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African Centre for the Study and Research on Terrorism

Terrorism

Bi-weekly Press Review

16 - 31 January 2016

Review no. 108



Press Review 16—31 January 2016

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Quatre dossiers chauds pour le sommet de l'Union africaine



La 26e réunion annuelle de l'Union africaine s'est ouverte mercredi à Addis-Abeba sur fond de crises politiques et de morosité économique avec le retournement des marchés de matières premières. Avant l'arrivée des chefs d'Etat et de gouvernement africains, attendus dans la capitale éthiopienne les 30 et 31 janvier pour leur Assemblée générale, les ministres des affaires étrangères ont commencé à débattre des dossiers chauds qui agitent le continent.

Lors de cette grand-messe, le Zimbabwéen Robert Mugabe passera le flambeau de la présidence de l'UA au Tchadien Idriss Déby Itno. En janvier 2015, la désignation à la tête de l'UA du doyen des présidents africains, presque 92 ans et trente-cinq ans de pouvoir, avait fait grincer des dents au sein de l'institution. « Tout le monde pensait que son mandat allait être une catastrophe pour l'UA, mais l'Afrique du Sud, représentée par la présidente de la Commission Nkosazana Dlamini-Zuma, a gardé le leadership, lâche un diplomate européen. Ses sorties publiques encombrantes n'ont finalement engagé que lui. »

L'entrée en scène du président tchadien sera observée de près alors que la question des droits de l'homme a été choisie comme thème principal de la réunion d'Addis-Abeba. La situation au Burundi devrait cependant occuper une large part des discussions. Parfois accusée d'être un « syndicat de 54 chefs d'Etat », souvent considérée comme déconnectée de son peuple, l'Union africaine, créée en 2002 pour succéder à l'Organisation de l'Union africaine (OUA), est très attendue sur ce dossier. Le sommet du Conseil de paix et sécurité, prévu vendredi 29, y sera entière-

ment consacré. « La qualité du leadership exercé par la Commission de l'UA est fortement dépendante de la marge de manœuvre que les Etats veulent bien lui accorder, analyse Yann Bedzigui, chercheur à l'Institut d'études de sécurité (ISS) Africa. L'Union africaine essaie de passer de la défense de la souveraineté des Etats à la protection des droits des citoyens. A elle de transformer l'essai. »

Trouver une issue à la crise au Burundi

L'Union africaine est-elle en mesure d'aller à l'encontre de la volonté d'un chef d'Etat africain en déployant une force de maintien de la paix au Burundi ? La question est sur toutes les lèvres, alors que la situation sécuritaire ne cesse de se détériorer dans ce petit pays d'Afrique des Grands-Lacs.

Le 17 décembre 2015, le Conseil de paix et de sécurité (CPS) de l'UA a voté le principe de l'envoi de la Mission africaine de prévention et de protection au Burundi, la Maprobu, composée de 5 000 hommes. Mais le président burundais Pierre Nkurunziza, dont l'annonce de la candidature à un troisième mandat en avril 2015 a précipité le pays dans une crise meurtrière, a immédiatement réagi en la qualifiant de « force d'invasion et d'occupation » et en se réservant le « droit d'agir en conséquence » en cas de déploiement militaire. Le chef d'Etat, réélu en juillet 2015, a réitéré son refus de toute ingérence internationale lors du passage à Bujumbura des ambassadeurs du Conseil de sécurité de l'ONU le 22 janvier.

Du côté du CPS, on continue d'espérer que le président burundais renoue le dialogue lors du sommet de l'UA. Un dialogue au point mort, tout comme la médiation ougandaise qui n'a porté aucun fruit. Et si M. Nkurunziza campe sur sa position ? « L'heure n'est pas aux spéculations », élude un membre du CPS.

L'UA est juridiquement en mesure d'intervenir au Burundi sans l'aval du président Pierre Nkurunziza, en vertu de l'article 4-h de l'Acte constitutif de l'UA, qui encadre légalement une telle intervention dans « certaines circonstances graves, à savoir : les crimes de guerre, le génocide et les crimes contre l'humanité ». Un terme que les membres du CPS n'ont pas hésité à employer en décembre 2015 en affirmant que « l'Afrique ne permettra pas un autre génocide sur son sol ».

Une telle intervention serait une première pour l'organisation panafricaine. Mais encore faut-il que les chefs d'Etat et de gouvernement de l'UA confirment cette décision par un vote à la majorité des deux tiers lors de l'Assemblée générale. « La question de la souveraineté reste vivace au sein de l'UA, explique Yann Bedzigui, chercheur à l'ISS Africa. Même si, sur le fond, bon nombre d'entre eux ne sont pas d'accord avec le président burundais, sur la forme, l'action de l'UA peut être perçue comme une forme d'ingérence. Certains peuvent craindre [de créer] un tel précédent. »

La montée du terrorisme

Le terrorisme a sévèrement frappé le continent africain ces derniers mois et entaché le début de l'année 2016 avec les attaques de Ouagadougou le 15 janvier. Etat islamique, Al-Qaida au Maghreb islamique (AQMI), Chabab en Somalie, la menace concerne tout le continent devenu « l'épicentre mondial du terrorisme », selon Cheikh Tidiane Gadio, le président de l'Institut panafricain de stratégie (IPS). En 2015, 4 523 attentats ont endeuillé 44 des 54 pays africains, selon ACLED

(Armed Conflict Location and Event Data Project).

Le sujet sera au cœur des discussions du sommet des chefs d'Etat. En marge de celui-ci, le président tchadien Idriss Deby Itno devrait en outre convoquer une réunion du G5 Sahel ([Mali](#), Niger, Burkina Faso, Mauritanie, Tchad) pour réfléchir aux moyens de coordonner leurs actions et de mobiliser les ressources pour lutter plus efficacement contre le terrorisme.

La Somalie sera également à l'agenda après l'attaque d'un camp de la mission de l'UA en Somalie (Amisom) dans le sud du pays le 15 janvier, qui a causé la mort de militaires kényans et de soldats somaliens.

L'impasse au Soudan du Sud

Les dirigeants de l'Union africaine vont-ils prendre le dossier sud-soudanais à bras-le-corps ? C'est en tout cas ce qu'espère le secrétaire général des Nations unies Ban Ki-moon, qui a invité les pays de l'IGAD, l'organisation sous-régionale chargée de la médiation, et de l'Union africaine à « saisir l'occasion du prochain sommet de l'UA pour traiter cette impasse politique ».

Les négociations pour former un gouvernement d'union nationale ont une nouvelle fois échoué dans le plus jeune Etat du monde. La décision du président Salva Kiir de redécouper le territoire en portant le nombre de régions à 28 au lieu de 10 a irrité le camp rebelle. Lors d'une conférence de presse dans sa résidence d'Addis-Abeba, dimanche 24 janvier, leur leader, l'ancien vice-président Riek Machar, a fait savoir que cette mesure unilatérale compromettait l'application de l'accord de paix signé le 26 août 2015. Actuellement à Kampala, il a affirmé qu'il souhaitait que l'Ouganda joue un rôle accru dans les pourparlers de paix.

Tedros Adhanom, ministre des affaires étrangères de l'Ethiopie, pays hôte des pourparlers de paix, a fait savoir qu'il souhaitait convoquer une nouvelle réunion de l'IGAD en marge du sommet. Le vote de sanctions à l'encontre des belligérants est toujours évoqué.

Droits de l'homme et Constitutions bafouées

Cette année, le 26e sommet de l'UA est placé sous le signe des droits de l'homme avec une attention particulière portée aux droits des femmes, qui est une priorité de la présidente de la Commission de l'UA, la Sud-Africaine Nkosazana Dlamini-Zuma. Mais le directeur régional d'Amnesty International pour l'Afrique de l'Ouest, Alioune Tine se fait peu d'illusion : « Le paradigme sécuritaire est une brèche dans laquelle de nombreux présidents africains vont s'infiltrer pour brimer les libertés fondamentales, analyse-t-il. En invoquant la nécessité d'une union sacrée contre l'ennemi extérieur, ils détournent l'attention et évitent d'évoquer les dérives internes. »

Parmi celles-ci, selon Alioune Tine, les modifications de la Constitution pour se faire réélire, comme c'est le cas au Congo-Brazzaville et au Rwanda. « Nous avons un leadership défaillant sur le continent en matière de droits humains, de gouvernance et de démocratie, regrette-il. Vouloir rester président à vie et instrumentaliser la Constitution participent à la déstabilisation de nos pays. » L'Union africaine a toujours été discrète sur la longévité au pouvoir. Son président sortant, le

Zimbabween Robert Mugabe, cumule à lui seul six mandats. Son successeur, est au pouvoir depuis vingt-cinq ans et devrait présenter sa candidature à l'élection présidentielle d'avril.

« L'UA joue sa crédibilité en plaçant le curseur sur les droits de l'homme, conclut Alioune Tine. Une première avancée serait peut-être la levée de l'immunité des présidents en exercice. Les chefs d'Etat soupçonnés de crimes de guerre ou de crimes contre l'humanité doivent répondre de leurs actes et ne plus être protégés par l'organisation panafricaine. »

<http://www.dakaractu.com/>

In the Fight Against Violent Extremism, Why Is Prevention Elusive?

20 January 2016



Graffiti in Syria, 'Peace I Miss You'

This article was originally published by IPI Global Observatory on 11 January 2016.

Countering violent extremism has become a cottage industry in both the global North and South, as Daesh (also known as ISIS) and other transnational armed terrorist groups continue to threaten the very foundations on which national and international peace and stability have rested for decades. For the countries of the Sahel-Sahara and North Africa regions, brutally affected by the scourge of violence, countering violent extremism (CVE) has been embraced as the new overarching framework for a continued pursuit of the “war on terror.”

Current Approaches and Limitations

Under the CVE umbrella, these countries have multiplied initiatives and adopted various measures both at the national and regional levels to address the roots of radi-

calization, violent extremism, and terrorism. Efforts based on increasing education and cultural outreach—such as training imams to counter radical Islamic teachings—have become common. Some countries, with the active participation of civil society organizations, have devised national action plans that include the organization of inter-religious and inter-communal dialogue, as well as awareness-raising campaigns aimed at encouraging citizen engagement in the prevention and the fight against violent extremism. Still others have included in their national CVE strategy the creation of socioeconomic opportunities for youth and other marginalized groups to prevent their radicalization.

Meanwhile, more traditional law and order-based counterterrorism approaches have also taken on more of a focus on prevention, rather than merely responding to the after-effects of attacks. This includes adopting legislative and policing frameworks to control, repress, and track terrorist activities; training, equipping and reorganizing national security forces and intelligence services; and enhancing border surveillance and check points. Some of these countries, because of porous borders and the transnational nature of the terrorist threat, have relied heavily on existing regional and international security cooperation arrangements or created new ones, such as the G-5 Sahel countries, which brings together Niger, Mali, Chad, Mauritania, and Burkina Faso.

With the exception of one or two countries, efforts continue to be largely state-centric and security-driven and do not go far enough in recognizing and addressing the governance and economic deficits that are at the root of radicalization and violent extremism.

As Daesh [tightens its grip](#) on the resource-rich northeastern part of Libya and consolidates its alliance with organized crime groups, the security-driven counterterrorism approaches to violent extremism are becoming more prominent, resulting in a rush to adopt repressive, punitive laws that end up sacrificing fundamental human rights and freedoms on the altar of stability. This in turn spawns frustration and radicalization. This has already happened in Tunisia after three deadly terrorist attacks of the past year. As of July 2015, a new counterterrorism law is on the books, some provisions of which have been judged as inconsistent with international human rights standards, and counter to the spirit and letter of the new Tunisian constitution.

The atmosphere of fear created by terrorist acts seems to be giving sustenance to a long-cultivated myth that people must forego some of their rights in order to live safely. In fact, there is [no contradiction](#) between security and human rights. They go hand-in-hand. Yet according to a recent poll in Tunisia, 78% of Tunisians indicated that they were ready to sacrifice a little bit of liberty for more security. As a result, we are seeing greater militarization of public security and diminished equality before the law.

Despite the increasing public acknowledgment of the limitations of military responses and the recognition that responding to violence with more violence makes us all more insecure, there continues to be deliberate reluctance to dig deeper in diagnosing some of the powerful drivers of violent extremists. This apparent paradox conjures up what Jacques Benigne Bossuet, a 17th century theologian, said: “God laughs at men who complain of the consequences while cherishing the causes.”

During [a forum held](#) in Tunis on December 7-8th 2015, which brought together a

number of Francophone policy analysts, researchers, and civil society practitioners from the Sahel and North Africa regions, practical suggestions were put forward in order to give a more prominent place to prevention in the fight against violent extremism in these regions. It was forcefully argued that when a preventive lens is applied, the minds of policymakers are freed from the tyranny of the urgent and focus instead on long-term strategies that address not only the proximate causes of insecurity, but also the underlying political, security, economic, social and cultural factors that drive and sustain it. Among these factors, the following were cited: weak or mistrusted states and elites, corruption and social injustice, lack of employment opportunities for youth, exclusionary policies that marginalize minorities, the shrinking of safe spaces for meaningful public policy debates, the lack of intercultural and interreligious dialogue, the criminalization of legitimate political dissent, and a broken educational system. All of these are hallmarks of poor governance and incubators of societal conflicts.

Regional and geopolitical considerations were also discussed in the Tunis forum as contributing or inhibiting factors in the fight against violent extremism. But they were not treated with the required candor, even though some of them are the “elephants in the room,” accounting in large measure for the reluctance of some governments to forego military solutions and pursue less violent measures.

Why is Prevention Elusive?

There are a number of reasons why prevention, despite the rhetoric and policy prescriptions, remains elusive. One reason is that if one digs deeply, it might bring to light the real identity of the states and/or powerful elites who finance many of the radical movements or control the poisonous religious media outlets they utilize for propaganda.

A second reason is that an analysis of root causes is likely to dredge up the strategic failures of wars and post-war efforts in Iraq and Libya, which unwittingly allowed Daesh and other barbaric malignancies to emerge, in the wake of massive humiliation and subjugation of large segments of society during and after these military adventures. In his book “

The Geopolitics of Emotions,” Dominique Moisi cites humiliation as one of the key emotions that can help us understand international politics and geopolitical dynamics and behavior. He contends that it is in the Arab and Muslim world that humiliation is most felt and acted upon, driven by a contrast of an idealized past and a stark and hopeless present. Daesh brutality seems to draw, with vengeance and visceral anger, on a bottomless reservoir of humiliation. The UN Secretary-General in his new [action plan to prevent violent extremism](#) indicates how collective grievances stemming from domination, oppression, or subjugation—real or perceived—can fuel the thirst for revenge.

<http://isnblog.ethz.ch/>

Espace CEDEAO – Survivre face au terrorisme (Analyse)

18 Jan 2016



Demain, dans l'espace CEDEAO, une nouvelle cartographie des relations commerciales et donc des parts de marché, liées aux influences politiques, s'esquisseront sous l'effet de divers éléments dont la crise sahélienne, l'évolution du piratage en mer et l'issue des élections en cours. Les relations dans l'espace politique, économique, social de l'Afrique de l'ouest seront dépendantes de ce qu'il en sera de Boko Haram, Aqmi, El-Mourabitoune et d'autres mouvements islamistes couvrant les zones entières de la Mauritanie, du Mali, du Niger, du Nigeria, de l'Algérie, de la Lybie, de l'Egypte...

Quelle connexion entre ces différents mouvements terroristes? Leurs leaders se retrouvent-ils pour définir les grandes orientations stratégiques du terrorisme? Qui définit leurs cahiers de charges? Quelle relation avec les mouvements terroristes du Moyen Orient? Avec l'Etat islamique? Quelle Afrique à l'issue de la lutte contre le terrorisme?

I-GUERRE DANS L'ESPACE MARITIME

En 2014, 104 attaques ont été recensées dans le Golf de Guinée. La frontière ivoiro-libérienne est considérée comme une zone à très fort risque. La Côte d'Ivoire a connu 16 actes de piraterie de 2006 à 2012. Quelles incidences sur le second port ivoirien? La frégate de la mission Corymbe pourrait être d'un secours inestimable dans cette zone. Notons que le Ghana, qui a connu 17 attaques dans la même période, a commandé en 2012 quatre (4) nouveaux patrouilleurs avec la Chine tout en attendant 2 avions d'attaque de l'Allemagne. En outre, le Ghana ambitionnait d'acquérir 3 avions de surveillance.

II-APRES LES ATTAQUES DE OUAGADOUGOU

« Le groupe terroriste El-Mourabitoune dirigé par Mokhtar Belmokhtar, dit Le Borgne, auteur des attentats les plus spectaculaires au Sahel ces dernières années, ex

-membre des GIA et du GSPC est en quête d'un mouvement fédérateur, une sorte de ligue des groupes terroristes dont il serait le guide. » Cette analyse qui circule dans certains milieux continue de servir de substrat à diverses analyses. Que faut-il y comprendre?

Les terroristes sont aussi des hommes; pas comme vous et moi mais nous avons des « déterminismes » en commun. Chacun d'eux a son ego et tient à se « faire respecter ». Les différentes tendances devraient se livrer une certaine guerre en termes d'attentats les uns plus meurtriers que les autres en vue de la reconnaissance des Barrons de la nébuleuse. Besoin d'estime (Maslow) mais aussi et surtout contrôler tout le business de la zone sahélienne. « 3,5 milliards de dollars, c'est ce qu'ont rapporté les trafics de drogue, d'armes et de tabac dans le Sahel entre 2013 et 2014, d'après l'ONUDC, l'Office des Nations unies contre la drogue et le crime.

Les terroristes vont essayer de récidiver à Ouaga sous peu; cherchant à déstabiliser le Burkina Faso; signifier qu'ils sont capables de faire ce qu'ils veulent quand ils le veulent. Un peu comme ils le font au Mali, au Niger, au Nigeria, au Cameroun... Après avoir créé une telle psychose à Ouagadougou, ils vont revenir à leur agenda de fin 2012, lorsqu'ils étaient à 72 h de Bamako; obligeant Hollande à intervenir dans des circonstances exceptionnelles. Leur nouvel objectif sera Abidjan et Conakry. Abidjan figure bel et bien sur l'agenda de ces mouvements terroristes. D'abord leur agenda originel est de créer un Califat mondial; ce qui les amène à attaquer partout où faire se peut. Ensuite, Abidjan regorge de plusieurs sites qui les excitent: les investissements français, américains. Enfin, frapper Abidjan ferait plus de bruits que dans n'importe quel autre espace de l'UEMOA. Pour des êtres qui sont en quête de publicité permanente, cela compte énormément.

III-LES IMPACTS D'UNE ATTAQUE TERRORISTE

Après un attentat, il va falloir faire des audits non pas forcément pour situer des responsabilités mais pour éviter que cela se répète dans l'avenir. Le résultat de ces enquêtes peut faire plus de mal s'il est avéré une faille au niveau sécuritaire. Il sera difficile de se rendre dans un pays où un attentat serait lié à une légèreté des forces de défense. Comment amener Autrui à faire confiance de nouveau au secteur qui a été défaillant? Cela susciterait quelques suspicions légitimes dans les relations économiques...sous régionales.

Imaginons qu'un aéroport de la sous région, pour une raison quelconque, subisse des attaques terroristes. Quel avion poserait dans le court terme dans ce lieu? Qui accepterait d'y transiter ? Les autres aéroports accepteraient-ils des avions en provenance de ce lieu? Souvenons-nous de la fermeture des frontières lors de l'épidémie du virus d'Ebola...L'économie et le contexte politique sont en permanente relation dialectique. Si l'environnement politique est perçu comme truffé de menaces, c'est l'économie qui prendrait un coup. En même temps, il faudra redémarrer l'économie pour trouver les moyens de combattre ces menaces.

Quels impacts des attentats terroristes sur le chiffre d'affaires des compagnies aériennes? Notons que la fuite des touristes affecterait davantage les secteurs de la culture, des spectacles et loisirs sans oublier la restauration, de l'hôtellerie. A moyen terme, les impacts sont difficiles à évaluer. Toutefois, la confiance est le moteur de la croissance économique de tout pays. Qui sont ces investisseurs qui s'aventureraient à placer leurs économies dans des projets à long terme dans un pays touché

par des attentats terroristes? On pourrait dire adieu à la transformation du taux de croissance en développement économique et social. Document Stratégique de Réduction de la Pauvreté, Programme National de Développement, projet de société... pourraient faire place au pilotage à vue. Il serait impossible de parler de réduction de la pauvreté, de développement humain, de résorption du chômage...Et ceux qui auraient leur premier emploi à...40 ans devraient bénir leur Dieu.

Le géant de la CEDEAO n'a pu venir à bout du terrorisme. Aucun pays de l'Afrique ne peut, à lui seul, lutter contre le terrorisme. Unir les forces pourrait être un début de solution. Dans ce domaine là, le nombre ne fait pas le poids. Et en l'état actuel, le besoin de sécurité devrait l'emporter sur diverses considérations. Sans vouloir remettre en cause les stratégies de gouvernance en place, ne faudrait-il pas se souvenir de nos forces spéciales sur des bases purement objectives? Côte d'Ivoire, Burkina Faso, Mali... Voici des pays où des contingents d'élites, formés aux frais du contribuable ont subi un rude Vetting si ce n'est une simple dissolution. En l'état actuel, n'est-il pas possible de leur faire appel pour créer une force sous régionale en charge de la lutte contre le terrorisme? Le dire n'est pas simplement réveiller de vieux démons encore moins être un fiévreux nostalgique... Il nous revient de moderniser l'armée (recruter et gérer les carrières sur des bases saines; renforcer les capacités, équiper l'armée...); renforcer la collaboration avec les pays expérimentés (France, Tchad, Nigeria, USA...); développer un leadership de sorte à susciter une fluidité des informations entre les capitales (Dakar, Nouakchott, Alger, NDjaména, Jo'Burg...)

