening the Malian armed forces towards ensuring their capable defense of the territory. The training mission comprises of about 600 soldiers from 21 EU member states and 4 non-member states. The Common Security Defense Policy was further boosted by the introduction and launch of the Regional Co-ordination Cell (RCC) in 2017 consisting of about 15 experts that facilitate the EU's operational efforts in fixing the gaps of the defense policy. In 2019 it was further directed at ensuring a more robust regional and national capacity of the G5 Sahel countries, as well as boosting the G5 Sahel Joint force military and police towards ensuring regional cross-border cooperation.

In 2016, the European Commission put in place a financial support to the Lake Chad Basin Commission Multi-National Joint Task Force (MNJTF) numbering up to 50million Euros in the fight against Boko- Haram.

3.1.2 EU and the Sahel G-5 Joint Security Force

The EU has been actively partnering with the G5 Sahel countries in fighting terrorism and organized crime. The G5 Sahel countries include; Burkina Faso, Chad, Mali, Mauritania and Niger. This is an intergovernmental co-operative facility designed to respond to the common challenges amongst the states and came into force in 2014. In the fight against terrorism and extremism, it launched the G5 Sahel Joint Force under the auspices of the African Union (AU) Peace and Security Council (PSC) to boost security in 2017. France played a huge supportive role in the final launch in July 2017 (Relief Web, 2018). France, Germany and the European Union subsequently launched The Sahel Alliance that same year, with the goal of providing support for the G5 Sahel countries in various areas including security, spanning with about twelve donors.

In a joint declaration between the European Council and the Member states of the G5 Sahel, it was adopted as part of the declaration to; propose a robust integrated response to the security challenges, particularly the terrorist threat; to find political solutions to the local grievances and conflicts which are being exploited by terrorist groups; and to respond to the root causes of the conflict that challenge security and sustainable development, and facilitate the aspirations of the population towards an inclusive socio-economic development.

This saw to the engagement of the World Bank, African Development Bank and the United Nations Development Program. The purpose was aimed at accelerating the coordination of development partners in executing projects as well as addressing the needs expressed by the beneficiary countries and the G5 Sahel Secretariat. Under the auspices of the European Union, a donor conference was organized in support of the G5 Sahel Joint Force, and to reinforce the coordination and effectiveness of sustainable development in the aid of the region. The President of the European Commission, Jean Claude Juncker stated expressly that, ‘Security and development go hand in hand and we must continue to mobilize all the instruments we have at our disposal to guarantee the visible impact in the region’(European Commission, 2018). The conference saw to the mobilization of a total of €414 million pledges to the force which exceeded the initial goal of €100 million (Ibid). The European Union and its member states took a stand towards increased financial assistance to the force. They firmly took the step to contribute about half of all international support to the Joint Force in the bid to curb terrorism and organized crime, thus improving the security conditions in the region. It is noteworthy that the European Union also provided apart from financial support, the needed political backing especially in the facilitation of the Mali peace processes.

Again, the EU-funded ‘Programme d’Appui au Renforcement de la Sécurité dans les régions de Mopti et de Gao et à la gestion des zones frontalières’ (PARSEC), focused on re-establishing security conditions along the borders with Niger and Burkina Faso, including strengthening the capacities of its internal security forces (European Commission, 2018). The European Union has also adopted measures outside financial and military means to combat terrorism and improve security. These measures aim at development in a bid to cut insecurity, violence, terrorism and

extremism. The Union facilitated \$8billion into development and initiated about 500 projects from 2018 into 2022 which include youth employment, rural development and food security, energy and climate, governance, decentralization and access to basic services, and security – which build on nationally defined priorities, including the Priority Investment Program(PIP) developed by the G5 Sahel (European Commission, 2018)

3.2 France Role in the Sahel

France has deployed about 4000 troops to foreign territories in missions referred to as Opérations Extérieures ("External Operations") or 'OPEX'. These missions have been very active in the Sahel region and have gained massive support from EU and NATO in countering terrorism in the region. NATO Secretary General, Jens Stoltenberg stated clearly that NATO allies will put in a massive support if President Emmanuel Macron will put in any official request for such support in the fight against Islamist terrorist groups in the Sahel (France 24, 2019). As discussed earlier in this chapter, France joined Germany and the EU in launching the Sahel alliance and has massively supported the G5- Sahel which was supported with deployment from the UN through France's initiative.

