

Master Thesis

The Impact of the US Global War on Terror on Moroccan and Algerian Security

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Abstract:

This paper will address the impacts of the ‘Global War on Terror’ (GWOT) on Morocco and Algeria – two of North Africa’s most populous countries and the United States’ most valuable allies in the region in terms of military strategy. The increased US political and military activity in Algeria and Morocco since 2003 has three principle effects: it obstructs the needed bilateral cooperation that is required for their sustained collective security, hardens these authoritarian governments against international and domestic calls for democratization, and inspires resentment of the US among the disenfranchised population. Overall, this paper will argue that the American strategy used to fight terrorism in these two countries under the banner of the GWOT has compromised progress toward security and democracy.

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- Nov. 2006 - May 2007 Office Assistant for *Foods Matter*, organic and allergy-free foods magazine: London, England.
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- June 2005 - June 2006 Advertising Sales Representative for *The Daily Nexus*, UCSB campus newspaper, circulation 11,000: Santa Barbara, California.
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 - Increased business by 260% with my top client.
 - Inherited 20 accounts in arrears from my predecessor, and resolved 16 in the first two months.
- June 2005 - Aug. 2005 Group Leader for *Environment Colorado*, subsidiary of *Colorado Public Interest Research Group (COPIRG)*: Boulder, Colorado.

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- Restructured the staff box in August '03. To increase efficiency, we divided the job of the News Editor into two jobs with distinct concentrations. I worked to smooth the transition for both Editors and the reporters we managed.

Volunteer work

- August 2008 Volunteer Greeter for the Democratic National Convention: Denver, CO

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- June 2008 Volunteer Field Research Assistant for a biodiversity research project: Patras, Greece.

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Übersicht

Die vorliegende Arbeit behandelt die Auswirkungen des ‚Globalen Anti-Terror Kriegs‘ (GWOT) auf zwei der bevölkerungsreichsten Länder Nordafrikas: Marokko und Algerien. Diese Länder sind die militärstrategisch wichtigsten Partner der Vereinigten Staaten in dieser Region. Das seit 2003 zunehmende politische und militärische Engagement der USA in Algerien und Marokko hat in erster Linie drei Auswirkungen: Es erschwert die bilaterale Kooperation, die als Voraussetzung für ihre gemeinsame und dauerhafte Sicherheit gilt, es stärkt die autoritären Regierungen dieser Länder gegenüber internationalen und nationalen Forderungen nach mehr Demokratie und schürt die Abneigung gegenüber den USA bei der unterdrückten Bevölkerung. Zusammenfassend wird in dieser Arbeit die These vertreten, dass die Amerikanische Strategie im Kampf gegen den Terror unter dem Banner des GWOT eine Entwicklung in Richtung Sicherheit und Demokratie in diesen beiden Ländern eher negativ beeinflusst hat.

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First of all, thanks to Oliver Rathkolb for his input and guidance.

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Table of Contents

Abstract	1
List of Acronyms	7
Introduction	8
Methodology and Review of Literature	13
Definitions	16
The Global War on Terror	16
The Maghreb	19
Security versus Securitization	21
Chapter 1: Algeria and Morocco	
Background	25
The Western Sahara Conflict	27
American Relations	34
Chapter 2: The Terrorist Threat	
Background	38
Terrorism in Algeria: The GSPC and Al-Qaeda	42
Morocco: The GICM at the doors of Europe	47
Chapter 3: The US takes the GWOT to North Africa	
Background	50
The Banana Theory: the thinking behind US Involvement in the Maghreb	52
US operations in the Maghreb and AFRICOM	57
Conclusion	60
Annex: Map of the Maghreb	63
Bibliography	64

List of Acronyms:

AFRICOM – Combatant Command for Africa

AMU – Arab Maghreb Union

AQIM – Al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (*Al-Qaïda au Pays du Maghreb Islamique*)

DoD – United States Department of Defense

FIS – Islamic Salvation Front (*Front Islamique du Salut*)

GIA – Armed Islamic Group (*Groupe Islamique Armé*)

GICM – Moroccan Islamic Combatant Group (*le Groupe Islamique combattant au Maroc*)

GSPC – Salafist Group for Teaching and Combat (*Groupe salafiste pour la prédication et le combat*)

GWOT – Global War on Terror

OEF-TS – Operation Enduring Freedom – Trans Sahara

Polisario Front – Popular Front for the Liberation of Saguia el-Hamra and Río de Oro (*Frente Popular de Liberación de Saguía el Hamra y Río de Oro*)

PSI – Pan-Sahel Initiative

TSCTP –Trans Sahara Counterterrorism Partnership

UMA – Arab Maghreb Union

Introduction

With the twin purposes of protecting the United States against further attacks and destabilizing terrorist networks abroad, the so-called Global War on Terror¹ initially manifested in the ongoing military operations in Afghanistan and Iraq.² The impetus for this turn in policy came during the shockwave following the Al-Qaeda attacks on US soil on September 11, 2001 (9/11). By 2002, the term Global War on Terror (GWOT) had come to stand for a paradigmatic turn in American foreign policy. By 2003 the US had begun low intensity counterterrorism operations in the Maghreb region such as the Pan-Sahel Initiative (PSI), providing American military training and assistance to Algeria and Morocco, as well as Mali, Niger and Chad.³ GWOT strategists' classifications of the region included an under-governed territory,⁴ a potential terrorist safe haven, and the next Afghanistan.⁵ Many articles and reports began even to refer to the Maghreb as "the second front in the war on terror."⁶ By the time of its actual implementation in 2004, the PSI had become the Trans Sahara Counter Terrorism Partnership (TSCTP) and the focus had turned to al-Qaeda's infiltration of national militant Islamic groups in nine North African countries including Algeria and Morocco.⁷

America's post-9/11 increase of military and political involvement in the Maghreb came at a time when popular calls for democratization within Algeria and Morocco were peaking and these authoritarian governments were loosing their tight grip on civil

¹ See p. 12 in the section on definitions for full discussion of the term.

² White House, The. *The United States National Security Strategy*. Washington DC: September 2002

³ "Pan Sahel Initiative" Office of Counterterrorism, US Department of State. Released Nov. 7, 2002. <http://www.state.gov/s/ct/rls/other/14987.htm>

⁴ Robert G Berschinski "AFRICOM'S Dilemma: The 'Global War on Terrorism,' 'Capacity Building,' Humanitarianism, and the Future of US Security Policy in Africa." *Strategic Studies Institute of the US Army War College*. 2007. 27. See also Emily Hunt "Islamist Terrorism in Northwestern Africa: A 'Thorn in the Neck' of the United States?" *The Washington Institute for Near East Policy*. Policy Focus #65. February 2007. 1-4

⁵ David Josar "EUCOM slated to step up role in Africa." *Stars and Stripes (European Edition)*. Jan 11, 2004.

⁶ Jeremy H. Keenan "The Collapse of the Second Front." *Foreign Policy In Focus*. Silver City, NM and Washington, DC: September 26, 2006. See also Berschinski, 2007 25-26.

⁷ John P. Entelis, "The Democratic Imperative vs. the Authoritarian Impulse: The Maghreb State between Transition and Terrorism." *Strategic Insights*, 30:6 (June 2005). 5.

dissidence.⁸ In Morocco, for example, the Sahrawi nationalist movement had come to rely almost exclusively on non-violent protests for self-determination.⁹ In Algeria, President Bouteflika (installed after the military annulled the 1991 Islamic party victory in the country's first elections¹⁰) began to talk seriously about compromise as the violent civil crisis between Islamic opposition and the military regime slowed towards a halt.¹¹ At this juncture, France maintained its economic and political support for North Africa and especially for the Moroccan monarchy, in what had always been considered its sphere of influence. Meanwhile the Bush Administration launched a policy platform centered on the Global War on Terror with its paramount objective being to encourage democratization, liberal values and unified liberal economies.¹²

It seemed that the US had a momentary opportunity to engage the Maghreb in earnest attempts to promote democratic participation, competitive elections and civil liberties. Instead, between 2001 and 2008 the trajectory of US policy in North Africa took a decidedly counter-productive turn. Policy makers initially zeroed in on the barren, minimally populated southern swath of desert that runs through Algeria and Morocco, which they identified as conducive to Islamic terrorist organization. However, the increased pace and intensity of counterterrorism efforts revealed inadequate concern for the problems of poverty and political oppression of which terrorism can often be a symptom.¹³

⁸ John P. Entelis, "The Democratic Imperative vs. the Authoritarian Impulse: The Maghreb State between Transition and Terrorism." *Strategic Insights*, 30:6 (June 2005)

⁹ Maria J. Stephan and Jacob Mundy, "A Battlefield Transformed: From guerilla resistance to mass nonviolent struggle in the Western Sahara." *Journal of Military and Strategic Studies*, 8: 3, (Spring 2006) 12-15

¹⁰ Martin Evans and John Phillips, *Algeria: Anger of the Dispossessed*. (London: Yale University Press, 2007) 255.

¹¹ Jeremy H. Keenan "Security and Insecurity in North Africa," *Review of African Political Economy*, Vol. 33, no. 108, (2006) 270

¹² Barry Buzan, "Will the 'global war terrorism' be the new Cold War?" *International Affairs*, 82: 6. (2006):1104

¹³ Anneli Botha "Challenges in Understanding Terrorism in Africa." in Okumu, Wafula and Anneli Botha, eds. *Understanding Terrorism in Africa: Building Bridges and Overcoming the Gaps*. Institute for Security Studies. (Cairo, Egypt: May 2007) 10

This paper narrows its analysis of the GWOT to Morocco and Algeria because of their rising geostrategic profile in the eyes of the US over the last seven years.¹⁴ They are located in the upper northwest region of the Sahel, a region of concern according to GWOT strategists for its proximity to Iraq and for its ties with al-Qaeda that will be discussed more in depth in chapter two. The relative size and influence of their respective economies among the Sahelian states make them strategically desirable allies in the Arab world. In the policy-making process that determined these countries to be of geostrategic importance, GWOT strategists are often too quick to make the connection between generalized characteristics – such as widespread poverty, Muslim heritage, and vast under governed desert areas¹⁵ – and the likelihood of harboring terrorists.¹⁶ These sociopolitical factors, plus the problem of the Sahel’s vast unmanned borders, as well as Morocco and Algeria’s proximity to Europe, combined to promote these countries into the category of potential terrorist safe havens.¹⁷ Although oversimplified, this categorization continues to structure the US response to the perceived terrorist threat emanating from the Maghreb.

Two chief factors explain why the US perceives the northwest Maghreb to be a hotspot in the GWOT. First, connections exist that tie certain Maghrebi militant Islamic groups to the those operating in Afghanistan and Iraq, such as the fact that many extremists in Morocco and Algeria who have taken up arms (mainly against their own governments) were in fact trained in the Soviet-Afghan War.¹⁸ Secondly, the expansive Saharan desert – roughly the size of the continental United States – cuts across borders from the horn of Africa to the Moroccan coast making border traffic difficult to patrol. Because a key aspect of the US global counterterrorism strategy is to control and monitor the international movement of money, goods, and terrorist suspects, the prospect of a trans-

¹⁴ Robert G Berschinski “AFRICOM’S Dilemma: The ‘Global War on Terrorism,’ ‘Capacity Building,’ Humanitarianism, and the Future of US Security Policy in Africa.” *Strategic Studies Institute of the US Army War College*. (2007) 3

¹⁵ Emily Hunt “Islamist Terrorism in Northwestern Africa: A ‘Thorn in the Neck’ of the United States?” *The Washington Institute for Near East Policy*. Policy Focus #65. 2007. 12.

¹⁶ “Algeria” *The World Factbook*. US Central Intelligence Agency. 2008.

¹⁷ Berschinski (2007)

¹⁸ Mathieu Guidère, *Al Qaïda à la conquête du Maghreb: le terrorisme aux portes de l’Europe*. Monaco : Éditions du Rocher, 2007. 59-60.

continental conduit is especially disconcerting to policy makers and military strategists.¹⁹ The concerns outlined by these two factors are summed up in the “Banana Theory of Terrorism”²⁰ named for the curved swath of under-policed borders between hot zones of confrontation (Afghanistan and Iraq) westward through the middle-east and along the coastal Mediterranean countries. Chapter three will explain how this threat assessment, although plausible, is highly unrealistic.

The international academic and political debate over America’s foreign policy objectives embodied by the GWOT – their success, their shortcomings, and their justification – is contentious and multisided. This paper will examine the spectrum of GWOT analyses regarding specifically Algeria and Morocco, arguing that the intensification of US military presence there since the 9/11 attacks has missed its mark, failing to improve American security and leaving northwest Africans less secure. The post-9/11 US foreign policy, still encapsulated by the seven-year-old Global War on Terror paradigm, aims to encourage democracy and liberal freedoms while fighting terrorism.²¹ Problems arise, however, when the means used to combat terrorism contribute to the restriction of civil liberties abroad.²²

From Washington’s point of view, bolstering the stability of these two leading moderate Islamic countries through counterterrorism partnership programs would build valuable allies in the Muslim world.²³ The resulting influx of US support has further entrenched the authoritarian principles of government in Rabat and Algiers and reinforced the security establishment’s staunch oppression of dissident voices and insurgent elements,

¹⁹ Emily Hunt “Islamist Terrorism in Northwestern Africa: A ‘Thorn in the Neck’ of the United States?” *The Washington Institute for Near East Policy*. Policy Focus #65. 2007. vii

²⁰ For more on the Banana Theory of Terrorism see chapter 3, see also Jeremy H. Keenan “The Banana Theory of Terrorism: Alternative Truths and the Collapse of the ‘Second’ (Saharan) Front in the War on Terror.” *Journal of Contemporary African Studies*. 25, 1. January 2007

²¹ White House, The. *The National Security Strategy of the United States of America*. Washington, DC. March 2006.

²² Barry Buzan, “Will the ‘global war terrorism’ be the new Cold War?” *International Affairs*, 82: 6. (2006): 1003

²³ Yahia H. Zoubir, and Karima Benabdallah-Gambier. “The United States and the North African Imbrolio: Balancing Interests in Algeria, Morocco, and the Western Sahara” *Mediterranean Politics*, 10, 2 (2005) 182-3

setting back the cause of democratization in the region several years.²⁴ Moreover, this intervention to promote cooperation with the US has removed the incentive for regional cooperation, further distancing two countries whose governments are already at odds. This paper's argument will consist of three major points: (1) The long-term security of these two Maghrebi adversaries depends upon their cooperation towards democratization, liberalization and counterterrorism. (2) US involvement is injecting enough military strength and international political clout into each state to sustain their oppression of civil calls for democratization. (3) The sustained build-up of US forces in the region in hopes of eradicating al-Qaeda strongholds has instead promoted stronger anti-American aggression.²⁵ This paper will show how the US military's strong-arm approach towards imposing this liberal democratic design undermines its attainment and thwarts the success of counterterrorism by bolstering authoritarian governments and fostering a resentment of the US.