Au nom des victimes, des survivants, de l'Humanité, il nous faut vaincre le terrorisme si nous ne voulons pas purement et simplement disparaître!

Sylvain N'GUESSAN

Consultant en Gouvernance et Justice transitionnelle

<http://www.connectionivoirienne.net/>

Burkina Faso

Aqmi est revenu sur le devant de la scène au Sahel en sous-traitant ses attaques

le 18.01.2016



Un soldat burkinabé le 17 janvier devant l'hôtel Splendid, qui a été visé par une attaque d'Aqmi dans la nuit du 15 au 16 janvier. Crédit photo: REUTERS/Joe Penney

Le groupe terroriste a revendiqué l'attaque terroriste qui a provoqué la mort d'au moins 29 personnes à Ouagadougou, dans la nuit du 15 au 16 janvier.

À quelques heures d'intervalles, deux attaques terroristes ont éclaté aux extrémités du continent africain vendredi 15 janvier. En début d'après-midi, des combattants Shabaab ont pris d'assaut une base militaire de l'Amisom, la force armée régionale déployée en Somalie pour sécuriser le pays, tuant plus de 60 soldats kényans sur le sol somalien. Puis, dans la nuit du 15 au 16 janvier, des djihadistes ont ouvert sur le feu en plein-centre de Ouagadougou, la capitale du Burkina Faso, tuant au moins 29 personnes dont 14 étrangers.

Très différentes dans leur mode opératoire et leur cible, les deux attaques ont cependant un point commun: elles ont été perpétrées par des organisations qui ont prêté allégeance à Al-Qaïda au Maghreb islamique (Aqmi), la branche du groupe terroriste qui opère sur le continent africain.

«Les attaques sur les extrémités opposées du continent contre des cibles très différentes pointent la constance d'al-Qaïda, des années après que des officiels américains aient déclaré que l'influence de l'organisation avait sévèrement chuté», analyse le magazine américain Foreign Policy.

Un rapport du Département d'État américain datant d'avril 2014 expliquait également qu'al-Qaïda avait profité de la faiblesse de plusieurs États en Afrique du Nord pour s'allier avec des groupes à l'idéologie proche afin d'«élargir et renforcer ses opérations» dans la région.

Des alliances pour survivre

L'attaque menée contre des lieux fréquentés par la population aisée de Ouagadougou, dont de nombreux expatriés, a eu un énorme retentissement mondial de par sa cible. Surtout, elle intervient deux mois à peine après l'assaut du Radisson Blu hotel à Bamako, qui avait fait 22 victimes le 20 novembre 2015. Comme au Burkina Faso, Al-Mourabitoune, un groupuscule dirigé par Mokhtar Belmokhtar qui avait fait lui-même dissidence avec Aqmi il y a quelques années, avait revendiqué, conjointement avec Aqmi, l'attaque menée à Bamako.

Les deux groupes djihadistes, auparavant rivaux, avaient annoncé leur alliance quelques jours après la prise d'assaut du Blu Radisson hotel. *«Alors que l'État islamique perce en Libye et qu'au Nigeria Boko Haram a prêté allégeance au califat d'Al-Baghdadi, la "centrale historique" fondée par Ben Laden, bousculée par l'EI, a pu exiger cette nouvelle alliance pour garder la haute main sur le jihad en Afrique de l'Ouest»*, note Libération. Nous expliquions également sur Slate.fr, que pour contrer les actions spectaculaires de l'État islamique en Libye, Aqmi appelle aujourd'hui les musulmans à bouter les Espagnols hors des enclaves de Ceuta et Melilla, et à s'en prendre aux étrangers en Libye.

Pour Samuel Nguembock, chercheur à l'Institut des relations internationales et stratégiques (Iris), les alliances nouées par Aqmi en Afrique sont des actes très rationnels.

«C'est une adaptation au rapport de force sur le terrain. L'accélération des attentats est une stratégie de survie. Daech a gagné beaucoup de terrain en peu de temps, et ça été l'inverse pour Aqmi. Face à cette réalité, le groupe a dû se réorganiser et nouer des alliances», explique à Slate.fr ce spécialiste du terrorisme au Sahel.

Dans la coopération entre Aqmi et al-Mourabitoune, la seconde semble être le bras armé de la première en menant les attaques sur le terrain, comme c'était le cas à Bamako puis à Ouagadougou: quand Aqmi semble plutôt axer ses efforts sur le plan organisationnel et sur la *«communication»* autour de son *«djihad global»*. Dans son communiqué revendiquant l'attaque de Ouagadougou, Aqmi a notamment affirmé avoir visé un *«repaire des services occidentaux en Afrique de l'Ouest»*, comme le rapporte sur son compte Twitter, Romain Caillet, chercheur spécialiste du djihadisme.

Une synergie entre djihadistes

Les mouvances djihadistes du Sahel, dont Aqmi, ont été durement frappées par les frappes des armées françaises et maliennes lors de l'opération Serval en 2013. Cette guerre frontale a affaibli des groupes concurrents qui pour résister ont tissé de nombreux liens entre eux. Aqmi s'était allié avec l'organisation Ansar Dine dans le nord du Mali en 2012.

«Il y a une rivalité, mais aussi une synergie entre les djihadistes», nous confiait Naffet Keita, chercheur à l'université de Bamako, au lendemain de l'attaque du Blu Radisson hotel.

Dans sa guerre contre les gouvernements de la région et l'armée française, Aqmi cherche aussi à viser le cœur des États, pour mieux agir à sa guise sur leurs fron-

tières, comme l'explique Samuel Nguembock de l'Iris.

«Aqmi est un groupe qui dès qu'il perd du terrain se replie sur ses bases arrières. Ils profitent de la porosité des frontières au Sahel pour garantir la sécurité du noyau de l'organisation. Quand la pression militaire des forces gouvernementales augmente, ils attaquent au centre du pays où la sécurité est moins assurée, pour obliger l'armée à relâché sa pression sur les zones périphériques.»

Mais pour exister et mener des actions de grandes envergures, Aqmi a aujourd'hui d'abord besoin de l'aide de groupes djihadistes locaux.

<http://www.slate.fr/story/112873/aqmi-burkina>

Attentats de Ouagadougou : Une solution œcuménique contre les violences interreligieuses ?

28 janvier 2016

Notre pays, le Burkina a été frappé par la violence aveugle au nom de la religion, et surtout des revendications politico-religieuses le 15 janvier 2016. En ce mois de prière pour l'unité des chrétiens, quelles réflexions œcuméniques sur cette actualité dans un pays africain, pauvre mais religieux dans ses cultures et dans sa foi ?

Le Burkina Faso, pays œcuménique par excellence

Le Burkina Faso compte, en général, 60,5 % de musulmans, 23,2 % de chrétiens et 15,3 % de pratiquants des Religions Traditionnelles Africaines. On lui reconnaît, dans tous les cas, des pratiques traditionnelles unanimes baignées dans l'animisme. C'est un œcuménisme vécu au jour le jour par des religions qui ne se contredisent pas, mieux qui vivent en parfaite harmonie. Le pays est symbolique dans son rapport avec la religion. Les valeurs traditionnelles sont quasi présentes et vivantes dans la société burkinabè. Ce sont des acquis à préserver à tout prix dans une Afrique touchée aujourd'hui, en plein fouet, par l'intégrisme religieux. En cela, la Somalie, l'Algérie, le Nigéria, le Mali ne sont que des exemples...

Jamais le pays des hommes intègres n'a connu une émotion nationale aussi forte avec cet attentat. La nation burkinabè, forte de ses hommes et de son esprit œcuménique, est frappée par un double impact. Premièrement, dans sa culture de paix et deuxièmement dans ses pratiques ancestrales. Ce pays, religieux dans l'âme et à la fois laïc, a su faire respecter l'essentiel de la foi en Dieu dans une diversité de cultures. Croire sans nuire, prier sans haïr.

Burkina Faso : un pays de cultures, de religions et de paix

Le pays est bien connu pour son accueil légendaire. Les Burkinabè sont accueillants et respectent les étrangers. L'hospitalité, on le sait, est sacrée au pays des hommes intègres. C'est une culture triomphante au Burkina et les natifs en sont légitimement fiers. La paix ne s'invente pas, elle se construit. Les Burkinabè l'ont bien compris. Une analyse simple permet de déterminer les forces de cette nation pauvre mais vaillante.

Il y a aussi des faiblesses. Parmi ces problèmes, il y a la forte intrusion de l'esprit néolibéral dans la société burkinabè. L'esprit capitaliste et celui du profit sont quasi-envahissant dans la société moderne des pays africains, et le Burkina n'est pas épargné. Il y a une métamorphose certaine due à la société consumériste de notre siècle. Les cultures, et même les religions, sont mises à mal, et les populations voient leurs repères traditionnels s'effondrer. La jeunesse, dont 46 % a moins de 15 ans, est la plus exposée. Les gouvernements, accrochés à leurs anciennes métropoles, font la politique de leurs mentors occidentaux. L'accès à l'eau, aux soins de base, l'agriculture déficitaire, le chômage sont le lot quotidien de populations meurtries par des insuffisances à tous les niveaux.

Le drame est que personne n'est coupable, tout le monde est victime, à l'image de l'attentat de ce mois de janvier 2016. La paix a un coût et il est urgent que les cultures et les religions travaillent dans ce sens. D'abord, un dialogue fructueux entre

les différentes religions doit être promu, ensuite à l'intérieur de chaque religion un rapprochement dépassant les conflits fratricides doit se développer. C'est alors que l'œcuménisme devient fondamental dans ce 3^e millénaire déchiré par les violences interreligieuses. L'attente est forte de paroles sûres et surtout d'actions convaincantes.

Au niveau du christianisme, un mouvement dit œcuménique a surgi au XIX^e siècle et pourrait être l'espoir d'un dialogue fructueux entre les chrétiens.

Bref historique du Mouvement œcuménique mondial

Un événement a été décisif dans l'histoire du Mouvement œcuménique, a une date : 1948. En cette année-là, des Églises (dans l'hémisphère nord) se sont rassemblées au nom de leur foi unique au Christ. Les siècles passés furent parsemés de divisions dogmatico-doctrinales. Une prise de conscience a éclairé les intelligences et la Commission « Foi et Constitution » a vu le jour. C'est l'ancêtre du Conseil Œcuménique des Églises dont le siège est en Suisse (Genève). Depuis lors, des rencontres décisives ont eu lieu en Europe notamment, pour rapprocher les chrétiens. Ainsi, divers groupes et organisations, ont été créés (Associations, Communautés etc.) pour entretenir la flamme de l'œcuménisme. L'une des célébrations phares est la Semaine de prière pour l'unité des chrétiens qui a lieu chaque année du 18 au 25 janvier. Cette prière a été initiée par un prêtre lyonnais : le Père Couturier (France).

L'œcuménisme et la Semaine de prière pour l'unité des chrétiens

Chaque année, dans ce cadre de cette célébration, les textes sont préparés par un groupe de travail issu d'un pays. C'est la Lettonie qui s'en est chargée en 2016, c'est un pays marqué par une histoire œcuménique féconde. Le thème a été conjointement préparé et publié par le Conseil Pontifical pour la promotion de l'unité des chrétiens et la Commission Foi et Constitution du Conseil œcuménique des Églises. « Appelés à proclamer les hauts faits du Seigneur » (cf. 1 Pierre 2, 9). C'est le thème qui invite tous les chrétiens à vivre profondément la Semaine de prière. En occident cette semaine se situe au mois de janvier, mais ailleurs, pour des raisons de convenance, les célébrations peuvent avoir lieu à un autre moment (aux environs de la fête de la Pentecôte). En réalité, c'est toute l'année que doit perdurer l'esprit œcuménique. Une collaboration œcuménique doit être promue pour développement des moments de rencontres fraternelles et de communion. Il s'agit de travailler sans relâche pour parvenir à la pleine unité dont le Christ est le premier acteur. Chaque pays doit s'organiser et promouvoir la paix.

L'œcuménisme au pays des hommes intègres

Qu'est-ce qui se passe sur le terrain burkinabè ? Il y'a des catholiques et des protestants au Burkina. On évalue les premiers à plus de 19 % et à 4,2 % les seconds, sans compter d'autres petites Églises minoritaires sur le territoire. Il est utile de rappeler que les missionnaires catholiques sont arrivés en 1900 et les premiers missionnaires américains datent des années 1920.

Comment se déroule cette semaine derrière pour l'unité ? Des célébrations communes sont organisées au gré des années, selon l'intérêt que les différents acteurs accordent à la question œcuménique. Autant le dire, tout le monde n'est pas forcément pour l'unité ! Des questions relationnelles et interpersonnelles impactent énormément la vie des Églises au Burkina. Pour preuve, un grand nombre de burkinabè ignore totalement le mot « œcuménisme ». C'est dire que pour promouvoir le mou-

vement œcuménique au Burkina, il faut d'abord passer par deux phases fondamentales : l'information et la formation.

Toutefois, quelques initiatives sont prises dans certains diocèses et paroisses, là où existent de bonnes relations entre les évêques, les prêtres et les pasteurs. Dans ce sens, on peut retenir l'Alliance Biblique Burkinabè et les activités conjointes des Églises autour des traductions de l'Écriture dans les langues locales. Un souhait majeur qui pourrait révolutionner la donne serait une organisation commune de la Conférence épiscopale Burkina Faso/Niger et la FEME (Fédération des Églises et Missions évangéliques) autour de cette semaine. L'espoir sera toujours permis tant que les Églises seront convaincues que le Christ est fondateur du christianisme et est le seul maître de l'unité. C'est lui qui a prié pour l'unité de ses fidèles (Jn 17,21).

Les attentats terroristes de Ouagadougou

Ce qui constitue l'urgence de telles célébrations et relations entre Églises, c'est elle paix et les conditions de la cohésion sociale dans un pays africain comme le Burkina. Au regard des faits sociaux liés aux religions, on peut dire que les conflits sont nuls dans le pays, nonobstant quelques écarts de comportements vite gérés par les pouvoirs religieux et surtout coutumiers locaux. De ce point de vue le Burkina est un pays « œcuménique » par vocation. C'est pourquoi l'attentat des semaines dernières à Ouagadougou apparaît comme surprenant dans un tel milieu, malgré le Mali voisin. Nul n'est à l'abri de violences interreligieuses dans la sous-région, et même ailleurs...

Il est trop tôt de faire le bilan d'une telle barbarie dont les revendications sont d'ordre politico-religieux, mais il n'est jamais trop tard pour créer les conditions d'un vivre ensemble fructueux à court ou long terme. Cette responsabilité incombe à tous et davantage aux chefs religieux. Ce sont eux qui parlent au nom de Dieu et par conséquent, ils portent aussi la responsabilité de la paix sociale dans leur pays. Quand verrons-nous des leaders religieux résolument déterminés à lutter contre l'usurpation de leurs doctrines et leurs dogmes ? Ils sont les premiers à décourager d'éventuels fidèles un peu trop zélés. Vivement l'avènement d'une analyse rigoureuse du langage violent dans les « Livres saints » quelles que soient les confessions qui les vulgarisent. La violence doit être combattue sous toutes ses formes verbales, écrites, sociale, économique, politique et religieuse. La paix entre les peuples est aussi à ce prix.

<http://lefaso.net/spip.php?article69371>

West Africa braces for more attacks after Burkina Faso siege

Posted: Wednesday, January 20, 2016 1:13 pm | Updated: 5:07 pm, Wed Jan 20, 2016.

DAKAR, Senegal (AP) — At the entrance to the King Fahd Palace hotel in Dakar, security guards inspect the trunks of every taxi at the gate, long before the vehicles get anywhere near the building itself.

After the recent attacks on upscale hotels and restaurants in two other West African capitals, no one here in the Senegalese capital is taking any chances.

The violence in Bamako and Ouagadougou underscores how danger has moved from jihadist strongholds far in the desert to the very places where Westerners stay and eat while working in the region. In Senegal, there is a growing sense of vulnerability and an acknowledgement that security forces can only do so much.

"The terrorists have hit Mali and Burkina Faso — Senegal is no stronger than these countries," said Joseph Mendy, a bank employee in Dakar. "If they had the chance, the terrorists would not hesitate to attack the country. Senegal must be extra vigilant."

In the part of Africa known as the Sahel, just south of the Sahara Desert, violent jihadism is nothing new. Large swaths have long been considered no-go areas for Westerners because of the risk of kidnappings for ransom by al-Qaida and others.

Extremists ruled the towns of northern Mali for nearly a year, implementing public whippings and amputations until French forces dislodged them from power. And to the east, the Nigeria-based group Boko Haram has carried out suicide bombings in Niger, Chad and Cameroon.

But the recent assaults on hotels in Bamako and Ouagadougou mark a dramatic escalation, striking at the very places still considered relatively safe in an increasingly dangerous region. They also highlight the threat still posed by al-Qaida in the Sahel, even as attention had turned to the danger of Boko Haram after it aligned itself with the Islamic State group.

Jihadism is spreading in the Sahel and the threat of a major attack is now a permanent one for the countries there, according to Cynthia Ohayon, a West Africa analyst for International Crisis Group.

"The question now is, which capital in the region is going to be hit next?" she said.

Jihadists who are being driven out of Mali by French forces want to set up smaller groups throughout the region, she said. Niger is particularly vulnerable, with Boko Haram jihadists threatening its border region near Nigeria and al-Qaida militants roaming elsewhere in the country, she added.

Senegal's president, Macky Sall, has warned that extremism has no place in this country where Muslims and Christians live together peacefully. Last year he even proposed banning women from wearing the burqa, the head-to-toe covering which some male jihadists also have worn to hide their explosive belts in other countries.

The jihadists behind the Ouagadougou attack have called the bloodbath that left 30 people dead last week "a drop in the sea of global jihad" and said it comes "within a series of operations to cleanse the land of Islam and Muslims from the dens of global espionage," according to a translation published by SITE Intelligence Group.

At the Radisson Blu hotel in Bamako, Mali, guests have returned two months after Islamic extremists killed 20 there. Hisham Ahmed, 40, sits with his coffee and iPhone at the hotel cafe, dressed in a white polo shirt, jeans and yellow leather shoes.

"Already, when I see the armed soldiers in front of the big metal door out front, it feels like I am entering a military camp," he confesses. "So I do feel a bit unsafe."

Ahmed, a Libyan national, knows that the best security in Mali, as in any country, can't be seen to the casual observer. And while he worries about whether jihadists could scale a fence or mount an attack from a nearby house: "I come here anyway because I have my projects."

The attack on the Radisson Blu, like the recent violence in Ouagadougou, was claimed by an alliance between al-Qaida and the feared Algerian extremist Moktar Belmokar. In addition to staging attacks in Mali, he also was behind a series of bombings in Niger in 2013. Now people across the region wonder what his next target will be.

Burkina Faso had been considered one of the safer countries in the region until Friday's attack. Still, there had been a sense of inevitability among some in Ouagadougou, given the proximity to extremism and the porous borders in this corner of the world.

According to security officials, authorities in Burkina Faso also had begun monitoring activities in mosques and the movement of some imams they suspected of fomenting extremism. In early December, several men from Niger and Nigeria who said they were coming to preach in Burkina Faso were questioned and then expelled.

Given the Sahel's porous borders, authorities acknowledge they must do a better job of sharing information if they are to combat extremism.

"We need to combine our intelligence and military to better fight terrorism, notably at our borders," Burkina Faso President Roch Marc Christian Kaboré said earlier this week. "From now on, we are going to take all measures to prevent such things from happening again."

<http://www.nytimes.com/>

Analysis Why did Burkina Faso become al-Qaida's latest target?

Their latest attack in west Africa sends ominous message to French forces, the Burkinabé people and other terror groups, writes Daily Maverick

Few doubt who is behind the attack, which left 30 people from a dozen different nations dead: Mokhtar Belmokhtar, the most infamous Islamic extremist commander in [Africa](#).

Belmokhtar's scarred face has been known to western security services for around a decade. But the violent career of the 43-year-old one-eyed militant is much longer, spanning the major phases of the evolution of contemporary Islamic extremism.

The son of a shopkeeper from a small town in central Algeria on the margins of the Sahara, Belmokhtar travelled to Afghanistan in the early 1990s. Too late to fight the Soviets, he arrived just as international veterans of that conflict were turning their attentions to their homelands across the Islamic world.

Through the 1990s, Belmokhtar fought with the savage Groupe Islamique Armée, which spearheaded a brutal insurgency in Algeria, and then helped found a successor group, the Groupe Salafiste de Prédication et le Combat. He also established relations with Osama bin Laden, then based in Afghanistan, who as the founder of al-Qaida hoped to enlist the younger man in his new "global" campaign of terrorism.

The Cappuccino restaurant opposite the Splendid hotel in Ouagadougou after it was attacked by militants. Photograph: Wouter Elsen/EPA

By 2003, Belmokhtar had relocated to northern Mali, shifting easily across the porous frontiers and great tracts of sand, gravel and craggy mountains of the Sahara. Marriages with local women helped consolidate connections with local tribes, and with the smuggling networks they often ran.

But the sobriquet "Marlboro Man" – frequently used by local journalists and a reference to Belmokhtar's alleged role in cigarette smuggling – may be misplaced.

"The tobacco allegations are baseless propaganda," [said Ould Salem Lemine](#), a French journalist and expert on militancy in the region. "Belmokhtar is an utterly committed, puritanical, fanatic and burned truckloads of cigarettes because he believes smoking is a sin. Anyway, it is easier and more lucrative to smuggle spare parts, petrol and grain, and that's what he made money with."

Former associates describe Belmokhtar as a rigorous but charismatic leader who wakes before his fighters, eats what they eat and shares in chores, Lemine said. This, and his rigid code of behaviour, means "local communities trust him more than they trust the local police or customs officials or anyone from the state".

