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AFTER THE WAR: POLITICAL SOLUTIONS TO THE CONFLICTS IN THE SAHEL REGION

by Marco Di Liddo and Francesca Manenti

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A NOTE ON METHODOLOGY

The present work has the dual aim of investigating the reasons behind the current phase of destabilization of the whole Sahel, which had in the Malian crisis of 2012-2013 a dramatic all-encompassing example, and exploring and proposing its possible political solutions.

In this case the Sahel crisis is a complex phenomenon that includes social, economic, political and security problems in a geographical and anthropological context, the one of the Sahel and the Sahara, which is very specific and particular.

In order to fully understand this complex human mosaic, the Ce.S.I. (Centre of International Studies) has applied his usual working methods, typical of policy analysis and based on the combination of the study of open sources, compared with the institutional and civil society in the countries studied, in holding a workshops with experts from different fields, both national and international, and experiences resulting from travels in the same scenarios.

As for the exploration of possible solutions to the multifaceted political instability in the Sahel, the present work has collected the thoughts, ideas and proposals that emerged during the conference "After the war: political solutions to the conflicts in the Sahel region", organized by Ce.S.I. on July 10th 2013 in Rome, at the CASD (Centre for High Defense Studies), and which was attended by distinguished figures from the institutional and scientific fields both Italian and international. In this sense, then, the work represents the collection of the conference proceedings and has the goal of being a strategic document aimed at a multiplicity of political, academic and military users.

As speakers, the conference was attended by:

Yossef Bodansky, Director of Research at the Association on Strategic and International Studies, Director of the Task Force on Terrorism and Asymmetric War of the Congress of the United States from 1988 to 2004;

Anouar Boukhars, Associate Researcher at the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace and Associate Professor of International Relations at McDaniel College in Westminster, Maryland;

Mohamed Bazoum, Minister of State for Foreign Affairs of Niger;

Hubert Tieman Coulibaly, Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Government of Mali between 2012 and 2013;

Raffaele de Lutio, Plenipotentiary Minister, Deputy General Manager and Director for Sub-Saharan African countries at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Italian Republic;

Cheikh Tidiane Gadio, President of the Pan-African Strategies, Minister of Foreign Affairs of Senegal between 2000 and 2009;

Monica Maggioni, Director of Rainews24;

Andrea Margelletti, President of the Ce.S.I. and Strategic Advisor of the Italian Defense Minister since 2012;

Mario Mauro, Defense Minister of the Italian Republic;

Bernard Miyet, President of Valarda Consulting, Deputy Secretary General of the United Nations peacekeeping operations from 1997 to 2000;

Pier Antonio Panzeri, Member of European Parliament, Chairman of the Delegation for relations with the Maghreb countries at the European Parliament;

Antonietta Piacquadio, Professor of International Law at the University of Padova;

Lapo Pistelli, Vice-Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Italian Republic;

Romano Prodi, Special Representative of the Secretary-General of the United Nations for the Sahel;

Peter Roell, President of ISPSW - Institut für Strategie Politik Sicherheits und Wirtschaftsberatung;

Ralph Thiele, Presidente del Politisch Militärische Gesellschaft;

Rinaldo Veri, Vice-Admiral of the Italian Navy and Chairman of the CASD;

Andrea Ungari, Associate Professor of International Relations at LUISS Guido Carli University in Rome.

INTRODUCTION

Over the last three years the region of North and Western Africa has strongly hit the international headlines for deep political upheavals that have affected its countries. It seems undeniable that the "Arab Spring" has represented, through its spread, both in its content and consequences, one of the most important phenomena of the last decade. The popular uprisings that led to the overthrow of the neo-capitalist regimes in North Africa had the effect of dismantling not only the old political institutions, but also the architecture of the various systems of internal security.

However, in a context characterized by porous and permeable borders as well as social, economic and anthropological dynamics which ignore political boundaries, the safety problems of a single state actor have inevitable effects on the stability of the entire region. This fluidity of threats is further aggravated when, as stated by Prof. Margelletti, President of the Ce.SI, it is impossible to identify the political agenda of those countries affected by the "Arab awakening" and engaged in the difficult transition to democracy and pluralism. However, it should be stressed that these upheavals have not created new problems, but they powerfully highlighted those critical, social and political legacy that the old regimes had kept at bay with authoritarian methods. In fact, in the past it has often been made the mistake of confusing the stability of regimes with the socio-political stability in the region.

The uncertainties and risk factors derived from the "Arab Spring" and from the Maghreb were superimposed and crossed to the unresolved issues of the countries of the Sahel, becoming the mechanism of triggering a new wave of claims, sometimes violent, by the population and local ethnic minorities .

As pointed out by the Plenipotentiary Minister Raffaele de Lutio, the instability within Sahel has ancient economic, environmental, social and governance roots before the "Arab Spring" which, as confirmed by Cheikh Tidiane Gadio, Minister of Foreign Affairs of Senegal in governments Sall I and II, led to the " balkanization " of Africa, causing internal contradictions to each individual country. In many circumstances, such contradictions have led to the development of separatism that, in severe cases, were funded and manipulated by some states as a tool for their attempts to expand their regional hegemonic supremacy. In contexts of great economic insecurity, a lack of adequate educational facilities and social support, popular distrust towards government institutions deemed corrupt, inefficient and repressive, the phenomena of ethnic insurgency and secessionism have found in the military conflict the only forms of opposition valid and effective for their own needs and aspirations.

The social and political fractures that characterize the African scenarios in question are often legacy of the colonial administration and taxes to which it has subjected the cultures, traditions and peoples of the continent. It is a heavy legacy, which Independent States and the new African political elite, emerged after the process of decolonization, have failed to adequately manage . The new governments have failed to solve the problems related to greater fairness in the redistribution of resources, the protection of civil and political rights and the institutional representation of subaltern groups . Over time, poverty and political marginalization have had two deleterious effect: the first was to push the needy people to seek alternative livelihoods in the economy and crime in the trafficking of drugs, weapons and human beings. The second effect is related to the refractoriness of the central institutions and the gradual weakening of ideological and operational movements of

traditional insurgence, it was the slow penetration of Al Qaeda propaganda that has transformed the struggles for self-determination in jihad.

Andrea Margelletti
President of Ce.S.I. – Center for International Studies

"The events of Mali, therefore, recall, now more than ever, the need for the implementation of a political and social tool as the main weapon in the fight against terrorism and as a cornerstone in the process of peaceful settlement of disputes between the state and local communities. The principle of self-determination of the people and the sacred and legitimate right to its pursuit, therefore, continues to be the main source of political turmoil in the African continent.

Despite the fact that the new qaedist propaganda says otherwise, the principle of self-determination of the people is not in conflict with the sanctity of the principle of unity and sovereignty of the state. It is up to the good will of national governments and expression movements of ethnic and cultural communities to find the most appropriate and shared political formulas, whether autonomy, federalism or the simple implementation of the principle of subsidiarity"

Mali was the meeting point of a "complex series of diaries ", which transformed it into the emblematic case of instability within the Sahel. The Malian crisis of 2012-2013 has been the most dramatic example of the convergence of all the historical, political, social and economic trends described so far. Indeed, it occurred simultaneously with the critical issues related to colonial rule (the forced cohabitation of two distinct ethnic groups and separated by diverse traditions

and cultures), with the economic problems (poverty and underdevelopment), with political and institutional limits (ruling class selected on the basis of sectarianism, corruption and nepotism) and the role of third countries (Libya with Gaddafi as a major supporter of the Tuareg secessionism). In this context, the government in Bamako has failed to develop a reformist agenda that could integrate minorities, most notably the " blue people of the desert ". The historical causes of the Malian instability and Tuaregs insurgency are going to be added to the negative externalities of the "Arab Spring", in this case the collapse of the Libyan regime and the uncontrolled inflow of weapons into the hands of the militia of the clan Kel Adrar. The subsequent intervention of the Qaedist forces and the processing, for about 6 months, of the north of the country in a jihadist sanctuary in the heart of Africa, has highlighted what are the risks of proliferation of terrorism within the geopolitical "black holes" created by the absence or by the weakness of state institutions.

Beyond the purely internal aspects, the Malian crisis has connections with the dynamics of the entire Sahel, from the Horn of Africa to the Gulf of Guinea. In fact, the structural weaknesses of Mali are also influenced by exogenous factors, such as migration, and they can be found in many other West African States and northern Europe. For these reasons, the scenario of the Malian crisis could be reflected on neighboring countries, like Niger and Mauritania. The risks of jihadist contagion along the vectors of political instability and political and economic demands of minorities are more than just an academic hypothesis.

Rinaldo Veri
Vice-Admiral of the Italian Navy and Chairman of the CASD

"In Mali, the instability determined by the conflict between the Government of Bamako and the Tuareg minorities was the cradle in which relations between Islamic fundamentalism and autonomist claims grew. The only possible solution to the Malian conflict is to ensure appropriate political representation of ethnic minorities in the north of the country, particularly with regard to the Tuareg. In this way, the government of Bamako and secular autonomist movements could reach a compromise and fight together against religious fundamentalism, which, at the moment, is not part of the Tuareg culture. We all know how important the definition of a common political agenda is, as an anti-terrorism strategy based solely on a military-type response would not be appropriate in the medium and long term. A political response is the only type that can be effective in the long run, and that can contribute to the process of state building".

The Franco-African military intervention of January 2013 made it possible to defuse, partially, the threat of Al Qaeda in northern Mali and prevented the probable consequent collapse of the fragile government in Bamako. However, as pointed out by prof. Romano Prodi, Special Representative of the UN Secretary General in the Sahel, the response to the crisis cannot be just military, since the military intervention is a tool that allows you to gain time to find a broader political and social solution. The anxiety to militarily defeat the brigades of al-Qaeda and bring Mali to a presidential vote could be fatal, because a poorly managed election could turn into gravestone of the process of political reform, economic and social development of the

country. The main goal that awaits the government in Bamako and the international community is trying to avoid the recurrence of the causes of the crisis and manage the process of "state building" to prevent terrorism from being the incarnation of the needs of the population. Such a possibility would guarantee a broad popular legitimacy of the jihadist movements never happened before.

In this regard, the future of Mali and the Sahel region passes through a redefinition of the model of coexistence between different ethnic communities and a reflection on the legal protections and on the political representation of these within the state. The right to self-determination can find in the mechanism of autonomy and local self-government a new and effective conciliation with the principle of inviolability of the territory and sovereignty of the state. However, the *sine qua non* of such a process lies in finding a balance shared between the government and minorities, in the implementation of the principle of subsidiarity and the categorical rejection of any disruptive and entropic mechanism that would jeopardize the unity of the state.

PART I

THE POLITICAL PROBLEMS

The main political problems affecting the Sahel essentially concern three closely related and consequential factors: the unbalanced relationship between the center and peripheries of the state, insurgency on ethnic–sectarian basis and support of governments "third" to the autonomist and secessionist organizations for the minorities for the sake of regional hegemonic projection.

The origin of the first two factors of instability is to be found in the policies of the former colonial powers and in some limits to the process of decolonization that, in many cases, failed to carry out adequate strategies of political integration and social support for all different ethnic communities of the country.

The history of the African continent teaches how the concept and the structures of the nation-state have been imported and imposed by the colonial powers, which, by virtue of its economic and strategic interests and in compliance with international political balance decisive in Europe, have divided the African territories without considering the ethnic- social dynamics characterizing them. The effect of the creation of colonial empires was to alter the traditional regionalization of certain civilizations and ethnic groups, disintegrating the structures of self-government and forcing people to live together in very different contexts artificially created . In addition to the separations and forced cohabitation between different ethnic groups and civilizations, the impact of colonial rule focused on the cultural and administrative center. In fact, in applying its own law and their own customs, countries colonists often upset and destroyed the local customs, profoundly affecting the way of life of the community in question. This criticality

has characterized, in particular, the French possessions, as the government in Paris has traditionally applied the strategy of the assimilation as a cornerstone of the management of the colonies. It seems clear, therefore, that such a centralized management, one-sided and single judge of political power was afoot of a profound conflict, often violent, between the governorates and local communities. To this must be added the repression that the security forces have applied colonial regularly whenever the movements expression of ethnic minorities have attempted to rebel.

In addition, the organization commissioned by the European governments tended, quite naturally, to the polarization of the political and economic scenarios of the colonial provinces . The reason for this imbalance is essentially economic : most of the colonial centers of power arose in strategic areas, such as coastlines, major rivers and the crossroads of trade routes and caravans . Over time, the governorates allocated most of the resources in such centers of power, taking advantage of the wealth of the suburbs but neglecting the active development . The political effect of this administrative and economic management has been the policy favoring the rise and consolidation of ethnic sedentary, located near the colonial "capitals", at the expense of peripheral groups and their integration into the structures of the state. The Sahel is so full of examples of political and economic polarization to induce to talk about an African colonial and post-colonial civilization conflict based on the coexistence between city-state and territorialized ethnic-tribal societies of the rural areas. Just think of the relationship Bamako\Gao-Mali, N'Djamena-Chad-Niger Niamey, Nouakchott-Mauritania, Khartoum-Sudan.

In many cases, during the process of decolonization, the new independent states

arose from the ashes of the colonial empires were broadly unchanged boundaries laid down, long ago, European governments and the administrative organization to be imposed on them. This "conservative" choice had the goal of preserving the unity of the new state subjects without exposing them to the risk of disintegration due to the pressure of the irredentist organizations of minorities. Once it arrived in power, the new African ruling classes have managed the resources and the politics of their countries according to a scheme based on nepotism, on neo-patrimonialism, corruption and on self-reference. This modus operandi has exacerbated the alienation of minorities and formed, together with the economic problems, fertile ground for the emergence and spread of movements of armed rebellion. Unfortunately, the new African governments have continued to adopt, in respect of social and political demands of the local communities, the same repressive policy of the European colonizers.

I.I The relations between center and periphery

The prof. Antonietta Piacquadio pointed out that the instability of the countries of the Sahel is related to the lack of effectiveness of governments that fail to manage instances and dynamics between center and periphery. The local African realities turned into "periphery" through a process of marginalization that has taken on an extreme level the African tribal and ethnic divisions, turning a fluid and dynamic social context in a social, political, economic and cultural system almost motionless.

The responsibilities of the colonial administration in the process of marginalization of the peripheries, discussed earlier, are complemented by those of the independent governments of the post-colonial era. The process of the construction of

national states, carried on by what would become the African ruling class, was carried out through a process of strong centralization of resources. In the early sixties, African leaders were convinced that only a significant centralization of management of the economy would ensure sustainable economic and competitive development in a context of unequal international relations. The government control over the economy, the creation of huge and isolated industrial centers and massive investment in a production system focused on the export of materials was the guarantee of a rapid and profitable, but fragile, since exposed to fluctuations in international market prices, and superficial, as unremarkable on society and on the domestic market. The economic centralization has been accompanied by an inevitable centralization policy based on ethnic elite. The dominance of a particular group within a country is derived from previous contacts with the administration and with the colonial culture . In fact, when European countries have abandoned the colonies, the transfer of sovereignty occurred to those who dealt with subordinate roles in the bureaucracy. Unfortunately, the management of the state has had to deal with ethnic and tribal social practices of the dominant groups, favoring the proliferation of "informal" political, economic and institutional dynamics that have characterized the preferential distribution of resources on a patronage basis. The process of political and economic centralization, combined with nepotism and patronage has done nothing but worsen the marginalization of the peripheries.

In contemporary Africa, the relationship between center and periphery is multi- vector, multi- dimensional and dominated by a paradoxical correlation between global scenario and internal scenario: at the time, the African continent is a resource center but a periphery policy that seeks to emancipation

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and to establish itself as a global player independent, self-sufficient and influential . In the same way, within the African States, the suburbs are opposed to their situation of poverty and social exclusion and seek to assert their rights.

The multi- vector and the multidimensionality of the relationship are evident in the contradiction between central and peripheral economic policy of some specific regions. Again, the examples are abundant in the Sahel: Niger, where the northern parts of the Air Massif provide the country its main asset, uranium, but suffer from the lack of an adequate program of investment in the water sector and agricultural and insufficient political representation of local populations; Sudan, where the Darfur and southern regions, now independent, have funded with oil expenses Khartoum, receiving in return a centralizing policy and authoritarian; Libya, in which the Cyrenaica and Fezzan possess the vast majority of hydrocarbon resources but have never benefited from social policies and investments of the Gaddafi regime.

However, in most cases, the economic and political marginalization coincide. The contexts in which this condition is realized are undoubtedly those who have less negotiating power vis-à-vis the central government, largely because of lack of resources. This scarcity of natural wealth and subsoil indirectly worsens regional underdevelopment. In fact, the state is a disincentive to invest in an area that is not able to offer a reliable and immediate economic return. In fact, the pattern of development in Africa still suffers from some defects of the colonial period and the early industrialization, being locked into a system focused on the intensive exploitation of the territory, aimed almost exclusively to the extraction and sale of raw materials. In some cases, institutions and national entrepreneurs decide to open up new activities in outlying

areas. However, the process of industrialization, made possible by the low cost of labor, it is usually attributed to the implementation of platforms for export, mainly in the field of textiles and electronics. The limits of this type of development are evident: the companies are formed for export and are not related to local needs, the activity is transitory, which tend to be transferred when wages increase; does not occur any specialization of labor nor any significant transfer of know-how.

The "classic" model of industrialization applied in Africa has the big disadvantage of not encouraging the construction of infrastructure, roads and the appropriate means of communication that connect places and people of the country. In addition, the concept of investment in human resources, typical of post-industrial societies, only in recent years began timidly to appear and spread in the states of the continent. These two factors have resulted in an ongoing human and geographical isolation of the suburbs and a lack of enhancement of the extraordinary social capital that Africa has.

Ultimately, it is a vicious circle expected to worsen in the absence of structural interventions by the state. In fact, without plans or prospects for development, the suburbs also see a massive drain of human resources. These internal migration are particularly evident when you consider the brain drain and migrant workers. Because of the inadequacy of the education system and the lack of jobs, the center has benefited and continues to benefit from importing doctors, scientists, leading management and workers from the periphery. The depletion therefore, is not only purely economic, but becomes progressively human and social.

The economic and social contradictions of the relationship between center and periphery are added to those policies when the underdevelopment and ethnic sectarianism

institutional overlap the denial of rights and representation of minorities. At that point, the set of claims from part of the peripheries, combined with the consciousness of the collective identity of subaltern groups generates the phenomena of occurrence.

I.II The claims of ethnic minorities

Prof. Antonietta Piacquadio noted how the imbalance of the relationship between center and periphery in the Sahel lies in the inadequacy of the model of territorial sovereignty, imposed by the process of decolonization in Africa, which does not take into account the factor of multicultural representation and protection . The post-colonial states have aggravated the inadequacy setting up its administrative and institutional structures on the model of dominance\ethnic and cultural domination of one group over others. In fact, the African ruling classes had voluntarily marginalized cultural identities which might constitute a potential form of opposition to them . When this critical situation was made worse, the suburbs have become the theater towards the center of the repression of political and economic spaces alternative or parallel to those of the ruling elites.

At a time when economic underdevelopment crosses political discrimination on ethnic grounds, the center-periphery conflict begins to take on deeper meanings and loads more symbolic . However, the birth and development of autonomist claims is inextricably linked to the collective awareness on the part of local communities. This fundamental step is not immediate and consequential with respect to economic discrimination, but it is necessary that the people of the periphery knowingly share the same culture, the same language and the same story. In the case of the people of the Sahel region, culture is often linked to religion, in its original and syncretic, and

collective identity through family relationships, tribal and clan. However, the fragmented nature of a clan-based society, in many cases prevents the hardening of social and ethnic groups, therefore, as rightly pointed out by the On. Pier Antonio Panzeri, it poses serious problems in the self- definition of "people". It should be noted the impact of the geographical and anthropological dimension in this process of identity. It is no coincidence that, in Africa, people who have early developed forms of collective identities were sedentary and those allocated along the banks of large rivers. On the contrary, the nomadic and semi -nomadic people of the desert, moving constantly and having endogamous social relations, have had a longer path to the definition of identity, complex and incomplete. In this sense, the Tuareg people and its society caste - clan are a perfect example.