The French army launched operation Serval to help regain occupied territories by Islamist groups in Mali in April 2013. When Muammar Gaddafi was ousted during the Libyan crisis, there was mass movement of weapons mostly in the Sahel region which contributed towards the Mali rebellion staged by the National Movement for the Liberation of Azawad (MNLA) in 2012 (Idahosa 2018, p. 730). Subsequently, there was a demand for independence in northern Mali between the MNLA and the terrorist groups Ansar Dine and the Movement for Oneness and

Jihad in West Africa (MUJAO). The situation was also worsened by the return of the Tuareg fighters to Northern Mali and the support of the Tuareg irredentism by jihadi groups in North Africa mainly from Algeria who took advantage of the situation (Kitissou, 2014).

With the involvement of the United Nations, the government of Mali also sought for French support in the country. This resulted in the launch of ‘Operation Serval’ which is France’s military intervention in northern Mali. The operation is filled with highly capable forces equipped with expertise on intelligence training, and on the cultural context in Mali with organizational skills to train and interoperate military missions with other security forces in Sahel region in general, and West Africa in particular (Ibid, p. 3). Operation *Serval* was successful in driving out these terrorist groups from Northern Mali, creating stability not only in the country but preventing the prospective unleashing of violent extremism throughout the Sahel.

Subsequently in 2014, France again launched ‘Operation Barkhane’ in N’Djamena, Chad as its headquarters. This operation was designed as a long-term counterinsurgency facility to support the G5Sahel armed forces in the fight against terrorist, and non-state armed groups in the ungoverned territories in the Sahel. This operation was set up to be the “French pillar of counterterrorism in the Sahel region.” It is France’s Sahel strategy which is aimed at ensuring the partnering states have the ability to ensure their own security (Yazbeck et al, 2018). The operation has 1,000 troops in Mali and 3,000 soldiers dispatched to aid in training of the G5 Sahel member state militaries. It has two other permanent support bases in Mali and Niger and other facilities such as an intelligence center in Niger, a special force center in Burkina Faso and operational bases for deployment from Cote d’Ivoire, Senegal and Gabon to support the operation (Idahosa, 2018, p. 730). Some assets deployed for the success of the operation include

17 helicopters, 200 armored vehicles, 200 trucks, six fighter-jets, ten transport aircraft and three drones spread over two military air bases in Chad (N'Djamena) and Niger (Niamey) (Ministère de la Défense, 2017).

Operation Barkhane has brought to an end some already existing French operations in Africa, namely; Licorne (Côte d'Ivoire, 2002-2017), Épervier (Chad, 1986-2014), Sabre (Burkina Faso, 2012-2014) and Serval (Mali, 2013-2014). It has gained support from other European states; for instance, Denmark have invested two helicopters and deployed 70 troops in the region and Estonia pledges to almost double the size of its Barkhane contingent in 2020. The UK is also supporting the UN mission in Mali and the French Operation Barkhane in the Sahel (The defense post, 2019)

Furthermore, France has been collating international support as the French Minister of Defense Parly, announced the facilitation of the international special operation in November 2019, task force in Takuba with a deployment in Mali in 2020 (Osland, K 2020). The French Development Agency (AFD) is the development partner of Operation Barkhane with the plan of action to support the countries along the Sahel belt. The facility is geared at ensuring economic growth, territorial development, and food security as well the provision of jobs for the youth. (Agence française de développement, 2015, p.15-20).

3.3 United States Role in the Sahel

The United States has had a long-standing involvement in the Sahel backdating from the George Walker Bush regime through to the Obama led regime. Though the US were a bit silent and largely uninvolved in terms of the terrorism developments in the Sahel in 2009 -2010, efforts

have been made to address some of the new developments and happenings in Mali, Mauritania, and Niger with the purpose of structuring and strengthening dialogues between policy makers on the matters of terrorism. The direction of the US involvement in Africa is moving towards military interventions largely in the Sahel than influencing political systems as it did some years back. The US has outposts for intelligence, surveillance, reconnaissance activities and special operations missions, located in Burkina Faso, Chad, Mali and Niger (Turse, 2015).