When in 2006, Ayman al-Zawahiri, then the deputy leader of al-Qaida, announced the formation of an affiliate in north Africa, Belmokhtar was swift to align his own faction with the project. His hopes of leading the new [al-Qaida in the Maghreb](#) (AQIM) were dashed, however, sowing the seeds of a long-running feud with other AQIM commanders that eventually [led to his split from the affiliate](#) in 2012.

As Libya descended into chaos in the aftermath of the fall of Muammar Gaddafi in Libya, Belmokhtar, with his long-established networks, was well placed to exploit the guns and fighters streaming through the desert. He recruited, trained and armed hundreds of fighters, as well as earning substantial sums from kidnapping.

And when in 2012 Islamic militants [seized Timbuktu](#) after Mali was destabilised by a military coup and an uprising by ethnic Tuareg tribesmen, sightings of Belmokhtar were reported there. The veteran jihadi was also seen during fierce fighting around the town of Gao, in the east of the country.

Once French troops arrived to restore order, Belmokhtar, dubbed the “uncatchable” or “the unkillable” after a series of false reports of his death, retreated north and launched a [spectacular raid on a gas refinery in southern Algeria](#) in which 39 foreigners and 29 militants died. He was then rumoured to be in Libya, where he apparently narrowly escaped a US airstrike, then in southern Algeria, and finally back in northern Mali.

In November last year came [a bloody attack on a hotel in Bamako](#), the capital of Mali, that was also favoured by expatriates. This strike too was claimed by Belmokhtar’s group, now called al-Mourabitoun.

Then came neighbouring [Burkina Faso](#). Last weekend, his fighters announced that the Ouagadougou attack was revenge “against the crusaders and the unbeliever French”, the former colonial overlords in Belmokhtar’s homeland.

As well as the growing geographic reach of AQIM, the Ouagadougou operation emphasised the importance of the contacts and knowledge Belmokhtar has gained over years in the region. Though the militants no longer control vast swaths of unpopulated land, they clearly retain enough support in towns and cities to organise relatively sophisticated attacks. Last weekend’s attack might have used contacts outside the militant movement too, experts believe.

A tribute rally for the victims of Ouagadougou in front of the Burkina Faso embassy in Rabat, Morocco. Photograph: Abdelhak Senna/EPA

“It is very possible that [the attack] used criminal networks and tribal connections. The nexus between terrorism and crime is often through tribes or clans,” said Virginia Comolli, an expert in jihadism in the [Sahel](#) at the International Institute for Strategic Studies, London.

Attackers appear to have been carefully chosen to show support among particular constituencies, analysts believe. In Bamako, the killers came from Mali itself. In Ouagadougou, the three militants who died included an Arab, a Tuareg and one man from the semi-nomadic Fulani, who live across much of the Sahel.

“Belmokhtar hopes to show that his group is made up of locals, not Algerians, Egyptians or Libyans or other outsiders. He is appealing to these communities that see themselves as marginalised,” said Lemine.

Almost all the attackers in recent strikes claimed by al-Mourabitoun have been in their late teens or early 20s too, and so part of the vast constituency of young males in the region, other analysts point out.

One key factor in the upsurge of recent violence may be the rivalry between al-

Qaida and Islamic State, which in the 18 months since its leader, Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi, declared a new caliphate based in the Iraqi city of Mosul has stolen the limelight from the older extremist organisation across much of the Islamic world.

Though leaders of Boko Haram, the group based in north-eastern Nigeria, have pledged allegiance to al-Baghdadi, the Sahel remains one of the few regions where Isis has yet to make significant inroads. Pressure from 3,500 French troops may also have brought squabbling factions together.

“The AQIM need Belmokhtar right now ... and Belmokhtar needs AQIM,” said Lemine.

The problems extend across the Sahel, and, as two weeks of widespread violence have shown, across much of the Islamic world. In a statement on the Ouagadougou assault reported by the [Site Intelligence Group](#), AQIM said bluntly: “This blessed operation is but a drop in the sea of global jihad.”

<http://www.theguardian.com/>

Attentats de Ouagadougou : récit d'une nuit tragique

Le 25.01.2016



Leur attitude est calme, les visages découverts et les kalachnikovs déjà sorties. Vêtus de noir, trois hommes marchent, déterminés, dans une rue perpendiculaire à l'avenue Kwame-N'Krumah au [centre](#) de Ouagadougou, ce vendredi soir 15 janvier. Devant l'hôtel Yibi, ils s'arrêtent brièvement puis repartent. « *Quand ils ont vu que l'établissement était en travaux, ils ont baissé leurs armes et continué leur route* », explique Eric Coulaud, le patron du Yibi. Il est près de 19 h 45 quand les trois hommes, surnommés « *Al-Battar Al-Ansari, Abu Muhammad Al-Buqali Al-Ansari et Ahmad Al-Fulani Al-Ansari* » selon la revendication d'Al-Qaïda au Maghreb islamique ([AQMI](#)), font irruption sur la terrasse du restaurant-bar Le Cappuccino, à une cinquantaine de mètres de là. Ils tuent les clients dînant à l'extérieur puis entrent dans l'établissement.

« *Ils ont commencé par [tirer](#) sur le comptoir avant d'abattre d'autres clients, au hasard. Tout [le monde](#) s'est jeté à terre pour se [cacher](#) sous les tables. Chacun attendait son tour* », affirme Jérémie Bangou, l'un des rescapés de la tuerie, qui aura fait 30 morts au [total](#), dont 26 au bar-restaurant. Ce soir-là, la salle et la terrasse affichent complet. Une cinquantaine de personnes dînent dans cet établissement prisé des expatriés et des Burkinabés plutôt aisés. Rares sont ceux qui sortiront indemnes de cet attentat.

Achever les survivants

« *J'entendais des gens qui agonisaient, mais ni [moi](#) ni personne ne pouvait leur [venir](#) en [aide](#). Ils tiraient à bout portant sur les hommes couchés qui respiraient encore* », se souvient Roland Kassoumina, également présent au Cappuccino lors des attentats. Pendant près de trois quarts d'heure, les vivants tentent de se [faire](#) passer pour des morts. Mais le feu commence à [ravager](#) l'établissement. Asphyxiés, certains clients réussissent à se [réfugier](#) dans les cuisines. « *Personne*

n'est venu à notre secours. En nous sauvant, nous avons seulement vu quelques gendarmes en civil », assure le Togolais. D'autres clients enjambent les cadavres et tentent une sortie. Ils seront tués sur la terrasse.

Autour du restaurant, les trois terroristes commencent à brûler des véhicules. Puis traversent l'avenue embrasée et font leur entrée dans l'hôtel Splendid, où près de 156 personnes sont présentes. Il est entre 20 heures et 21 heures. La cérémonie de vœux organisée par l'Agence pour la sécurité de la navigation aérienne en Afrique et à Madagascar (ASECNA) est terminée depuis une heure, mais une dizaine d'employés est restée sur la terrasse pour faire la fête.

« Pendant que nous dansions autour de la piscine, nous avons entendu des coups de feu », explique l'un des salariés de l'ASECNA. Nous avons réussi à nous échapper par la porte sud et nous sommes partis nous cacher derrière des mottes de terre. » Mais un de leurs collègues, un pompier, manque à l'appel. *« Il est sans doute revenu dans l'hôtel pour sauver des blessés », avance le capitaine Guy Hervé Yé, porte-parole de la gendarmerie burkinabée. En vain. Il est tué par les terroristes, son corps sera retrouvé entre les deux portes d'entrée du Splendid.*

Alors que d'autres otages réussissent à s'échapper en escaladant le mur arrière de l'hôtel à l'aide d'un drap et d'une étagère récupérée dans l'une des chambres, les terroristes retournent au Cappuccino pour « finir le travail » et achever les derniers survivants. *« Ils faisaient la navette entre le bar-restaurant et l'hôtel », explique une source au sein de la police technique.*

Mauvaise coordination

Vers 21 heures, quelques gendarmes arrivent enfin sur les lieux, au compte-gouttes. Ils informent de la situation par textos les unités spéciales qui se préparent. *« Avant de nous mobiliser, il fallait qu'on sache où l'on mettait les pieds »,* indique une source sécuritaire ayant participé à l'assaut.

Aux alentours de 22 heures, les forces spéciales burkinabées se positionnent autour de l'avenue Kwame-N'Krumah. Une quinzaine de soldats français du camp ouagalais de Kambou N'sin viennent en renfort. Des éléments des forces spéciales américaines complètent le dispositif. Au total, entre 150 et 200 hommes participent aux opérations, selon le capitaine Guy Hervé Yé.

Un périmètre de sécurité se met enfin en place, mais la riposte des autorités a du mal à s'organiser. *« C'était un vrai cafouillage, la coordination était mauvaise. Chaque unité voulait faire quelque chose et n'était pas informée de ce que l'autre entreprenait. Il n'y avait aucun chef chargé de coordonner l'ensemble, confie une source sécuritaire. Avant ces attentats, nous n'avions jamais fait d'exercice sur ce type de situation, seulement des simulations de prises d'otages, à l'aéroport. »*

image: http://s2.lemde.fr/image/2016/01/25/768x0/4853276_6_95b4_l-hotel-splendid-de-ouagadougou-apres_43ec2c24533061202997f1c0053a6d74.jpg



Pendant que les forces de sécurité établissent leur poste de commandement au ministère de la fonction publique, à l'intérieur de l'hôtel, les clients retranchés dans leur chambre attendent, sous leur lit ou dans leur baignoire, d'être exfiltrés. « Cette soirée s'est ponctuée de courts moments d'échanges de tirs et de longues périodes de silence pendant lesquelles seule la sirène incendie de l'hôtel résonnait. Ce qui était très difficile à [vivre](#), c'est qu'à chaque fois que les tirs cessaient on croyait que c'était fini. Mais ça repartait », raconte Jean-Michel Rollot, un des Français retranchés au Splendid.

Trajectoire de la balle

Dès 22 heures, les forces de sécurité veulent [lancer](#) l'assaut. Mais rien ne dit que les terroristes sont encore à l'intérieur. « Les forces spéciales ont tiré des coups de semonce pour [inciter](#) les terroristes à [répliquer](#) et ainsi [repérer](#) d'où venaient les tirs », détaille une source militaire. Pendant l'échange, un soldat burkinabé est blessé d'une balle dans la jambe. Une blessure qui permet aux unités spéciales d'analyser la trajectoire de la balle : elle vient du Splendid.

Mais les informations divergent. Depuis leurs chambres, quelques-uns des 150 clients envoient des textos aux forces spéciales. Certains évoquent une douzaine de terroristes. Bien davantage que les trois repérés quelques minutes plus tôt par les autorités. « Pendant que l'opération se préparait, nous avons reçu un appel de la hiérarchie réunie au QG de crise du ministère de la sécurité. On nous a dit de ne pas [monter](#) à l'assaut, car les terroristes étaient trop nombreux, ça serait fatal aux otages », explique une source sécuritaire.

L'information s'avérera erronée mais, tant que le doute persiste, l'opération ne peut [être](#) lancée. D'autant que la majeure partie des forces françaises, dépêchées en urgence de Gao, au [Mali](#), n'est pas encore arrivée. Un haut gradé de l'[armée](#) française enjoint les Burkinabés de les [attendre](#) avant d'envisager tout mouvement.

image: http://s1.lemde.fr/image/2016/01/25/768x0/4853277_6_8718_le-25-janvier-a-ouagadougou-lors-de-la_1475ab45ff50c13b01f32b832e5718f8.jpg



Pendant ce temps, de l'autre côté de l'avenue, les flammes ravagent le Cappuccino. Il faut rapidement [secourir](#) les rescapés encore retranchés à proximité du bar-restaurant. Un escadron se forme et récupère près de 45 personnes afin de les [emmener](#) au ministère de la fonction publique pour les premiers soins et les identifications. Mais les tirs des terroristes reprennent. L'escadron transportant les blessés est directement visé. Des blindés positionnés aux quatre coins de la zone d'attaque se replient pour [protéger](#) le convoi.

Alors que toute l'attention des forces spéciales est retenue par cette opération délicate qui se déroule dans un [environnement](#) chaotique au milieu d'une fumée épaisse qui ne laisse [voir](#) que la trajectoire des balles, les trois terroristes en auraient profité pour s'enfuir de l'hôtel Splendid, [traverser](#) la rue et se [retrancher](#) dans l'hôtel Yibi. La façon et l'heure à laquelle ils se sont échappés reste confuse.

Miraculeusement vivant

Entre minuit et demi et une heure du matin, le bruit saccadé des pales d'un hélicoptère se fait [entendre](#). Les forces françaises du Mali viennent d'atterrir à la base aérienne. L'assaut peut être lancé. Selon le capitaine Guy Hervé Yé, une unité américaine passe par l'hôtel voisin, le Palm Beach, pour [commencer](#) à [récupérer](#) les otages de l'aile droite. Français et Burkinabés font leur entrée par la porte sud. « Une grenade, déclenchée à distance, a explosé devant nous. Dans le hall, tout était brûlé. Il n'y avait personne et comme l'électricité était coupée, nous progressions dans le noir », raconte une source sécuritaire.

Etage par étage, les forces spéciales des trois pays libèrent les clients, sans [trouver](#) de terroristes. « Vers 4 heures du matin, j'ai entendu des militaires

français *appeler* mon nom du bout du couloir. Ils m'ont demandé *desortir* ma main par la porte de la chambre pour *vérifier* que c'était bien moi », précise Jean-Michel Rollot. Comme lui, les autres clients sont emmenés au ministère de la fonction publique, en attendant que le Stade du 4-Août soit prêt à les *accueillir*. Ils y resteront confinés jusqu'au lendemain après-midi.

Lorsque le jour se lève sur l'avenue Kwame-N'Krumah, les trois terroristes n'ont toujours pas été retrouvés. Où sont-ils retranchés ? A l'intérieur de l'hôtel Yibi ? Dans le bar d'en face, le Taxi-Brousse ? Dans la zone, les tirs sont nourris. Retranchés dans la chambre 204 du Yibi depuis près de trois heures, le patron, Eric Coulaud, et trois de *ses* amis, Ludovic, Agba et Kossivi, attendent toujours d'être sauvés. « *Ça tirait encore, mais ça ne nous faisait plus rien. On se marrait nerveusement, c'était un moyen d'évacuer, de ne pas stresser* », raconte Ludovic.

Dans l'immeuble en construction derrière le Yibi, une unité policière burkinabée attend l'arrivée des forces françaises pour lancer l'assaut. Mais peu avant sept heures du matin, des tirs provenant du Taxi-Brousse atteignent l'un des policiers : « *J'ai d'abord été touché à la tempe, mais le casque a amorti l'impact de la balle*, explique Basile Tindano, miraculeusement encore vivant. *Puis j'ai reçu une deuxième balle dans l'avant-bras et deux autres dans la main. C'était des rafales.* »

Le mystérieux client de la chambre 303

Les terroristes repérés, quatre groupes de forces spéciales se positionnent autour du Taxi-Brousse. Les trois djihadistes sont cernés. Sentant que la fin approche, ils tentent une ultime riposte avec leurs dernières grenades et dernières munitions de kalachnikovs. « *Ils sont sortis et ont tiré sur tout ce qui bougeait* », explique une source au sein de la gendarmerie. Une sortie qui a permis à d'autres agents, positionnés de l'autre côté de l'avenue, de *tuer* les trois individus, entre 7 et 8 heures du matin. « *Près d'une demi-heure s'est écoulée entre la mort du premier et celle du troisième terroriste car ils étaient lourdement armés* », poursuit-elle. De l'autre côté de la rue, Eric Coulaud et ses trois amis retiennent encore leur souffle quand, enfin, des militaires français et burkinabés les évacuent par un toit, à l'aide d'une échelle.

Plus d'une semaine après les attentats, de nombreuses questions restent ouvertes. Et d'abord sur d'éventuelles complicités. « *Des personnes suspectées d'être des complices des terroristes ont été identifiées au Stade. Quand quelqu'un sort d'un tel cauchemar et reste zen, téléphonant tranquillement, ça interpelle*, souligne une source. *D'autant plus que, sur les caméras de vidéosurveillance de l'hôtel, certains clients ont formellement identifié des individus discutant avec les terroristes, avant les attentats.* » Les *vidéos* sont toujours en cours d'analyse.

De même, les actes et les motivations des djihadistes à l'intérieur du Splendid restent flous. Trente-trois clients ont été blessés, un seul a été tué, le pompier de l'ASECNA. Plusieurs témoins évoquent des assaillants tirant surtout en l'air, sur le mobilier, n'ayant plus l'objectif de tuer. D'autres parlent du mystérieux client de la chambre 303. Un Indien faisant commerce de la noix de cajou qui aurait été activement recherché par les terroristes. Là encore, les conclusions de l'*enquête* sont attendues.

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Les indices d'une déstabilisation programmée du régime KABORE

24 JANVIER 2016



Le Burkina Faso est depuis près de 10 jours victime d'une série d'assauts. Entre attentats, rapt et attaques de garnisons militaires, Ouagadougou est aujourd'hui dans un état d'alerte maximal. Retour sur les indices d'une déstabilisation programmée du régime du président Roch Marc Christian Kaboré.

Le vendredi 15 janvier 2016, le Burkina Faso a connu trois (03) actes terroristes. Il s'agit de la tentative d'attaque d'une garnison de la gendarmerie nationale dans le nord du pays. Il y a ensuite l'enlèvement d'un couple australien dans le septentrion. Le point d'orgue de cette journée a été l'attaque meurtrière du Splendid Hôtel et du Café bar le Cappuccino. Bilan 29 morts et une cinquantaine de blessés. Une semaine jour pour jour après, le peuple burkinabè qui n'a pas encore fini de panser les plaies des attaques du 15 janvier 2016 se réveille avec une nouvelle très inquiétante. Des individus armés ont fait une incursion contre un dépôt d'armes et de munitions près de Ouagadougou ce vendredi 22 janvier 2016. Les auteurs de cette incursion seraient des éléments troubleurs de l'ex- régiment de sécurité présidentielle (RSP) dissout au lendemain du putsch manqué des 16 et 17 septembre 2015. Ces éléments (une dizaine selon une source burkinabè) ont pris par surprise les soldats commis à la garde de cette poudrière qui était une chasse gardée du RSP. Même si le bilan officiel de cette expédition ne fait état d'aucune perte en vies humaines, il est important de souligner qu'une quantité non négligeable d'armes et de munitions a été emportée par les assaillants. Donc, ces armes sont dans la nature, ravivant la psychose d'une menace d'insécurité permanente au Burkina Faso.

Un plan de déstabilisation du Faso?

Le moment choisi et les cibles visées de ces actes révèlent bien l'objectif des auteurs de ces attaques. Même si un lien possible peut être établi entre ces actes malveillants, il est clair qu'ils n'ont pas un même objectif. L'enlèvement du couple australien et les attaques du Splendid et du Cappuccino visent à ternir l'image du pays à l'extérieur, semer une psychose d'insécurité généralisée au Faso et montrer que les nouvelles autorités ne sont pas en mesure d'assurer la sécurité dans le pays. C'est l'acte 1 du plan machiavélique contre le Burkina. Les populations seront amenées à douter de la capacité du Président Roch Marc Christian Kaboré à assurer la sécurité des Burkinabè. Après le succès de l'acte 1, l'étape suivante sera de préparer les esprits à un coup d'Etat. Il s'agit d'un coup de force qui sonnera le glas de la démocratie en marche au Burkina. Pour cela, on a besoin d'armes en grande quantité. A ce niveau, les cibles sont bien trouvées : la garnison de la gendarmerie et le dépôt d'armes de Yimdi à l'entrée de Ouagadougou. Si la première tentative a été infructueuse, la seconde a permis aux assaillants de récupérer une certaine quantité d'armes et de munitions. Il faut souligner que le dépôt d'armes de Yimdi était la chasse gardée du RSP, la garde prétorienne du Président déchu Blaise Compaoré. Cette unité était une « armée » au sein de l'armée burkinabè. Elle était la plus entraînée et la plus équipée. Elle a été désarmée et dissoute après le coup d'Etat manqué. Mais des éléments de cette unité d'élite ayant fui avec des armes, sont toujours « en balade » dans la nature avec des armes sophistiquées. C'est justement pour renforcer leur capacité de feu que ces éléments sont venus à la charge pour récupérer des armes de guerre leur « appartenant ». Le lien est ainsi établi entre les jihadistes du 15 janvier 2016, les assaillants de la garnison de la gendarmerie et ceux de Yimdi. Les différents faits se sont produits presque au même moment et cette synchronisation entre les jihadistes supposés être proches du Général Diendéré aujourd'hui en prison et de Blaise Compaoré en exil forcé, n'est pas un indice à négliger dans l'analyse et l'enquête.

Les complicités internes et externes

Cette série d'attaques qui interviennent après une année de transition tumultueuse au Burkina, est révélatrice d'un fait majeur. Il y a beaucoup de complicités aussi bien à l'intérieur qu'à l'extérieur. Les attaques du 15 janvier 2016 montrent que des complicités existent sur place. Mieux, les assaillants ont choisi 3 h du matin pour opérer au dépôt d'armes de Yimdi. Ils ont opéré au moment où le couvre-feu battait son plein. Ces faits s'ajoutent à la tentative d'évasion du général Diendéré organisée par ses collaborateurs du RSP pour montrer que la dissolution de cette unité n'est pas du goût de tous les Burkinabè. Ceux qui bénéficiaient d'avantages mirobolants sous le régime déchu sont nostalgiques d'un passé récent mais déjà révolu. Dans la sous-région, l'opinion africaine se souvient du rôle joué par l'ancien président Blaise Compaoré dans la guerre civile qu'avait connue la Côte d'Ivoire, pays voisin du Burkina Faso et qui est devenu aujourd'hui sa terre d'exil. Le Burkina Faso servant de base arrière à la rébellion ivoirienne, avait fourni armes, munitions et camps d'entraînement aux ex-rebelles qui se retrouvent aujourd'hui dans la plus haute sphère de l'Etat ivoirien. Les conclusions de l'enquête sur le putsch manqué du Général Diendéré les 16 et 17 septembre 2015, établissent des complicités entre certaines autorités politiques et militaires du pays voisin. Fort de ces conclusions, la justice militaire burkinabè avait lancé un mandat d'arrêt international contre le président de l'assemblée nationale de la Côte d'Ivoire et ancien chef de la rébellion ivoirienne, Guillaume Soro. Ces faits, s'ils sont avérés, montrent à merveille que les auteurs du putsch manqué au Burkina Faso ont bénéficié des complicités à l'extérieur du Burki-

na Faso.