²⁴ Jeremy H. Keenan, "Security and Insecurity in North Africa," *Review of African Political Economy*, 33: 108 (2006) j279

²⁵ Paul Rogers. *Global Security and the War on Terror: Elite power and the illusion of control*. London and New York: Routledge, 2008. 166; see also Berschinski, (2007), 43; Rashid Khalidi, *Resurrecting Empire: Western footprints and America's Perilous Path in the Middle East*. New York: Beacon Press, 2004; Barry Buzan, "Will the 'global war terrorism' be the new Cold War?" *International Affairs*, 82: 6. (2006): 1102-3.

Methodology and Review of Literature

This section will recount how I arrived at this topic and the academic approach used to investigate it. My interest in the region began three years ago when I focused my undergraduate degree in Global Studies on decolonization in the French Maghreb, specifically Algeria and Morocco. As I continued this emphasis into my master's degree in Global Studies, several global political and social currents had started to converge over the Maghreb and cemented my interest in the region. Tacitly recognizing France's zone of influence, the US traditionally has treated the Maghreb with indifference, but as France continued to distance itself from the GWOT, and from the 2003 invasion of Iraq in particular, Washington policy makers increasingly saw the need to reinstate US presence across the Mediterranean from its European allies.²⁶ As Martins and Phillips argue, this approach began with the same assumption that US counter-terrorist chiefs from the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) to the Department of Defense (DoD) have often used: that counterterrorism in this region is "too important strategically to be left to France."²⁷

These conditions piqued my interest in the topic, and so I began the research process. This paper's extensive research began broadly as a literary review on the topic of changing security and geopolitics in the Maghreb since the region became an area of concern for the United States in its post 9/11 Global War on Terror. I arrived at a topic about which relatively little is written. To begin, I read several articles from social anthropologist Jeremy Keenan, whose current topic of focus is security and counterterrorism in the Maghreb. His research was primarily based on first-hand observation in the region, but his inclusion of other literature led me to political scientists John Entelis, Barry Buzan, Mustafa Barth, and Yahia Zoubir. Their sharp critique of what is sometimes referred to in this category of literature as the US's 'Second Front' in

²⁶ Barry Buzan, "Will the 'global war terrorism' be the new Cold War?" *International Affairs*, 82: 6. (2006): 1113

²⁷ Martin Evans and John Phillips, *Algeria: Anger of the Dispossessed*. (London : Yale University Press, 2007) 254-5

the GWOT²⁸ seemed to be only half of the academic debate over US involvement in North Africa. It was then that several successive searches of Internet databases uncovered articles from more conservative points of view, usually ones written by military mouthpieces or by universities and think tanks associated with the Pentagon. Subsequent articles by Robert Berschinski, Emily Hunt and Jacob Mundy helped to round out the discussion.

Next, my research turned to books published on the topic of the GWOT's impact on North Africa, of which there are few. The relative paucity of books I attribute to three factors. First, the newness of the GWOT as a policy directive meant that at the time I began my research, only six years had passed since its inception. Although broad critiques of the GWOT were coming in vogue at the time, there was only a relatively small body of reliable books by academic experts. Second, while books on the GWOT were scarce, books treating its intersection with Algeria and Morocco specifically represented a fraction of that already small category. Finally, operating out of the University of Vienna (UV), Austria made finding relevant books in English slightly more difficult, initially. Although the library's collection was expansive, it was not until spring of 2008 that the UV Library of Cultural and Socio Anthropology received Paul Rogers's 2008 collection of articles on Global Security and the War on Terror, and then the UV Library of Contemporary History was able to order two books on my behalf; one by Andrew Martin and Patrice Petro, the other by Matheu Guidère,

Finally, to support the timeline of events and to track the changes in rhetoric or thinking on the part of the US, it was critical to consult official statements, press releases and reports from the White House. In the same vein, speeches made by the president, talks by administration mouthpieces, and journalistic articles were also useful in order to show the changing perception in Washington of the threat in North Africa and its portrayal in the media.

²⁸ Mustafa Barth "Sand Castles in the Sahara: US Military Basing in Algeria." *Review of African Political Economy*, 30:98 (December 1, 2003) 679; J.H. Keenan, "The Banana Theory of Terrorism: Alternative Truths and the Collapse of the 'Second' (Saharan) Front in the War on Terror." *Journal of Contemporary African Studies*. 25, 1 (2007): 31

Finally the driving question of my thesis started to take shape: What impact or impacts has the US Global War on Terror had on Moroccan and Algerian security and geopolitics? This paper will attempt to answer this question in three sections. The first chapter is a historical and political analysis of these two Maghrebi states and the historical and contemporary political relationship between them and each with the United States, respectively. Then, the terrorist threat in North Africa will be analyzed from both an empirical, or material standpoint, and also from the “securitization”²⁹ perspective as outlined by political scientist Barry Buzan.³⁰ Before the final conclusions the third chapter will discuss the US actions taken militarily and politically in Morocco and Algeria from 2003 up until Spring 2008.

²⁹ Barry Buzan, “Will the ‘global war terrorism’ be the new Cold War?” *International Affairs*, 82: 6. (2006): 1101-1118.

³⁰ see page 18, “Security versus Securitization,” in the Definitions chapter for greater discussion on this topic

Definitions

This paper will describe the intersection of two contemporary currents in international affairs: United States foreign policy since 2001, referred to here as the “Global War on Terror”, and regional security in Morocco and Algeria. These two topics will also provide this paper’s temporal and spatial limitations. The topics and concepts described in this section are contentious and likely to incur criticism, but a workable understanding must be established in order to come to any meaningful analysis of how America’s military presence in Morocco and Algeria is impacting regional security.

The Global War on Terror

Authors who have analyzed the ‘Global War on Terror’ (GWOT) use different labels for this turn in policy, from the “New Imperialism”³¹ to “the new Cold War.”³² The White House calls it “the decisive ideological struggle of the 21st century.”³³ Due to the repeated use of this title in political speeches, government policy reports, and contemporary media, the phrase has become commonplace as a reference to the broad range of American counter-terrorism measures since 9/11. This paper will accept the validity of GWOT as appropriate terminology to refer to the banner under which US foreign policy has operated since 2001, but not without critically evaluating its conception. It is especially important to look at the recent argument of political scientist Barry Buzan, which holds that the GWOT is fast becoming a defining international security paradigm similar to what the Cold War framework was up until the early nineties.³⁴ The terminology in use, however, is already evolving. The architects of the Bush administration, as of 2007, began to reframe the Global War on Terror as the ‘long

³¹ Jeremy H. Keenan, Waging war on Terror: The Implications of America’s ‘New Imperialism’ for Saharan Peoples.” *The journal of North African Studies*. 10: 3-4. (2005). 619

³² Barry Buzan, “Will the ‘global war terrorism’ be the new Cold War?” *International Affairs*, 82: 6. (2006): 1101

³³ The White House, President George W. Bush. “Fact Sheet: The Sixth Anniversary of 9/11...” Office of the Press Secretary. Sept.11, 2007.

³⁴ Barry Buzan, “Will the ‘global war terrorism’ be the new Cold War?” *International Affairs*, 82: 6. (2006): 1101.

war'³⁵ – an enduring struggle of ideologies that they hope will transcend the negativities associated with some of its unsuccessful initiatives such as the invasion of Iraq.³⁶

Without stepping outside the temporal scope of this paper's topic, a brief retrospective into the makings of today's US foreign policy stance is needed.

In the latter half of the twentieth century, America's foreign relations strategy was built around the ability to militarily and politically contain the Soviet Union until its demise in 1989. Shortly after the crumbling of the USSR, policy makers looked towards delineating a new position for the US in world affairs.³⁷ Security studies expert Barry Buzan argues that this point in US policy-making is characterized by a "threat deficit," wherein Washington was lacking a hegemonic concept of global security that would cast the US in a leadership role.³⁸ In the 1990s, many of those in Republican circles perceived President Clinton's preference for diplomacy as an inability to arm the US in defense of its security interests overseas.³⁹ This neoconservative viewpoint has always held the US to be a civilizing force, charged with a duty to shape international affairs; this opinion was manifest in the policy of the George W. Bush administration.⁴⁰ When the September 11th attacks took place, only nine months into the Bush presidency, Buzan argues that Washington conservatives were provided with the fodder to build a case for a powerful emerging global ideological struggle led by the US, which from then on was dubbed the "Global War on Terror."

³⁵ Barry Buzan, "Will the 'global war terrorism' be the new Cold War?" *International Affairs*, 82: 6. (2006): 1101; Ian Lustick et al. "Symposium: Are We Trapped in the War on Terror?" transcript published by *Middle East Policy Council*. Washington, D.C. November 3, 2006.

³⁶ Barry Buzan, "Will the 'global war terrorism' be the new Cold War?" *International Affairs*, 82: 6. (2006): 1109

³⁷ Paul Rogers, *Global Security and the War on Terror: Elite power and the illusion of control*. (London and New York: Routledge, 2008) 107-8

³⁸ Barry Buzan, "Will the 'global war terrorism' be the new Cold War?" *International Affairs*, 82: 6. (2006): 1101

³⁹ Rogers (2008) 156-7

⁴⁰ Rogers (2008) 159

Buzan is not the only political observer to compare the GWOT and the Cold War.⁴¹ This association derives from the Bush administration's deliberate repetition of symbolic parallels between the struggle to contain communism and the global war on terror. For instance it was common in both eras to frame US interests as synonymous to Global interests, in order to rally allies to the cause.⁴² The 2006 US National Security Strategy focuses on two key operative precepts: first, that in order to prevent attacks on US soil it is necessary to engage the enemy abroad; and second, that success in this war against terrorist extremists depends on the strength of "transformational diplomacy," or Washington's ability to ideologically shape other nations in a liberal democratic image.⁴³

The GWOT is primarily a political posturing that justifies and gives unity to the myriad US foreign policy objectives worldwide. Although it is a fairly robust security framework on the same scope and scale as the Cold War, in the end the GWOT is not as stable a construct for United States security. Buzan cites two characteristics of the framework and its resultant policies that diminish its endurance. First, the weak process used to justify action taken under the GWOT banner will not hold up over time. Chapter three of this paper, on the thinking behind US involvement in Algeria and Morocco, will talk more about the treatment of evidence justifying action, namely the systematic amalgamation of disparate threats, upon which counterterrorist activities in North Africa are based.⁴⁴ The second major weakness of the GWOT – which is closely related to the main argument of this paper – is that the tactics used in the pursuit of Islamic terrorists actually threaten the values they purportedly protect.⁴⁵

⁴¹ Barry Buzan, "Will the 'global war terrorism' be the new Cold War?" *International Affairs*, 82: 6. (2006): 1101; Lustick, Ian, Ivan Eland, Rand Beers, Edward Luttwak. "Symposium: Are We Trapped in the War on Terror?" transcript published by *Middle East Policy Council*. Washington, D.C. November 3, 2006.

⁴² Buzan (2006) 1108

⁴³ The White House, *The National Security Strategy of the United States of America* Washington D.C. 2006. 43-4

⁴⁴ David Kilcullen, "Countering Global Insurgency." *Journal of Strategic Studies*, Vol. 28, No. 4. Aug. 2005, 597-617. 608. see page 41.

⁴⁵ Barry Buzan, "Will the 'global war terrorism' be the new Cold War?" *International Affairs*, 82: 6. (2006): 1103

The Maghreb

This paper, although dedicated to Algeria and Morocco specifically, will refer at times to the surrounding region. These two countries have the two highest gross domestic products and are the most populous of the region.⁴⁶ Emily Hunt, writing for the Washington Institute for Near East Policy, calls Morocco and Algeria “the epicenter of terrorist activity in northwestern Africa.”⁴⁷ Often the meaning of geographic or geopolitical regional labels are taken for granted, so this section will briefly explain the various regional headings under which Morocco and Algeria fall.

The Maghreb is an easily delineated region consisting (in most definitions) of five states: Morocco, Mauritania, Algeria, Tunisia, and Libya.⁴⁸ Geographically distinguished from neighboring regions such as Europe or central Africa, it also shares a relatively high cultural, linguistic, historical and political cohesion.⁴⁹ The name “Maghreb,” Arabic for “western,” came about in the 7th century when the Umayyad Caliphate seated in Damascus extended its empire westward.⁵⁰ In the 15th century the region came under Ottoman rule, but control was minimal except for administrative contact between Constantinople and the major capitols such as Algiers, Tunis, and Tripoli.⁵¹ In the colonial era, France exerted the most influence on the region, although Spain and Italy also had influence over Morocco and Libya, respectively.

The Maghreb is also referred to under other broader titles, for instance the acronym MENA, for Middle East and North Africa, is popular shorthand among certain international bodies such as the World Bank, but it has a vague definition including

⁴⁶ Source: CIA World Factbook 2008

⁴⁷ Emily Hunt “Islamist Terrorism in Northwestern Africa: A ‘Thorn in the Neck’ of the United States?” *The Washington Institute for Near East Policy*. Policy Focus #65. (February 2007) 1

⁴⁸ See Appendix 1: Map of the Maghreb

⁴⁹ Ziba Moshaver “Global Change, Interdependence and State Autonomy: A View from the MENA Region” in *The State and Global Change: The Political Economy of Transition in the Middle East and North Africa*, ed. Hassan Hakimian and Ziba Moshaver, (Surrey, UK: Curzon Press, 2001) 248.

⁵⁰ Bruce Maddy-Weitzman, “Maghreb Regime Scenarios.” *Middle East Review of International Affairs*, 10: 3, (2006) 103-119.

⁵¹ Hugh Roberts, *The Battlefield Algeria 1988-2002: Studies in a Broken Polity*. (London and New York: Verso, 2003)

between twelve and fifteen states from Morocco to Iran.⁵² The US Military prefers using “the Sahel” – a more geographic grouping that includes a fairly straight-forward list of countries bordering the Sahara Desert: Senegal, Mauritania, Mali, Morocco, Algeria, Niger, Nigeria, Tunisia, Libya, Chad and the Western Sahara territory. When addressing the specific strategic concerns relating to the shared problem of difficult-to-patrol desert borders, the Sahel categorization is useful.

