



House of Commons
Foreign Affairs Committee

The UK's response to extremism and instability in North and West Africa

Seventh Report of Session 2013–14

*Volume I: Report, together with formal
minutes*

*Ordered by the House of Commons
to be printed 11 March 2014*

HC 86-I
Published on 21 March 2014
by authority of the House of Commons
London: The Stationery Office Limited
£0.00

The Foreign Affairs Committee

The Foreign Affairs Committee is appointed by the House of Commons to examine the expenditure, administration, and policy of the Foreign and Commonwealth Office and its associated agencies.

Current membership

Rt Hon Sir Richard Ottaway (*Conservative, Croydon South*) (*Chair*)
Mr John Baron (*Conservative, Basildon and Billericay*)
Rt Hon Sir Menzies Campbell (*Liberal Democrat, North East Fife*)
Rt Hon Ann Clwyd (*Labour, Cynon Valley*)
Mike Gapes (*Labour/Co-op, Ilford South*)
Mark Hendrick (*Labour/Co-op, Preston*)
Sandra Osborne (*Labour, Ayr, Carrick and Cumnock*)
Andrew Rosindell (*Conservative, Romford*)
Mr Frank Roy (*Labour, Motherwell and Wishaw*)
Rt Hon Sir John Stanley (*Conservative, Tonbridge and Malling*)
Rory Stewart (*Conservative, Penrith and The Border*)

The following Members were also members of the Committee during the parliament:

Rt Hon Bob Ainsworth (*Labour, Coventry North East*)
Emma Reynolds (*Labour, Wolverhampton North East*)
Mr Dave Watts (*Labour, St Helens North*)

Powers

The Committee is one of the departmental select committees, the powers of which are set out in House of Commons Standing Orders, principally in SO No 152. These are available on the internet via www.parliament.uk.

Publication

The Reports and evidence of the Committee are published by The Stationery Office by Order of the House. All publications of the Committee (including news items) are on the internet at www.parliament.uk/facom. A list of Reports of the Committee in the present Parliament is at the front of this volume.

Committee staff

The current staff of the Committee are Kenneth Fox (Clerk), Peter McGrath (Second Clerk), Zoe Oliver-Watts (Senior Committee Specialist), Dr Brigid Fowler (Committee Specialist), Louise Glen (Senior Committee Assistant), Su Panchanathan (Committee Assistant), and Alex Paterson (Media Officer).

Contacts

All correspondence should be addressed to the Clerk of the Foreign Affairs Committee, House of Commons, London SW1A 0AA. The telephone number for general enquiries is 020 7219 6105; the Committee's email address is FAC@parliament.uk.

Contents

Report	<i>Page</i>
Summary	3
Glossary	5
Conclusions and recommendations	7
1 Introduction	13
A new terrorist frontline?	13
Terms of reference	14
Evidence-taking and visits	14
2 The geographical context	16
Religion in the region	17
The region's challenges	18
Poverty and lack of economic development	18
Population growth	19
Environmental problems and resource scarcity	20
Ethnic or religious tensions	20
Weak peripheral security and organised trans-national crime	20
Coups, corruption and mis-governance	22
The link with extremism	22
The wider context	24
3 The main events of 2012-13 and the UK Government's response to them	25
The jihadist takeover of northern Mali	25
Operation Serval	25
Mali today	26
The militant groups in northern Mali: AQIM and MUJAO	26
The UK's support for Operation Serval	27
Algeria: the attack at In Amenas	29
Belmohktar, the Signed in Blood Brigade and Al Murabitun	29
UK response to the crisis	30
Nigeria	31
Boko Haram emerges	32
Ansaru	33
The state of emergency	33
The UK response	34
Wider lessons from recent events	36
The frontier has shifted	37
A magnet for jihadists?	37
The scale of the threat	37
The effect of instability in Libya	38
Military strength of extremism in the region	39
Threat to UK interests in the region	39

Threats to the UK itself	41
4 Addressing future challenges	43
The UK's diplomatic resources: rhetoric versus reality	43
The UK's current diplomatic footprint	43
The FCO's analysis of recent events	44
UK government administrative changes in response to recent events	46
Addressing long-standing political grievances	47
The UK's diplomatic footprint in Francophone countries	47
Key partnerships for the UK	48
The need for better co-ordination on security and development	49
A tripartite leadership model	49
France	49
The US	50
The West's early warning systems in the region	51
Security co-operation with the African Union	52
UK partnerships in West Africa	53
Algeria and Morocco	53
Development aid, foreign policy and fragile states	55
Development aid and good governance	56
Development aid and security	57
Training up African forces	58
Monitoring of development aid	60
Fragility, instability and demography	61
Migration	63
5 Conclusion	65
Annexes	66
Annex A: Committee meetings on visits connected with the inquiry	66
Meetings in Algeria	66
Meetings in Mali	66
Meetings in Morocco	67
Meetings in Nigeria	67
Meetings at the US African Command ("AFRICOM") in Stuttgart	68
Annex B: Informal meetings in the UK relevant to this inquiry	69
Formal Minutes	70
Witnesses	72
List of printed written evidence	72
List of additional written evidence	73

Summary

A new frontline of violent extremism has opened up in the Western Sahel-Sahara region of Africa. Jihadists have put down roots in remote or marginalised areas, taking advantage of weak or non-existent state and security institutions, lucrative local criminal networks, and public disillusionment and anger with the corruption and mis-governance of political elites. In Libya, Mali and Nigeria the threat is currently greatest, but all countries in the region are at risk. Concerted international co-operation is required to address this threat: there need to be robust security responses, but also large-scale political and economic interventions to address the underlying causes of instability. The improvement of the region's governance must also be a priority. The world is waking up to the need for action, but effective co-ordination is still badly lacking, with insufficient clarity over where responsibility lies.

The UK Government has set out a bold vision to increase its political, security and economic engagement with the region, on the ground that failing to engage more would put the UK's long-term interests at greater risk. We agree, but the current mismatch between the Government's ambitions and its scant diplomatic resources in the region is vast and irreconcilable. The Government should consider enhancing its diplomatic presence in the Western Sahel and the Maghreb, within the tight financial constraints that the FCO is currently forced to operate in. It should also avoid inflated rhetoric and be realistic in its aims, focussing on what the UK does best. We do believe that the UK has a vital role to play in the region, because of the UK's strong links with some countries and (despite the current low diplomatic profile) its hard and soft power strengths. We consider that the UK Government should press for agreement at international level of a common security and stability policy for the region, with lead responsibility for securing its implementation resting with a tripartite leadership of France, the UK and the US.

France was right to intervene in Mali in 2013 and the UK was right to support it and offer practical assistance. The intervention helped arrest a potential humanitarian disaster in northern Mali and may have saved the whole country from a jihadist takeover. However, there remain very significant obstacles ahead in Mali's path back to peace. Lessons also need to be learned from the crisis. The West seemed to turn a blind eye to events in the country, failing to spot the warning signs until it was too late; a pattern repeated more recently in the Central African Republic. The UK and its allies need to examine their early warning systems for the region. There was also a failure by the UK Government to anticipate the full effects of the Gaddafi regime's collapse on its Saharan neighbours, and therefore to try to mitigate them. This has been a costly error. A common thread in UK policy appears to be a weakness of analysis in relation to crises straddling North Africa and West Africa: the Sahara may form a departmental barrier within the Foreign Office, but it is not one for terrorists. The UK Government must look to accumulate deeper reserves of specialist expertise and knowledge about the Western Sahel-Sahara region if its aspiration of more effective engagement is to become a reality.

Development aid has a key role in combating regional instability and the lure of extremism, but has not yet helped the Western Sahel-Sahara region anything like as much as it should. In Mali, the West may even have inadvertently let development aid become

part of the problem rather than part of the solution, by contributing to a culture of irresponsible and corrupt governance that may have undermined respect for democracy. The Foreign Office should make it more of its business to ensure that development aid programmes in the region are robust and on track, even in countries where the UK does not have a bilateral aid programme.

Population pressures in the Western Sahel are enormous and it concerns us that politicians in the region may not see addressing them as a priority. We fear that if nothing is done, the problem of illegal immigration into Europe—and the tragic events that tend to go with it—will continue to increase. We also see evidence of a link between rapid population growth and political instability. We believe that the UK Government should continue to impress on its international partners the need for international action to extend the availability of family planning in the Western Sahel.

Regional co-operation exists in the region, and can be built upon, but effective co-operation is hampered by countries' lack of resources and weak peripheral security (particularly in West Africa) and by regional rivalries (particularly in the Maghreb). Proposals for an African Union standby force are welcome but a wholly African solution to African security problems is still some years away. Until then, the UK and its international partners must look for ways to help fill the gap. Accordingly, we welcome indications from the UK Government that it proposes to extend its programme of military training missions to assist countries in the developing world. We acknowledge the very difficult choices the UK faces in determining how much military assistance to give Nigeria in its battle against terrorism. On the one hand, there are well documented concerns relating to the conduct of the Nigerian security forces. On the other hand, in the Boko Haram movement, Nigeria faces a ruthless, brutal enemy, and trusting relations and effective counter-terrorism co-operation between the UK and Nigeria are important, in view of our growing economic and diaspora links. We consider that the UK Government should provide as much security and intelligence assistance as is consistent with its human rights values.

Other key bilateral partners in the region include Algeria and Morocco. Effective co-operation between the two countries is vital, but the relationship has been badly frayed by their decades-long stand-off over the Western Sahara territory. We foresee a possible window of opportunity ahead to begin mending relations between the two countries and would encourage the UK Government to explore ways of helping repair the relationship.

Islamist extremism is not a static phenomenon. Unless there is concerted international action to address instability in the Western Sahel-Sahara region, and its root causes, the problem will not go away. Indeed, the contagion of instability may well spread, with its effects being felt more widely across the world.

Glossary

The following comprise some of the main militant bodies in the Western Sahel-Sahara region, which are mentioned in this report.

Al Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM, sometimes alternatively AQMI): one of the largest and most active terrorist groups in the region, its leadership comprising mainly veterans of the losing Islamist side in the 1990s Algerian civil war. Since around 2006-7 (when it “rebranded” as AQIM), it has described itself as part of the global Al Qaeda movement. Present for years in parts of northern Algeria, it has recently become more active in the wider Sahara region and is heavily involved in organised crime.

Movement for Oneness and Jihad in West Africa (MUJAO; their French acronym, occasionally also MOJWA): a splinter group from AQIM, originating in 2011, apparently in dissent at the latter’s mainly Algerian Arab leadership. Appears to be strongest in Mauritania, Mali and Niger. Like AQIM, it is involved in organised crime.

The **Signed in Blood Brigade** (or the Masked Brigade): another breakaway group from AQIM, coming into being in late 2012 following personality clashes between the AQIM leadership and Mokhtar Belmokhtar, one of its veteran members. The group led the attack on the Tigantourine gas facility in Algeria in January 2013 and claimed joint responsibility for suicide attacks in Niger later in the year. MUJAO and the Signed in Blood Brigade have apparently since merged into a body known as **Al Murabitun**.

National Movement for the Liberation of the Azawad (MNLA): the latest incarnation of various armed Tuareg nationalist movements in northern Mali (*Azawad* to the Tuaregs) since independence. An avowedly non-Islamist movement, it led the Tuareg rebellion in 2012, but was quickly sidelined by Islamists. Re-emerged after the French intervention, holding parts of the north for much of 2013. Currently engaged in talks with the Malian government.

Ansar Dine (sometimes Ansar Eddine): based in northern Mali, it is committed to establishing an Islamist Tuareg state in the area. It sparked the 2012 Tuareg rebellion in northern Mali, in alliance with the MNLA. Personality clashes, and Ansar Dine’s harsh application of Islamic law, led the two groups to fall out, and Ansar Dine then joined forces with AQIM and MUJAO to create an Islamist mini-state in the north. Has since split; one faction claims to have renounced violence and to have joined the political process.

Boko Haram: emerged around 2001 as a movement to promote traditional Islamic education in north-east Nigeria, gradually becoming more militant and cult-like. Following a government crackdown on its activities in 2009, resulting in the death of its first leader, it has become an extremely violent terrorist organisation, with hundreds, possibly thousands of militants operating in loosely-organised cells. Its leadership calls for complete and immediate implementation of Islamic law, rejecting any form of compromise with the state. Apparently less internationalist than other major extremist bodies; less “strategic” and more indiscriminate in its violence; and also less obviously involved in money-making crime, but appears to have begun to carry out kidnappings for ransom.

Ansaru: A breakaway group from Boko Haram, active since 2011, whose main theatre of operation has been northern Nigeria, but also present in Niger. It claims allegiance to the global jihad movement.