Le contexte dans lequel ces différents actes déstabilisateurs sont intervenus, fait d'eux des faits très préoccupants. Il y a quelques semaines, le Burkina a délivré un mandat d'arrêt contre Blaise Compaoré, le Président déchu. Il est inculpé entre autres d'assassinat et de complicité d'assassinat dans les affaires Sankara et Zongo. Les membres de la garde prétorienne de Compaoré veulent tout faire pour le ramener au pouvoir au Burkina. Pour cela, ils peuvent compter sur des soutiens de toutes sortes dans son pays d'accueil. Quelques jours plus tard, c'est Guillaume Soro, chef du législatif ivoirien qui est visé par un autre mandat en provenance du tribunal militaire de Ouagadougou. C'est pour l'écouter dans l'élucidation des circonstances du coup d'Etat manqué des 16 et 17 septembre 2015 au pays des hommes intègres. Le premier mandat comme le deuxième n'a pas reçu un avis favorable de la part des autorités ivoiriennes. C'est dans un tel contexte que sont intervenus les derniers événements déplorables sur la terre de Mogho Naba, chef des Mossis. L'enchaînement de cette série d'actes attentatoires à la paix et à la sécurité au Burkina constitue des indices d'une déstabilisation savamment préparée du régime du président Roch Marc Christian Kaboré. Faut-il renoncer aux poursuites judiciaires contre l'ancien président Blaise Compaoré et le numéro 2 de l'Etat ivoirien, Guillaume Soro pour avoir la paix ? Ce sont là des interrogations auxquelles devront réfléchir les autorités actuelles du pays des hommes intègres.

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Raoul Sumo TAYO: Boko Haram Dispose Encore de Sanctuaires Cote Nigerian

Comment comprendre la récurrence des attentats-suicides dans l'Extrême-Nord malgré la prise de mesures prises par le Cameroun et des partenaires

Le facteur climatique explique cette récurrence des attentats ces derniers mois. En effet, l'avènement de la saison sèche et l'assèchement de l'El Beïd, par exemple, qui sert de frontière internationale le long de la ligne de front, rendent faciles les infiltrations en territoire camerounais car du coup, les voies d'accès se démultiplient. Il faut que nos compatriotes soient conscients de ce que l'on ne peut pas placer un homme à chaque mètre de la longue frontière. Le Cameroun n'a pas encore les moyens de surveillance permanente des airs. Il est donc difficile de surveiller les 412 km de frontières, de Saguir dans le lac Tchad au Mayo-Oulo qui servent en même temps de ligne de front. Ceux qui connaissent la géographie de la zone savent à quel point il est facile de traverser la frontière Cameroun-Nigeria au niveau des départements du Logone-et-Chari et du Mayo-Sava.

Le Cameroun a fait le choix tactique du contrôle de zone et, en plus des patrouilles aléatoires, le Cameroun surveille prioritairement les couloirs de pénétration, car, dans un combat d'infanterie, l'on sécurise d'abord les axes. Vous comprenez donc pourquoi en zone sahélienne, cela devient compliqué. Dans le cadre d'un combat offensif classique, lorsque les hommes n'ont pas pour cible des forces armées classiques, il est facile pour les combattants adverses de se dissimuler pour passer les contrôles.

C'est malheureux de le dire mais les attentats de ce début de semaine se situent dans le cycle normal des activités terroristes. Si le gros des forces de la nébuleuse Boko Haram a été détruit, des forces, au moins résiduelles existent. La menace a changé de forme, car la secte est en situation de faiblesse capacitaire née de ses multiples revers ces derniers mois. Elle n'a pas autre choix que de se livrer à des attentats suicides pour obtenir un effet psychologique, un choc ou la désorientation qui affecte l'initiative, la volonté ou la liberté d'action du Cameroun. Et, il faut le dire, cette situation durera, car justement, les terroristes semblent avoir misé sur le temps long pour faire fructifier le chaos et lasser les forces camerounaises. Le choix de la cible ne relève pas du hasard. Il s'agit, pour les terroristes de faire désorganiser la vie sociale dans la région.

La porosité des frontières est donc la principale de la recrudescence de ces attentats ?

La sociologie du théâtre des opérations favorise également la survenance régulière des attentats de type kamikaze. En effet, l'on retrouve des mêmes peuples de part et d'autre de la ligne de front. C'est le cas, par exemple, des Kanuri, bâtisseurs de l'Empire du Bornou, qui étaient avec les Mandara, les plus grands razzieurs d'esclaves du bassin du Tchad. Même si la présence de ces peuples à cheval sur cette section de la frontière Cameroun-Nigeria est une opportunité de coopération, il n'en demeure pas moins vrai qu'elle génère de grosses contraintes sécuritaires, car elle favorise les infiltrations de combattants de la secte terroriste. De plus, la frontière n'est pas venue à bout des solidarités ethniques. Les combattants de Boko Haram

mettent à profit les similitudes culturelles avec le Nord Cameroun pour s'infiltrer et se dissimuler au sein de la population. Il faut dire que la zone a été infestée à 80% du fait de la complicité ou de la crainte des populations. Le challenge pour les forces de défense est, dès lors, de faire comprendre que leur sécurité dépend des forces camerounaises, non de Boko Haram. Ceci est d'autant plus grave que, « gravitant dans l'orbite du territoire (voisin), les populations perdent le réflexe de sentiment national, la solidarité locale prévalant alors sur la solidarité nationale », comme le relève fort à propos l'historien et criminologue camerounais Saïbou Issa.

L'armée camerounaise veille toujours au grain...

La géographie des attentats kamikaze montre cependant que les mesures prises par les responsables des forces de défense et de sécurité et les autorités administratives portent. Suivant les prescriptions du colonel Laurence, théoricien et praticien de la guerre insurrectionnelle et s'inspirant des réflexions du général Giap, les forces des opérations Alpha et Emergence, la police, le gendarmerie et les Comité de vigilance ont réussi à empêcher à ces terroristes d'avoir la mobilité, la sécurité et le temps pour leurs opérations en terre camerounaise, d'où la localisation des attentats au niveau des périphéries nationales, notamment les localités de Kangeléri, Kerawa, Fotokol, Bodo et les abords de Mora. L'analyse des actions de ces terroristes laisse cependant penser que ces attentats ont été initialement préparés avec des objectifs en profondeur.

Voyez-vous, comme les USA, et la France, par exemple, le Cameroun est en plein dans ce que Bertrand Badie appelle l'impuissance de la puissance. Dans l'asymétrie, le fait d'avoir une armée performante qui dépasse très largement en capacité et en savoir-faire son adversaire ne constitue pas une garantie de triompher. Il s'agit là d'un vieux dilemme de la stratégie : le puissant est obligé, de réussir à tous les coups, le nuisible peut, par un coup d'éclat de temps en temps mettre en échec le puissant. Les forces camerounaises de défense et de sécurité déjouent au quotidien des attentats grâce aux opérations coup de poing (rafles, ratissage, etc.) qui permettent d'identifier et de neutraliser les kamikazes avant qu'ils ne passent à l'action.

Le travail des forces camerounaises de défense et de sécurité est rendu difficile par le fait que la secte terroriste dispose encore des sanctuaires côté nigérian, à partir desquels il leur est facile de planifier et de conduire une attaque terroriste dans les localités frontalières camerounaises.

Est-ce que nos forces se sont suffisamment adaptées à la tactique des kamikazes ?

Si la stratégie de l'armée camerounaise contre Boko Haram a évolué en fonction du comportement de l'ennemi sur le terrain, c'est-à-dire de la prise en compte du retour d'expérience, j'ai l'impression que face à la survenance régulière des attentats de type kamikaze, l'armée camerounaise n'a pas encore pris. Les tâches opérationnelles permanentes des forces camerounaises de défense consistent, entre autres, en de patrouilles de jour et de nuit avec fouille systématique de véhicules et autres vecteurs, notamment les motos, chevaux, ânes, chameaux, la garde et sécurisation des postes de Commandement des zones et secteurs. Il faut aller au-delà. Il faut impliquer tout le monde, au-delà du bricolage discursif qui consiste en une mobilisation discursive induite du concept de défense populaire.

Identifier et neutraliser les kamikazes ne nécessitent pas la force, mais la méthode. Le pays doit donc véritablement prendre en compte le changement de mode opératoire des terroristes de Boko Haram. Les forces armées, qui, indiscutablement, ont gagné la première phase de la guerre contre cette secte terroriste. Il faut dorénavant impliquer davantage, non seulement les forces de 1ère et 2e catégorie, mais aussi l'ensemble de la société. Cela sera difficile car les terroristes ont exploité les failles de la loi portant institution d'une carte nationale d'identité. De plus, les élites locales ont travesti la belle initiative présidentielle de la gratuité de la carte nationale d'identité pour enrôler massivement des étrangers à des fins électoralistes. De plus, des fonctionnaires véreux ont ainsi délivré de nombreux certificats de perte de la CNI aux adeptes de Boko Haram ayant trouvé refuge en territoire camerounais. De nombreux indices indiquent l'existence d'un réseau de délivrance de certificat de perte aux adeptes de Boko Haram dans la localité frontalière de Mora, par exemple. La tâche sera donc rude et longue.

Dans ce contexte, quelle est la plus-value de la présence américaine au Cameroun ?

La présence américaine au Cameroun dans le cadre de la lutte contre Boko Haram se situe dans le cadre plus global de la lutte contre le terrorisme à la suite des attentats du 11 septembre 2001. L'appui au Cameroun et à la FMM devrait contribuer à prévenir la surprise stratégique, face à une menace toujours fuyante. Leur apport sera certainement d'une très grande utilité puisqu'il s'agit d'identifier les menaces avant qu'elles ne se manifestent. Les Américains apportent des moyens de détection et d'observation qui pourraient permettre de mener des actions offensives, localiser et ou traiter l'ennemi. Les Américains apportent l'expérience acquise en Afghanistan et en Irak, par exemple. C'est sans doute la raison pour laquelle ils ont un apport ciblé sur la coopération civilo-militaire car, le véritable centre de gravité des mouvements terroriste est le rapport aux populations civiles. Il s'agit d'amener les populations à se détourner des terroristes et à collaborer avec les forces de défense et de sécurité. Le choix de ce type d'assistance tient de ce que, compte tenu des dernières mutations de la guerre et du fait que Boko Haram utilise peu les moyens modernes de communication, il est donc nécessaire de privilégier le renseignement humain, le renseignement de contact.

Quelle place pour la force multinationale mixte ?

Tout dépend de l'évaluation de la situation, moment essentiel dans toute séquence de réflexion stratégique. Avait-on fait une bonne évaluation de la situation au moment où l'on pensait la FMM ? J'ai, pour ma part, l'impression qu'à partir d'une mauvaise évaluation, les pays de la sous-région ont pris de mauvaises décisions et s'y cramponnent. La question essentielle est celle de savoir que peuvent deux ou trois divisions contre un kamikaze ? Il faut relever que la force Multinationale mixte a été pensée au moment où Boko Haram semblait dépasser les capacités des Etats touchés, en témoignent les nombreux décrochages de l'armée nigériane. C'est dans ce contexte qu'avaient été définis le concept d'opérations et les règles d'engagement de la force multinationale. Aujourd'hui, le déficit capacitaire actuel en défaveur de Boko Haram et l'évolution du mode opératoire du mouvement terroriste qui en a découlé, pousse à s'interroger sur la nécessité de cette Force. De plus, je suis d'avis que la FMM ne peut que conduire des actions offensives de force. Or face aux attentats, il faut des actions en souplesse.

A quand la fin de cette guerre ?

Tout dépend des objectifs initiaux. Si, comme j'entends dire ci-et-là, le but de la guerre est l'éradication de Boko Haram, je crains que nous nous soyons condamnés à l'enlisement, à la « non limitation temporelle d'action. ». Dans ce contexte, il est craindre que les responsables opérationnels, pour donner un sens à leur combat, transforment la contre-insurrection en une politique spécifique, prenant ainsi l'outil pour l'objectif.

Parce que la notion de victoire en contexte asymétrique est relative, la modélisation de l'objectif devrait se faire en de termes relatifs, et non absolus. Envisagé de cette façon, il est des signes qui montrent que le Cameroun est en train de gagner la guerre. Je crois d'ailleurs que le point culminant de cette guerre a été atteint depuis longtemps et que de ce fait, l'on est, à minima, au début de la fin de cette guerre. Cela va certainement prendre du temps, mais il s'agit bien du début de la fin. Pour cela, la préparation de la fin doit faire partie des opérations. Par exemple, il faudra déjà réfléchir au sort des populations déplacées, des comités de vigilance, mais surtout, il faut déjà penser à la reconstruction. Sur ce dernier point, il faut éviter de retomber dans le piège de la gabegie et de l'administration des comités qui ont plombé la mise en valeur de la péninsule de Bakassi et des îles camerounaises du lac Tchad au début de la première décennie des années 2000. Les projets de reconstruction devraient être bâtis suivant un modèle éprouvé qui consiste en des allers-retours permanents entre réflexion et actions, séminaires et ateliers de travail d'un côté et recherche sur le terrain et production de documents de travail de l'autre, chacune des phases nourrissant l'autre réciproquement.

Mais il ne faut pas perdre de vue le fait que le Cameroun sera exposé, pour longtemps encore, au terrorisme. D'ailleurs, à l'échelle globale, comme le note Thierry Garcin, « le terrorisme restera pendant longtemps un acteur clé des relations internationales, mettant à mal les sociétés. » Cette menace ne disparaîtra certainement pas dans un bref avenir, surtout que la zone demeure favorable à l'entrepreneuriat du crime.

<http://www.camer.be/>

Propositions pour une double citoyenneté fructueuse

25 JANVIER 2016

Au Cameroun, le code de la nationalité, datant du 11 juin 1968, prévoit que quand un citoyen camerounais obtient la citoyenneté d'un autre pays, il perd automatiquement sa nationalité originelle. La loi de juin 1968 stipule que lorsque l'on perd la nationalité camerounaise, la réintégration (par exemple à travers la restauration) doit être sanctionnée par décret. La loi reste pourtant silencieuse sur l'identité de l'émetteur dudit décret.



Paul Biya, Président du Cameroun

Bien qu'il existe de nombreux éléments positifs dans la loi du 1968 (par exemple, elle est gracieuse à l'égard de ceux nés apatrides, art.12), elle tend à être discriminatoire à l'égard des femmes concernant l'acquisition de la nationalité par mariage. Tandis que l'homme camerounais peut transmettre la nationalité camerounaise à sa conjointe étrangère par le mariage, l'inverse n'est pas autorisé (art.17). Ce qui est encore plus problématique est la perte de la nationalité suite à la conservation ou l'acquisition volontaire de la nationalité étrangère comme ordonné dans l'art.31 (a). Une tentative par le parti d'opposition, le Social Democratic Front (SDF), en 2014 pour introduire un amendement à cette disposition n'a pas recueilli assez de soutien. La question de la double nationalité pour les Camerounais est controversée. Ceux qui sont contre avancent plusieurs arguments. Premièrement, la double nationalité provoquera la chute des recettes liées aux frais de demande de visa qui sont vitaux pour l'entretien des ambassades camerounaises. Deuxièmement, ils soutiennent qu'elle favorisera le « shopping juridique » par les malfrats, ce qui renforcera l'impunité. Troisièmement, dans une ère de propagation de l'extrémisme violent (notamment l'activisme de Boko Haram), elle pourrait favoriser l'insécurité en facilitant la mobilité de terroristes. Quatrièmement, les Camerounais de la diaspora ne sont pas indispensables au développement national. Cinquièmement, la double nationalité soutiendra les comportements antipatriotiques en raison de leur double allégeance. Enfin pour eux, ceux de la diaspora pourraient, grâce à leur pouvoir (financier et relationnel) revenir pour défier les titulaires de mandats électoraux. Cependant, la majorité de ces arguments avancés ne résiste pas à une analyse plus approfondie. Prenez celui de l'argent par exemple. Une solution pourrait être (pour commencer) de percevoir une taxe forfaitaire d'environ 50 dollars US (ou un autre somme jugée raisonnable) par an sur tous ceux qui désirent conserver la double nationalité. Cette taxe s'appliquerait seulement aux travailleurs et aux hommes d'affaires. Les Etats-Unis collectent les impôts de leurs citoyens et des détenteurs de la

carte verte partout dans le monde. Cela aidera à faire face à la courte chute qui pourrait résulter de la perte des frais de demande de visa des natifs camerounais détenant d'autres passeports.

Une solution technique à ce problème résiderait dans l'élaboration d'un moratoire qui sera appliqué aux demandes provenant d'un groupe restreint de pays, durant les trois premières années de l'amendement permettant la double nationalité

Deuxièmement, dans les cas où ont été commis des crimes graves, des traités d'extradition devraient être négociés afin que les criminels n'exploitent pas les failles. La négociation de ces traités est tout à fait possible. Dans les cas très graves, les services d'Interpol pourraient être sollicités aussi.

Concernant la lutte contre le terrorisme (en particulier les militants de Boko Haram), il est essentiel pour le gouvernement de forger des partenariats avec la diaspora camerounaise qui fournira l'indispensable savoir-faire, l'expertise et les réseaux qui pouvaient être développés pour contrer les groupes radicaux et violents. Une préoccupation majeure est liée au fait que les militants et certaines personnes mal intentionnées dans les pays voisins pourraient profiter des lois de la double nationalité du Cameroun pour demander à devenir Camerounais. Une solution technique à ce problème résiderait dans l'élaboration d'un moratoire qui sera appliqué aux demandes provenant d'un groupe restreint de pays, durant les trois premières années de l'amendement permettant la double nationalité.

Pour ce qui est du rôle de la diaspora, et en cohérence avec la vision 2035 pour le développement du Cameroun, il est fortement recommandé que les ambassades du Cameroun s'engagent à mobiliser les Camerounais de l'étranger pour contribuer à la réussite de cette stratégie de développement. Oubliez le sous-sol ! La plus grande ressource est le capital humain. Beaucoup de pays africains l'ont compris. Vingt pays africains, notamment ceux à croissance rapide comme la Côte d'Ivoire, le Ghana, le Kenya, le Rwanda et même le Nigeria, ont adopté la double nationalité parce qu'ils en perçoivent les gains.

Quant à l'esprit patriotique, il est conseillé d'entreprendre des initiatives comme le service civique, qui pourrait être implémenté et géré par nos ambassades à l'étranger. Chaque ambassade pourrait alors façonner et gérer ce programme en fonction de ses besoins propres.

Enfin, au sujet des préoccupations que la diaspora pourrait biaiser la politique locale, il suffit d'inclure une clause ou une disposition dans le projet de loi d'amendement stipulant clairement que les Camerounais désirant accéder à des mandats politiques, devront présenter une preuve de résidence dans le pays d'au moins 3 ans à l'intérieur de toute période de cinq ans précédant les élections en question.

Dans l'avenir immédiat, trois propositions sont à considérer pour répondre à la problématique de la double nationalité. D'abord, le pouvoir législatif devrait modifier la loi de 1968, pour permettre la double nationalité. Deuxièmement, le Président devrait créer une Direction générale des Affaires de la Diaspora (DGAD). Le directeur ou la directrice de cette instance coordonnera toutes les activités liées à la diaspora du Cameroun. Troisièmement, il est temps pour le Cameroun d'émettre des obligations (Diaspora Bonds), à souscrire par la Diaspora, semblables à ce qui a été fait en Israël et en Inde pour les faire participer au financement du développement du pays. Avoir une diaspora forte et engagée est central. Avoir une diaspora distante et désengagée est une recette pour la stagnation. Le code de la nationalité a été adopté en 1968 à un moment où l'interdépendance mondiale à l'ère de l'Internet était inexistante. Depuis lors, le monde a changé. Il est temps pour nos législateurs et le Président de se mettre au diapason de l'évolution de notre société.

Stephen Kingah, Université des Nations Unies, CRIS, Belgique.

Article publié en collaboration avec Libre Afrique

<http://www.afrik.com/>

Libya

Islamic State Pouring 'Gas on Fire' in Libya

January 22, 2016



FILE - An image purportedly shows an English-speaking IS fighter speaking to the camera at an undisclosed location.

Over the waning weeks of 2015, about 500 key Islamic State (IS) officials and commanders packed up and slipped away, leaving their posts in Syria and Iraq.

The move, according to a U.S. official familiar with the intelligence, was not part of any sort of retreat. Rather, it appeared to be a calculated move to bolster the self-declared caliphate's growing provinces in Libya, already benefiting from a steady bleed-back of rank-and-file Tunisians and Libyans who honed their fighting skills in the terror group's heartland.

While some U.S. officials see the militant group's Libya expansion as part of an effort to "buy time and space" in order to shift the world's focus from losses in Iraq and Syria, the threat is being taken seriously.

A U.S. airstrike this past November targeted and killed Abu Nabil, believed to have been the top IS leader in Libya at the time.

And in remarks earlier this week during a visit to Paris to meet with coalition partners, U.S. Defense Secretary Ash Carter admitted, "Libya will continue to be a challenge in the year to come."

Other current and former officials are even more wary, watching what they see as a force growing in size and in capability in a state already mired in chaos.

"It's gas on the fire," said Patrick Skinner, a former CIA case officer now with The Soufan Group, a strategic security intelligence consultancy. "Now you have the real nightmare because Libya's not going to get any better any time soon."

