



universität
wien

MASTER THESIS

Titel der Master Thesis / Title of the Master's Thesis

„THE ROLE OF AFRICOM IN ENSURING PEACE IN WEST SAHEL REGION“

verfasst von / submitted by

Alberta Kwei

angestrebter akademischer Grad / in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree
of

Master of Advanced International Studies (M.A.I.S.)

Wien 2022 / Vienna 2022

Studienkennzahl lt. Studienblatt
Postgraduate programme code as it appears on the
student record sheet:

A 992 940

Universitätslehrgang lt. Studienblatt
Postgraduate programme as it appears on the
student record sheet:

Internationale Studien / International Studies

Betreut von / Supervisor:

Professor Markus Kornprobst, M.A., Ph.D.



diplomatische
akademie **wien**

Vienna School of International Studies
École des Hautes Études Internationales de Vienne

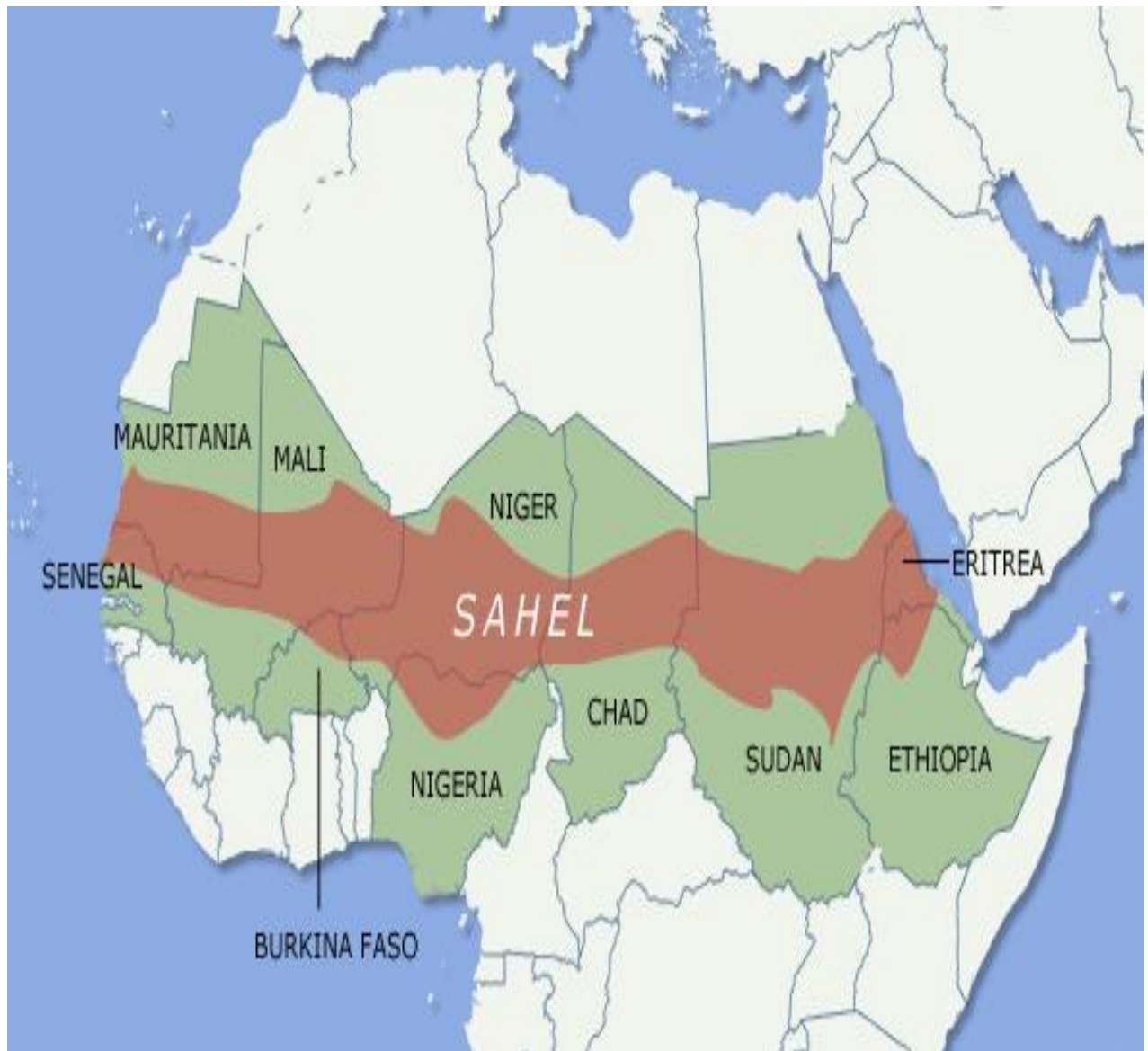
Table of Contents

Abstrakt.....	5
Abstract.....	5
Introduction	5
Statement of the Problem and Question.....	13
CHAPTER 1	14
Literature review.....	14
Conceptual Framework.....	19
<i>Contextual Analysis: adapting Principal-Agent Model</i>	19
Methodology.....	24
CHAPTER 2	27
CASE 1: MALI.....	27
2.1 Political Context	27
2.2 Security Posture.....	27
2.3 Economic Context.....	28
2.4 Cultural and Religious Context.....	29
2.5 What is AFRICOM's Role in Ensuring Peace in Mali?	30
CHAPTER 3	32
CASE 2: BURKINA FASO.....	32
3.1 Political Context	32
3.2 Economic Context.....	33
3.3 Security Posture	33
3.4 Cultural and Religious Context.....	34
3.5 What is the Role of AFRICOM in Ensuring Peace in Burkina Faso?	34
CHAPTER 4	36
CASE 3: NIGERIA.....	36
4.1 Political Context	36
4.2 Security Posture	36
4.3 Economic Context.....	37
4.4 Cultural and Religious Context.....	37
4.5 What is the Role of AFRICOM in Ensuring Peace in Nigeria?	38
CHAPTER 5	40
RESEARCH FINDINGS.....	40
CONCLUSION.....	47
Policy recommendation	50
Agenda for further research	51
Bibliography	52

*On my honour as a student of the Diplomatische Akademie
Wien, I submit this work in good faith and pledge that I
have neither given nor received unauthorized assistance on
it.*

ALBERTA KWEI

Map of Sahel region in Africa



Source: Universidad de Navarra / Center for Global Affairs and Strategic Studies (2021)

Abstrakt

Trotz der Präsenz des United States African Command zusammen mit seinen europäischen Verbündeten und der Gruppe der 5 (G-5 Sahel) in der Sahelzone ist die Region ein Brennpunkt für Unsicherheit aufgrund von Staatsstreich, Piraterie, islamischen Aufständen, Binnenvertriebene, gewalttätige extremistische Angriffe und andere Bürgerkriege. Diese Forschung versucht daher, den Erfolg oder Misserfolg des Afrika-Kommandos der Vereinigten Staaten (AFRICOM) und seine Auswirkungen auf den Frieden in der westafrikanischen Sahelzone, insbesondere in Nigeria, Mali und Burkina Faso, im Rahmen des US-amerikanischen Trans-Sahara-Programms zur Terrorismusbekämpfung zu erklären. Die Studie adaptiert das Prinzipal-Agenten-Modell, das in Terrorismusstudien angewendet wird, als Linse für die Analyse der Terrorismusbekämpfung.

Abstract

Despite the presence of United States African Command, together with their European Allies and Group of 5(G-5 Sahel) in the Sahel region, the region is a hot-spot for insecurity due to coup d'états, piracy, Islamic insurgency, internally displaced population, violent extremist attacks and other civil strife. This research therefore seeks to explain the success or failures of United States' Africa Command (AFRICOM) and its impact on peace in West Africa's Sahel region, in particular Nigeria, Mali and Burkina Faso under US' Trans-Sahara Counterterrorism Partnership program. The study adapts principal-agent model, applied in terrorism studies, as a lens for counterterrorism analysis.

Introduction

AFRICOM is one of the 7 geographic combatant commands¹ under the US Department of State which was established in October 2007 by former President George Bush. Its stated mission is that it “counters transnational threats and malign actors, strengthens security forces and responds to crises in order to advance U.S. national interests and promote regional security, peace and prosperity” (US Africa Command, 2022). AFRICOM has been operational for more than a decade responsible for US strategic and security interest on the African continent. Even though US

¹There are 11 combatant commands in all. These are 7 geographic commands and 4 functional commands.
<https://www.defense.gov/About/combatant-commands/>

policymakers perceive this security policy as beneficial to African peace, it is perceived by pessimists as US' militarization of foreign policy toward the African continent. For this reason, this research will seek to explore the role of AFRICOM in the Sahel region since it is one of the hotspots for insecurity on the African continent.

The conceptual framework I used as lens for analysis is Principal-Agent model. The issues in this study will be analyzed by adapting principal-agent model to counterterrorism strategy. I conceptualize this analytical framework as *Contextual Analysis*. It is noteworthy that principal-agent model has been used to analyze different problems and transactional relations such as terrorism, corruption and research policymaking (Braun & Guston, 2003; Byman & Kreps, 2010; Groenendijk, 1998). On one hand, the principal-agent model applied in terrorism study explains state-sponsored terrorism² whereby state officials delegate their power to use force to militant groups to act on their behalf in several situations as a way to improve their governance (Byman & Kreps, 2010, pp. 1-3). This model focuses on interest/gains of the actors and how these interest shapes their relationship. However, the model does not explain the matrix from which the actors develop their actions. Nevertheless, the principal and agent do not act in a vacuum as the classic principal-agent model seems to portray when used to analyze state-sponsored terrorism in international relations.

However, the actors' domestic politics influences their foreign policy in their international transactions. For example: in 2020, the US suspended their security cooperation with Mali³ in accordance with US legal obligation (Foreign Assistance Act, 1961) and norms (democracy) due to the military coup that overthrew former president Ibrahim Boubacar Keita. In response, the interim military government turned toward Russia for security cooperation through the services of Wagner Group. After that, in February 2022, the US had halted security aid⁴ in the amount of \$160

² See this article (Byman & Kreps, 2010) "Agents of Destruction? Applying Principal-Agent Analysis to State-Sponsored Terrorism. The author analysed how states offer material and political support to terrorist group. For instance, how from 1970-1980, the Indian government led by Gandhi sponsored the Liberation Tiger of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) in their secession movements in Sri Lanka; Iran's support for Hezbollah; Syria for the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP) and Taliban's support for Al-Qaida. In the case of Gandhi's government relation with the LTTE, the author explains how the once friendship they shared was crashed when the Indian government's interest now aligned with the interest of the Sri Lanka government.

³ See <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-mali-security-idUSKBN25H190>

⁴ See <https://www.reuters.com/world/africa/exclusive-us-halts-aid-burkina-faso-after-finding-military-coup-occurred-2022-02-18/> and Vice news interview with US AFRICOM Rear Admiral Milton Sandy on (Sands, 2022) <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mfuQYrqXxbl>

to Burkina Faso due to the military coup that ousted former president Roch Marc Christian Kabore. The military cited the ex-president's inability to address the security challenges facing the country while having security cooperation with US. However, the Burkinabé military hopes to diversify their security partners since the US has withdrawn her assistance.

Thus, the model considers interest only of actors but does not consider the local conditions of the principal or agent actors/countries. Also, problems have context and actors operate in a context so resolving problems might as well be influenced by the context. Conditions such as economic, social, political, cultural and religious context of the actors/countries shape the interest of actors. and how these variables shape the interest of actors; how the interest is pursued; and finally, how these influence the decisions of the actors in this relationship. It is important to look at these conditions because they shape the actions of the agent in the relationship.

By filling the gap in the literature, I will on the other hand adapt the principal-agent model to counterterrorism. I seek to explain US' strategy in the implementation of "Global War on Terror" in Africa. In their counterterrorism campaign in Africa, the United States is acting as the principal actor while African partner countries act as agents. This is because the US has adopted indirect role by engaging willing African governments under the policy framework of Trans-Sahara Counterterrorism Partnership (TSCTP) programme to fight terrorism in the Sahel.

In implementation of the TSCTP program, the agents act directly on the battlefield on behalf of the United States by which in turn, the latter provides funding, logistics, equipment and training of partner countries' security forces with a promise of regime security for the partner government. Using the principal-agent analysis, the study shows that this security arrangement seems to be a mutually beneficial relationship. The 12 countries acting as agents under the TSCTP programme are as follows: Mali⁵, Nigeria, Burkina Faso⁶, Tunisia, Chad, Cameroon, Morocco, Senegal, Mauritania, Niger, Libya and Algeria (Office of the Inspector-General, 2020).

⁵ Mali currently has been suspended by the United States from its security cooperation with Mali because of the 2020 military coup that overthrew the democratic government from power in Bamako. See <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-mali-security-idUSKBN25H190>

⁶ In February 2022, the United States had halted all security cooperation she has with Burkina Faso because of the military coup in January in Ouagadougou that ousted a democratically elected government. For this reason, the US has suspended \$160 million in aid in accordance with US aid disbursement law. See <https://www.reuters.com/world/africa/exclusive-us-halts-aid-burkina-faso-after-finding-military-coup-occurred-2022-02-18/>

Essence of this Study

It is well-known that the transition from policy declaration to practice can be unpredictable, with sometimes uncertainty about the nature of their actual effects. Moreover, as the sociologist Robert Merton (1936) has argued that actions often have ‘unintended consequences.’ Consequently, it is important to subject policies and actions to analysis to find the nature of their effects in human societies. In the case of AFRICOM, we need to examine its role in ensuring peace in West Sahel. Such an examination is important given the contested aims of AFRICOM. Some analysts view it as ‘Trojan horse’ (Institute for Global Dialogue, 2018; McNeill, 2017; Nathan, 2009). Others consider it beneficial to Africa’s peace and security (Forest & Crispin, 2009; A & Aning, 2008). However, as expected, the USA has made it clear that its priorities supersede those of their partners’. For example, the US provides military advice and technical assistance to the Nigerian government to combat Boko Haram however this must be conducted within the framework of US national interest.