The US established an African Command (AFRICOM) which has been mandated with the responsibility of defense operations and security activities on the African continent. This was established in a bid to respond to the growing terrorism threats in the Sahel and Sahara to some extent, especially when threats on the oil exports were imminent. The work of the United States Africa Command (AFRICOM) has been in cooperation with Special Forces of NATO. The United States donated \$8million worth of military equipment to Niger to aid the G5Shael in their fight against terrorism (United States Africa Command, 2018). More than 10 years ago after the establishment of the African Command (AFRICOM), the US military has more than 7000 troops deployed to Africa with 1000 of them operating in some Sahelian states like Niger, Nigeria, and Mali.

The US troops existing in Niger has reached a total of about 800 in number with the purpose of intelligence and reconnaissance support not only in the country but in the region as a whole. In November 2017, drone facilitations were made with the establishment of a drone base to aid the fight against terrorism (Pawlyk, 2019). In Nigeria, the US offered intelligence aid against Boko Haram and trained the Nigerian soldiers in the fight against them, and worked hand in hand with

the Chadian government to operate an air drone base to counter their operations. Eighty air force troops were also dispatched to gather intelligence in the search for the school girls abducted by Boko Haram. The US have been actively involved in Mali and deployed Special Forces known as the Green Beret to provide intelligence about militant groups in Mali to the U.S. Embassy (Lichtenbaum, 2019).

This was facilitated to combat the activities and operations of armed groups. Another program established by the United States is the Trans-Sahara Counterterrorism Initiative/Partnership known previously as the 'Pan Sahel Initiative' (TSCTI) was put in place to combat terrorist threats to US oil/natural gas operations in the region in countries like Algeria, Chad, Mali, Mauritania, Morocco, Niger, Senegal, Tunisia, Nigeria, and Libya (Kitissou, 2014, p. 15)

Just like the EU, the US also aims toward capacity building as a long term plan in ensuring the countries in the Sahel are capable enough to handle their own crises autonomously. To achieve this, programs such as International Military Education and Training and the Global Peace Operations Initiative are being undertaken. For example, the Flintlock program trains participants from respective countries in the region on counter-terrorism, border security and peace keeping.

3.4 Analyzing EU, France and the US presence's in the Sahel

Despite their presence largely through military means, the situation in the region seems to be unchanging, though it has yielded some positive outcomes. Some have concluded to an extent that the fight in the Sahel is unwinnable no matter how many troops are deployed. From

observing the real issues on the ground, the factors that are responsible for terrorism in the Sahel calls for a more dialogue based approach than military centered. The military interventions especially by these global players have caused further retaliation from these groups, which have resulted in exacerbations of already difficult situation.

3.4.1 Exacerbations of the crisis in the Sahel

The presence of these international players in the Sahel and the various groups of interests such as the Turages, AQIM, MUJAO etc... has resulted in a multiplicity of actors in the region thereby creating an ever increasing rise in the militarization of the region as a result of interlocking conflicts. Several of these players are active in the region. The area of Tuareg irredentism is France's and the United States' central area of involvement (Kitissou, 2014, p. 14).

This has created the use of force as a means to conflict resolution, thus leading to further exacerbations including those in the near future. The result of this is that internal remedies towards managing armed conflicts are hindered but at the same time recurring retaliations from armed groups still prevails, hence the recurring violence in the region. For instance, there was a rocket attack on a military base for UN, French and Mali forces days before President Emmanuel Macron was to host a summit of Sahel G5 leaders geared towards the fight against terrorism (Deutsche Welle, 2020). In another case, five US commandos and five Nigerien soldiers were killed in October 2017 by the Islamic State in the Greta Sahara in Tongo Tongo. This is an obvious proof that in spite of all the facilitation that is going on in fighting off these terrorist groups, even more complex attacks are being carried out (Maiga, 2018).

Again the presence of these international players is creating further motivation for these radical groups to build a stronger arsenal. This is paving way for further arm race in the region. The presence of these international players in the major hotspot countries like Mali is creating the opportunity for most of these groups to spread to other parts of the region not only to regroup, but also spreading the reach of their influence and operations in these neighboring countries (Kitissou, 2014, p. 19).