Conclusions and recommendations

The link with extremism

1. Addressing terrorism in the Western Sahel-Sahara region comprehensively means addressing the environmental conditions that are allowing it to grow: poverty and inequality, corruption and mis-governance, the pressure of fast-growing populations on depleting natural resources, insufficient cross-border co-operation, and the spread of extremist ideology. This is a huge task requiring international co-operation across a number of disciplines. We see signs that development and investment challenges are beginning to be addressed, but are concerned that co-operation on security matters should not be neglected. (Paragraph 29)
2. We recognise that the UK Government has sought to secure international co-operation, for instance through the communiqué agreed at the 2013 G8 summit. We recommend that the UK Government, in its response to this report, outlines how it proposes to maintain momentum on this issue over the remainder of this Parliament, particularly in relation to security and intelligence co-operation. (Paragraph 30)

The jihadist takeover of northern Mali

3. The UK Government was right to back France's intervention in Mali in January 2013, and to provide practical assistance. France's intervention was justified and necessary: the threat to the whole country appeared credible, given the state of the Malian military and the lack of a regional response. The intervention also helped prevent the humanitarian catastrophe beginning to unfold in northern Mali from significantly worsening. It is too early to say whether Mali is now "safe": this in any case requires more than military intervention, but we can say that Operation Serval was, in military terms, a success. (Paragraph 42)

Algeria: the attack at In Amenas

4. The UK's ability to respond independently to the hostage crisis at In Amenas, Algeria, in January 2013 was limited, given the nature of the Algerian state. However, it is evident that, at the moment of crisis, the channels of communication that the UK wanted to access were not available, indicating that there is an ongoing need to develop key relationships at political and diplomatic levels. We accept that this will be challenging. We note that the FCO has taken steps to ascertain whether there are lessons to be learned from the attack, and is working closely with industry to ensure better co-ordination and information-sharing on security matters, in order to ensure that British expatriate workers are as safe as possible. We urge the Government to ensure that this includes contractors and subcontractors of companies, as well as employees. (Paragraph 48)
5. We note that the UK Government expressed confidence in 2013 that it would in due course secure more information from its Algerian counterparts on the circumstances

surrounding the mission to recover the plant from the terrorists. We would be grateful for an update. (Paragraph 49)

Nigeria

6. The UK Government wants Nigeria to defeat terrorism, but has concerns about assisting the Nigerian military. We fully understand the Government's dilemma but consider it important that the UK do whatever it can, consistent with its respect for human rights values, to assist Nigeria in its battle against Boko Haram's uniquely repellent brand of extremism. We ask the Government to be mindful of the importance of effective counter-terrorism co-operation between the two countries, given our strong diaspora links with Nigeria, and of the possibility of Nigeria eventually seeking security assistance elsewhere, perhaps from countries with far fewer scruples than the UK has. We note that the UK Government provides training and assistance to other armies in the developing world and seek clarification from the Government that it is satisfied that its position is entirely consistent. (Paragraph 63)

Wider lessons from recent events

7. We agree with the UK Government that parts of North and West Africa have become a new frontline in the contest with Islamist extremism and terrorism. (Paragraph 65)
8. However, we have encountered limited evidence thus far to confirm the Prime Minister's concerns that the empty quarters of the region have become a "magnet for jihadists". (Paragraph 66)
9. The threat from terrorism to people in many parts of the Western Sahel-Sahara region is immediate, frightening and real. The prospect of another extremist "takeover" of territory somewhere in the Western Sahel cannot be ruled out. However, it is important to maintain a sense of proportion about the scale of the military threat the extremists pose. The precedent of Mali in 2013 suggests that they would struggle to hold territory in the face of any Western-led intervention. We are aware of no evidence that extremists in the region yet pose an "existential threat" to the West. (Paragraph 72)
10. UK interests in parts of North and West Africa are vulnerable to terrorism and will continue to be for the foreseeable future, whatever the level of UK engagement in counter-terrorism. It is possible that greater engagement might lead to increased targeting of UK interests, and citizens. However, we agree with the Prime Minister that UK and Western disengagement from the region, and failure to seek to address terrorism and its causes, would in the longer term carry greater risks for the UK. (Paragraph 80)
11. We urge the UK Government to remain vigilant on the issue of possible radicalisation within North and West African diaspora communities, bearing in mind that dialogue and positive engagement with these communities could also contribute to an effective counter-terrorism strategy. (Paragraph 81)

12. The UK's policies on non-payment of ransom money to terrorists may have helped protect vulnerable UK citizens abroad. We acknowledge the Prime Minister's global leadership in seeking to eradicate ransom payments. Countries that continue to flout the ban on payments are guilty of strengthening the terrorists' hand. The UK should continue to discreetly but firmly press its allies to end this practice. (Paragraph 82)

The UK's diplomatic resources: rhetoric versus reality

13. Recent events underline the difficulty of monitoring events in the Western Sahel-Sahara region, anticipating crises, and responding to them as they unfold, particularly when diplomatic resources are limited. They also underline that, whilst the Sahara may be a departmental barrier within the FCO, it is not one for terrorists. The UK Government should reflect on weaknesses in analysis that the events appear to have exposed, and how these might be rectified at departmental level. This applies particularly in relation to intervention in Libya in 2011: considerable resources were expended ensuring that military goals were successfully achieved (for which the Government deserves credit), but there was a failure to anticipate, and therefore mitigate, the regional fallout from the intervention, which has been enormous and, in some cases, disastrous. (Paragraph 99)
14. Looking to the future, the UK's very limited diplomatic resources in and around the Western Sahel will make it difficult for the Government to achieve its ambitions to be more intensively involved in the region and to help shape events as they unfold. The Government should consider increasing its resources in the region and its reserves of specialist knowledge. If not, it should scale back its ambitions—and its rhetoric. (Paragraph 100)
15. We suggest that the UK Government contemplate an enhancement of its diplomatic profile in Francophone parts of the Western Sahel-Sahara region. This would be consistent with the Government's commitment towards greater engagement with the region. It would appear that a raised UK profile in the region would be welcomed and it seems probable that the UK may be able to offer advice and assistance in a way that some other countries could not. Far from raising the risk of the UK and France wastefully "doubling up" diplomatic resources, we suggest that it will increase opportunities for the two countries to work together fruitfully on security, development and political co-operation in the region, as they have been doing in Mali. (Paragraph 103)

Key partnerships for the UK

16. There is a need for a step-change in the co-ordination of international efforts to combat insecurity, and the drivers of insecurity, in and around the Western Sahel. We propose that the UK Government press its international partners for agreement to a common security and stability policy for the Western Sahel. Lead responsibility for securing implementation of the policy should rest with a tripartite leadership of France, the UK and the US, supported by others, including the European External Action Service. (Paragraph 110)

17. There is an emerging pattern of evidence of the UK and its main partners being unsighted by events in and around the Sahel region. The international community's successive failure, in Mali and in the Central African Republic, to anticipate events and to respond to them speedily as they unfolded, is worrying. We accept that the UK was not the only country to be unsighted by events and acknowledge that its diplomatic resources in both countries are light. We recommend that the UK Government seek to raise at international level the need for more effective early warning systems in and around the Western Sahel region. (Paragraph 115)
18. Renewed proposals within the African Union for a standby military force are welcome, and we would support the UK and its international partners seeking to assist in building capacity. It is reasonable to assume that it will be some time before there are wholly African solutions to African problems of equivalent scale to those in Mali and the Central African Republic. This places an onus on the UK and its international partners to ensure that contingency plans are in place to deal with future crises. (Paragraph 119)
19. Algeria and Morocco are both key to delivering increased stability in the Western Sahel-Sahara region, and effective bilateral relations with both countries are essential. Partnership with Algeria does present some challenges, particularly in relation to Algeria's security and intelligence services, but we believe that a constructive and effective relationship can be maintained if the UK is realistic in its aims and maintains its red lines on issues of particular importance such as respect for human rights. We note encouraging signs that Algeria is willing to engage with the UK on a more open basis than it perhaps did in the past. (Paragraph 126)
20. Conflict over the Western Sahara issue has had a toxic effect on regional co-operation in North-West Africa, including on security issues. The intensification of the terrorist threat in the region, combined with the gradual generational shift in political leadership, may present an opening for new approaches to resolving the conflict to be tested. We would encourage the UK Government to explore options for helping to bring the different sides together. (Paragraph 127)

Development aid, foreign policy and fragile states

21. We agree with both the aims of the UK Government's Building Stability Overseas strategy to integrate foreign, security and development policies, and the premises that inform it. (Paragraph 129)
22. We invite the Government to comment on whether its bilateral aid programme for Nigeria is making satisfactory progress against goals set out in the Building Security Overseas strategy and, if so, how this progress has been measured. We also suggest that the Independent Commission for Aid Impact, in its work evaluating DFID's approach to anti-corruption, treat DFID's work in Nigeria as a case study. (Paragraph 133)
23. We draw these remarks to the attention of the International Development Committee. (Paragraph 134)

24. We note that the opportunity is currently open to debate the purpose and definition of overseas development assistance, and that the UK Government will be a contributor. We would invite the UK Government to consider whether the current definition has the effect of restricting or preventing the development of aid programmes based around delivering increased security. We also invite the Government to respond to evidence we received during the inquiry that countries of the Western Sahel would welcome non-military development assistance to help strengthen their borders against terrorism and trans-national organised crime. We draw these views to the attention of the International Development Committee. (Paragraph 138)
25. We are supportive of signals from the UK Government that it is considering an extension of its programme of offering military training to vulnerable countries. We see this as a practical way for the UK to help bolster security and stability in fragile states. We also see it as naturally complementary to programmes to develop improved governance delivered through development aid packages. We are mindful that, in undertaking any such work, it is necessary to be realistic, as success in transmitting values and standards is not assured. We would welcome an update on UK Government policy on the future of the EU Training Mission in Mali. (Paragraph 145)
26. The crisis in Mali raises questions about the administration of development aid in fragile countries. There is evidence that development aid appears to have become part of the problem rather than part of the solution in Mali, inhibiting the development of responsive and responsible government and entrenching corruption in its political culture, in a manner inconsistent with the Government's Building Stability Overseas Strategy. We are also concerned to ensure that development aid programmes in Mali and elsewhere are better monitored in future. Mali remains a fragile democracy affected by internal political tensions, as well as the threat of terrorism. (Paragraph 151)
27. We consider that the FCO has a role in relation to monitoring these projects alongside DFID, particularly where (as in Mali) DFID does not have a direct bilateral relationship with the country concerned. We also suggest that the Independent Commission for Aid Impact, in its work evaluating DFID's funding of multilateral aid and the scaling up of aid spending, consider treating Mali as a case study. (Paragraph 152)
28. We draw these comments to the attention of the International Development Committee. (Paragraph 153)
29. There is clear evidence that high population growth in the developing world is often linked to political instability and to the spread of radical or extremist views. We suggest that recent events in the Western Sahel may provide further evidence of that correlation. While we are concerned that DFID do not acknowledge this link, we commend the UK Government for prioritising increased access to family planning in the developing world and call on it to ensure that the issue remains on the international agenda. (Paragraph 158)

30. We urge the UK to press for greater clarity from the EU on its policies for handling increased migration to Europe from Sahelian countries, and in particular on whether, when potential immigrants are located on boats in the Mediterranean, they are turned back or ushered to safety. (Paragraph 161)

Conclusion

31. Analysis and policy-making about terrorism and insecurity in the areas covered by this report suffers from a lack of information on some key issues. We consider that increasing the gathering, and analysis, of information and intelligence on terrorism in and around the Western Sahel should be a priority for the UK Government and its international partners. (Paragraph 163)

1 Introduction

A new terrorist frontline?

1. Recent events in North and West Africa have led the Prime Minister to warn that parts of the region have become a new frontline in the global contest with religious extremism and terrorism:

- In 2012, northern Mali fell to a coalition of Al Qaeda-aligned terrorists. For some months, they ruled the territory as a rump Islamist state. The terrorists were only dislodged following a French-led, and British-supported, military intervention in January 2013, and they continue to operate a guerrilla campaign;
- In January 2013, a group of armed terrorists captured a huge gas facility at In Amenas in the Algerian desert, taking scores of western workers hostages. The Algerian security services recovered the plant after a massive military operation, but 40 Western hostages, including six Britons, were left dead. The ringleader of the attack is thought to be still at large;
- In May 2013, the Nigerian President declared a state of emergency in the north-east, in response to an escalating campaign of violence by the extremist Boko Haram movement that has left thousands dead. The conflict continues, with no immediate end in sight; as we publish this report, it appears to have entered a particularly bloody phase.

2. Elsewhere across the region there have been bombings and suicide attacks, the targeted kidnapping or murder of Westerners, and ethnic or sectarian clashes, all against a backdrop of political instability, deep social injustice, and grinding poverty.

3. In the immediate aftermath of the Algerian attack, the Prime Minister said the attack showed that organisations operating in “ungoverned spaces” posed “a large and existential threat” to the British way of life.¹ In a statement to the House shortly afterwards, on 21 January 2013, he issued a warning about the risks proliferating in parts of North and West Africa.² He said that parts of the region had become a “magnet for jihadists” and a new focus in the “generational struggle” against Islamist extremism. The Prime Minister said this made it a priority for the UK to step up its engagement with the area: to strengthen key partnerships in the region; to be able to respond robustly to future security threats; and to be more prepared to help address the underlying causes (such as poverty and long-standing political grievances) that helped terrorism and insecurity to thrive. The Prime Minister concluded:

I will use our chairmanship of the G8 this year to make sure this issue of terrorism, and how we respond to it, is right at the top of the agenda, where it belongs. In sum, we must frustrate the terrorists with our security, we must beat them militarily, we must address the poisonous narrative they feed on, we must close down the

1 HC Deb, 18 January 2013, col 1169

2 HC Deb, 21 January 2013, cols 25-27

ungoverned space in which they thrive, and we must deal with the grievances that they use to garner support. This is the work that our generation faces, and we must demonstrate the same resolve and sense of purpose as previous generations did with the challenges that they faced in this House and in this country.