Moreover, despite AFRICOM’s security cooperation with their partners, coup d’états have become attractive in some of their partner countries under the TSCTP for instance in Mali, Burkina Faso Guinea, Guinea Bissau and failed coup attempts made in Sudan in north Africa. Also, Violent Extremist Organizations (VEOs) such as Boko Haram, al-Qaeda, Fulani Herdsmen, al-Shabaab and Islamic States West Africa (ISIS-affiliated) are still active in Mali, Niger, Chad and Nigeria who pose as security threat to these countries in particular and the West African region at large (Committee on Foreign Affairs-House of Representatives, 2016).

African Union’s Standard of Peace

What is the African Union’s understanding of peace? According to the African Union (hereafter AU), peace in Africa will be achieved when there is economic development, liberty, political unity, pacific settlements of disputes as well as democracy⁷. According to Kornprobst, AU’s conception of peace is shaped by their colonial experience and the future the organization envisions for the continent (AU Agenda 2063, 2022; Kornprobst, 2022). The AU also conceptualizes peace as mechanisms that promote dialogue-centered approach to conflict prevention and resolution towards a peaceful and stable African continent.

⁷ This kind of peace is what Johan Galtung refers to as positive peace.

Further, the AU believes that conditions such as good governance, accountability, transparency, functional society, multi-party system for electing government, and the existence of a legitimate government of African states as a consequence, will promote peace on the continent. In the event of armed conflict, the AU prefers to use reconciliation⁸, as a form of restorative justice other than punitive justice, to resolve conflict (AU Agenda 2063, 2022; Zondi, 2017). Reconciliation is a holistic process for the search for truth; delivering justice by offender showing remorse; asking and giving forgiveness respectively by offender and victim; and accommodation of parties to a conflict within a system.

The above question posed can also be examined from the perspective of the nature of conflict existing during the period when the AU had resolved to commit to peacebuilding on the African continent in the year 2000 onward. By the time the Organization of African Unity (OAU) was transformed to becoming the African Union (AU), the organization was faced with challenges coming from all five regions of the African continent for it to address. Prominent of the challenges were armed conflict.

Consequently, the pattern of conflicts were no longer inter-state conflicts between the inherited Berlin-engineered colonial states on one hand, and the pre-colonial African states on the other, but rather intra-state conflicts involving different ethnic groups struggling over state power; secessionist movements who seek the right to self-determination; politico-religious elite power struggle; economic fighters who seek their share of socio-economic resources, among other warring parties within the state.

Therefore, the new patterns of conflicts have revealed that African governments do not efficiently provide resources to all their citizens which has given rise to communities affected by this phenomenon, sometimes with religious motivation, to fight against their governments to demand their economic security. Other intra-state conflicts arise because of inter-ethnic power struggle seeking to govern their states but are regarded as illegitimate government authorities (Zondi, 2017). Besides, these intra-state conflicts have revealed that some African states do not effectively govern their territories hence the emergence of the so-called ‘ungovernable spaces’ in Africa which the decision-makers in the United States have decided to take control of to deny their occupation by violent extremist organizations (AFRICOM Posture Statement, 2021) from harming United States’ interest.

⁸ For example, the Ubuntu philosophy used in east and south Africa as a way of resolving dispute in the interest of keeping harmony and reconciliation in members of a community.

Understanding Positive Peace

AU's understanding of peace is what Johan Galtung⁹ conceptualizes as positive peace in his theory of peace. According to Galtung, there are two types of peace, namely negative and positive peace. peace means 'positive peace'. According to Galtung, on one hand, positive peace means a kind of peace built based on investments into economic and human development as well as institutions that fosters peace of society as well as resilience of the people living in that society to withstand shock when conflict arises.

On the other hand, negative peace means the absence of armed conflict. This therefore means that a society enjoys negative peace when hostilities cease to exist through the conclusion of ceasefire or armistice without complete end to the conflict. Parties seeking to achieve negative peace do not consider achieving the social welfare of the people affected by the armed conflict.

For the purpose of this study, I will adopt 'positive peace' to mean peace in Western Sahel. Galtung's concept of positive peace reaffirms the AU'S idea of "silencing the guns" towards achieving a secure and peaceful Africa.

Silencing the Guns

The African Union has declared through their 'Agenda 2063', aspirations that they seek to achieve by the end of year 2063. Therefore, "Aspiration Number 4": *A Peaceful and Secure Africa*, popularly known as ***silencing the guns*** is a peace framework set out by the African Union to end intractable armed conflicts on the continent. The essence of 'silencing the guns' as envisioned by the African Union is that it creates a link between peace, peace and development in all parts of Africa. To achieve this objective, the African Union has devolved its power to the eight AU-Regional Economic Communities¹⁰ (RECs) to take measures to prevent, manage and resolve conflicts that emerge within their jurisdiction (AU PSD, 2015).

This framework was conceptualized by way of revisiting the ideals of African unity and renaissance, expressed as the quest for inclusive and sustainable economic growth, peace as well as development, African leaders in 2013, signed the ***50th Anniversary Solemn Declaration*** to

⁹ Johan Galtung (1964) is a Norwegian peace researcher who introduced the concept of negative and positive peace in academic literature.

¹⁰ The African Union's recognized RECs are Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS); Southern African Development Community (SADC); Arab-Maghreb Union(AMU); Community of Sahel-Sahara States (CEN-SAD); Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa (COMESA); Eastern African Community(EAC); Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IAD) and Economic Community of Central African States(ECCAS). This is contained in the African Peace and Security Architecture Roadmap (2016-2020).

mark the Golden Jubilee milestone of the Organization of African Unity (OAU) succeeded by the African Union (AU) in 2002.

The declaration indicated a commitment of Africa toward the attainment of the “Pan-African Vision of an integrated, prosperous and peaceful continent, driven by its citizens” (Africa Union , 2013) and a force to reckon with in the international arena in the next 50 years. In line with this, **Agenda 2063**, a continent-wide social contract with 7 aspirations¹¹ between the AU and civil society groups was concluded in 2015 detailing the 50-year transformational vision from 2013 to 2063 (Africa Union , 2013).

Posture of AFRICOM on the African Continent

There are 17 states in West Africa, but AFRICOM does not have military presence in all countries in the West African region therefore this research will be limited to AFRICOM’s ‘Partners’, in the Sahel region. Even though AFRICOM does not have presence in all the countries in the Sahel region, it collaborates with French and EU forces who have been operating in this region for more than a decade. AFRICOM Commanders have stated in their successive posture statements that they share common security concerns with their European counterparts engaged in Operation Barkhane¹² so they provide intelligence, equipment and other resources to them therefore they have a role to play in this security environment (AFRICOM Posture Statement, 2021, p. 10).

According to Lauren Ploch¹³ in her Congressional Research Service’ 2011 Report to Congress, United States’ policymakers have realized the strategic importance of the African continent to United States’ interest. The most prominent of this interest is Africa’s energy resources and concern over violent extremist organization operating in ‘un-governed and under-governed spaces’ in Africa such as terrorist groups, illicit traffickers, and pirates in international waters; increasing humanitarian crises as well as armed conflict on the continent (Ploch, 2011).

For the above reasons, AFRICOM was established by the Department of Defense (hereafter DoD) to achieve the following objectives. The objective envisioned by the DoD for AFRICOM is to promote and protect United States’ strategic interest in Africa by working with African states

¹¹ The 7 Aspirations document of the African Union adopted in 2013 are as follows:

1. A prosperous Africa based on inclusive growth and sustainable development ; 2. An integrated continent, politically united and based on the ideals of Pan-Africanism and the vision of Africa’s Renaissance; 3. An Africa of good governance, democracy, respect for human rights, justice and the rule of law; 4. A peaceful and secure Africa ; 5. An Africa with a strong cultural identity, common heritage, shared values and ethics; 6. An Africa whose development is people-driven, relying on the potential of African people, especially its women and youth, and caring for children; 7. Africa as a strong, united and influential global player and partner.

¹² Operation Barkhane is an operation led by French military together with some European forces who are engaged in a military conflict against islamic insurgency in the West African Sahel region since 2014.

¹³ Lauren Ploch Blanchard is an analyst in African Affairs at the United States Congressional research services.

and regional organizations to help boost the latter's defence capabilities so that they can better contribute to their own (African continent's) security and peace. Moreover, AFRICOM has the mandate to conduct military operations **if** authorized by the national authorities of the state in the theatre of operation (Ploch, 2011).

For example: In my opinion, in the spirit of this last mandate as well as the principle of Responsibility to Protect(R2P) is the one invoked by AFRICOM, in cooperation with NATO members when AFRICOM undertook Operation Odyssey Dawn in Libya in March 2011 leading to the overthrow of Muammar Qadhafi and his death thereafter. This operation began with the US directing AFRICOM to plan for a non-combatant evacuation operation of American citizens from Libya. Then, AFRICOM had established a Joint Task Force-Odyssey Dawn to execute the operation however, later transformed into US-led NATO coalition, alongside non-NATO allies¹⁴, to operate in Libya since the U.S. was already militarily engaged in Afghanistan and Iraq in the Middle East (Quartararo, Rovenolt, & White, 2012, p. 144).

Furthermore, even though the operation was not jointly sanctioned by the Libyan government and AFRICOM, the United States unilaterally violated the 'if authorized by the national commanding authorities' clause within their own mandate prescribed for AFRICOM. I am aware that from the perspective of international law, the above argument could be contested using United Nations Resolution 1973(para.4) which authorized the use of force in Libya using 'all necessary means' or the invocation of the doctrine of Responsibility to Protect (R2P) in intra-state conflict, where civilians are the object of attack, as the reason AFRICOM intervened in Libya.

In conclusion, per my analysis, the primary and undeclared objective of AFRICOM is to secure the United States' homeland under the framework of 'War on Terror'. I cited the above example because the consequences of Operation Odyssey Dawn undertaken by AFRICOM in Libya has had a spillover effect. Thus, violent extremist organizations as well as movement of arms to the West African Sahel region was caused by the Libyan state collapse. This event has led to the United States expanding their operation in accordance with their declaration of 'War on Terror' in the Sahel. Even though the United States has interest that span the whole of the African continent, they do not have significant troop presence there except east Africa in Camp Lemonnier in Djibouti and at its operational headquarters in Stuttgart in Germany. However, in the northeast Africa for example, the US acts militarily either under the umbrella of French-led European forces or contracts African countries to act on their behalf and in turn provide incentive for their operation or promise regime security for their defence of US interest.

¹⁴ Such as Qatar, Saudi Arabia and other allies who prefer to stay anonymous but contributed resources to Operation Odyssey Dawn.

Statement of the Problem and Question

The United States has declared “Global War on Terror” on VEOs who target US interest on the homeland or elsewhere. In Africa, the US has contracted African Partners, through the TSCTP program, to fight on their behalf while the former provides incentives to the security forces of the latter to engage VEOs on the ground. The goal of the US is to prevent VEOs from having safe haven in ungoverned spaces and fragile states in the Sahel.

However, despite the presence of AFRICOM, together with their European Allies and Group of 5(G-5 Sahel) in the Sahel region, the region is a hot-spot for insecurity due to coup d'états, piracy, Islamic insurgency, internally displaced population, pastoralist-farmers conflict due to adverse effect of climate change on the environment in these countries, violent extremist attacks and other civil strife.

Given this problem, the research poses the following question:

1. To what extent has AFRICOM ensured peace in the Sahel region of West Africa through their Trans-Sahara Counterterrorism Programme with Mali, Nigeria and Burkina Faso?

In conclusion, I will explain this problem by first adapting Principal-Agent model to assessing the relationship between the AFRICOM, who is the principal actor and their African Partners, who are the agents contracted by the USA under the TSCTP program to fight terrorism on their behalf in the Sahel region. Secondly, I will provide the reason for US adopting such policy and how effective this relationship has been.

CHAPTER 1

Literature review

The United States' intention for instituting AFRICOM is widely discussed in the literature. American foreign policy observers and security analysts are divided on the nature and purpose of AFRICOM by the US in addressing security challenges on the African continent. In this section, I discuss the varying views on this subject.

To begin, one, Forest and Crispin (2009) have conducted qualitative research into the purpose of AFRICOM and why it is negatively perceived by international observers. The authors have interviewed officials of U.S. security services and other related non-governmental organizations whose views underpin the research. The authors have categorized their research findings into two: "planning shortfalls and unrealistic expectations" and "consultation and communication" issues within the USA and in foreign countries. Forest and Crispin (2009) argue that US European allies, observers within US itself as well as Africans on the continent negatively received their 'well-intentioned' AFRICOM.

The authors have observed that international observers held a misconception that US wants to militarize their foreign policy toward Africa through AFRICOM. However, Forest and Crispin contest this perception and argue that American foreign policy toward Africa is shaped by 'history' and 'actions' however I do not think it rules out the militarization charge. For this reason, according to the authors, AFRICOM is organized to focus on activities geared toward war prevention and addressing African security and development needs. They maintain that AFRICOM demonstrates American commitment to helping Africans address their security challenges while promoting peace of the continent. I think this assertion is rather vague because the authors do not provide any statistics or evidence to support their claims.

Forest and Crispin argue that Africans have been largely hostile toward AFRICOM due to poor planning, failure to consult African stakeholders and a lack of strategic communication on the part of US policymakers regarding the aims, objective and orientation of AFRICOM. Also, US policymakers must ensure that AFRICOM is used to pursue developmental policies and programmes which would aim at improving the lives of Africans as means to meeting US security needs.