⁵² World Bank. *Regional Fact Sheet from the World Development Indicators 2008: Middle East and North Africa*. (WDI 2008)

Security versus Securitization

This paper poses the question: What are the impacts on Algerian and Moroccan security caused by the GWOT? In constructing a relevant answer to the nature and effects of US security strategy, it is important to define the broader concept of security. This section outlines the components of security that will come to bear on this paper's argument, specifically the idea that Morocco and Algeria's security – that of their people and of their region – is not best served by the US Trans Sahara Counterterrorism Partnership (TSCTP) nor by other operations under the GWOT mandate.

Keenan writes that security analysis “revolves around two critical questions; namely, whose security and security from whom or what?”⁵³ The traditional realist approach is concerned mainly with the security of the Westphalian model of the state against external military threats.⁵⁴ Today multiple applications of the concept of security exist in academic literature from political science, international relations, and the still-emerging discipline of security studies. Keenan asserts that on the individual, state and international level, overall security in North Africa at the end of the 1990s was improving. His argument takes into account factors such as the level of violence, the extent of democratic opening, and progress toward peace in territorial disputes (such as that over the Western Sahara).⁵⁵ In his argument, it is a direct result of America's post 9/11 involvement in North Africa that the previously mentioned indicators – ending violence, democratization, and cooperation on territorial disputes – are declining once again.⁵⁶ Rather than increasing security in the North African region, US support for the regimes (especially through US

⁵³ Jeremy H. Keenan, “Security and Insecurity in North Africa,” (*Review of African Political Economy*, 33: 108 2006) 269.

⁵⁴ Keenan (2006) 269; Ziba Moshaver “Global Change, Interdependence and State Autonomy: A View from the MENA Region” in Hakimaian, Hassan and Ziba Moshaver, eds. *The State and Global Change: The Political Economy of Transition in the Middle East and North Africa*, Surrey, UK: Curzon Press, (2001) 250

⁵⁵ Keenan (2006) 270-1

⁵⁶ Keenan (2006) 271-2

corporations' investment in the hydrocarbon sector) the US has instead strengthened the authoritarian security establishments of Morocco and Algeria.⁵⁷

Keenan goes on to explain in specifics how, in the name of cooperation under the GWOT, not only Morocco and Algeria but every regime in the Maghreb has instituted political repression by labeling dissidents as terrorists or linking them somehow to terrorist groups.⁵⁸ For example, in 2003 Moroccan parliament passed a tough new anti-terrorism law after the Casablanca bombings that same year killed forty-three people in five coordinated blasts.⁵⁹ This legislation is sometimes cited by US policymakers as evidence that the counterterrorism efforts coordinated under the GWOT are moving in the right direction,⁶⁰ but in reality it has done more to imprison the innocent than to thwart terrorists. While attacks from Islamic radicals like the 2003 Casablanca bombings no doubt deserve a harsh reaction from the government, the legislation passed has provided merely a justification for authoritarian abuses of human rights, including arbitrary arrest, torture, and unfair trials.⁶¹

Despite the arguments of Keenan and others that the Trans Sahara Counterterrorism Partnership is in fact decreasing the level of security in North Africa on multiple levels, the United States National Security Strategy of 2006 still holds that the aid packages and military assistance being invested in Morocco and Algeria is making America more secure – joining with allies abroad in an effort to “keep [the enemy] on the run” and prevent them from coming to US soil.⁶² It is difficult to argue that the joint military operations held in the Sahel or the diplomatic pressure to pass counterterrorism legislation are positively impacting the security of American individuals. However,

⁵⁷ Jeremy H. Keenan, “Security and Insecurity in North Africa,” *Review of African Political Economy*, 33: 108 (2006) 279

⁵⁸ Keenan (2006) 279

⁵⁹ Robert G. Berschinski, “AFRICOM’S Dilemma: The ‘Global War on Terrorism,’ ‘Capacity Building,’ Humanitarianism, and the Future of US Security Policy in Africa.” *Strategic Studies Institute of the US Army War College* (2007) 17

⁶⁰ David C. Welch, Assistant Secretary for Near Eastern Affairs. “US Policy Challenges in North Africa.” *Statement before the House Foreign Affairs Committee*. Washington, DC. June 6 (2007)

⁶¹ John P. Entelis, “The Democratic Imperative vs. the Authoritarian Impulse: The Maghreb State between Transition and Terrorism.” *Strategic Insights*, 30:6 (June 2005) 11

⁶² White House, The. *The National Security Strategy of the United States of America*. Washington, DC: March 2006. 13

analyzing these actions from the perspective of US security on the level of the Nation-state, they do benefit the US government by reinforcing the GWOT framework. This accomplishment, according to Barry Buzan, stabilizes American hegemony on the global level.⁶³ Strides taken in counterterrorism initiatives abroad, such as the 2004 Moroccan anti-terrorist legislation, help to frame US interests as universal principles.⁶⁴

Buzan's article on security and the GWOT starts with the premise that nothing changed in international security after 9/11 except for the perception that something had changed,⁶⁵ and this perception was used in Washington to redefine US foreign policy interests. Security is therefore closely tied to beliefs and perceptions of security, or securitization.⁶⁶ According to Buzan the analysis of a 'securitization' – as opposed to a materialist analysis of security – hinges on whether something can be successfully constructed as a threat, with this understanding being accepted by a wide and/or specifically relevant audience."⁶⁷ In the case of Morocco and Algeria, the under-policed desert expanses to the south were successfully constructed as threatening once viewed through the GWOT.

It could be argued that the success of the GWOT as a securitization creates a paradigm that places the US in a leadership role in international politics and is therefore beneficial to US security. States like Morocco and Algeria, by playing into the GWOT securitization are in turn able to tap into the financial resources provided by a partnership with the US, thereby boosting their national security. For example Algeria is suspected of manipulating the terrorist threat, even helping to stage terrorist attacks,⁶⁸ in order to justify the repeated renewal of the state of emergency under which the military regime

⁶³ Barry Buzan, "Will the 'global war terrorism' be the new Cold War?" *International Affairs*, 82: 6. (2006) 1102

⁶⁴ Buzan (2006) 1103

⁶⁵ Buzan (2006) 1102

⁶⁶ Buzan (2006) 1103

⁶⁷ Buzan (2006) 1102

⁶⁸ For a greater in-depth explanation of the kidnapping of 32 German tourists in Algeria and the suspected complicity of the Algerian government, see chapter three, pages 44-47. See also Jeremy H. Keenan, "Security and Insecurity in North Africa," 2006; and Evans and Phillips, 2007

justifies its control.⁶⁹ As countries like Algeria and Morocco vie for US funding, the presence of a certain level of terrorist violence begins to work in their favor. Thus it becomes clear that the GWOT is experiencing negative feedback counterproductive to its goal of bettering American security.

In summary, after the attacks of 9/11 the GWOT was presented initially as a strategic directive – a new task to which the United States would devote its unmatched military power. Upon further analysis, however, the concept is more of a securitization paradigm, under which a myriad of aggressive and often unilateral American actions are justified. Built into the US security strategy, which today is centered on the GWOT, is a policy of rewarding countries like Morocco and Algeria who cooperate with the US in counterterrorism. One of the greatest flaws of this system is that these authoritarian governments, eager to gain trade privileges and diplomatic clout through association with the US, and in pursuit of financial aid to their security establishment, tend to exaggerate the terrorist threat they face. The material security of the United States is left unchanged if not worsened, and the people of Morocco and Algeria face an increased threat to their day-to-day security from their own government.

⁶⁹ Martin Evans and John Phillips, *Algeria: Anger of the Dispossessed*. (London : Yale University Press, 2007) 295-6

Chapter 1: Algeria and Morocco

Background

Historically, Algeria and Morocco share many traits common to the region resulting from the influence of neighboring cultures: ancient Islamic civilizations to the East, colonial Europe to the north, and less significantly, mercantile West Africa.⁷⁰ Not until the sixteenth century did the separate territories that would become the modern states of Morocco and Algeria begin to take shape,⁷¹ and that is where their broad similarities give way to their differences. Most prominent are their different political structures. In the wake of Ottoman rule, Algeria adopted the patrimonial military state structure, in which state power remained in the hands of a small elite that presided mainly over the coastal areas, with tribal leaders of the interior left to govern themselves.⁷² Morocco instead developed along the Arab caliphate model, ruled by *shurafa*, (singular *sharif*, meaning descendent) whose legitimacy depends on a lineage traced back to the Prophet Mohammed.⁷³ Although different in their structure, the governing apparatus in both countries reinforce the patrimonial logic upon which several Maghrebi authoritarian governments operate.⁷⁴

This early divergence in political structures persists today, despite a destructive period of European intervention in the colonial era, a topic explored further in chapter two. Since 1962 the generals and soldiers of the military extension of the Algerian nationalist party (FLN) have run the country, using the military to silence opposition. Morocco adopted a constitutional monarchy in 1957 as a condition of independence from France, but functions on a closed system of nepotism. Although it is outside the main temporal focus

⁷⁰ Michel Le Gall “The Historical Context” in Zartman, I. William and William Mark Haabeeb, eds. *Polity and Society in Contemporary North Africa*. (Boulder, CO: Westview, 1993 3-18) 3

⁷¹ Le Gall (1993) 6-8

⁷² Le Gall (1993) 7

⁷³ Le Gall (1993) 8

⁷⁴ John P. Entelis, “The Democratic Imperative vs. the Authoritarian Impulse: The Maghreb State between Transition and Terrorism.” *Strategic Insights*, 30:6 (June 2005) 1, 3

of this paper, this history is important in discussing the relationship between the US and its two key Maghrebi allies today.

Algeria's military regime and Morocco's constitutional monarchy have tried in the past to cooperate on security, economic development and other regional issues, but their thirty-year political stand-off over the Western Sahara territory prevents any unified action.

Algeria is the biggest state supporter of the group fighting Morocco for self-determination, the Polisario Front. The following section will focus on the regional and historic importance of this territorial dispute, outlining Algeria and Morocco's history of mutual animosity over the Western Sahara dispute. A resolution to this issue is the lynchpin on which further regional cooperation relies. The final section provides greater detail of the contemporary nature of US relations with Morocco and Algeria, respectively, and the ways in which the GWOT has impacted these relations.

The Western Sahara Conflict

In 1970 Morocco was at the center of a geopolitical situation that was about to undergo significant changes. Spain owned the land south of Morocco, known then as the Spanish Sahara. It was one of the last colonial territories in Africa, and while general Franco's health deteriorated King Hassan II of Morocco plotted to take over the territory in the wake of Spanish rule. Meanwhile, a group of Sahrawi students from the Mohammed V University in Rabat began a movement to resist colonial rule. In May 1973 the group formally named themselves The Polisario Front⁷⁵ and they made broad appeals to the Maghrebi nations for support to achieve a definitive end to Spanish colonial control.⁷⁶ After receiving backing from Colonel Qadhafi, they began their guerilla campaign, comprised initially of attacks on Spanish garrisons and desert outposts, and later on Moroccan military targets.⁷⁷ The front solidified their objective to pursue "national liberation... and the achievement of complete independence."⁷⁸ Polisario had defined itself as the voice of all Sahrawi people, as well as part of a larger Arab movement.⁷⁹ This movement would prove to be an enduring resistance group and key political actor in the contemporary conflict.⁸⁰

In October 1975, the International Court of Justice (ICJ), ruled in affirmation of the Sahrawi people's right to self-determination, but Hassan II elected to ignore that finding – the ruling's main point – and acknowledged only the section that affirmed Morocco's stake in the territory.⁸¹ The King never recognized the issue as one of decolonization, so to reclaim the region, he organized the relocation of 350,000 Moroccan volunteers – soldiers and settlers – in a project he referred to as the "Green March," for the holy color

⁷⁵ Polisario is an acronym for the Spanish translation of the Popular Front for the Liberation of Saguia el-Hamra and Río de Oro, the two main geographic regions that make up the Western Sahara.

⁷⁶ Tony Hodges, *Western Sahara: The Roots of a Desert War*. (Westport, Conn: Lawrence Hill & Co., Publishers, Inc., 1983)158.

⁷⁷ Hodges (1983) 161; Maria J. Stephan and Jacob Mundy, "A Battlefield Transformed: From guerilla resistance to mass nonviolent struggle in the Western Sahara." *Journal of Military and Strategic Studies*, 8, no. 3, (Spring 2006), 19

⁷⁸ Polisario Front, quoted in: Hodges (1983) 163

⁷⁹ Hodges (1983) 164

⁸⁰ Hodges (1983) 155

⁸¹ Yahia H. Zoubir, "Stalemate in Western Sahara: Ending International Legality." *Middle East Policy*, 14: 4 (2007) 161-2

of Islam.⁸² Algeria saw this move as merely the latest manifestation of Morocco's desire for territorial expansion and began to support the Polisario's calls for self-determination.⁸³ Spain illegally signed the territory over to Morocco and Mauritania on February 26, 1976. Morocco immediately occupied the majority (roughly sixty per cent) of the area Spain vacated, while Mauritania seized fifteen per cent.⁸⁴ Accounts from Sahrawi residents who remember the time of Spanish withdrawal and the Green March recount how surprising it was, as people had previously felt such little connection to Rabat.⁸⁵

Spain never provided for a referendum on self-determination in its former colony, as the United Nations General Assembly mandated in repeat resolutions spanning 1964 to 1973.⁸⁶ Spain was sure to sign trade agreements, however, with Morocco and Mauritania to ensure Spanish ships could maintain fishing enterprises in the rich waters off the Western Saharan coast.⁸⁷ In 1978 Mokhtar Ould Daddah, Mauritania's president, fell to a military coup spurred on largely by the humiliation of military defeat at the hands of the Polisario.⁸⁸ Politically Mauritania would continue to support Morocco's annexation, but this coup effectively ended Mauritania's territorial interest in the region. The Moroccan king feared the same fate as Daddah if his military bowed to the Polisario Front's forces, or if he was to hold a referendum that did not affirm his assertions that the territory was in fact a southern province of Morocco, held captive by a few wayward secessionist Moroccans. By the end of the 1970's, with the legitimacy of the crown then wrapped up in its assertion of sovereignty in the Western Sahara, full independence became an unacceptable solution in the eyes of the king. This bolstered the monarch's resolve, and prevented him from even acknowledging Polisario's existence by agreeing to talks.