3.4.2 The Scramble for Resources in the Sahel

This scramble for resources in the Sahel is traced back to an historic event known as the scramble for Africa. It is the phenomenon that refers to the contention that took place between European powers to share their control over the African continent which took place in between 1884-1885 at the Berlin conference. After colonization, a new scramble has evolved. This new scramble refers to the contention for resources in the continent. The Sahel region of Africa has been the center of attention since there are so many foreign players in the dynamics of this region. Though these interventions are officially geared towards the fight against terrorism, there is no denial that these players have self-interests in the region. This is the scramble of resources in the region.

Oil, gas and uranium supplies have been established in many of these countries in the region such as Niger, Mali, Mauritania and Nigeria. The intervention by these global players in the fight against terrorism is only an invitation for them to establish a good amount of control over the resource reserves in the region. The EU has economic interest in the Sahel and the resources, for instance, ore from Mauritania is vital to some of its member states. In order to protect its interests, good bilateral and multilateral relations have been effectively fostered with some of the

Sahelian states through the improvement of their socio-economic conditions as well as dealing with the pressing security situation of terrorism and Islamic radicalism (Yazbeck et al, 2018, p. 8).

3.4.3 France Interests in the Sahel

As stated earlier, France has maintained a very strong presence in the Sahel even after the independence of most of its colonies. A look at the vase distribution of resources in the region can explain the reason France has maintained this presence. Resources such as oil, phosphate, iron, uranium are in large deposits in the Sahel- Maghreb areas which comprises of countries which were former colonies of France.

Before Independence of most French states from the 1960s onwards, the French government signed a colonial pact with these colonies which is known as Francafrique. These were defense agreements signed bilaterally. The pact was an agreement to facilitate France preferences in terms of the political, commercial and defense processes in its former colonies in Africa who were signatory nations. This agreement has ensured a strong dependence on France by most of these former colonies. For instance, the pact offers a strong military cooperation as well as the provision of Technical Military Aid Agreements (AMT) which provides education and training of African security officers. The other agreement was that all military weapons must be acquired from France as well as an agreement that the French ministry of defense was to carryout defense operations solely by the French military.

Further agreements included other clauses of economic preferences such as France's first place access to raw materials for instance, the Uranium in Niger and Cocoa from Ivory Coast. (Kitissou, 2014). The economic aspect of the deal also covered the currency, the CFA Franc that is used by fourteen of its former colonies namely; Benin, Burkina-Faso, Ivory Coast, Mali, Niger, Senegal, Togo, Cameroon, Central African Republic, Congo, Gabon, Equatorial Guinea, Bissau Guinea, and Chad (Mbaye, 2004, p. 11).

For this reason there has been the permanent presence of French police and military in most of these African countries. Though France has denied a neither economic nor political interest in the region, much of its military presence in the region is geared more towards protecting their own interests in the resources in these areas, but masked the goodwill of fighting terrorism. The French influence is felt for instance in the western Sahel where Tuareg irredentism and jihadi activities are prevalent.

In Niger for instance, the huge deposits of Uranium have been France's source of fuel for its nuclear programs. France is the world's leading country in nuclear power production and generates almost 80% of electricity through these nuclear sources. Apart from that, large quantities of electricity are exported from France to many countries in Europe. Because of the France's control in AREVA (which is the second largest producer of Uranium), the mines in Niger are of prime importance. About one-third of raw Uranium tapped by AREVA is from Niger and this number looks to increase in the coming years because of the new mine in Imouran which is to be tapped for the next four decades (Quartz, 2013).

In addition to this, there is a large and untapped reserve of uranium in Mali and Senegal which is another huge prospect for France; it is for this reason France is ensuring the maximum protection of its interest in the region by deploying troops to Niger to guard its mines. It is determined to fight off radical Islamic fundamentalists and jihadist movements whose primary quest is really to register their prolonged grievances, and are in no way interfering with France's interests in the region.