To resolve these AFRICOM challenges, Forest and Crispin (2009) argue for the US to focus on effective communication, extensive consultation and public diplomacy. They argue that even though AFRICOM was tasked with both military and civilian mission, they have limited knowledge about the continent. Hence, there was a need for greater efforts at building a knowledge base to inform AFRICOM actions.

Two, Nathan (2009) disputes the claims by Forest and Crispin (2009). He is especially skeptical of the assertion that miscommunication and lack of consultation with stakeholders on the African continent is the reason Africans and international observers have opposed the institution of AFRICOM. For him, this is a misdiagnosis, and that the consequent policy recommendations for AFRICOM's future success are misplaced.

According to Nathan, four major concerns have been raised by Africans in opposition to AFRICOM. These concerns are: regional destabilization, offensive military action, overriding African interests and undermining the African Union by the US through the institution of AFRICOM. The author rather asserts that the US wants unhindered access to natural resources from Africa; wants to ensure stable supply of oil; wants to counter China's economic and political influence; and contain terrorists in furtherance of US security interest.

Nathan (2009) maintains that the adverse response to AFRICOM reflects a "deep-rooted anti-imperialist posture" which is founded on the historical and contemporary experiences by Africans vis-à-vis the 'realities of African politics and US foreign policy'. For this reason, communication strategy cannot overcome the negative reaction toward AFRICOM. Further, Nathan observes that the period in which AFRICOM was instituted also had the image of USA being characterized by 'unilateralism', 'militarism' and disregard for 'international law' as the framework for US foreign policy therefore AFRICOM is a feature of American militant foreign policy. For this reason, AFRICOM is a security threat to the sovereignty of African states.

Three, Khlopov (2021) explores how US security interest and strategy have evolved over the years under the administrations of Bush, Obama and Trump toward Africa after US' disastrous experience in Somalia. The author had observed that under these three presidents, US security strategy toward Africa was geared toward 'War on Terror' under George Bush; changed to counterterrorism under Barack Obama; and shifted to 'Great Power Competition' under Donald Trump. Besides, US foreign policy under Joe Biden is geared toward regaining lost influence.

In contrast to Nathan's (2009) arguments, Khlopov argues that African allies to the US had provided access to their security environment to the US since the Cold War and they did this as "foot soldiers" for US to dominate the world. Therefore, AFRICOM is not a new institution to now facilitate access to the security environment of Africa for the US.

Four, McNeill (2017) argues that AFRICOM is an institution for advancing the liberal order. In this regard, the author maintains that AFRICOM is a bio-political security institution used for securitizing the culture of Africans. The author had examined AFRICOM's activities in the Sahara-Sahel region of West-Africa focusing on Mali and Niger. McNeill explored how biopolitical strategies¹⁵ are explored in security policy at the global level. The outcome of the research was that AFRICOM's strategy, such as focus on human security needs,¹⁶ in Africa are geared toward securing access for US forces to African geo-strategic space to enable the US to shape the international security environment even though US rhetoric is disguised to emphasize on African security and development.

On one hand, Khlopov, Nathan (2009) and McNeill (2017) share opinion on the argument that US-Africa relationship was formalized by the need to internationalize American values. On the other hand, Khlopov shares the claim by Forest and Crispin (2009) that African security system is fragile and that AFRICOM is the answer to the insecurity on the continent.

Five, the Institute for Global Dialogue (2018) agrees with the research finding of McNeill on the grounds that AFRICOM has been used by the US to get access to African security environment as well as militarization of US African Affairs. The Institute had observed that in 2009, AFRICOM held military exercise with 8 West African states and that US uses security cooperation, humanitarian aid, military aid through AFRICOM to get disproportionate access to West Africa security environment.

¹⁵ In the Foucauldian theory of power, biopolitics, at the domestic level, is having power over life and the procedures of directing human conduct (Foucault, 1978, pp. 502-504; Thompson, 2012). This theory is what McNeill draws upon to underpin his research at the international level. At the global level, biopolitics is having power to govern the lives of a foreign population to advance a Great Power's interest.

¹⁶ Using the biopolitical framework, McNeill's research finding reiterates how American 'soft power' advances her strategic interest. According to McNeil, biopolitical security strategy is about how population and their culture are regarded as objects to secure¹⁶. To put this in perspective, the author argues that AFRICOM is to secure "American way of life" through governing African population and propagating political liberal order through Western ideas such as democracy, human rights, economic liberalization, humanitarian aid among others.

Further, the Institute maintains that AFRICOM's militarization of African affairs is conducted through the establishment of bases, provision of military equipment to their African Partners and military intervention in some African countries. In addition, the Institute has observed that after all the rhetoric and inspirational talk that projected peace and hope for the African continent, on the contrary, former president Obama's AFRICOM strategy reflected Orwellian philosophy: "war is peace" and "ignorance is strength". The Institute maintains that it was under President Obama that AFRICOM had been used extensively to advance US interest. For instance, according to Institute, AFRICOM, alongside NATO, intervened in Libya in 2011 during the Libyan civil conflict to engage in regime change without considering the stance from Africa or the African Union. Per my assessment, the literature suggests that this event led to instability in the Sahel.

Six, Hon. Duncan Hunter¹⁷, at a committee hearing on AFRICOM in the House of Representative (Committee on Armed Services, 2007) referred to President George Bush's justification of the establishment of AFRICOM and its goals as being, amongst others, "to bring peace and security to the people of Africa". He then poses a question to Hon. Ryan Henry, (deputy Assistant Under Secretary of Defence for Policy), to respond to concerns about AFRICOM being an instrument to militarize US-Africa relations and how it will ensure peace on the continent?

In response to this question, Hon. Ryan Henry responded by arguing that the reasons underpinning misgivings about AFRICOM by African leaders and African experts are 'misperceptions and recirculated myths. He therefore identifies three myths that are not true from US perspective as follows: one, that US is fighting terrorism and thereby render the continent a target for terrorist attacks; two, to counter Chinese influence thereby polarize the continent between two Powers; and three, to secure access to oil in a neocolonial fashion.

In contrast to these misperceptions, Secretary Henry argues that one, violent extremist organizations and safe havens provided to these groups by 'ungoverned spaces' in Africa is what the AFRICOM seeks to address. Two, US and China share common interest in a stable and secure Africa though they differ on the means to achieving that purpose. Three, that it is in a stable environment that Africans and non-Africans will have access to and benefit from their natural resources.

¹⁷ a ranking member on the House Committee on Armed Services and a representative from California in the US legislature.

In his three responses above, I do not see Secretary Henry rejecting the charges made against AFRICOM or responding to how AFRICOM ensures peace in Africa but rather he justifies the reasons why AFRICOM is necessary to achieving the security objectives of US.

Seven, in response to the strategy adopted by AFRICOM in their mission in the Sahel, Burgess (2019) has argued that the United States and France share the same national security objective in West African Sahel region. The French mission is to counter terrorist attacks and disrupt their activities through operation Barkhane while the US has also declared global “War on Terror” after 9/11. Even though the United States acknowledges that the center of the fight against terrorism is in southwest Asia, thus Afghanistan and Iraq, there needs to be vigilance on Violent Extremist Organizations in Africa due to the dire economic conditions in the region. The author has observed that the United States operates in the Sahel region under the larger banner of French-led counter terrorism operations in the Sahel region beginning with *Operation Serval* in Mali in 2013 and ongoing *Operation Barkhane* in the whole of Sahel since 2014.

Besides France deploys ‘direct military intervention’ strategy in its military operation in the Sahel while the US deploys ‘indirect military intervention’ strategy by funding, training, equipping, and deploying African intervention forces on their behalf in their efforts to counter the activities of VEOs. In other circumstances, the author maintains that the United States deploys Special Forces and Remotely Piloted Aircraft (RPA) without engaging in direct combat with VEOs. Also, the United States had invested in Pan-Sahel Initiative (PSI) and Trans-Sahara Counterterrorism Partnership (TSCTP) by training and equipping security forces in the Sahel countries including Mali, Burkina Faso and Nigeria to be deployed for intervention however the United States does not intervene directly with its own forces.

The sources I have reviewed above do not exhaust all the arguments on this subject. Nevertheless, the authors above have made differing arguments regarding the nature and purpose of AFRICOM. The common argument that justify the institution of AFRICOM is that it is used to address the security, development and humanitarian challenges on the African continent. On the contrary, other scholars, particularly, McNeill’s research which focused on part of the security environment I seek to study, found that AFRICOM is a tool to advance liberal ideology; it is also used to gain disproportionate access to African geo-strategic space through security cooperation with African states as well as modest military and humanitarian aid to their client states. For this reason, my study will fill the gap in this literature by examining the role of AFRICOM in ensuring peace in the Sahel region, specifically in Nigeria, Burkina Faso and Mali.

Conceptual Framework

Contextual Analysis: adapting Principal-Agent Model

Under what conditions does the Trans-Sahara Counterterrorism Partnership (TSCTP) become effective to ensure peace in the Sahel by AFRICOM? The theoretical lens through which I seek to answer this question is adapting principal-agent model. According to this model, ‘one actor [i.e., the principal] “seeks extension of self” by delegating an action for execution by other actors [i.e., agent] who seem better capable to do so’ (Braun and Guston 2003, p. 303). The model has been applied to study various collective problems including political corruption (Groenendijk 1997) and state-sponsored terrorism (Byman and Kreps 2010). In the aforementioned studies, the model focuses on interest of the actors which shapes their relationship. However, the principal-agent actors do not operate in a vacuum, rather their political, economic, and social context as well as the security posture of the actor influence the decisions each actor makes in the relationship.

I therefore seek to adapt the model to counterterrorism by applying it to the relationship between AFRICOM and their African Partners in the Sahel region.

In this research, adapting principal-agent model to counterterrorism views AFRICOM as the principal actor, while their African partners become their agents in the theatre of operation against Violent Extremists Organization (VEOs) such as Boko Haram/ISWAP¹⁸ operating in Nigeria and the Lake Chad Basin; Nusrat Al-Islam¹⁹/ Al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb operating in Burkina Faso; and Tuareg Rebels /JNIM²⁰/AQIM²¹ operating in Mali.

Justification for the Contextual Analysis in this Study

In her ‘Global War on Terror’, the United States adopts a binary view according to which countries either support the war or the violent extremist organizations. Consequently, political elites within an African state who do not cooperate with the United States in containing or neutralizing groups that it defines as violent extremist groups, particularly religious fundamentalist,

¹⁸ Islamic States West Africa Province (ISWAP) is the administrative branch of Islamic States of Iraq and Levant (ISIL) in West Africa. See <https://www.crisisgroup.org/africa/west-africa/nigeria/273-facing-challenge-islamic-state-west-africa-province> to understand the modus operandi of this VEO.

¹⁹ Ibid.

²⁰ JNIM is a coalition of jihadist group operating in the West African Sahel region. The acronym JNIM is a VEO formed in 2017 that is formally known as Jama’at Nasr al-Islam wal Muslim. The Arabic name translates to mean ‘Group to support Muslim and Islam’. This JNIM group was formed as part of Al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb to support the Nusrat al Islam in Burkina Faso to launch offensive campaign on the Burkinabé military.

²¹ AQIM is acronym for Al Qaeda in the Maghreb. They are administrative branch of Al Qaeda in Iraq and Levant in the Middle East.

risk being held complicit in the activities of the VEOs. However, even though the model considers the interest/gains of the principal and actors, it does not explain how the domestic politics of a given actor shapes their interest and how those interest re pursued.

Therefore the hypothesis for this research is as follows:

A: That AFRICOM's TSCTP program **has** ensured peace in the Sahel region.

B: That AFRICOM's TSCTP program **has not** ensured peace in the Sahel region.

The principal-Agent problem: misperception by Intervenor (s)

First, do intervenors assess insurgency and terrorist activities in Mali, Nigeria and Burkina Faso as purely military problem so requires purely military measures for their solution? Secondly, do they consider the collapse of the Libyan state as a major source of weapon and militants to the Sahel? It is true that some VEOs such as Islamic State West Africa Province (ISWAP), Jama'at Nasr al-Islam wal Muslim (JNIM / 'Group to support Muslim and Islam') and Al Qaeda in the Maghreb (AQIM) that operate in Northern Nigeria and the Lake Chad regions, Algeria, Mali and Burkina Faso are motivated by religious ideology.

However, other VEOs, such as the National Movement for the Liberation of Azawad (NMLA) in Mali or Boko Haram in Nigeria (based on their initial demands for economic opportunities in the north of Nigeria when the group was first formed) were formed as either secessionist movements or non-terrorist groups demanding economic and political justice from their governments, appear to be motivated by political, social, or economic injustices and not to harm US/EU interests on the continent or elsewhere.

Yet, since the population of these 3 countries are largely Muslims, Islamic ideology is used as a mobilizer for their recruitment. Overcoming such VEOs might require a policy that addresses the underlining problem. These challenges are poverty, food insecurity, effects of climate change causing desertification, political exclusion and underdevelopment of 'ungoverned spaces' where VEOs operate and wield influence (International Crises Group, 2019; AFRICOM Posture Statement, 2021, p. 3).

First, I want to point out that there is principal-agent issue arising from the security environment which is caused by the minimal understanding of the root causes of the conflict in the security environment by foreign intervenors who operate in the Sahel region. It is important for intervenors to understand the political, economic, and cultural dynamics causing the underlying drivers of the conflict within the security environment in which they operate.

In as much as AFRICOM and French-led EU intervention during their counter-VEO campaigns have chalked notable success in the Sahel theatre by containing the expansion of terrorist groups or extremist ideology, it is now conventional knowledge that despite the counter -VEO efforts by the US, France-led EU force and the G-5 joint troops in the Sahel, VEOs activities are spreading in the Sahel countries. In response to this, some observers consider intervenor's effort as having destabilizing effect on the Sahel region, AFRICOM officials blame these counter-effects on military leaders who overthrow democratic leaders because they believe the junta creates opportunities for VEOs to breed instead of eliminating them from the security environment (Sands, 2022).