The growth of a people " national " identity has the effect of adding the variable to the ethnic conflict between economic center and periphery. In fact, the peripheral groups acquire awareness of discrimination and sectarian patronage of the mechanisms of power-sharing and resource management. At this point, the fracture of a country become economic, social and ethno- cultural, as the subaltern populations perceive the central institutions as alien and challenging. Since the identity of a people based on ethnicity and culture - religion, the internal divisions to the United materialize along these lines. The Sahel region represents the most emblematic manifestation of this process of confrontation, as it embodies, as stated by prof. Cheikh Tidiane Gadio, the problem of the existence of a racial rift between " White Africa " (Maghreb) and " Black Africa" (sub- Saharan Africa). Shifting his gaze to the south, in the heart of sub -Saharan Africa, this racial rift is often accompanied by the religious one, which often marks the clash among Christian communities, animist and Muslim. On.

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Panzeri reflected on the fact that, from this set of contrasts, comes a critical need to rethink the structures of the state, for there still continue to exist strong doubts about the relationship between sovereignty and democracy, and between the latter and the respect for ethnic minorities.

People identity awareness linked to the political and economic demands of this in relation to central institutions is the genesis of sectarian claims. This phenomenon can have both peaceful and violent demonstrations and may possess a wide and varied range of content and political objectives. However, there is a common feature of the phenomenon in any two forms, namely the fact that it poses, as highlighted by prof. Margelletti, the problem of the legal and political protection of the right of self-determination of people.

The concept of self-determination, in contemporary international legal theory, has evolved beyond the epistemological limits associated with only one possibility, for the people, to become itself as a sovereign state. Up to date, the international community has tried to overcome the old scheme linked exclusively to the notions of "state" and "Nation" that trapped the right to self-determination in a legal situation overly political - bureaucratic. Paradoxically, the doctrine of self-determination was taking the risk of not being able to emancipate from the formula linked to the necessary creation of a new state agency. Fundamentally, the concept of "self-determination as secession from the state" it is worn and not very open to all other solutions, while ensuring self-determination, do not affect the integrity of the state. If this formula were to be applied tout court in complex multi-ethnic contexts, you could run the risk of a dramatic political entropy and of a potentially unstoppable fragmentation of the state reality. African history, as well as examples of ethnic difficult

cohabitation, has also offered models of political cooperation and multi-ethnic societies who were able to find their own balance and the original forms of legal protection, policy and institutional minorities, such as in Angola, Ethiopia, Gabon, Ghana and South Africa. The experience of these countries has shown that it is possible to create a "self-determination in the State" or "self-determination as a new social contract". These are two dynamic formulas, which have in the concepts of participation, representation, inclusion and subsidiarity their pillars. This change of approach necessitates a rethinking of the right to self-determination, not only on a practical and methodological level, but especially in terms of content. In fact, the right to self-determination becomes part of the universal category of collective human rights and, within them, the protection of minorities becomes the right to have an identity. In this way, a legal situation created on the basis of strictly political categories, develops and provides more social, anthropological and civil issues. The protection and promotion of human rights and the right to collective identity are the new foundations of the right to self-determination and allow the latter to be guaranteed even within existing state structures, without seeking the path of rupture of institutions and the division of the territorial and sovereign unity of a country. The set of collective human rights and the right to identity does not represent an inhibition or suppression of the legitimacy of any secessionist choices. Indeed, if, by the power elite and central institutions there was no willingness to defend this body of law, minorities would be even more empowered to seek solutions marked on secessionism. The main difference from the past is that the new doctrine on self-determination is plural and diverse in its solutions, so inclusive, not exclusive.

The minorities movements offered a range of solutions to the political and economic

problems in different countries, ranging from a request of ethnic quotas in the institutions of local self-government in the central regions unredeemed by massive investment in infrastructure development plans in the suburbs to a wider distribution equitable income from the exploitation of natural resources, from the administrative autonomy of the territories of origin. In severe cases, the struggle for self-determination has degenerated into secessionism. Indeed, in some contexts, onset movements aim to radically change the structure, laws, and ethnic balance of the country without threaten the territorial integrity, but rather aiming to subvert the political balance in force. In any case, as said the Italian Minister of Defense Mario Mauro, the political aspirations of minorities and the right to self-determination assume violent feature due to the precarious economic and social conditions in which they live.

Sahel is full of examples of nationalist claims movements that have adopted different political agendas and objectives. Unfortunately, in most cases, the courses in question have not been able to lead a peaceful struggle, but they resorted to the use of arms. As for ethnic movements whose ultimate aim is the achievement of regional autonomy, some explanatory examples are the Tuareg MJN (Movement of Nigerians for Justice) in the north of Niger and CMSB (Supreme Military Council of Barqa) expression of the tribes of Cyrenaica in Libya. The secessionist movements are located in the JEM, which leads the fight for the liberation of Darfur in Sudan, and in the North of Mali Tuareg MNLA its maximum expression. Finally, one of the most complex cases in the galaxy of rebel groups in Africa covers the southern edge of the Sahel, specifically in the active northern Nigeria where Boko Haram operates.

In northern Nigeria can be found all the critical elements investigated until now: the unbalanced relationship between center and periphery, economic underdevelopment, awareness of identity of a subjected ethnic group and his opposition to those in power. In addition, the Nigerian case is interesting because it allows to emphasize how easy could be the transmission of ideological mechanisms in the Sahel, helped by the porosity of borders, and introduce the risk of infection and penetration of radical Islamic Al-Qaeda in the contexts of interethnic struggles.

Boko Haram (in Hausa language it means " Western Education is Sin", original name "Jama'atu Ahlis Sunna Lidda'awati Wal - Jihad", "People Committed to the Propagation of the Prophet's Teachings and Jihad"), is the leading Islamist radical group nowadays active in Nigeria. Today, the organization aims to create an Islamic state in Nigeria, the imposition of Sharia law in its most radical side through the literal interpretation of the Koran.

The emergence of Boko Haram is part of a context, at a national level, defined by long-running ethnic and religious conflicts between Muslims and Christians, and at the regional level, by a competition between the ethnic groups of Hausa - Fulani and Kanuri, both Islamic, in northern Nigeria. While members of the first group have been able to establish themselves in cohabitation with Christian groups Yoruba and Igbo in the south of the country, as one of the hegemonic forces of the country, fulfilling important positions in the Arm, the Kanuri have traditionally been marginalized and do not benefit of an adequate institutional representation, they have less political clout and live in worse economic conditions. In fact, they are mainly allocated in the two north-eastern states of Nigeria, Yobe and Borno, close to the Sahel, in a very poor area of resources and where

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the government in Abuja has not yet managed to achieve an adequate program of social development. The marginalization of the Kanuri has been a breeding ground so that within the social and religious rifts Islamic propaganda could penetrate, probably came about through the work of some Islamic charities and through tribal ties . In fact, the Kanuri people is present throughout the Sahel and would not be ruled out that some of its members may have come into contact with members of jihadist forces. Boko Haram typically emerges as a reality due to the Kanuri and recruits its militants in a large mass of unemployed youth in the northeast of the country. So, through the imposition of Sharia, the Kanuri people will subvert the institutional order and the Nigerian ethnic balance and position itself as a political equal than the other power groups.

Originally the radical movement had pursued his claim in a non- violent way and had committed, from the social point of view, to meet the demands of the local population. In doing so, the organization had created in the state of Borno, a parallel network of political institutions and welfare that, in 2009, the central Nigerian government has attempted to dismantle with a military operation that resulted in the deaths of 900 people . The ensuing repression which has hit the Kanuri, culminating in the arrest and killing of its founder Mohammed Yusuf in July 2009, allegedly for ill-treatment by the police, led to the beginning of the radicalization of Boko Haram.

After the founder's death, the leadership of the group was taken over by his deputy, Abubakar bin Muhammad Shekau, a more uncompromising and radical personality than its predecessor. This handover determined the violent connotation of the Kanuri insurgence, which was above all ideological. From 2009 until today, Boko Haram has gradually gained strength and relevance,

particularly with regard to the skills and techniques in conducting attacks and bombings and has increased its relations with AQIM and MUJAO, North Africa, and al-Shabaab in Somalia. The organization is targeting the symbols of the central government (government infrastructure and security forces), the objectives that the group considers expression of Western imperialism (as in the case of the attack on August 26th, 2011 at UN headquarters in Abuja) and religious goals (both Christians and Muslims considered to be moderate). The sect, in the last four years, has killed more than 4,000 people.

On the basis of the above considerations regarding the identity of the different ethnic and religious communities in Nigeria, it seems logical to understand the reasons for the actions and goals of Boko Haram . The radical Islamic sect affects the Christian population, especially the Yoruba and Igbo, since this is, in his view, the power that subjugates, marginalize and compels to poverty the Kanuri people. In Islamic radicalism, the Kanuri have sought a violent response to what they consider predatory policies of the Yoruba Christian population and, therefore, subjected to Western governments and to their "impure" and discriminatory customs and traditions. However, even the moderate Muslim population and law enforcement is affected by the attacks of Boko Haram . Even in this case, ethnic rivalry, religious issue and political and social demands are united by the same ideological inclination. Moderate Muslims are hit first and foremost as members of the ethnicity Hausa-Fulani, the group "corrupt" that shares, like the Yoruba Christians, responsibilities in political, social and economic marginalization of Kanuri. In addition, the Salafi sect has learned to exploit the ethnic and religious conflicts of the other Nigerian federal states, such as the Plateau, to recruit militants, further radicalize the

ethnic clashes outside the north-east and, ultimately, to widen the scenario of their own operations.

The examples of ethnic claims presented here enable us to understand how the issue of self-determination is still relevant and how the process of decolonization has addressed it in an incomplete and superficial way. However, the sanctity of the right of self-determination has to deal with the principles of unity, sovereignty and territorial integrity of the state. As far as the Sahel is concerned, according to the Italian Minister of Defence Mauro, a possible solution could be the implementation of a federal model that, in addition to ensuring greater protection for the expression of political minorities, would reduce the space for terrorist infiltration, for the benefit on internal security in the whole region. Institutional reforms, however, should ensure the effective and real conditions of minorities and not turn into simple legal frames totally meaningless . In addition, on an international level, we must consider the impact that the success of a movement for autonomy in a given country may have on other countries in the region. The secession of a province, and its subsequent transformation into the state, can give rise to the phenomena of imitation by other ethnic groups and other minorities next door. In this case, the real risk would be a drastic increase of ethnic insurgencies and a danger of disintegration and atomization of the political landscape of Africa.

I.III The States support to the claims of ethnic minorities

The nationalist uprising phenomena constitute a political and security criticality for both the countries in which they act and the regional and international balance . In fact, the movements of minorities have often been involved in the rivalry between States and used as a "fifth column" for the realization of

hegemonic patterns of a country in a given area. This strategy for external support proposed sensitive and mutual benefits : on the one hand, the insurgent groups could have money, weapons, training and logistics provided by the Member sponsors, on the other hand funder governments possessed an extraordinary tool to destabilize the military and political neighboring countries. So, on an international level, ethnic separatism turned into a means external interference. This form of support is often not just about the rebel movements, but also the jihadi formations. In addition, in many cases, to fund and arm the insurgent groups and radical Islamic militias are not only regional governments, but also those who have substantial interests in the whole of Africa, although belonging to other geographical areas. Yossef Bodansky has shown that, in a context of high geographical and political

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Prof. Cheikh Tidiane Gadio, Minister of Foreign Affairs of Senegal between 2000 and 2009

"We need to reflect carefully on the issue of self-determination and autonomy of the groups. On this subject, there are two main strategies: the first, which goes in the direction of integration, aims to achieve respect for the rights of individuals and minorities within a unitary design of the states. The second, which tends to the division of state realities in Africa on an ethnic basis, inevitably leads to the balkanization of the African continent and to the fragmentation of its political landscape. This fragmentation occurs at a time when politics and international relations are increasingly dominated by global players and multi-ethnic units. Therefore, we must avoid a rewriting of the boundaries on the basis of the claims for autonomy and, on the contrary, we must support an integrative strategy based on the sharing of resources and Armed Forces and the development of a collective Continental economy."

permeability such as the Sahel, the State sponsors are able to alter the regional balance. In fact, in addition to the flow of arms and money in favor of the insurgency movements, it should be stressed the added value of the expertise provided by the ex-servicemen belonging to the armies of the region. It is a highly specific know-how, relating to tactics, to the strategy and training to war and guerrilla, to the management and operational logistics of the operation.

The Sahel region has seen many examples of state support to rebel group, among which the most important are represented by the support of Algeria to the Polisario Front (Frente Popular para la Liberación de Saguia el Hamra y Río de Oro), by the hegemonic and subversive policy of the Gaddafi regime and, as far as extra-regional governments are concerned, by the African strategy of penetration of Iran.

The territories of Western Sahara, claimed as their own by the Polisario Front, correspond to a part of the ancient Spanish colonial possessions in North Africa . The first Spanish colonization of the land dates back in 1884, when Madrid took control of that portion of territory now called Río de Oro and Saguia El Hamra. In 1912, a French-Spanish agreement settled their respective areas of influence: Mauritania and Algeria to France, Río de Oro and Saguia El Hamra to Spain and joint protectorate over Morocco .

With the beginning of the process of decolonization, the French and Spanish governments returned part of their sovereignty to Morocco, with the exception of Tangeri and Tarfay, under French administration, from 1956 to 1958, and Río de Oro, Saguia El Hamra and Ifni where Madrid continued to maintain its authority. In fact, between 1953 and 1957, Spain had embarked on a massive investment plan for the development and exploitation of mineral resources (phosphate) and fish . However,

Spain happened to control a region lacking of true local administrative authorities, inhabited by nomadic pastoralists and claimed by the Kingdom of Morocco, as traditionally forming part of its legitimate territory. The Moroccan claims, corroborated by the judgment in October 1957 by the International Court of Justice, had to quickly deal with the Algerian and Libyan opposition, then with the birth and development of autonomist demands of the local community, which called itself Sahrawi (Saharan Arabic word that means) and that wanted the independence of Western Sahara. In 1973, a group of students formed the Sahrawi Polisario Front, an organization of socialist ideology and self-proclaimed as "the only authority empowered to represent the Sahrawi people". The Treaty of Madrid of 1975, which sanctioned the withdrawal of the Spanish starting from the following year, was sentenced by the Algerian authorities which, in turn, proclaimed the birth of the SADR (Saharan Arab Democratic Republic). For this reason, since its inception in 1976, the Polisario front was supported by Libya and Algeria and, almost like a government in exile, hosted the refugee camps of Tindouf. At the time of withdrawal from Western Sahara, Spain withdrew from Western Sahara left to Morocco and Mauritania the responsibility of the political fate of its former colony . From then on Polisario began a long guerrilla campaign against the Moroccan authorities, which lasted until the ceasefire of 1991.

The reasons for the Algerian support to the Polisario lie in the conflicting relations between Algeria and Morocco related to the disputed territories of Tindouf and Bechar. These rivalries had caused the outbreak of the so-called "War of the Sands" of 1963-1964, which ended through the mediation of the Organization of African Unity. On that occasion, thanks to the diplomatic Hail the Emperor of Ethiopia Hailé Selassié and President Modibo Keita of Mali, was not only

signed the peace agreement, but the foundations were laid for a hypothetical Treaty, never entered into force, between Algiers and Rabat for sharing mineral resources of Western Sahara. Despite the signing of a peace treaty between Algeri and Rabat, the rivalry between Algeria and Morocco has been so intense to determine the closure of the respective borders. The Algerian government, therefore, to destabilize the domestic front and engage the Moroccan monarchy in a matter that restricted the operations of foreign policy, began to fund and support the Polisario militarily. In addition, the Algerian government called for the creation of a "friend" State on the shores of the Atlantic which take advantage of the economic resources. It seems important to emphasize that, without the contribution of Algeria, the ability of the movement for the independence of Western Sahara would be irreparably compromised. Furthermore, the use of the Polisario as a "fifth column" of Algeria in Morocco makes it very difficult to develop a peaceful dialogue between the institutions and representatives of Rabat and Sahrawis. The lack of peace in the confrontation between the Kingdom of Morocco and Polisario has a negative impact on the work of MINURSO (United Nations Mission for the Referendum in Western Sahara), which must define the mechanisms of the referendum on the independence of the Saharawi people. It is easy to understand the reluctance of the Moroccan government in negotiations with the Polisario, in fact Rabat is contrary not only to the possibility of the loss of a strategic territory for historical and economic reasons, but fears the establishment of an Algerian satellite-state along its southern border.

In addition to its relations with Algeria and the Polisario, a second great example of state support to the irredentist movements and ethnic militias is the Libya of the Gaddafi regime. The reasons that prompted the

Colonel to fund and arm a large number of rebel movements across the African continent are ideological and they are projecting the Libyan influence on the Maghreb and Sahel scenario. Regarding the first aspect, Gaddafi had come under the influence of a pan-African and Arab supremacist ideology and had re-interpreted, according to personal standards, post-colonial pan-Africanism, two factors, which had led to support anti-colonialist and anti-imperialist organizations around the world. Moreover, according to Gaddafi view, the anti-colonial struggle and the emancipation of the Arab peoples were a piece of the global confrontation between Western countries and Islamic countries. As far as the aspirations of foreign policy are concerned, Gaddafi was perfectly aware that their country, rich in resources but with a poor population, needed to increase "men" at their disposal in order to achieve a large-scale hegemonic policy. Supporting secessionism became the instrument that gathered political and ideological needs. In fact, in supporting the rebel movements, Gaddafi not only hoped in the fall of those governments he judged as an enactment of the old Motherland, but intended to gather all "free" States into a single political entity having its cornerstone in Lybia. The means by which Libya trained, financed and tried to coordinate a comprehensive pattern of the various independence movements, was above all the local LIP (Islamic Pan-African Legion), founded in 1972 with the clear objective to release the peoples of the Sahara and Maghreb and create the great Islamic State of the Sahel. The LIP was mainly composed of immigrants from poorer countries of the Sahel and scattered groups of Pakistanis and Bangladeshis, some of whom had been recruited since 1981 with the promise of work in Libya. In general, members of the Legion were immigrants from Chad, Niger, Mali, originating from sub-Saharan Africa. One of the largest components consisted of the Tuareg ethnic group that Gaddafi considered

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central in its State Sahel pattern. Gaddafi sent the legionnaires to fight in Uganda, Palestine, Lebanon and Syria, but the most relevant experience of LIP were on the Chadian - Libyan conflict of 1978-1987, during which 7,000 men were employed. The disastrous outcome of the Chadian campaign lead the Colonel to dissolve the LIP, without abandoning the anti-colonialist and anti-imperialist vocation. In fact, Gaddafi continued to supply the insurrectionary movements with weapons, money and training, as proved by the creation of the World Revolutionary Center, a sort of university for the global anti-governmental organizations . In addition to significantly contributing to the training of Tuareg militias, the LIP constituted a major training and funding center for the Janjaweed militia, framed in the movement Tajammu al-Arabi, who fought for the rights of the Arab population in Darfur.