Terms of reference

4. The purpose of this inquiry, launched in March 2013, was in essence to consider the claims made by the Prime Minister and the case he had made for greater UK engagement with vulnerable parts of North and West Africa. Our terms of reference were to consider:

- The UK's main foreign policy interests in the region, and whether the UK has the diplomatic resources to secure them;
- The effectiveness of UK co-operation with France and other Western allies to secure UK interests in the region, and lessons to be learned from the French-led intervention in Mali;
- The factors contributing to the power of religious extremists in the region, how they can most realistically be dealt with, and whether they amount to a significant threat to UK interests or are primarily a regional concern;
- The extent to which gangsterism and crime contribute to regional instability and how this is best tackled;
- The UK's support for regional co-operation by ECOWAS³ and others;
- The risk of "blowback" to UK interests if the UK takes a more interventionist foreign policy stance in the region;
- The extent to which the UK Government's long-term policy aims of building inclusive democracies, strengthening the rule of law, and tackling extremism in the region are realistic and achievable.

Evidence-taking and visits

5. Throughout our inquiry, our main approach has been to treat the three events listed in paragraph 1 as case studies, gathering evidence on the events themselves and the contexts in which they occurred. Accordingly, the three main visits we have made in connection with this inquiry have been to Algeria, Mali and Nigeria. We also made visits to Rabat in Morocco and the US Africa Command near Stuttgart in Germany. We list all the meetings that took place in Annex A to this report

6. We held five evidence sessions at the House of Commons over the course of the inquiry. A list of witnesses is set out at the back of this report. These included the Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State at the Department for International Development (DFID) and officials. We invited DFID to give evidence because it had become increasingly evident in

³ ECOWAS (the Economic Community of West African States) is the regional economic community for West Africa. It also co-operates on security matters.

the course of the inquiry that UK security policy for the region could not be considered in isolation from UK development policy.

7. We also received 14 written submissions in response to our call for evidence.⁴ Submissions from witnesses who gave evidence in person are contained in Volume 2 of our report, which also contains transcripts of all oral evidence taken during the inquiry.

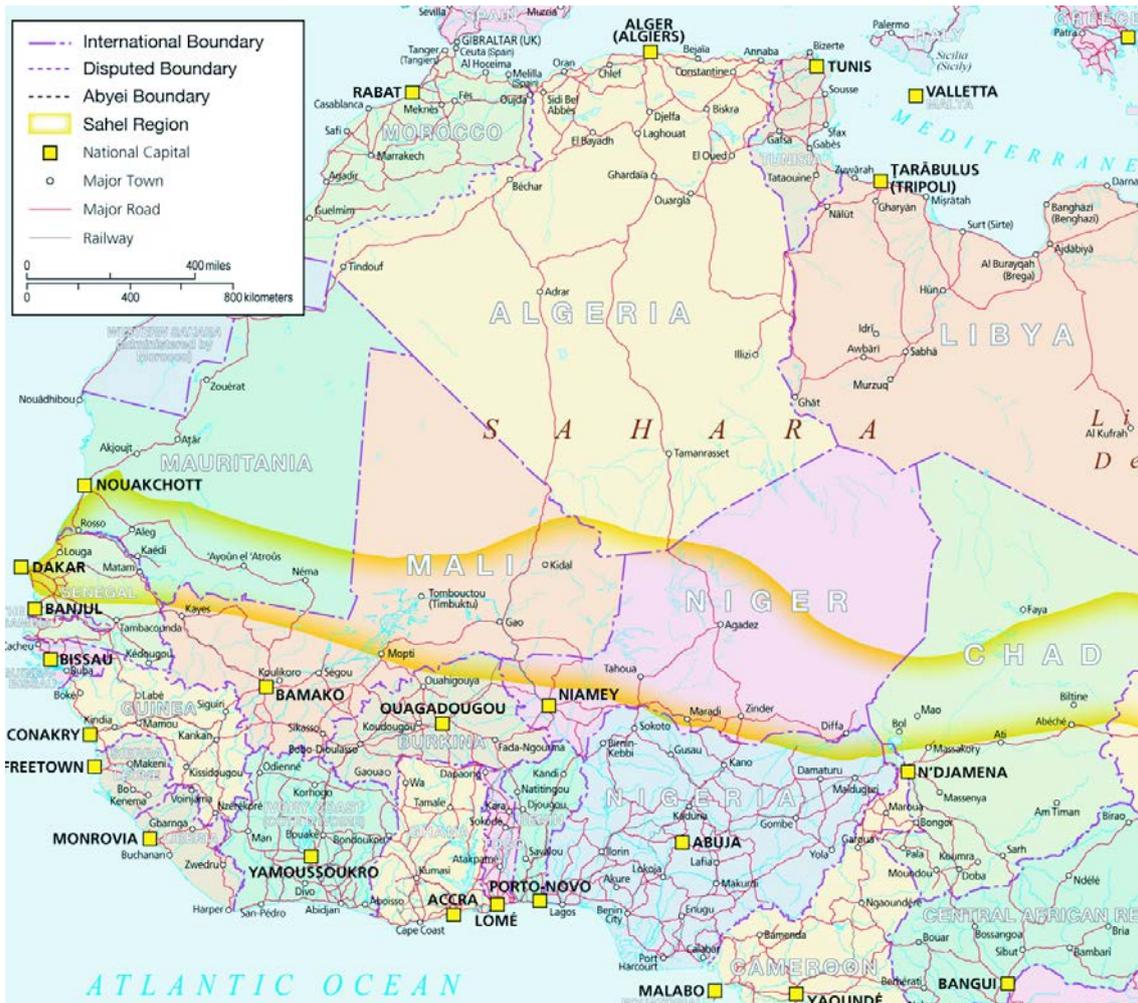
8. In preparation for formal evidence-taking, the Committee had two informal briefings: with Chatham House experts on North and West Africa; and with the Prime Minister's Special Representative for the Sahel, the Rt Hon Stephen O'Brien MP. Following a request for a meeting, we met in July 2013 a group comprising British survivors of the attack at In Amenas, and close relatives of some of those who had died. This was not a formal meeting, but following on from it, we had an exchange of correspondence with the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, which we have published.⁵ It was instructive and sobering to hear the group relate their experience and we are most grateful to them for their time and their views, as we are to all others who, in different ways, contributed towards our inquiry. A list of all informal meetings in the UK relevant to the inquiry is set out in Annex B to the report.

4 This includes a submission from the Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO). Both the FCO and DFID provided supplementary written evidence. All Government evidence is set out in Volume 2 of our report.

5 Ev 80-82

2 The geographical context

9. Most of this report is devoted to discussing the extremist threat in the region and how best to respond to it. Before doing so, we consider it important to take some time to describe the geographical context in which the threat is situated, and the prevalent social conditions.



(Extract from map provided by UK Government: Crown Copyright 2012)

10. The main geographical focus of our inquiry has been an area we describe as the *Western Sahel-Sahara region*: an area running from around Lake Chad (where Nigeria, Cameroon and Chad meet), west across the Sahel to the Atlantic Ocean, and north to the desert interior of the Maghreb. “Sahel” is thought to come from the Arabic word for coast: it is the southern “shore” adjoining the “sea” of the Sahara, running across Africa at approximately its widest point; from the Red Sea to the Atlantic Ocean. The Sahel is a zone of climatic transition, from desert in the north to grassland or forest in the south. It is also a zone of demographic and cultural transition; from a mainly Arab or Berber north to a mainly black African south. North of the Sahel, most people speak Arabic; to the south there is enormous linguistic diversity. If the Sahara is a sea, then its navigators are the Tuareg, a traditionally nomadic people whose livelihood has always included ferrying

goods and people across the desert. A stateless people, the Tuareg are mainly found in Niger, Mali, Algeria, Burkina Faso and Libya.

11. The Sahel (more properly the Western Sahel) is also a loose collective term for the cluster of mainly Francophone countries sitting on the western Sahelian belt, with Mali, Mauritania, Burkina Faso and Niger at the core. The Sahelian belt reaches into the north of Nigeria, and the people of northern Nigeria have strong historical, religious and linguistic links to their northern neighbours. Accordingly, for the purposes of this report we treat northern Nigeria as part of the Western Sahel. Our consideration also extends north of the Sahel into the sparse interior of the Maghreb region, in particular the deserts of Libya and Algeria. We include this region because of its cultural links with the Sahel. We also include it because, as discussed below, it appears that jihadists and criminals are able to travel with relative ease from bases in southern Libya, and perhaps also southern Algeria, into Chad, Niger, Mali or even further afield, and then back again.

12. We discuss the UK's links to countries in the region in Chapter 3, and its diplomatic and soft and hard power resources in Chapter 4. For now, it is sufficient to note that, with the important exception of Nigeria, the UK's commercial and cultural links within the region are not particularly strong, and our diplomatic footprint light—extremely so. This should be borne in mind in the course of the discussion which follows on the challenges facing the region.

Religion in the region

13. Sunni Islam is the dominant religion across the Western Sahel-Sahara region. There are also Christian and animist minorities, especially towards the south. It is commonly agreed that most Muslims in the region follow a moderate, Sufi-influenced form of Islam,⁶ but there is a rough pattern, over the centuries, of “purifying” religious movements emerging, and seeking to impose a more severe form of belief on the populace, with varying degrees of success.⁷ The presence of “extremism” or “fundamentalism” (to use modern terminology), whilst atypical, is therefore not without precedent in the region. Over the course of this inquiry we heard of concerns that strains of Islam stressing the importance of literalist adherence to Islamic law (*Sharia*), for instance, the Salafist or Wahhabist⁸ movements, are once again becoming more common in the region.⁹ These movements do not necessarily preach violent jihad but concerns have been expressed that they can amount to a gateway into even more extreme belief and activity.¹⁰ We noted evidence

6 Q 264 (Mark Simmonds MP). Ev w2 (Alliance for Mali); Ev w21-22 (Guy Lankester)

7 Examples include the Almohad and Almoravid dynasties of the 11th and 12th centuries in north-western Africa, both of which began as “purifying” jihads; the Fulani jihad led by Usman Dan Fodio in and around modern northern Nigeria in the early 19th century (see Q 118); and the Senussi movement originating in 19th century Cyrenaica (eastern Libya). The latter spread its beliefs by largely peaceful means.

8 Salafists (from the Arab word *salaf* meaning predecessor or ancestor) are Muslims who seek to live and to practice the faith in a manner as similar as possible to Mohammed and his followers, in so doing stripping out any “impure” accretions, which are considered to be un-Islamic or *shirk* (idolatry). Wahhabism is the name given to the movement founded by the 18th century Arabian jurist Mohammed bin Abd Al-Wahhab that preaches essentially Salafist views; and “Salafism” and “Wahhabism” are generally used synonymously.

9 Q 56-57 (Professor Michael Clarke). See also Directorate-General for External Policies of the EU, *The involvement of Salafism/Wahhabism in the support and supply of arms to rebel groups around the world*, June 2013 [http://www.europarl.europa.eu/ReqData/etudes/etudes/join/2013/457137/EXPO-AFET_ET\(2013\)457137_EN.pdf](http://www.europarl.europa.eu/ReqData/etudes/etudes/join/2013/457137/EXPO-AFET_ET(2013)457137_EN.pdf)

10 Ev w35 (Dr Oz Hassan and Dr Elizabeth Iskander Monier)

during the inquiry that some of these groups have become adept at spreading their beliefs by linking their hardline theology to the provision of practical assistance, often in areas where the state is failing in its duty to provide basic goods and services to ordinary people.¹¹ We also heard evidence that many of these groups seek to spread a false narrative, increasingly by use of modern media, that their values and beliefs are under attack from Western interests and their local proxies, and that ordinary Muslims are threatened.¹² Ministers and officials have assented to the proposition that the UK and other Western aid-providers are in “a battle for hearts and minds” with these movements in much of sub-Saharan Africa. It was therefore somewhat concerning to hear that the UK Government has no current programme to monitor their spread within the region, and the impact it is having.¹³

14. In this report, we use the term “Islamist” to denote any movement that advocates the imposition of a literalist interpretation of Islamic law, by force if necessary. We use “jihadist” to describe any movement which is Islamist and which, furthermore, publicly advocates violent global jihad in the manner of the al Qaeda network. We use “extremist” as a catch-all term to cover any violent movement claiming inspiration from religious ideology, including bodies which, beyond this characteristic, lack any clear political agenda. We note a tendency amongst some commentators to refer to any militia, movement or political party operating in and around the Western Sahel which does not appear to pursue an overtly Islamist agenda as “secular”.¹⁴ (We are surprised to note that during the inquiry the term was sometimes even used to describe more moderate elements, relatively speaking, within extremist religious movements.¹⁵) We doubt this terminology is helpful: given the generally traditional, religious and conservative nature of society, any such body is very unlikely to be secular in the way we would understand and use that term in the West. Instead, we use the term “non-Islamist” to denote any such movement.

The region's challenges

15. The Western Sahel has a rich pre-colonial history and a vital artistic and musical heritage. There are some positive stories to be told in the present day about economic, social and political progress in and around the region. However, the modern region is defined in large part by the massive challenges it faces. We list some of these below.