And it is a nightmare could look eerily familiar.

Growing force in Libya

“I would not be surprised if we woke up one morning, and ISIS in Libya had grabbed a large part of Libyan territory-the same kind of blitzkrieg on a smaller scale that we saw in Iraq,” former CIA deputy Director Michael Morell told lawmakers on the House Armed Services Committee earlier this month, using acronym to describe the terrorist organization, which also goes by ISIL and Daesh.

Part of the reason for that is how much IS's Libyan forces have grown, described by some as “exponential.”

A U.S. intelligence official, speaking on the condition of anonymity, put the number of IS fighters at “a few thousand,” though other Western and North African officials say the actual figure could be much higher, perhaps 5,000 or more.

“These assessments are still very fluid as numbers are likely to increase, especially in terms of foreigners,” said Jason Pack, a researcher of Middle Eastern History at Cambridge University and president of Libya-Analysis.com.

Already, evidence suggests IS in Libya has supplemented its veteran fighters from Syria and Iraq with new recruits from Tunisia, Mauritania, Sudan and Somalia.

And Pack believes the terror group is just starting to benefit from local support, something it has not yet enjoyed.

“In the last few months and weeks native Libyan participation in ISIS has increased notably, especially in sleeper cells in Tripoli,” he said. “Most of these Libyans are young under 30's and many under 20's, some of whom were suicide bombers in Benghazi and, most recently, in Sidra.”

Analysts believe that trend is only likely to accelerate if international efforts to broker a political settlement between the country's warring factions falter or if some of those groups begin to succumb to internal differences.

The Soufan Group's Patrick Skinner calls it a remarkable turnaround for a group that, despite its brazen propaganda, had been straining to make a real impact on the ground.

“Last year ISIS was struggling,” he said. “They were just one of a thousand tiny militias in Libya.”

But despite a lack of the type of sectarian tensions that IS used to its advantage time and again in Iraq and Syria, the group has managed to take what was once just a training base and managed to turn it into something more substantial.

“Sirte, ISIS's stronghold in Libya, looks more and more like Raqqa, its Syrian equivalent: A city under foreign occupation,” according to Levantine Group security analyst Michael Horowitz.

“The local branches of ISIS have spared no efforts to promote Libya as a land for jihad,” he added.

Expanding reach

And as more and more jihadists land in Libya, the IS militants' reach expands.

“They have an increasing ability to project military power out of their base in Sirte and they have a safe haven space to organize, plan and recruit,” former U.S. Ambassador to Libya Robert Ford recently told U.S. lawmakers.

And Skinner, the former CIA case officer, worries that it will not take much for the growing Islamic State base in Libya to make its presence felt via familiar smuggling routes across the Mediterranean Sea.

“Instead of people having to go through Turkey and then cut across to Greece, they can now literally just hop on a boat and go 160 miles to Italy,” he said.

“People are going to get across that we don’t want to get across,” Skinner warned. “And if anybody thinks we’re monitoring that on a individual level, that is crazy.”

<http://www.voanews.com/>

Terrorisme en Afrique : les groupes terroristes du nord du Mali contournent les forces internationales (ANALYSE)

le 22-01-2016

Depuis l'engagement de la communauté internationale dans le nord du Mali contre les groupes terroristes, ces derniers soumis à une forte pression ont opté pour la dispersion, avant de se lancer dans une nouvelle stratégie consistant à contourner les forces internationales et à frapper plus au sud.

Ces frappes ont particulièrement visé des hôtels de luxe, tels que le Radisson Blu à Bamako et le Splendid Hôtel à Ouagadougou, fréquentés par des occidentaux. Elles ont été précédées par celles perpétrées en Tunisie contre un hôtel de Sousse et un musée de Tunis.

D'ailleurs, l'émir pour l'AQMI de la zone du "Grand Sahara" s'est félicité de l'existence de brigades constituées de combattants noirs au sein de cette organisation djihadiste capables d'agir sans être repérables dans le sud du Mali.

Yahya Abou El Houmam évoquait, dans une interview accordée au site mauritanien Al Akhbar, l'attaque de l'hôtel Radisson Blu de Bamako, le 20 novembre, qui a fait 22 morts dont trois ressortissants chinois, et qui a été revendiquée par l'Al-Mourabitoune et l'AQMI.

"Nous disposons de katibas (brigades) constituées à partir de combattants originaires de cette région disponibles pour toute attaque sans que nous fassions recours à l'envoi de nos autres frères (arabes) facilement repérables dans cette zone", avait affirmé le chef terroriste.

Ces attaques, où qu'elles se situent, restent orientées contre des cibles potentiellement marquées par la présence d'Occidentaux, ou tout simplement de paisibles touristes.

La nature de ces attaques exécutées par des commandos à effectif très réduit ou des loups solitaires souvent très jeunes, montre que le terrorisme a été capable d'aligner dans les rangs une jeunesse fanatisée à l'extrême et convaincue du bien fait de la mort "sur le chemin du jihad" ou guerre sainte.

C'est là l'effet d'une propagande aux méthodes sophistiquées dont le terreau est l'internet à travers les réseaux sociaux. Un champ laissé libre où des fanatiques de tous les pays continuent à distiller leur idéologie et leur culture de kamikazes.

Cette propagande vendant un Islam violent incriminant la société moderne pourra être efficacement contrecarrée par la propagation d'un islam pacifique dont se réclame les peuples musulmans aujourd'hui.

Cette contre-mesure serait d'autant plus efficace si elle est consolidée par le respect du principe du droit des peuples de disposer d'eux-mêmes.

Toute ingérence ou présence de troupes étrangères en terre musulmane ne ferait que jeter de l'huile sur le feu en suscitant chez les peuples l'esprit de vengeance.

Cette tendance à la haine devient de plus en plus forte si ces peuples identifient les

forces occidentales à un "envahisseur chrétien" venu spolier les biens de cette terre d'Islam.

Cette propagande opportuniste exploite tous les maux dont souffrent la jeunesse des pays africains, notamment le désarroi né du chômage, la déperdition culturelle et la perte de repères, la criminalité, le trafic de la drogue et l'absence de politiques sociales capables de prendre en charge les besoins des jeunes.

Face à ces attaques, les pays d'Afrique de l'Ouest ont pris du retard pour répondre à cette menace asymétrique d'un genre particulier. Les services de renseignements des différents pays n'ont pas encore atteint un niveau d'échanges permettant de prévenir le pire.

Mais il semble qu'au cours des dernières années, avec l'appui d'autres pays, comme la France, ces pays ont franchi une étape importante de la mobilisation contre le danger terroriste, notamment à travers la mise en place de forces spéciales et d'états-majors tactiques de coordination et d'emploi.

En effet, d'aucuns constatent aujourd'hui, la tendance à l'internationalisation du terrorisme, notamment depuis la création de l'Etat Islamique (Daech), entité aux méthodes plus violente que l'Al-Qaïda et à laquelle nombre de factions terroristes ont prêté allégeance.

Depuis le nord du Mali, en passant par la Libye, la Tunisie et le Nigeria, jusqu'au Moyen-Orient, l'Etat islamique (EI) ne cesse de gagner du terrain et de réunir autour de lui des organisations extrémistes comme Boko Haram.

Une situation inquiétante qui n'a jusqu'ici pas encore suscité une vraie mobilisation de la communauté internationale. Fin

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Source: Agence de presse Xinhua

<http://french.china.org.cn/>

What a Mali—Burkina Faso Terrorism Coalition Will Mean for West



Following the recent terror attacks in Mali and Burkina Faso, both countries have formed a coalition to battle the menace. The prime ministers of both countries met in Burkina Faso's capital, Ouagadougou on Sunday to discuss this new coalition. This resolution came just two days after members of terrorist group Al Qaeda in the Islamic Mahgreb (AQIM) attacked a restaurant and hotel in Ouagadougou, killing 28 people and wounding another 50. These attacks follow a similar one carried out by the group in a hotel in Mali in November 2015.

The objective of the coalition is “sharing intelligence and conducting joint security patrols following two deadly and well-coordinated attacks in the region”. This coalition looks a lot like the one formed by fellow West African neighbours Nigeria, Niger, Chad and Cameroon in May 2014. It was then upgraded in June 2015 after Nigeria's President Muhammadu Buhari was sworn in. The Nigerian coalition has had its own challenges. The coalition has since last year been upgraded to an 8,700 strong joint task force team including Benin republic.

However, Ventures Africa spoke to Dr. Bolarinwa of the Nigerian Institute of International Affairs, Lagos Nigeria and here's what he had to say about the coalition. He expects the Mali coalition to yield positive results. “I believe the coalition would stem the killings that look to be gaining ground in that part of West Africa. It could also extend to other West African countries and hopefully bring positive results”. The Mali-Burkina Faso coalition seems necessary considering the fact that the AQIM, who were mostly operating in Northern Mali, now seem to be moving southwards to other African countries.

Al-Qaeda in the Islamic Mahgreb (AQIM) and Boko Haram

The AQIM terror group gained worldwide recognition during the Malian civil war between 2012 and 2013. Since then, it has carried out a series of random attacks in Northern Mali, apparently in a bid to create its own caliphate. The AQIM is an affiliate of Al-Qaeda and reportedly has links with East Africa's Al-Shebab. After the civil war ended, AQIM merged with Al-Mourabitoun, another terror group in Mali. Looking at their recent attack in Burkina Faso, they seem to be moving downwards towards other West African countries, a course which could see them come in contact with Boko Haram. "They need to be stopped now before they grow into something big like Boko Haram. Boko Haram started in Nigeria in that way before it spread to Nigeria's neighbours. This coalition has come in a timely manner," said Dr Bolarinwa.

AQIM released a statement after the attack at the weekend. "This blessed operation is but a drop in the sea of global jihad," the statement read. Boko Haram, which is affiliated with ISIS, has seen its activities in the Nigerian coalition countries greatly reduced. Despite the beef between ISIS and Al-Qaeda, a "global jihad" could hint of something more; a possible merger between Al-Qaeda's AQIM and ISIS Boko Haram.

<http://venturesafrica.com/>

Nigeria

Deconstructing Boko Haram – Analysis

JANUARY 25, 2016



Boko Haram.

Boko Haram's brutal war against the Nigerian state is now in its sixth year. On the surface, the militant group appears to be losing the battle and significantly weakened after numerous setbacks throughout 2015. The long-running Islamist insurgency, which began in 2009 in the northeast of the country, looks to finally be on the wane: militants have recently retreated into their rural heartlands after being pushed back from the urban areas they once controlled by a regional coalition of troops from Nigeria, Cameroon, Chad and Niger.

However, whilst it is clear that the group has been temporarily weakened, the threat from Boko Haram lives on due to one particularly worrying development: its pledge of allegiance to Islamic State (ISIS). The alliance with Islamic State means that an organization which previously confined its activities to the northeast region of Nigeria will now adopt a dangerous new outlook that extends across borders and into the wider region.

Over the past six years, Boko Haram has gained a reputation as a particularly brutal terrorist group, forcefully pressing its objectives via a wave of killings, bombings, and abductions across Nigeria. It gained widespread international media coverage in April 2014, after the kidnapping of more than 200 girls from their boarding school in the town of Chibok. This thrust the situation into the international public consciousness, prompting widespread outrage and strong condemnation from Western governments. Key developments and events such as this have been widely reported, however the background context to the insurgency has often been left under-explored. Whilst the conflict in Nigeria is often simplified and presented within the overall narrative of global Islamic terrorism, in reality the background to the militancy is complex and multi-faceted, with many inter-related factors being responsible

for the rise of Boko Haram and its sustained campaign against the Nigerian state.

The Evolution of Boko Haram

To better understand the insurgency, it is essential to go back to the beginning. Boko Haram was formed in 2002 by Muslim Cleric Mohammed Yusuf. Yusuf set up a religious complex consisting of a mosque and Islamic school with the initial aim of opposing Western-style education – which has been prevalent in Nigeria since the historical Sokoto Caliphate fell under British imperial control in 1903. The group set up its headquarters in the northeast city of Maiduguri, and became known by the local population as Boko Haram (loosely translated from the local Hausa language: ‘Western education is forbidden’). Officially, the group is called ‘Jama’atu Ahlis Sunna Lidda’awati wal-Jihad’, meaning ‘People committed to the Prophet’s teachings and Jihad.’

Based on its radical interpretation of Islam, Boko Haram’s aims quickly moved beyond just education and morphed into a wider political project. Its goal was to overthrow the Nigerian government and create an Islamic Caliphate, which would forbid Muslims from taking part in any political or social activity associated with Western society, such as voting in elections, wearing Western-style clothing, or receiving a secular education.

In July 2009, Boko Haram shifted its focus to full-scale militant insurgency, launching a campaign of violence in Borno state, killing hundreds of people in attacks on police stations and government buildings. The response from the Nigerian military was immediate and overwhelming: security forces launched a sustained assault, seizing the group’s headquarters, killing its leader and capturing or killing many of its fighters. At this point Boko Haram appeared to be decimated. However, its fighters soon re-grouped under a new leader, Abubakar Shekau.

Under the leadership of Shekau, recruitment soared and Boko Haram gained a notorious reputation for committing acts of horrific brutality, launching ever more ambitious attacks throughout Nigeria. In August 2011, Boko Haram extended its reach to the capital, killing 23 people in a suicide bombing at the UN headquarters in Abuja. The wave of violence continued on a daily basis – in January 2012, more than 100 civilians were killed in a single day of co-ordinated bombings and shootings in the town of Kano.

As violence escalated the government struggled to maintain control, resulting in President Goodluck Jonathan declaring a state of emergency in May 2013 in the three northern provinces of Borno, Yobe, and Adamawa. Troops were deployed to the region to combat the growing militant threat, leading to Boko Haram fighters being pushed out of their urban base Maiduguri and retreating to the dense Sambisa forest to the South, and the remote Mandara Mountains close to the border with Cameroon.

However, the insurgency proved difficult to put-down, and attacks have continued in recent years at an alarming rate. Militants have emerged from their rural hideouts to launch mass attacks on towns and villages – looting property, carrying out mass killings, abducting women and girls, and conscripting men and boys into their army. In April 2014, the group launched its most notorious attack, kidnapping more than 200 girls from a boarding school in Chibok. Despite a huge international outcry and ex-

tensive search by the Nigerian military, their whereabouts remains unknown and it is assumed that many have been kept as slaves or sold-off as wives to jihadist fighters.

In August 2014, Boko Haram announced the creation of a Caliphate in the areas under its control, establishing the town of Gwoza as its new center of power. This was followed just months later with a declaration from Boko Haram's leader Abukakar Shekau that the group had pledged its allegiance to ISIS, and should henceforth be known as Islamic State's 'West Africa Province.' Despite this development, the Nigerian military has continued to push-back the militants throughout 2015. Many Boko Haram fighters have been killed, a large quantity of weapons has been seized and hundreds of captives have been freed. However despite its apparent retreat, Boko Haram has so-far proven itself to be lethal and resilient – it still has an estimated 9,000 fighters, and has gained control of vast amounts of money and weapons. This all suggests that the insurgency is far from over.

Deconstructing Boko Haram

This timeline of events portrays a picture of a militant organization resourceful enough to overcome repeated attempts to destroy it. Considering this, a key question is posed: How was Boko Haram able to emerge as a powerful militant group with the ability to wage the sustained insurgency that has wreaked havoc in Nigeria for over six-years?

Firstly, its historical roots lie in its resistance to the West: sentiments which can be traced back to the colonial period during which Western ideas were first introduced to Nigeria. Many Muslim families in the northeast of the country have long refused to send their children to government-run 'Western-style' schools, suggesting that the current jihad is not simply a new phenomenon, but the latest manifestation of a history of religious rebellion in the northeast of the country. Many analysts have suggested that Boko Haram emerged from remnants of the Maitatsine movement of the 1970s-80s, which was led by radical preacher Mohammed Marwa, who denounced Western education and disregarded mainstream Muslim scholars. The group engaged in frequent violence and armed clashes which led to the deaths of thousands of people. It can be argued that Boko Haram has continued this tradition of violent rebellion in the name of opposing Western influences.

Secondly, the concept of a 'war against the state' is a key ideological factor behind the rise of Boko Haram. The militants have continually stated their desire to overthrow the Nigerian government and replace it with an Islamic Caliphate governed under Sharia Law. Boko Haram's strategy to undermine the government's authority has been clear through their choice of targets; for example the June 2011 bombing of Abuja's Police headquarters and the August 2011 bombing of the UN building. This desire stems from a dissatisfaction with the state's structures of governance, which the militants view as corrupt, Western-oriented and un-Islamic in nature.

Thirdly, there is a clear religious element behind the group's aims: they have stated their ambition to establish a Caliphate, and have implemented their version of Sharia Law in areas under their control. However, there is evidence to suggest that the majority of Nigeria's Muslim population does not support the activities of Boko Haram. Prominent Muslim figures have spoken out against the group, whilst the Nigerian Coalition of Muslim Clerics has publicly denounced it as well. So rather than being inspired by a purely faith-based version of Islam, Boko Haram can be said to

have manipulated the religion, using faith as a vehicle through which to pursue its political agenda, mainly the overthrow of the state to establish control of its territory.

Fourth, as with the emergence of almost all militant groups throughout history, there are strong economic factors which have played a key role in creating the conditions for Boko Haram to emerge and thrive. It can be viewed as an uprising not just located within religion and geography, but also within the wider context of poverty and economic underdevelopment. Similar with many other countries in Africa, particularly those with natural resources such as oil, economic growth has been accompanied by growing inequality. In this sense, Nigeria can be understood to be suffering from the 'Resource Curse' – a situation in which oil wealth creates corrupt governance, resulting in vast inequalities between regions and social groups, increasing the risk of poverty-induced conflict. Nigeria is now Africa's largest economy, yet it's also one of the continent's most unequal societies. In the north, 72% of the population live in poverty, compared to just 27% in the south and 35% in the Niger Delta.

Some may contend that this combination of poverty, joblessness, and despair at the perceived corruption of the central government have created fertile ground for the northeast's generation of disenchanting young men to turn to militancy. This, along with the use of religion by Boko Haram as a vehicle for mobilization, is a key reason behind the insurgency.

Lastly, the role of climate change can't be ignored. It is an increasingly important factor in conflicts around the world, and has been leading to a growing instability in Nigeria for decades. A 2009 study by the UK Department for International Development warned that climate change could result in desertification in the region, causing water shortages and crop failures. A more recent study by the US Institute for Peace found a 'basic causal mechanism' linking climate change to violence in Nigeria. Poor adaptive responses to climate change can result in severe secondary effects such as hunger, unemployment, and the loss of livelihoods, creating an atmosphere of social dislocation from which violent conflict can emerge. A report by Africa Review suggested that many of Boko Haram's fighters are people displaced from neighboring Chad and Niger as a result of severe drought and food shortages, some of who fled across the border only to be lured in by Boko Haram's alternative ideology.

The Lingering Threat of Boko Haram

In light of the factors behind Boko Haram's rise and continuing appeal, does the group present an existential threat to Nigeria? Some may argue that it does, suggesting that it remains an attractive proposition to young marginalized people, offering an alternative political order. However, in reality the group has so far been largely contained in the far northeast of the country, as the Nigerian military has been increasingly effective in pushing back the militants, whilst the vast majority of Nigerian citizens reject Boko Haram's extremist ideology.

New Nigerian President Muhammadu Buhari, elected in May 2015, recognizes that the current threat has not gone away, telling the UN General Assembly in September 2015 that terrorism is the "immediate problem" which the country must face.

Overall, the toll of the conflict has been devastating: almost 43,000 people are esti-

mated to have been killed since May 2011, whilst 1.2 million people have been internally displaced. Despite recent setbacks, Boko Haram has continued to pose a huge threat to civilians. According to Amnesty International, at least 3,500 civilians were killed by the group in the first 10 months of 2015, with over 2,000 massacred in the town of Baga alone.

Boko Haram's recent pledge of allegiance to Islamic State is a cause for severe concern, not just for the Nigerian Government, but also for the wider region. It could yet prove to be a significant recruiting tool for Boko Haram's leaders to revive the organization once more – this time with a new ideology and an extended mandate, to look beyond Nigeria's borders and into the neighboring countries of Cameroon, Chad, and Niger. This previously localized conflict is already showing worrying signs of change, as Boko Haram has shifted its tactics and staged numerous attacks in Chad and Cameroon, claiming at least 520 lives.

Given the complex factors which lie behind the emergence of Boko Haram, it is unlikely to be defeated through a military solution alone. If the underlying conditions remain unchanged, then the militancy is likely to lie dormant under the surface, only to re-emerge in another form. Therefore a multi-faceted long-term strategy is needed, one which also addresses the ideological, environmental, and economic causes of the insurgency.

This article was published by [Geopolitical Monitor.com](http://www.eurasiareview.com/)

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Al-Qaïda veut reprendre la visibilité perdue au profit de l'État islamique

L'État islamique est le groupe terroriste à la mode sur la planète, selon Aurélie Campana. «Aujourd'hui, le label payant, c'est État islamique. Il y a des effets de mode.»

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Les attentats survenus au Burkina Faso et au Mali ont montré une fois de plus la volonté d'Al-Qaïda de reprendre sa visibilité perdue au profit du groupe de l'État islamique (EI). Les deux groupes terroristes rivalisent de violence pour attirer les combattants étrangers et les sources de financement.

«Jusqu'à très récemment, le label Al-Qaïda, c'était payant. Aujourd'hui, le label payant, c'est État islamique. Il y a des effets de mode. Dans les années 2000, c'était Al-Qaïda, là, c'est l'État islamique», tranche Aurélie Campana, titulaire de la Chaire de recherche du Canada sur les conflits et le terrorisme à l'Université Laval.