In addition to the LIP, the Libyan government supported in a systematic, direct and more traditional manner other revolutionary movements in Africa. In addition to the armed Tuareg groups in Mali and Niger, the most obvious example of this approach involves Chad. Indeed, besides the elements of the LIP, Gaddafi openly supported the FROLINAT (National Liberation Front of Chad), an organization that fought against the government in Khartoum, accusing him of being corrupt, unrepresentative and expression of the interests of the former French Motherland. Not surprisingly, the headquarters of the FROLINAT was in Tripoli. As in the case of Western Sahara and the relations between Algeria and Polisario, even the relationship between Libya and FROLINAT was imposed by the attempt of hegemonic projection of Tripoli in the Sahel region and the political conflict with Chad .

In fact, the regime of Colonel claimed as their own Aozou Strip, a strip of land on the border with Chad particularly rich in uranium deposits . The Libyan claims on Aozou Strip, started in 1970, they were based on historical, ethnic and legal arguments. First, the Libyan government claimed that the territory itself was inhabited by indigenous peoples, belonging to the Arab-Berber family, devoted to the Ottoman Empire and the Senussi monarchy. In addition, Gaddafi attempted to establish the legitimacy of their claims on the basis of a Franco- Italian treaty of 1935, never ratified, which granted the strip to the Italian colony of Libya. The conflict between Libya and Chad lasted from 1970 to 1987, alternating phases of high and low intensity. In this context, the FROLINAT, mainly formed by Arab militants, constituted a kind of Libyan political and military detachment on Chadian territory. Only the long series of military defeats and the consequent decline of goals on Strip Aozou lead Libya to stop the donation of money and weapons to the FROLINAT that, a few years later, ceased to exist .

The race for resources in the Sahel, as mentioned earlier, not only concerns the countries of the region, but it also involves States external to it. These actors act in an attempt to increase their economic opportunities and to destabilize political balance, both national and international unfavorable to them. In addition, the Sahelian region, because of the difficulty in controlling the borders, it is particularly suitable for the smuggling of weapons and precious metals. The non-African country more involved in the problems of the Sahel is certainly Iran.

For some years the Iranian government, in close alliance with the Sudan, has carried out a detailed strategic agenda throughout the Sahel, from the Red Sea to the Gulf of Guinea. The ultimate goal of this strategy is to consolidate the control and influence of this vast region and its remarkable energy and mineral resources, first of all the uranium,

which is essential to the realization of Tehran's nuclear program. At the international political level, the Islamic Republic would like to take advantage of the difficulties of Western countries and, at the same time, hinder the growth of Salafi anti-Shiite entity in the region. In addition, Tehran, in deference to an old practice of Soviet inspiration, sees the African countries as valuable allies who can help him to come out of the economic and political isolation imposed by the US-Israel axis.

The African penetration of Iran began in 1980, in the aftermath of the advent to power of Ayatollah Khomeini and the fall of the Shah . From the very beginning, Iran has been working closely with the more radical members of the Lebanese Shiite community present along the shores of the Gulf of Guinea, which then evolved into networks of Hezbollah. Since 1989, the main partner of Iran in Africa has been the Sudanese government of President Omar al-Bashir. This alliance has demonstrated the great flexibility of Iran, a country able to enter into agreements with a clear majority Sunni regimes which have the common aim of countering the economic and political cooperation with the West African countries .

As for the achievement of political objectives, the Islamic Republic of Iran has been the main supplier of ammunition, explosives and equipment for all anti-government west African forces regardless of their ideologies . Most of the uprisings that saw the protagonists formations in Côte d' Ivoire, Nigeria, Liberia and, partially, Mali, could not be supported logistically and militarily without the Iranian supplies .

As a result, Iranian intelligence has been able to establish a strong presence on all continental lines of communication and has established a deep operational cooperation with all subversive forces in this vast area regardless of their objectives and their

motivations. The main hub for the flow of these supplies was Sudan, traditional transit point for weapons in Africa directed both to Iranian allies in Palestine, to the Syrian regime and to Hezbollah. In addition, with the passing of time, Khartoum has become a real production and storage site of Iranian weapons, as witnessed from the site of Yarmouk, which was destroyed by the Israeli air force in October 2012. In addition to supporting the Sudan and some Palestinian organizations, the Islamic Republic of Iran has played a very active role in the security crisis in the Sahel . In fact, many of the jihadi militias who are in possession of weapons of Libyan arsenals did it thanks to the support and protection of elements of the Quds Force and Sudan. Discrete quantities of Libyan weapons were transported to Khartoum and then redistributed to Iran's allies through traditional continental power lines . In addition to Sudan, the Iranian presence is strengthened also in Nigeria, a country used as a crossroads and coordination center for activities in West Africa. The Nigerian security forces have repeatedly discovered hidden cache of Iranian weapons linked to local networks of Hezbollah and presumably intended to terrorist groups and Ansaru Boko Haram .

The sense of funding insurgent or inspired Al Qaeda organizations is easy to understand : it is intended to strike a tactical alliance with governments in good relations with the West in order to upset them and promote, at a later time, new ruling classes allied in Tehran. Thus, the indirect support to such organizations is purely tactical and short term, but with strong destabilizing effects.

Financing insurgent groups has both political and strategic economic aims. The support for jihadist forces in the Sahel may have the objective to weaken and affect the fragile governments of Mali and Niger, two countries rich in uranium resource that Iran needs to

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advance the nuclear program. It is conceivable that, in the event of failure to complete the project of subverting the regional political balance, Tehran may seek to channel traffic of rare earths. At the moment, such a procurement strategy is experienced by Iran against another country rich in the precious mineral, the CAR (Central African Republic). In fact, the Iranian regime, through its Sudan ally, has built strong relationships with Michel Djotodia, leading Seleka, the rebel group who overthrew president of RCA in March 2013. In fact, Djotodia, formerly a member of the Central African diplomatic staff in Darfur, has benefited from the Sudanese political and military aid during his rise to power and, in exchange for this support, he immediately sent an important load of diamonds for the Janjaweed militia . It is not impossible, therefore, that in the coming months the axis between Bangui and Khartoum will produce positive effects for Tehran.

States support for ethnic separatism, therefore, takes place in logic and established strategy of "proxy wars" that oppose governments competing for regional hegemony. However, an insurgence movement, in relying on a sponsor State, inevitably risks losing its political and operational independence. In addition, there is a risk that the reasons of the uprising and the struggle for self-determination take second place to the needs of the state sponsors. Finally, the presence of a "gray eminence" influencing the decision makers mechanisms of the insurgency poses a risk to any negotiations between the central government and the insurgents. In fact, no state authority legitimately in power would ever accept to discuss political and integration reform plans with movements considered as representative of a foreign power.

PART II

THE PRECARIOUSNESS OF HUMAN DEVELOPMENT

When Prof. Cheikh Tidiane Gadio introduced the reasons for the Afro-Arab crisis, he immediately focused his attention on the issues of ecological fragility and the consequent migration of the population that, in a context characterized by highly permeable geographical and political boundaries, generates economic and social problems difficult to be managed.

In a region like the one of Sahel, where the rainy season lasts up to four months in a year, the weather is a critical factor for the economy. The latter, in fact, is based essentially on a semi-nomadic agriculture (sorghum, millet and maize), livestock transhumance (camels and cattle) and trade (such as salt, for the preservation of foods, and products derived from animals, such as leather), all activities related to and dependent on the availability of fertile land and water. The hostility of the climate and the severe drought faced by Member Sahelian States are obstacles to food security and the fight against poverty of their populations.

Since the 70s there has been a significant increase in cultivated areas (approximately 8 to 18 million hectares in little more than thirty years), to which, however, has not matched an equivalent increase of crops: the over-exploitation of the soil has impoverished the land, causing a decrease in the wild areas and pastures. The gradual desertification of the area has inevitably led to a degradation of the geological conditions of the land, in the long term it has taken its toll on the possibilities of people's livelihood. This has caused on the one hand, the migration of entire tribes to new territories, on the other a reduction of the availability of crops for that part of the permanent population that has

instead remained tied to their land. The poor productivity of crops has thus generated tensions over access to resources still available. In particular, the tribes dedicated to transhumance, such as Tubu, Tuareg and Fulani, traditionally and culturally nomadic, are moving in search of water reserves for the sustenance of their livestock, thus putting at risk the already precarious crops of the sedentary tribe, Hausa, Kanuri and Songhai in the south of the region. The ethno-tribal partition of the economic activities has often led to attribute to demographic reasons conflicts that were instead triggered by competition for the exploitation of natural resources increasingly scarce. This is the case of Darfur, where following the birth of the political movements of the tribes of Arab origin, as the Tajammu al-Arab, and African origin, such as Sunni Front and Darfur Renaissance Front, the traditional arguments for the right to exploitation of the earth are transformed into complex social-political claims. When the non-Arab population has seen radicalizing the discriminatory attitude towards him, carried out by the central government in favor of nomadic tribes, the fear of a progressive crystallization of social inequality has moved groups of fighters to take up arms against the Sudanese government. The lack of training in dealing with the regular Army guerrilla insurgent movements, namely the JEM (Justice and Equality Movement) and the SLM (Sudan Liberation Movement), led the central government to finance the Janjaweed militia, starting an ongoing conflict, whose the impact has further exacerbated the environmental degradation in the country. In ten years, in fact, the increase in populous areas adjacent to the refugee camps, resulting in overexploitation of the resources available and the destruction of the natural heritage of the areas subject to raids by militias, have worsened the already precarious economic sustainability.

Although the immediate impact of the climatic conditions is clearly reflected on the primary sector, the crisis of agriculture and pastoralism, in turn, has an impact on businesses and the dynamics of urbanization of the rural population. Considering, for example, the dry season that hit the Sahel region in 2010 that has devastated the agricultural activity of the Eastern states of the Sahel. In Niger, only that particular drought, which for the population of Niger was the fourth within 36 years (the previous dates back to 1974, 1984 and 2005) has compromised the entire crop and decimated the livestock. With 90% of the population engaged in agriculture, the paralysis of the agricultural sector, which accounts for 40 % of Nigerian GDP, food crisis has involved about 8 million people. There has been a gradual depopulation of the countryside, in the south of the country, and a massive shift of population to the cities, both for the flow of breeders, who traveled in urban centers to try to sell the heads remained both for those who hoped the city could offer alternatives to work in the fields. The absence of an offer of suitable work to absorb the wave of labor from fields has inevitably resulted in a growth in unemployment, worsening social conditions of the country. Furthermore, the lack of agricultural products to be sold on local markets has interrupted trade with merchants Tuareg, who have always found it a source of livelihood in the sale of leather and finished, making it a possible variable to destabilize the security of the entire region.

The secondary sector is almost absent in the economy of the Sahel. The mining is the only form of industry in the region, but is still set according to a colonial model, according to which establishments in the area are operated by joint ventures between foreign multinationals and national companies whose production is entirely for export. For example, in 2012, Burkina Faso has exported about 32 tons of gold, ranking fourth among African producers . The local mining industry has experienced a great development as a result of privatization plans in 2004, accounting for 64.7 % of exports, with a value of € 66 billion, or 8% of GDP. The current six mines, some still in the exploration stage, are mostly run by the Canadian and Australian. With the reform of the Code of extraction, the Government of Burkina Faso has encouraged foreign investment in the sector, which can now enjoy a fixed taxation in the mining activity, a reduction of five percentage points (from 7.5 to 2.5 %) of customs duties on start up and the validity of the mining permit for 20 years, then renewable every 5 until depletion of the deposit. The attraction of foreign investments has helped to strengthen the mining industry itself, without, however, result in a positive return on the general economic system: in fact, still remain marginal projects for the development of a plan for local procurement that can enter the community national economy among stakeholders gold. This could stimulate the formation of local skilled labor, and consequently, an early form of service economy, setting the development of the macro-economic system towards a post-industrial model .

In addition to the wealth of its underground (gold, tin, iron, copper, salt and phosphates) the Sahel provides important deposits of energy resources, such as oil (Sudan and Niger), gas (Algeria) and uranium (Niger), which arouse the interest of the countries of Europe, America and Asia. In particular, China is one of the most dynamic economic actors in the region, driven by the search for alternative sources for diversification of its energy supplies. The Chinese economic penetration is evident in Niger, where until a few years ago the local uranium resources were allocated exclusively to the French market, while recently the government in Niamey has opened negotiations for the sale of concessions with Canada and China. The latter, in 2007 established a joint venture

between the national airline Sinou and the Niger government for the extraction of about 700 tons of uranium a year in the Teguidda n-Tesumit, in di In Gall, south of Arlit . It is no coincidence, therefore, that the China Nuclear International Uranium Company has become the largest investor in the activity of extraction. In addition, CNPC (China National Petroleum Corporation), has signed a deal worth U.S. $ 5 billion for the extraction of oil from the site of Agadem, including the construction of 2,000 kilometers of pipeline and a refinery capable of treating 20,000 barrels per day.

The substantial centralization of access rights to the energy and mining assets by the central government and the consequent inequality of the profits generated from it, often leads to tension with the tribal minorities that inhabit the region in which are deposits. In the case of Niger, the main mining activities are located on the Air Massif, which has always been considered a totemic place by the Tuaregs. In addition, the aquifer of Agadez, at the foot of the Massif, is grazing area for the cattle of these tribes: the pollution caused from uranium, which is poured into water reserves in the area, ends, in fact, to have major repercussions on their economic activities. Similarly, even in Darfur, the rebels of JEM in carrying out their opposition to the government in Khartoum, are claiming a more equitable redistribution of income related to the extraction and sale of oil, raising the percentage from 2 to 5%.

Given the close link existing between the institutions of the United Sahelian and international companies that invest in the territory, colonial economic heritage of the interference, the importance of the tribal factor does not concern exclusively the economic dynamics of the region, but has repercussions on the interests of the international community. Examples in this regard were the consequences of the crisis in

Mali : the attacks on the website of the Niger French nuclear company Areva and the previous assault on the website of In Amenas, Algeria, were acts of retaliation for France intervention against the advance of the Tuareg fighters in northern Mali. The instability created by the interpenetration of tribal movements with the network of international terrorism in the region creates, therefore, a substantial security crisis that discourages any form of investment in the long run.

In an economic system in which the industrial sector is entirely dependent on foreign capital, the loss of these investments would force states in the region to regress economy to a substantial subsistence. In this context, economic development appears to be, in fact, the result of two key variables: the stabilization of the context and institutional governance.

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PARTE III

THE SAFETY PROBLEMS

III.I Trafficking of weapons, drugs and humans

The Sahel has become a major hub for the trafficking of drugs, weapons and humans leaving from the African continent towards Europe or Asia. The ephemeral borders and the morphological features of the, in fact, make it particularly difficult to control the borders, facilitating the smuggling activities.

The trafficking of humans arriving in Europe from Africa follows two main lines, one from West Africa and the other along the East Africa. As far as West Africa, the collection points are Agadez, Niger, and Gao, in Mali. From these two cities starts two distinct routes: Tamanrasset, in Algeria, which goes to Spain and the one of Sebha, in Libya, which goes to Italy. In the past there were two other routes, a more western one that from the coasts of Mauritania and Senegal led to the Canary Islands, and a terrestrial one, from Senegal to Morocco, passing through Mauritania or Mali to the Spanish coast, now threatened by the activities of patrolling by the Madrid authorities.

Given the current freedom of movement within the ECOWAS, whose all West African States belong to, with the exception of Mauritania, the critical issues for those seeking to leave the continent is clear during the transit in the states of North Africa, for which you would need a visa and regular identity documents. This difficulty led many refugees to turn to, often with the complicity of local police, "professional" traffickers who can guarantee, upon generous reward, the transport and local knowledge needed to reach the coasts of Mediterranean.

Traffickers in human beings, known as smugglers in Gao or Tchaga In Agadez, in general are traders or former emigrants who maintained a well-established network of relationships with criminal networks in the destination countries, generally related to the world of prostitution. Despite doubts still remain about the link between human trafficking and organized crime in Africa and Europe, it certainly feeds the network of lawlessness and corruption in the countries of transition migration routes. In fact, traffickers often work with other criminal organizations for locating means for direct contact with refugees, adopting a logic of functional differentiation typical of structured business activities. In addition, in many cases the border crossings and the inspection of police forces are exceeded by the payment of bribes. According to estimates the evaluations by UNODC (United Nations Office on Drug and Crime), emigrants trafficking to Europe in 2011 has generated a spin-off of about 105 million dollars: a part of these were allocated to local authorities, panderers in finding visas for the entry of refugees in North African countries, and most have instead swell the coffers of terrorist groups in the region, applying taxes to step inside the desert areas, as a handout for the safety of convoys.

Ralph Thiele

President of Politisch-Militärische
Gesellschaft

*"Need to adopt a comprehensive approach
to the security issue because to focus on
the individual details (as did the
international community in Mali) is not an
appropriate response. The scenario is a
mosaic made up of organized crime (crime
and political ambition), interest in external
actors (e.g. China and Saudi Arabia) and
ethnic minorities. Recommendations:
continental cooperation for the
securitization of borders, cooperation with
NATO in crisis management programs
(could make use of existing infrastructure
thanks to Western intervention)"*

As for East Africa, trafficking in human beings that starts mainly from Eritrea to arrive in Egypt and the Sinai Peninsula, crossing the Sudan. Many of these migrants, who are trying to escape the regime of Isaias Afewerki and find refuge in camps in eastern Sudan, are often kidnapped and held hostage by a group of local smugglers. Among them, members of the Rashaida tribe originating in northern Eritrea and Sudan's north-east, dealing with kidnappings, while the Bedouin groups are responsible for collecting the ransom (about $300) or sale of the hostages on the European markets, Israelis and Arabs. Again, this network is often connected with corrupt police force, who facilitate the kidnappings in refugee camps, or their movement across the border. The induced traffic generated by the refugees would not be produced only by redemption payments by family members but also from the sale of organs on the black market, for which the selling price start from $ 20,000. Organ trafficking would generate an overall profit second only to the flow of money tied up in arms trafficking.

The latter, before 2011, was essentially based on the flow of weapons from Somalia, Egypt, Chad and Sudan, to the eastern regions of the Sahel and from Liberia, Ivory Coast and Sierra Leone to the west. With the fall of the Gaddafi regime and the ensuing political and security crisis in Libya, the regional market has been hit by loads of weapons used by the militias during the revolution which, through the passage of Erg Merzoug, arrived in Niger. The warehouse, once controlled by Libyan security forces, are the main sources of this new traffic: it is mostly RPG, anti-aircraft artillery, surface to air missiles and ammunition made in Russia. The size and sophistication of Libyan armaments represent a critical factor for the security of the region: as there is no control over the destination of the weapons, these have strengthened the offensive capabilities of the groups of active combatants in the entire region of West Africa and the Sahel. Arms trafficking in Africa is not only fueled by criminal networks, but is characterized by sales channels managed by corrupt members of the Security Forces or guaranteed by foreign countries. Significant in this regard is the provision of weapons that Iran has allocated to the Sudanese government as early as 2008, when, following the signing of an agreement on military cooperation between the two countries, exports to Khartoum have reached 12 million dollars. In addition, in the northern part of Darfur exist some warehouses managed by the Department of Special Iranian Revolutionary Guard, the Quds Force, which would be kept in the armamentarium of Gaddafi, taken away by the forces of Tehran during the Libyan civil war of 2011.

The traffic can be managed by former soldiers, fighters or mercenaries, who deal with the procurement and sale of weapons, transport, especially on long distance, was instead given to couriers experts who know how to take advantage of differences in

taxation between the different countries, or nomadic groups who know the topography of the area and ensure the safety of the load. The latter case sees Tuaregs as one of the most illuminating examples.