⁸² Eric Jensen, *Western Sahara: Anatomy of a Stalemate*. (Boulder, Colo: Lynne Rienner Publishers, Inc., 2005) 27.

⁸³ Zoubir (2007) 160-162

⁸⁴ Yahia H. Zoubir "The Western Sahara Conflict: Regional and International Dimensions." *The Journal of Modern African Studies*, 28, no. 2 (1990), 226.

⁸⁵ Toby Shelley *Endgame in the Western Sahara: what future for Africa's last colony?* (London: Zed Books, 2004) 128.

⁸⁶ Yahia H. Zoubir "The Western Sahara Conflict: Regional and International Dimensions." *The Journal of Modern African Studies*, 28, 2. (1990) 226

⁸⁷ Zoubir (1990) 226-7

⁸⁸ Zoubir (1990)

As is typical in territorial disputes, the parties' mutually exclusive definitions of the situation have rendered arbitration and peace talks extremely difficult.⁸⁹ Morocco's assertion that the conflict is a civil uprising, and not a territorial dispute, is so narrowly conceived as to seem disingenuous, and at times mocking. For instance, when in 2001 Polisario's president Mohammed Abdelaziz sent King Mohammed VI an invitation to arrange for negotiations, Mohammed's only reply was that Abdelaziz was welcome to come to Rabat as a subject to pay homage to the king.⁹⁰ A review of Morocco's consistent stance since the 1970s reveals that Rabat's goal is to outlast the opposition, or in other words, to wait to gain sovereignty by international recognition after the United Nations and other arbitrators have exhausted their patience, funding, and goodwill.

Algeria's backing has been the most important for Polisario since 1976 when Algeria opened its borders to Sahrawi refugees and committed military support to the cause. Emerging from a decade-long civil war, twenty-first century Algeria is engaging more in regional foreign policy than the Algeria of the 1970s and 80s.⁹¹ There have been attempts from several Maghrebi governments to call for political and economic unification, and in 1995 Algeria was spearheading the integration process when Morocco suspended its participation in the Arab Maghreb Union (UMA) over Algeria's pro-Sahrawi stance.⁹² Then, just before the UMA summit in 1999, King Hassan II signaled a real readiness to improve communication and engage in talks with Algeria's Bouteflika, but Hassan passed away suddenly on the 24th of July before the meeting could take place.⁹³ The following year, heads of state from Algeria, Libya, Morocco and Tunisia held a brief summit to begin the resuscitation of the UMA, signaling their acceptance of the fact that participation in the global economy was becoming increasingly difficult alone.⁹⁴ They scheduled a UMA summit for 2002 but Mohammed backed out at the last minute.

⁸⁹ Steven R. Ratner, "Land Feuds and Their Solutions: Finding International Law beyond the Tribunal Chamber" *The American Journal of International Law*, 100: 4. (Oct. 2006) 811

⁹⁰ "Polisario's Sinking Hopes: Promises, promises, never kept." *The Economist*. 361: 8251. (Dec. 8, 2001)1

⁹¹ Yahia H. Zoubir, "The Resurgence of Algeria's Foreign Policy in the Twenty-First Century." *The Journal of North African Studies*. 9, 2 (2004) 169

⁹² Zoubir (2004) 171

⁹³ Zoubir (2004) 171

⁹⁴ Zoubir (2004) 172

Although Algeria and Morocco both express a desire for greater cooperation, the issue of the Western Sahara continues to poison the chances for any real unified action.

Morocco's ongoing boycott of the African Union, (called the Organization for African Unity prior to 2002) illustrates how the conflict is preventing closer regional economic cooperation. Despite Morocco's integral role in the union's creation, in 1984 the country's delegates walked out of the OAU in reaction to several member countries' recognition of the SADR as a member state.⁹⁵ This action contributed to stalling the Western Saharan peace process, increasing King Hassan's international diplomatic isolation and awarding a major diplomatic advantage to Algeria and the Polisario Front.⁹⁶ Political victories like these have increased Polisario's political leverage in the conflict despite its relative military weakness in comparison to Morocco.

Although Algeria has been the most influential supporter of the Sahrawi people and the Polisario front, the most influential arbitrator was Former US Secretary of State James Baker.⁹⁷ In 1997, shortly after he assumed the post of UN Secretary-General, Kofi Annan appointed Baker as special representative to the Western Sahara.⁹⁸ Baker mediated between the Polisario Front and Morocco and by 1999 delivered a plan for self-determination and a list of eligible voters for a referendum, but Morocco ducked the referendum process, demonstrating once more the fundamental and multiple disagreements between the parties. It was then that Annan and Baker both began to seriously favor an alternative to the referendum solution, in what many critics have called an acceptance of Morocco's open and repeated infringement upon international legality.⁹⁹ In a final attempt to uphold the initial ICJ ruling for a referendum, Baker submitted the

⁹⁵ Packer, C.A.; Rukare, D. "The New African Union and Its Constitutive Act." *The American Journal of International Law*, Vol. 96, NO.2 (Apr. 2002). p 374

⁹⁶ Festus U. Ohaegbulam. "The Conflict in the Western Sahara: Review of Thompson & Adloff, Damis and Hodges." (*The Journal of Modern African Studies*, 22: 4. 1984) 697

⁹⁷ Issaka K. Souaré, "Western Sahara: Is there light at the end of the tunnel?" *Institute for Security Studies* paper 155. November 2007. 4-6

⁹⁸ Yahia H. Zoubir, and Karima Benabdallah-Gambier, "The United States and the North African Imbroglia: Balancing Interests in Algeria, Morocco, and the Western Sahara" *Mediterranean Politics* 10: 2 (2005) 185-6

⁹⁹ Yahia H. Zoubir "Stalemate in Western Sahara: Ending International Legality." *Middle East Policy*, 14: 4. (2007) 163-4

“Baker Plan II” in early 2003. Despite reservations, the Algerians and Sahrawis suddenly accepted the proposal in order to force Moroccan refusal and reveal the bad faith intentions of the opposing party.¹⁰⁰ Baker Plan II called for the UN Security Council to enforce the plan’s implementation (a caveat that the Moroccans and the French staunchly opposed). Baker’s frustrated resignation in 2004 marks the end of the US’s most significant involvement in this dispute between Morocco and the Algerian-backed Polisario. Stalemate set in once again as US attention turned to Iraq and Al-Qaeda’s global jihadist movement, and Rabat’s illegal presence in the Western Sahara was thereby implicitly supported by the US.¹⁰¹

This crumbling of the second Baker plan was in no small part due to France’s enduring protection of Morocco’s interests in the UN Security Council (UNSC). This paper’s focus is on US influence but it would be a mistake not to acknowledge the influential role of France in its former colonies. France can be counted on to block any UN resolution that would forcibly implement a Western Sahara solution that does not align with Rabat and Paris’ view that Morocco’s sovereignty must remain intact.¹⁰² With the Moroccan kingdom as one of its major trading partners, Paris has used its UNSC veto more than once to thwart resolutions advocating for the Sahrawi’s right to self-determination.¹⁰³ France is careful not to allow its special relationship with Morocco to interfere with its delicate and complex relationship with Algeria.¹⁰⁴ French-Algerian relations did not become friendly until the early 2000s but Algeria in the twenty-first century has become a force for cooperation on economic policy and security in the Mediterranean.¹⁰⁵ Despite this increased regional clout, Algiers is still unable to negotiate European support for the long avoided referendum for the Sahrawi people.

¹⁰⁰ Zoubir (2007) 165

¹⁰¹ Zoubir (2007) 166.

¹⁰² Yahia H. Zoubir “Stalemate in Western Sahara: Ending International Legality.” *Middle East Policy*, 14: 4 (2007) 168

¹⁰³ See Zoubir (2007) and Zoubir and Benabdallah-Gambier (2005) for discussion on France’s explicit support for Morocco.

¹⁰⁴ Zoubir (2007) 168-9

¹⁰⁵ Yahia H. Zoubir “The Resurgence of Algeria’s Foreign Policy in the Twenty-First Century.” *The Journal of North African Studies*. 9: 2 (2004) 174-6

One reason why Algeria and the Polisario have been unable to convince the international arena to act decisively relates to the mineral resources to be found in the Western Sahara. While international law unwaveringly upholds the right of all people to self-determination, especially in the wake of colonial rule such as Spain's, international business is far less strict. Extraction companies interested in phosphate (the region's primary export) or oil prospects have repeatedly confirmed Morocco's three-decade de facto ownership of the Western Sahara territory. In 2001 two oil companies - one based in Paris and the other in Houston – signed oil-prospecting contracts off of the West Saharan coast. These contracts were signed with the Moroccan government and completely ignored the SADR's authority,¹⁰⁶ demonstrating that the stalemate over the territory is not only due to Moroccan stubbornness but also international complicity.

The SADR has become less of a state in waiting, and more of a state in neglect, and this status may have been unintentionally compounded by the UN intervention that would have upheld the rights of the Sahrawi people. Eric Jensen, leader from 1994 to 1998 of MINURSO (the United Nations Mission for the Referendum in the Western Sahara,) ¹⁰⁷ and other analysts point out that while the UN-brokered ceasefire has saved lives, it conversely provided a semblance of resolution and allowed the low-intensity conflict over the Western Sahara to fade in importance from the international perspective.¹⁰⁸ Moreover, for the parties directly involved in the fighting it “removed the incentive to compromise that arises when fighting leads to exhaustion and grows too costly, so that an alternative becomes appealing.”¹⁰⁹ Violence is a recourse to be avoided in any conflict and this paper does not intend to advocate it, however the status of “neither peace nor war”¹¹⁰ that has replaced the fighting in the Western Sahara is no solution at all.¹¹¹

¹⁰⁶ The Economist “Polisario's Sinking Hopes: Promises, promises, never kept.” 361: 8251. (Dec. 8, 2001)

¹⁰⁷ Eric Jensen, *Western Sahara: Anatomy of a Stalemate*. Boulder, Colo: Lynne Rienner Publishers, Inc., (2005) 9

¹⁰⁸ Toby Shelley, *Endgame in the Western Sahara: what future for Africa's last colony?* (London: Zed Books, 2004) 201.

¹⁰⁹ Eric Jensen, *Western Sahara: Anatomy of a Stalemate*. Boulder, Colo: Lynne Rienner Publishers, Inc., (2005) 118

¹¹⁰ Pablo San Martin “Nationalism, Identity and Citizenship in The Western Sahara.” *The Journal of North African Studies*. 10: 3-4. (2005) 566.

¹¹¹ Toby Shelley, *Endgame in the Western Sahara: what future for Africa's last colony?* (London: Zed Books, 2004) 178.

Although the Royal Moroccan Armed Forces were able to neutralize the Polisario in the initial fifteen-year armed struggle, there has been no decisive Moroccan victory to justify Morocco's territorial claims. Furthermore, no foreign nation or international body has ever formally diplomatically recognized Morocco's sovereignty despite the more than three-decade-long military occupation.¹¹² Rabat's appeal to western powers, who see the monarchy as a moderate Islamic government in an unstable region, has prevented the application of any meaningful pressure towards holding a referendum, the outcome of which might destabilize a valuable Arab partner to France and the US. International acquiescence to Morocco's claims would be perceived in Algeria as encouragement of Moroccan irredentism, and would exacerbate the existing mutual aggression that prevents regional integration.¹¹³ Today an entire generation of the Sahrawi people has grown up in refugee camps. Without a resolution to the Western Sahara dispute Morocco and Algeria will remain adversaries and not allies, and the Sahrawi people will continue to be the ones who suffer.

¹¹² Shelley, *Endgame in the Western Sahara*. 133.

¹¹³ Zoubir (2007) 174.

American Relations

Moroccan-American relations go back to the 18th century when the Kingdom of Morocco became one of the first nations to recognize the United States' independence from Great Britain.¹¹⁴ With the exception of Egypt, more US aid has gone to Morocco since its 1956 independence than to any other Arab country.¹¹⁵ US policy toward Morocco, from decolonization up until 9/11, is characterized mainly by ambivalence, if not apathy. However the desire to retain Morocco as a valuable ally in the Arab world has often necessitated backing their position against the SADR in the Western Saharan dispute – a subjugation of America's principled support of self-determination.¹¹⁶ In 1980 the US decided to back Morocco in the desert war against the Polisario Front with arms sales.¹¹⁷ In 1991 the parties of the dispute agreed to a ceasefire, and the US diverted its attention to the violent civil war in Algeria, which erupted at around the same time.¹¹⁸ Partly because of the bloodshed in Algeria – bloodshed perpetrated by extreme Islamicists and returned by the oppressive authoritarian establishment – Morocco earned points for seeming more moderate and stable in comparison to its tumultuous neighbor.

After 9/11 when the GWOT became the US's dominant policy directive, Morocco's standing with the US increased again as the US sought to draw closer ties of cooperation to help Rabat deal with rising jihadism in the country.¹¹⁹ In 2004 the US rewarded Morocco's counterterrorist efforts and cooperation in the GWOT by opening a Free Trade Agreement.¹²⁰ In April 2007 Morocco proposed a plan to give the Western Sahara "meaningful autonomy" under Moroccan sovereignty, and the US supported it fully even

¹¹⁴ Tony Hodges *Western Sahara: The Roots of a Desert War*. Westport, Conn: Lawrence Hill & Co., Publishers, Inc., (1983)

¹¹⁵ Zoubir and Benabdallah-Gambier (2005) 188

¹¹⁶ Yahia H. Zoubir "Stalemate in Western Sahara: Ending International Legality." *Middle East Policy* (2007) 14: 4. 169-71

¹¹⁷ Yahia H. Zoubir, and Karima Benabdallah-Gambier, "The United States and the North African Imbroglia: Balancing Interests in Algeria, Morocco, and the Western Sahara" *Mediterranean Politics* 10: 2 (2005) 184

¹¹⁸ Zoubir and Benabdallah-Gambier (2005) 186. See chapter two's section on terrorism in Algeria for more information about the Algerian civil war.

¹¹⁹ Zoubir and Benabdallah-Gambier (2005) 190

¹²⁰ Zoubir and Benabdallah-Gambier (2005) 182

though it had no mention of a referendum.¹²¹ This endorsement, however, contradicts the position of the US that any solution to the disputed Western Sahara territory must be “consistent with [the Sahrawis] right of Self-determination.”¹²² This contradiction in US policy toward Morocco is representative of the complex long-standing diplomatic relations between the two countries. The prioritization of counterterrorism in the US relationship with Morocco has allowed goals like democratization and transparency to lose importance. This is the defining paradox in US-Moroccan relations and it is compounding the problem of anti-Americanism among disenfranchised Moroccans.