AFRICOM is a tool for the United States to achieve human and territorial security on the homeland; their African Partners also want regime security, military and financial support in their political endeavours (AFRICOM Posture Statement, 2021). It therefore seeks to prove that in the West-African context, the VEOs or so-called 'terrorists' (depending on the angle you look at it from) seeking political inclusion, economic justice and social security, tend to radicalize and use force to attain their objectives as well. AFRICOM's campaign in West-Africa do not appear to differentiate between VEO who targets US interest anywhere in the world and those VEO who are fighting their African governments for community development or political inclusion.

For instance, Boko Haram was formed in 2002 in Maiduguri, Nigeria. It has evolved over the years as revisionist group beginning with protest in Northern Nigeria fighting excessive poverty, religious freedom and economic injustice. The police responded with excessive use of force, which had the unintended effect of radicalizing Boko Haram into the violent group it has become, launching attacks on police posts and government offices (Lowy Institute, 2022).

AFRICOM stated in their 2021 Posture Statement that they share the same national security interest as the French-led EU forces who are engaged in Counter-Violent Extremist Organization(C-VEO) activities. Although they use different strategies, France and the United States are the major countries leading in intervention in West Africa. While the French use *direct military intervention* in their operations, the United States uses *indirect military intervention* in their operations by training, funding, equipping, providing logistical support and deploying African intervention forces in the Sahel region in their effort to counter VEO operations. In some operations, the US uses Special Forces or Remotely Piloted Aircraft (RPA) without having to engage in direct ground combat in the theatre. Moreover, the USA uses indirect military intervention because her interest is not attacked or perceived to be targeted by an armed attack in the Sahel (Burgess, 2019, p. 69).

To sum, the TSCTP program is a tool to countering competitor influence and access (AFRICOM Posture Statement, 2021, pp. 12-13). Therefore, African government officials who enter into security arrangement with AFRICOM are recruited as ‘agents’. Their role is to provide access to the security environment for intervenors and to contribute to G-5 Sahel Joint Force from affected states in the Sahel region to operate as containers of violent extremist groups. In turn, these countries receive military training, logistics, and promise of regime security. It, therefore, appears to be a relationship of mutual benefit. As in other principal-agent situations, this relationship ‘exists uneasily and disharmoniously’ (Byman and Kreps 2010: 12). Two problems often emerge in this relation: informational asymmetry and divergence of interests. According to Byman and Kreps (2010, p. 12), ‘the reality of asymmetric information—the agent has inside information about its interests and activities, while the principal must rely on less precise observables to gauge compliance—further complicates the relationship.’

The figure below shows the TSCTP partner countries in West and North (Maghreb):

Figure 1: TSCTP Partner Countries



Source: OIG generated based on TSCTP project information obtained from AF.

As cited in (Office of the Inspector-General, 2020)

The Principal-Agent problem: misperception by Intervenor (s)

Do intervenors assess insurgency and terrorist activities in Mali, Nigeria and Burkina Faso as purely military problem so requires purely military measures for their solution? It is true that some VEOs such as Islamic State West Africa Province (ISWAP) that is operating in Northern Nigeria and the Lake Chad regions are motivated by religious ideology however other VEOs are highly motivated by political, social, or economic injustices and not to harm US interest however, since the population of these countries are largely Muslims, Islamic ideology is used as a mobilizer for their recruitment. To eliminate the existence of VEOs, unless the underlining problem for their existence is addressed. These challenges are poverty, food insecurity, effects of climate change causing desertification, political exclusion and underdevelopment of ‘ungoverned spaces’ where VEOs operate and wield influence (International Crises Group, 2019; AFRICOM Posture Statement, 2021, p. 3).

First, I want to point out that there is Principal-Agent problem arises from the security environment which is caused by the conflict of goals²² between AFRICOM and their Sahelian agents. That is the goal of AFRICOM is to fight against terrorism while the goal of partner countries is regime security. Meanwhile the partnership does not consider country specific issues that shape their foreign policy. This phenomenon has caused minimal understanding of the Sahelian security environment by foreign intervenors who operate in the Sahel region. It is important for intervenors to understand the political, economic, and cultural dynamics within the security environment in which they operate.

In as much as AFRICOM and French-led EU intervention during their counter-VEO campaigns have chalked notable success in the Sahel theatre, it is now conventional knowledge that despite the counter-VEO efforts by the US, France-led EU force and the G-5 joint troops in the Sahel, VEO is breeding, and coup d’état is particularly attractive in the Sahel countries. In response to this, some observers consider AFRICOM’s effort as having destabilizing effect on the Sahel region, AFRICOM officials blame these counter-effects on military leaders who overthrow democratic leaders because they believe the junta creates opportunities for VEOs to breed instead of eliminating them from the security environment (Sands, 2022).

²² See the article written by (Waterman & Meier, 1998) where they discuss conflict of goals and informational asymmetry as the problems arising from the principal-agent relationship on <http://citeseerx.ist.psu.edu/viewdoc/summary?doi=10.1.1.119.5487&rank=7>

AFRICOM serves as a tool for the United States for achieving human and territorial security on the homeland; their African Partners want regime security, military and financial support (AFRICOM Posture Statement, 2021); in the West-African context, the VEOs or so-called ‘terrorists’ (depending on the angle you look at it from) seeking political inclusion, economic justice and social security, tend to radicalize and use force to attain their objectives. AFRICOM must differentiate between VEO who targets US interest anywhere in the world from VEO who are fighting their African governments for community development or political inclusion during their Counter-Violent Extremist Organization campaigns in West-Africa.

For instance, Boko Haram was formed in 2002 in Maiduguri, Nigeria evolved over the years as revisionist group beginning with protest in Northern Nigeria fighting excessive poverty, religious freedom and economic injustice suffered from successive governments due to the North-South political and social divide in Nigeria. The police responded with excessive use of force and this in turn radicalized Boko Haram to launch attacks on police posts and government offices (Lowy Institute, 2022).

In the West African Sahel theater, AFRICOM has stated in their 2021 posture statement that they share the same national security interest as the French-led EU forces who are engaged in Counter-Violent Extremist Organization(C-VEO) activities. Besides, France and the United States are the major two countries leading in intervention in West Africa however both countries use different strategies in achieving their goals. While the French use *direct military intervention* in their operations, the United States uses *indirect military intervention* in their operations by training, equipping, and deploying African intervention forces in the Sahel region in their effort to counter VEOs. In some operations, the US uses Special Forces or Remotely Piloted Aircraft (RPA) without having to engage in direct combat in the theatre. The USA uses indirect military force because her interest is not attacked or perceived to be targeted by an armed attack in the Sahel (Burgess, 2019, p. 69).

Also, AFRICOM is a tool to countering competitor influence and access (AFRICOM Posture Statement, 2021, pp. 12-13). Therefore, African government officials who entered into security arrangement with AFRICOM are recruited as ‘agents’ who provide access to the security environment for intervenors as well as their contribution of G-5 Sahel Joint Force from affected states in the Sahel region to operate as containers of violent extremist groups regardless of their interest, with regime security in return.

Methodology

This study will be guided by rational choice theory. I chose this methodology because states are seen as rational, goal-seeking actors who would act and take decision in their self-interest (Snidal, 1985).

Research technique and Sources of Data

I will use content analysis as a research technique to analyze the findings of this research. Content analysis is used to make inference from a message or data communicated and puts the message into context. The technique poses the question: who is the messenger? why this message? ; what is the message?; and what impact will the message have on the target audience? (Krippendorff, 1989, p. 403)

I have chosen content analysis because it is useful in communication research and since this study is going to rely on policy document, speech and posture statement, I believe it will serve as a guiding approach to interpret the message, decipher unexpressed interest contained in these documents to enable me reach justifiable conclusion in this research. The study will use coding of theme, language, diction as stated in the documents and speech.

I will conduct content analysis of congressional service reports, journal articles, official speeches of US Government and Extremist Violent Organizations, US national security policy documents and AFRICOM annual posture statements.

The reason I chose the listed sources is that a content analysis of these security policy documents, congressional reports by the US Government officials as well as rhetoric gives an insight into the policy directive, intent, strategies, preferences and objectives of AFRICOM for the decisions the players have made in the past as well as what they intend to achieve in the future given dynamism in national interest. The journal articles will serve as source of knowledge on the subject matter as well as finding direction on how to use *Game Theory* in analyzing conflict situation. I will focus on journal articles that have studied the subject I am researching into such as the research I undertake.

I chose to study AFRICOM's engagements in the Sahel region because there are different political dynamics in the region such as democratic, autocratic and military regimes that are governing in their respective countries. Also, some states are politically stable and are enjoying negative peace²³, others are experiencing civil conflict. Some states in the region have religious dynamics that impact their socio-political and international engagements at the global level. I will explore these dynamics while conducting this research.

²³ The absence of armed conflict or ceasefire.

Strength and Limitation of the Study

1. The methodology used in collection and analysis of the data will prevent surveys or interview of AFRICOM officials or their African Partners.
2. The strength of this study is that it seeks to examine the achievements and failures of AFRICOM in the West African Sahel region.
3. It will further reveal military strategies being employed by AFRICOM in achieving their objectives

CHAPTER 2

Map of Mali (Reuters, 2015)

CASE 1: MALI

2.1 *Political Context*

Mali is a land-locked country in West Africa geographically spread over the Saharan-Sahel regions. It is bordered by Niger, Algeria, Mauritania, Burkina Faso, Guinea, Senegal, and La Cote d’Ivoire. The capital city of Mali is Bamako. Mali gained independence from France in 1960. Its official language is French. As of 2021, Mali was estimated to have a population of about 21 million. Since 2020, Mali’s relation with ECOWAS members as well as France and their European allies have deteriorated due to the coup that overthrew the civilian government. Further diplomatic and security cooperation with the latter has also deteriorated.



Mali is a parliamentary democracy with the president as head of state. The president in turn appoints the Prime Minister as head of government. The state also has a multiparty system guaranteed by the constitution. Mali is governed by three arms of government: executive, legislature and judiciary. Mali’s democratic governance has been punctuated by military coups since 1968 through to 2021. The president as well as the members of the National Assembly are equally elected for five year-term. the recent cool occurred in March 2012 where the Economic Community of West African states (ECOWAS) mediated with the military junta for Mali to return to civilian rule. In September 2013, a democratically elected president was installed who was subsequently ousted in August 2020. However, in May 2021 a palace coup occurred so until April 2022, the current interim president of Mali is Colonel Assimi Goita who is assisted by interim Prime Minister Choguel Maiga.

2.2 *Security Posture*

Mali was a member of Group of 5(G5) Sahel Joint Force against jihadist in the Sahel and a traditional ally of France for security but in May 2022, the junta announced Mali’s withdrawal from the group because they were blocked from assuming the presidency of the anti-jihadist joint force. Mali’s relation with France and their allies have deteriorated due to their security

cooperation with Wagner Group²⁴ from Russia. The country is one of the states within French sphere of influence therefore France is a major security provider to Mali in times of security crises. France backs this sphere of influence with military force to protect her interest, i.e., French citizens and corporations doing business in Mali. However, the United States, through their Trans-Sahara Counterterrorism Partnership (TSCTP) programme has security agreement with Mali to train, equip and conduct counterterrorism military drills with Malian security agencies to defend their country (US Department of State, 2019). From 2005-2007 fiscal years, the US disbursed \$31 million to Mali. Also, in 2008, they disbursed \$6 million making a total of \$37 million under the TSCTP program (Government Accountability Office, 2008).

Nevertheless, Mali's military force is largely composed of army and air force because it is a landlocked country. Since 2013, the United Nations sanctioned the Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali (MINUSMA) as peacekeeping force mission to counter violent extremist organization as well as to maintain peace and security in Mali. There is also the African-led International Support Mission (AFISMA) organized by the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), but sanctioned by the United Nations, when the Malian government called for international support when it faced a challenge with insurgency by Islamic insurgency in Northern Mali in 2012. This mission however has handed over their operations to MINUSMA when it begun its operation in 2013.

2.3 *Economic Context*

Mali has an agrarian economy dominated largely by rural population who engage in subsistence farming and livestock production. Rice production is the flourishing sector, followed by declining tourism sector in the North of Mali which used to be a huge revenue generating industry for the Malian economy before the conflict began. Mali's top exports are gold, rough wood, oily seed, raw cotton, chemical fertilizer and top imports are refined petroleum, woven cotton, medical products, cars and cement (OEC, 2022; OECD, 2022).

As at 2022, Mali has had a total population of 21,473,764. The country has a North-South divide with most productive economic activities occurring in the Southern region of Mali however Northern Mali, as destination for the tourism industry, covers 66% of the national territory in the Sahara-Sahel region is considered by pessimist as the burden of the Malian economy. Nevertheless, Mali is a low-income country and a net importer of goods due to low industrialization and less technology. The country relies on foreign aid from France, United State, Organization of

²⁴ Wagner group is a private military contractor from Russia. Even though the firm presents itself as a private entity, the West believes they are supported by the Kremlin to undermine the gains of the West in a security environment. For example in Central African Republic, Ukraine and now in Mali.

Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC), and other European Union countries (Britannica, 2022; OECD, 2022).

Besides, Mali is a heavily indebted poor country with a poverty headcount ratio at \$1.90 dollar a day and has a gross domestic product per capita of \$862.45 as at 2020. Moreover, as at 2022, Mali has had a gross domestic product growth rate of 5.2% and is expected to have a steady annual growth rate in the future. Mali has an unemployment rate of 7.69% and only 48% of the total population has access to electricity (World Bank, 2021).

The economic overview of Mali above seeks to show that the study findings of OECD in 2013 regarding the cause of in peace and insecurity in West African Sahel region, particularly, in Northern Mali and in Northern Nigeria, is largely ‘conflict over resources’ (OECD.org, 2013).