Poverty and lack of economic development

16. First and foremost, the Western Sahel suffers from extreme poverty and low human development. The UN Human Development Index (HDI) is a composite index of statistics related to life expectancy and health, education, and standards of living. In 2013, Niger

11 Ev w2 (Alliance for Mali); Ev w15 (Dr Claire Spencer); Ev w30 (Joliba Trust); Ev w32 (Dr Benjamin Zala and Anna Alissa Hitzeman)

12 Q 7-8 (Professor Paul Rogers). Ev w36 (Dr Oz Hassan and Dr Elizabeth Iskander Monier)

13 Q 156-191 (Lynne Featherstone MP and Susanna Moorehead); Q 215-216 (Simon Sherdiff)

14 Eg Ev w32 (Dr Benjamin Zala and Anna Alissa Hitzeman); “Mali open to dialogue with secular rebels”, *FT Online*, 31 January 2013 <http://www.ft.com/cms/s/0/30a7522e-6abd-11e2-9670-00144feab49a.htm#axzz2v0JdCJby> “In Search of Monsters”, Stephen W Smith, *London Review of Books*, 7 February 2013 <http://www.lrb.co.uk/v35/n03/stephen-w-smith/in-search-of-monsters>

15 Q 52 (Professor Michael Clarke)

ranked bottom of the HDI, with Chad, Burkina Faso and Mali not far behind. Neighbouring countries also fared badly.¹⁶ Alongside poverty there is social injustice. In Nigeria, a tiny cadre of the super-rich benefits from the country's enormous natural resources whilst over 60% of Nigerians live on less than \$1.25 a day,¹⁷ and there are more out-of-school children than in any other country in the world.¹⁸ Race-based slavery is still considered an endemic problem in Mauritania,¹⁹ and when we visited Mali we heard allegations that slavery has not yet been wholly eradicated in some parts of the north.

Population growth

17. The countries of the Western Sahel have some of the highest population growth rates in the world and there is no immediate sign that this trend is slowing.²⁰ Niger and Chad have the world's highest fertility rates (7.6 per maternity-age female in Niger), with Mali and Burkina Faso not far behind. If trends continue, it is estimated that, by 2050, most of these countries' populations will have more than doubled. Nigeria's will be 440 million, making it the world's third most populous country.²¹

18. In the last two or three decades, there has also been rapid and largely unplanned urbanisation. Lagos in Nigeria has become West Africa's first megacity, with a population now estimated at over 12 million²² with other lesser-known cities now following a similar trajectory. Urbanisation creates opportunities, including an opportunity for the growth of an entrepreneurial middle class, and for smaller families, as government economists pointed out to us in Nigeria. However, as we also learned in Nigeria, urbanisation has separated people from their traditional lives, and thrown together communities that formerly lived apart, with unpredictable and sometimes explosive results. Urbanisation means the rich and poor living in far greater proximity than may have occurred in the past, giving rise to the greater awareness of *relative* deprivation that, some of our witnesses argued, was a major catalyst of radical self-politicisation, leading in turn to a greater risk of political instability.²³

-
- 16 UN Development Programme Human Development Report 2013
http://hdr.undp.org/sites/default/files/reports/14/hdr2013_en_complete.pdf
- 17 The World Bank's 2010 estimate is that 68% of Nigerians live on less than \$1.25 a day. <http://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SI.POV.DDAY> In February 2012, Nigeria's National Bureau of Statistics reported that almost 100 million Nigerians were, at the end of 2010, living on less than \$1 a day, indicating that absolute poverty had increased sharply in the country: "Nigerians living in poverty rise to nearly 61%", *BBC News Online*, 13 February 2012 <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-africa-17015873>
- 18 UNESCO, *Education for all: global monitoring report 2013*.
<http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0022/002256/225654e.pdf> "Slight fall in world's children without schools", *BBC News Online*, 10 June 2013; Q 118 (Virginia Comolli)
- 19 This is according to the Walk Free Foundation's inaugural Global Slavery Index, published in October 2013.
<http://www.globalslaveryindex.org/> See also "Black Mauritians suffer 'slavery-like' conditions, says UN", *The Guardian*, 12 September 2013 <http://www.theguardian.com/global-development/2013/sep/12/black-mauritania-slavery-un>
- 20 Q 23-25 (Professor Paul Rogers)
- 21 Population Reference Bureau 2013 World Population Datasheet
<http://www.prb.org/Publications/Datasheets/2013/2013-world-population-data-sheet.aspx>
- 22 The UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs estimated Lagos's population in 2011 as 11.2 million. (*World Urbanisation Prospects: the 2011 Revision*). The Government of Lagos state (in area terms essentially a city-state) claims that the state's population is now over 20 million <http://www.lagosstate.gov.ng/pagelinks.php?p=6>
- 23 Q 22 (Professor Paul Rogers); Q 25 (Imad Mesdoua)

Environmental problems and resource scarcity

19. The Sahel has suffered cyclical drought for centuries but there is evidence that the desert is advancing, through a combination of climate change and soil degradation. The UN has recently estimated that the number of people facing food insecurity in the Western Sahel has grown from around 11 million in 2013 to 20 million today.²⁴ The combination of desertification and population growth has meant increased and occasionally violent competition for resources.²⁵ In northern Nigeria, we heard that clashes over grazing rights between nomadic herders and settled farmers, sometimes resulting in fatalities or even deaths, was a growing and worrying social problem. Nomads and farmers tend to come from different ethnic groups and may follow different religions, potentially adding more fuel to the fire.²⁶

Ethnic or religious tensions

20. The Western Sahel—like West Africa generally—is a complex mosaic of different tribes, cultures and linguistic groups. The colonial era led to the imposition of national boundaries bearing no relation to these underlying patterns of settlement. Thus, for example, there are native Hausa speakers in at least seven West African countries, whilst the Fulani people²⁷ are found in at least 15 countries but nowhere constitute the majority. In Nigeria, some estimates put the number of different linguistic communities at well over 200,²⁸ with the overall population thought to be split almost exactly between Christians and Muslims.²⁹ It is admirable that countries of the region have largely managed to forge a shared national identity, and ethnic groups for the most part live alongside each other in relative harmony.³⁰ But this is not always the case. As discussed below, ethnic tensions lay behind the crisis in Mali, and ethnic and religious tensions are present in Nigeria's current problems with insecurity and terrorism.³¹

Weak peripheral security and organised trans-national crime

21. Some country borders are little more than notional lines in the sand, and we heard on our visits that border control is often weak, as poorly paid border guards struggle with outdated equipment, sometimes in the presence of local militias better armed and

24 UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs: *Sahel Humanitarian Response Plan 2014-2016* <http://www.unocha.org/cap/appeals/sahel-humanitarian-response-plan-2014-2016>

25 Ev w17 (Church of England's Mission and Public Affairs Council)

26 Similar tensions are reported as being one of the main factors behind the current crisis in the Central African Republic: FCO Research Analyst paper: *Central African Republic: Background Brief and Analysis of the Crisis*, January 2014: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/central-african-republic-background-brief-and-analysis-of-the-crisis>

27 Also known as the Fula or Peul people

28 The Ethnologue linguistic database puts the number of languages in "vigorous" use in Nigeria at 358 <http://www.ethnologue.com/country/NG/status>

29 No formal census of religious belief in Nigeria has taken in Nigeria since 1963. As we noted on our visit to Nigeria, a Muslim-Christian split of roughly 50:50 (plus a small and decreasing number of animists) appears to be widely accepted as broadly accurate

30 "Why Mali's Tuareg Are Lying Low", *BBC News Online*, 3 February 2013: <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/magazine-21296746>

31 Q 102 (Sir Richard Gozney)

equipped than they are. We also heard that some border communities such as the Tuareg in northern Mali and the Kanuri in north-eastern Nigeria may tend to feel little loyalty to central government, seeing it as distant, and, at best, irrelevant. Accordingly, they may be reluctant to co-operate with the state security apparatus. The evidence that we gathered during our inquiry indicates that regional co-operation on border protection, whilst apparently better than in the past, still lags badly when it comes to addressing cross-national terrorism and criminality.³²

22. In and around the Sahara there is a long tradition of smuggling and black marketeering, with respect for the police and judicial authorities correspondingly weak.³³ Smuggling of licit or illicit goods (for instance cigarettes or arms) is a major industry, as is kidnapping for ransom, and we learned in our evidence-taking that many or most of the groups involved in these activities are also involved in terrorism.³⁴ For decades, West Africans have been migrating to Europe. Now there is growing anecdotal evidence that people smuggling in the Western Sahel is a growing problem, as some people in the region grow increasingly desperate to seek out a better life elsewhere.³⁵

23. The United Nations Office for Drugs and Crime³⁶ has identified West Africa as a major nexus in the international cocaine trade: cocaine from South America enters carefully chosen parts of the region by boat or plane, and that which is not consumed locally is then conveyed northwards towards the Mediterranean. During our inquiry, we heard that evidence linking the cocaine trade to extremists is mainly anecdotal,³⁷ although in Mali and Algeria we met local politicians who said it was a fact that terrorists in the Saharan border region were heavily involved in trafficking.³⁸ Either way, the UNODC has estimated that the market value of a single ton of cocaine exceeds the military budget of several West African countries.³⁹ The potential for the trade to destabilise and distort local economies and political systems is therefore clear. It is widely acknowledged that Guinea-Bissau, a small littoral country on the western edge of the area covered by this report, is a major landing point and a narco-state; a country permeated at almost every official level by the corrupting effect of trafficked cocaine from South America.⁴⁰ In Mali we heard of allegations that the former government had, at the very least, tolerated the presence of international traffickers on its soil.

32 Q 28 (Professor Paul Rogers; Imad Mesdoua) Q 236 (Rt Hon Hugh Robertson MP; Samantha Job)

33 Ev w3 (Alliance for Mali) Ev w27-21 (Joliba Trust.)

34 Q 26-27 (Professor Paul Rogers; Imad Mesdoua). Ev w23 (Guy Lankester)

35 UN Office on Drugs and Crime, *The role of organized crime in the smuggling of migrants from West Africa to the European Union*, 2011 http://www.unodc.org/documents/human-trafficking/Migrant-Smuggling/Report_SOM_West_Africa_EU.pdf

36 UN Office on Drugs and Crime, *Transnational Organized Crime in West Africa*, 2013 <http://www.unodc.org/toc/en/reports/TOCTAWestAfrica.html>

37 Q 139-140 (Virginia Comolli). The 2013 UNODC report (*ibid*) states, at page 14, that: "Though no large cocaine seizure has ever been made in the Sahara itself ... there have been a number of peripheral indicators that the route is in use".

38 See also Ev w28-29 (Joliba Trust)

39 UN Office on Drugs and Crime, *Transnational Organized Crime in West Africa*, 2013, page 18

40 *Ibid*, page 16; Q 48 (Jon Marks)

Coups, corruption and mis-governance

24. Countries in the region became independent from around 1960 onwards but democracy has been slow to take root. Coups and attempted coups have been common. Some countries such as Burkina Faso and Chad have had “strongmen” leaders almost continuously since independence. Other countries have made genuine strides towards real democracy, but concerns remain about the possibility of electoral fraud or manipulation, the use of the ethnic or religious card in election campaigns, and the lack of a culture of robust public scrutiny.⁴¹ Money meant for public services has sometimes been misspent,⁴² and where there are natural resources they have often been mismanaged.⁴³

The link with extremism

25. We have taken some time to set the scene in this way in order to make two related points that we consider to be fundamental, and to precede the more detailed discussion of terrorism and extremism that takes up the rest of this report. The first is that terrorism has begun to thrive in the region in large part because the environmental conditions for its growth appear to be near perfect. In the longer term, the goal should be to address those conditions.⁴⁴

26. To put this idea in context, the evidence we gathered during our inquiry indicates that the terrorist groups we discuss later in this report—groups such as AQIM, MUJAO and Boko Haram—comprise a jumble of three main mindsets united around a common revolutionary cause. The cause was summarised by one of our witnesses as a “revolt from the margins”; a religiously-inspired rebellion against a corrupt, unjust and sinful status quo,⁴⁵ whilst the mindsets comprise those of the ideologue, the gangster, and the disaffected.⁴⁶ Many of our witnesses considered that the key to addressing terrorism in the long-term was to focus on the disaffected, as it was they who could most easily be prised away from the cause.⁴⁷ The ranks of the disaffected primarily comprise under-employed young men who are likely to have become attached to terrorist groups through a mixture of frustration, social pressure and poverty.⁴⁸ One of our witnesses referred to young men in northern Nigeria being “pretty biddable to anyone who has got \$2 a head in their pocket and wants to cause trouble”⁴⁹ whilst a Parliamentarian in northern Mali told us of how terrorists lured youths into the cause by offering them free jeeps for smuggling.⁵⁰ Our witnesses stressed that many of these young men could be won back over to the mainstream if it was shown that that it could offer a better alternative. This might not

41 Q 106 (Sir Richard Gozney); Q 132 (Virginia Comolli)

42 Q 95 (Sir Richard Gozney)

43 Eg UN Environment Programme, *Environmental Assessment of Ogoniland report*, 2011 <http://www.unep.org/nigeria/>

44 Ev w1-4 (Alliance for Mali.), Ev w12 (Dr Claire Spencer)

45 Ev 61 and Q 20 (Professor Paul Rogers)

46 Q 44 (Jon Marks); Q 52 (Professor Michael Clarke); Q 138 (Virginia Comolli) Ev w36 (Dr Oz Hassan and Dr Elizabeth Iskander Monier)

47 Q 21-22 (Imad Mesdoua; Professor Paul Rogers); Q 54-55 (Professor Michael Clarke)

48 Ev w2 (Alliance for Mali); Ev w32-33 (Dr Benjamin Zala and Anna Alissa Hitzenman)

49 Q 91 (Sir Richard Gozney)

50 See also Ev w2 (Alliance for Mali)

wholly neutralise such groups—an ongoing security response would still be required—but it would significantly reduce their power and reach.