Algerian-American relations are relatively newer. The US was apathetic to opening relations with post-colonial Algeria. Algeria did not take a side in the cold war; in fact Algeria was a champion of the non-aligned movement until the fall of the Soviet Union.¹²³ The Algerian government cancelled national elections in 1992 for fear of the Islamic Salvation Front (FIS) party taking control of the parliament.¹²⁴ Bloody civil war broke out in which a diverse range of Islamic extremist groups attacked police officers, officials working for the government (which they considered religiously bankrupt and financially corrupt) as well as civilians deemed too loyal to the government.¹²⁵ The violence lasted for several years, and the government massacred scores of innocent citizens, often blaming renegade extremist groups. The US and other western nations turned a blind eye for the most part. It was not until the late 1990s that the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) opened an office in Algiers as Washington recognized the threat to American security posed by Algerian-based terrorist groups.¹²⁶ President Abdelaziz Bouteflika negotiated a cease-fire in 1999, and that same year the US reopened

¹²¹Yahia H. Zoubir “Stalemate in Western Sahara: Ending International Legality.” *Middle East Policy* (2007) 14: 4, 170-1

¹²² Zoubir (2007) 171

¹²³Martin Evans and John Phillips, *Algeria: Anger of the Dispossessed*. (London : Yale University Press, (2007) 67-101

¹²⁴ Evans and Phillips (2007) 166-171. For more on the civil war in Algeria see chapter two, on terrorism in Algeria

¹²⁵ Evans and Phillips (2007) 183, 177-214

¹²⁶ Evans and Phillips (2007) 253

talks to expand military cooperation with Algeria by planning several diplomatic visits and joint counterterrorism maneuvers.¹²⁷

As of today, Algeria is one of the biggest US trading partners in the Arab world¹²⁸ and is considered by Washington to be a pivotal state in terms of maintaining regional stability – a key to securing US interests and oil imports.¹²⁹ A member of Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC), the country derives much of its funds from the hydrocarbon sector.¹³⁰ Although the US has historically remained uninvolved with Algerian domestic affairs, Washington's position has always been one of encouragement, touting concern for democratization, better governance, and the expansion of civil society.¹³¹ In 2002 the US committed to a doubling in investment in the International Military Education and Training Program, to bolster the Algerian military's ability to combat terrorists, a minimal contribution. Some of the militant Islamic groups who fought in the civil war reorganized under the name of the Salafist Group for Teaching and Combat (GSPC). For financial and networking assistance, the GSPC appealed to al-Qaeda, and as they continued to target government agents and symbols, foreigners, and civilians, the US began to pay greater heed to Algerian requests for equipment and aid.¹³² In addition the US asked for military basing rights in Algeria, but this request has not yet been granted, or at least not publically.¹³³ In 2006, at a speech given in Algiers, US Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld emphasized that under the framework of the GWOT, Algeria has a valuable role to play in the US counterterrorist agenda, but made no mention of liberalization and democratization.¹³⁴ The US could do more to pressure the ruling establishment in Algeria, and in Morocco, to make meaningful elections fair

¹²⁷ Evans and Phillips (2007) 254-5

¹²⁸ David C. Welch, Assistant Secretary for Near Eastern Affairs. "US Policy Challenges in North Africa." *Statement before the House Foreign Affairs Committee*. Washington, DC. June 6 (2007)

¹²⁹ Zoubir and Benabdallah-Gambier (2005) 182-3

¹³⁰ Zoubir and Benabdallah-Gambier (2005) 190; See chapter two's discussion of the nature of Islamic terrorism in Morocco for more information on currents underlying the rising jihadism.

¹³¹ Jeremy H. Keenan, "Security and Insecurity in North Africa," *Review of African Political Economy*, 33: 108 (2006) 281

¹³² Mustafa Barth "Sand Castles in the Sahara: US Military Basing in Algeria." *Review of African Political Economy*, 30: 98 (December 1, 2003) 681

¹³³ See Barth (2003), some authors assert that the US already has secret bases in Algeria, but this is unconfirmed by either government.

¹³⁴ Keenan (2006) 281-2

and open, to cultivate the parliamentary bodies to represent citizens (and not just rubber-stamp the whims of the ruling elite), to grant freedom of speech, and to clean up the criminal systems in both countries that have wrongly imprisoned or disappeared its dissident citizens.

President Bouteflika continues to call for domestic reconciliation in the wake of the vicious civil war, pleading also with the US for debt relief and increased attention to the root causes of terrorism, such as “poverty and inequality.”¹³⁵ As long as the military leadership continues to manipulate the country, however, the requests of the president are not the final word on Algerian foreign relations. The military demands a different approach, the military and the security establishment in Algeria call for the eradication of terrorism in a more heavy-handed crackdown on politicized Mosques religious schools, and religiously-based political parties.¹³⁶ The fissures in foreign and domestic policy within the upper levels of Algerian leadership make it difficult for diplomatic partners like the US to construct foreign relations. What is certain is that neither governing faction can be counted on to represent the best interest of Algerians.

¹³⁵ Yahia H. Zoubir, “The Resurgence of Algeria’s Foreign Policy in the Twenty-First Century.” *The Journal of North African Studies*. 9: 2 (2004) 180

¹³⁶ Zoubir (2004) 179-181

Chapter 2: The Terrorist Threat

Background

Defining terrorism can be done on broad terms, for instance by addressing the asymmetric nature of terrorist warfare, the indiscriminant targeting of civilians, and other characteristics, but no single theory can cover its complexity.¹³⁷ Political Scientist Mhand Berkouk¹³⁸ calls it a “ubiquitous occurrence that transcends cultural, religious, economic and political contexts.” Historians agree the term initially referred to state-sponsored terror, having roots in the period known as the reign of terror that followed the French Revolution.¹³⁹ Berkouk argues the importance of making a distinction between terrorism – a recourse that can never be justified morally or politically – and resistance, a right guaranteed by international law.¹⁴⁰ Political scientist John P. Entelis astutely argues that in the case of Morocco, Algeria and Tunisia, terrorism is “the most extreme manifestation” of the discontent caused when sub-state militant forces intersect with high-tension sociopolitical fault lines.¹⁴¹ That intersection is the focus of this chapter. The background section outlines the variables specific to North Africa that will help explain the roots of terrorism in the focus countries, Morocco and Algeria. The second and third parts will give a material analysis of the terrorist threat posed to the region and to American interests, focusing on two major groups with ties to al-Qaeda: the Salafist Group for Teaching and Combat (GSPC) in Algeria, and the Moroccan Islamic Combatant Group (GICM).

The legacy of French colonial rule has had influenced the dynamics of terrorism in North Africa, but in a different way for each country. Although under the same imperial force,

¹³⁷ Mohamed Kamal, “The Impact of Terrorism in the Middle East and North Africa” in Okumu, Wafula and Botha Anneli, eds. *Understanding Terrorism in Africa: Building Bridges and Overcoming the Gaps*. Institute for Security Studies. (Cairo, Egypt: May 2007) 29

¹³⁸ Mhand Berkouk, “Terrorism: An Etymo-Epistemological Analysis” in Wafula Okumu and Botha Anneli, eds. *Understanding Terrorism in Africa: Building Bridges and Overcoming the Gaps*. Institute for Security Studies. Cairo, Egypt: (May 2007). 3.

¹³⁹ Thierry de Montbrial and Jean Klein, eds. (*Dictionnaire de strategie* Paris: PUF. 2006) 582.

¹⁴⁰ Berkouk (2007) 5

¹⁴¹ John P. Entelis “The Democratic Imperative vs. the Authoritarian Impulse: The Maghreb State between Transition and Terrorism.” *Strategic Insights*, Vol 30:6 (June 2005) 1

Morocco and Algeria did not share the same colonial experience, starting with the pre-colonial era.¹⁴² Recognizing their strategic location at the mouth of the Mediterranean Sea, the Moroccan sultans of the Alawi dynasty (1664-present) wove a web of bilateral trade agreements throughout the nineteenth century with European nations as well as with the United States.¹⁴³ Popular movements among the people of Morocco at the time opposed what they perceived as a partnering with ‘the infidel’ that contradicted the foundations of the *sharif*’s God-ordained legitimacy.¹⁴⁴ Morocco remained largely independent until 1904 when France and Spain went against previous treaties, claiming Morocco for the French, and what was then called the Spanish Sahara for Spain. The first Moroccan nationalists took to peaceful disobedience in protest of the French colonists during the inter-war period. In 1955 the Alawi sultan returned from his two-year French-imposed exile and he declared Morocco a constitutional monarchy. France was never as invested in Morocco as it was in Algeria; it granted Morocco independence by 1956 in an extraordinarily peaceful decolonization process.¹⁴⁵

In 1830, France invaded Algeria under the pretense that the dey (or chief janissary) of Algiers had insulted the honor of a French diplomat while demanding the repayment of seven to eight million Francs Algeria had leant to support the Napoleonic wars.¹⁴⁶ France dethroned the dey and over time replaced the Ottomanized regional governors with French-trained Algerian elites – a class that grew into the liberal professional class eventually known as the *évolués*.¹⁴⁷ During the initial invasion, the French army brutalized the countryside with its scorched-earth policy, wiping out resistance and staking claims for France’s new district across the Mediterranean. That was the vision of the French, not only to reap harvests and resources from an African territory, but also to extend their state’s physical border southward. By the 1950s French settlers comprised ten percent of Algeria’s population and they had representation in Paris proportionate to

¹⁴² Zoubir (2007) 160

¹⁴³ Michel Le Gall “The Historical Context” in Zartman, William and William Mark Habeeb, *Policy and Society in Contemporary North Africa* (Boulder, CO: Westview 1993)

¹⁴⁴ Le Gall (1993) 12

¹⁴⁵ Le Gall (1993) 13

¹⁴⁶ Martin Evans and John Phillips, *Algeria: Anger of the Dispossessed*. (London : Yale University Press, 2007) 2, 28.

¹⁴⁷ Le Gall (1993) 13

other districts. The Algerians who made up the other ninety percent of the population were not given citizenship and were excluded completely from political or economic participation and brutally oppressed.¹⁴⁸

Lasting from 1830 until 1962, the French settler colony was a violently invasive debasement of the Algerian people's culture and societal cohesion. Frantz Fanon, the psychologist from Martinique, was an influential anti-colonial writer at the time, and many say he was the ideological leader of Algeria's independence movement. His 1961 book *Les Damnés de la Terre* (The Wretched of the Earth) argued not just for the justification for but the necessity of violence to remove an oppressor that recognizes no other system.¹⁴⁹ Distorted remnants of that ethos can be identified in the violent civil war during which the Armed Islamic Group (GIA) attacked scores of government workers, foreigners and civilians.¹⁵⁰ In 1954, the nationalist forces, the Front du Libération Nationale (FLN) began a bloody eight-year battle for independence that would not just pit Algerians against the French; in their efforts to completely extract French influence from their country, the FLN would also attack Algerian civilians believed to be cooperating with or merely sympathetic to the French. Algeria won independence in 1962 and the country faced a strongly divided flock of FLN generals scrambling to seize the reigns of the fledgling country in the wake of French rule.

This brief overview of the colonial experience in Algeria and Morocco has provided historical depth to two currents – social discontent and the legacy of militancy – the intersection of which partly explains North African terrorist activity, according to Entelis.¹⁵¹ For a study on how the experience of post-colonial nation building was also a

¹⁴⁸ Martin Evans and John Phillips, *Algeria: Anger of the Dispossessed*. (London : Yale University Press, 2007) 27

¹⁴⁹ Frantz Fanon *The Wretched of the Earth*. (London: Penguin books, 1967)

¹⁵⁰ This group will be discussed more in the following section.

¹⁵¹ John P. Entelis, "The Democratic Imperative vs. the Authoritarian Impulse: The Maghreb State between Transition and Terrorism." *Strategic Insights*, Vol 30:6 (June 2005) 1-2

defining era, see Hakimaian and Moschaver's 2001 book *The State and Global Change: The Political Economy of Transition in the Middle East and North Africa*.¹⁵²

Skipping ahead to the twenty-first century, Algeria is still a nation where power resides in the hands of the unaccountable few governing over the unrepresented many.¹⁵³ The FLN, the ruling party and the movement that battled France for Algeria's independence, draws the greatest animosity from its radical Islamic militants for its secular authoritarianism. The ruling elite and the military apparatus are one and the same, thoroughly dominated by a single party. Morocco's monarchy still manipulates its influence in Madrid and Paris, as well as London and Washington, to its economic and political advantage. King Mohammed VI, son of Hassan II, took the throne in 1999 and was seen initially as a reformer. He has been lauded for his support for the 2004 family code, which was notable for granting more rights to women under the state constitution. However the gestures are largely symbolic and empty, and human rights abuses on the part of the state are commonplace. Washington had high hopes for the young monarch to become a more liberal democratic ruler, but his reign so far has shown greater movement in the opposite direction, towards heavy-handed government supervision and oppression.¹⁵⁴

¹⁵² Moschaver, Ziba. "Global Change, Interdependence and State Autonomy: A View from the MENA Region" in Hakimaian, Hassan and Ziba Moschaver, eds. *The State and Global Change: The Political Economy of Transition in the Middle East and North Africa*, (Surrey, UK: Curzon Press, 2001)

¹⁵³ Entelis, John P. (June 2005) 3

¹⁵⁴ John P. Entelis, "The Democratic Imperative vs. the Authoritarian Impulse: The Maghreb State between Transition and Terrorism." *Strategic Insights*, Vol 30:6 (June 2005) 11

Terrorism in Algeria: The GSPC and Al-Qaeda

Al-Qaeda is a different organization at present than it was in 2001. Recent trends in its organization include an expansion, through the internet and other means, of its jihadist message-generating machine, or what analysts have called the ‘Global Islamic Media Front.’¹⁵⁵ Al-Qaeda’s recent emphasis on propaganda campaigns has by no means eclipsed the primacy of its militant campaigns. The increased emphasis, however, has initiated a trend in which many smaller groups are beginning to join al-Qaeda symbolically in attempts to bolster their credibility. When the Salafist Group for Teaching and Combat (*Groupe salafiste pour la prédication et le combat*, GSPC) took up the name of Al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM) in 2007, it was unclear if this pledge had operational significance or not.¹⁵⁶ At the least, the new allegiance is representative of this same broad trend in jihadist groups, however it was no simple opportunism that led to the decision; instead, the alignment resulted from a cooperative effort between three groups: Al-Qaeda in Iraq, the GSPC, and al-Qaeda itself.¹⁵⁷ This section will first look at the founding and evolution of the GSPC and how its ties to al-Qaeda were established, followed by a discussion of its relevance to regional security and the American assessment of the extremist threat emanating from Algeria.