As for drug trafficking, the Sahel is the preferred corridor for the cannabis trade, coming from the coastal regions and directed to Egypt and the Arabian Peninsula across the Sahel, heroin and methamphetamine, of Asian origin, and cocaine. The cocaine that arrives in Africa comes from big producers in Latin America, Colombia and Venezuela since 2004, in fact, there has been a partial modification of the routes of drug couriers who, abandoning the Caribbean route, have begun to watch with interest the West African coast. There are two main routes for this traffic: from Guinea and Guinea Bissau, through Mauritania and from the Gulf of Benin through Niger and Mali. The target market is essentially Europe. While initially the voyage was by boat, today it is increasingly common that drug couriers resort to air transport, with both commercial and cargo aircraft. This change in the modus operandi, which was confirmed in 2009 by the discovery, in an improvised track of the Malian desert, of a Boeing 767, shows a substantial evolution in the organization of the network of trade, which gradually became one of the main economic resources for the countries of the region.

The drug trade that transits from the Sahel is the result of the confluence of international interests, Latin American producers, traffickers of the countries where the loads and European criminal groups arrive, but inevitably impacts on the regional context. In fact, according to the survey of the UNODC (United Nations Office on Drug and Crime) in 2009 approximately 21 tons of cocaine, valued at $900 million, would have transited the Sahel .

If the flow of money generated by drug trafficking is added to that resulting from the arms smuggling and trafficking of human beings, it is clear that the spin-off of the criminal economy represents a significant source of income for the local population, who often have to live with a situation of extreme underdevelopment. In a context where the government is unable to ensure the sustainability of its economy and, consequently, the existence of the local community, the criminal organizations are easily able to fill this void of authority, within the population finding a recruitment pool to draw upon to strengthen its network . The afore mentioned permeability of boundaries, the inability of security forces to control entire areas on the outskirts of the States and the flow of money that smuggling activities can stimulate the region lead, in fact, the population to look for criminal networks as a viable alternative for their livelihoods. And the interpenetration of the interests of traffickers with those of local communities, which is inevitable in the absence of an economic system that gives the possibility of long-term development, to encourage the roots of crime, more or less organized within the social network of the region . Over the past ten years, the new criticality safety was made by the penetration of Jihadi organizations in networks of trafficking in drugs, arms and human beings as sources of funding. The thinning of the border between crime and terrorism makes it even more difficult the work of contrast by the national security agencies and especially increases the consequences and political responsibility of those members of institutions and police forces colluded with the traffickers . As stated by Cheikh Tidiane Gadio, today in the Sahel, the problem of the existence of a criminal economy is irrevocably linked to the generation of cash flows available to the terrorist networks.

III.II Al Qaeda-inspired terrorism

The most safety criticality afflicting the Sahel region of Africa and the north and west, is the terrorism of Al Qaeda. Between al-Qaeda and Africa there has always been a privileged relationship for historical and ideological reasons. It should be stressed that the embryo cultural Qaedism was born in Egypt thanks to the writings of Said Qutb and that Osama Bin Laden conceived and founded the network in the second half of the nineties while he was a guest of the Sudanese government of al- Bashir . In addition, the first attacks claimed by al- Qaeda in 1998 struck Kenya and Tanzania . However, the systematic and structured penetration of al-Qaeda in the Sahel region is relatively recent and happened very gradually. In fact, the birth of the terrorist network is essentially a urban phenomenon, which occurred in a structured society and through " neutral "channels such as universities, mosques and centers of Islamic culture. In the Sahara and the Sahel, tribal societies, the absence of mosques and the prevalence of Sufi Islam has made the operations and penetration of Al Qaeda slower and more difficult. In fact, the jihadi commanders have had to develop a network of contacts with tribal leader, initially for purely logistical aims, such as the need for funding, and through channels of drug trafficking and weapons.

It should be noted that, in the Maghreb, the Salafist terrorist movements have often developed in an indigenous and independent form from al- Qaeda and with the aim of hitting the autocratic regimes in their countries of origin. With the passing of time, these organizations have intensified their relations with al-Qaeda, providing militants for the cause of Bin Laden or developing different degrees of affiliation with the network, such as the alliance or the transformation of it into a franchise. Initially, the relationship between national Salafist movements and al-Qaeda have been

developed through personal contacts of some militants who had taken part in the anti - Soviet jihad in Afghanistan in the eighties and who had remained to fight there in the next period. The different degrees of affiliation and transformation into Al Qaeda franchise by national groups has depended on many factors, whose most important are the economic needs, the decrease of the political and ideological appeal of national groups on the local population, the logistic-instructional benefits deriving from the membership of an extended network. The most important examples of the relationship between national Salafi groups and al-Qaeda are the LIFG(Libyan Islamic Fighting Group), the EIJ (Egyptian Islamic Jihad) and the Algerian SGPC (Salafist Group for Preaching and Combat). In this case, the LIFG has maintained a steady independence in regard to the Al Qaeda network, maintaining relationships based on the individual experience of some of its leader, the EIJ is totally merged to al-Qaeda, while the SGPC became AQIM, the North African and Sahelian franchise of the organization.

According to Yossef Bodansky, jihadism, as a theological concept, abstract and general, can theoretically be traced back to a specific geographic data and for this reason, the name "al- Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb" would not initially make sense. However, since 2005, there has been a progressive loss of ties between groups in North Africa and the leaders of Central al-Qaeda, in order to allow greater operational and strategic independence to the first mentioned. In fact, the generation who took the field in 2005 is more "localized".

AQIM was formally born on January 28th, 2007, when the leader of the SGPC Abdelmalek Droukdel (Abu Musab Abdel Wadoud) has officially announced the affiliation of the Algerian group to the network

Yussef Bodansky

Director of the Task Force on Terrorism and Asymmetric War of the Congress of the United States from 1988 to 2004

"Jihadism is a theological, abstract and general concept, and as such cannot be traced to a precise geographical indication. In this sense, from an ideological standpoint, the AQIM denomination doesn't make sense. The evolution of Al Qaeda jihadism starts from 2005, when a new generation of fighters, much more localized than the previous ones, took the reins of the anti-Western front while gradually losing ties with the leaders of al-Qaeda Central. For state institutions, the only weapon to demotivate the ideological basis is to get partners of the civilian population, proposing and supporting the phenomenon of grassroots participation, encouraging the representation of ethnic minorities and ensuring that international aid provides for infrastructural and social disfunctionality and state security."

of al-Qaeda. However, the relationship between the two organizations was already consolidated for several years . The desire to Droukdel of joining the franchise of al-Qaeda was determined by the need to reinvigorate the strength and appeal of the SGPC, both of them damaged by the effective anti-terrorism strategy of the Government of Algiers and the gradual alienation of popular support. In fact, the Algerian people, exhausted by decades of civil war, 1992-2002, were becoming increasingly critical towards the ideology, methods and activities of Salafist groups originated and evolved from the ISF(Islamic Salvation Front) and the AIG (Armed Islamic Group).

Droukdel saw in affiliation with al-Qaeda is the possibility to revive the image, prestige

and, therefore, support and recruitment to the SGPC, enlarging the area of operations from Algeria itself to the whole region of North Africa, West Africa and the Sahel.

The structure of AQIM, which although depending formally by al- Qaeda Central and Ayman al-Zawahiri has a wide operating range, partially follows the organizational scheme of the SGPC . The leader of the organization is the Emir Droukdel, assisted by the Majlis al-Ayan (Council of Dignitaries) in the definition of the political and operational strategies. Immediately subordinate to the Emir and the Council of Dignitaries is the Majlis al-Shura (Consultative Committee), a body composed of the members of the Majlis al- Ayan and heads of individual committees. These are "departments" responsible respectively for military affairs, external relations, recruitment, judicial matters, Sharia law, media and propaganda. A peculiar aspect of the structure of AQIM is the separation of the committee responsible for the Sharia and the charge of judicial affairs, which is unique in the global Al Qaeda scenario. In fact, in the other regional slings of al-Qaeda, which AQAO (al- Qaeda in East Africa, Union of Somali jihadist movement al-Shabaab and the Kenyan Islamic Youth Center) and AQAP (al-Qaida in the Arabian Peninsula) judicial affairs and matters relating to the Sharia are gathered into a single committee. The reasons for the peculiarity of AQIM and the separation between the two committees are to be found both in the specificity of the Algerian jihadists, characterized by an evolution and development which despite the effects of the global Al Qaeda, have always maintained local characteristics non-traceable in the other groups of the network, and in the diversity of traditions and Islamic schools in the region of the Maghreb and the Sahel, often influenced by the strong legacy of ethnic and tribal cultures of the area. In any case, AQIM has inherited from SGPC its

purely Algerian nature, as witnessed by the origin of the great majority of the militants and almost all of the commanders.

From the operational point of view, AQIM is organized into three districts or Emirates: Central Emirate, corresponding to the northern province of Boumerdes Algeria and the region of Kabylia, it is the nerve center of the activities of the Algerian Salafist groups since the time of the GIA and has maintained this characteristic also with the SGPC and AQIM, which still houses the leadership and management structures. The Eastern Emirate, including the eastern Algerian provinces of Constantine,Tébessa, Jijel and Skikda; this "district" has suffered the most counter-terrorist actions by the Armed Forces of Algiers, a factor that has weakened its structure and diminished its operativity. The Emirate of the Sahara, corresponding to southern Algeria and northern Mali and to the north-east of Mauritania. This Emirate is the most active and strong inside AQIM. Its distinctive feature is the presence of a high number of militants and leaders of no Algerian nationality, such as Sahrawis, Mauritanian, Malian, Nigerian and Chad .

Each Emirate, whose head is appointed directly by the leader of AQIM, controls a variable number of military commands which are in turn subordinating different katiba (brigades).

The Emirate of the Sahara, before 2007, corresponded to the military command of the Sahel-Sahara inside the GSPC, created a few years earlier by the Algerian militant Abderrazak al-Para in order to expand the propaganda and the recruitment pool for regions external to the Salafi Algeria. From 2005 to 2007, before the transformation of the SGPC into AQIM, the district commander of the Sahel - Sahara was Belmohktar Mokhtar, a veteran of the civil war in the ranks of the Algerian GIA. Contemporary of Droukdel, Belmokhtar, unlike the emir of

AQIM, traveled to Afghanistan in the early 90s where he was trained in the jihadists camps and came into direct contact with the Al Qaeda leadership. In the two years at the top of the military command of the Sahel - Sahara, Belmohktar has established himself as one of the most influential and authoritative characters of the terrorist scenario in North Africa, contributing significantly to the spread Salafi ideology out of Algeria and strengthening his influence through the control of the routes deserts of cigarette smuggling and narcotics from South America and headed for Europe. The latter activity has earned him the nickname "Mr. Marlboro". When AQIM was born, Belmohktar and Droukdel had already entered the competition for the position of Emir. Once obtained the appointment to head the Al Qaeda North African organization, Droukdel has constantly sought to delegitimize and weaken Belmokhtar, at first degrading him to the role of commander of the al-katiba Moulathamine (Masked Brigade) and then emphasizing the "sinfulness" of his financing methods and its relationship with drug traffickers.

The final break occurred following the attack by AQIM against the United Nations offices in Algiers on December 11th2007. In that case, the decision to attack a strong symbolic value was taken from Droukdel in person and had Belmokhtar one of the strongest opponent . In fact, Belmokhtar believed, rightly, that such an action would have triggered a vehement reaction from the Algerian security forces. His prediction was proved to be correct. In fact, the subsequent operations of the Armed Forces of Algiers was profoundly struck by the organization and the cells of AQIM, forcing its leadership to flee, isolated and less operative, on the mountains of Kabylia .

On the contrary, the Emirate of the Sahara, in particular thanks to the Masked Brigade Belmokhtar, continued to increase both the

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number of attacks against the Armed Forces and the kidnapping of Western citizens residing in the Sahel countries (Algeria, Mauritania, Mali, Niger). In addition to the proceeds of drug trafficking, then, AQIM operatives have entered strongly into the business of ransoms, rapidly becoming the richest "franchise" within the structure of al-Qaeda.

Needless to emphasize how, with the passing of time, the contrast between the two leadership of AQIM, the one of Kabylia orbiting Droukdel and the one of the Sahel focused on the figure of Belmokhtar, has become increasingly pronounced .

However, in a harsh environment such as the Sahara, power, operational capabilities and social networks of individual personality weigh more than the structure of organizations . In the desert, al- Qaeda is primarily represented by the commanders of individual katiba and around them grows or decreases the power and influence of the organization. Therefore, the leadership of Al Qaeda in the Sahel is, by its nature, multipolar and highly autonomous from the top of Kabylia, influenced by the strong ties that exist between tribal groups Sahrawi, Mauritanian, Malian and Nigerien that transcend the functional hierarchy of the organization. These really entropic ethnic dynamics and the contrast between the Algerian and non-Algerian component of AQIM has led to the birth of MUJAO (Movement for Unity and Jihad in West Africa), Al-Qaeda -inspired group composed mostly of militants from Mauritania, Mali and Niger, specialized in the business of kidnapping. As stated by Peter Roell, this criminal activity has a double meaning, which is used as a weapon of political pressure from Western governments and as a form of financing. At the moment, the kidnappings are the most dangerous security problems for

Europe and for its citizens in the Sahel region.

Belmokhtar, as a personality formed in the complex scenario of the desert, is one of the most illuminating examples of Sahel nature leadership of al-Qaeda. Not surprisingly, once found himself isolated within the Emirate of the Sahara has not hesitated to escape from AQIM and to found, in 2012, an independent group called al- Muawaqqi bin al-Dima (Battalion of those who sign with the Blood). It should be emphasized how Belmokhtar, although he continues to play a central role in the control of trafficking routes for drugs and weapons in the Sahel, has not abandoned the ideological vocation and political purposes of his al Qaeda militancy . The seizure of the western Algerian technicians and employees in the energy infrastructure of In Amenas in Algeria is a clear evidence of how the activity of Belmokhtar is also directed to a global dialectic jihad. In fact, in addition to the payment of a ransom, the terrorist leader has called for the release of two prominent personalities of al- Qaeda prisoners in the United States, the blind sheikh Omar Abdel Rahman and Afia Siddiqui, and the cease of French military operations in Mali. The request for the release, impossible to be granted and the strong ideological and propagandistic value, is the best proof of the real reasons that still guide Belmokhtar in its Salafist militancy .

Belmokhtar has played a central role in the insurrection of 2012 Tuareg from the beginning. In fact, initially he was one of the most responsible for the transfer of arms arsenals of Gaddafi to Tuareg (and non Tuareg) Qaedist militants. The leader of the Battalion of those who sign with the Blood has become one of the biggest weapon dealers in the Sahel at the end of 201, when it replaced the Tuareg leader Ibrahim Ag Bahanga through Colonel Gaddafi and the tribes of the desert, who died in August the

same year. Later, when the control of AQIM, the MUJAO and Ansar al-Din has stabilized in the north of Mali, Belmokhtar went to Gao to supervise closely the operations of the Qaedist militia.

The experience of Belmokhtar best represents the Qaedist trends in the Sahel. In fact, the organization, not being able to get "block " in the region, has relied on the work of individual and relevant personalities linked to the different ethnic groups and different tribes. Belmokhtar, in fact, is not an isolated case: just think of Adnan Abu Walid Saharawi military chief of MUJAO, from one of the most influential Sahrawi tribes of the Sahel. As wanted to highlight Anouar Boukhars, AQIM wants to diversify its activities, penetrating in other states, such as Libya, Tunisia, Mauritania and Nigeria, and finding support in other groups, such as the MUJAO. This diversification of activities, continued Boukhars, is part of a process of re-launching its ideology and its strategy following the success of the anti-terrorist in the United States, globally, and Algeria, locally. In this sense, the crisis in Libya of 2011 and the crisis in Mali of 2012 established two new opportunities to penetrate the region.

For al-Qaeda, the penetration opportunities are linked to regional, economic and political problems of the Sahel region. In fact, drug trafficking and tribal networks are a means to expand its hegemony, not the ultimate targets of the organization. As stated by prof. Margelletti, the spread of jihadism is mainly due to lack of credible alternatives to the local populations. The instability, in this sense, is caused by the inability of states to receive their authority through the provision of services such as education, health and work. The exploitation of underdevelopment and poverty has allowed AQIM and the MUJAO to pose as new partners against marginalized and subordinate ethnic minorities. The infiltration of jihadist irredentist movements

can take place when the old formations of the peripheral ethnic minorities lose consensus towards their recruitment base. There are many reasons that determine the loss of appeal of the traditional military-ethnic political formations: the lack of funds, the sedimentation of the political agenda, the lack of concrete results, nepotism and self-leadership. This loss of confidence is particularly evident in the younger generation, often far from the propaganda and original history of the insurgent groups. Al- Qaeda, on the contrary, is able to give money, services and "tempting" ideals militants who intend to embrace the cause. The Sahel collects two great examples of this infiltration: the young Tuareg militants in Niger and Mali and the youth of the Polisario Front. The risks associated with this mechanism of infiltration are twofold: on the one hand, as stated by Anouar Boukhars, there is a risk that al-Qaeda could radicalize instances of minorities and paralyze the ethno-nationalist matrix of the conflicts that already exist, while on the other it is feared that the struggles for self-determination of people are transformed into jihad, and thus lose its original purpose and become politically and legally unsustainable.

Besides the ability to infiltrate the local tribal-ethnic contexts, al-Qaeda has been shown to develop a new policy and a new strategic and operational trend. The state of marginalization of the peripheries and the absence of State has determined, as pointed out by the Minister of Defense Italian Mauro, an evolution of the terrorist threat that has brought to replace the existing legitimate political institutions with their own ones. This new criticality emerged in particular in northern Mali and across the Maghreb.

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Raffaele de Lutio
Deputy General Manager and Director for Sub-Saharan African countries at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Italian Republic

"The most important aspect of the military intervention and the subsequent political action is to prevent terrorist groups from being able to embody what are the political and social needs of minority and disadvantaged groups of the Sahara and the Sahel. In the event that the political and social agenda fuses with the jihadist agenda, terrorism would be legitimized, since it would cease to be a simple act of violence, but would turn into a concrete vehicle for the claims of large parts of society. For this reason, it is fundamental to manage the governance and absorption of social issues in the reconstruction of a state that is able to ensure the common

The trend to institutionalization by al-Qaeda does not result solely in an attempt to build a bureaucracy and social apparatus parallel to that of the state. In fact, the new policy approach developed within the organization has had significant returns on those Salafi formations that, while not formally allied nor placed in the network, maintain with it substantial and significant ideological ties. In this case, it is the extremist organizations in Libya and Tunisia in the aftermath of the "Arab Spring" and that, in both countries, have assumed the name of Ansar al-Sharia(The Protectors of the Law). Especially in Tunisia, Ansar al-Sharia has begun to play a very significant political role, acting as a privileged interlocutor of the vulnerable populations of rural areas and the suburbs. The Salafi group has demonstrated political and social agenda of absolute importance, rapidly becoming the first force in many districts of the country. This incredible growth of consensus was made possible, as

mentioned earlier, by the shortcomings of the state in the poorest areas of Tunisia, such as the South-East and the areas close to the desert and the border with Algeria. The most worrying is the possibility that Ansar al-Sharia, in the regions where it is prevalent, impose their own men in the institutions, using both channels of the election and methods of intimidation and\or plebiscites. So, as he warned prof. Margelletti, this criticality poses a serious problem of infiltration of jihadist realities within the local and political administrations.