2.4 Cultural and Religious Context

Mali is a multi-ethnic society comprising of three major ethnic groups namely the Bambara constituting one-third of the population; and the two minority groups are the Fulani who constitute 15% of the population; and Tuareg and Maure/Moore who constitute 10% of the population. Mali has a significant Muslim population and a minority Christian community as well. The main religions in Mali are Islam representing 94.8%, Christianity representing 2.4%, and traditional religion representing 2%. The main languages spoken in Mali are French (official language), Bambara, Songhai, Fulfulde and Tamasheq (Minority Rights Group, 2019).

The Bambara ethnic group live in southern-central Mali, and they dominate political life. Also, the Tuareg and Maure who live in northern Mali are Berber nomads who practise Arab-Berber culture; they practice Islam; and speak dialects of Arabic. The Tuareg and Maure living in northern Mali are politically marginalized, so their political exclusion coupled with extreme poverty deepened by the effect of climate change have motivated this community to initiate secession of the north from South Mali. Their major concerns were with regards to access to water, land use and for grazing. The secessionist move by the Tuaregs has created conflict with the government in Bamako dominated by the Bambara ethnic group in the South (Britannica, 2022; Minority Rights Group, 2019).

Some members of the Tuareg community had launched an offensive campaign in 2012 to register their grievances during which they captured two-third of the Malian territory. To make matters worse, this offensive campaign has been exploited and the rebels were radicalized by foreign Islamist violent extremist groups, of which the government counter-attacked with the help of French forces in 2013. To end, this assessment is not far from what the OECD had found in their study in 2013 that the conflict in Mali is largely ‘conflict over resources’ (OECD.org, 2013).

2.5 What is AFRICOM's Role in Ensuring Peace in Mali?

The hypothesis upon which this question will be answered is as follows:

A: That AFRICOM's TSCTP program **has** ensured peace in Mali.

B: That AFRICOM's TSCTP program **has not** ensured peace in Mali.

Does AFRICOM's *indirect military intervention* through the TSCTP program meets the standards of peace set by the African Union? Again, what role does AFRICOM play in implementing the Algiers Peace Agreement²⁵ in Mali?

As mentioned earlier, the African Union conceptualizes peace as the conditions that promote 'dialogue-centered approach' to conflict prevention and resolution. To this end, the African Union believes that conditions such as good governance, responsible government accountability, transparency, functional society, multi-party system for electing government and the existence of a 'legitimate government' of African states as a consequence will promote peace and peace on the continent. However, in an event of armed conflict, the African Union prefers to use reconciliation, as a form of restorative justice other than punitive justice or military action, to resolve the conflict (Africa Union, 2013; Zondi, 2017; AU Agenda 2063, 2022).

According to U.S. government officials who appeared before the Subcommittee on African Affairs of the Committee on Foreign Relations in Senate in 2009, they reiterated the point that their African partners have categorically requested that the United States should not play a leading role but rather a 'supporting role' in counterterrorism efforts in the Sahel since US military presence would be counterproductive and exacerbate terrorist activities in the region (Subcommittee on African Affairs, 2009).

To respond to the above question, Mali is a beneficiary of the Trans-Sahara Counterterrorism Partnership program as part of U.S. anti-terrorism campaign in West Africa. In 2005, the United States under the Bush administration, had launched the Trans-Sahara Counterterrorism Partnership (TSCTP), under the framework of 'Global War on Terror', to boost the capability of governments of 'partner countries' in the Sahel region to fight against terrorism as well as to contain the spread of Islamist extremist ideology. The TSCTP program draws resources from United States Agency for International Development (USAID), Department of Defense, and U.S. State

²⁵ The Algiers Peace Agreement is a truce signed between the Malian government and the Azawad National Liberation Movement (ANLM) to restore peace in Mali. The mediation team was led by Algeria hence the name 'Algiers Agreement'. The US was designated a 'Friend of the Mediation' alongside France. The terms of the truce included the Malian government recruiting former rebel group members into the national army; boosting the economy of northern Mali and initiate justice and national reconciliation process using dialogue-based approach. See <https://reliefweb.int/report/mali/mali-s-algiers-peace-agreement-five-years-uneasy-calm>

department as implementing agencies who coordinate development and diplomacy efforts in the Sahel region.

Under the TSCTP program, Malian security forces are trained and equipped by U.S. resource personnel. On one hand, AFRICOM'S primary objective in Mali is indirectly engaging in anti-terrorism campaigns in North-Central Mali while its secondary objective is the promotion of democracy. On the other hand, the primary objective of the Azawad National Liberation Movement is to secede and establish an independent state of northern Mali. To this end, Jihadist extremist ideology becomes a mobilizer of the members of the Azawad movement, rather than a goal to be achieved by the Taureg rebels.

In conclusion, when AFRICOM builds counterterrorism capacity of Malian forces to defend US interest, the aim is to neutralize and disrupt the activities of VEOs, which to some extent, chalked successful decapitation operations. For example, in 2021, Operation Barkhane forces announced that the leader, Adnan Abu Wahid al-Sahrawi, of Islamic State in Greater Sahara terrorist group (ISGS) was neutralized by French forces. This leader was targeted because they claim he was responsible for trio-border attacks in Mali, Niger and Burkina Faso which claimed American, French and Nigerien lives in 2019 as well as kidnap of Spanish and Algerian targets in 2012 (Aljazeera News, 2021).

Therefore, to sum, largely, AFRICOM's activities are focused on government and military engagements rather than civilian engagement in Mali and there is little evidence to show how these military engagements lead to peace. The finding is inconclusive as to how the activities of AFRICOM ensures peace according to the standards of peace set by the AU.

CHAPTER 3

Map of Burkina Faso (Punch Newspaper, 2022).

CASE 2: BURKINA FASO

3.1 Political Context

Burkina Faso attained independence from France in 1960. It is a landlocked country in West Africa that shares borders with Mali, Niger, Ghana, Benin, Togo and La Cote d'Ivoire. The capital city of Burkina Faso is Ouagadougou. Burkina Faso is a Parliamentary Republic with president as head of state who appoints the Prime Minister as head of government. The government comprises of the executive, legislature and judiciary. Both the legislature and the president has its officials serve a five-year term. Burkina Faso's political history was marked by coup d'états and elite power struggle since 1960 when it gained independence. The political inpeace continued until 1990 when Blaise Compaoré overthrew Thomas Sankara in a palace coup and remained in power for 27 years. In 2014, President Blaise Compaoré reluctantly left power after he attempted amending the constitution to extend his stay in power.

However, the Burkinabés protested against his decisions, and he was removed from power. Consequently, a transitional government was in place until 2015, Rock Marc Christian Kaboré who was former Prime Minister of Burkina Faso, contested and won the presidential election. It was under President Kaboré that Burkina Faso started facing increasing armed attacks from Jihadists in the region.

Burkina Faso is currently suspended from the Economic Community of West African States as well as from the African Union due to the recent coup in January 2022. The coup makers justified their action by the incompetence of the civilian government to manage the terrorist attacks in the country as well as providing resource to the security forces to neutralize violent extremist groups.



3.2 *Economic Context*

According to the United Nation's Department of Economic and Social Affairs, Burkina Faso is a least developed country. The country has an agrarian economy with 80% of the population employed in the agricultural and forestry sectors, but with a vibrant gold mining industry. Burkina Faso has a gross domestic product of \$48 billion in terms of purchasing power parity as at 2021 (Trading Economics, 2022; International Security Sector Advisory Team, 2021).

Burkina Faso has an estimated population of 19.2 million as at 2017. Burkina Faso has an annual gross domestic product growth rate of 1.93% in 2020 which was a decline from 5.7% in 2019 (World Bank, 2021). this was due to increasing government spending during the COVID-19 pandemic. On one hand, the country's top export in the year 2020 are gold, raw cotton, zinc ore, oily seeds, coconut, Brazil nuts and cashew. On the other hand, Burkina Faso's top imports are refined petroleum, medicine, electricity, cement and trucks (OEC, 2022).

3.3 *Security Posture*

Burkina Faso is a member of Group of 5(G5) Sahel Joint Force and is a traditional ally of France for security. The country is also a participating country in the United States' Trans-Sahara Counterterrorism Partnership program as part of U.S. anti-terrorism campaign in West Africa' Sahel region. The security overview of Burkina Faso is that the country has been facing terrorist attacks since 2014, particularly, in the northern parts of the country that borders Mali and new due to spillover from the conflict in the neighbouring countries. In 2018 through to 2021, the Burkinabé government had declared a state of emergency in some regions and restricting freedom of movement and assembly due to terrorist attacks in the northern part of Burkina Faso.

The northern region of Burkina Faso is at a risk of being fertile ground for violent extremist organization because the communities are neglected by their own government. This is because the communities in this region express political marginalization from the capital as well as unequal distribution of state resources amongst all regions of Burkina Faso. The country faces food insecurity as well. This is because as mentioned earlier, Burkina Faso is largely an agrarian economy with increasing population in recent years. This phenomenon has raised poverty level and unemployment rate to 50%. This economic crisis and human insecurity is driven by effects of climate change as well as absence of government services in the northern region of Burkina Faso (International Security Sector Advisory Team, 2021).

According to Clingendael Organization, the major source of security threat to Burkina Faso, and by extension to the Sahelian countries is unequal access to pastoral resources which is driven by structural change in in economic means of production at the macro and micro levels.

Consequently, this security threat to livelihood has caused a change in economic, social, political relations among pastoralist farmer communities as well as the security posture of Sahelian countries. Also, since intercommunal trust has been broken, VEOs such as Islamic State in the Greater Sahara (ISGS) and Katiba Macina have employed-identity based rhetoric to recruit pastoralists, mostly, the Fulani, into VEOs. Hence, the aim of VEOs is to use divide-and-rule tactics in Islamic Christian communities to polarize them to achieve their political in. That (Fulani) pastoralists are the communities whose grievances are exploited by VEOs to launch attacks in Burkina Faso.

3.4 *Cultural and Religious Context*

Burkina Faso is multi-ethnic society comprising the Mossi representing 51% of the total population. Minority ethnic groups include the Peul, Dioula, Bobo, Lobi and Tamasheq (Tuareg). Even though the Mossi dominate political life in Burkina Faso, other minority ethnicities dominate economic sectors. The official language of Burkina Faso is French and main local languages spoken in the country are Hausa, Dioula, Mooré and Gurmanche. The main religions are Islam representing 63%, Christianity representing 22% and traditional beliefs representing 15%. The Fulani and Tuareg ethnic minority are Muslims living in the Burkina Faso border region with Mali (Minority Rights Group International, 2022). It is important to note that the Tuareg community in Mali is the community that is rebelling against the Malian government for secession of north of Mali due to underdevelopment and under-government of the region whose situation was exploited by violent extremist organization.

To end, it is important to note that the communities in northern Mali and northern Burkina Faso share common grievances, namely, political marginalization, economic insecurity, Tuareg ethnicity in both countries, Islamic religion as a mobilizer into VEO, and ungoverned spaces due to lack of state representation and service delivery in these communities.

3.5 *What is the Role of AFRICOM in Ensuring Peace in Burkina Faso?*

The hypothesis upon which this question will be answered is as follows:

A: That AFRICOM's TSCTP program **has** ensured peace in Burkina Faso.

B: That AFRICOM's TSCTP program **has not** ensured peace in Burkina Faso.

The table below shows TSCTP projects implemented between September 2015 to December 2019 by BAF in Burkina Faso:

Project Name	Recipient Country	Purpose	Value
G5 Force Support (19AQMM18F3925)	Militaries in Burkina Faso, Mauritania, Chad and Niger	To provide training, equipment and logistical support to military	\$113,167,134
Vehicle Maintenance Facility (19AQMM18F4237)	Burkina Faso (SkyBridge)	To construct a vehicle maintenance facility for the military.	\$3,755, 511
Sowing the seeds of peace	Burkina Faso (IQRA)	To teach students resiliency against extremist ideology and increase knowledge of income-generating opportunities.	\$250,000

The photo below shows the construction site of the vehicle maintenance facility provided by the US to military in Burkina Faso under the TSCTP program.



Figure 4: Site view of the construction of facility for the Burkinabe military under the Vehicle Maintenance Facility contract. (SkyBridge photo, August 2019)

CHAPTER 4

Map of Nigeria (BBC, 2022)

CASE 3: NIGERIA

4.1 Political Context

Nigeria gained independence from Great Britain in 1960. It is a federal democratic republic. Nigeria is located in West Africa Sharing border with Niger, Benin, Chad, Cameroon, and the Gulf of Guinea. The country's administrative capital is Abuja while the commercial and industrial capital is Lagos. Nigeria is the most populous country in Africa with the largest economy as well. Nigeria's government comprises of the executive, bicameral legislature (Senate and House of Representatives) and a judiciary. The president and vice-president of Nigeria are directly elected to power by popular vote for a four-year term which is renewable once. The country's political history has been punctuated by civil wars and coup d'états. Boko Haram activities begun as non-terrorist group fighting structural injustice perpetrated by the Nigerian state against the communities in north-eastern states of federation and the group was eventually exploited by religious fundamentalist to deploy violence as a tool to register their grievances. The irony is that the current president of Nigeria, Muhammadu Buhari, is a retired Army General of the Nigerian army who campaigned on the theme of restoring security in the country and won but now under whose regime insecurity worsened in Nigeria.



4.2 Security Posture

Nigeria's major security forces are the police force and the military force. The federal military comprises of the army, the navy, and the air force. The sources of threat to Nigerian security have been shaped by the fight against Boko Haram ²⁶since 2011, police brutality as well as secessionist movements. Moreover, Nigeria is notorious for widespread corruption including in government institutions. The inefficiency of the federal police force for domestic security is attributable to low level of education, poor recruitment process, poorly equipped, and poor maintenance of the force by the federal government (CSIS, 2014).