Another resource that is tapped by the French in the Sahel is the oil reserve in Mali. 'Total', France's energy powerhouse controls most of the oil supplies in Mali which is tapped from the Taoudeni Basin which stretches 1,000km from Mauritania to Mali and finally into Algeria (Snorek, 2020). France seeks to facilitate its economic interests in the region by ensuring massive military presence. It is worth noting that the governments of many of these countries encourage the constant exploitation of these resources by the French if it means their strong military presence will aid in the fight against terrorist groups.

As a matter of fact, the continuous presence of French military in some of these countries in the Sahel is causing a further escalation of tensions of these groups who feel threatened and unprotected. These escalations have led to further attacks including those meted out against French soldiers and workers. For example, Islamists fundamentalist held four French staff of Areva captive (Toledoblade.com, 2013). It is obvious to say that violence is further exacerbated by the 'war on Terror'. However, France views that the stability in the Sahel region will facilitate a better environment to satisfy resource interests.

It remains an issue of concern if the primary interest is driven towards preserving interests outside the region rather than dealing with the root causes of these armed conflicts such as local grievances. The point can be put across that there is therefore no relevance of their presence in the region owing to the fact that they have failed, if they continue with this kind of strategy (Kitissou, 2014).

3.4.4 The United States Interests in the Sahel

As with France, the United States have interests in the Sahel region. Though the United States has no colonial influence as France, it has strong Military presence in the region as discussed earlier. From the 1950s the US has been involved in fighting many wars in Africa such as Angola, the DRC, Somalia, the Sudan, Ethiopia, Somalia, Morocco, Libya, Djibouti. Their military bases are evenly distributed across the continent. The result is that these involvements will build mutual partnerships between the US and Africa that will facilitate economic growth for both parties.

The US has been interested in the reserves of oil in Africa mostly in the Sahel region. The oil and gas industry in America provides about 10million jobs and contributes about 10% of the Gross Domestic Product. The oil reserves in the Sahel serve as an investment hub for America's oil firms. The US just like France, is determined to fight any group whose activities may hinder the free petroleum exports. However, the US does not only have to deal with some of the armed groups and radical Islamic movements as the only threats, but have perceived China's growing interest in the region as a major challenge. The growing interest of China in the region provides threat for the US because of the competition and the race for global economic dominance.

Because of the economic and technological dominance of China, the perceived possibility that China will take over the development of some prospective oil reserves is high. China's ability to win the trust of local governments in the region as well as economic gains is very possible.

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CHAPTER FOUR

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

4.0 Introduction

This chapter encapsulates the summary of the major findings of this research in respect to the objectives of the study. It reveals the complex situation in the Sahel as well as dealing with the conclusions that have been drawn from the findings. These details are discussed as follows:

4.1 Summary of Findings

The major findings of this research are stated below:

- Terrorism and extremism in the Sahel is triggered by several factors in most of the countries in the region. These root causes include; poverty, youth bulge, unemployment, weakened state structures, border porousness and ungoverned spaces, regional instability, economic and political exclusions and marginalization.
- The major factor that incites terrorism in most countries in the region is prolonged unaddressed grievances. These grievances are rooted not only in terms of exclusion and marginalization but also in the quest for independence and separations from some states. The National Movement for the Liberation of Azawad for example employs violent means to register their grievances aimed at gaining an independent status. Some of these groups do not intend to be terrorists, but rather employ radical means to register their grievances.
- Various international players such as, the European Union, France and the United States are playing varying roles in the region and have been long involved in the Sahel. Their

interventions have largely been geared towards military means of curbing the situation which has resulted in retaliations by these terrorist groups, hence exacerbating the already complex situation in the region.

- There has been a major focus on military means to handle the crisis and has given little room for major negotiations to be held with terrorist groups or leaders of these groups. No major negotiations have taken place between states and the groups involved or between either of these international bodies and these groups.
- Other findings have shown from this study that the major international players involved in the region namely; the United States and France have personal interests in the resource reserves in the Sahel and West Africa. This certainly explains why they have established a strong presence in the region. They may officially be in the region to fight terrorism but there is no denial that their interventions are rooted in self-interests in the long-run.