The destabilization of the Sahel and the activities of al-Qaeda pose a danger not only for the African region, but throughout the world. In fact, in the era of global relations, shared economic interests and the massive development of the media, a crisis in a particular corner of the planet has inevitable international repercussions. If you think of the Sahel, a belt between the southern coast of the Mediterranean Sea and the Gulf of Guinea, it is clear that the previous statement is valid especially for Europe. In fact, the jihadist groups through the control of drug trafficking and human beings have a remarkable weapon of political pressure to the governments of the north shore of the Mediterranean. In addition, the asymmetric military capability allows the brigades of al-Qaeda to strike Western economic interests by sudden attacks on energy infrastructure where there are citizens and European and American companies. Finally, the business of kidnapping, forcing governments to shell out large sums of money for the release of hostages and, more importantly, creates serious repercussions on public opinion of the countries involved.

We must not forget the Al Qaeda network capacity to mobilize and transfer significant resources towards those fronts and those goals deemed sensitive by it. Peter Roell has emphasized in particular the latest threat,

recalling how real is the risk of movements of militants in the direction of Europe with the intention of organizing attacks in retaliation for operations in the Sahel region.

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PART IV

THE MALIAN CASE

IV.I Preliminary considerations

The Malian crisis of 2012-2013 summarizes in itself all the issues of Sahel described until now and embodies the total volume of risks to which every State in the area is virtually exposed.

Over the last two years, the West and North Africa has been moved by a profound and unexpected political upheaval that has affected, in particular, the regions of Maghreb and Sahel. This change happened in two different phases: the first was the so-called "Arab Spring", which caused the overthrow of neo-capitalist regimes in Tunisia, Libya and Egypt, weakening or, in severe cases, shattering political institutions and safety. The second phase was the destabilization of the countries of the Sahel, which had in the Malian Civil War its most dramatic and bloody example. In this sense, the negative externalities of the collapse of authoritarian regimes in Maghreb have superimposed and crossed with the critical political, economic and social ones that has long afflicted the Sahel region, contributing to their violent explosion. In this context of precarious balance and continuous rotation, the threats related to the activities of AQIM (al- Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb) and its allies, the traffickers of drugs, weapons and human beings, have found an excellent opportunity for penetration and proliferation.

From the historical and geopolitical point of view, the liaison that binds the two phases of the North African upheaval, is represented by the effects of the fall of the regime of Colonel Gaddafi. Since the late sixties, the deceased President had funded and trained to fight armed ethnic and tribal minorities in neighboring countries who were fighting for self-determination in order to destabilize the region's governments. In addition, due to multiple internal reasons, Gaddafi had both integrated many members of tribes and ethnic groups in the Libyan army and hired numerous militias who responded directly to his orders. One of the most important components of these "mercenaries departments" was made up of Tuareg militants. Not surprisingly, during the Libyan Civil War of 2011, much of the loyalist resistance insurgency was made up of ethnic Tuareg fighters or sub-Saharan Africans. The relationship between the "blue people of the desert" and the Colonel was particularly strong: in fact, most of the traffic in arms with

> ## Tieman Hubert Coulibaly
> Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Government of Mali between 2012 and 2013
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> *"The fall of Colonel Gaddafi in Libya not only caused the movement of large quantities of arms, but encouraged the spread of a logic of destabilization toward Mali and toward all the area of the Sahel and of the Maghreb. The difficulties that the Malian government had with a dialogue with some of the Tuareg communities are derived from the presence, in those specific communities, of extremist elements of foreign origin. Such extremism seriously endangered the territorial integrity of the state. The dialogue of reconciliation is critical to ensuring the territorial integrity in the future. It is a process internal to Mali, a process of national respect to which the election of July 28 constitutes a starting point and not an ending point. Only the establishment of a new government and a new parliament legitimately elected by the people will allow the effectiveness of reconciliation because a transitional government would not have the authority to act as guarantor."*

which Gaddafi supplied the secessionist movements throughout Africa was run by Ibrahim Ag Bahanga, an influential tribal leader linked to the Tuareg clan Kel Adrar.

The death of the Colonel, in October 2011, has deprived the Tuareg of their main political sponsors and their main source of livelihood. At that point, hundreds of militants, loads of weapons and equipment of the Libyan arsenals, have returned to their homelands. The Tuaregs returned in Mali have not been able to reintegrate into an economic and political deficit, aggravated by the lack of resources for the sustenance and the absence of a channel of political-institutional dialogue with the central government and the protection of their rights. The explosive mixture of poverty, discrimination and wide military availability has soon degenerated, from January 2012, in the insurrection against the government in Bamako, which has shown all the fragility and uncertainty of an administrative structure and a process of democratization that slowly and gradually began to offer encouraging signs. In the face of armed uprising, the weaknesses of the state of Mali have emerged rapidly and inexorably, causing the collapse of the legitimate democratic institutions and the disintegration of the Armed Forces. In this political anarchy scenario, the movements of al-Qaeda have embraced the cause of Tuareg independence, impoverishing its contents and transforming it into a jihad. The absence of the state has allowed AQIM and its allies the establishment of a Salafi sanctuary in the heart of the Sahel, in a strategic position to influence the political dynamics and safety of both the Maghreb, struggling with the delicate democratic transition followed the "Arab Spring" that West African affected by social and ethnic problems such as to allow a possible jihadist infiltration.

Only the French intervention and the African Union, which took place earlier than originally expected, was able to stop the advance of the Qaedist forces. However, despite having limited military operational capabilities of AQIM and its allies, the African regional organizations and the international community are now required to contribute to the institutional reconstruction of Mali. The crisis of Bamako has shown how the problems of the Sahel and North and West Africa are primarily economic and political. The Malian events are unique not only in the regional setting. If we deeply analyze the political, economic and social problems of the Sahel countries there are a lot of similarities with the case of Bamako. The risk of Qaedist contagion in the area passes through the capabilities of jihadist movements to exploit these vulnerabilities to their advantage. On the contrary, the international community is well aware that the best weapon against the Salafi proselytism is the implementation of a strong social agenda based on the protection of civil and political rights of different ethnic communities and the development of an adequate system of welfare. The stabilization of Mali and the Sahel is fundamental to the whole Mediterranean area. In fact, the main lesson of the Malian crisis is that, in contexts where the boundaries are simple segments traced on a map, the problems of a State may soon become problems of all States in the region adjacent to it. For this reason, common problems need common and shared solutions to be solved.

IV.II The Tuareg separatism: origins and historical events

As in many other African conflicts, the origin of the Tuareg insurgence is to be found in the policies of the former colonial powers and in some limits to the process of decolonization that, in many cases, including that of Mali, has failed to achieve adequate strategies political integration and social support for all

the different ethnic communities of the country.

The history of the African continent teaches how the concept and the structures of the nation-state have been imported and imposed by the colonial powers, which, by virtue of its economic and strategic interests and in compliance with international political balance decisive in Europe, have divided the African territories without considering the ethnic-social dynamics that characterized them. The effect of the creation of colonial empires was to alter the traditional regionalization of certain civilizations and ethnic groups, disintegrating the structures of self-government and forcing people to live together in very different contexts artificially created. In addition to separations and forced cohabitation among different ethnic groups and civilizations, the impact of colonial rule focused on the cultural and administrative center. In fact, in applying its own law and their own customs, the country colonizer has often upset and destroyed the local customs, profoundly affecting the way of life of the community in question. This criticality has characterized, in particular, the French possessions, as the government in Paris has traditionally applied the strategy of the assimilation as cornerstone in the management of the colonies. It seems clear, therefore, that such a centralized, one-sided and single management of political power was afoot of a profound conflict, often violent, between the governorates and local communities. To this must be added the repression that the European security forces have regularly applied whenever the movement expression of ethnic minorities have attempted to rebel.

In many cases, during the process of decolonization, the new independent states arose from the ashes of the colonial empires maintained broadly unchanged the administrative organization and the boundaries established, long ago, by European governments. This "conservative" choice had the goal of preserving the unity of the new state subjects without exposing them to the risk of disintegration due to the pressure of the demands of minorities. Unfortunately, the new African governments have continued to adopt, in respect of social and political demands of the local communities, the same repressive policy of the European colonizers.

The complexity of the political dynamics and problems related to colonial rule find in the Tuareg issue and in the Malian historical experience two clear examples.

The Tuareg represent an ethnic-tribal reality framed in the great Berber family. It is a semi-nomadic people, devoted to trade, agriculture and livestock and organized in a complex and articulated confederation "greater than" eight "minor" confederations which, in turn, bring together the different families and tribes. The semi-nomadic nature of the Tuareg allows these people to move in a relatively limited space and that each "minor" confederation retain a specific territorialism. Based on these characteristics, it has become increasingly difficult to make a reliable census of the Tuareg people. In any case, their number should oscillate around two million. The Tuaregs are a half-caste and strongly hierarchical society in which the confederation of the Kel Adrar, native of the northeast Mali, has traditionally played a political and military leading role. The territory that the Tuareg recognize as their land of origin is defined by them Azawad and includes a huge portion of the Sahel and the Sahara. The Tuaregs recognize as the first source of authority their tribal councils and are generally averse to any form of administrative and fiscal control and imposition by the state institutions. The balance of power and the balance between the clans determine the development of the

political action of the Tuareg, however, it has always been generally fragmented and highly independent. For all these reasons, the notion of "Tuareg identity" is a concept of recent development and implementation of a political agenda with objectives and shared content and unique is far from being realized. In a geographical and political context as that of the desert, where the forms of state control have been and still are traditionally weak, it is easy to imagine how the Tuareg community are constantly eluding the attempts of assimilation by the central power.

The social-anthropological characteristics of the Tuareg found in the political and administrative center of Mali a context of difficult conciliation. In fact, the French colonial government had specific responsibilities in the process of political marginalization of tribal communities of the desert. In fact, when arranging administratively colonial possessions, the government in Paris has voluntarily divided the territory of Azawad between the provinces of French Sudan (now Mali), Upper Volta (now Burkina Faso), Niger and Algeria. In this way, the homelands of the Tuareg extended over the French West Africa, subjected to the legal regime of the colony, and the southern provinces of Algeria, which on the contrary, were metropolitan departments. As a result, the Tuareg and other nomadic Arab tribes of the desert had to deal with limited freedom of movement and different legal statuses. The choice of the French administration was not accidental, since Paris did not want to realize the unity of the proud and combative Tuareg people in a hypothetical single colonial province. In fact, the Tuareg had offered a strong resistance against the advancing French troops during the expansion phase in Africa started in the late nineteenth century.

Moreover, through the creation of the region of Sudan, it had gathered together the nomadic peoples of the desert, in the north

and sub-Saharan ethnic groups settled along the basin of the Niger River, in the southern part of the country. The two main ethnic groups are deeply divided by history, traditions and cultures. In addition, for logistics reason, the French representatives had their headquarters in the southern part of Mali, allocating and managing here most of the resources and enabling people from sub-Saharan minimal participation and representation in political and administrative institutions of the country. This polarization of the political and geographical Mali resulted in discrimination against the Tuareg people of sub- Saharan ethnic groups in both the colonial period and after the independence of Mali. In fact, the semi-nomadic Tuareg community, engaged in the production and trade, and community questions and Songhay, employed in agriculture, have often clashed for the exploitation of the fertile soil at the edge of the southern belt of the Sahel, near the city of Timbuktu, Gao and Menaka. It seems obvious that, from the point of view of mere legal protection of property and land rights, sedentary groups are favored, as permanently present in one place and therefore easily traceable by government authorities. In contrast, the nomadic nature of the Tuareg makes it very difficult the traceability mechanism and protection of land ownership.

Between the late fifties and early sixties, the process of decolonization has revolutionized the political geography of the African continent and its relations with Europe. However, the rise of the African national elite was not counterbalanced by a new shape of the administrative boundaries of the colonies. Therefore, the new independent states have arisen with the same geographical demarcation of the colonial provinces of which had taken place, inheriting some discriminatory aspects against ethnic subordinates groups. In the case of French West Africa, some delegations Tuareg had

explicitly asked the administration to resell the colonial boundaries anticipating the formation of the Tuaregs state. However, the proposal was never really taken into account.

In 1960, when it became independent, the new Malian State has inherited this economic and political confrontation between the North and the South, doing little to try to heal it. The reasons for this inaction are many. First, as mentioned earlier, the political and economic Malian engine is located along the Niger River and, therefore, the new administration has focused its development efforts and interests in this area. Secondly, the southern ethnic groups were those who, for historical reasons, have had more contact with the French government and were able to take advantage of a modern education system that allowed them to acquire experience in politics and the "national consciousness" able to lead the struggle for independence and to take control of government institutions. Finally, once came to power, the sub-Saharan ethnic groups have managed the resources and the policy according to the Malian traditional African patterns based on nepotism, on neo-patrimonialism and corruption. The Malian political elites, therefore, have soon become self-referential and have neglected the development and needs of the people of the north of the country. It seems clear, then, on what political and economic foundations Tuareg secessionism finds its raison d'etre.

The fragmentary nature of the Tuareg society, influenced by the nature of the territory in which the community has developed, has made it impossible to create a single political-military movement that would gather and guide desert people instances. Over time, when the Tuareg have taken up arms against the French administration before and after the Malian, they did it by following the individual efforts of a single clan, who often had to fight alone because the other tribes did not agree with

the reasons of his revolt or simply had no interest in doing so. Therefore, the Tuareg insurgence, far from being considered a political demonstration unit must be read and interpreted not only as directed to the central powers, but also as fighting the tribal confederation whose purpose is to achieve the hegemony of a clan on others.

Over the decades, the nature, method and the claims of the Tuareg uprisings have profoundly evolved. Initially, the tribes of the desert are opposite to those government mandates that harmed their economic activities, while, since the sixties, the demands have become increasingly mature from the political point of view. The reason for this change of pace is to be found in the political atmosphere during the years of African decolonization. In fact, the Tuareg community suffered the influence of national liberation movements that, across the continent, struggled to free themselves from the colonial yoke.

The "Alfellaga", the First Tuareg Rebellion of the contemporary era, broke out in 1963 and lasted for about a year. Despite its disastrous results and its military policy outcomes, the Alfellaga is a fundamental event to understand the future of constant Tuareg uprisings. On that occasion, the Tuareg rebelled against the central government betrayed because they had seen their hopes of emancipation related to the independence of Mali. In fact, despite the promises of the first president of Mali, Modibo Keita, the desert community had not benefited from any political or economic benefit from the creation of the new government free. To rise up against Bamako was the city of Kidal, led by the Confederation clan Kel Adrar, and the theater of the war was the eastern massif of the Ifoghas. The badly organized Tuaregs militias were brutally repressed by the Malian army, who established a regime of occupation of the northern provinces for over

10 years. The Alfellaga had the merit of developing the embryo political consciousness and to erect the Tuareg Kel Adrar to separatism leader of the nomadic Malian. However, the negative effect of the First Rebellion was to further worsen the Tuareg fierce aversion towards Bamako and draw a deep rut between the two Malian communities.

The Tuaregs claims continued to incubate and mature for the next 25 years until ri-exploding, through a violent form, in the nineties. Compared with 1963-64, the Second Tuareg Rebellion, which broke out in 1985, was a phenomenon that actually involve a broader swath of the population of the desert and that interested Mali and neighboring Niger. On this occasion, the hostilities between the central government and independence movements broke out first in Niger in 1985, and subsequently plagued the north of Mali, between 1990 and 1995.

Again, Kidal was the epicenter of the clashes, which rapidly involved Gao and Menaka, and the Kel Adrar led the revolt. Compared to the sixties, the Tuareg front was better trained and equipped, and above all had developed their own political leadership represented by MFUA (Mouvements et Fronts unifiès de l' Azawad, United Movements and Fronts of Azawad), an organization that wanted to establish itself as a legitimate interlocutor of the government in Bamako. The leader of the MFUA was Iyad Ag Ghaly, very influential personality within both the Kel Adrar and the entire community of Tuareg Azawad. The clashes between the forces of MFUA and the Malian government lasted between 1990 and 1991, when the dictator Moussa Traore Bamako forced the cease of hostilities and the signing of Tamanrasset, January 6th 1991. According to the peace treaty, the Tuaregs were guaranteed the autonomy of the Kidal region and a greater presence in the central institutions. However, the

agreements did not satisfy all the Tuareg factions, some of which, composed of militia trained by Libya's Gaddafi, they resumed their anti-government campaign between 1994 and 1996. These two years were particularly cruel, as the Malian government, unable to directly deploy its military presence for reasons of political expediency, financed the training of militias of ethnic Songhay, the most famous of which was the MGK (Movement Ganda Koi) in opposition to those Tuaregs. At this juncture, the conflict between North and South of Mali took, for the first time in the history of the country, the nature of a real civil war. The mediation of Ag Ghaly and Algeria again allowed the cessation of hostilities.

The Second Tuareg Rebellion of 1990-1995 pointed out some new features and critical of their claims for autonomy. First, the question of the desert people had passed the borders of Mali and had taken on a regional dimension, involving the communities of the Niger and, above all, highlighting the role of Libya's Gaddafi as a country promoter and supporter of the revolutionary movements in Africa. The Colonel used the desert tribes not only as a unit "praetorian" for the internal security of the country, but also as a weapon to destabilize neighboring states, often on good political and commercial relations with Western governments. It is no coincidence that many military commanders and political leaders Tuareg had previously worked as officers in the Libyan Armed Forces. However, because of the traditional divisions of the Kel Adrar, only a part of the militia was linked to Colonel Gaddafi, emphasizing the rivalry between the tribal leaders. It should be emphasized that, within the complex balance of the Kel Adrar, supporters of the alliance with Gaddafi clan were outnumbered economically weak and politically less influential. They sought, in alliance with the Libyan President, a support that would allow

them to take the upper hand over the rival massif of Ifoghas.

The alliance between the Gaddafi regime and some Tuareg tribes arose in the context of LIP, the military formation in which the Colonel hoped to realize the dream of creating a Great Islamic State of the Sahel. The LIP greatly influenced the economic and political fate of the Tuareg community from the first half of the seventies . The inflow of militants of the desert in the Legion began at that time, when a series of severe droughts led many young people to migrate in search of fortune to Libya. Many of them were recruited into the LIP, where they received both a military training and a fierce anti-colonialist indoctrination.

Gaddafi was very sensitive to the cause Tuareg for two reasons: he admired his fighting skills and claimed to have an affinity with the people of the desert arising from its family ties. In fact, the mother of Colonel was of Tuaregs origins. In addition, the social and anthropological characteristics of the Tuareg embodied Gheddafi's best policy idea of a desert nation without borders and unified Arab culture and Islam. This self-styled project has found, over time, the favor of those desert clans who fought for the recognition of self-determination since the sixties.

From the political and military point of view clan Tuareg confederation, as without a proper coordination structure and a shared agenda, had managed to face and launch a joint and concerted action against the Malian and Nigerian centers of power. The people of the desert had managed to organize parties and movements, always based on tribal ties but sufficiently structured and able to negotiate effectively and consistently with the institutions of Bamako. Despite these significant improvements, the Tuareg front was strongly divided, and even within the same Kel Adrar, rivalries between clans

prevented the definition of a clear political line with the Malian government. In fact, in the aftermath of the agreements of Tamanrasset, the MFUA ceased to exist as a unified and divided again into dozens of smaller formations. The difficulty to speak with one voice and internal divisions are features that accompany the Tuareg insurgency throughout its history and which will have two deleterious effects: the first is the inability to enter into an agreement with long-lasting Bamako, while the second is the vulnerability to infiltration and external influences.