The attacks in Afghanistan and the worldwide hunt for al-Qaeda operatives scrambled their usual communication networks and organizational abilities. By the end of 2003 al-Qaeda’s strength had all but evaporated in the wake of the American response. In North Africa, radical Islamist terrorism had begun to decline.¹⁵⁸ In Algeria, for instance, the radical Islamic opposition groups were suffering from internal fights and key members had started to cave in to government calls for a national reconciliation.¹⁵⁹ At that point in time the US launched the war in Iraq, and over the course of the following four years, the

¹⁵⁵ Peter Brookes, "Trends in Terrorism." *Counter-Terrorism: Trends - Challenges – Strategies*. American Reference Center. Vienna, Austria. May 28, 2008

¹⁵⁶ “Islamist Terrorism in the Sahel: Fact or Fiction?” (*International Crisis Group*. Africa Report 92. 31 march 2005) 7

¹⁵⁷ Mathieu Guidère, *Al Qaïda à la conquête du Maghreb: le terrorisme aux portes de l’Europe*. Monaco : Éditions du Rocher (2007). 120

¹⁵⁸ Guidère (2007) 21

¹⁵⁹ Guidère (2007). 21

militant group known as Al-Qaeda in Iraq came to provide a globalized template for other Islamic militant groups operating on the local-scale.

Al-Tawhid wa al-Jihad, or Unity and Jihad, is the name of the small group commanded by Abu-Musab al-Zarqawi in Iraq that would eventually come to be known as Al-Qaeda in Iraq. Their efforts to become part of Osama Bin Laden's global al-Qaeda network demonstrate the trend some refer to as al-Qaeda's renaissance,¹⁶⁰ others as simply a new trend in al-Qaeda terrorist tactics.¹⁶¹ By either description, the Unity and Jihad group was able to attract the attention of al-Qaeda's leaders with the execution of several bloody and daring military operations against the coalition forces in Iraq.¹⁶² Adopting Bin Laden's tactic of filming these attacks in order to provide shock value that the world media can relay, the Iraqi group became perhaps best known for the kidnapping and beheading of a number of foreign civilians working on the side of the coalition forces in 2004.¹⁶³ Next, Zarqawi released a public statement of allegiance to Osama bin Laden at the end of that same year. This move, consisting of a highly publicized declaration of allegiance to al-Qaeda, coupled with the release of videos showing attacks and messages of recruitment, became an easily copied strategy for jihadist groups elsewhere.¹⁶⁴ Thus, al-Qaeda began to operate in something like a franchise model, and the GSPC in Algeria was the next group to take up the process.

The GSPC was not passively caught up in the jihadist fervor after 9/11 and co-opted by al-Qaeda; militant Islamism in Algeria goes deeper than that. In order to understand how the group Al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM) came to be, a longer chronology is needed. Algeria's experience of decolonization and its long bloody battle with the French for independence gave way in the seventies and eighties to a strong-armed, secular military autocracy. Social dissent was classified as harmful to the young state's

¹⁶⁰ Mathieu Guidère, *Al Qaïda à la conquête du Maghreb: le terrorisme aux portes de l'Europe*. Monaco : Éditions du Rocher (2007). 22

¹⁶¹ Peter Brookes, "Trends in Terrorism." *Counter-Terrorism: Trends - Challenges – Strategies*. American Reference Center. Vienna, Austria. May 28, 2008

¹⁶² Guidère (2007) 22

¹⁶³ BBC News. "Profile: Tawhid and Jihad group" Friday, 8 October, 2004.
http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/middle_east/3677658.stm

¹⁶⁴ Guidère (2007) 24

stability and was smothered or bought off in the name of national progress.¹⁶⁵ The state elites gained confidence in their ruling mandate through their ability to suppress dissenters. Civil frustration with the ruling party, the National Liberation Front (FLN), had by the mid-1980s metastasized into a welling of civil unrest and increased grass-roots organization. The opposition leaders rallied people against the ruling elites using Islamic symbols, congregating often in Mosques to hold political meetings. Unemployment among young men in particular, a general lack of public services and widespread poverty were three main factors feeding into mounting civil unrest. Despite an oil boom in 1985, by the end of the decade state export revenues had fallen by more than 40 per cent in less than four years,¹⁶⁶ and the national budget could not support the level of state subsidies that had previously been used to mute aggression towards the government.¹⁶⁷

In October 1988, riots broke out in multiple Algerian cities. Within days, what began with a frustrated group of ransacking high school students on strike in Algiers became a nation-wide series of popular demonstrations organized by Islamic fundamentalist leaders. The demonstrations took the form of destructive marches through the center of major towns, targeting local law enforcement buildings, political councils, luxury hotels, and state-owned businesses.¹⁶⁸ Government workers and police were also targets of humiliation and violence. The military responded with brutality, tear gas, and firepower, and by the fifth day five hundred youths, mostly boys and men, had been killed.¹⁶⁹ To put a halt to the violence and destruction, president Chadli Benjedid made a speech that, although vague in its language, signified for the first time a willingness on the part of the FLN to “eliminate the current monopoly of responsibility.”¹⁷⁰ Although skeptical, the nation prepared for the first multiparty elections in its history.

¹⁶⁵ Frédéric Volpi, *Islam and Democracy: The Failure of Dialogue in Algeria*. London: Pluto Press. (2003)

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¹⁶⁶ Volpi (2003) 36-7

¹⁶⁷ Volpi (2003) 38

¹⁶⁸ Martin Evans and John Phillips *Algeria: Anger of the Dispossessed*. London : Yale University Press (2007) 105.

¹⁶⁹ Evans and Phillips (2007) 104

¹⁷⁰ Evans and Phillips (2007) 105

The most viable opposition represented by the Islamic Salvation Front (*Front Islamique du Salut*, FIS), founded on the wave of momentum generated by the October riots. Then, in the June 1990 local elections, FIS won fifty-five per cent of the vote nationwide and even seasoned political observers were surprised and impressed at the success of the country's first significant opposition party.¹⁷¹ The FIS candidates' landside defeat in most of the contests for regional councils surprised most political observers. More surprising still was the ability of FIS officials to subsequently run the local public services at a more cost-effective rate.¹⁷² The new atmosphere of democracy spurred an increase in civil demonstrations among a population that could sense a loosening of restrictions. Unfortunately, by 1991 the disorder caused by the protests gave the military elites the excuse they had been looking for to once again clamp down on dissidents. The declaration of a three-month state of emergency in 1991, and the military regime's banning of the FIS in 1992 marked the beginning of a civil war between an abusive and repressive state military and the militant Islamic groups that rose up in the place of FIS.¹⁷³

One such Islamic group is the Armed Islamic Group (*Groupe Islamique Armé*, GIA) which established itself quickly as the most radical and most violent of all FIS splinter groups. The cells operating under the GIA banner are characterized by a refusal to entertain negotiations with the military government, an indiscriminate targeting of civilians, and a violent ferocity in their tactics.¹⁷⁴ Guidère explains that the GIA is merely one denomination of groups that splintered off of the Islamist movement in the 1990s.¹⁷⁵ The GIA was notoriously violent and indiscriminate with their targets, with a strategy based on escalating human costs in the battle.¹⁷⁶ In September 1998, the splinter group called the Salafist Group for Preaching and Combat (GSPC) led by Hassan Hattab became one two main groups that had distanced themselves from the GIA's

¹⁷¹ Martin Evans and John Phillips *Algeria: Anger of the Dispossessed*. London : Yale University Press (2007) 152-3

¹⁷² Frédéric Volpi, *Islam and Democracy: The Failure of Dialogue in Algeria*. London: Pluto Press. (2003) 48-49

¹⁷³ Hugh Roberts, *The Battlefield Algeria 1988-2002: Studies in a Broken Polity*. (London and New York: Verso, 2003), 133.

¹⁷⁴ Roberts (2003) 155.

¹⁷⁵ Mathieu Guidère, *Al Qaïda à la conquête du Maghreb: le terrorisme aux portes de l'Europe*. Monaco : Éditions du Rocher (2007) 59-60

¹⁷⁶ Volpi (2003) 90-91

counterproductive, murderous conduct and failed leadership.¹⁷⁷ With their arsenals depleted after nearly a decade of civil war, GSPC activists agreed to supply Osama bin Laden with trained soldiers in exchange for money and weapons.¹⁷⁸ The GSPC decided to continue the struggle against the Algerian regime until it became more “Islamicized,” and they made the government security establishment their sole target.¹⁷⁹

¹⁷⁷ “Islamist Terrorism in the Sahel: Fact or Fiction?” (*International Crisis Group*. Africa Report 92. 31 march 2005) 7; Martin Evans and John Phillips *Algeria: Anger of the Dispossessed*. London : Yale University Press (2007) 261

¹⁷⁸ Evans and Phillips (2007) 260

¹⁷⁹ Frédéric Volpi, *Islam and Democracy: The Failure of Dialogue in Algeria*. London: Pluto Press. (2003)

Al-Qaeda in Morocco

In his book *Al Qaïda à la conquête du Maghreb*, Islamic studies expert Mathieu Guidère analyzes the al-Qaeda affiliated terrorist networks in Algeria, Morocco, Libya and Tunisia. His chapter for Morocco is entitled “La pépinière d’Al-Qaïda” or “the breeding ground of al-Qaeda.”¹⁸⁰ In Morocco, the relative intensity of dedication to the idea of militant Islam is at least partially attributable to the monarchy’s longtime efforts to appear as a moderate Islamic regime.¹⁸¹ This political posturing has been advantageous when the government wanted to draw closer to western countries. Certain religious elements in society – and not just the militant Islamic groups – consider this policy out of touch with the monarch’s traditional title of title of Amir al-Mu'minin, or *Commander of the Faithful*. As is true in Algeria and other parts of the Maghreb, the state security apparatus has contained, coerced or disbanded a host of the most virulent civil society organizations to the point where fundamentalist Islamic groups, and their extremist militant arms, are the only examples left of functioning outlets for dissent.¹⁸²

The Moroccan Islamic Combatant Group (GICM) was formed initially by soldiers (or *Moudjahidines*) trained in Afghanistan. The main enemy of the GICM is the Moroccan monarchy, who they aim to destabilize and replace with an Islamic state. Like the GSPC in Algeria, the GICM regards the government as illegitimate, so when the US is seen to support this government they become targets of aggression by virtue of association. As the Polisario continued its dispute against the monarchy, al-Qaeda approached the militant factions within the Sahrawi nationalist groups to solicit their help in the ultimate goal of destabilizing the government.¹⁸³ According to Moroccan security sources, in 2006 a member of al-Qaeda close to Ayman Al Zawahiri, bin Laden’s second in command, was sent to Morocco on a mission to organize a strategy to destabilize the

¹⁸⁰ Mathieu Guidère, *Al Qaïda à la conquête du Maghreb: le terrorisme aux portes de l’Europe*. Monaco : Éditions du Rocher (2007) 185

¹⁸¹ John P. Entelis, “The Democratic Imperative vs. the Authoritarian Impulse: The Maghreb State between Transition and Terrorism.” *Strategic Insights*, 30:6 (June 2005). 10.

¹⁸² Robert G. Berschinski, “AFRICOM’S Dilemma: The ‘Global War on Terrorism,’ ‘Capacity Building,’ Humanitarianism, and the Future of US Security Policy in Africa.” *Strategic Studies Institute of the US Army War College* (2007) 17

¹⁸³ Guidère (2007) 194.

monarchy.¹⁸⁴ This envoy to Morocco was to work under the direction of the GICM.¹⁸⁵ This demonstrates how the al-Qaeda network grows itself to better reach the distant enemy, while the smaller groups that fall under its umbrella are still mainly concerned with local issues and local enemies.¹⁸⁶

On March 11, 2007, three years to the day after the Moroccan-organized Madrid attacks, two youths attempted to carry out an attack on an internet café in Casablanca, but only one of the suicide bombers detonated his explosives. The young men had come to a café, armed with explosives, to confirm their instructions over the Internet through a jihadist chatroom. Access to these sites had been blocked in a 2003 measure by the government to limit the possibility of communication among terrorists. The shop-keeper called the police when the boys grew frustrated at what they thought was a glitch in the computers, at which point one detonated his explosives, and the other, badly injured tried to run but was caught by the police. This vignette shows that Islamic terrorists in Morocco are not necessarily the *Moudjahidines* trained in Afghanistan, but could be average, unemployed, disenfranchised youth – and this is just the tip of the network’s iceberg. Although not the most significant attack in recent years, it is one of the most recent and indicates the far-reaching ability of al-Qaeda’s ‘Global Islamic Media Front’ to stoke the flames of localized discontent with a perceived connection to a global jihadist movement. Guidère writes that the AQIM has strengthened its networking, publicized its message, and should be taken as a serious threat to Maghrebi countries.¹⁸⁷

Moroccan *Moudjahidines* have also demonstrated their ability to carry out attacks in Europe, such as the high-profile 2004 Madrid train bombings that killed 191 people; these individuals are now united – at least in title – under the AQIM. The intent to perpetrate violent attacks on government targets in Morocco and Algeria is clear, as is the ability to operate in European countries through Maghrebi networks. Any US policy framework must acknowledge this physical threat. The QWOT recognizes this threat, but

¹⁸⁴ Mathieu Guidère, *Al Qaïda à la conquête du Maghreb: le terrorisme aux portes de l’Europe*. Monaco : Éditions du Rocher (2007) 193-194.

¹⁸⁵ Guidère (2007) 194

¹⁸⁶ Guidère (2007) 189

¹⁸⁷ Guidère (2007) 204-5

its weakness is that it does not address the motives and makeup of individual groups such as the GSPC and the GICM. If US military strategists paid greater attention to the real enemy of these groups, they would often find it to be the Moroccan monarchy, or the Algerian military establishment – the very governments that the US under the Bush administration has worked so hard to support.¹⁸⁸ The following chapter will discuss this and other oversights that have undermined the effectiveness of US counterterrorist activities in Morocco and Algeria under the GWOT and programs like the TSCTP.