²⁶ The anti-government rebellious group formed in 2011 to protest structural injustice meted out to the states in the north-east region of Nigeria. Over time, they became radicalized and transformed into religious extremist group.

Most importantly, the root cause of terrorist activities in Nigeria includes economic deprivation and underdevelopment of the north-east region of Nigeria. Boko Haram is exploiting public hopelessness to lead aggrieved residents of the north to use violence against the government. Since 2011, when Boko Haram begun its terrorist activities in north-east Nigeria, the most affected areas are Borno state, Yobe, Adamawa, as well as herder-farmer conflict in Kaduna state. There have been security threats to the capital city in Abuja as well.

4.3 *Economic Context*

Nigeria has a population of 206.1 million as of 2020 and it is the largest economy in Africa with a gross domestic product of \$432.3 billion as at 2020 (World Bank, 2021). The country's major natural resources it exports are oil and gas hence its membership in Oil and Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC). Nigerian's major exports are crude petroleum, petroleum gas, scrap vessels, Palm oil, Sorghum and cocoa beans. However, its major imports are refined petroleum, vehicles, wheat, pharmaceuticals, and electrical equipment (OEC, 2020). Most importantly, oil accounts for more than 80% of Nigeria exports.

According to the World Bank, in 2018, 40% of Nigerians representing 83 million people lived below the poverty line while 25% representing 53 million were vulnerable. The World Bank maintains that the number of people living below the international poverty line in Nigeria is expected to rise by 12 million by 2023. Despite that, the World Bank also projects modest economic recovery for Nigeria after the COVID-19 pandemic however Nigeria's economic outlook is uncertain due to the country's overdependence on oil export, poor infrastructure, public financial management challenges and governance deficit. Nigeria faces challenges such as 55% only of the population have access to electricity, unemployment, income inequality, high illiteracy rate, high poverty levels, high inflation rate (9%), uneven social development across the federal states and social-political unrest (World Bank, 2021).

4.4 *Cultural and Religious Context*

Muslim-Christian religious divide shapes the conflict between VEOs and the Nigerian government. Christianity is dominant in the north while Islam is dominant in the south. Nigeria is multi-ethnic federation with 36 states. The country is also culturally diverse. Nigeria is constitutionally, a secular state and the constitution has limited the central and federal states from interfering in religious affairs of the citizens (1999 constitution, section 10). The Nigeria federation has a

political, economic, religious, and socio-cultural divide between the north and south regions of Nigeria. This religious divide was a foundation laid by colonial interaction between Nigerians and Arab jihadists on one hand, and Nigerians and British Christian missionaries on the other hand (Yesufu, 2016; Minority Rights.org, 2018).

The largest ethnic groups in Nigeria are the Hausa, Fulani, Igbo and Yoruba representing 68% of the total population. The Hausa and Fulani who live in the north constitute 29% of the total population and practise Islam. They are also the ethnic groups who dominate Nigerian politics. The Yoruba and Igbo who live in the South constitute 21% of the total population of Nigeria. The country is estimated to have over 250 ethnic groups as well as estimated to have 51% Muslim population, 47% Christian population and 2% practise traditional religions. The official language of Nigeria is English however the main local languages spoken are Hausa, pidgin (corrupt English), Yoruba, Igbo, Fulani and Ijaw (Minority Rights Group International, 2022; World Bank, 2021; Yesufu, 2016).

4.5 *What is the Role of AFRICOM in Ensuring Peace in Nigeria?*

Nigeria is not a member of the Group of 5 (G5) Sahel Joint Force formed by the Sahelian countries to fight terrorism. The United States security cooperation with Nigeria is limited to peace-keeping training; non-lethal military assistance; counterterrorism advice and building the capacity of Nigerian authorities in disaster preparedness and response. From 2005-2007 fiscal years, the US disbursed \$3 million and \$5million in 2008 making a total of \$8million to Nigeria under the TSCTP program (Government Accountability Office, 2008). In support of this, from 2015-2019, the US disbursed an amount of \$64,027,357 in logistical support for counter Boko Haram operations to Nigerian military to fight the threat of Boko Haram alongside Nigeria (Office of the Inspector-General, 2020).



Figure 5: Motorola radios provided to the Nigerian Armed Forces under the Logistical Support for Counter Boko Haram contract. (OIG photo, September 2019)

In 2021, the Nigerian government formally requested the United States to relocate the headquarters of AFRICOM from Germany to Nigeria so that the institution can help the latter fight terrorism in the Sahel, but the outcome is unknown yet. Per my assessment, I do not foresee AFRICOM being relocated to Nigeria in the short to medium term because the main theatre for

counterterrorism effort is in the Middle East/Southern Asia therefore West African Sahel is a secondary theatre not a high priority theatre of operation for the United States.

CHAPTER 5

RESEARCH FINDINGS

What are the achievements or failures of the TSCTP program being implemented by AFRICOM?

A. *What is AFRICOM's Mandate?*

Former president George Bush had stated that AFRICOM is to bring 'peace and security to the peoples of Africa' (as cited in (Committee on Armed Services, 2007)).

In that regard, I assessed African success or failures based on their mission statement. That is, it "counters transnational threats and malign actors, strengthens security forces and responds to crises in order to advance U.S. national interests and promote regional security, peace and prosperity" (US Africa Command, 2022). The research found the following:

1. That the mandate of AFRICOM is not to ensure peace in the Sahel. However, AFRICOM's mandate is to build the capacity of African partner countries' security forces in order to defend their own security.
2. That the TSCTP program is a preventive measure taken by the US in accordance with the US' legal requirement (Public Law 87-195). The law provides that US takes proactive measures to secure the homeland and citizens even by assisting foreign democratic countries if the government deems it urgent to do so in the interest of US security. However, the president of the US can waive the democratic criterion to assist authoritarian countries if working with the latter will help secure the US homeland (Foreign Assistance Act , 1961).
3. The TSCTP program does not consider the source of VEOs as well as their motivation for their operations in Mali, Nigeria and Burkina Faso. To this end, the research found that the instability in the Sahel region is inextricably linked with the Libyan state collapse caused by Operation Odyssey Dawn undertaken by AFRICOM and NATO. Even though United Nations Resolution (1974, para. 4) authorized the use of force in Libya which gave credibility to US-led Operation Odyssey.

The reason Qadhafi was targeted can partly be explained by the Lockerbie plane crash which claimed American and British lives. The Europeans and American leaders believed the crash was perpetrated upon Qadhafi's instruction. Even though the Lockerbie case was litigated at the International Court of Justice, it ended in out of court settlement and so his capture and further assassination could be partly explained by this event as an act of revenge from a realist point of view.

4. AFRICOM's mandate just not to ensure peace in Africa but rather empower their partner countries security forces to defend their own security and peace. However, AFRICOM has the mandate to conduct military operations if authorized by the government of the state.
5. That African engagement in the Sahel is based on U.S. policy of "Global War on Terror".
6. From my research and analysis, the primary and undeclared objective of AFRICOM is to ensure the "Global War on Terror" declared by US is executed in Africa. This is because the strategic importance of the African continent has much to serve US interests.
7. Therefore, secondly, AFRICOM's role is to engage African partner countries including Nigeria, Mali and Burkina Faso to help boost their defense capabilities to better contribute to their own security and peace.

B. *Major Actors Identified in the Transactional Relationship in the Sahel Theatre*

- a. United States AFRICOM (principal)
- b. African Partners (Agents of AFRICOM)
- c. Religious extremist groups (terrorist groups)
- d. Revisionist groups (non-terrorist groups)
- e. European Union Joint Force (hidden actors in the principal-agent relationship)
- f. Civilian population (caught between both terrorist attacks and counterterrorist operations)

C. *Common characteristics found in the Civil conflicts in Nigeria, Mali and Burkina Faso*

- a. The neglect of the role of Libyan state collapse causing the instability of the Sahel region.
- b. Herder-farmer sporadic conflicts fueling terrorist activities.
- c. Government deficit in north of each country which is controlled by either Al-Qaeda or ISIS affiliates.
- d. Large ungoverned spaces due to weak governments.
- e. Islamic ideology is exploited as a mobilizer, not the cause of terrorism, due to shared Islamic faith and population in the three countries.
- f. State security forces of all 3 countries are ill-equipped and lack capacity to effectively engage VEOs. In Burkina Faso, for example, this is the reason given by the military to overthrow the government in January 2022.

- g. Communication gap at the grassroots level between government agencies and local population leading VEOs to fill with propaganda to suit their agenda.
- h. Connection between under-governed population with VEOs due to government's disconnection with the people. For example, members of ISWAP in north Nigerian communities are reported to provide humanitarian support to local population in the absence of government such as security, law and order, digging wells for potable water and provision of fertilizer to local farmers among other services so have won the minds and hearts of the grassroots²⁷.
- i. Porous borders leading to border insecurity in each country due to less security force personnel and modern technology to effectively secure the borders in each country.
- j. Activities of illicit traffickers of drug and human complement the activities of VEOs in that they serve as source of funds and weapons for the latter.

Despite the common characteristics found in all 3 countries outlined above, there are deficiencies found in Nigeria's counterterrorism approach. They are as follows:

- a. Re-integration of amnesty given to Boko Haram is not a solution Because it depends the hatred the pop the local population half for the central government because the population think the government is a sympathizer of terrorist group.
- b. Under-development and irresponsive government towards community needs is a major problem in the counterterrorism effort by the Nigerian government.
- c. The psycho-social therapy given to the local population at the grassroots level after they experience traumatic terrorist attacks is not sufficient or effective to restore the sanity of the local population. This is because therapists using counseling rather than the Nigerian government and her foreign partners focusing on economic investment to improve the livelihood of people, is rather deepening the disconnection between the central government and the local people.

²⁷See the article below

https://www.google.com/url?sa=t&rct=j&q=&esrc=s&source=web&cd=&cad=rja&uact=8&ved=2ahUKewiUt-Xgs6f4AhUJR_EDHQZNA60QFnoECAQQAQ&url=https%3A%2F%2Finstitute.global%2Fpolicy%2Fbattle-hearts-and-minds-lake-chad-basin&usg=AOvVaw3WmaFnN8vpPwJuXSomxK0w and African journal on Terrorism

Here:

https://www.google.com/url?sa=t&rct=j&q=&esrc=s&source=web&cd=&cad=rja&uact=8&ved=2ahUKewiUt-Xgs6f4AhUJR_EDHQZNA60QFnoECAMQAQ&url=https%3A%2F%2Fassets.publishing.service.gov.uk%2Fgovernment%2Fuploads%2Fsystem%2Fuploads%2Fattachment_data%2Ffile%2F1003788%2FNGA_-_Islamist_extremist_groups_in_North_East_Nigeria_-_CPIN_-_v3.0_FINAL_Gov_UK_.pdf&usg=AOvVaw23uxpU4Eu6ywwzV09HwRI_C

- d. There is sense of systemic injustice, government corruption, and government neglect of local needs in affected areas. These are such as lack of education in this region as well as entrenched inequality and unequitable development of the region as it is provided in the southern part of Nigeria.
- e. The local populations exposure to violence drives support for violence and participation in saying to express grievances.
- f. the government is not effective in resolving ongoing violent conflict such as political violence ethnic cleansing and criminal violence Which the government seems to ignore.
- g. Also, the government must re-strategize to disarm violent groups.

D. *AFRICOM's Strategy in the Counterterrorism Policy*

The primary counterterrorism policy by US in northwestern Africa is the TSCTP. The main strategy adopted by AFRICOM is indirect military intervention. This is implemented by contracting African partners as agents fighting for the United States. The US provides incentive such as training, funding, and equipping African forces to operate on their behalf without putting American forces on the grounds to engage in direct combat with VEOs in their counterterrorism efforts in the Sahel.

Also, the United States operates under the banner of French-led operations known as Operation Serval and Operation Barkhane. The US counterterrorism operations began post 9/11 in the Sahel after France launched the two operations with the former operation beginning in 2013 and the latter operation beginning in 2014. The US cooperates with France and its European allies by providing intelligence and logistical support since they share the same security interest as France-led European forces.

E. *African Union's understanding of peace*

The AU's understanding of peace is outlined in their agenda 2063 policy aspirations. The AU believes peace will be achieved in Africa when there is economic development, democracy, pacific settlement of disputes, political unity and liberty for the African people (AU Agenda 2063, 2022; Kornprobst, 2022; Zondi, 2017).

F. *The Nature of the Principal-Agent Relationship Between AFRICOM and Partner Countries*

AFRICOM employs the governments of Mali and Burkina Faso to fight against VEOs in the Sahel on their behalf under the framework of the TSCTP programme. The US provides infrastructure, funding, training, logistical support and equipment to partner countries' security forces as well as promise of regime security.

In accordance with US legal requirements and norms, the US in some cases does not consider whether a state is democratic or undemocratic before she provides security assistance to that country so long as it serves US interest. The promise of regime security is regardless of the government being democratic or authoritarian so long as the government is willing to join the fight against VEOs on behalf of the US. For example, Paul Biya of Cameroon has been president for 40 years but US standard of democracy does not apply to Biya because Cameroon is partner country under the TSCTP program fighting terrorism on behalf of US. Also, from 2005 to 2008 Chad received a total of \$32 million from the US under the TSCTP program however democratic standard did not apply to the country until the demise of Idris Déby after ruling for more than 30 years in power as president of Chad.

The United States' relationship with Nigeria in the counterterrorism effort is a special case. In relation to that, even though North Nigeria is in the Sahel region, Nigeria is not part of the G5 Sahel Joint Force which is fighting against terrorism in the region in partnership with French-led EU forces. This is because the United states' security cooperation with Nigeria is limited to peace keeping training; counterterrorism advice; building the capacity of security forces for disaster preparedness and response as well as provision of non-lethal military assistance.