The division of the Tuareg front, combined with some deficiencies of the Malian government in the implementation of the agreements of Tamanrasset have transformed the peace of 1991 and the cease-fire of 1996 in insecure agreements and devoid of substantive meaning. In fact, between 1996 and 2007, the tension in the north of the country remained very high, with continuous attacks by Tuareg members of the institutions and the Armed Forces. The most dramatic moment occurred between 2006 and 2007, when the ADC (Alliance Démocratique du 23 Mai pour le Changement, the Democratic Alliance of 23 May for the Change), yet another political movement expression of the Kel Adrar, gave birth to a brief insurrection in Kidal and Gao. The leaders of the AD, the revived Iyad Ag Ghaly and Ibrahim Ag Bahanga, an ally of Gaddafi, requiring compliance with the agreements of Tamanrasset and the integration of the militia Malian Tuaregs in the Armed Forces and denounced the submissive attitude of the government in Bamako. Ag Ghaly had resumed the armed struggle as disappointed by the lack of progress in the process of reconciliation between the Tuareg and central institutions and, probably, to maximize their own personal gain. Only the mediation of Algeria allowed the signing of a new treaty of peace and demobilization of armed groups of Kidal.

The Algiers Agreement of 2006 supercharged the content of those of Tamanrasset in 1991, without opening new concessions and, more importantly, without a mechanism of control that occurs enforcement. Again, the main outcomes were joined by Ag Ghaly and his clan of reference, which obtained the assignment of roles in local and national government. The faction of Ag Bahanga, contrary to the contents of the Algiers Agreements, withdrew from the negotiations and returned to Libya, from which he continued to launch raids continue in northern Mali, resulting in a re-rupture within the Kel Adrar .

The complex of agreements and Tamanrasset Algiers did not solve the underlying problems of separatism Tuareg: the North of Mali continued to live a very precarious economic and humanitarian situation, legislators in Bamako had not initiated any plan for the protection of social rights the Tuareg and the creation of a system of access to the exploitation of arable land and pasture, the members of the desert people were poorly integrated in the institutions and security forces. In addition, the Malian government was pursuing its own predatory practice, without putting in place a support structure that could protect the northern population. For their part, the Tuaregs continued to be divided and torn by conflicts between factions . Poverty and the continuing economic crisis had pushed those who did not use the benefits of the agreements with the government to seek a livelihood in drug trafficking and weapons. The poverty, the absence of the state and the competition between the clans of the Kel Adrar had prompted many tribal leaders to seek new partners, both non-state actors that, in order to give new impetus to both the business and political struggle. From the second half of the twenty-first century, Gaddafi's support to the cause Tuareg had been gradually diminishing due to a change

in strategy by the pan-Africanist Colonel. In addition, the old political organizations Tuareg had begun to lose touch with the "base" and not to get the support of the younger generation, who did not sympathize with the rhetoric Alfellaga and the Second Rebellion of the nineties. The search for new political partners and new business partners met with the simultaneous opening of the al-Qaeda movement of Algerian origin scenarios and opportunities of the Sahara and the Sahel. Initially, the contacts between Tuareg and jihadist reality were purely for convenience, related to trade and the displacements in the desert. However, with the passing of time, with some components of the Kel Adrar it has been created a synergy policy that would emerge strongly in the crisis of 2012-2013.

IV.III La crisi del 2012-2013

The Tuareg insurrection and the Malian civil war of 2012-2013 were generated by the combination of three main factors: historical-political, economic and regional. The historical-political factor, as stated before, concerns the constant tension between the Tuareg communities and the Bamako government, which cyclically takes the form of armed rebellion when the movements of minorities and government institutions clash on the legality or on the extremism, according to their respective points of view, of the request of certain political and civil rights. It should be emphasized that the 2012-2013 insurrection derived from the dissatisfaction toward the fact that there was no real application of the Algiers and Tamanrasset agreements. In fact, both the Peace Agreements that marked the end of the Tuareg rebellions of the nineties and of 2006 envisaged the allocation of structural funds to resolve the "Northern issues". This money was never used for the construction of infrastructure, but rather enriched a few of the Tuareg political leaders and several ministers

and soldiers who received high institutional positions.

The economic factor is related to the traditional conflict on the rights of exploitation of arable land to which the severe drought in the Sahel between 2009 and 2011 added to the problem. The lack of rainfall affected all the people of the Sahel, further shrinking water resources and crop yields. In this way, the Tuareg had even less access to fertile land for grazing and agriculture. In addition, movement of the caravans was unnecessary, as the impoverishment of farmers prevented the normal course of business.

Finally, the regional factor was fundamental in ensuring that the traditional political and economic demands of the Tuareg appeared in the form of an insurrection. The Malian crisis was triggered by an exogenous factor, which was the heavy rearmament of the Tuareg separatists as a result of their participation in the Libyan Civil War of 2011. In fact, some tribes who fought as mercenaries in support of Gaddafi came into possession of large quantities of weapons and equipment that made them a clear superiority over the Malian Army. Gaddafi's death in October 2011, forced the militants to return home, where the deficient economic and humanitarian situation prevented their reintegration into the local social fabric. Beginning in mid-January of 2012, the Tuareg, reunited in the MNLA (National Movement for the Liberation of Azawad) and the Ansar al-Din (Defenders of the Faith), launched a new offensive against the central government in order to obtain the independence of Azawad, a portion of the Sahel as big as Texas, corresponding to the regions of northern Mali's Timbuktu, Gao and Kidal.

The lightning rebel advance, facilitated by the unpreparedness of the Malian military, generated a deep discontent in the Armed Forces, which, on March 22, 2012, led by

Captain Amadou Sanogo, implemented a coup d'état, forcing President Amadou Toure into hiding, and created the National pour le Comité de Redressement the Démocratie et la Restauration de l'Etat (CNRDRE, National Committee for the Renewal of Democracy and the Restoration of the State). Only international pressure and the threat of intervention of the ECOWAS (Economic Community of West African States) convinced the coup leaders to give back power to civil institutions, allowing the formation of an interim national unity government, led by Dioncounda Traore, a character of great international prestige who also has an excellent relationship with his former French Motherland. The attempted coup d'état caused a considerable weakening of the institutions and the Malian Armed Forces, which quickly abandoned the Northern Territories, performing a confused and disorderly retreat. At the beginning of April, after just three months, the MNLA and Ansar al-Din easily had control throughout the North of the country.

However, the Tuareg front, led again by the Kel Adrar, continued to be characterized by internal divisions between the different clans. The MNLA, formed mostly by the militia of the numerous Idnan clans, and directed by Bilal Ag Acherif and Mohamed Ag Najem, embraced a religiously tolerant nationalist ideology respectful of the traditions of Sufi Islam practiced by the Tuareg. On the contrary, Ansar al-Din, headed by Iyad Ag Ghaly, had a more religiously intransigent position, clearly inspired by Salafi, which made the organization Qaedist sympathizers. Once they consolidated their control over the territory, the two groups clashed for supremacy in the region. The reason for the conflict is due to the rivalry between Ag Ghaly and Ag Acherif for the leadership of the Tuareg front. In fact, while the former wanted to impose sharia in the conquered territories, in order to use it as an instrument of control

and power over the population and militia, the second was inclined to leave the local customary laws unchanged. Islamist militias, initially inferior to the nationalist forces, managed to prevail thanks to the support of the brigades of AQIM (Al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb) and MUJAO (Movement for Unity and Jihad in West Africa), called to aid by Ansar al-Din. As previously stated, the contacts between the Qaedist organizations and Tuareg groups began in the early 2000s, for reasons of opportunities related to trade. However, over the years, the ideological penetration and the increase of the operating activities of AQIM have become more solid. Compared to the past, the big change of the intervention of the jihadist brigades in Mali is the objective to undermine the territorial integrity of the country. The clash between AQIM-MUJAO-Ansar al-Din and the MNLA is not only ideological or linked to clan rivalries, but concerns a competition and a bitterness that has developed in the last ten years. In fact, the initial installation of the Qaedist militias in Azawad happened with the consent of those rulers of Bamako involved in drug trafficking. The occupation of the territory by the terrorist organizations generated discontent among the members of the Kel Adrar who did not collude with them.

The MNLA, severely defeated in the Battle of Gao in June of 2012, had to retreat and take refuge in the rural areas to the west of Timbuktu. However, in this way, the organization of Ag Ghaly saw their role and their political agenda greatly reduced. In fact, the Tuareg leader hoped to use the jihadist network of alliances that had built up over time to his advantage. But this was not the case, as AQIM and MUJAO became the hegemonic forces in the region and what had started as a "struggle for national independence" of the Tuareg people turned into a complete jihad led by al-Qaeda inspired forces.

In a few months, in June of 2012, the Qaedist forces conquered all of northern Mali, taking control of the regions of Kidal, Gao and Timbuktu and establishing an oppressive regime based on strict literal application of the sharia. In addition, the control of a vast territory allowed AQIM, the MUJAO and Ansar al-Din to attract radical Islamic militants from all over Africa (Nigeria, Niger, Mauritania, Algeria, Libya, Tunisia, Sudan, Somalia), from Asia (Pakistan) and even some from Europe (mainly from the Maghreb and African communities in France). Once they consolidated control of northern Mali, AQIM and its allies began to build training camps for the training of guerrillas.

The taking of Gao, and subsequently of Douentza, in the central part of the country, definitively split Mali in two. The jihadist organizations quickly defined their spheres of influence: the MUJAO settled in Gao, a communication crossroads in the Sahel and toward the Maghreb, AQIM established its operational base in Timbuktu while Ansar al-Din, as expected, settled in Kidal, near the plateau of Ifoghas. It is further suspected that two of the main leaders of al-Qaeda in North Africa found refuge in the cities reclaimed from government control. In the six months from June to December 2012, the northern regions of Mali turned into a true jihadist African "sanctuary", a logistics and training hub capable of foraging and supporting terrorist organizations from all over the Maghreb and West Africa. Moreover, the absence of state control was an incentive to the rapid spread of arms and drug trafficking, two of the sources of funding, along with the business of kidnapping Western citizens, of Qaedist organizations.

In the first week of January 2013, after the failure of yet another attempt to mediate between the government and insurgents by the government of Burkina Faso, Islamist forces reopened hostilities and launched a

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new offensive to the south, heading directly over the city of Mopti and towards the Sévaré airport, in order to immediately inhibit any response attempt by Malian and international Armed Forces. In fact, three months earlier, the United Nations had ordered the formation of an international mission that should have intervened in September 2013. In the face of the Islamist offensive, President Traore, fearing the loss of additional portions of the Malian territory and witnessing the spread of panic among the population, had asked the international community to intervene to help the country to prevent the advance of the militia to the capital.

On January 11, 2013, France, for obvious historical and strategic reasons, responded to the Malian request and kicked off Operation "Serval", simultaneously launching a massive air campaign on the city of Gao, Konna, Kidal, Douetza, Lare and Timbuktu, in order to significantly weaken the ability of the Islamist forces. A week later, at the side of the French troops, the AFISMA (African-led International Support Mission to Mali) force began to line up, the mission of the African Union led ECOWAS authorized by resolution 2085\12 of the United Nations. The 4,500 men of the French Army and 8,000 of AFISMA (from ECOWAS and Chad) contributed to the operational reorganization of the Malian Armed Forces and after a 4-month military campaign, they released the main cities of the regions of Kidal, Timbuktu and Gao, forcing the jihadi militias to retreat to rural areas, to the thick of Ifoghas and flee to neighboring countries. From that moment on, a slow recovery and re-appropriation of legitimate national sovereignty began by Malian Armed Forces and institutions.

The French military intervention had the positive effect of strengthening the credibility and stability of the government of President Traore and, simultaneously, undermining the face of the Qaedist forces. The presence of government troops from Paris was a great boost of confidence and enthusiasm for the Malian civilian population and reduced the social unrest that was the base of support for the coup leaders of Sanogo. In addition, the French diplomacy led to the signing of an agreement between the Government of Traore and some anti-jihadist insurgent groups. In fact, at the side of the French-African contingent, battalions of the MNLA and MAA (Movement of Azawad Arabic), an Arabic formation in Timbuktu, started fighting. On the contrary, with regard to the jihadist alliance, the gradual Reconquista of northern Mali was a serious blow to both the infrastructure, transport and equipment and to the morale of the militants. The military defeats exacerbated the internal conflicts of the individual groups. An obvious example is when Ansar al-Din, after the release of Gao, saw the secession of a faction led by Alghabasse Ag Intallah, Ag Ghaly's right hand. The new group was called IMA (Islamic Movement of Azawad) and promptly declared their rejection of terrorism and their willingness to cease hostilities and to find a negotiated solution to the Malian conflict.

The French military campaign, which ended officially in April 2013, and AFISMA operations had a strong impact both on the security situation and on a political level, resizing the threat posed by AQIM and MUJAO and facilitating the peace negotiations between the Government of Bamako and the Tuareg movements. However, the pacification of northern Mali continues to be a difficult goal.

On July 1, 2013 the MINUSMA (United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali) was started, a UN peacekeeping mission, authorized by resolution 2100\13 and under the command of the Rwandan General Jean Bosco Kazura, who has the task of accompanying and supporting the Armed Forces and the Malian

political institutions in the process of stabilization and reconstruction of the country after the war. Its mandate, which was inspired by the last renewal of MONUSCO (United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo), provides for extended powers in the field of peacekeeping and law enforcement that are needed to directly tackle the jihadi militias. The need to extend the powers of MONUSCO was established in the aftermath of the offensive of the M23 (March 23 Movement), by a group of rebel Tutsi, on the city of Goma, in eastern Congo, in November 2012. In fact, on that occasion, the UN peacekeepers, because of the restrictions imposed by the mandate, could not offer the necessary resistance to the advance of the militia and felt powerless to the fall of the city. The episode of Goma prompted the Security Council to rethink the contents of the mandate and to provide MONUSCO certain powers and legal legitimacy to better cope with and neutralize such a threat. The Congolese experience created, therefore, a political and legal precedent in which the United Nations made reference to in the formulation of the MINUSMA mandate.

Alongside MINUSMA, is the European Union mission EUTM (European Union Training Mission) Mali, launched on February 18, 2013 and focused on the training and the reorganization of the Malian Armed Forces. EUTM Mali involves the participation of 350 soldiers of the EU, of which 200 are instructors (14 Italian) and has the lead nation in France. On July 5, "Waraba", the first Malian battalion trained by European instructors, was officially stationed in Gao.

MINUSMA and EUTM Mali are called to a delicate role in a very important moment for the country's security. Although AQIM and MUJAO have lost control of the cities of the north, their brigades are active in rural areas, in the desert and in the eastern plateau of the

Adrar des Ifoghas. In addition, the deployment of the French and African contingents has forced jihadist militants to change combat tactics. In fact, for as long as AQIM, MUJAO and the Ansar al-Din had faced the MNLA and the Malian Armed Forces, both poorly trained and equipped formations, they behaved like a regular army, opting for confrontation and moving as a force of occupation. The arrival of the French and African troops, better equipped and organized, forced the jihadi militias to fall heavily on the techniques of guerrilla warfare and suicide attacks, avoiding confrontation and focusing on the strategy of making the country ungovernable. In fact, starting from February 8, a series of suicide bombings struck the city in the north, the most serious of which, on April 12 in Kidal, caused the death of 4 Chadian soldiers.

In addition to the tactical and instructional requirements necessary to face an unequal threat, MINUSMA and EUTM Mali will have to support the Malian Army in achieving the most difficult objective: the establishment of a trusting and respectful relationship between it and the people of Northern Mali. In fact, on some occasions, the Armed Forces of Bamako have behaved like an occupying force, guilty of abuse of power on the civilian population and raids on the villages. These behaviors must be inhibited and discouraged, in order not to create animosity between the military and the communities of northern Mali. In fact, one of the keys to the neutralization of the phenomena of insurgence and terrorism is to deprive the militia of consent and support of the local population.

In recent months, in addition to the improvement of the security situation, Mali has seen sensitive developments in the dialogue between the government and Tuareg movements. The threat of Al Qaeda and the international military intervention had the dual effect of favoring a "tactical" alliance

between Bamako and the MNLA in an anti-jihadist role and dividing Ansar al-Din. In the first phase of the conflict, the Malian government and regional mediators had tried to open a channel of dialogue with Ansar al-Din. The intention of Bamako was to detract this movement from the coalition of Al Qaeda, dealing directly with its leader, Iyhad Ag Ghaly, and to take advantage of the traditional divisions within the Kel Adrar. The objective of the Malian President Traorè and the President of Burkina Faso Blaise Compaoré was to include Ansar al-Din and the MNLA in a peace process that had the Tuareg movements at the center and not the Qaedist groups. The basis for these negotiations was the granting of great autonomy to Azawad policies and greater institutional weight to the Tuareg in exchange for giving up the armed fight. Over the following months, this strategy paid off: Ansar al-Din, progressively marginalized within the axis with AQIM and MUJAO, experienced a profound political and identitarian crisis, which caused deep internal divisions. Initially, many militants left Ansar al-Din and gave rise to the MIA (Islamic Movement of Azawad). Later, with the break-up of the jihadist group, Ansar al-Din was dissolved altogether. At that point, the political representation of the Kel Adrar was entrusted to a new movement, the HCUA (Haut Conseil pour l'Unité de l'Azawad, High Council for the Unity of Azawad), which integrated the MIA and gathered escaped militants from the MNLA and former guerrillas of Ansar al-Din.

IV.IV The role of jihadist organizations

Compared to the uprisings of the sixties and nineties, the Tuareg rebellion of 2012-2013 saw an impetuous new factor: the presence and activism of Qaedist organizations. AQIM and MUJAO were very able to take advantage of the conflicts and preexisting social divisions in the Malian context in order to spread their propaganda and become the hegemonic forces in the region. The fact that Gao and Mopti constituted the southern boundary of the jihadist forces is not tied exclusively to reasons of military character. In fact, the Mopti region can be considered the dividing line between the Arab-Berber and sub-Saharan African world, in which the socio-political and religious customs make the implementation of the Qaedist propaganda difficult.

The danger posed by AQIM and MUJAO derives primarily from substantial sources of funding to which they can draw in the Sahel. With regard to the trafficking of drugs and arms, Mali has traditionally been a channel for passage of the flow of drugs from Latin America through the ports of Guinea-Bissau and Ghana. Not surprisingly, most of the couriers, both of land, sea and air, are of Malian and Nigerian origin. With time, the management of smuggling routes has become one of the major sources of profit and funding, along with the business of kidnapping, of groups inspired by Al Qaeda in the Sahel. The "sovereignty" of a portion of territory so vast has ensured for these groups a significant increase in their functional income to increase their political power. The control of criminal activities is, at this time, the main resource of the Qaedist organizations of North Africa and the key to their empowerment in the international jihadist scene. Finally, the business of kidnapping, the main activity of the MUJAO, has drawn attention to the dual importance of the mix between criminality and terrorism. The hostages, in fact, are not only a source of profit but also an instrument of political blackmail. In this regard, we can simply think of the Urru case and the case of the 7 Algerian diplomats kidnapped in Gao.

From the political and military standpoint the situation in the North of Mali was and is particularly critical precisely because of the

influx of Islamic militants from all over the Sahel. The main risk was related to the creation of a "safe haven" for the movements and terrorist groups coming not only from West Africa. In fact, beside the guerrillas of AQIM and MUJAO, during the Battle of Gao, bands composed of militiamen from Côte d'Ivoire, Niger, Chad, Mauritania, Nigeria, from refugee camps in southern Algeria and even from Pakistan were spotted. It should be stressed that these bands are not only drawn to the possibility of having a secure base from where they can organize their own "jihad", but also for the vast opportunities of "financing" offered by the Malian situation. Regarding the fighters of Pakistani origin, some of them have already been spotted previously in the area of Timbuktu. Their arrival may have occurred through contact with the Salafi group Dawa al Islamyya of Timbuktu, founded in the early nineties and frequented by many students of Pakistani origin. This is a worrying trend that could plague the various state realities of the region, increasing the operational capacity of Salafist groups emerging in Tunisia (Ansar al-Sharia), Libya (Ansar al-Sharia) and Nigeria (Boko Haram, Ansaru). So, the real risk for a few months was the rise of a "backbone of terror" from Algiers to Abuja.