27. The second point is that if those environmental conditions are to be addressed, it will require a concerted international effort to do so. Given its very limited resources in the region, the UK's capacity to effect change on its own, whilst not negligible, is limited. Ministers and FCO officials addressing this inquiry have acknowledged this point,⁵¹ as did the Prime Minister when he made his statement to the House in January 2013. However, the somewhat inflated rhetoric that the UK Government has on occasions used about future UK engagement in the region (including language used by the Prime Minister in his January 2013 statement, some of which we referred to in paragraph 3) has, we think, slightly muddled that message.

28. At the G8 summit at Lough Erne in July 2013, the Prime Minister secured a joint commitment on tackling terrorism, and in particular on the non-payment of ransoms to terrorists.⁵² This is very welcome, although it remains to be seen what long-term effect it will have. Elsewhere on the international stage, we see further signs that the message is getting through; for instance in the pledging of almost \$8 billion in regional development aid for the Sahel at a donor conference in Bamako in November 2013, organised by the UN, the World Bank and the European Union.⁵³ Given that the Western Sahel has already been a major recipient of aid, debt forgiveness and investment assistance, and that results have been at best patchy, we hope that future development and investment programmes are much better targeted and monitored. In relation to military, intelligence and security challenges, we have seen during the inquiry plenty of evidence of activity from various governments and multilateral organisations, but insufficient evidence of effective co-ordination, as we discuss further in Chapter 4.

29. Addressing terrorism in the Western Sahel-Sahara region comprehensively means addressing the environmental conditions that are allowing it to grow: poverty and inequality, corruption and mis-governance, the pressure of fast-growing populations on depleting natural resources, insufficient cross-border co-operation, and the spread of extremist ideology. This is a huge task requiring international co-operation across a number of disciplines. We see signs that development and investment challenges are beginning to be addressed, but are concerned that co-operation on security matters should not be neglected.

30. We recognise that the UK Government has sought to secure international co-operation, for instance through the communiqué agreed at the 2013 G8 summit. We recommend that the UK Government, in its response to this report, outlines how it proposes to maintain momentum on this issue over the remainder of this Parliament, particularly in relation to security and intelligence co-operation.

51 Q 217 (Tim Morris and Rt Hon Hugh Robertson MP); Q 242-3 and Q 273-274 (Mark Simmonds MP)

52 2013 Lough Erne G8 Leaders' communiqué.
https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/207771/Lough_Erne_2013_G8_Leaders_Communique.pdf

53 "Over \$8 billion pledged for Africa's Sahel region as global leaders begin UN-led visit", UN News Centre Press Release, 4 November 2013 <http://www.un.org/apps/news/story.asp?NewsID=46410>

The wider context

31. We recognise that the themes of this report are not neatly enclosed by lines drawn on a map. Extremists move around, seeking the nearest weak point of resistance. Security crises in one country can also have a shockwave effect, destabilising more resilient neighbours. As recent events in the Central African Republic (CAR) illustrate, the factors that may give rise to instability and extremism are not unique to the Western Sahel. The crisis now unfolding in the CAR had barely begun when we started our inquiry, and we did not anticipate taking evidence on it, but, following the escalation of the crisis in late 2013, we took the opportunity to put a few questions on the crisis to the Minister for Africa, Mark Simmonds MP, in our final evidence session.⁵⁴ We see in that country the repetition of themes encountered in our evidence-taking on Mali: a political crisis, with a weakened central government losing control of events; angry men with guns or knives filling the power vacuum; latent tensions emerging, with communities splitting on ethnic or religious lines;⁵⁵ evidence of foreign meddling; the lack of an effective and timely regional solution; and Western powers observing the crisis unfold, uncertain of whether and, if so, how best to intervene. It follows from all this that we do not consider that the conclusions we draw in this report apply only to the Western Sahel. Some may be of far wider relevance.

54 Q 255

55 Following a coup in March 2013, reports gradually emerged of Christians and animists, who comprise the majority in the CAR, being victimised, terrorised or even murdered by members of the mainly Muslim Séléka militia who had taken over the country, many of whom appeared to be foreign. This led many non-Muslims to flee their homes and to the formation of self-defence groups, known as the Anti-Balaka. There have been reports of brutal reprisals now being openly exacted against local Muslims by elements within the Anti-Balaka. See "Seeds of genocide' in Central African Republic, U.N. warns", *Reuters*, 16 January 2014 <http://www.reuters.com/article/2014/01/16/us-centralafrican-idUSBREA0F0PR20140116>

3 The main events of 2012-13 and the UK Government's response to them

32. In this chapter, we discuss the three main terrorist events mentioned in paragraph 1, and consider the UK Government's initial decisions taken in response to them, starting with its decision to support intervention in Mali.

The jihadist takeover of northern Mali

33. Mali, a landlocked country of 15.5 million people five times bigger than the UK, comprises two unequal "halves" joined at a narrow central waist. Southern Mali is where the vast majority of the population live, around the capital Bamako. Most southern Malians are black Africans, of various ethnic groups. Northern Mali covers a larger area, but is very thinly populated, being mainly desert or mountain. In the north, Arabs and Tuaregs live in a sometimes uneasy coexistence with black African peoples. Discontent with rule in faraway Bamako has simmered in the north, amongst Tuaregs especially, ever since independence from France in 1960.⁵⁶

34. Mali's crisis began with a coup against President Amadou Toumani Touré in March 2012. The coup leaders were apparently angry that the President had failed to put down a Tuareg rebellion in the north and was neglecting the army. The country then sank into political chaos. By April, Tuareg militants had proclaimed an independent state in northern Mali. Splits soon emerged between Islamist and non-Islamist elements amongst the rebels. The arrival on the scene of al Qaeda-aligned jihadists decisively tipped the balance, and by June extremists were in complete control of the north. They set about creating a totalitarian Sharia state; music and dancing were banned; dissidents were beaten; transgressions were punished with stoning or amputation;⁵⁷ and much of the region's Sufi patrimony was destroyed.⁵⁸ The takeover exacerbated a refugee crisis already unfolding following the Tuareg rebellion. Hundreds of thousands fled: Tuaregs and Arabs mainly to neighbouring countries, and black northern Malians to the south of Mali.

Operation Serval

35. Whilst the crisis unfolded, Mali's army stalled, apparently incapable of launching a credible mission to recover its own territory. Mali's neighbours—partner countries in ECOWAS,⁵⁹ the regional body in West Africa for economic and security co-operation—also hesitated.⁶⁰ When we met ECOWAS's military and political leadership in Abuja, Nigeria, they told us that this was because they considered it necessary to receive an

56 Ev w23 (Guy Lankester); Ev w30 (Joliba Trust) Ev w32-33 (Dr Benjamin Zala and Anna Alissa Hitzemann)

57 "Mali Crisis: "Gao protests 'stop hand amputation", *BBC News Online*, 6 August 2012 <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-africa-19155616>

58 "Mali: Islamists destroy more holy Timbuktu sites, *Reuters*: 1 July 2012. <http://www.reuters.com/article/2012/07/01/us-mali-crisis-idUSBRE8600EC20120701>

59 ECOWAS's full name is the Economic Community of West African States

60 Q 36 (Jon Marks)

unambiguous request for military assistance from the interim Malian government, and this had never come. In late December 2012, the UN Security Council approved Resolution 2085, mandating an African-led international force to intervene in northern Mali, but the African Union was still months away from being able to put troops on the ground.

36. On 9 January 2013, a sudden push southwards by the jihadists appeared to open up the possibility of the entire country falling. Two days later, at the invitation of Mali's interim government, France intervened militarily, with logistical support from the UK, in an operation codenamed Operation Serval. Some 3800 French troops were deployed, along with units of the French Air Force, and with military support from some African countries, especially Chad. Within less than a month, the extremists had been routed from all the main population centres in the north, and central authority had been restored.

Mali today

37. Following the recovery of the north, the emphasis has shifted to restoring normality and political stability to all of Mali. Progress has been made: a new President and National Assembly have been elected, and the flow of development aid from donor countries has begun to be restored. Under pressure from France and other Western countries, the Malian government has also agreed to talk to non-Islamist Tuareg militants about the possibility of decentralising some power, on condition that they acknowledge Mali's territorial sovereignty. A commission for dialogue and national reconciliation has also been set up. An EU Training Mission is working with the Malian army to make it more effective and professional. However, major challenges remain, particularly in relation to the north, where hundreds of thousands of people remain displaced.⁶¹ We heard in Mali that many are very reluctant to return to the north, because of the fear of ethnically-based reprisals from the army or police or from local militias.⁶² Pockets of insurgency remain in the north, and we are concerned to note that, since we drew evidence-taking on this inquiry to a close, unrest and violence there has been growing.⁶³ We understand that some of this may be linked to a loss of momentum in talks between Tuareg leaders and the Malian government and some to extremists apparently beginning to regroup. We should add that when we visited Mali we gained the impression that the division between Islamist and non-Islamist Tuareg militants may not always be clear-cut on the ground.

The militant groups in northern Mali: AQIM and MUJAO

38. Three groups jointly controlled northern Mali. One, called Ansar Dine, appeared to be mainly the outfit of a local clan leader, committed to establishing an Islamist Tuareg state in northern Mali. It allied initially with the main non-Islamist Tuareg separatist movement,

61 The UN High Commission for Refugees (<http://www.unhcr.org/pages/49e484e66.html>) has estimated that, as of December 2013, there were 165,000 internally displaced people (IDPs) in Mali, mainly around Bamako, just under half of whom were being assisted by the UNHCR. This is down from over 350,000 earlier in the year. The UNHCR does not appear to have a single statistic to denote refugees from Mali, but, as of December 2013, the total number of Malian refugees in neighbouring Burkina Faso, Mauritania and Niger was estimated at 160,000. This is only slightly lower than the UNHCR's mid-2013 figure. We were informed in Mali that most IDPs are black Africans from the north, whereas many or most Malian refugees are Tuareg. This appears to corroborate evidence that Tuaregs are more wary of returning to their homes in the north than non-Tuaregs.

62 See also Ev w21 (Guy Lankester)

63 Report of the 7095th meeting of the UN Security Council, 16 January 2014 http://www.securitycouncilreport.org/atf/cf/%7B65BFCF9B-6D27-4E9C-8CD3-CF6E4FF96FF9%7D/s_pv_7095.pdf

the MNLA, before switching to the jihadists.⁶⁴ It has since split, with factions claiming to have renounced extremism.⁶⁵ The two other movements had, and have, wider ambitions:

- Al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM), originating in the defeat of Islamists in the Algerian civil war of the 1990s. A few survivors regrouped, rebranding around 2006-7 as AQIM, and pledging loyalty to the al Qaeda leadership in Pakistan and Afghanistan. AQIM has long had cells in northern Algeria but has been gaining strength further south; in desert regions of Algeria, Libya, Niger and Mali.⁶⁶ AQIM are known to be involved in smuggling, extortion and kidnapping,⁶⁷ and many of its leaders are understood to have married into desert clans, cementing their position in the community, and enabling them to key into lucrative local trade and trafficking networks.⁶⁸ We have also heard of some evidence that AQIM have been bankrolled by rich foreign sympathisers.⁶⁹ AQIM appear to see themselves as the natural leadership of the jihadist movement in North and West Africa;⁷⁰
- The Movement for Oneness and Jihad in West Africa (usually known by their French acronym MUJAO), which originated in 2011 as a West African splinter group from AQIM, dissenting at the dominance of AQIM's mainly Algerian Arab leadership. MUJAO appears to be strongest in Mauritania, Mali and Niger and its main income may be hostage-taking; it is thought to have made tens of millions of dollars from ransoming captured Westerners.⁷¹ Documents recovered following the recovery of northern Mali show AQIM rebuking MUJAO for an over-zealous application of Sharia in the areas the latter controlled.⁷²

The UK's support for Operation Serval

39. The UK Government supported France's intervention, diplomatically and practically. The UK loaned two C-17 cargo planes to provide logistical support, as well as a detachment of around 20 technical personnel. This was later augmented by a Sentinel R1 aircraft sent to Dakar, Senegal, with supporting ground crew and technical support staff of about 70 people.⁷³ The UK's decision was taken swiftly, in response to the sudden,

64 Burkina Faso Official Goes to Islamist-Held Northern Mali in Effort to Avert War, *New York Times*, 7 August 2012 <http://www.nytimes.com/2012/08/08/world/africa/burkina-faso-official-visits-mali-in-effort-to-avert-war.html>

65 Mali's Ansar Dine Islamists 'split and want talks', *BBC News Online*, 24 January 2013 <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-africa-21180766>

66 Q 43 (Jon Marks)

67 Q 140 (Virginia Comolli) Ev w 9 (Dr Sajjan Gohel); Ev w13 (Dr Claire Spencer)

68 Ev w9 (Dr Sajjan Gohel); Q 43 (Jon Marks)

69 Q 26 (Imad Mesdoua); Ev w28 (Joliba Trust) See also Directorate-General for External Policies of the EU, *The involvement of Salafism/Wahhabism in the support and supply of arms to rebel groups around the world*, June 2013, [http://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/etudes/JOIN/2013/457137/EXPO-AFET_ET\(2013\)457137_EN.pdf](http://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/etudes/JOIN/2013/457137/EXPO-AFET_ET(2013)457137_EN.pdf)

70 Mali Islamists warned about Sharia in al-Qaeda 'manifesto', *BBC News Online*, 26 February 2013, <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-africa-21587055>

71 Ev 13 (Dr Claire Spencer); "Freed Italian, Spanish hostages head for Europe", *Reuters*, 19 July 2012 <http://mobile.reuters.com/article/worldNews/idUSBRE8610JQ20120719>; International Centre for Counter-Terrorism, "Mali and the narco-terrorists", 13 March 2013 <http://www.icct.nl/publications/icct-commentaries/mali-and-the-narco-terrorists>

72 Mali Islamists warned about Sharia in al-Qaeda 'manifesto', *BBC News Online*, 26 February 2013, <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-africa-21587055>

73 HC Deb, 29 January 2013, col 781

unexpected move south by the jihadists, which in turn provoked a rapid French response. In May 2013, we asked our first set of witnesses whether Operation Serval would turn out to be a success.⁷⁴ At that point, the terrorists appeared to have been routed, but there was still guerrilla fighting in some areas, and uncertainty as to how solid France's military gains would turn out to be. Some commentators had argued that the intervention, and the UK's support for it was a tactical error.⁷⁵ Our witnesses answered that it was too early to say whether the intervention would succeed, and arguably this remains the case: Mali remains a tense country with a number of security and political problems.⁷⁶ France has not yet been able to effect a drawdown of troops from Mali as scheduled, several informal deadlines having come and gone.⁷⁷ The longer it has stayed, the more France has been drawn into domestic political conflict and lost popularity,⁷⁸ as we noted at first hand when we visited in June.