4.2 Conclusions

As established, the Sahel region of Africa is an area of great concern and has gained global attention. The rise in terrorism in the region in recent years has led to several interventions by not only regional bodies on the continent, but other international players outside the continent. France, the United States and the European Union have been at the forefront of this fight in the region. However after almost a decade, the situation in the region remains unchanged. The research sought to examine the roles that these parties are playing in the region. Notable aspects of the study included an overview of the crises in the region, and some of the main factors that have aided terrorism in the region. It included brief overviews of some selected countries in the region with regards to the incidences of terrorism in the respective countries. The study went

further to point out some of the major roles of France, the United States and the European Union have played in the fight against terrorism in the region and critically examined their prolonged presence there.

From all the indications drawn out from the study, it concludes that most cases of terrorism in the region are as a result of unaddressed grievances. While some of these aggrieved groups have by themselves resorted to radical and violence means to ensure that their grievances are addressed, radical and extremist groups have taken advantage of the situation and offered to be the saviors of these aggrieved populations and thus pose as their freedom fighters. In actual sense, these groups do not set out to become terrorists, but prolonged unaddressed grievances result in the employment of radical means of registering these grievances. Boko Haram for example started out as a peaceful Islamic political movement.

The intervention of the main international players in the region like France and the United States are military centered and are in no way solving the problem. It must be well noted that fighting back an aggrieved sect without dealing with their grievances will never be enough to prevent their aggressiveness and radicalism. This military interventions alone is causing more retaliation from already aggrieved and angry groups, thus making the region more militarized therefore exacerbating the situation. These military interventions have been going on for almost a decade, but have not changed the situation in the region by much. It might probably not change in another decade; the study therefore concludes that there should be a shift from the overemphasis on military means in dealing with the situation in the region.

The study also concludes that these international players have a personal interest in the region. Though they may be officially fighting terrorism, they have their personal pursuits in the region mainly with regards to the natural resource reserves of ore, uranium and oil. Through fostering good relationships with the states in the region in terms of partnering in this fight, they create an environment conducive for them to establish themselves in the region and gain a great deal of share and control over these resources. This also explains the reason for their prolonged presence in the region which is worsening tensions.

4.3 Recommendations

The situation in the Sahel at this point needs negotiation and dialogues between the governments of the states and the leaders of these radical groups. As deduced from the study, most of the cases of radicalism and extremism are rooted in unaddressed grievances of various groups which have escalated. Though there have been a few mentions of negotiations with some of the radical groups, a major focus on military interventions is aggravating an already terrible situation. Thus there is the need for the adoption of another strategy. Negotiation has proven to be one of the best methods of conflict resolution and should be the main focus toward the Sahel.

Negotiations involve dialogue and constant discussions between parties to arrive at an agreeable consensus. Constant dialogue between radical groups with various governments of the individual states in the region must be established in order to arrive at an agreeable consensus. The nature of negotiation should be a win-win bargain. It will be imperative for the international players in the dynamics of the Sahel to excuse the central governments to hold these discussions. If possible, a large number of their troops should be withdrawn.

The governments should grant audience to aggrieved groups to address what these grievances are and should list out strategic plans in ensuring these grievances are catered for. The outcome of these series of discussions could include community and social developments as well as an inclusion in sharing the national cake in some of the neglected towns or cities. Apart from giving the people a good standard of living by these developmental projects, relationship between the government and the people should be fostered and can create governmental representation in those places, which will result in the restoration of lost control over some of these territories. There should also be the creation of employment to eradicate poverty as well as granting them access to education. Some of the neglected ethnic groups should be included in the political administration process to create sense of belonging to the state. All these strategies if pursued on a larger scale can go a long way in ensuring stability in the region in the long-run.

Another important step towards ensuring stability in the region is the analysis and redirection of the role of the regional bodies. A strategy must be adopted by regional organizations like the African Union and the Economic Community of West Africa States (ECOWAS) and the United Nations (UN) to collectively deal with the situation in the region. The responsibility should not be left entirely in the hands of individual countries like France and the US who have the tendency of pursuing their personal interests in the region.

These regional bodies must work towards the development of a comprehensive framework that will accommodate a region-centered direction with transnational implementation across the states in the region. The framework should work to include contributions from non-formal and subnational stake holders, to ensure a uniform implantation in the region.

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