¹⁸⁸ John P. Entelis, “The Democratic Imperative vs. the Authoritarian Impulse: The Maghreb State between Transition and Terrorism.” (*Strategic Insights*, 30: 6. June 2005) 2

Chapter 3: The GWOT in North Africa

Background

Buzan argues that events of 9/11 changed the perception of global threats more than they changed the actual global security environment.¹⁸⁹ One outcome was a reassessment on the part of the US government of the intensity and the source of terrorist threats. As a result of this policy reassessment through the lens of the GWOT, certain characteristics of Morocco and Algeria contributed to these countries being categorized as likely “breeding grounds for terrorists.”¹⁹⁰ These attributes led the Bush administration to classify the area as a region of concern for US national security: the extreme poverty of the majority of its people, its Muslim heritage, its overall lack of democratic freedoms, its large swaths of under governed desert territory,¹⁹¹ and its geographical proximity to Iraq – which in 2003 became the main theater of action in the GWOT .

Two factors of this classification have been discussed previously in chapter two: first, that this approach is based on a misperception of Algerian and Moroccan people and their relationship to Islam;¹⁹² and second, that terrorism has a more complex origin in North Africa. This broad characterization is representative of a particular method of threat assessment in Washington, which the US State Department’s Chief Strategist in the Office for the Coordinator of Counterterrorism, David Kilcullen, calls ‘aggregation.’¹⁹³ Aggregation refers to the tendency to group local insurgencies or Islamic radicals into

¹⁸⁹ Barry Buzan, “Will the ‘global war terrorism’ be the new Cold War?” *International Affairs*, 82: 6. (2006) 1102

¹⁹⁰ Robert G. Berschinski “AFRICOM’S Dilemma: The ‘Global War on Terrorism,’ ‘Capacity Building,’ Humanitarianism, and the Future of US Security Policy in Africa.” *Strategic Studies Institute of the US Army War College*. (Nov. 2007); and Anneli Botha, “Challenges in Understanding Terrorism in Africa.” in Okumu, Wafula and Botha Anneli *Understanding Terrorism in Africa: Building Bridges and Overcoming the Gaps*. Institute for Security Studies. Cairo, Egypt (May 2007) 9

¹⁹¹ Robert G. Berschinski, “AFRICOM’S Dilemma: The ‘Global War on Terrorism,’ ‘Capacity Building,’ Humanitarianism, and the Future of US Security Policy in Africa.” *Strategic Studies Institute of the US Army War College* (2007) 27.

¹⁹² Berschinski (2007) 18, 24; Jessica R. Piombo “Terrorism and US Counter-Terrorism Programs in Africa: An Overview.” *Strategic Insights*, 6: 1 (January 2007) 1

¹⁹³ Kilcullen, David. “Countering Global Insurgency.” (*Journal of Strategic Studies*, 28: 4. 2005) 597-8.

one homogenous, artificially monolithic threat.¹⁹⁴ This tactic pervades GWOT policymaking broadly, not just in the Maghreb.¹⁹⁵ In a situation in which security is assessed through aggregation, it becomes common for worst-case scenarios to win attention over realistic threat assessments.¹⁹⁶ This process exaggerates the threat posed by individual groups such as the low-level al-Qaeda affiliates in the Maghreb, despite their essential dissimilarity.¹⁹⁷

So far this paper has elaborated on the general nature of the GWOT in the definitions section and in the introduction. In addition, chapters one and two describe the contemporary social political environment in Morocco and Algeria and its history. Not long after the introduction of the GWOT as the major framework for American foreign policy-making, Washington made a decision to step up its presence in Morocco and Algeria. This presence involved building partnerships in counterterrorism,¹⁹⁸ helping train and equip the countries' militaries, and planning to one day establish a large forward operating base in one of these two North African allies in order to 'keep an eye on' the terrorists operating out of this region.¹⁹⁹ The following sections will first look at the thinking behind the US approach to counterterrorism in Morocco and Algeria, then elaborate on the the current US operations in action and their goals.

¹⁹⁴ Robert G. Berschinski "AFRICOM'S Dilemma: The 'Global War on Terrorism,' 'Capacity Building,' Humanitarianism, and the Future of US Security Policy in Africa." (*Strategic Studies Institute of the US Army War College*. 2007) 2

¹⁹⁵ David Kilcullen, "Countering Global Insurgency." *Journal of Strategic Studies*, 28: 4. (Aug. 2005) 608

¹⁹⁶ Berschinski (2007) 12

¹⁹⁷ Berschinski (2007) 15

¹⁹⁸ Emily Hunt, "Islamist Terrorism in Northwestern Africa: A 'Thorn in the Neck' of the United States?" (*The Washington Institute for Near East Policy*. Policy Focus #65. 2007) 15

¹⁹⁹ Mustafa Barth "Sand Castles in the Sahara: US Military Basing in Algeria." (*Review of African Political Economy*, 30:98 2003) 680

The Banana Theory: the thinking behind US Involvement in the Maghreb

Scholars and critics disagree widely on the impact of the GWOT as a security framework on Algeria and Morocco, but all sides agree that North Africa did not constitute a region of high priority for the US until 2003.²⁰⁰ With US military pressure on the Taliban in Afghanistan mounting, and the invasion of Iraq imminent, the US military began in early 2003 to theorize where the ‘enemy’ (Islamic terrorists) would move next. A concept called the ‘banana theory’ began to develop, named for the banana-shaped path on which military leaders believed terrorists would travel from Afghanistan, over the Horn of Africa, through the largely un-patrolled Sahara Desert and then north to militant epicenters in Morocco and Algeria.²⁰¹ In a statement made to the military newspaper *Stars and Stripes*, EUROCOM Major General Jeff Kohler explained that because the governments of Sudan, Libya, Chad, Niger, Algeria, Mali, Mauritania and Morocco have trouble policing their vast interiors, terrorists would find havens in the lawless regions around the Maghreb’s porous southern borders, providing an “easy back door into Europe through Algeria, Morocco and Tunisia.”²⁰² This statement reveals the predominant mindset in Washington at the time. In February that year, when the GSPC claimed responsibility for the capture of thirty-one European hostages, the ‘Banana Theory’ gained credibility, and the Bush administration started to pay greater attention to terrorism in North Africa.²⁰³

The disputed nature of the kidnapping of these thirty-two hostages is a point of contention between authors writing on US involvement in the Maghreb; some authors – from social anthropologists to economists – argue that the kidnapping was fabricated to attract and justify US military assistance. Reports from American military listening posts

²⁰⁰ Mustapha Barth “Sand Castles in the Sahara: US Military Basing in Algeria.” *Review of African Political Economy*, 30:98 (December 1, 2003).; Jeremy H. Keenan “The Banana Theory of Terrorism: Alternative Truths and the Collapse of the ‘Second’ (Saharan) Front in the War on Terror.” *Journal of Contemporary African Studies*. 25:1 (2005)

²⁰¹ Emily Hunt, “Islamist Terrorism in Northwestern Africa: A ‘Thorn in the Neck’ of the United States?” *The Washington Institute for Near East Policy*. Policy Focus #65. (February 2007) vii

²⁰² David Josar “EUCOM slated to step up role in Africa.” *Stars and Sripes (European Edition)*. Jan 11, 2004

²⁰³ Hunt (2007) 6-9; David C. Welch, Assistant Secretary for Near Eastern Affairs. “US Policy Challenges in North Africa.” *Statement before the House Foreign Affairs Committee*. Washington, DC. June 6, 2007

in the Sahel and officials in the Algerian security establishment indicate that a faction of the GSPC kidnapped over thirty European tourists in the Sahara and held them hostage in the mountainous region to the south.²⁰⁴ The faction was led by Ammari Saifi, known as “El Para” for his stint as a paratrooper in the Algerian army.²⁰⁵ They split the hostages into two groups, transported them through the desert, and after three months all were freed when the German government reportedly paid five million euros for their return.²⁰⁶ The US military subsequently supported the Algerian army in their pursuit of El Para, which led forces across Algeria, Mali, Niger, and finally Chad, where he was captured by Chadian rebels and returned to Algiers for trial in 2004.²⁰⁷ Mustafa Barth provides compelling evidence, however, that this long evasion led by El Para was in fact reliant on provisions supplied by the Algerian military over the course of the pursuit, even after the hostages had been released.²⁰⁸

In the aftermath of the kidnapping and the March 2004 capture of the purported leader of the kidnappers, the Pan-Sahel Initiative was soon upgraded and renamed the Trans-Saharan Counter-terrorism Initiative (TSCTI). More countries including Morocco were included in the targeted group. The goal remained to bolster the resilience of Sahelian militaries and engage in preventative measures to thwart terrorists in the Sahel. American forces in North Africa have utilized both diplomatic measures as well as kinetic (lethal) counter-terrorism operations in their mission to disrupt terrorist activities and prevent attacks.²⁰⁹ The 2003 kidnapping and yearlong hunt for El Para were cited in Washington as an example of the porousness of the Sahelian borders, the inefficiency of

²⁰⁴ Hunt (2007) 8-9; Mustafa Barth “Sand Castles in the Sahara: US Military Basing in Algeria.” *Review of African Political Economy*, 30:98 (December 1, 2003)

²⁰⁵ Robert G. Berschinski “AFRICOM’S Dilemma: The ‘Global War on Terrorism,’ ‘Capacity Building,’ Humanitarianism, and the Future of US Security Policy in Africa.” *Strategic Studies Institute of the US Army War College*. (Nov. 2007) 24

²⁰⁶ Jeremy H. Keenan “The Banana Theory of Terrorism: Alternative Truths and the Collapse of the ‘Second’ (Saharan) Front in the War on Terror.” (*Journal of Contemporary African Studies*. 25: 1, 2007) 34; “Islamist Terrorism in the Sahel: Fact or Fiction?” (*International Crisis Group*. Africa Report 92. 2005) 1-2

²⁰⁷ Jeremy H. Keenan “Security and Insecurity in North Africa,” (*Review of African Political Economy*, 33:108 2006) 278

²⁰⁸ Mustafa Barth “Sand Castles in the Sahara: US Military Basing in Algeria.” *Review of African Political Economy*, 30:98 (December 1, 2003) 682-4

²⁰⁹ Berschinski (2007)

state militaries in the region, and the need for greater US surveillance and influence.²¹⁰ Scholars and journalists are left asking: Was the US justified in taking up operations in the Sahara, and did Algeria intentionally inflate the threat to attract US attention? Political scientist Robert Berschinski points out that despite Washington's exaggerated reaction to the threat posed by the GSPC thereafter, the event seemed to "reinforce PSI's core philosophical underpinnings: A transnational terrorist group had used the Sahel's ungoverned areas to attack Western interests and evade authorities."²¹¹ The International Crisis Group produced an analysis of the Sahelian region and its ungoverned spaces in 2005. It points out that regardless of the fact that PSI assistance helped enable Sahelian militaries to track a terrorist group through four countries, the goal to fully patrol the desert borders of these countries could not be attained even by ten times as many trained troops.²¹²

According to several authors publishing in 2005-2008, the 2003 kidnapping incident in Algeria played a serious role in justifying the US involvement in North Africa.²¹³ The US military supported the Algerian and Chadian armies in their pursuit of the terrorist group across multiple desert borders. PSI-trained troops engaged in a firefight that killed forty-three members of the group before El Para was captured, brought to Libya then extradited to Algeria for trial. Berschinski, a former US Air Force intelligence officer and veteran of Operation Iraqi Freedom, writes that the ordeal demonstrates the success of the training of the military training provided under the PSI. What it does not necessarily demonstrate is the long-term usefulness of bursts of kinetic operations such as this: "Though often tactically successful, these efforts – against Algerian insurgents in North Africa [...] have neither benefited larger American security interests nor stabilized events in their respective regions."²¹⁴ The study from which this quotation is taken was

²¹⁰ Robert Berschinski "AFRICOM'S Dilemma: The 'Global War on Terrorism,' 'Capacity Building,' Humanitarianism, and the Future of US Security Policy in Africa." *Strategic Studies Institute of the US Army War College*. (2007) 12

²¹¹ Berschinski (2007) 25.

²¹² "Islamist Terrorism in the Sahel: Fact or Fiction?" (*International Crisis Group*. Africa Report 92. 31 March 2005) 2

²¹³ Emily Hunt, "Islamist Terrorism in Northwestern Africa: A 'Thorn in the Neck' of the United States?" *The Washington Institute for Near East Policy*. Policy Focus #65. (February 2007) 6

²¹⁴ Berschinski (2007) v

supervised at the US Army War College and still, despite the use of military euphemism, it is a strong statement of criticism.

Evans and Philips provide detailed accounts of how al-Qaeda grew its networks in the Sahel region, starting in the 1990s even before counter-terrorism took on such preeminence on the international stage after 9/11. Their analysis supports the threat perceived by Pentagon officials, however also suggests that Algeria had reason to inflate their reports of terrorist activity in order to receive military assistance from the US.²¹⁵ Taking this argument even further, Authors Keenan and Barth argue that key elements of the reports issued by Algeria and by the US were fraudulent, or even that one or both had complicity in the kidnapping for political motivations.²¹⁶ The scholarly community is divided in this subject, and some arguments read more like conspiracy theories than analyses.