De la concurrence «féroce» entre Al-Qaïda et Daech (acronyme arabophone du groupe de l'EI) naissent inévitablement les attaques et les attentats. «Ils veulent se faire voir pour attirer le monde et l'argent. Malheureusement, on est aujourd'hui dans une dynamique de surenchère de la violence parce que le seul moyen de se faire entendre, c'est de faire des attentats», affirme-t-elle.

Promotion

C'est dans ce souci de promotion que Boko Haram a prêté allégeance à Daech l'an dernier, se rebaptisant du coup État islamique en Afrique de l'Ouest. «Il le fait dans une recherche de visibilité, pour ne pas être marginalisé. Parce que Al-Qaïda l'est, marginalisé, même avec les attaques de Ouagadougou et de Bamako», analyse l'experte.

Al-Qaïda aurait d'ailleurs perdu des plumes du côté de ses allégeances, le groupe n'ayant pratiquement aucun contrôle sur ses alliés. «Tout le monde s'entend pour dire que le contrôle est excessivement ténu. Il a pu exister à certains moments, mais aujourd'hui, ces groupes évoluent en totale autonomie. Ils ne reçoivent pas d'ordres, d'aucune manière», tranche-t-elle.

Mouvement

Les allégeances à l'un ou l'autre des groupes rivaux se modifient aussi, pratiquement au quotidien. «On va s'en parler aujourd'hui et demain, il va y avoir beaucoup de choses qui vont avoir changé. C'est la principale difficulté», avance-t-elle.

Elle cite en exemple le groupe Al-Mourabitoune, qui revendique les attentats au Burkina Faso et au Mali. Al-Mourabitoune avait quitté, il y a quelques années, Al-Qaïda au Maghreb islamique (AQMI), pour prêter allégeance à l'État islamique. L'organisation a fait volte-face récemment, revenant vers l'AQMI avant de perpétrer les récentes attaques meurtrières.

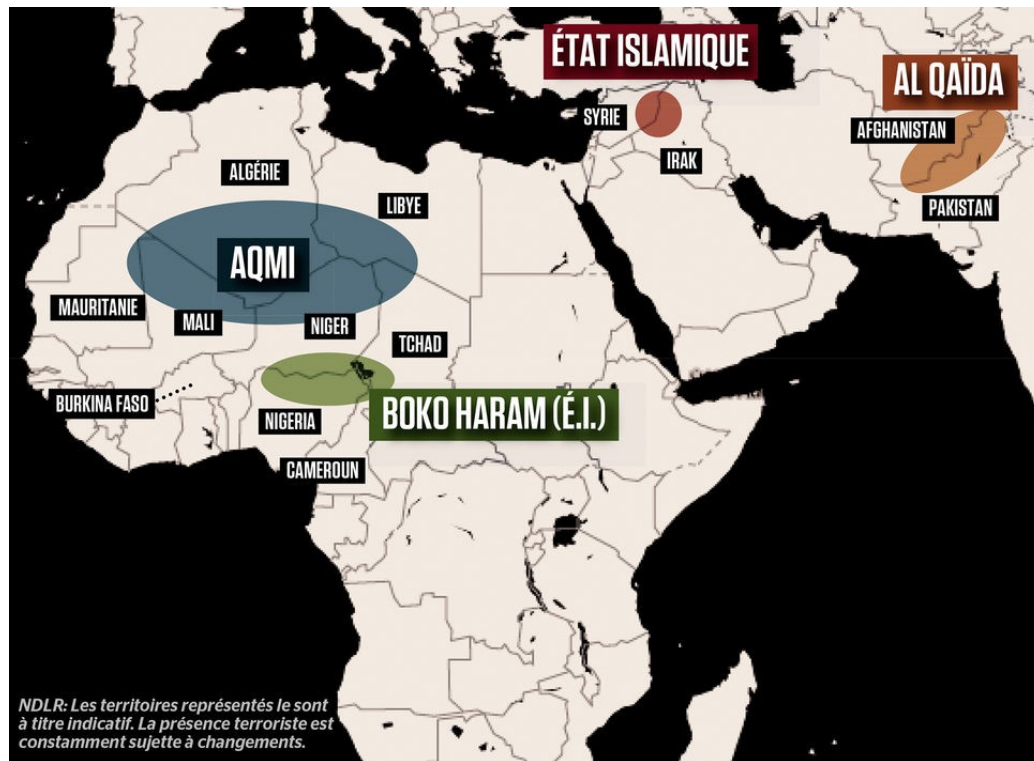
«[Les groupes terroristes] ne cherchent pas à dominer le monde. Ils cherchent à établir un pouvoir sur un territoire, la charia [loi islamique] pour certains. Certains y croient vraiment: ils sont très religieux et ils pensent que c'est le seul modèle de société qui devrait être appliqué. D'autres y ont adhéré mollement et y voient un moyen de réaliser leurs ambitions personnelles.»

«Oui, des attentats, il va continuer à y en avoir. Les attentats seront meurtriers comme à Paris, certainement. C'est très tragique de le dire, mais on n'est pas au bout de ça. Il y a un appel au loup solitaire, l'État islamique a formé des

gens et il est capable de les réintroduire en Europe sans alerter les services de renseignement.»

– Aurélie Campana, titulaire de la Chaire de recherche du Canada sur les conflits et le terrorisme, à l'Université Laval

Les 5 principaux groupes terroristes islamistes



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Somalia

Three things we learned from last week's al-Shabaab attack in Somalia

January 19, 2016



Members of the Kenya Defense Forces in Nairobi carry the casket of a comrade serving in the African Union Mission in Somalia, who was killed during an attack last week by Somalia's al Shabaab Islamist group. (Thomas Mukoya/ Reuters)

On Jan. 15, al-Shabaab's Saleh Nabhan brigade claimed responsibility for overrunning a forward operating base of the [African Union Mission in Somalia](#) (AMISOM) at El Adde in Somalia's Gedo region, near the border with Kenya. Al-Shabaab claimed that it killed "[more than 100](#)" of the company of Kenyan soldiers deployed in El Adde and took [additional hostages](#). It kept silent about its own losses. The [Kenyan government](#) and [AMISOM](#) acknowledged there were fatalities on both sides but have not provided further details.

Who are the players?

AMISOM is the African Union's longest running and largest-ever peace support operation. AMISOM was deployed in March 2007 to help protect the Transitional Federal Government in Mogadishu from its opponents, most notably al-Shabaab militants. AMISOM is [now mandated](#) to reduce the threat posed by al-Shabaab and assist the Somali government to expand its control throughout Somalia

Al-Shabaab [emerged in 2005](#) as a violent Islamist group intent on enforcing its brand of justice across Somalia. In late 2006, it focused on expelling the Ethiopian forces that had intervened in Somalia and later aligned itself with al-Qa'ida.

Why does this attack matter?

El Adde was the third AMISOM forward operating base that al-Shabaab has overrun in the last seven months. In June 2015, al-Shabaab forces attacked and plundered AMISOM's base at Leego, killing more than 50 Burundian soldiers and stealing equipment, vehicles and arms. In September, the militants stormed AMISOM's base at Janaale, killing 19 Ugandan soldiers and taking others hostage.

If Kenya did indeed lose more than 100 soldiers last week, the attack on El Adde represents AMISOM's bloodiest day since it deployed to Mogadishu in [March 2007](#). Regardless of how many died, however, the attack highlights some important lessons for AMISOM and its international partners.

What are the lessons?

1. The threat from al-Shabaab has changed, and its ambitions have expanded

Al-Shabaab no longer poses the existential threat to Somalia's governing authorities in Mogadishu that it once did, in its "[golden age](#)" during 2009-10, when it controlled not only most of the capital city but also most of south-central Somalia. Most of al-Shabaab's fighters were forced out of Mogadishu in August 2011; today they do not directly govern nearly as many towns across south-central Somalia. But al-Shabaab's fighters can still move freely, and exert influence over local populations across much of south-central Somalia.

Since mid-2013, al-Shabaab has become an increasingly [extremist and transnational network](#) with the stated aim of creating a caliphate across east Africa. It has therefore dramatically increased its recruitment and activities in [Kenya](#). Since then, al-Shabaab has fought to destabilize parts of Kenya – to take back what it claims are Muslim lands – and south-central Somalia in order to undermine AMISOM, reveal the weaknesses of Somalia's central government and its collusion with foreign forces, and control local populations.

In 2014 and 2015 in Somalia, AMISOM, the Somali National Army (SNA), and supporting militia launched a series of offensives and forced al-Shabaab out of about two dozen towns, as I'll discuss more below. Some al-Shabaab fighters moved north into the Puntland region while others concentrated in the Jubba River Valley in southern Somalia; from there, they continue to launch attacks.

Al-Shabaab continues to attack the region using [a range of military tactics](#). It has carried out suicide and remotely detonated bombings and commando raids on symbolic government and international targets in Somalia's capital, Mogadishu. It has frequently harassed AMISOM and SNA supply routes.

Its two major battalions – the Saleh Nabhan brigade and the Abu Zubair battalion, both named after al-Shabaab commanders who died in battle – have launched major attacks on the three AMISOM bases noted above: in Leego, Janaale and El Adde. In each case, al-Shabaab used large vehicle-borne improvised explosive devices to breach the base before invading with several hundred infantry.

2. AMISOM forces remain vulnerable, even as the war against al-Shabaab has changed

Because Al-Shabaab can usually avoid AMISOM and SNA forces, it attacks the African Union peacekeepers when and where it wants. The El Adde battle is just the latest reminder of how vulnerable AMISOM's forces are.

Over the past nine years, [AMISOM's war against al-Shabaab has evolved](#) from urban warfare in Mogadishu to a sprawling counterinsurgency and stabilization campaign waged across most of south-central Somalia. In late 2013 the United Nations Security Council authorized a “surge” of [over 4,000 additional troops](#) for AMISOM, most of which came from Ethiopia.

In March 2014, AMISOM launched four interrelated operations to degrade al-Shabaab: Operations [Eagle](#), [Indian Ocean](#), [Ocean Build](#) and [Jubba Corridor](#). As mentioned above, these forced al-Shabaab's fighters out of [about two dozen towns across south-central Somalia](#).

But here's the catch: Because al-Shabaab forces generally retreated without a fight, AMISOM couldn't deal a fatal blow to the militants' main combat forces. AMISOM chose to maintain garrisons and forward operating bases across most of these newly recovered settlements — which extended the mission's supply routes and stretched its forces.

Now AMISOM faces a shortage of needed specialist military units including engineers, logisticians, and aviation assets. For instance, in 2012 [the UN Security Council](#) authorized twelve military helicopters, which have never been delivered or deployed, leaving AMISOM with no helicopters. That means AMISOM can't strike back quickly when al-Shabaab attacks its supply routes and remote forward operating bases.

Meanwhile, AMISOM's [Kenyan forces have failed](#) to build strong relationships with the Gedo region's local population or SNA forces stationed nearby. That's what left AMISOM's forces blind and vulnerable to this most recent attack.

3. The propaganda war between al-Shabaab and Somalia's government continues

The battle at El Adde has also highlighted the ongoing propaganda war waged by both al-Shabaab and AMISOM and its partners. Each side usually presents very different versions of events.

AMISOM and its contributing governments usually release few details about battles if they've lost many troops; its international partners usually offer stock condemnations of al-Shabaab [“terrorism.”](#)

Al-Shabaab, in contrast, often quickly releases verbose and usually hyperbolic statements and photographs about its victories, sometimes even while still attacking.

During the two most recent attacks on the AMISOM bases at Leego and Janaale, al-Shabaab later released detailed propaganda [videos](#) depicting the battles and their aftermath. These have revealed far more information about these episodes than the information provided by the African Union — and have emboldened al-Shabaab's supporters.

Unlike some other African Union [peace operations](#), AMISOM's policy is to not release information about its fatalities; it leaves that decision to the respective contributing country. But these countries usually refuse to issue full details, fueling estimates of AMISOM's fatalities that vary wildly.

As a result, the subject of AMISOM's fatalities has become [very controversial](#) for

both the families of the dead soldiers and for its international partners. For the families, information about their relatives in uniform is not always forthcoming. Meanwhile international partners are asked to foot the bill for death and disability compensation payments without accurate information about those deaths.

The Memorandums of Understanding signed between the African Union and the AMISOM contributing countries stipulate that families of deceased soldiers should receive compensation of US\$50,000. These payments are made with money donated to the African Union by the European Union, through its [African Peace Facility](#). That makes it important for the families of the deceased, the international partners who pay the compensation, and the African Union to publicly recognize all AMISOM's fallen peacekeepers. Having accurate information would also help counteract al-Shabaab's propaganda.

What should Somalia and its allies do now?

The El Adde attack leaves AMISOM and its international partners with some difficult choices. How can they best reduce the threat posed by al-Shabaab? How can the African Union and SNA forces on the front lines be better protected? Finally, if AMISOM's contributing countries do not reveal the facts about these attacks, al-Shabaab's propaganda will continue unchecked.

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<https://www.washingtonpost.com/>

Terrorism in the World

France

More holistic approach needed to counter militant threat

18 JANUARY 2016

As Parisians reflect on the attacks that started with the assault on the offices of satirical weekly Charlie Hebdo a year ago this month, terrorism has once again reared its ugly head at the start of a year. And, this monster seems to have gained tentacles, with high-profile incidents in three continents within a week. This highlights the fact that violent extremism is far from beaten, despite vigorous military action in the Middle East last year that gave cause for cautious optimism. It was reported earlier this month that Pentagon officials said the Islamic State was in a “defensive crouch”, with the recapture of 30 per cent of territories that it had controlled in Iraq and Syria. The noose seems to be tightening on upper-tier militant commanders, with the announced deaths or capture of extremist leaders in Europe, the Middle East, North Africa and even our backyard in Southeast Asia. And then, the week came to pass with attacks in Istanbul, Jakarta and Ouagadougou. All of them occurring a day apart from each other and hitting targets that were popular with foreigners. A suicide bomber hit the Blue Mosque in the European side of Istanbul on Tuesday, killing 10 German tourists. On Thursday, Jakarta was rocked by a gun and suicide bomb attack that resembled the violence in Paris in November. All five attackers were killed, but two civilians died, and it was by the grace of providence that the body count wasn’t higher. Late on Friday, gunmen assaulted hotels in Ouagadougou, the capital of Burkina Faso, leaving more than 20 people dead. Four attackers were killed in gun battles with security forces. In the aftermath of these attacks, especially the Jakarta incident, Malaysian police have upped security in the country. On Saturday, Inspector-General of Police Tan Sri Khalid Abu Bakar announced the arrest of four people for suspected links with IS. What’s worrying is that one of the suspects was believed to be planning a suicide bomb attack in Malaysia. This would have been the first suicide attack in the country, but not the first perpetrated by Malaysians. The first reported Malaysian suicide bomber linked to IS was Ahmad Tarmimi Maliki. He blew himself up attacking an Iraqi police base on May 26, 2014. Since then, at least 17 Malaysians have died fighting for IS; six of them were suicide bombers. Scores of Malaysians are thought to be still in Syria and Iraq, and least 145 have been arrested since 2013 for links to terrorism. While the country’s security apparatus has so far been on top of the militant threat facing the country, a more holistic approach is needed. Arresting suspected extremists does not seem to be dimming the allure of seeking martyrdom in the name of a twisted ideology. A purely punitive and military approach, while necessary, is not enough. You can’t bomb or arrest an idea. More must be done to understand why these people are willing to die for a twisted ideology that hides behind a veneer of piety. It is tempting to believe that poor economic prospects are driving low-income, poorly educated young men to seek a higher purpose in life. Tarmimi was 26, and had worked in various odd jobs before dying. But, people like Noordin Mohammad Top, Yazid Sufaat and Dr Azahari Husin debunk that profile. They were well educated and could have held high-flying jobs, but chose to apply their intelligence and skills to organise terror. The fact the United

States' Federal Bureau of Investigation had designated these men as high-value suspects attest to their abilities. Their discontent must be understood and then countered. Social media sites that are being used to radicalise young people have been shut down or blocked. But the borderless nature of the Internet makes this approach a temporary fix. Perhaps engaging these sites to point out the error of their ways should be stepped up. Policy grievances that people might have and use to justify violent action must be acknowledged and explained by the authorities. This will take away the justification that the powers that be are ignoring or suppressing the grouses of the grassroots. Religious authorities should also be more vocal in denouncing violence, while promoting the tolerant and forgiving aspects of Islam. More effort should be made to highlight passages of the Quran that have been misinterpreted by extremists to justify militancy and to counter that with the proper reading of those passages. The government has announced several measures to effect this line of action. Malaysia has been chosen by the US to host a regional digital counter-messaging centre to fight extremist ideology. However, details on how this initiative is to be organised and deployed are still unavailable. Next week, Malaysia will host the International Conference On Deradicalisation And Countering Violent Extremism. In the aftermath of events in the past week, there will be much attention on the outcomes of this meeting. As a much-touted progressive and moderate Islamic nation with a multiracial society, Malaysia could, and should, play a leading role on the ideological front in the global fight against terror. Bombs and bullets will only kill extremists, but not the idea of extremism. The writer is NST's Foreign Editor, who breaks down overseas' happenings 121 reads More must be done to understand why these people are willing to die for a twisted ideology.

<http://www.nst.com.my/>

Who organised the attacks of January and November 2015 in Paris?

by *Thierry Meyssan*

New information, published by the Croatian daily *Slobodna Dalmacija*, alleges that the French state was responsible for the attacks which occurred in Paris in January and November 2015. Either the French authorities had previously infiltrated the groups which perpetrated these attacks, and chose not to intervene to prevent them, or else they were directly implicated in the organisation of the attacks. In any case, it remains to be determined who made these decisions, and whether or not he was acting on behalf of the Republic.



On the 11th January 2015, 56 heads of state and government met in Paris, in a street close the the Voltaire Métro station, to demonstrate their opposition to terrorism. Among them were the godfathers of Al-Qaïda and Daesh, such as Ahmet Davutoğlu.

According to the official version, the attacks of January and November 2015 in Paris were sponsored by Al-Qaïda in the Arab Peninsula (AQAP) —for the execution of the editors of *Charlie-Hebdo*— and by Daesh for all the others. The authorities have admitted that the *Charlie-Hebdo* attack was coordinated with the attack against the supermarket at the Porte de Vincennes, although, according to them, AQAP and Daesh are enemies. They also admitted that doubt persists concerning the claim that Amedy Coulibaly was a member of Daesh.

Reuters revealed that the weapons used in the attacks came from the factory of Crvena Zastava, situated in Kragujevac (Serbia) [1]. Both *Associated Press* and the *Palm Beach Post* believed that one of the Serbian pistols had been transported by Century International Arms, a Florida firm linked to the CIA [2], although the Press Agency – but not the *Post* – has since retracted the claim [3].

According to the Croatian daily *Slobodna Dalmacija*, the weapons used in the January attack against the supermarket, and others used during the attack in Novem-

ber, came from the Serbian manufacturer Crvena Zastava, and were moved to France by the same dealer, Claude Hermant [4].

Our readers will remember that in 1998, the Réseau Voltaire uncovered the surprising activities of the security contingent of the Front National, the Département Protection Sécurité (DPS). This unit had been compiling a list of personalities and had scouted their homes – apparently a small group of individuals within the DPS were preparing certain illicit activities. After a long period of complicated negotiations, we managed to obtain the creation of a Parliamentary Commission of Enquiry to investigate these facts [5]. The elements that we provided for the Assemblée Nationale, specifically concerning the double mission of members of the DPS - for the Front National in France and for the organisation of coups d'état in Africa - were quickly blocked by the Secret-Défense [6]. However, this information provoked a crisis and division within the Front National, so that finally, no-one was available to answer the allegations. Two years later, in 2001, one of the ex-members of the DPS, Claude Hermant, (mentioned above), admitted to the French daily *Libération* the existence of the « Action » structure within the DPS [7].

Here's a reminder of our work between 1998 and 1999. We had established that in 1972, the « Front National pour l'Unité Française » had been created in secret by Jacques Foccart, then responsible for Affaires Africaines et Malgaches at the Élysée, by request of President Georges Pompidou. The FN was led from the beginning by Jean-Marie Le Pen, who had played an important rôle in Charles de Gaulle's ascension to power in 1958, before turning against him [8], and by François Duprat, who had engaged with Bob Denard in the support of Moïse Tchombé in Katanga. Also, we had shown that in 1984, François Mitterrand and Guy Penne, Jacques Foccart's successor at the Élysée, had used secret Republican funds to finance the electoral campaign of the Front National in the European elections. We thus arrived at the conclusion that the FN was, and had always been, not so much a political party with the desire to exercise power, but a structure necessary to the Élysée, which it used first of all to control personalities of the extreme right wing, then to introduce them into the national political landscape.

Concerning the DPS, we have shown that it was directed at the time by Bernard Courcelles, also the bodyguard for Anne Pingeot, François Mitterrand's mistress, and by Gérard Le Vert. The DPS included a secret group of about 60 men, all of whom were linked to the secret services, and were mobilised whenever necessary to carry out secret missions, mainly in Africa. This is the group to which Claude Hermant belonged. The true directorate of the DPS was not the Front National, but the Ministry for Defence, with the DPSD, a secret service with almost the same name, whose mission was the protection of the armed forces.

Now the revelations of the *Slobodna Dalmacija* make sense. In January 2015, when he was jailed for « arms trafficking », Claude Hermant described himself to the committing magistrate as an « informer » for the Customs and the Gendarmerie. When asked by the magistrate for details of the weapons he had sold, he played the Secret-Défense card. The Advisory Committee for Secret-Défense, and then the Minister for the Interior, Bernard Cazeneuve, opted in his favour [9].

In summary, Mr. Hermant belonged to a structure which, under cover of the security unit for the Front National, was unofficially charged by the Élysée with secret missions overseas. Today he is paid for freelance work by the Customs and the Gen-

darmerie, still without any official status. According to *Slobodna Dalmacija*, he bought decommissioned weapons in Serbia and recommissioned them himself, and that these were the weapons used in the attacks of January and November. The Croatian daily also spoke of the results of a microscope analysis of a firearm which no-one has so far mentioned. Mr. Hermant also allegedly sold weapons to Islamists in Brussels. His trafic, despite being illegal, is covered by the Secret-Défense.