The United States priorities supersede the interests of their partners given the fact that their military assistance under the TSCTP program given to their African partners are conducted within the framework of U.S. national interest. For example, AFRICOM provides military advice and cooperation to the Nigerian government in their fight against Boko Haram however this assistance is provided within the framework of U.S. national interest.

US interest in Africa is about access to energy resources and concern for VEOs operating in Africa who seek to harm US interests (Ploch, 2011; AFRICOM Posture Statement, 2021). However, it is worthy to note that US security policy is different for each region in Africa depending on the level of interest in that region. For example, U.S. military presence in east Africa is heightened over West Africa because of the following reasons:

VEOs attacks on US embassies in Tanzania and Kenya in 1998 as well as on the naval base in Kenya at Manda Bay in 2020. Another example of Principal-Agent problem is Mali's withdrawal from the G5 Sahel group which was announced by the junta in Mali in May 2022, which is committed toward counter terrorism in the Sahel, is manifestation of non-alignment of interest between Mali and the foreign forces present in the Sahel.

G. *Does AFRICOM's Activities Lead to Peace in the 3 countries?*

It depends on the angle from which you look at it. On one hand, when you look at it from the perspective of United States, the activities of AFRICOM have prevented foreign terrorist groups from attacking US homeland. On the other hand, when you look at it from their partner countries' perspective, the activities of AFRICOM have contained VEOs through the funding, training and equipping of partner countries' security forces, rather than neutralizing them altogether.

Contrary to what Bush had stated that AFRICOM is "to bring peace and security to the people of Africa" (as cited in (Committee on Armed Services, 2007), The US has noted in their 2020 Inspector General's Audit report that the TSCTP program has limited assurances to achieving its goals of building counterterrorism capacity of partner countries' security forces as well as addressing the drivers of radicalization in the Sahel (Office of the Inspector-General, 2020). It therefore goes to prove that AFRICOM's activities in the Sahel is only for preventive purposes by way of fighting terrorism on foreign land. Their activity in the Sahel brings peace to US homeland other than the theater therefore the mission statement is just a rhetoric. According to U.S. officials, AFRICOM seeks to deny VEOs safe haven in Africa and that AFRICOM's mandate is not to ensure peace in Burkina Faso, Nigeria and Mali.

H. *Does TSCTP Examine the Root Causes of the Intra-state Conflict in Mali, Nigeria and Burkina Faso?*

The underlying causes of conflict in the 3 partner countries are weak government, porous borders, ill-equipped or ill-trained militaries, pastoralist-farmers conflict, lack of economic opportunities, marginalized ethnic minorities and ungoverned spaces. The TSCTP program does not consider the Libyan state collapse as a fundamental source of weaponry and militants boosting the fighting capacity of VEOs in the Sahel. Neither does the program aim at specifically resolving the root causes of the intra-state conflicts in Mali, Nigeria or Burkina. For example, the research has found that conflict between pastoralist (largely Fulani) and farmer communities is the major security threat in the Sahel. This is because the Fulani who are spread across Nigeria, Mali and Burkina

Faso share the same identity and Islamic faith so VEOs exploit their grievances in order to recruit them into launching attacks (Clingendael Organization, 2021).

In conclusion, in theory, the TSCTP programme seeks to address economic, socio-political, and military challenges of Mali, Nigeria and Burkina Faso in the affected regions of those countries. The TSCTP is a military approach in the counterterrorism campaign. It usually results in civilian casualties and human rights abuse. For example, in 2019, Human Rights Watch had reported more than 600 extra-judicial killings, torture and kidnaps committed by the government security forces, in conjunction with foreign forces, of Mali and Burkina Faso during their counterterrorism operations (Human Rights Watch, 2022). Consequently, this has caused popular disapproval of the methods being used and support for French and allied forces operating in Mali for example.

CONCLUSION

This research sought to answer the question: what is the role of AFRICOM in ensuring peace in Mali, Nigeria and Burkina Faso? The research was inconclusive because it found that the mandate of AFRICOM is not to ensure peace but rather build the capacity of security forces of US African Partners who are contracted to fight against terrorism on behalf of US under the TSCTP program. For this reason, my research focused on the relationship between AFRICOM and African partners in the Sahel region. However, the relationship between AFRICOM (principal actor) and their African partners (agent) is mutually beneficial since US provides incentive to Sahelian countries to fight terrorism on the former's behalf.

The findings on AFRICOM ensuring peace were inconclusive but the existing relationship between both actors is mutually beneficial because AFRICOM's activities in implementing the TSCTP program is premised on the following argument: that their African partners have categorically requested that the United States should not play a leading role but rather a 'supporting role' in counterterrorism efforts in the Sahel since US military presence would be counterproductive and exacerbate terrorist activities in the region (Subcommittee on African Affairs, 2009)

Over the past decade, we have seen increasing activity by violent extremist organization such as Islamic State West Africa Province (ISWAP), Jama 'at Nasr al-Islam wal Muslim (JNIM / 'Group to support Muslim and Islam') and Al Qaeda in the Maghreb (AQIM) that operate in northern Nigeria and the Lake Chad regions, Algeria, Mali and Burkina Faso as well as the National Movement for the Liberation of Azawad (NMLA) in Mali or Boko Haram in Nigeria. In the region, this violent extremist organizations are particularly active in northern parts of Mali, Nigeria and more recently Burkina Faso.

The US believes that these organizations are threats to its national security both in the homeland and elsewhere they have assets therefore pursuant to their Foreign Assistance Act (1961), they have contracted African countries to fight the VEOs on their behalf. However, the US has made it a policy not to engage the VEOs directly but rather AFRICOM engages the VEOs indirectly by funding, training, providing logistics and infrastructure as well as equipping partner country's security forces including the G5 Sahel Joint forces to fight terrorism in the Sahel on behalf of the US.

I am interested in explaining this relationship and the conditions in which it might or might not be effective. To do so, I have chosen to apply the principal-agent model. The model identifies

an actor who engages another to carry out certain functions and duties on its behalf as the principal, providing incentives to the agents so as to act and take decisions on their behalf. This means that the engaged actor is the agent, and the actor contracting that agent is the principal. For my current study, I see AFRICOM as the principal and the African partners as Agents. They are agents engaged to fight violent extremists organizations on US' behalf.

I knew that, as with all principal-agent relationships, two challenges emerge: asymmetry of information and divergent of interests. The success of the relationship depends on minimizing these two challenges I therefore develop a simple matrix by discussing the economic, political, cultural, and religious contexts as well as the security posture of Mali, Nigeria and Burkina Faso.

I also looked at what resources each case studied received from the US under the TSCTP programme. Unlike previous application of the principal-agent model to other problems or relationships which focuses only on the gains/ interest made by the actors and how it shapes their relationship, I argue for contextual analysis to be taken seriously.

In the context of this research, the case of applying the model to US counterterrorism analysis, the historical, security posture, economic, political, religious and cultural contexts both in the region and in the US which will affect how the partnership works. These contextual issues affect the nature of the counterterrorism strategies being deployed by the AFRICOM and the African partner, the strength of the relationship, and its prospects.

I chose this cases in point because this region is a hotspot for Islamic insurgency, coup d'états, civil war, weak militaries, having large Muslim communities, weak governments, porous borders, having ungoverned space, pastoralist-farmers conflict, fragile communities having uneven development across each country, and experiencing terrorist attacks. AFRICOM, in their stated mission, has military and civilian duties but are conducted in the framework of advancing US security needs and priorities. In the literature, some scholars argue that AFRICOM is a 'Trojan horse' used by the Americans to gain access to Africa's geo-strategic space giving the US unequal advantage to shape the international security environment. Other scholars believe that AFRICOM is beneficial to African states and their people because of its focus on human security rather than territorial security.

Nathan (2009) was not far from the truth when he noted in his paper that the United States instituted AFRICOM to contain terrorists in furtherance of US security interest, to ensure stable supply of oil, and to counter China's economic and political influence on the African continent. This claim was affirmed by AFRICOM that the US' ability to project power globally rests on free

access in and around Africa. That the continent of Africa is important to her because it is economically, militarily, and strategically important and that is why US foreign policy, under former president Trump to Biden has geared toward Great Power politics with competitor states like Russia, China or Iran on the continent. This assertion proves that US activities in Africa is not merely for gaining influence or ensuring peace but understandably, for her interest.

The Sahel region consist of countries that span an area between West Africa and the Maghreb. One, the underlying source of threat for Nigeria is Biafra secession movement, Boko Haram, police brutality, high illiteracy rate and lack of economic opportunity in the northern region of Nigeria. Two, the security threat to Mali is the secession movement from the Tuareg group, uneven development of the north and south regions of the country. Three, the source of security threat to Burkina Faso is the spillover of conflict caused by VEOs from neighbouring Mali and Niger as well as ill-equipped security forces to manage the spill over attacks from the neighbouring countries.

Primary and Secondary Objectives of the Actors

The primary undeclared objective of AFRICOM is to provide security on the US homeland through security cooperation with their African partners as well as European allies in counterterrorism campaign. With this objective in mind, the US fights against terrorism through the Trans-Sahara Counterterrorism Partnership program with African partners on voluntary basis in the Sahel. The agents are employed on voluntary basis because the US has a binary view of the “Global War on Terror”. Either foreign states are on the side of the US in this fight or if they do not, then they are complicit in the activities of terrorist so obviously, no economic or militarily weak state in the Sahel would like to be in the wrong books of the US on this matter.

The declared secondary objectives of AFRICOM are to neutralize and disrupt violent extremist organizations; counter competitive influence; provide regime security for their African partners (regardless of their nature: authoritarian or democratic so long as they are in sync with US interest); and to provide access to strategic resources. On the other hand, the primary objective of Violent Extremist Organization is to secure human development through fighting economic and political injustice. Their secondary objective is to attain religious freedom and non-interference by foreign powers in their domestic affairs.

Policy recommendation

This research attempted to seek answer to how the activities of AFRICOM lead to peace in Mali, Nigeria and Burkina Faso according to African Union standards of peace, but the finding was inconclusive. So based on the findings of this research and the fact that there is no concrete evidence to show how AFRICOM ensures peace in Mali, Burkina Faso and Nigeria, I therefore recommend that Sahelian leaders in counterterrorism fight ought to:

- Distinguish between terrorist and non-terrorist elements in VEOs so as to engage them separately address their demands separately. This is because the research found that non-terrorist elements such as Azawad movement or Boko Haram from their early formation were groups fighting for the socio-economic security of their communities, of which the governments of Mali and Nigeria took for granted. However, since the population of these countries are largely Muslims, Islamic ideology was used to mobilize and recruit them into VEOs and started using extreme violence against their victims. So now, they are radicalized to serve the interest of VEOs with different agenda from the interest of non-terrorist groups.
- In relation to the above, the Nigeria and G5 Sahel governments and their foreign partners must formulate a wholesome strategy that establishes robust communication with the grassroot in each country because there is disconnection between government agencies and grassroot (CSIS, 2021). This is because, for example in north Nigeria, the research found that the government uses horizontal approach in decision-making as well as in policy implementation. The local government implements decisions that have been taken in Abuja whether it suits the needs of the grassroot or not, they do not mind²⁸.
- AFRICOM and their agents in the Sahel region must focus on investing in foreign direct investment in local communities instead of giving humanitarian support through their governments directly in order to encourage popular support for their counterterrorism campaigns.

²⁸See the panel discussion of transnational threats in the Sahel where experts on the region and advocates from Nigeria speak to issues on the ground (Center for Strategic and International Studies, 2016) (CSIS, 2021).

- Sahelian leaders and foreign partners should negotiate with VEOs to find out their grievances in order to inform their counterterrorist strategies. They should also compromise with reasonable demands that can ensure stability and development.
- In relation to the above, Sahelian governments and their foreign partners should focus on pastoralist-farmer conflicts in their respective countries and address their concerns because these conflicts serve as the basis for VEO recruitment.

Agenda for further research

According to US, AFRICOM was established to bring ‘peace and security’ to Africans, yet this research found that the goal of AFRICOM is to build counterterrorism capacity of African security forces and to address the underlying causes of radicalization in northwest Africa. In effect, this goal is implementing the US declaration of “Global war on Terror” in Africa since the US assesses the continent and its people to be fragile to create a safe haven for terrorist to target US interest. This research sought to find answer to the question: what is the role of AFRICOM in ensuring peace in West Africa Sahel region? The research attempted doing this by testing the hypothesis as follows but was inconclusive:

- A: That AFRICOM’s TSCTP program **has** ensured peace in Mali, Nigeria and Burkina Faso?
- B: That AFRICOM’s TSCTP program **has not** ensured peace in Mali, Nigeria and Burkina Faso.

This qualitative research therefore sets the grounds for further research into answering this question. The enquiry should focus on what means to end VEO activities in the Sahel since one method-fits-all approach cannot be used to end terrorist attacks everywhere.