However, one of the most worrying aspects of the roots of Islamic terrorism and its asymmetric military dimension is the ability to undertake hostile actions and to carry out retaliations in an extremely varied and extensive area, both on metropolitan territory and in areas where people of Western origin reside or work. A glaring example of this strategy is offered by the seizure of hundreds of workers, among them dozens of Europeans, which occurred on January 16, 2013 at a gas conducting facility in In Amenas, Algeria, by one of the BCFS (Signed-In-Blood Battalion, al-Muawaqqi bin al-Dima), the group led by Mokhtar Belmokhtar, as a form of retaliation against

the French military mission in Mali. The blitz for the release of hostages by the Algerian Special Forces ended with the killing of the kidnappers, but unfortunately it is also cost the lives of a significant number of Western citizens. It is necessary to reflect carefully about this event because, beyond the payment of ransom and the release of al-Qaeda prisoners detained in Mauritania and the United States sought by the kidnappers, one of their real objectives was to destabilize the home front of the countries directly involved in Mali or those who offered logistical political support for the French action, leveraging on the reaction of their public opinion. In fact, unlike the Algerian government that follows a line of firm rejection of any form of negotiation with the terrorists, the Western countries cannot afford to sacrifice one human life.

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The big change that emerged during the war in Mali is the affirmation of a new modus operandi by the North African jihadist movement, which was not limited to guerrilla actions against the local armed forces, but took advantage of the weakness or absence of political institutions of the state to replace them and impose their own administration focused on the strict application of sharia.

From a political perspective, this evolution of al Qaeda, consisting of a new approach to the control of territory and a new "institutionalization trend" emerged in Yemen and, later, in Mali. However, there is a profound difference between the two cases. In Yemen the creation of "a Qaedist administration" was made possible by the local origins of the militia, familiarly linked to the tribes that gave refuge to the group. In this way, AQAP (al Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula), thanks to the lack of central institutions, managed to create a state-controlled administrative system, especially in the field of justice, before the counterterrorism operations of the Sanaa authorities dismantled the network and the militia took refuge in the highlands of Hadramawt. In Mali, however, AQIM entered into a strategic alliance with some of the Tuareg clan of Kel Adrar, who historically carry out the requests for autonomy of those who claim it as their own territories. Once control of northern Mali was taken, the definition of an administrative structure mainly responded to this Tuareg agenda, where Qaedist militants were always more interested in the creation and management of training camps.

However, as stated by Anouar Boukhars, the Malian crisis has demonstrated the inability of al-Qaeda to manage governance processes due to lack of adequate social connections, a shared and wide-ranging policy agenda, all of which do not allow them to put down roots in a state or to establish themselves as a

Anouar Boukhars
Associate Researcher at the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace

"The war in Mali and the winds that rocked North and Western Africa made clear the risk that al-Qaeda radicalizes instances of existing ethnic-tribal and nationalist conflicts, paralyzing, as a result, the peace processes. However, the same Malian crisis has demonstrated the inability of al-Qaeda to manage governance processes. The lack of social and tribal connections, the absence of a political, strategic and comprehensive design and the distance from the cultures and local traditions prevented them from putting down roots in a state or to effectively replace the legitimate institutions, both state and customary tribal. The consequence of failure in Mali was the new de-territorialization of the movement and its return to a purely military dimension. However, the power void in Libya and Tunisia continue to represent an excellent opportunity to continue the experiment of nationalization of the organization started in northern Mali."

credible alternative to it. The immediate effect of these operational and strategic gaps, made even more evident by the French-African military intervention was, continued Boukhars, the new de-territorialization of the movement. The tribal ties have been a significant obstacle to greater integration between Qaedist and Tuareg realities. In fact, among the major strategic mistakes charged by the emir of AQIM Droukdel to the commanders of the katiba of the Sahel in Mali there was lack of gradualness in the imposition of sharia law and the lack of intermarriage between the Tuareg and foreign militants, which are essential to cement relations between the different ethnic

groups. In a harsh environment such as the Sahara, power, operational capabilities and social networks of individual personalities weigh more than the structure of organizations.

However, taking control of such a vast territory in northern Mali led to a serious threat to the stability of the country, a circumstance which led to the international intervention. In this way, paradoxically, it was no longer possible for AQIM to create a solid logistical background in northern Mali from which, then, to be able to start their operations and train new militants.

The fact remains, however, that in a political context in transition, such as that of North Africa after the "Arab Spring", the destabilizing push of al-Qaeda could find new space to act. Not so much in the case of what is happening in Mali, but rather due to the strength of the very idea of Qaedism and to transnational relations that now have been consolidated. What happened to the American consulate in Benghazi is an example where a Libyan national Salafist group worked in conjunction with other elements from both Tunisia and Egypt. In this mixture of elements the names among the various groups lose their meaning and the main theme is that of a global vision of jihadism, now found in al-Qaeda that is no longer a mere organization, but a real ideology.

IV.V The regional impact of the crisis and the response of the international community

The degeneration of the Malian crisis had initially raised two opposite reactions within the international community. On the one hand there was the desire to continue negotiations between the Malian government and the insurgents, while on the other hand the need for a military intervention was thought to be

urgent that would control the jihadist forces before they could increase their influence and their territorial control.

The continuation of the negotiations between the government and Islamist militias was supported by Captain Sanogo, by the Malian military circles and by the governments of Algeria, Morocco and Mauritania. From the internal point of view, the Malian military was aware of the fact that the entry of a foreign contingent in their country not only would deprive them of prestige and support of the civilian population, but also would have prevented any new attempt to seize power at the expense of civil institutions. The lack of staff and the poor equipment available had pushed, in time, the Military Staff of Mali to implement a comprehensive program of training of civilians in order to replenish both the MGK and the Ganda Izo, a militia of ethnic Fulani. Unfortunately, the major limitation of the strategy focused on negotiation was the inability to deal with the Qaedist front, "hard" negotiating actors unwilling to compromise, with who it was possible to find agreements on immediate issues, such as the exchange of prisoners, but not on broader political issues.

For their part, the governments of Algeria, Morocco and Mauritania, while fearing the creation of a massive base of AQIM outside their own borders, believed that a possible military intervention in Mali could further undermine the security situation in the region with repercussions in its metropolitan territory and the mobilization of internal Salafi groups. The Algerian and Mauritanian authorities feared the possibility that, in the event of armed conflict, jihadist groups would "migrate" through the desert, within their territory, turning a regional conflict into an internal crisis. At the moment, after almost one year after the French intervention, such a risk has become a reality in the north of Niger and southern Libya, for different reasons. In

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the first case, the jihadist militias have exploited the porosity of the desert borders and of Tuareg tribal networks, while in the second case the migration was made possible by the collapse of the Libyan state and the absence of national security forces in the region.

On the contrary, the use of force was advocated by the government of Mali, Nigeria and, partially, by France and the European Union. The authorities in Bamako, fragile and exposed to new risks of a coup by the Armed Forces, continued to survive only thanks to the external support of ECOWAS and diplomatic support by the governments of France and, in part, the United States.

As far as the international community was concerned, the largest supporter of an interventionist line was always the Nigerian government, initially inclined to send a contingent of about 3,000 men, under the auspices of ECOWAS, in order to strengthen its leading role in the region and to inflict considerable damage to Boko Haram, the Salafi sect of ethnic Kanuri active in the northeast of the country, and to Ansaru. The link between Boko Haram and jihadist groups of AQIM and al-Shabaab in Somalia, has been widely proven to be from the analysis of technical factors, such as the ability to manufacture explosives and tactics of suicide bombings, both from surveys that have shown that the militants of the sect were trained in camps in Somalia, Mali and Niger. Further evidence of these connections is the fact that a large handful of Nigerian militants fought alongside AQIM-MUJAO in Gao. Finally, we must not underestimate the impact of such an operation on Nigerian domestic politics.

The international political subject that appeared to be more prone to an interventionist solution was the European Union, driven by pressure from France, the country most active in the region. As of June

2012, in fact, the secret services of Paris had initiated the "Operation Sabre". Initially the purpose of the mission was to obtain useful information for the release of the two French geologists kidnapped in Niger a year ago, but with the passing of the months and the increase in the activities of jihadi groups, transalpine intelligence had begun to monitor the situation in northern Mali and offer support to the government of Bamako. The desire of President Hollande, accused by the opposition of indifference to matters pertaining to the former French colonial empire and international terrorism, was to launch a major campaign of military support to the Malian government. In the first months of the crisis, the French Defence would have preferred an intervention under the aegis of the United Nations or the European Union, but because of the slowness of the two international organizations and the sudden escalation of the crisis in Mali, they had to urgently intervene and were supported by the African Union through AFISMA. The intervention of the African contingent is closely linked to the needs of French and Nigerian activism. In fact, the mission of ECOWAS had its biggest individual contributor in Nigeria, but in French-speaking countries in the coalition of former colonies of Paris the highest overall number of troops. If you think about the subsequent integration of two thousand Chadian soldiers in AFISMA, it is easy to see how the international intervention assumed the structure of a French mission and of its African allies.

With regard to the economic and political dimension of the conflict, the interests of the government in Paris focused on the exploitation of energy and mineral resources (uranium, gold and oil) and on the monitoring of the security situation and the fight against terrorism and Islamic radicalization.

Regarding the first aspect, the political will is to prevent the north of Mali to become the

new shrine of international Islamic terrorism related to both Malian and international economic protection in the region. In fact, in northern Mali there are two of the major gold fields of the country, in Taoudenni and Taghaza, and two large basins whose hydrocarbon exploration phase began in 2006 and whose potential has yet to be estimated accurately. The loss of control over the north of Mali could have compromised gold mining and had a significant impact on the world market, but also could have slowed down the exploration of oil and gas field blocks, damaging the interests of operators and slowing the development of a country that is not energetically self-sufficient. Furthermore, in light of recent events in In Amenas in Algeria and Arlit in Niger, the French government wants to contrast instability of Mali and the Sahel, the best form of protection to their citizens and to their domestic companies operating in Africa.

With regard to the fight against radicalization, it should be noted that the vast majority of French immigrants are of northern and western African origin. If the north of Mali is strengthened as a logistics hub of Salafism in the region, there would be an increased risk that a growing number of Islamic fundamentalists would reach the territory of the motherland through the channels of immigration. Apart from this, one should not underestimate the impact of the jihadist narrative on French citizens of African origin living in poor social conditions, especially in the slums of the big cities. In fact, the issue of security and radicalization of French Muslims has once again become a topic deeply felt by the electorate after the massacre in Toulouse in March 2012.

In this context, the U.S. position wavered. In fact, if on one hand the Obama administration had declared its opposition to military intervention, on the other it continued its intelligence operations and support to the

armed forces of some countries of the Sahel and West Africa. In fact, the United States in a series of bilateral military cooperation agreements and TSCTI (Trans-Saharan Counterterrorism Initiative), has cornerstones of its presence in the region. In particular, the TSCTI is a transnational program of both military and civilian assistance to the countries of North Africa and the Sahel focused on combating Islamic terrorism. The military component of TSCTI, OEF-TS (Operation "Enduring Freedom Trans-Sahara") provides a wide range of technical training in anti-terrorism and counter-insurgency as well as an extensive cooperation and assistance in the event of attacks or kidnappings perpetrated by AQIM. In addition, the bases in Burkina Faso and Niger allow the monitoring of the desert by remotely piloted Pilatus PC-12 aircrafts classified in operation "Sand Creek". In fact, the major U.S. allies in the Sahel are Morocco, Algeria and Mauritania, "bridgehead" countries in the fight against terrorism, but at the same time, opposed to military intervention in Mali.

The American waiting game strategy on the Malian issue was inevitably influenced both by the death of Ambassador Chris Stevens in Benghazi, in September 2012, and by the worsening of the situation in Libya, a problem which highlighted the critical operational potential of al-Qaeda groups and that cast doubt on the strategy of the Department of State in the region. After what happened in Cyrenaica, the White House increased the number of CIA operatives in both Libya and in neighboring countries.

Italy, present in the area both through the activities of ENI and for the professionals working in the cooperation and non-profit sectors, follows the development of the Malian situation with great attention. The Italian role at both a diplomatic level and for support of EUTM Mali is fundamental in virtue

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for both its threatened national interests in the Malian crisis and for its long experience that the Italian National military deployments has amply demonstrated during missions abroad. Our country, in fact, not only is severely affected by the problem of drug trafficking from the Sahel and North Africa, but also clearly feels the threat posed by the possible destabilization of the entire area in question. Not surprisingly, the appointment of Romano Prodi as Special Envoy of the Secretary General of the United Nations for the Sahel is indicative of this attention and demonstrates the central role that the country is called to play to help cover the negotiation between the various warring groups in Mali, to fight Islamic radicalism and terrorism of Al Qaeda, and finally in support to institutions and the civilian population in the process of post-crisis reconstruction.

IV.VI The meaning of the presidential election and the future prospects for the country and for the region of the Sahel

On July 28, 2013, the Malian people chose Ibrahim Boubacar Keita as the new President of the Republic. It was a historic event, the result of months of negotiations between the central government and Tuareg insurgent movements, from the deep political significance and the notable implications for the security of the country and the whole region of the Sahel. At the beginning of 2013, such an event seemed unfeasible. In fact, at that time, the fragile government of Bamako, worn out by the military and civilian feud, had to manage the delicate phase of restoration of democratic rule of law, after the brief coup in March 2012, and was pressed by the offensive of the Qaedist militias in the north of the country. The intervention of the French military and the African Union averted a further deterioration of the crisis and allowed the gradual normalization of the security

situation, the partial recovery of the political and social activities and, above all, returned a minimum of hope and more optimism for the future to the Malian people.

Despite the high political and symbolic value of the election, the vote was influenced by two factors that limited functionality and transparency. The first factor is logistical: at the time of the vote, in the North, there were still 500,000 displaced people and refugees, and only 20% of those eligible were officially registered. The second factor is psychological and social and relates to the emotional impact that the Tuareg uprising had on the Malian people and that exacerbated the ethnic and cultural conflict between the north and the south of the country. It is no coincidence that the weeks before the election were marked by several incidents between Malian soldiers, for the most part of southern origin, and the local Tuaregs. In the northern regions memories of the war are still very strong. In this respect, armed clashes further worsened relations between Tuareg communities, Mande and Songhay, resulting in the latter a spirit of vengeance and revenge against the first. Not surprisingly, during the slow return of Malian Armed Forces in the regions of Timbuktu, Gao and Kidal, the military became the protagonists of some cases of abuse and raids in the villages to the detriment of both the Tuareg and to the Muslim population.

All these problems ensured that among the candidates for the presidency there was only the expression of southern ethnic groups and that the elections were characterized by substantial inhomogeneity of representation in favor of the region of the South. The race for the presidency was characterized by the lack of a consolidated party structure. In fact, the war undermined the foundations and civil society organizations and institutions, making the election a highly personalistic competition, focusing on the charisma of the

leader more than their program. In this sense, then, the victory of Keita does not seem surprising. In fact, the new president is among the few candidates with political experience and personal prestige such as to obtain the consent of the voters and of the formations of civil society and the international community. Some doubt remains about his actual ability and willingness to negotiate with the Tuareg movements, particularly in light of his rigid positions on the granting of autonomy.

The Malian elections of July 28 do not represent an end point for the process of stabilization of the country, but a starting point. In fact, the pacification and the political, economic and military reconstruction of Mali reserve numerous pitfalls. First of all the dialogue and the process of political integration between the government and Tuareg continues to present significant shortcomings and pitfalls. In fact, after months of negotiations, Bamako and the MNLA were able to agree "in principle" only on the date of the election and the return of the Army to Kidal. At the moment, the negotiations on the definition of a shared reformist agenda are in a stalemate. There are still many unresolved issues: the future institutional structure of the country, the administrative decentralization, the greater government Tuareg representation and the implementation of political and economic rights of minorities. In addition, we must consider the plurality of actors involved in the negotiations: the Tuareg of the MNLA and HCUA, the Arabs of the MAA and the Fulani of the Ganda Iso. In this sense, the promotion of autonomy for the regions of Timbuktu, Gao and Kidal, could be a solution capable of reconciling the right to self-determination of the Tuareg people and the need for full sovereignty and territorial unity of the state. Regarding this aspect, the future Malian executive could be inspired by Niger, where the Tuareg insurgency of 2007-2009

subsided thanks to an agreement which guaranteed the representatives of the "blue men of the desert" a conspicuous presence in the government, represented by the assignment of different sub-secretariats, by the appointment of Tuareg Brigi Rafini as Prime Minister, by the Tuareg majority in local regions of the north and the granting of a share in the ethnic police force.

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President Keita's main responsibility is to continue negotiations and dialogue with the MNLA, trying to build a solid and lasting balance. In addition, he will have to be able to negotiate with the HCUA and the Kel Adrar. The possible failure of these negotiations could further accentuate the gap between Bamako and Kidal, making the path toward stabilization of the country more difficult and keeping some dangerous rebellion groups active. Once again, therefore, the internal divisions at the Tuareg front represent a threat to the peace and stability of Mali and pose a heavy burden on the actual implementation of political agreements. The geographical distance between Bamako and Kidal, respectively located to the extreme west and east of the country, is not only geographical, but also cultural, ethnic and political. These two cities represent the two souls of Mali, the two poles around which to gather the interests of political movements and ethnic groups. The future institutional and political structure, therefore, will have to consider this endemic diarchy and build upon it a new administrative structure. In this respect, the history of Mali provides contrasting examples, since, until 2011, the country rightfully boasted of international acclaim for success in the process of democratization of public life, while the events of 2012 revealed deep political, social and military divisions that will need time and willingness to negotiate on the part of major Malian politicians, in order to be reunited and remedied.

Following the previous insurrections, the Tuareg movements and the Malian government reached an agreement and tried to find a mutually beneficial political and institutional formula. However, such agreements were insufficient, and it was more a long-term truce than a structured project of social and political integration. Today, after the crisis of 2012-2013, Mali has a great opportunity to find a new, stable, durable and shared institutional balance and to formulate a new social pact between its different ethnic and cultural components. Bamako and the Tuareg movements have a responsibility to be a political laboratory in which to conceive new solutions to the problems of minorities, inspired by those experienced from neighboring countries such as Niger and Burkina Faso, and trying, at the same time, to offer a model of exportable coexistence. Only time will tell whether the integration process will be successful or there will be a new "long truce".

Regarding the security framework, it is significantly improved thanks to the French-African intervention and the subsequent deployment of MINUSMA. However, the complete pacification of the northern regions is far from being realized. The main problems of security in northern Mali continue to be linked to the activities of insurgent groups, both al-Qaeda-inspired and not, composed of both local and foreign militants. Such instability further increases the need for the government of Bamako to find a political agreement with Tuareg communities to protect them from the influence of jihadist propaganda and sedition. AQIM, the MUJAO and militant groups allied to them have managed to infiltrate the dynamics of pre-existing social-political opposition, turning a national liberation struggle into an international jihad front. For many months, Islamic militants controlled a vast area where they experienced, for the first time, a process of embryonic statualization.

Bernard Miyet
Deputy Secretary General of the United Nations peacekeeping operations from 1997 to 2000

"There is no ideal-typical solution to international crises, but each must be dealt with ad hoc solutions that take into account the specific scenario in which action is taken. In this sense, the UN approach must be holistic: to reassure that minorities will be heard, to guarantee the democratization process, to coordinate various interventions and different strategies of pacification and state building. Regarding Africa, the basic principles around which to build the processes of reconciliation and stabilization must be national identity, even with permeable borders, and regional dialogue. In the specific case of Mali, the stabilization must be developed around three key concepts: reconciliation, inclusiveness and subsidiarity."