Let us mention that according to the US Press agency *McClatchy*, the Kouachi brothers, the killers of *Charlie-Hebdo*, were linked to the French secret services [10]. Finally, let us also note that Claude Hermant was imprisoned on the decision of judges from Lille, Stanislas Sandraps and Richard Foltzer, who were investigating his arms trafficking, and not by the Parisian judges who were investigating the attacks, Christophe Tessier, Nathalie Poux et Laurence Le Vert. Madame Le Vert is incidentally the cousin of Gérard Le Vert, mentioned above, Claude Hermant's ex-boss in the DPS.

In conclusion, either Mr. Hermant was working on infiltrating the terrorist cells who perpetrated the attacks, without their action having been prevented, or else – and this is less probable – his current superiors, probably in the Élysée, themselves participated in the organisation of the attacks. But it still has to be determined why, and in whose name, Claude Hermant's superiors acted as they did.

[1] “Some guns used in Paris attacks produced in ex-Yugoslavia's arsenal”, Aleksandar Vasovic, *Reuters*, November 28, 2015.

[2] “Dealer: Gun linked to Paris attack came through Delray firm”, *Associated Press*, December 10, 2015. «Dealer: Gun linked to Paris attack came through Delray firm», Pat Beall, John Pacenti & Mike Stucka, *Palm Beach Post*, December 10, 2015.

[3] “Correction: Serbia-Paris-Guns story”, Jovana Gec & Dusan Stojanovic, *Associated Press*, December 18, 2015.

[4] «Oružje za Charlie Hebdo prodao hrvatski branitelj», Marijo Kavain, *Slobodna Dalmacija*, 11 janvier 2016. Version française : « Les armes pour Charlie-Hebdo ont été vendues par un ex-combattant volontaire croate », Traduction Svetlana Maksovic, *Réseau Voltaire*, 14 janvier 2016.

[5] You will find [here](#) extracts from the report presented by the Réseau Voltaire to the parliamentarians, [here](#) the text of the parliamentary hearings, and [here](#) the text of the parliamentary report. In French.

[6] *La Françafrique, le plus long scandale de la République*, de François-Xavier Verschave (Stock, 1998).

[7] «Un ancien du DPS révèle à "Libération" les activités de déstabilisation et d'infiltration menées en France et en Afrique», par Renaud Dely et Karl Laske, *Libération*, 6 juin 2001.

[8] « Quand le stay-behind portait De Gaulle au pouvoir », par Thierry Meysan, *Réseau Voltaire*, 27 août 2001.

[9] « Les armes de Charlie-Hebdo couvertes par le Secret-Défense », *Réseau Voltaire*, 17 septembre 2015.

[10] “According to McClatchy, Mohammed Mehra and the Kouachi brothers could be linked to the French secret services”, Translation Pete Kimberley, *Voltaire Net*

India

Is India ready to fight ISIS?

The country's security apparatus is familiar with militant groups in Pakistan but Islamic State is a different kind of enemy.

2016-01-27

A day before India's Republic Day, over a 100 people aboard Jet Airways flight 9W 260 were hurriedly made to disembark and escorted to the boarding hall at New Delhi's IGI Airport.

Security personnel then entered the plane, bound for Kathmandu, in search of a "gift box" apparently under one of the seats.

After all seats and overhead bins had been checked, the plane was marked safe to fly. Minutes earlier, airport authorities had received a phone call saying there was a bomb in the plane.

The incident occurred a couple of days after a similar threat had forced a GoAir flight from Bhubhaneshwar to Mumbai to make an emergency landing in Nagpur minutes after take-off.

India has been on the edge in the days leading up to the Republic Day.

On January 21, NSG commandos and Delhi policemen suddenly surrounded the posh Khan Market area, leaving shoppers worried.

Luckily, it was just a mock drill.

Similar drills were carried out at a mall in Vasant Kunj, Palika Bazaar — an underground market in the heart of the city — and a food court near Nehru Place Metro station.

The security drills came amid a series of raids in which 14 suspects with links to the Islamic State were arrested or detained across the country.

If media reports quoting intelligence sources are to be believed, the terror group based in Syria has managed to set up a wing called Ansar-ut Tawhid fi Bilal al-Hind (AuT) in India.

Muddabir Mushtaq Sheikh, who was reportedly appointed the chief of this outfit, was arrested during the crackdown.

The Islamic State was reportedly planning to attack malls and shopping complexes, including Select Citywalk, DLF Promenade and the Great India Place.

High level of security in the Indian capital is not uncommon ahead of the January 26 parade or Independence Day celebrations on August 15.

Para-military forces are deployed across the city, security blockades are set up on

many roads to screen vehicles, high-rise buildings near Lutyens' Delhi are shut down and sniffer dogs are on the prowl in metro stations. However, drills, such as the one in Khan Market and other hot spots, are rare and indicative of an impending threat of a terror attack.

Unfortunately, what adds to the panic is India's perennial problem of hoax calls. As it turned out, the forced landing of the GoAir flight in Nagpur was a result of a hoax call by a suspect in Pune. As was the call that led to the Jet flight inspection.

There are many existing challenges India faces in fighting terror. For example, the Pathankot attack in early January, which took place despite intelligence warnings, shows how things can go wrong. As is the trend, the Pathankot attack, like most terror strikes in India, was also traced to Pakistan.

India's security apparatus is familiar with militant groups in Pakistan, such as Lashkar-e-Taiba and Jaish-e-Mohammed, but the Islamic State is a different kind of enemy.

Unlike any other terror organisations, Islamic State has a global footprint. The group wants to carve out an Islamic Caliphate that extends from large parts of Asia (including India) to Spain and North Africa.

It sells the idea of a "Golden Caliphate" to entice youngsters around the world to join hands in bringing back the "glory days of Islam". They use literature that celebrates "great Islamic conquests" and romanticises the caliphate.

India needs to plan a strategy that can counter Islamic State's propaganda. It is worrying that Islamic State's activities have been reported in neighbouring Bangladesh, Pakistan, and Afghanistan.

In fact, the latest edition of Islamic State's magazine, *Dabiq*, claims that militants in Kashmir have pledged allegiance to their "caliphate". Hafeez Saeed Khan, who defected from the Pakistani Taliban to Islamic State, in an interview to the magazine said that the group is set to expand to Kashmir.

While there is no evidence of the presence of Islamic State in Kashmir, flags and posters have been seen on a few occasions during protests. The legitimacy of Islamic State's claims are debatable but the danger this global terror group poses cannot be denied.

The group has managed to carry out brazen attacks, such as the recent one in Jakarta, despite suffering many losses in Syria.

Its military prowess in Syria and Iraq is believed to be slowly withering in the face of the Russian, US and European airstrikes. But that has not stopped their savvy online propaganda to inspire lone-wolf attacks.

It is essential that India follows the footsteps of countries such as Indonesia and Malaysia and focus on promoting de-radicalisation programmes.

The onus also lies on Muslim institutions in India, which are against the Islamic State's interpretation of Islam, to reach out to young minds who may fall prey to Islamic State's propaganda.

It is also important to note that an Islamic State's attack in India will feed the ultra-nationalist Hindu narrative, which is anti-Muslim in essence and ignorant of the politics in Middle East and the complexities of Islam.

The formation of so-called "Dharma Sena" in the state of Uttar Pradesh is clear proof of how right-wing groups will use the fear of Islamic State to spur anti-Muslim sentiment in the country.

The government, while taking necessary steps to crack down on those who have been radicalised, must also take strict action against such hate-mongering groups.

The discourse on Islamic State should not be allowed to creep into the religious fault lines of the country.

<http://www.dailyo.in/politics/>

Indonesia

Jail to jihad: Indonesian prisons a breeding ground for militancy

18 Jan 2016



Romeo Hacad | AFP | Getty Images

Indonesia's Cipinang prison in the capital city Jakarta.

Afif was an inmate in a high-security Indonesian jail when he transformed from aspiring radical Islamist to soldier for Islamic State, ready to sacrifice his life for a group based thousands of miles away in the Middle East.

His journey ended with his death last week on a busy intersection in central Jakarta, after the gun and suicide bomb attack he launched with three other militants that brought Islamic State's brand of violence to Southeast Asia for the first time.

Afif's graduation from jailbird to jihadi shines a light on a prison system where staff shortages, overcrowding and corruption have allowed extremists to mingle and emerge as determined killers in the name of Islam.

Security officials say Afif, also known as Sunakim, was sentenced to seven years in prison for taking part in a militant training camp in the province of Aceh, where Islam is generally practiced in a stricter form than other parts of Indonesia.

Once behind bars, he refused to follow deradicalization programs, the officials added.

Akbar Hadi, spokesman for the Ministry of Law and Human Rights, declined to comment on whether Afif's activities were monitored after he was released last August.

Police said he planned the Jakarta siege with the three other attackers, one of whom was also a former convict. Four civilians died in the attack along with the militants.

A report by the Institute for Policy Analysis of Conflict (IPAC) last year said that 26 prisons across Indonesia housed about 270 "convicted terrorists", but Islamic State supporters accounted for only a small minority of them.

National Police Chief Badrodin Haiti told Reuters that at least five jailed militants were believed to have been in communication with the plotters in the lead-up to the attack.

Couriers, cell phones

While inside Jakarta's Cipinang prison, Afif was one of some 20 convicts heavily influenced by fellow convict and firebrand Islamist cleric Aman Abdurrahman, experts said.

From behind bars, Abdurrahman heads an umbrella organization formed last year through an alliance of splinter groups that support Islamic State.

"They shared the same cells, they prayed together, they cooked together," said Taufik Andrie, Jakarta-based executive director of the Institute for International Peacebuilding.

Abdurrahman regularly spread "takfiri" doctrine, a belief among Sunni militants who justify their violence by branding others as infidels, through his sermons and lectures.

Abdurrahman was moved to a maximum security prison in Nusakambangan in Central Java in 2013, but continued to communicate with Afif and a growing group of around 200 followers using couriers and cell phones.

A lawyer for Abu Bakar Ba'asyir, another high-profile radical inmate at Nusakambangan, told Reuters it is easy to convey messages to the outside world from inside prison.

"Any kind of visitor is allowed and even if they don't exchange any cell phones, there is still an exchange of information and the visitor can interpret that," said Achmad Michdan.

Social media a key tool

Experts say radical inmates like Abdurrahman still get away with disseminating sermons by email, Facebook, and hard copies. Despite being behind bars, Abdurrahman was able to make an online pledge of allegiance to Islamic State in 2014.

"Those with more radical thinking can also hold religious sermons on a regular basis and it is very easy to convey radical ideas to others," said Farihin, a former militant who participated in a government deradicalization program during his time in a prison in Palu on the island of Sulawesi.

Indonesia's counter-terrorism chief, Saud Usman Nasution, told Reuters in November that prison officials were unable to halt this type of communication because of overcrowding.

"We are aware that there is a problem with convicts being allowed to communicate using the Internet and cell phones. There is definitely room for improvement," said Ministry of Law and Human Rights spokesman Hadi, adding that inmates cannot be forced to join deradicalization programs.

Experts say access to social media and messaging apps like Telegram is a large part of the problem.

Police believe the alleged mastermind of the Jakarta attack, an Indonesian fighting with Islamic State in Syria called Bahrin Naim, used social media to communicate his radical ideas to followers in Indonesia.

He may also have transferred thousands of dollars to accounts here, police said.

Since the attack, Indonesia has blocked websites and sent letters to social media networks Twitter, Facebook and Telegram, asking them to take down radical content.

Indonesia: The Muslim country ISIS considers un-Islamic

January 18, 2016



ISIS a deadly new threat to Indonesia 03:06

Story highlights

- After terror attacks in Jakarta, authorities warn that ISIS represents new generation of terrorists
- Indonesia police chief says that unlike al Qaeda, ISIS legitimizes the murder of fellow Muslims

Jakarta, Indonesia (CNN)Three days after ISIS militants carried out a deadly terror attack in broad daylight, Indonesians poured out by the thousands onto the streets of this tropical city for an exuberant day of recreation.

A stream of families walked, jogged, cycled, munched street food and enjoyed live music performances on Sunday morning. The festive scene took place within yards of the Starbucks that ISIS members attacked with suicide bombs and grenades on January 14.

The happy procession on Sunday was not specifically a response to the deadliest terror attack Jakarta has seen in six years, which killed at least 4 civilian bystanders and wounded at least 25 people.

For years every weekend, this teeming, steamy city closes vehicular traffic on several main boulevards as part of an initiative called "Car Free Day." But there was a spirit of defiance among many residents of the capital this weekend.



Jakarta defiant to terror after attacks 02:03

"This Sunday I'm quite happy, because look, everybody's here," said Rainier Daulay, an Indonesian hotel owner who took a break from exercising on his bicycle to smoke a cigarette.

"We don't care about terrorism."

He stood near a police traffic control booth that had been attacked by ISIS militants on Thursday. The battle-scarred structure was now decorated with the colors of the Indonesian flag as well as slogans that translated as "Brave Indonesia, Peaceful Indonesia."

In front of the Starbucks, still gutted and burned on the inside from the attack, men dressed in traditional costumes and skull and feather head-dresses danced with spears to the beat of a drum in a show of Indonesian patriotism.

New threat

Thursday's attack did not approach the scale of carnage caused by the 2002 al Qaeda-linked bombing on the Indonesian island of Bali, which killed more than 200 people.

In fact, counter terror experts here say ISIS only attracts a fringe minority of support in the world's most populous Muslim country.

And yet, law enforcement authorities warn ISIS represents a new generation of terrorists that could be more lethal than their al Qaeda predecessors.

"ISIS is more dangerous in the case of Indonesia...because they perceive Indonesia as not Dawla Islamiya, not an Islamic country," said Jakarta police chief Tito Karnavian in an interview with CNN.

Unlike al Qaeda, Karnavian says ISIS legitimizes the murder of fellow Muslims.

"I know some ISIS supporters personally," said Harits Abu Ulya, an expert on Islamist extremism and founder of the Community of Ideological Islamic Analysis.

"They are quick to declare that other people are infidels," he explained. "They accuse opponents of acting incorrectly to such an extreme level to justify killing them."

Friend of ISIS militant

Abu Ulya said for years he has been a close personal friend of Bahrin Naim, the 32-year-old who Indonesian authorities accuse of plotting the January 14 Jakarta attack.

"I consider him like a younger brother," he said with a smile.

Abu Ulya said he first met Bahrin Naim in their native city of Solo, where he led a local chapter of the Islamist movement Hizb-u-Tahrir.

"He was adventurous when he was in Hizb-u-Tahrir," Abu Ulya recalled. "Searching for answers including in matters of jihad."

A spokesperson for the group, Ismail Yunanto, confirmed to CNN that both men were members of the movement, which operates legally in Indonesia.



Indonesians mourn terror victims 01:39

"Then in 2010 Bahrin Naim was expelled from Hizb-u-Tahrir," Yunanto said.

At that time, police arrested Bahrin Naim for possession of ammunition. He was sentenced to more than two years in prison.

Abu Ulya said that in prison, "Bahrin Naim became more militant ... he got closer to other jihadis."

Abu Ulya insisted that it wasn't until January 2015 that he knew Bahrin Naim had suddenly moved his family thousands of miles away to Syria. The radical had joined

ISIS in Raqqa, the Syrian city that became the capital of the group's self-declared caliphate.

According to Indonesian police, [Bahrn Naim planned and ordered last week's attacks in Jakarta from Raqqa](#).

"His vision is to join, to unite all ISIS-supporting elements in southeast Asia: Indonesia, Malaysia and the Philippines," said Karnavian, the Jakarta police chief.

Communication from ISIS stronghold

Abu Ulya held up a Lenovo smartphone.

There, in a text messaging application called Telegram that he said was favored by supporters of ISIS in Indonesia, was a long series of messages exchanged with someone identified as Syam BN.

Syam is an Indonesian transliteration for the Arabic name for the Levant region of the eastern Mediterranean, which includes Syria.

Abu Ulya said several months after Bahrn Naim reached Syria, he contacted him via Telegram.

One of the final messages he received from the militant was dated December 3, 2015. Translated from the Bahasa Indonesian language it said "sorry sorry I was influenced by the boys." The message ended with two smiley-faced emoticons.

An undated photo of Bahrn Naim posted on his Telegram profile shows him dressed in a leather jacket, leaning against a wall decorated with Arabic flyers, holding a Kalashnikov assault rifle and wearing a Middle Eastern kaffiyeh scarf. The architecture of the buildings behind him is similar to structures one would see in many Syrian and Iraqi towns.

Since ISIS announced the creation of a caliphate around Raqqa in 2014, the region has served as a magnet for jihadis from around the world.

One ISIS-recruiting video shows a small group of men walking along a lake carrying weapons and an ISIS flag.

"We are your brothers from Indonesia who have come to join the Islamic state," says a man identified as Abu Muhammad al Indonesi. Speaking in Bahasa Indonesia, he urges fellow Muslims in Indonesia to drop familial and professional obligations to emigrate to Syria.

In a separate video, Indonesians demonstrate how they celebrate Eid al Adha, or the Feast of the Sacrifice, in Raqqa. And they repeat the appeal for Indonesians to make the pilgrimage to the ISIS stronghold.

Communicating via Telegram, Abu Ulya said he learned that Bahrn Naim took two wives and two children with him to Syria.

In fact, at Bahrn Naim's request, Abu Ulya said he informed the parents of the second wife that their daughter had gone to Syria.

"The parents are so sad losing her," he said.

In November, Abu Ulya learned that Bahrn Naim had been injured in Syria.

"He told me he was experimenting with chemicals and there was an accident," Abu Ulya said.

"Because of the accident, in his own words he became an 'office boy.'"

Around 14 weeks ago, someone identified as Bahrn Naim began posting blogs on a Google-plus account.

The articles include hand-drawn instructions on how to make an explosive belt, as well as lessons on making remote-controlled bombs and detonators.

Abu Ulya described Bahrn Naim as an "urban guerilla." He disputed the Indonesian government's claims, however, that his "little brother" was the leader of the ISIS movement in Indonesia, arguing that the 32-year old was too young to hold such a position.

However, several scholars of Indonesia's radical Islamist movements agree that with his social media profile and his presence in Syria, Bahrn Naim has become an inspiring figure for other young would-be supporters of ISIS on the Indonesian archipelago.

"Many people respect him even though he's very young," said Al Chaidar, a lecturer at Malikussaleh University in Indonesia's Aceh region.

"We can see the new role of a new generation of the jihadi movement," Al Chaidar added.

Security investigation

Last December, Indonesian police ramped up security before Christmas after intercepting communications that ISIS was planning "a concert." They interpreted that to be a codeword for an attack.

Abu Ulya told CNN that in November 2015 he received a similar message from his old friend in Syria.

"He once told me that he wanted to make a concert," Abu Ulya said. "The date of the concert is not fixed yet, but he told me just to wait."

Abu Ulya said it was far too early to conclude that Bahrn Naim planned the January 14 terror attack.

The militant's younger brother Dahlan told Indonesian media last weekend not to jump to conclusions about his sibling's alleged role in the suicide bombing.

"Regarding those allegations against Bahrn, I think we should just let the law take its course," said Dahlan Naim.

Journalist Mohammad Eyad Kourdi contributed to this report from the Syrian-Turkish border.

<http://edition.cnn.com/2016/01/18/asia/indonesia-isis-analysis/>

Iraq

Identifying The Principles Of The Fight Against Islamic State – Analysis



Fighters belonging to the Islamic State group in Anbar, Iraq. Photo from Islamic State propaganda.

JANUARY 23, 2016

2015 ended with Western countries perplexed by the challenge posed by the Islamic State of Iraq and Levant (ISIL). Some 14 years have passed since the attacks on New York and Washington on 11 September 2001. An American-led coalition had then turned on al Qaeda in Afghanistan and apparently left them routed and in hiding. Then, an intervention in Iraq, advertised as the next stage of the war on terror, resulted in a surge of violence and inter-communal strife, allowing an offshoot of al Qaeda to take root. This lasted for a few years until its leader, Abu Musab al-Zarqawi, was killed in June 2006 as Sunni tribesmen revolted against the extremism of the militants. Yet it never quite went away and returned to view in 2014. It took advantage of the civil war induced mayhem in Syria to establish a bridgehead before sweeping back into Iraq, pushing aside an undisciplined Iraqi army that appeared reluctant to defend Sunni areas. Only as it approached Baghdad and Kurdish territory did it meet serious resistance, though this required the return of western airpower to Iraq. ISIL is even more extreme than al Qaeda, dealing brutally with minority groups and Shia, and making a spectacle of the murder of hostages. Even worse, it has begun to branch out, attracting followers in the unsettled states of North Africa and mounting attacks against its western enemies, culminating in November 2015 with the destruction of a Russian airliner flying from Egypt and multiple attacks on Paris.

2016 therefore starts with governments wondering what to do about a pernicious threat that seems able to bounce back in a new form every time an attempt is made to stamp it down. Members of the international community that argue about much

else agree that ISIL must be eliminated, but, as yet, do not have an agreed strategy other than to intensify air strikes against its known areas of strength. Before a better strategy can be developed, the first requirement is an honest appreciation of ISIL's position.

The first point is that this is the latest in a line of extremist groups that share ideological roots. It can be traced back to the development of the Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt in the interwar years. There are significant differences between these groups, which matter to their leaders and occasionally to their followers, but they draw on similar themes and are often in competition for recruits from the same broad constituency. There is a large constituency in the Muslim world for radical policies based on exclusive and austere religious beliefs and a conviction that these must be defended and promoted through violent action. Many Muslims reject the underlying ideology and others accept the ideology but reject the methods. Some with moderate religious views still blame western governments for policies that seem to target Muslims. The numbers actively sympathetic to ISIL and similar groups may be a small proportion of the total but the absolute numbers are significant.