Barth and Keenan offer the most credible evidence to suggest that there was a government cover-up of the Algerian military's role in the affair. Barth points out that at the time of the kidnapping, the Algerian military government establishment was offering to the US its expertise in counter-terrorism in exchange for weapons deals from the US.²¹⁷ This expertise, they claimed, was gained over the decade-long civil war against Islamic rebel groups, stemming from the military's nullification of 1991 election results in the Islamic Salvation Front's favor. Keenan argues that El Para's "modus operandi" was inconsistent with both the trend of decreased violence in Algeria overall, as well as with the known activities of the known terrorist groups in operation at the time.²¹⁸ Additionally, the Sahelian region was politically, socially and geographically unsuited to the kind of over-ground terrorism El Para's group undertook.²¹⁹

²¹⁵ Martin Evans and John Phillips *Algeria: Anger of the Dispossessed*. London : Yale University Press (2007)

²¹⁶ Mustafa Barth "Sand Castles in the Sahara: US Military Basing in Algeria." *Review of African Political Economy*, 30:98 (December 1, 2003) 682-4

²¹⁷ Barth (2003) 686

²¹⁸ Jeremy H. Keenan "Security and Insecurity in North Africa," *Review of African Political Economy*, Vol. 33, no. 108, (2006) 273

²¹⁹ "Islamist Terrorism in the Sahel: Fact or Fiction?" (*International Crisis Group*. Africa Report 92. 31 March 2005) 1

As Barth and Keenan's argument goes, both countries got what they wanted by exaggerating key aspects of the event: the US got their excuse to establish a military presence in North Africa in response to a tangible threat, and Algeria received more military backing and weapons deals in return for their cooperation in the GWOT.²²⁰ Like other countries in the Sahelian region, they stand to gain financially or politically by playing on US fear of an Islamist terrorist threat.²²¹ Another group that benefited from the assumptions of the banana theory, and from US actions undertaken in response to the 2003 kidnapping, is the GSPC. Washington's misunderstanding of the GSPC and their grievances elevated the cause of this local insurgency to the level of an international jihad. This exaggeration helped them obtain the notoriety necessary to secure al-Qaeda's backing in what this paper has called the franchise model of al-Qaeda.²²²

²²⁰ Keenan (2006) 272-4

²²¹ "Islamist Terrorism" (2005) 2

²²² Robert G. Berschinski "AFRICOM'S Dilemma: The 'Global War on Terrorism,' 'Capacity Building,' Humanitarianism, and the Future of US Security Policy in Africa." *Strategic Studies Institute of the US Army War College*. (Nov. 2007) 26

US operations in the Maghreb and AFRICOM

Washington is committed to multiple military operations or diplomatic initiatives that have bearing over US relations with Morocco and Algeria. For example, the US is beholden to the Broader Middle East and North Africa Initiative, developed by the Group of Eight Industrialized Nations (G8) countries in 2004. It is a vague agreement to uphold democracy, human dignity, rule of law, economic opportunity, and freedom in countries spanning Afghanistan to Israel, Saudi Arabia to Mali.²²³ This agreement, proposed by the Bush administration, has had scant participation among the Arab countries to which it pertains, and has relatively little impact due to lack of funding and little enthusiasm among the G8. The Trans Sahara Counterterrorism Partnership (TSCTP)²²⁴ is an initiative coordinate by the US State Department that incorporates foreign military training and diplomatic cooperation in counterterrorism. The TSCTP grew out of the 2002 Pan-Sahel Initiative (PSI), which also had the central goal of “preventative involvement in potential terrorist safe-havens.”²²⁵ TSCTP took over the PSI operations in 2005 when it launched a major joint military operation in the Maghreb called Flintlock 2005, a training mission to enhance tactical operations, land navigations and intelligence gathering in Algeria, Senegal, Morocco, Mauritania, Mali, Niger and Chad.²²⁶ Military operations are coordinated under the project entitled Operation Enduring Freedom – Trans Sahara (OEF-TS).

The TSCTP is a multi-agency program under the supervision of the State Department that provides training and equipment to Algeria and Morocco, as well as nine of its Maghrebi neighbors.²²⁷ Writing for the Washington Institute for Near East Policy, Emily Hunt writes that the TSCTP has as its goal the tactical military training to bolster the militaries

²²³ Marina Ottaway “The Broader Middle East and North Africa Initiative: A hollow Victory for the United States” *Arab Reform Bulletin*, June 2004.

²²⁴ Hunt (2007) and Berschinski (2007) refer to the Trans Sahara Counterterrorism Partnership, whereas, Keenan (2005) and Kamal (2007) refer to the Trans Sahara Counterterrorism Initiative.

²²⁵ “Trans Sahara Counterterrorism Initiative” *GlobalSecurity.org* Alexandria, VA Feb 2008
<http://www.globalsecurity.org/military/ops/oef-ts.htm>

²²⁶ “Trans Sahara Counterterrorism Initiative” 2008

²²⁷ Emily Hunt “Islamist Terrorism in Northwestern Africa: A ‘Thorn in the Neck’ of the United States?” (*The Washington Institute for Near East Policy*. Policy Focus #65. February 2007) 12

of what Washington strategists have labeled “important” African countries.²²⁸ This refers to the strategic concept of ‘pivotal states,’ developed in the 1990s to illustrate the regional importance of certain handpicked American allies. These are countries whose stability upholds the political and economic order and political system, but whose collapse would drastically disrupt a region.²²⁹ Both Morocco and Algeria have taken turns on this list of important African countries in terms of American foreign policy priorities.

The different administrative agencies that comprise the leadership of the TSCTP are indicative of its various purposes.²³⁰ Foremost is the State Department in providing the strategic and tactical coordination for the program. The State Department’s involvement highlights the diplomatic goal of building up the counterterrorism programs of the TSCTP’s nine participant countries within American parameters. The Department of Defense (DoD) is charged with organizing the joint military operations and military training of Saharan militaries alongside the US Special Forces operating out of the US Europe Command Center, or EUROCOM. In 2007 it was announced that AFRICOM, the fifth and newest command center, would take over African operations for EUROCOM by the end of 2008, inheriting responsibility for the TSCTP. Finally, the US Agency for International Development (USAID) is the newest and smallest component of the TSCTP, or the ‘partnership’, as the TSCTP is sometimes called. USAID looks to incorporate humanitarian projects into the partnership’s objectives. The policy of giving aid according to compliance with the GWOT security rationale is controversial among other European aid agencies that do not take security and foreign policy concerns into aid distribution.²³¹

²²⁸ Hunt (2007) 12

²²⁹ Robert Chase, Emily Hill and Paul Kennedy “Pivotal states and US strategy.” (*Foreign Affairs*, 75:1 1996) 37

²³⁰ Emily Hunt “Islamist Terrorism in Northwestern Africa: A ‘Thorn in the Neck’ of the United States?” (*The Washington Institute for Near East Policy*. Policy Focus #65. February 2007) 12

²³¹ Hunt (2007) 12

AFRICOM is one of five US operation command centers, and the first to directly address Africa and its problems with terrorism.²³² Berschinski criticizes the post-9/11 model of US military operations that AFRICOM seeks to perpetuate, writing that the combination of what military analysts call ‘kinetic’ and ‘non-kinetic’ operations, or in other words armed combat missions and humanitarian or community-building operations, is a counter-productive strategy.²³³ While the emphasis for AFRICOM’s mode of operation in the Maghreb is on humanitarian projects and training local militaries in counterterrorism tactics, the application of kinetic operations against al-Qaeda operatives is frequent enough to draw contradictions between the stated objectives of the TSCTP and its actions. The aggressiveness of America’s presence in the cities and rural areas of Morocco and Algeria is cultivating an already pernicious anti-Americanism. The United States’ strong-armed diplomacy and offensive military tactics are counterproductive means of attaining the twin goals of counterterrorism and democratization. In practice, US military intervention in Morocco and Algeria treat only the symptoms of terrorist activity while actually compounding the root causes.²³⁴

²³² Another motive of the recent creation of this command center is to increase US visibility on the continent in the face of rising Chinese influence of from the government and Chinese corporations, but this is more of a political move with less explicitly stated goals.

²³³ Robert G. Berschinski “AFRICOM’S Dilemma: The ‘Global War on Terrorism,’ ‘Capacity Building,’ Humanitarianism, and the Future of US Security Policy in Africa.” *Strategic Studies Institute of the US Army War College*. (Nov. 2007) v-vi

²³⁴ Evans and Phillips (2007)

Conclusion

The impact of the Global War on Terror on Morocco and Algeria is a broad topic that begs further investigation. Multiple sections of society, culture, politics and economics are involved in assessing all the ways one superpower's foreign policy initiative can impact these two countries' security at the individual, state and international level. As time goes on there will be greater insight into the successes, the faults, and the long-term effects of this turn in policy dubbed the GWOT.

In Morocco and Algeria, the rapidly growing current of economic and social discontent can produce an environment conducive to radical Islamist terrorism when crossed with the legacy of militancy in sub-state groups.²³⁵ The GWOT securitization has created superficial cooperation between Washington and the authoritarian governments of Morocco and Algeria, rather than targeting the underlying socio-economic problems. The GWOT promotes competition between these neighboring countries to prove that their struggle with radical Islamist terrorism is more deserving of US aid and military assistance. Washington's goal to encourage democratization is undermined by its support for authoritarian government establishments who lack transparency. US involvement in Morocco and Algeria under the GWOT framework is incompatible with security interests of the region. The inclusion in the TSCTP of humanitarian projects, distributing funding along the parameters of a predetermined American counterterrorist agenda, is ineffective in dealing with militarized groups with localized grievances.

This paper has shown that US counterterrorism tactics in the Maghreb have been ineffective, but that argument does not imply a disregard for the seriousness of the terrorist threat emanating from Morocco and Algeria. The threat is real, it demands action, but Washington has fundamentally misunderstood its nuanced origins. The effect of al-Qaeda's global Islamic media front has been to increase access to radical Islamic messages encouraging violence among Morocco and Algeria's under-represented and

²³⁵ John P. Entelis, "The Democratic Imperative vs. the Authoritarian Impulse: The Maghreb State between Transition and Terrorism." *Strategic Insights*, Vol 30:6 (June 2005) 1-2

unemployed youth. Islamist extremism has a small but receptive audience for the first time in generations. John Entelis identifies a growing cadre of disenfranchised youths living at home and abroad who are growing frustrated with the oppression and corruption of the Moroccan monarchy and of the Algerian military state. He argues that as long as the US is “perceived [by the Maghrebi people] as deeply implicated in the maintenance of this ‘unjust’ system... they will be the natural targets for terrorists and terrorism.”²³⁶ The overall security interests of the US, and of Morocco and Algeria are poorly served by these shortsighted terms of cooperation.

Washington continues to ignore the Moroccan monarchy’s disregard for international law in the Western Sahara dispute, as well as the Algerian military establishment’s role in the violent civil war in the 1990s. This deliberate inaction contradicts the stated concern for humanitarian goals such as the primacy of the rule of law and the need for democratization. The recent strengthening of American ties with Morocco and Algeria under the GWOT mandate has fortified the authoritarian security establishment of both countries. Overall, there has been real improvement in counterterrorism capabilities in militaries trained by the TSCTP. To the Moroccan and Algerian people’s detriment, their governments have used the GWOT securitization to introduce increasingly harsh legislation and military power to suppress legitimate political opposition groups. Washington’s attempt to develop civil society and human rights in both countries through the TSCTP’s humanitarian and military components is producing the opposite effect, and democratic opening in Morocco and Algeria appears on hold for the foreseeable future.²³⁷

This paper began with an outline of a three-part argument: (1) The long-term security of Morocco and Algeria depends upon their cooperation towards democratization, liberalization and counterterrorism. Cooperation has been limited by the resilience of the Western Saharan dispute, compounded by Washington’s fear of destabilizing the Moroccan monarchy, which they perceive to be a moderate ally in the Arab world. (2) The US involvement injects enough military strength and international political clout into

²³⁶ Entelis (2005) 2

²³⁷ John P. Entelis, “The Democratic Imperative vs. the Authoritarian Impulse: The Maghreb State between Transition and Terrorism.” *Strategic Insights*, 30: 6. June 2005. 2.

each government to sustain their domestic oppression of civil demands for democratization. In fact their oppression of dissident voices in the civil society is more easily justified by the GWOT as a securitization framework. (3) The sustained build-up of US forces in the region, originally intended to eradicate al-Qaeda strongholds, has instead promoted stronger anti-American aggression leaving the disenfranchised more receptive to al-Qaeda's message of global jihad.²³⁸ The achievement of stated GWOT goals in Morocco and Algeria such as democratization and liberalization is undermined by the actions taken to promote them. The application of the GWOT priorities has negatively impacted the security of Moroccan and Algerian citizens, who today face stricter oppression from their authoritarian governments. If security is measured by the robustness of these two authoritarian security establishments then the overall impact has been positive, but by shoring up the legitimacy of increasingly unpopular and undemocratic governments, the GWOT framework has harmed America's long-term strategic security interests in Morocco and Algeria.

²³⁸ Paul Rogers. *Global Security and the War on Terror: Elite power and the illusion of control*. London and New York: Routledge, 2008. 166; see also Berschinski (2007), 43; Rashid Khalidi, *Resurrecting Empire: Western footprints and America's Perilous Path in the Middle East*. New York: Beacon Press, 2004; Barry Buzan, "Will the 'global war terrorism' be the new Cold War?" *International Affairs*, 82: 6. (2006): 1102-3.

Appendix 1

Map: The Maghreb

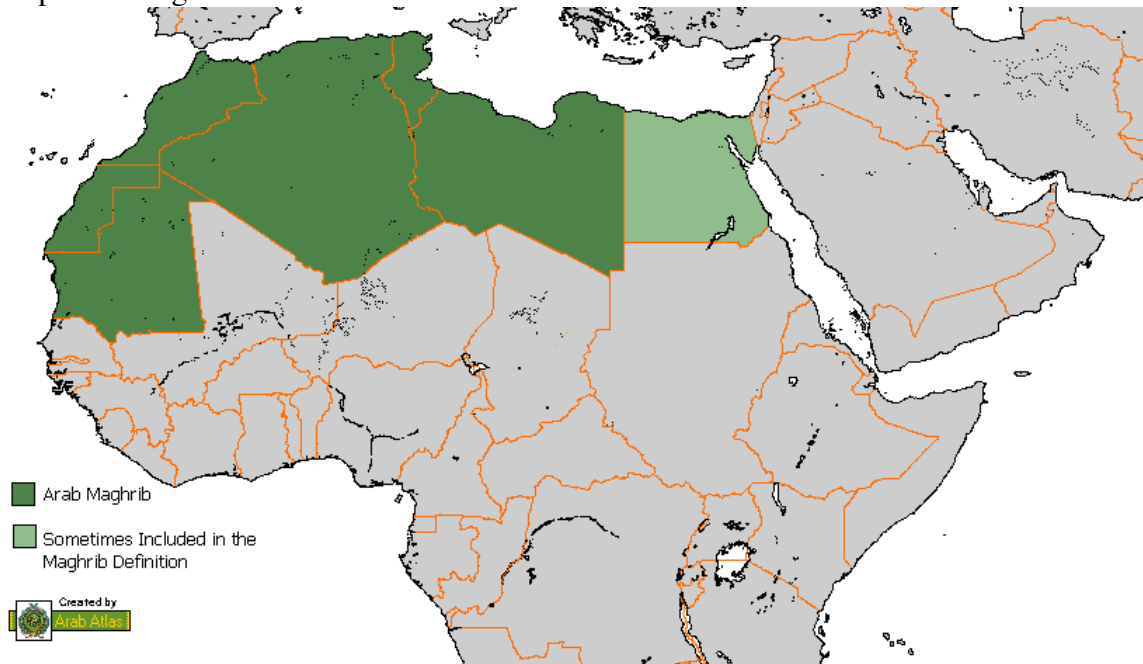


Image: Maghrib.PNG, From Wikipedia, en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Image:Maghrib.PNG accessed July 17, 2008

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