In fact, the north of Mali was transformed over the period March 2012-January 2013 into a de facto Islamic emirate, where the sharia existed and where al-Qaeda, the MUJAO and Ansar al-Din administered justice, imposed taxation and took care of the educational and religious structures. For these reasons, the challenge facing Malian institutions and African and European partners is not only focused on improving the military capabilities of the Armed Forces, but also on a deep intervention on a social, political and economic level. In fact, we must not forget that the jihadist phenomenon is not only armed insurrection, but it is mainly ideological militancy which gets its main followers in contexts of political marginalization and social and economic poverty. To nip at the base of al-Qaeda and its allies it is necessary to work on a primarily political and economic agenda that

strengthens the presence of the institutions in the suburbs of the state, which allows organizations of ethnic minorities to carry out its activities in a peaceful manner and in compliance with laws and shared state procedures, which guarantees educational facilities, welfare and more efficient and equitable redistribution of wealth. It is a long process, but necessary to avoid the proliferation of armed rebellions and social and political disintegration of those African states that have within themselves the same problems that gave rise to the war in Mali. For these reasons MINUSMA and EUTM Mali's task is not limited to technical and tactical training of the Malian military. The United Nations Protection Force must prepare Malian soldiers in the mechanisms of building a relationship of trust and respect with the civilian population, in order to avoid the occurrence of such abuses of power previously mentioned, and in order to let the Tuareg and other ethnic and cultural communities of Northern Mali perceive the Armed Forces and the government as an ally and not as an occupation force.

Finally, we must not forget the regional and global dimensions of the Malian crisis and the lessons that the international community can draw from it. The events in Mali have shown, once again, that the porosity of the human and geographical boundaries of the Sahara and the Sahel represents the catalyst of the political dynamics in North and Western Africa. The contexts are fluid, in which the safety problems influence multiple actors, state and non. The Malian crisis and the destabilization of the Sahel, work of al-Qaeda and its allies, are closely related events that demonstrate how real and dangerous the risk of Qaedist contagion is in the region. It is a multifaceted and evolving threat, which finds, in the weakness of state authorities and in the precarious socio-economic condition of the Sahel, a large and formidable growth opportunity and that includes the proliferation

of drug, weapons and human being trafficking, three factors that can be used as a weapon of political and social pressure on European governments. For a few months, the war in Mali guaranteed the jihadist militants the opportunity to build training camps in which to train new fighters from across North and West Africa. In addition, on a symbolic level, the Malian "jihad" built a new narrative able to mobilize new financial and human resources on both sides of the Mediterranean. One of the most alarming facts is that AQIM and other Qaedist organizations have learned from the experience in Mali. The first lesson learned by the jihadist movements is related to the method and timing of the imposition of Salafism in the controlled territories: in the letter of emir of AQIM Abdelmalek Droukdel to the militiamen deployed in Mali, found in Gao, the Qaedist leadership recommended to gradually introduce the precepts of Salafism and the exploitation of tribal identity to overcome the natural resistance of the local population to the literal application of the Sharia. The second lesson learned by al-Qaeda regards purely military combat strategy: the militia jihadists were able to assert control over a territory where the state structures were weak and where the armed forces were inadequate in terms of training aspects and equipment. On the contrary, in the face of French and African troops, battalions of AQIM and MUJAO suffered heavy losses, having to abandon the strategy of symmetrical confrontation and passing to the usual tactics of guerrilla warfare and suicide attacks. However, the loss of territory allowed al-Qaeda to restore its ancient nature of "asymmetric" force without compromising danger. In this sense, the examples given by the attacks of January 16, 2013 to the gas conducting facility in In Amenas in Algeria and of May 23 to the uranium extraction plant in Arlit in Niger, made by the BCFS of Mokhtar Belmokhtar, seem explicative. Both attacks, directed against structures operated

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by Western societies where Western technicians worked, testify how broad the spectrum of potential Qaedist targets is and how difficult it is to anticipate and prevent them. It is evident that the ultimate aim of this strategy is to raise both the economic costs of the business in the African area and public pressure on Western governments.

In the face of such threats, the international community must continue to pay close attention to the security dynamics of the Sahel. Military intervention in Mali did not solve the problem of the reasons of the Tuareg insurgence nor the reason linked to the Qaedist activities. In the second case, the militants have simply migrated to other easier areas less under the control of national or international security forces, most notably the south of Libya. The regional and international organizations will be called, therefore, to support the Malian government in the reconstruction process of the institutions in order to resume the path of democratization interrupted by the civil war and, above all, in order to convey a message of confidence and cooperative willingness to all the countries affected by the same problems of Mali. The ultimate goal is to guarantee African countries, in the shortest possible time, the development of political and military capabilities so that they will be able to manage and solve their own crises.

CONCLUSION: POSSIBLE POLITICAL SOLUTIONS TO THE CRITICAL SITUATION OF THE SAHEL

The presidential elections of July 28, 2013 and the victory of Keita represented the turning point of the Malian crisis. In fact, after the "destructive" phase of the Tuareg insurrection of the jihadist onset, the country entered the "constructive" phase linked to the reform of the institutions and the implementation of a process of dialogue between the various communities. As pointed out by Hubert Tieman Coulibaly, Foreign Minister of the transitional government of Mali, the reconciliation between ethnic groups is critical to ensuring the territorial integrity of the State in the future. However, this process has to be spontaneous and internal to Mali, without interference by external actors. Italian Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs Lapo Pistelli has highlighted the importance of inclusiveness in the reconstruction process if they want to avoid having Malian society and politics assume traits of extreme polarization and fragmentation as in Egypt and Libya. In this regard, the victory of Keita and the formation of a new government that is an expression of the electoral seem extremely important. In fact, a transitional government, created for emergency reasons and notwithstanding the usual democratic practices, would not have the necessary authority to act as guarantor of reconciliation.

So, if the French-African military intervention had the great merit to curb the factors of instability, the elections and the formation of a new government have a duty to create conditions for stability. However, according to prof. Prodi, the presidential election did not dispel all the doubts about the real moral and political authority of Keita and the attitude that he will have towards the communities of the desert. In addition, Mali faced another big test of maturity: the general election in

September. At the moment, the country experienced serious problems in terms of

Prof. Romano Prodi

Special Representative of the Secretary-General of the United Nations for the Sahel

"We must be careful to consider military intervention as a final act. After it, in fact, the most delicate phase begins: the political phase. In this sense, Europe can act as a constructive example of peaceful settlement of disputes between the state and minorities. Just looks at Alto Adige, the Basque Country and at the many violent problems that our continent has had internally that have been resolved through the promotion of economic development and common identity. These are the two pillars on which to build the future of Mali and the Sahel, namely to support the development of the local economy, to dismantle the criminal economy linked to the trafficking of weapons and drugs, and promote the creation of networks of local experts, representatives of politics, civil society and economy, in order to contribute to the creation of a common Malian, and later African, identity."

administrative capacity at the local level. In terms of governance, the general elections represent a litmus test on the real will of the ruling classes of the south to include the peoples of the north in the decision-making processes of the country. Returning Mali to the positive platform where it had begun to walk for a few years is not an easy task, especially in a political and human climate marked by resentment and the wastes of war. One of the pressing needs of the new government is linked to the return of refugees to their countries and regions of origin, with the aim not only to be able to legitimately

exercise the right to vote, but to be able to return to a peaceful and dignified life.

The new Legislative Assembly will have the responsibility and legitimacy, reinforced by popular mandate, to reform the Malian constitution, making it more modern and more geared to the social demands and anthropological nature of the country. A possible new constitution will have to address the issue of the guarantee of the representation of ethnic and cultural minorities in parliament, of respect for human rights and of the new organization of local authorities. Administrative decentralization and forms of self-government of the suburbs, designed and built in harmony with the uniqueness of the powers of the state, are the first steps towards a concrete realization of self-determination of communities in the north.

Ralph Thiele stated that every conflict inevitably divides the political and social field in the two broad categories of winners and losers. In the case of Mali, the winners are undoubtedly the state actors in the Sahel, who saw their sovereignty and territorial integrity safeguarded, and their strategic partners in Europe, since they succeeded in halting the rise of Al Qaeda-inspired terrorism and protected their economic interests, especially in energy, in the region. On the contrary, the losers are the Tuareg minority, who saw their struggle for self-determination contaminated and delegitimized by jihadist movements, and the United States, whose investments in Mali are threatened by the return of the former French colonial power.

The set of critical issues that led to the explosion of the Malian crisis, that is the simultaneous presence of social and economic insecurity, lack of adequate institutional representation of minorities and radical Islamic penetration against an already extremist irredentist movement, requires a wide range of solutions. According to Yossef

Bodansky we should first de-motivate the ideological basis of both the irredentist Tuareg movement and the jihadist organizations by creating institutions that make direct interlocutors of the population. It is necessary, according to Bodansky, to not repeat the mistakes made in the past by the international community: to not stop at the military solution, but seek answers to broader themes that include urbanization, state building and representativeness of ethnic diversity. In this sense, any international aid should be able to compensate for the dysfunction of the Sahel States. Of the same opinion was prof. Margelletti, who also pointed the finger at some personal interests that characterize the political and military strategy of the European Union and prevent its cohesive and concerted action. The crisis of Mali and the destabilization of the Sahel have been a risk common to all the countries of the Old Continent, and for this reason, there is urgent need for shared and unambiguous solutions.

The Malian crisis was primarily a regional crisis in the Sahel. For this reason, as stated by prof. Prodi, no political solution can be achieved by taking into account only Mali. In fact, the fear of a mobile terrorism without boundaries, and social and economic insecurities are common to all countries in the region. However, it is the sharing of this fear that could turn it into a common and non-confrontational political platform. The first step is socio-economic and concerns the eradication of poverty and the fight against underdevelopment. It seems necessary to replace criminal activities with a healthy, widespread and interdependent economic system. In fact, development cannot be created without creating an economic community. Local experts and major international organizations are working to define a futuristic scenario within which to achieve this development, based on investment in agriculture, in infrastructure, in

mechanisms for decentralized production and distribution of energy, in school and in health. The African Development Bank, together with the European Bank and the Islamic Bank, has agreed to support the project. It will be the African Bank who will supervise the implementation, and will take technical and political responsibility. The task of the international community will be to supervise compliance with the agreements that the parties involved in the Sahel will take to overcome the crisis.

Barzoum Mohamed, Minister of State for Foreign Affairs and Cooperation of Niger, developed the options outlined by Prodi. According to Barzoum, in addition to economic development programs, in order to respond to the security crisis in the Sahel, the international community must address five key challenges:

o   Guarantee of collective security. Assist states in the region with the implementation of a safety device, such as to ensure, independently and sufficiently, the safeguarding of its own population and resilience of the state to the pressures of destabilization carried out by criminal groups and terrorists. The starting point could be the refusal to recognize any armed group that, through the use of force, tries to weaken the authority of the state. It is these groups, where extremism often is born, who are seen as easily recruitable tools by the network of international terrorism.

o   Fight against terrorism. Eradicate the terrorist groups operating in the Sahel region (AQIM, Ansar al-Din, MUJAO and violent Tuareg formations) and those who have their epicenters in Mali, Nigeria and Libya.

o   Fight against drug trafficking. The relationship between the drug cartels in Latin America and irredentist movements of Islamic inspiration transform the latter

into narco-terrorists, linked to international crime.

o   Fight against money laundering. Corruption and the ability to create wealth through illegal activities in the long run leads to failure of small productive activities in the region and, consequently, to the decrease in domestic and international investment.

o   Creating incentives for democratization. It is necessary to ensure the transparency of the governmental structure and social equity to prevent the recruitment of the population by criminal groups.

The international scope of the challenges that characterize the context of the Sahel requires a multidimensional response to the crisis, which is brought toward a strengthening of institutions and state authority and a development of defense and collective continental security. This last point is particularly important to prof. Gadio, who has highlighted the need for deployment of military capability, technology and resources by the international community to fund an African Armed Forces.

However, as noted above, the development of socio-economic projects and military instruments would have little impact without the definition of a shared African political agenda. The two focal points of such an agenda should be regional cooperation and critical reflection on ethnic and cultural identities and on their protection and institutional representation.

Mario Mauro
Defense Minister of the Italian Republic

"The necessary initial assumption consists of acceptance of the inviolability of the right to self-determination of the people, but also the sanctity of the right of integrity and unity of the state. What might look like an irreparable dichotomy could actually find its own reconciliation in federal models or by granting autonomy to local communities. This could be the political response to the problems not only of the Sahel, but also of many other African geopolitical scenarios that for too many decades have been oppressed by the conflict between the center and the suburbs. The numerous tribal realities of the Sahel are very important social and cultural identification traits, precisely because of their uniqueness and regional characterization, and because of this they must be safeguarded to protect their prerogatives. However, only through compromise with governments and the provision of a common agenda can both parties aspire to a full and mature realization of mutual goals."

In this sense, regarding the first aspect, the dialogue between the countries of the Maghreb and sub-Saharan Africa is essential for a joint mobilization against the risks linked to terrorism and crime. The road ahead will necessarily lead to the implementation of regional and inter-regional integration on several levels. First of all among the countries of the Sahel and North and West Africa and, simultaneously, the European neighbors, through a strong alliance that unites the two shores of the Mediterranean. In this sense, the international community, which in its time has been ready to intervene militarily in defense of the institutions of democracy and Mali, must now continue its contribution to the reconstruction of the country and the resolution of Sahelian issues. In the near future, the coalition committed to the stabilization mission MINUSMA should be accompanied by a plan of international support to the Sahel that includes, in addition to security, immigration issues, both internally and for the European continent, sustainable, equitable and shared use of natural resources and the guarantee of collective human rights. The first step is to ensure that the local people have the means for subsistence and development, employment and the improvement of educational facilities and care, so that the humanitarian disaster that is now being experienced in the Sahel is not only constrained but is finally extinguished. It is not just an economic issue, but the defense of human dignity. In fact, as stated by Prof. Margelletti, the work is not only a source of money, but is the source of freedom, happiness and respect for man towards himself and to others. Those who work not only earn money, but profoundly feel the contribution it can give to their family and to their community.

Regarding the second point, the promotion of autonomy or federalism represents one of the solutions at the most feasible and common sense moment. In fact, according to Cheikh Tidiane Gadio, it is appropriate to safeguard the territorial integrity of the states and avoid a rewrite of borders, on the basis of the claims for autonomy, in order to avoid the atomization of the continent. In this sense, as argued by Bernard Miyet, there should be an intense propaganda and civic education that aims to enhance the principle of national identity, even in the presence of permeable borders, compared to that of ethnic identity. The model to follow would be that of "Rainbow Nation" carried out by Nelson Mandela during the years of struggle against apartheid.

The concept of unity in diversity is particularly important to Deputy Minister Lapo Pistelli.

Lapo Pistelli
Vice-Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Italian Republic

"Italy is among the greatest supporters of every continental integration process, regional and sub-regional, because it is integration that allows the coexistence of even the most marked differences. If you are looking for the perfect ruler or the perfect border that is able to separate the different identities, you run the risk of the breakdown of the African political framework. In Mali, our country is expected to contribute to the process of reconstruction of credible institutions, promoting political dialogue between different cultures and offering keys to sustainable understanding for national reconciliation. Elections alone are not enough. In a democracy you can win with 50.1% and lose with 49.9% of the vote, but if there is no mutual recognition, elections are no longer a democratic triumph, but can become the beginning of a civil war. So, something more than just the celebration of the Election Day is needed: reforms and inclusive dialogue are needed."

In fact, he has pointed out how, in terms of integration and even in full awareness of some of its limits, Europe can be an example of a reference model. Indeed, historical experience and European politics is synonymous with the recomposition of a densely populated reality and of sharing of resources that, due to friction, became an opportunity for development. Integration allows the coexistence of diversity within a unitary political context, and its overall and

shared development. However, representing a reference model for developing contexts constitutes a serious responsibility. According to Ambassador Raffaele de Lutio, the European Union is called upon to give clear answers and to consolidate its role as a partner with the states in the region. The model of economic and social development in Europe should be developed in partnership with African states, otherwise there is a danger of losing the strategic dialogue with Africa for the benefit of China.

According to prof. Ralph Thiele, in addition to economic cooperation projects and military assistance, the international community is called to a role in promoting African continental cooperation for the securitization of the borders. Such cooperation could take the form of a partnership with NATO for crisis management programs, making use of existing structures in the territory thanks to earlier Western interventions. Of the same opinion is prof. Peter Roell, who stressed that there will be a need for more sharing and discussion of data and analysis on the part of intelligence services of several countries, both European and African. In fact, to identify the current and future threats to the Sahel region it is necessary to develop a network of structured information. In this sense, the EU-INTENT (EU Intelligence Analysis Centre) could be a model for similar future units in Africa.

In conclusion, the events in Mali and the destabilization of the Sahel have taught us that there is no "ideal-typical" solution for international crises, but each must be dealt with *ad hoc* solutions.

The real need is to find a balance between realpolitik needs, geographical peculiarities and local anthropology, all in accordance with the principles of the UN Charter. According to Bernard Miyet the three key concepts that

should guide the process of reconstruction of the State of Mali and the approach of the international missions are reconciliation, inclusiveness and subsidiarity. On these three pillars, the Malian government and the

Peter Roell
President of ISPSW - Institut für Strategie Politik Sicherheits und Wirtschaftsberatung

"The crisis in the Sahel and the war in Mali is a Mediterranean problem and, therefore, both an African and European problem. Qaedist terrorism poses a direct threat not only to the countries of the Maghreb and West Africa but also to Europe. The kidnapping of Western citizens and attacks on energy infrastructures managed by European and American companies and staff are a clear example of this. This is why it is urgent to implement cooperation between different intelligence services of the different countries, to develop a network of information to acquire structured knowledge, and coordinate services with those of Western Africa. The European Union should expand the activities of the Unit of Fusion Connection to North Africa and stand as a model for similar units in Africa. For example, in order to promote military cooperation between the various African states a similar institution to the EU-INCENT could be created."

international community have a responsibility and duty to construct the Roadmap for peace in the country for development across the Sahel. In fact, of fundamental importance is to address the issues at the local and decentralized level. Only such content may allow economic development and participation in the public life of all ethnic groups. The approach of the UN and other international organizations must be holistic,

reassuring that minorities can be heard, ensuring real democratization, and enabling participation in local life and in the mechanisms of collective security.

The hope of the people of Mali and the entire international community is that the process of stabilization of the country, albeit with difficulty, will continue without interruption. The reconstruction of state institutions and the inclusion of Tuareg minorities in a broad program of economic, social and political reforms could make Mali an example and a model for replication in the future. Understanding and solutions to the crisis of 2012-2013 may be taken as examples from other Sahel countries that share the same problems that led to the Civil War in Mali. Paradoxically, the same porosity of the borders that makes destabilizing phenomena dynamic, mobile and uncontrollable could be a great incentive to the movement of ideas and solutions to problems. A geographical context without barriers and borders is a container in which political, social and ethnic groups can insert ideas and activities as needed. Up to now, sharing and the freedom to move were only negative activities. The hope is that, in the future, the freedom of movement and dynamism will be related to factors of cooperation and common economic and human development. From the ashes of the Malian civil war and the current instability and problems in the Sahel an opportunity to re-invent the model of African development, and even global development, can arise. It is a long and arduous commitment and a strategic and ambitious objective whose achievement cannot ignore the united and strong will of the whole international community.