40. None of these factors should obscure Operation Serval's success as a military operation: it routed the jihadists from their northern stronghold, with limited loss of civilian life.⁷⁹ Despite a worrying rise in recent guerrilla attacks, gains have been held: territory has not leaked back to the jihadists. This has provided the space for Mali to begin the journey back to stability and democracy. The rapid recovery of the north also saved the people of northern Mali from continuing jihadist rule and helped reduce, if not arrest, the humanitarian crisis beginning to unfold in the north.

41. In calculating whether to intervene in January 2013, France would have had to have taken into account how serious a prospect there was of Bamako falling to the jihadists. Given that the total number of Islamist militants in Mali may never have exceeded three or four thousand, this would appear *prima facie* unlikely, and we heard evidence that the jihadists may not actually have intended to march all the way to the capital.⁸⁰ On the other hand, in early January France was taking a decision in real time about an unpredictable enemy, against a backdrop of political infighting in Bamako and splits in the Malian army. We should add that those of us who visited Bamako were informed of intelligence that there were Islamist sleeper cells in Bamako and other southern cities.

42. The UK Government was right to back France's intervention in Mali in January 2013, and to provide practical assistance. France's intervention was justified and necessary: the threat to the whole country appeared credible, given the state of the Malian military and the lack of a regional response. The intervention also helped prevent the humanitarian catastrophe beginning to unfold in northern Mali from significantly worsening. It is too early to say whether Mali is now "safe": this in any case

74 Q 2-3 (Professor Paul Rogers and Imad Mesdoua). See also Q 58 (Professor Michael Clarke)

75 "UK intervention in Mali treads a familiar – and doomed – path", Simon Jenkins, *The Guardian*, 30 January 2013 <http://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2013/jan/30/david-cameron-creep-speak-imperialism> "In Search of Monsters", Stephen W Smith, *London Review of Books*, 7 February 2013 <http://www.lrb.co.uk/v35/n03/stephen-w-smith/in-search-of-monsters> See also "Responses to Sahel Terrorism: Music to Jihadist Ears", Professor Michael Clarke, *RUSI Analysis*, 22 Jan 2013, <http://www.rusi.org/analysis/commentary/ref:C50FED9E953BBC/>

76 Q 68-71 (Professor Michael Clarke); Q 263 (Mark Simmonds MP)

77 Q 63 (Professor Michael Clarke)

78 Ev w3-4 (Alliance for Mali); Insecurity in northern Mali strains relations between Bamako and France, *The Guardian*, 26 November 2013 <http://www.theguardian.com/world/2013/nov/26/mali-france-kidal-tuareg-al-qaida-tension>

79 Q 58 (Professor Michael Clarke)

80 Q 4 (Professor Paul Rogers)

requires more than military intervention, but we can say that Operation Serval was, in military terms, a success.

Algeria: the attack at In Amenas

43. Five days after France launched Operation Serval in Mali, news emerged that the vast Tigantourine gas facility in Algeria had been overrun by terrorists. The facility, which is run jointly by BP, Statoil of Norway, and the Algerian state-owned Sonatrach company, is responsible for around 10% of Algeria's gas production, and is situated in a remote desert area in the south-east of the country, near the small town of In Amenas. The terrorists, numbering around 40, targeted the approximately 135 foreign workers based at the plant, seeking to take as many as possible hostages. Barely 24 hours after the capture of the plant, the Algerian government launched a military operation on the site. The siege ended around two days later with the plant recovered and most or all of the militants captured or dead. Forty workers were left dead, including six UK citizens.

Belmokhtar, the Signed in Blood Brigade and Al Murabitun

44. The self-proclaimed mastermind of the attack—though it appears he did not personally take part—was Mokhtar Belmokhtar, a former AQIM battalion leader. Connected through marriages to various Tuareg clans, Belmokhtar is thought to have made millions of dollars from kidnapping, weapons dealing and smuggling.⁸¹ He split from AQIM in 2012, following clashes with its leaders, founding a breakaway group: the Signed in Blood Brigade. It has been suggested that the group's goals in launching the attack may have been twofold: to blow the plant up, thus creating the propaganda "spectacular" that would prove the group's, and Belmokhtar's, credentials as new and serious jihadi "players" to doubting former associates; and to escape to Libya or Mali with as many hostages as possible.⁸² Reports⁸³ that Belmokhtar had been killed in Mali in April 2013 appear to have been unfounded. A person claiming to be him claimed responsibility online for masterminding two suicide attacks in Niger in May 2013. In August 2013, there was a further announcement on the internet that the Signed in Blood Brigade and MUJAO had merged into a new group: Al Murabitun, its name an echo of a much older jihadist movement in north-west Africa,⁸⁴ committed to waging jihad "from the Nile to the Atlantic".⁸⁵ The group has issued threats since its formation, expressly singling out France as a future target for its campaigns because of its involvement in Africa, but appears to have not yet staged any major attacks.

81 Q 41-42 (John Marks); Ev w29 (Joliba Trust)

82 Q 42 (John Marks); Statoil, *Report of the investigation into the terrorist attack at In Amenas*, 2013, page 40; <http://www.statoil.com/en/NewsAndMedia/News/2013/Downloads/In%20Amenas%20report.pdf>

83 "Islamist militant Mokhtar Belmokhtar 'killed in Mali'", *BBC News online*, 4 March 2013 <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-africa-21645769>

84 This name (roughly translating as the Sentinels or the Keepers of the Fortress) is also the name of the Berber dynasty that conquered and ruled large parts of north-west Africa and Spain in the 11th and 12th centuries. In English, the dynasty is better known as the Almoravids.

85 "Al-Murabitun: North Africa's Jihadists Reach into History in Their Battle against European "Crusaders"", *The Jamestown Foundation Terrorism Monitor*, 17 November 2013: <http://www.refworld.org/docid/5295e2af4.html>

45. Government ministers we met in Algiers attributed the crisis to a decrease in security along Algeria's southern and eastern borders, following the collapse of the Gaddafi regime, and the uprising in northern Mali. (In Amenas is some 30 kilometres from the frontier with Libya and it would appear that the attack was launched from across the border.⁸⁶) This is also one of the main conclusions of a report commissioned by Statoil, which provides a comprehensive analysis of the crisis.⁸⁷ The report's other main conclusion, expressed in somewhat coded language, is that the performance of the Algerian military and gendarmerie, who were formally responsible for protecting the outer perimeter of the site, fell short of what the managers of the plant could have expected: they failed first to detect the attack and then to respond to it before the attackers had entered the perimeter.⁸⁸ We understand that the Algerian Government's main practical response has been to step up security in the south, including in relation to large hydrocarbon sites.⁸⁹ We also understand that formal inquiries by the Algerian authorities into the attack are continuing, and that in due course there will be a trial of surviving terrorists.⁹⁰

UK response to the crisis

46. The evidence we have received about Algeria's security service presents it as a tough, secretive, and practically autonomous body, hardened by the bloody experience of the 1990s civil war, that would always be likely to deal with domestic terrorist incidents on its own uncompromising terms.⁹¹ It appears that the UK and other foreign governments caught up in the crisis were in essence bystanders not only to the attack itself, but also to the Algerian response. We note reports of the UK Government being frustrated at a lack of communication from the Algerian Government prior to the military operation being launched,⁹² but in his 21 January statement to the House, the Prime Minister said that he understood the challenges that the Algerian Government had faced in responding to the attack, and that responsibility for the deaths lay squarely with the terrorists. He also committed the UK to deepening its counter-terrorism co-operation with Algeria in future.⁹³

47. The survivors of the crisis and relatives of the deceased whom we met told us that they felt that many of their questions about the crisis had not been answered. They expressed concerns that the UK would put future co-operation with Algeria ahead of asking awkward questions about how the authorities had dealt with the crisis. We do understand these

86 Q 45 (Jon Marks)

87 Statoil, *Report of the investigation into the terrorist attack at In Amenas*, (2013), page 40; <http://www.statoil.com/en/NewsAndMedia/News/2013/Downloads/In%20Amenas%20report.pdf> BP has decided not to carry out a formal review whilst judicial proceedings in the UK and Algeria are ongoing, a decision which survivors of the crisis and deceased relatives criticised when we met them in July 2013. A coroner's inquiry is being carried out in the UK but we understand that progress has been slow whilst the coroner awaits information from Algeria.

88 See also Q 45 (Jon Marks)

89 "Algeria security reassures energy industry", *Financial Times*, 13 March 2013, <http://www.ft.com/cms/s/0/faddb9f8-8759-11e2-bde6-00144feabdc0.html?siteedition=uk#axzz2v611p4Zy>

90 Ev 80-82

91 Q 35 (Imad Mesdoua); Q 75 (Professor Michael Clarke). Ev w15 (Dr Claire Spencer.)

92 Britain to work with Algeria on counter-terrorism, says David Cameron, *The Guardian*, 30 January 2013 <http://www.theguardian.com/world/2013/jan/30/uk-algeria-counter-terrorism-training>

93 HC Deb, 21 January 2013 cols 26 and 42

views, but the bulk of the evidence we have received leads us to believe that efforts by the UK to put pressure for answers on the Algerian authorities are unlikely to be successful, and may even be counter-productive.⁹⁴ The Secretary of State told us in correspondence that the UK Government had open channels of communication with the Algerian authorities about the incident and that he was hopeful that the Algerian authorities would provide more information once their investigations were at a more advanced stage. He also said that the FCO had responded to the events at In Amenas by seeking to make available to companies, employees and contractors travel advice that was more context-specific, and by pursuing deeper engagement on security issues with companies working in at-risk areas that employ British nationals, or take on British contractors. We note from our meeting with victims and survivors that a number of UK nationals working at In Amenas did not have a direct contractual relationship with BP.⁹⁵

48. The UK's ability to respond independently to the hostage crisis at In Amenas, Algeria, in January 2013 was limited, given the nature of the Algerian state. However, it is evident that, at the moment of crisis, the channels of communication that the UK wanted to access were not available, indicating that there is an ongoing need to develop key relationships at political and diplomatic levels. We accept that this will be challenging. We note that the FCO has taken steps to ascertain whether there are lessons to be learned from the attack, and is working closely with industry to ensure better co-ordination and information-sharing on security matters, in order to ensure that British expatriate workers are as safe as possible. We urge the Government to ensure that this includes contractors and subcontractors of companies, as well as employees.

49. We note that the UK Government expressed confidence in 2013 that it would in due course secure more information from its Algerian counterparts on the circumstances surrounding the mission to recover the plant from the terrorists. We would be grateful for an update.

Nigeria

50. Nigeria is split along its middle between a mainly Christian south and a mainly Muslim north. In the middle belt and in the larger cities, there are mixed populations where relations between Christians and Muslims have sometimes been tense, sliding occasionally into rioting and murder. Islamist political movements made their first appearance in northern Nigeria in the 1970s, since when demands for a more Islamic public sphere in the region have grown.⁹⁶ Following the restoration of civilian rule in 1999, every northern state adopted Sharia. Community relations in mixed areas have in general worsened since the restoration of civilian rule. Interlocutors in Nigeria put this down to a number of factors. These included the irresponsible behaviour of some politicians seeking to mobilise particular voting blocs, or of local media in the way they reported stories; perceptions of an increasing gap in economic performance between north and south;⁹⁷ and, in the religious sphere, a growing tendency for more strident voices—on both sides—to drown out the

94 Q 37 (Jon Marks); Q 75 (Professor Michael Clarke)

95 Ev 80-82

96 Q 118 (Virginia Comolli)

97 See also Q 90 (Sir Richard Gozney) and Q 118 (Virginia Comolli)

voices of moderation. Some people also referred to a lack of shared social space between Christians and Muslims, leading them to lead separate lives, even where communities lived alongside each other, and a lack of real opportunities for young people in the social as well as the economic sphere.