Second, although comparisons have been made with the past "isms" of Nazism, Fascism and Communism, Islamism as an ideology has important differences. It does not depend on a particular state or the advocacy of a particular charismatic leader. Many leaders have been killed, often by western forces, but the ideology persists. Even if ISIS is "eliminated" the animating ideas will live on. The idea of a Caliphate challenges existing national boundaries, so it is not nationalist as such. Although, it would be surprising if national factions do not develop over time as they did in al Qaeda. Moreover, in some countries it can appeal to the majority religion, while in others, for example in the West, it can only appeal to a minority of the population. There are no obvious borders to the influence of ISIL and its interest in mounting operations, but there are to its ability to establish a base.

Third, its durability and spread means that even if we could identify "root causes" of its more violent impulses, it is hard to see how addressing these could remedy the current position. We can regret our past colonialism and heavy-handedness as well as our support of dictators and mishandled interventions; we should regret our past encouragement of Islamism, because it was so anti-communist, as well as paying court to Arab regimes even while they provided the seed money for the expansion of the ideology. In addition, we cannot ignore the importance of poverty, racism and discrimination. These are all matters that need addressing and doing so may help to limit ISIL's future appeal. However, addressing these issues may provide little short-term respite, and in some cases may further destabilise an already unsettled region.

What, then, can be done? First this is a "war of ideas". The Paris attacks provide a compelling reminder of the things that we do value, including our core freedoms and the forms of innocent enjoyment that so enrage ISIS. It is important to demonstrate that our societies are not so soft and decadent that they are unable to withstand this sort of attack. Second, it is not only the case that the most vital ideological struggles must be those taking place within the Muslim world, for these affect the ability of militants to get support, but they also affect the ability of the militants to cohere. Groups that claim to be custodians of divine truth can find error easily and start fighting among themselves. Radical groups tend to fracture and this should be encouraged. Third, a cult prepared to embrace martyrdom is hard to deter by threats of

punishment, but they can be frustrated through denial – that is, being caught out by good intelligence, informers, protective measures and so on. This is especially true in societies where ISIL is unable to mount an insurgency but can try terror campaigns. It is impossible to prevent all attacks, especially those by “lone-wolves”, but the political effect desired by ISIL will only come about if they are regular, and so disrupt normal life. We should not set impossibly high standards for counter-terrorism but it is vital that there should be no sense of a persistent and irresistible campaign.

Lastly, ISIL wants to be a state and in the end that must be denied to them. That means addressing their ability to sustain the populations under their control by disrupting their financial and trafficking networks as well as harassing their leadership and degrading their capabilities. Other than Special Forces and advisory groups, Western armies are not going to enter Iraq and Syria soon in large numbers. If ISIL is defeated this will have to be by local armies, and for this to happen there has to be more conflict resolution, reform and reconciliation in the region, especially in Syria. That will take time. The strength of ISIL should not be exaggerated. The threat it poses can be minimised if not eliminated, but this is a long haul and there are no quick fixes.

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***Turkish version of this op-ed was first published at Analist monthly journal's January 2016 issue.*

<http://www.eurasiareview.com/>

Syria

Squaring contradictory demands of all players on Syrian battlefield will be herculian task

The Syrian peace talks, which got off to a start of sorts this weekend, are meant to be a uniquely Syrian affair. But in reality there is a host of outside interests also at the table, in spirit at least.

What began as a popular revolt against the authoritarian rule of President Bashar al-Assad in March 2011 quickly degenerated into a multi-front civil war that sucked in regional and global powers and created a chaos exploited by brutal jihadist groups.

Today, the war in Syria is as much about global politics and regional competition as it is about who runs the country.

On one side are Russia and Iran, the chief financial and military backers of Assad.

On the other stand Western countries, the Gulf monarchies and Turkey -- all of whom demand Assad's removal -- but each with its own priorities on the ground.

The one enemy common to all parties is the Islamic State group (IS), though they disagree on how much of a priority its eradication should be.

World powers also say they are committed to a diplomatic solution -- with everyone signing up to a timetable for the fledgling peace process at talks in Vienna in November and the UN last month.



Syrian refugees sit on the ground at the Azraq refugee camp in northern Jordan (Khalil Mazraawi (AFP))

But squaring their contradictory demands will be a huge task.

Iran will be particularly reluctant to abandon its ally, having sent large numbers of "military advisors" to Syria, as well as deploying its Lebanese proxy militia Hezbollah, which has lost hundreds of fighters in the conflict.

Experts say that Russia, despite its air strikes in support of Assad's regime, may be willing to see him go, but only if a replacement is found who can guarantee that Moscow retains its last foothold in the Middle East.

"If Iran loses Syria, it loses by far its biggest ally in the Middle East. If Russia loses Syria, it's a big geopolitical blow at a time when it's facing isolation," said Shashank Joshi, senior researcher at the Royal United Services Institute in London.

- Rising tensions -

On the other side of the conflict, the United States abandoned the idea of bombing Assad's forces back in August 2013, even after the regime crossed its supposed "red line" when it used chemical weapons against opponents in a Damascus suburb.



UN envoy for Syria Staffan de Mistura answers questions at a press conference after a session of peace talks with the Syrian government delegation at the United Nations (UN) Offices in Geneva (Fabrice Coffrini (AFP/File))

Washington has been reluctantly dragged into the conflict by the growing threat of IS, with US planes taking the lead in a prolonged bombing campaign against the jihadists in Syria as well as Iraq.

It has supported some "moderate" opposition groups, but most of these are focused on fighting Assad, and US attempts to train and equip anti-IS troops ended in disaster last year when the new force collapsed almost immediately and the program was abandoned.

Observers say the United States may be moving away from the demand that Assad must stand down as a pre-condition for talks.

That could put it at odds with its Arab allies led by Saudi Arabia and Qatar, which both arm hardline militias against Assad and tend to see the conflict through the prism of their competition for regional dominance with Iran.

The Gulf monarchies already feel sidelined by Western efforts to bring Iran back into the diplomatic fold since a deal on Tehran's nuclear program and the recent lifting of sanctions.

Regional tensions were further heightened when Saudi Arabia executed a Shiite cleric in Riyadh, leading to violent protests in Tehran. The two rivals are also engaged in a proxy war in Yemen.

One of the more inscrutable players has been Turkey, which has suffered terror attacks by IS but tends to view Kurdish separatists as the bigger threat.

Western governments have criticized Ankara for failing to seal its southern border, allowing IS to trade oil and receive supplies and foreign fighters.

(AFP)

<http://www.i24news.tv/en/>

USA

Pentagon: US Forces in Libya, Looking for ‘Worthy’ Partners

January 27, 2016



FILE - Fire rises from an oil tank in the port of Es Sider, in Ras Lanuf, Libya, Jan. 6, 2016. A Petroleum Facilities Guards blamed the blazes on attacks by Islamic State militants.

WASHINGTON—

U.S. military forces are on the ground in Libya looking for potential partners in what could soon be an expanded campaign against the Islamic State (IS) terror group.

"There have been some U.S. forces in Libya trying to establish contact with forces on the ground," Pentagon Press Secretary Peter Cook told reporters Wednesday. "Get a better sense of who the players are, who might be worthy of U.S. support and support from some of our partners going forward."

Cook described the U.S. contingent as a small group, adding they were in Libya "at the concurrence of Libyan officials."

While not the biggest fighting force in Libya, IS has been growing stronger there in recent months, cementing its hold on the city of Sirte and surrounding areas.

Growing threat in Libya

A U.S. official familiar with the intelligence recently told VOA about 500 key IS officials and fighters who left Syria and Iraq during the last several weeks of 2015 and moved to Libya in what appeared to be a calculated move.

Western officials estimate IS may now have upwards of 5,000 fighters in Libya.

"This is a situation that does cause us concern, and we're considering what our op-

tions might be going forward should that threat, ISIL, become an even bigger threat," Cook said, using an acronym for the terror group.

Cook's comments come just days after the top U.S. military officer warned the Islamic State in Libya posed a pressing regional threat.

"You want to take decisive military action to check ISIL's expansion and at the same time you want to do it in such a way that's supportive of a long-term political process," Marine General Joseph Dunford, chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, told a small group of reporters Friday.

"My perspective is we need to do more," Dunford added, saying key decisions about U.S. involvement in Libya could come within a matter of weeks.

The U.S. has already shown a willingness to strike IS in Libya, killing Abu Nabil, believed to have been the top IS leader in Libya, in an airstrike this past November.

Training ground

Islamic State has long used Libya as a training ground for fighters destined for Syria and Iraq, but increasingly it has become part of the terror group's expansion plans.

"It now is a destination," Levantine Group security analyst Michael Horowitz said. "The local branches of ISIS have spared no efforts to promote Libya as a land for jihad."

Like in Syria and Iraq, the terror group has taken advantage of large tracts of ungoverned spaces as well as political turmoil.

"The current fragmentation between and within rival Libyan political camps is also helping ISIS to grow by eroding trust and legitimacy in Libyan politics and politicians as a whole amongst a large swath of the Libyan population, especially the youth," according to Jason Pack, a researcher of Middle Eastern History at Cambridge University and president of Libya-Analysis.com.

Despite the presence of U.S. special forces on the ground in Libya, the Pentagon rejected the notion of sending traditional U.S. forces, or "boots on the ground," to Libya.

"Right now, that's not something that's under consideration," said spokesman Cook.

<http://www.voanews.com/>

Why Airstrikes Won't Destroy the Islamic State

January 27, 2016

In anticipation of the upcoming fourth season of our HBO show, which will premiere February 5 at 11 PM, we are releasing all of season three for free online along with updates to the stories. Today's installment follows up on a dispatch called Global Jihad, which explored the Islamic State's appeal in Europe and US airstrikes against the group. Watch the episode below:

Last spring, America's unofficial war against the Islamic State seemed to be in crisis. "The fall of Ramadi exposes Obama's weak Islamic State strategy," read the headline of a *Washington Post* editorial after the terror group captured the key city less than 100 miles from Baghdad. And that was before the attacks in Paris and San Bernardino set off waves of panic about jihadi attacks in the West.

More than six months later, the good news is that there has been some obvious progress since Ramadi fell. ISIS has endured significant losses, and despite ongoing clashes, Ramadi itself is mostly back in the hands of Iraqi security forces.

The bad news is that the biggest battles against ISIS still lie ahead, not only in Iraq and Syria, but in places like Afghanistan and Libya, where the group has spread. The chief question is where the armies to fight those battles will come from. Under President Obama, who was elected on a promise to pull American troops out of Iraq, the US has refused to provide the ground forces to fight ISIS in the Middle East.

Colonel Steve Warren, a spokesman for Operation Inherent Resolve—the military's name for its battle against ISIS—recently told reporters that the Islamic State has lost an estimated 40 percent of its territory in Iraq and 20 percent in Syria in the past year. That's higher than some estimates from outside the Pentagon, but even independent analysis shows ISIS losing turf over the past year.

According to a former Army Special Forces officer who served in Iraq during the last war and now works as a civilian in the country's Kurdish region, US airstrikes have been instrumental in rolling back advances from ISIS and changing the nature of the battlefield in Iraq.

"Nobody feels like ISIS is what it was a year and a half ago," the former officer said about the mood among anti-ISIS populations in northern Iraq. "Nobody thinks anymore that they have hundreds of trucks that are going to swarm out of the desert. Those fears are gone."

Still, airstrikes alone can't defeat ISIS, particularly in areas like Mosul where the group is mixed with civilian populations. It takes ground soldiers to clear ISIS out and hold ground to prevent its return; local forces had some success in the past year, especially when they had direct support from American airpower, like Kurdish and Yazidi forces had in Sinjar. But there is still nothing close to a broad coalition in the region that can translate tactical gains into strategic victory because many of the groups fighting ISIS, like the Shia militias in Iraq and the Kurdish peshmerga, are also deeply suspicious of each other.

And rolling back the Islamic State's territorial gains, however promising, only tells part of the story.

According to Brian Fishman, a fellow at New America and an ISIS analyst who's writing a book about the group, it's important to remember that the Islamic State is a "hybrid group."

"There are three dimensions in which ISIS has to be considered," he said. First, "how is it doing in the core areas of control in Iraq and Syria?" Second, "how is it doing spreading to the *wilayats* [provinces] outside the core?" And third, "how is it doing as a global terrorist organization, committing attacks across the international system?"

"In Iraq and Syria, ISIS is on the defensive from a year ago, but when it comes to the *wilayats*, they're stronger" Fishman told me. He also noted "reports" that they have moved a number of people from Iraq and Syria to Libya," adding, "to the extent that it's happening that's striking. That's the kind of thing people always worried about with al Qaeda."

Lastly, as a global terrorist group, the Islamic State has "executed that obviously very well in 2015," Fishman added, pointing to high-profile incidents like the downing of a Russian passenger plane over Sinai, which ISIS claimed credit for in its house magazine *Dabiq* and security officials blamed on a terror act.

Retired Army Colonel Derek Harvey, who served in Iraq as a senior analyst under General David Petraeus, believes there's been "some shift in [the Islamic State's] operational momentum," but that the significance of that change has been exaggerated.

"[Anti-ISIS] coalition and Iraqi forces have made tactical gains in Ramadi, Tikrit and areas around Baghdad," Harvey, who now studies ISIS as a researcher at the University of South Florida, told me. "But the gains are overstated because many of those areas are still contested by ISIS and the advances are disconnected from any political or security efforts from Baghdad or the coalition to address the underlying factors behind ISIS' rise."

Like Fishman, Harvey believes that the Islamic State's global expansion has been successful over the past year despite US and international efforts to keep a lid on the group. "Strategically ISIS is still expanding outside of Iraq and Syria," Harvey said. "[ISIS] still has tremendous resources, personnel, a recruitment flow of foreign fighters and leadership that for the most part is still intact and strong."

According to the Pentagon, as of December 15, the US has spent \$5.5 billion fighting the Islamic State since August 2014, the month the unofficial war began. That's an average cost of \$11 million per day. In statements last week, Army spokesman Colonel Steve Warren gave some details on where the money's gone.

"So far in the air campaign, we have flown 65,492 sorties, and we have conducted 9,782 airstrikes," the colonel said of the American-led coalition, including 6,516 strikes in Iraq and 3,266 in Syria. A Pentagon press release adds that "coalition strikes have killed about 95 senior and mid-level ISIL leaders since the beginning of May," and says that, aside from the cost of the air war, the coalition has "provided basic combat training for 16,715 personnel and put thousands more through various specialized training programs."

Meanwhile, the Islamic State's finances have deteriorated, with the group reportedly losing a significant amount of oil revenue due to US airstrikes,

which compelled it cut pay for members in half.

Despite the gains touted by the Pentagon and Defense Secretary Ash Carter's recent pledge in Politico magazine to "do more" and "accelerate" the fight against ISIS, the essential limit on US involvement remains the same: There's only so much more we can do without sending Americans in to do the fighting.

"It must be local forces who deliver ISIL a lasting defeat, " Carter wrote, "because only they can secure and govern the territory by building long-term trust within the populations they liberate. We can and will enable such local forces, but we cannot substitute for them."

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Four US Policy Priorities for Africa In 2016 – Analysis

JANUARY 24, 2016



United States and Africa

There were some positive developments for U.S. interests in Africa in 2015. Nigeria, the continent's most populous nation and boasting its largest economy, peacefully elected a new president. Congress reaffirmed the U.S.'s commitment to Tunisia, a fledgling democratic ally in the crosshairs of the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS). The African Growth and Opportunity Act, a linchpin of U.S. engagement with the continent, was renewed.

However, many challenges remain for 2016. The U.S. and its allies still lack a strategy for Libya even as the nation descends deeper into chaos. Democratic gains are being rolled back across the continent, and terrorist and political violence threatens a number of American allies in the region.

Here are four African policy priorities for the U.S. in 2016:

1. **Counter political and Islamist terrorist violence.** Africa hosts an array of transnational Islamist terrorist groups that are destabilizing important American allies and inflicting terrible suffering in parts of the continent. Some of these terrorist groups pose a threat to the U.S. itself.

In Nigeria, the ISIS-affiliated Boko Haram terrorist organization surpassed ISIS as the deadliest terror group in the world in 2014. Al-Shabaab continues to terrorize Somalia and neighboring Kenya, and is trying to reinvigorate its recruitment of Americans. ISIS has established a significant beachhead in Libya, and has designs on the country's lucrative oil fields, while al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb and a rat's nest of other armed groups destabilize northern Mali and other parts of the Sahel region.

Political violence will be a real danger as well in 2016. In the Central African Re-

public, tensions remain high between Muslims and Christians in a sectarian battle exacerbated by dysfunctional politics. Election-related violence in Burundi, a country with a history of genocide, is threatening to metastasize into an ethnic conflict that could inflame the central African region. South Sudan has been locked in civil war since December 2013, with the leaders of each side showing no commitment to peace, all while the nation faces a looming famine.

To respond to these crises in Africa, the U.S. should:

- ✦ Continue providing military support—particularly training and intelligence—to responsible countries battling terrorism.

- ✦ Make enabling regional responses a priority. Neighboring countries often have a deeper understanding of these conflicts and strong incentive to solve them.

Remain strongly engaged, as circumstances dictate, with countries gripped by political violence.

2. Promote economic freedom in Africa. A recent global slump in commodity demand is bringing economic challenges to the significant number of African economies that are overly reliant on commodity exports. Zambia is in economic free-fall as copper prices tank, while major economies such as Angola and Nigeria are scrambling to plug budget shortfalls due to the plummeting price of oil. China, a major importer of African commodities, is also slowing economically, adding to the pain for many countries.

The World Bank still estimates that sub-Saharan Africa grew at a 4.2 percent clip in 2015, although that is down significantly from the 6.4 percent average growth it enjoyed from 2002–2008.[1] Moreover, this rate of growth is insufficient, in many countries, to meaningfully raise the standard of living for their swelling populations. The current crunch is an opportunity for countries to undertake reforms that will bring long-term, stable growth. The U.S. should:

Urge and assist commodity-dependent countries to build more competitive economic climates. Only seven African countries are ranked “mostly free” or “moderately free” in The Heritage Foundation/*Wall Street Journal* 2015 Index of Economic Freedom,[2] while in the World Bank’s latest *Doing Business* report, the majority of African countries rank in the bottom quarter.[3]

3. Remain watchful toward other countries’ growing influence on the continent. In 2009, China overtook the U.S. as Africa’s largest trading partner, although the U.S. still outstrips China in aid and investment to the continent. China’s need to protect its large investments in volatile areas of the continent has led to change in its traditional non-interference policy in African countries’ internal affairs. In January 2015, for the first time in its history, China began deploying an infantry battalion to a U.N. peacekeeping mission, in this case to South Sudan, where it has significant oil interests. This is part of a major increase since 2000 of China’s contributions to U.N. peacekeeping operations, more than 80 percent of which are in Africa.[4]

In November 2015, China announced that it would build its first overseas military outpost in the strategically located nation of Djibouti, which also hosts the U.S.’s only permanent military base in Africa. Additionally, Chinese President Xi Jinping attended a December 2015 summit in South Africa, the first time China has engaged in such a high-level event on African soil. At the summit, Xi doubled China’s previous aid pledge to Africa by promising \$60 billion over three years to African coun-

tries.[5]

Russia, too, is looking to the continent. Its trade with Africa increased more than tenfold between 2000 and 2012. Russia needs some African natural resources, but it is also pursuing commodities such as oil and natural gas as a hedge against Western diplomatic and economic pressure. State-owned companies Gazprom and Lukoil are developing major hydrocarbon deals in Algeria, while two state-owned Russian commercial entities under Western sanctions have struck a recent deal to develop platinum mines in Zimbabwe, despite Russia already controlling 30 percent of the global supply of platinum.[6]

Africa has more than enough opportunity for all, but nations such as China and Russia, which frequently challenge U.S. interests in other parts of the world, are likely to follow the same playbook in Africa.

The U.S. should:

- ✦ Nurture its African friendships by all available means to prevent potential challenges from competitors. A good start would be making the successful 2014 U.S.–Africa Leaders Summit an annual or bi-annual event.

Enhance U.S. influence with African states by increasing cooperation with allies active on the continent, such as Germany, the U.K., and France.

4. Encourage countries to recommit to their democratic transitions. President Obama has, to his credit, explicated the importance of democracy in a number of prominent speeches delivered in Africa. The Obama Administration has also decried the undemocratic activities proliferating around the continent, and has tried to stem the election-related crisis currently gripping Burundi.

Yet the President last year also visited Ethiopia, one of Africa's most repressive and least-democratic countries, a few months after Undersecretary of State for Political Affairs Wendy Sherman praised the country's democracy.[7] Ethiopia is important to U.S. interests, but a presidential visit was an unnecessary reward, and a setback for the cause of democracy on the continent.

The Administration has also been reluctant to push a strategy of democracy promotion, despite a democratic slide on the continent. Vaguely worded security laws have been used to crack down on political opposition and the press, while laws targeting nongovernmental organizations have hollowed out civil society in a number of countries. Since 2001, 16 African heads of state have fiddled with constitutions, and engaged in a range of other machinations, in an attempt to extend their stays in power. [8]

The U.S., as the world's standard-bearer for democracy, should:

Revitalize its commitment to African democracy by assisting and rewarding those countries making democratic gains, and by working to put regressing countries back on track for democracy.

The Growing Importance of Africa

Africa's resources, security challenges, and economic opportunities ensure that its global importance will increase in the coming decades. Now is the time for the U.S. to enhance its activities on the continent to ensure its long-term interests are protected and promoted.

About

the

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Source:

This article was published by **The Heritage Foundation**

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TOPICS: Africa China Economics Foreign Policy Nigeria Oil Religious Freedom Russia Terrorism Trade United States Zambia

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