Bibliography

- Punch Newspaper. (2022, April 24). *Five soldiers, others die in Burkina Faso military unit attack*. Retrieved from The Punch Newspaper Agency Report: <https://punchng.com/five-soldiers-others-die-in-burkina-faso-military-unit-attack/>
- A, B. S., & Aning, K. (2008). *US Peace Operations Policy in Africa: From ACRI to AFRICOM. International Peacekeeping*.
- Africa Union . (2013). *Agenda 2063: The Africa we want*. Retrieved March 3, 2021, from <https://www.un.org/en/africa/osaa/pdf/au/agenda2063.pdf>
- AFRICOM Posture Statement. (2021). *Africa: Securing U.S. Interests, Preserving Strategic Options*. Stuttgart: AFRICOM.
- Aljazeera News. (2021, September 16). *Aljazeera ISIL/ISIS : Adnan Abu Walid al-Sahrawi, who was wanted by the US, led the Islamic State in Greater Sahara armed group*. Retrieved from France says leader of ISIL group in Sahel has been killed: <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2021/9/16/france-says-leader-of-isil-group-in-sahel-has-been-killed>
- AU Agenda 2063. (2022, April 17). *African Union*. Retrieved from African Union.international website: <https://au.int/en/agenda2063/aspirations>
- AU PSD. (2015). *African Union International. Retrieved from Africa Peace and Security Architecture (APSA) Roadmap: 2016 – 2020*: <https://au.int/en/documents/20200331/africa-peace-and-security-architecture-apsa-roadmap-2016-2020>
- BBC. (2022, April 27). *BBC News*. Retrieved from bbc.news Africa section: <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-africa-61216157>
- Braun, D., & Guston, D. H. (2003). Principal-agent theory and policy research: an introduction. *Science and public policy* 30(5), 302-308.
- Britannica. (2022, April 18). *Britannica: The Editors of Encyclopaedia*. Retrieved from Britannica.com: <https://www.britannica.com/place/Mali/Transportation-and-telecommunications#ref54987>
- Burgess, S. (2019). Military Intervention in Africa: French and US Approaches Compared. *JEMEEA Spring* , 69-89.
- Byman, D., & Kreps, S. E. (2010). Agents of destruction? Applying the principal-agent analysis to state-sponsored terrorism. *International Studies Perspectives* 11(1), 1-18.

- C., K. (2021, April 15). *United States Institute of Peace*. Retrieved from [www.usip.org: https://www.usip.org/publications/2021/04/it-time-rethink-us-strategy-sahel](https://www.usip.org/publications/2021/04/it-time-rethink-us-strategy-sahel)
- Center for Strategic and International Studies. (2016, September 27). *CSIS-Transnational Threats Projects*. Retrieved from *Militancy and the Arc of Instability in the Sahel*: <https://www.csis.org/programs/transnational-threats-project/past-projects/militancy-and-arc-instability/militancy-and-a-1>
- Clingendael Organization. (2021, February 1). *Introduction: pastoralism and conflict in Burkina Faso*. Retrieved from [www.clingendael.org: https://www.clingendael.org/pub/2021/between-hope-and-despair/introduction-pastoralism-and-conflict-in-burkina-faso/](https://www.clingendael.org/pub/2021/between-hope-and-despair/introduction-pastoralism-and-conflict-in-burkina-faso/)
- Committee on Armed Services. (2007). *Statement of Hon. Duncan Hunter, a Representative from California, Ranking Member, Committee on Armed Services*. Washington: US Government Printing Office.
- Committee on Armed Services. (2007). *Statement of Hon. Ryan Henry, Principal Deputy Under Secretary of Defence for Policy*. Washington: US Government Printing Office.
- COMMITTEE ON ARMED SERVICES. (2011). *OPERATION ODYSSEY DAWN AND THE SITUATION IN LIBYA*. WASHINGTON : U.S. GOVERNMENT PRINTING OFFICE.
- Committee on Foreign Affairs-House of Representatives. (2016). *The US Role in Helping Nigeria Confront Boko Haram and other Threats in Northern Nigeria*. Washington D. C.: US Government Publishing Office.
- CSIS. (2014, May 9). *Center for Strategic and International studies*. Retrieved from [CSIS.org: https://www.csis.org/analysis/what-boko-haram-tells-us-about-nigeria-and-why-it%E2%80%99s-so-difficult-help](https://www.csis.org/analysis/what-boko-haram-tells-us-about-nigeria-and-why-it%E2%80%99s-so-difficult-help)
- CSIS. (2021). *Center for Strategic & International Studies-Militancy And The Arc Of Instability-Violent Extremism In The Sahel*. Retrieved from [CSIS.org: https://www.csis.org/events/militancy-and-arc-instability-violent-extremism-sahel](https://www.csis.org/events/militancy-and-arc-instability-violent-extremism-sahel)
- Dunn, G. (2018, January 24). The impact of the Boko Haram insurgency in Northeast Nigeria on childhood wasting: a double-difference study. *BMI-Springer Nature-Conflict and Health* 12(6). Retrieved from *Conflict and Health*: <https://conflictandhealth.biomedcentral.com/articles/10.1186/s13031-018-0136-2>
- EnCompass. (2013). *EnCompassworld website*. Retrieved from [EnCompassworld.com: https://encompassworld.com/project/usaids-assessment-of-the-trans-sahara-counter-terrorism-partnership-in-mali/](https://encompassworld.com/project/usaids-assessment-of-the-trans-sahara-counter-terrorism-partnership-in-mali/)

- Foreign Assistance Act . (1961, September 4). Act of Congress (Public Law 87-195) . Washinton, District of Columbia, United States of America.
- Forest, J. J., & Crispin, R. (2009). AFRICOM: Troubled Infancy, Promising Future. *Contemporary Security Policy*.
- Foucault, M. (1978). LECTURES AT THE COLLÈGE DE FRANCE :Security, Territory and Population. *Palgrave McMillan*, 502-504.
- Gouvernement Accountability Office. (2008, July 31). *gao.gov.assets GAO-08-860*. Retrieved from Combating Terrorism: Actions Needed to Enhance Implementation of Trans-Sahara Counterterrorism Partnership: <https://www.gao.gov/assets/a279061.html>
- Groenendijk, N. (1998). A principal-agent model of corruption. *Crime, Law, and Social Change* 27(3), 2017-229.
- Guner, S. (2012). A Short Note on the Use of Game Theory in Analyses of International Relations. *E-International Relations*, 1-4.
- Human Rights Watch. (2022, April 5). *Human Rights Watch.org*. Retrieved from [humanrights.org : https://www.hrw.org/news/2022/04/05/mali-massacre-army-foreign-soldiers](https://www.hrw.org/news/2022/04/05/mali-massacre-army-foreign-soldiers)
- Institute for Economics and Peace. (2018). *What is positive peace?* Retrieved from [positivepeace.org: https://positivepeace.org/what-is-positive-peace](https://positivepeace.org/what-is-positive-peace)
- Institute for Global Dialogue. (2018). *www.igd.org. The expansion of AFRICOM in Africa under Obama: A Paradox?* Retrieved December 22, 2021, from <https://www.igd.org.za/home/160-the-expansion-of-africom-in-africa-under-obama-a-paradox>
- International Crises Group. (2018, March 5). *International Crises Group.org*. Retrieved from [Crises Group.org: https://www.crisisgroup.org/africa/west-africa/burkina-faso/burkina-fasos-alarming-escalation-jihadist-violence](https://www.crisisgroup.org/africa/west-africa/burkina-faso/burkina-fasos-alarming-escalation-jihadist-violence)
- International Crises Group. (2019, May 16). *International Crises Group*. Retrieved from [crisesgroup.org: https://www.crisisgroup.org/africa/west-africa/nigeria/273-facing-challenge-islamic-state-west-africa-province](https://www.crisisgroup.org/africa/west-africa/nigeria/273-facing-challenge-islamic-state-west-africa-province)
- International Security Sector Advisory Team. (2021, July 1). *Geneva Center for Security Sector Governance*. Retrieved from [ISSAT-DCAF.ch- Critical Security Issues for Burkina Faso: https://issat.dcaf.ch/Learn/Resource-Library/Case-Studies/Burkina-Faso-Current-Critical-Security-Issues#:~:text=A%202018%20donor%20led%20assessment,gendarmerie%20ratio%20is%201%2F2%2C685](https://issat.dcaf.ch/Learn/Resource-Library/Case-Studies/Burkina-Faso-Current-Critical-Security-Issues#:~:text=A%202018%20donor%20led%20assessment,gendarmerie%20ratio%20is%201%2F2%2C685).

- J, S., & Francis, J. D. (2011). U.S. Strategy in Africa: AFRICOM, Terrorism, and Security Challenge. *Naval War College Review Volume 64, Number 2 Spring*, 2-4.
- Khlopov, O. A. (2021). The Role of AFRICOM in Solving Security Problems on The African continent (2001-2020). *Bulletin of Science and Practice* 7(9):619-629, 619-627.
- Kornprobst, M. (2022). Peaceful Change in Africa. In R. Emmers, T. Paul, W. Larson, A. H. Trinkunas, & A. Wivel, *The Oxford Handbook of Peaceful Change in International Relations* (p. 34). New York: Oxford University Press.
- Krippendorff, K. (1989). Content Analysis. *Scholarly Commons, University of Pennsylvania*.
- Lowy Institute. (2022, April 20). *The Interpreter*. Retrieved from Lowy Institute.org: <https://www.lowyinstitute.org/the-interpreter/boko-haram-early-years>
- McNeill, C. (2017). "Playing the away game": AFRICOM in the Sahara-Sahel. *ELSEVIER*.
- Minority Rights Group. (2019, June 1). *Minority Rights Group International*. Retrieved from World Directory of Minorities and Indigenous Peoples: <https://minorityrights.org/country/mali/>
- Minority Rights Group International. (2022, April 25). *Minority Rights.org*. Retrieved from World Directory of Minorities and Indigenous Peoples: <https://minorityrights.org/country/burkina-faso/>
- Minority Rights.org. (2018, January). *Minority Rights*. Retrieved from development.minorityrights.org: <https://dev.minorityrights.org/country/nigeria/>
- Myerson, R. B. (1997). *Game Theory: Analysis of Conflict*. Massachusetts: Harvard University Press.
- Nathan, L. (2009). AFRICOM: A Threat to Africa's Security. *Contemporary Security Policy*.
- OECD. (2020). *OECD.world*. Retrieved from oec.world.Nigeria: <https://oec.world/en/profile/country/nga>
- OECD. (2022, April 24). *Observatory of Economic Complexity*. Retrieved from OEC.world: <https://oec.world/en/profile/country/mli>
- OECD. (2022, April 24). *Organisation for Economic Cooperation*. Retrieved from OECD.org: <https://www.oecd.org/countries/mali/northernmaliataglace.htm>
- OECD.org. (2013). Conflict over Resources and Terrorism: Two Facets of Insecurity. *OECD West African Studies*.
- Office of the Inspector-General. (2020). *Audit of the Department of State Bureau of African Affairs Monitoring and Coordination of the Trans-Sahara Counterterrorism Partnership Program*. Washington D.C: United States Department of States.

- Ploch, L. (2011). *Africa Command: U.S. Strategic Interests and the Role of the U.S. Military in Africa*. Washington D.C.: Congressional Service Report.
- Quartararo, J., Rovenolt, M., & White, R. (2012). Libya's Operation Odyssey Dawn: Command and Control. *National Defense University, Prism 3 Number 2*, , 141-156. Retrieved from cco.ndu.edu: https://cco.ndu.edu/Portals/96/Documents/prism/prism_3-2/prism141-156_quartararo-all.pdf
- Reuters. (2015, January 4). *VOAnews*. Retrieved from VOA Africa News: <https://www.voanews.com/a/six-un-peacekeepers-wounded-by-roadside-bomb-in-north-mali/2585081.html>
- Sands, R. A. (2022, April 17). How Coups Are Derailing the US War on Terror in Africa. (V. W. News, Interviewer)
- Snidal, D. (1985). The Game Theory of International Politics. *World Politics Vol. 38, No.1*.
- Subcommittee on African Affairs. (2009). *EXAMINING U.S. COUNTERTERRORISM PRIORITIES AND STRATEGY ACROSS AFRICA'S SAHEL REGION*. Washington D.C.: U.S. Government Publishing Office.
- Thompson, M. (2012). FOUCAULT, FIELDS OF GOVERNABILITY , AND THE POPULATION-FAMILY-ECONOMY NEXUS IN CHINA. *History and Theory* .
- Trading Economics. (2022, April 26). *Trading economics*. Retrieved from tradingeconomics.com: <https://tradingeconomics.com/burkina-faso/gdp-growth-annual>
- UN-DESA. (2021). *United Nations Department for Economic and Social Affairs*. Retrieved from UN-DESA Economic Analysis-2021 Triennial Review: <https://www.un.org/development/desa/dpad/least-developed-country-category-burkina-faso.html#:~:text=Least%20Developed%20Country%20Category%3A%20Burkina,of%20Economic%20and%20Social%20Affairs>
- US Africa Command. (2022, January 22). *U.S. Africa Command*. Retrieved January 22, 2022, from <https://www.africom.mil/about-the-command>
- US Department of State. (2019, February 14). *US Deapartment of State*. Retrieved from bureau-of-international-narcotics-and-law-enforcement-affairs: <https://www.state.gov/trans-sahara-counterterrorism-partnership/>
- Waterman, R., & Meier, J. K. (1998). Principal-Agent Models: An Expansion. *Journal of Public Administration Research and Theory*, 1.
- Wolfowicz, M., Litmanovitz, Y., Weisburd, D., & Hasisi, B. (2020). What Is the State of the Quantitative Literature on Risk Factors for Radicalization and Recruitment to Terrorism?

- In D. Weisburd, U. E. Savona, B. Hasisi, & F. Calderoni, *Understanding Recruitment to Organized Crime and Terrorism* (pp. 25-53). Cham: Springer Link.
- World Bank. (2021). *World Bank Group*. Retrieved from World Bank.Org: <https://data.worldbank.org/country/ML>
- World Bank. (2021, October 11). *World Bank Group*. Retrieved from The World Bank in Nigeria: <https://www.worldbank.org/en/country/nigeria/overview#1>
- Yesufu, M. (2016). The impact of religion on a secular state: the Nigerian experience. *Studia Hist. Ecc.* vol.42 n.1 Pretoria, South Africa, 3-5.
- Zondi, S. (2017, October 22). *African Union approaches to peacebuilding: Efforts at shifting the continent towards decolonial peace*. Retrieved from African Centre for the Constructive Resolution of Disputes: <https://www.acCORD.org.za/ajcr-issues/african-union-approaches-peacebuilding/>