Boko Haram emerges

51. Since 2009, this escalation in tensions has been accompanied by a campaign of terror propagated by the extremist Boko Haram group. The movement (whose name is usually translated as “Western education is forbidden”) emerged in around 2001, in the mainly Kanuri-speaking north-east; the cradle of Islam in Nigeria, but today one of the country’s poorest regions.⁹⁸ Boko Haram rejects everything “Western” as sinful, and shuns contact with anyone not acting in accordance with its strict interpretation of Islamic law. Accordingly, it rejects the Nigerian state. Its main political aim appears to be to impose a literalist form of Sharia, although whether this is a local or global cause is unclear.⁹⁹ Some of our Nigerian interlocutors suggested that Boko Haram was an essentially nihilist organisation with no coherent political agenda, whose main aim was simply to spread terror.¹⁰⁰

52. Initially Boko Haram focussed on teaching and preaching, but in 2009, amidst concerns that it was arming and becoming a security risk, the Nigerian government arrested its leadership. Riots broke out across the north-east, with hundreds killed. Boko Haram’s then leader, Mohammed Yusuf, died in police custody. This marks the point of Boko Haram’s transformation into an overtly terrorist paramilitary movement.¹⁰¹ Since 2009, it has killed thousands, targeting churches, schools, government buildings, and the UN office in Abuja, as well as soldiers and police officers. It is thought that health workers administering the polio vaccine who were assassinated in February 2013 were killed by Boko Haram,¹⁰² whilst more recently there have been reports of Christian women and girls being captured, forcibly “converted” to Islam, and married off to Boko Haram militants.¹⁰³ It is Christians in vulnerable areas who have been disproportionately targeted, but members of northern Nigeria’s Muslim elites, and ordinary Muslims connected however remotely with the state apparatus, have also been attacked and killed. As a military movement, Boko Haram is understood to be loosely organised,¹⁰⁴ meaning that in some cases attacks attributed to “Boko Haram” may not have been carried out at the direct behest of the leadership. It has cells scattered across Nigeria, but the main concentration is in the north-east.

98 Nigerians living in poverty rise to nearly 61%, *BBC News Online*, 13 February 2012 <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-africa-17015873>

99 Q 123 (Virginia Comolli)

100 Comparisons were made with the Kharijites; a schismatic and revolutionary sect that violently rejected the authority of the early Caliphs and declared jihad on all other “apostate” Muslims

101 Q 119 (Virginia Comolli)

102 Nigeria polio vaccinators shot dead in Kano, *BBC News Online* 8 February 2013 <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-africa-21381773>

103 Insight—Boko Haram, taking to hills, seize slave ‘brides’, *Reuters*, 17 November 2013 <http://www.reuters.com/article/2013/11/17/us-nigeria-security-islamists-insight-idUSBRE9AG0412013117>

104 Q 121 (Virginia Comolli)

Ansaru

53. In around 2011, Boko Haram suffered a split, with the formation of Ansaru,¹⁰⁵ following apparent disagreements over tactics, and possible ethnic tensions between the mainly Kanuri-speaking leadership and Hausa-speaking followers.¹⁰⁶ Ansaru claims to be aligned with the global jihadist movement and is thought to be linked to al Qaeda,¹⁰⁷ but appears to lack the same depth of grassroots support as Boko Haram. Its main activity so far has been taking Westerners hostage.¹⁰⁸ Ansaru's activities have also included raids on prisons to free Boko Haram captives indicating that the two groups are not completely estranged.¹⁰⁹

The state of emergency

54. By 2012, there were reports of swathes of the north-east becoming no-go areas beyond the control of state and federal authorities,¹¹⁰ of a step-up in Boko Haram's military capacity, and of it beginning to take on army targets directly.¹¹¹ In May 2013, President Jonathan declared a state of emergency in three north-eastern states, sending thousands of troops into the region. The state of emergency was renewed in November 2013. The Government's official message is that the army is winning, although the lack of objective information from the frontline makes this difficult to verify.¹¹²

55. When we visited Nigeria in early September, senior counter-terrorism officials in the federal government told us that Boko Haram had been pushed out of the towns and cities into the bush, that many of its senior leaders had been killed, and that its communications systems had been disrupted. The military experts told us that there were probably still a few thousand active partisans in the north-east, and we viewed video footage (which we understood to be recent) of a Boko Haram gathering in the bush numbering in the low hundreds. The officials told us that, despite recent advances, Nigeria would still welcome military assistance from the UK and others to help to finish the job. At a meeting with the Governor of Borno state, epicentre of the current violence, he alleged that a failure by the Cameroonian Government to protect its border with Nigeria from Boko Haram infiltration had enabled the movement to create a new safe haven in Kanuri-speaking parts

105 This is the shortened form of a name translating from Arabic as the "Vanguard for the Protection of Muslims in Black Africa".

106 Q 122 (Virginia Comolli)

107 Q 123 (Virginia Comolli); The UK Government's current travel advice for Nigeria describes Ansaru as being "broadly aligned with Al Qaeda" <https://www.gov.uk/foreign-travel-advice/nigeria/terrorism>

108 Ev 67-68 (Raffaello Pantucci and Luke Gribben)

109 "What do we know about Ansaru?", *Think Africa Press*, 22 January 2014 <http://thinkafricapress.com/nigeria/who-are-ansaru>

110 Q 125 (Virginia Comolli)

111 "Nigeria braces for escalation in terrorist attacks", *The Guardian*, 25 September 2012 <http://www.theguardian.com/world/2012/sep/25/nigeria-terrorist-attacks-boko-haram> "Boko Haram timeline: from preachers to slave traders", *BBC News Online*, 15 May 2013 <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-africa-22538888>

112 Q 120 (Virginia Comolli)

of Cameroon's far north, beyond the reach of the Nigerian military. Recent news reports indicate increasing evidence of Boko Haram infiltration of northern Cameroon.¹¹³

56. Until recently, Boko Haram had tended to be assessed as a cult-like body operating outside the jihadist mainstream, but the counter-terrorism experts we met told us of increasing evidence of contact between Boko Haram and other extremist groups, and that Boko Haram's military tactics were increasingly convergent with those of the wider al Qaeda movement.¹¹⁴ The movement also appears to have begun kidnapping Westerners for ransom,¹¹⁵ and the experts told us that this may have been as a direct result of an instruction from al Qaeda to diversify tactics and raise more money for jihad.

57. A December 2013 UN report¹¹⁶ estimated that Boko Haram had killed over 1200 soldiers and civilians since the state of emergency commenced. In mid-January 2014 President Jonathan sacked the chief of defence staff, and the heads of the army, navy and air force, and has referred to a culture of competition between the security forces leading to "obvious lapses" in their performance.¹¹⁷ It is very concerning to note that, as we publish this report, there seems to have been a further escalation of violence over recent weeks, with horrifying reports of well-armed militias roaming the north-east and murdering hundreds of people in raids. These include scores of children at a boarding school and worshippers attending their local church. Increasingly, doubts are being aired in public by political and civic leaders about whether the current military strategy is working.¹¹⁸ When we visited the country, we were made aware of growing concerns about the state of the military. With some 80,000 serving personnel, the Nigerian armed forces are the largest in West Africa, but numbers are not large relative to the country's massive population and its security challenges, and we heard of perceptions that the forces' performance is in long-term decline and that there is a lack of leadership. The Nigerian air force is considered to be in a particularly weak state, with much of the fleet not currently operational.

The UK response

58. The UK Government has made very clear that it is a firm supporter of the Nigerian Government, and the Nigerian people, in their fight against extremism. We know that both countries value the bilateral relationship, and wish it to remain strong. Given the strong diaspora links between the two countries (discussed later in this chapter), it is particularly important that the UK has Nigeria's trust and co-operation on counter-terrorism. We are

113 "Boko Haram blamed for Cameroon village attack", *Al Jazeera English*, 4 March 2014
<http://www.aljazeera.com/news/africa/2014/03/boko-haram-blamed-cameroon-village-attack-20143413314679420.html>

114 See also Q 123 (Virginia Comolli)

115 Boko Haram 'holding' kidnapped French priest, *France 24*, 16 November 2013
<http://www.france24.com/en/20131115-nigeria-boko-haram-holding-french-priest-kidnapped-cameroon/>

116 UN Office for Co-ordination of Humanitarian Affairs, Humanitarian Bulletin, Nigeria, Issue 08, December 2013
<http://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/HB%20Nigeria%20December%20final.pdf>

117 "Did Nigerian military splits help Boko Haram?" *BBC News Online*, 31 January 2014,
<http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-25978785>

118 Eg: MURIC demands answers from Federal Government, army, *Daily Trust (Abuja)*; 27 February 2014;
<http://allafrica.com/stories/201402270429.html> Boko Haram "stronger than Nigerian army, 17 February 2014,
Aljazeera English <http://www.aljazeera.com/news/africa/2014/02/boko-haram-stronger-than-nigerian-army-2014217194247251822.html> "In Nigeria, No One Has Your Back", *New York Times*, 4 March 2014
http://www.nytimes.com/2014/03/05/world/africa/in-nigeria-no-one-has-your-back.html?_r=0

aware that the UK Government has expressed uncertainties or reservations, in private and public¹¹⁹ about some aspects of Nigeria's counter-terrorism policy. One concern is that the federal government may have underplayed social and economic elements—what we labelled in Chapter 2 the environmental factors that may lead to instability—in its approach to counter-terrorism.¹²⁰ Some of our witnesses expressed very similar views.¹²¹ Another concern that we are aware of is as to the conduct of the Nigerian security forces in tackling extremist violence. We understand that the UK Government is very concerned not only that some civilians may be being mistreated, but that a narrative of police and army heavy-handedness (or worse) towards ordinary people in the north and north-east risks playing into Boko Haram's hands. We are aware of very serious concerns relating to the ethics and conduct of elements within the Nigerian army, including allegations of torture and extra-judicial killing.¹²²

59. Having visited Nigeria, and spoken to a range of Nigerians from different backgrounds and walks of life, we now understand even more clearly the nature of the battle in which the Nigerian government is engaged. Boko Haram's methods are repellent even by the extreme standards of modern Islamist terrorism. In Abuja, the briefing we received from counter-terrorism experts provided a chilling insight into the tactics, beliefs and mindset of Boko Haram militants. It also included a showing of a Boko Haram propaganda video that left us in no doubt as to the cult-like violence and sadism of the movement's hardcore. It was particularly distressing to see very young children being indoctrinated into, and participating in, the movement's brutalising and murderous activities.

60. However, we also understand the UK Government's reservations. Although we accept that all regions of Nigeria are challenged, it does appear that northern Nigeria needs major social and economic interventions, over the long-term, to address issues such as poor educational outcomes and a lack of jobs and foreign investment. Nigerian federal government representatives told us that the UK and Nigeria are essentially in agreement on this issue, referring to the three pillars of President Jonathan's northern strategy which, alongside the security crackdown provided via the state of emergency, also comprise the offer of dialogue with those willing to renounce violence (through the body known as the Amnesty Committee, which we met in Abuja), and various interventions to benefit the northern economy and public services.

61. The UK's reservations in relation to the Nigerian security services have led it to take a very cautious response to requests for military assistance and training. We understand that this has left the Nigerian government frustrated. Alongside the very understandable human rights concerns, it appears that the UK Government is anxious about the possibility of advice and training given in good faith being subsequently misused in a field setting, and of the British officer who provided the training becoming implicated. We sought

119 "Boko Haram: US, UK advocate non-military approach", *The Vanguard* (Lagos), 3 February 2014; <http://www.vanguardngr.com/2014/02/boko-haram-us-uk-advocate-non-military-approach/> "Foreign Secretary condemns latest violence in North East", Foreign and Commonwealth Office news release, 8 May 2013 <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/foreign-secretary-condemns-latest-violence-in-north-east-nigeria>

120 Q 251 (Mark Simmonds MP)

121 Q 124-125 (Virginia Comolli)

122 "Nigeria: Deaths in custody of hundreds of Boko Haram suspects must be investigated", Amnesty International news release, 14 October 2013 <http://www.amnesty.org/en/news/nigeria-deaths-hundreds-boko-haram-suspects-custody-requires-investigation-2013-10-15>. See also Q 36 (Jon Marks)

clarification from the FCO when they gave evidence, especially in view of the fact that the UK Government has provided recent military training and assistance to countries such as Libya, Afghanistan and Kenya. The FCO confirmed that their military assistance was more limited than the Nigerian government wished. Simon Shercliff, Head of the Counter-Terrorism Department told us that:

what we cannot do, and cannot afford to do ... is to blindly go into these alliances with countries that are wilfully and openly transgressing international human rights norms. That is something that our democracy doesn't stand for. We cannot afford to be, for example, handing over intelligence on Nigerian terrorists for the Nigerians then to go and find the people and hang them up by their toenails. So we assist the Nigerians to go round the place and find the terrorists, because that is very much in our national interest, and at the same time—from the top level of political exhortation to the practical capacity building level—we continually exhort them to do their work while maintaining international standards of human rights. You can't do one without the other.¹²³

62. Mark Simmonds MP, the Parliamentary Under-Secretary at the FCO, sought to stress that the UK was nevertheless “doing a lot” to assist Nigeria in counter-terrorism, listing matters including advice on counter-terrorism strategies, anti-terrorist finance training, and judicial training.¹²⁴

63. The UK Government wants Nigeria to defeat terrorism, but has concerns about assisting the Nigerian military. We fully understand the Government's dilemma but consider it important that the UK do whatever it can, consistent with its respect for human rights values, to assist Nigeria in its battle against Boko Haram's uniquely repellent brand of extremism. We ask the Government to be mindful of the importance of effective counter-terrorism co-operation between the two countries, given our strong diaspora links with Nigeria, and of the possibility of Nigeria eventually seeking security assistance elsewhere, perhaps from countries with far fewer scruples than the UK has. We note that the UK Government provides training and assistance to other armies in the developing world and seek clarification from the Government that it is satisfied that its position is entirely consistent.

Wider lessons from recent events

64. Some wider points can be made from considering all three events in the round. These relate to the four main premises on which the Prime Minister's statement of 21 January 2013, and the FCO's evidence to this inquiry have essentially rested; that there has been a geographical shift in the global contest with Islamic extremism towards parts of North and West Africa; that this is an increasing threat to UK interests; that this requires increased diplomatic, security and economic engagement from the UK and its partners; and that a failure to increase engagement would carry greater risks.

123 Q 238

124 Q 251-252

The frontier has shifted

65. Essentially, none of the evidence we received dissented with the proposition that there had been a partial shift in the extremist battleground towards parts of North and West Africa where state authority is weak.¹²⁵ The evidence we gathered on our visits to Algeria, Mali and Nigeria, and our discussions with politicians, military figures, academics, and civic leaders, further confirmed that these countries are, in different ways, confronting a new, or re-invigorated, challenge from violent extremism. **We agree with the UK Government that parts of North and West Africa have become a new frontline in the contest with Islamist extremism and terrorism.**

A magnet for jihadists?

66. **However, we have encountered limited evidence thus far to confirm the Prime Minister's concerns that the empty quarters of the region have become a "magnet for jihadists"**. It has been established that at least two Westerners were involved in the attack at In Amenas,¹²⁶ and on our visits we encountered anecdotal evidence of South Asians, East Africans and Gulf Arabs being involved in some groups. However, the great majority of militants appear to be from within the region or, in the case of Nigeria, from within one part of the country.¹²⁷ We note that, at the time when he spoke, the Prime Minister may not have anticipated the extent to which the Syrian civil war would continue to draw in jihadists from around the world, perhaps diverting them from battlefields elsewhere. Should the Syrian civil war, one way or another, be resolved, we cannot predict where some jihadists might go next.

The scale of the threat

67. It is more difficult to express a clear view on the scale of the extremist threat. In effect, this amounts to speculating on what would constitute a worst-case scenario were extremism left unchecked. No one we took evidence from considered that terrorists were likely to pose a serious threat to Algeria's current apparently stable form of government.¹²⁸ At most, it might lead to some power seeping back to more authoritarian elements within government, at the expense of the liberalising forces that have been quietly at work in the country in recent years. Similarly, in Nigeria, no one we spoke to considered the state, or national unity, to be directly under threat.¹²⁹ The risk was more insidious: that Boko Haram's campaign was destroying the authority of the state in large parts of the country, that vigilante justice was filling the vacuum, and that the campaign itself, and the state's response to it, might further erode relations between the Christian and Muslim "halves" of Nigerian society. We should add that there were some people in Nigeria who informed us that the security situation in the north-east was not the most critical issue facing the

125 Q 50 (Professor Michael Clarke) Ev 67 (Raffaello Pantucci and Luke Gribben)

126 "Canadian was a 'clear leader' among Islamist terrorists who killed 40 workers in Algeria gas plant attack: report", *National Post (Toronto)*, 17 September 2013 <http://news.nationalpost.com/2013/09/16/canadian-was-a-clear-leader-among-islamist-terrorists-who-killed-11-workers-in-algeria-gas-plant-attack-report/>

127 Q 41 (Jon Marks); Q 134-135 (Virginia Comolli)

128 Q 32-33 (Imad Mesdoua)

129 See also Ev w16 (Church of England's Mission and Public Affairs Council)

country and that it was more important, for example, to deal with corruption or the country's creaking infrastructure.

68. In the case of Mali, an al Qaeda-ruled rump state was a reality for some months, and some of our witnesses considered that Mali's neighbours were potentially vulnerable to a similar fate. Niger and Mauritania were singled out, and Mali itself was not yet seen as being out of the danger zone.¹³⁰ It is reasonable to assume that an Islamist statelet somewhere in north-west Africa would be a centre of smuggling, people trafficking and kidnapping; activities that already go on in the region. It may have some limited strategic importance, especially if it sat on valuable natural resources.¹³¹ A rump state would have the potential to disrupt or destabilise its neighbours¹³² and—although this point is speculative—launch attacks on more distant enemies.

The effect of instability in Libya

69. Another country that our witnesses saw as very endangered was Libya. The country's domestic politics continue to be chaotic, civic institutions are weak, and terrorist groups are organising openly, particularly in and around the eastern city of Benghazi.¹³³ Given the UK's recent history of involvement in Libya, including military intervention in 2011, we decided that the domestic political situation in the country merited further consideration as a stand-alone issue, and we have agreed to take separate evidence on this issue, on 25 March 2014.

70. It has been widely agreed during this inquiry that the ongoing crisis in Libya has also destabilised a far wider area and, in so doing, strengthened the extremists' hand.¹³⁴ We discuss the extent to which this was anticipated by the FCO in the next chapter. Three main regional consequences have been identified as flowing from the crisis in Libya, all of which have been factors in the events covered in this chapter:

- A failure to secure the Gaddafi regime's arms caches after the regime fell has led to a proliferation of small arms and light weapons, and some heavier artillery, across North and West Africa, and indeed elsewhere. In Nigeria, we were informed that Libyan small arms had even ended up in the hands of Boko Haram militants, thousands of miles from where they originated;
- Many of the thousands of armed African mercenaries that the Gaddafi regime is known to have hired over the years left Libya hurriedly after the regime collapsed. The mainly Tuareg mercenaries who left for northern Mali helped catalyse the Tuareg uprising which led to the 2012 crisis in the country. It appears that some mercenaries then went on to ally with the jihadist cause;¹³⁵

130 Q 19 (Imad Mesdoua); Q 61 (Professor Michael Clarke) Ev w13-14 (Dr Claire Spencer)

131 For example, uranium reserves in northern Niger, which supply around 20% of the raw material for France's nuclear industry: Ev w13 (Dr Claire Spencer)

132 Q 4 (Imad Mesdoua)

133 Ev w4-11 (Dr Sajjan Gohel)

134 Q 28-31 (Professor Paul Rogers and Imad Mesdoua); Q 61-62 (Professor Michael Clarke); Ev w32 (Dr Benjamin Zala and Anna Alissa Hitzemann)

135 Ev w2-3 (Alliance for Mali)

- Libyan border security and control over remote areas has sharply declined. It has become much easier for extremists both to settle in southern Libya and to make raids across the border.¹³⁶

Military strength of extremism in the region

71. The success of the extremists in Mali appears to have owed as much to political opportunism as to military might. They seized the moment to capitalise on political chaos in the south, and made alliances of convenience with disgruntled elements in the north. However, they do also appear to have been well-armed and supplied: those of us who attended a briefing given by a French military commander at the October 2013 NATO Parliamentary Assembly were concerned by evidence of the advanced state of the logistics and materiel that he showed they had left behind in northern Mali.¹³⁷ That said, Operation Serval was able to quite quickly reverse the gains made by the extremists and only began to encounter greater difficulty when conflict entered a guerrilla stage. This indicates that extremists' main strength continues to be in asymmetrical warfare and that where military success brings greater exposure they are perhaps weakened. There is also reason to believe that the extremists might have struggled to maintain unity: recovered documents and public statements by groups show that they are prone to personality clashes and splits over tactics; between "ultras" and (in relative terms) pragmatists, and between local and global agendas.¹³⁸

72. The threat from terrorism to people in many parts of the Western Sahel-Sahara region is immediate, frightening and real. The prospect of another extremist "takeover" of territory somewhere in the Western Sahel cannot be ruled out. However, it is important to maintain a sense of proportion about the scale of the military threat the extremists pose. The precedent of Mali in 2013 suggests that they would struggle to hold territory in the face of any Western-led intervention. We are aware of no evidence that extremists in the region yet pose an "existential threat" to the West.

Threat to UK interests in the region

73. The UK's strongest regional links are with Nigeria. There are cultural ties, through the English language, the Commonwealth, and the colonial past. In terms of trade, Nigeria ranked 30th in UK exports in 2011-12 and the UK currently does more business with Nigeria than with any other sub-Saharan country apart from South Africa. The UK's commercial interests are mainly found in the south: in the oil-rich Delta region (where Royal Dutch Shell is one of six companies licensed to operate) and the city of Lagos. Morocco, Algeria and Libya respectively ranked 47th, 65th and 84th for UK exports in 2011-

136 Q 45 (Jon Marks); Ev w10 (Dr Sajjan Gohel)

137 Q 231

138 Q 20 (Professor Paul Rogers); Q 51 (Professor Michael Clarke); Ev w15 (Dr Claire Spencer); "Mali Islamists warned about Sharia in al-Qaeda 'manifesto'", *BBC News Online*, 26 February 2013 <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-africa-21587055>; "Al-Qaeda's scathing letter to troublesome employee Mokhtar Belmokhtar reveals inner workings of terrorist group", *The Telegraph*, 29 May, 2013 <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/al-qaeda/10085716/Al-Qaeda-scathing-letter-to-troublesome-employee-Mokhtar-Belmokhtar-reveals-inner-workings-of-terrorist-group.html>

12.¹³⁹ It was clear from our visit to Algeria that both sides are keen to grow both the business and the diplomatic relationship. The UK's commercial relations with Francophone countries of the Western Sahel are negligible.

74. We note evidence that regional instability will exert upward pressure on energy prices.¹⁴⁰ The UK would appear to be relatively vulnerable to any price rises: in 2012, Nigeria provided 12% of the UK's crude oil imports and Algeria 6%.¹⁴¹ (Despite having enormous reserves, Nigeria has practically no gas industry and Algerian gas exports to the UK are small, although we understand that there are moves to increase them.)¹⁴² Nigerian crude oil comes from the largely Christian Delta region. The Delta region is already very vulnerable to serious organised crime, although not currently terrorism; to that extent, any such upward pressure may therefore have already been priced in.

75. There was general agreement from those providing evidence that an increased UK security profile in the region does carry the risk of making more vulnerable our interests in the region, and our citizens.¹⁴³ In a few cases, especially kidnappings of Britons, the risk has already crystallised at the UK's current level of engagement, and clearly British expatriate workers are potentially at risk.¹⁴⁴ We did not take formal evidence on the size of UK expatriate communities in the region, but understand that in general they are very small. There are some 40,000 British passport holders living in Nigeria, most, we understand, of Nigerian origin.¹⁴⁵ However, we are not aware of evidence that, because of this factor alone, they are more vulnerable to terrorism or kidnapping than other Nigeria residents. We note the UK Government's policy of refusing, under any circumstances, to pay or permit payment of ransom money to terrorists. It is of course not possible to make any direct correlation but, as some evidence has noted,¹⁴⁶ significantly fewer British nationals have been kidnapped than nationals of some other European countries.

76. In relation to well-publicised claims by Mohktar Belmohktar that the attack at In Amenas was payback for Western intervention in Mali, which were dismissed by the Prime Minister at the time, the evidence we have received has corroborated the Prime Minister's view. This is on the ground that the attack, which happened less than a week after the launch of Operation Serval, would have taken weeks to plan.¹⁴⁷

139 The source for these statistics is HM Revenue and Customs UK trade information database <https://www.uktradeinfo.com/Pages/Home.aspx>

140 Ev 69 (Raffaello Pantucci and Luke Gribben)

141 "Energy imports and exports: Commons Library Standard Note SN04046", 30 August 2013 <http://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/research/briefing-papers/SN04046/energy-imports-and-exports>

142 "Activists accuse Britain of 'gas grab' in Algeria despite human rights abuses", *The Guardian*, 9 February 2014 <http://www.theguardian.com/business/2014/feb/09/activists-britain-gas-grab-algeria-human-rights>

143 Ev w3 (Alliance for Mali); Ev w20 (Professor Alice Hills)

144 Q 83 (Professor Michael Clarke); Q 129 (Virginia Comolli); Ev 67-68 (Raffaello Pantucci and Luke Gribben)

145 Q 249 (Mark Simmonds MP)

146 Ev w22 (Guy Lankester); Ev 67 (Raffaello Pantucci and Luke Gribben)

147 Q 46-47 (Jon Marks)

Threats to the UK itself

77. The FCO's written evidence stated that the terrorist groups at large in North and West Africa currently do not have the capacity to pose a threat to the UK mainland. This view was essentially not disputed during our inquiry.¹⁴⁸ This may be an issue of priorities as well as capacity: it appears that, despite the rhetoric of global jihad, most extremists in the region are, at present, more concerned with fighting local wars than with taking the battle to the UK, or to anywhere else in Europe. The Rt Hon Hugh Robertson, Minister of State at the FCO, told us he accepted the proposition that if groups were to unite, this might extend their reach, and may require the UK Government to revise its assessment.¹⁴⁹

78. We sought views during the inquiry of the risk of diaspora communities in the UK becoming radicalised should the UK become more engaged in counter-terrorism activities in North and West Africa. The general view was that there was a latent risk,¹⁵⁰ but that the existence of diaspora communities also offered opportunities for the UK. For example, written evidence from two counter-terrorism experts argued that there was a need for the UK Government to engage more actively with North and West African communities in the UK, through existing strategies such as "Prevent."¹⁵¹ The evidence argued that, if engaged with positively, diaspora communities could be an intelligence asset, and could help protect UK interests; and that without such engagement, there would be a risk of a reprise of the "home grown" terrorism the UK experienced in the 2000s, but this time with African-British rather than South Asian-British protagonists.¹⁵²

79. According to the FCO's written evidence to the inquiry, the number of Moroccans, Algerians and Libyans in the UK each numbers around 20,000.¹⁵³ By far the largest diaspora community of any country considered in this report comes from Nigeria, although we were perturbed to note wide discrepancies in estimates of its size, with the FCO putting it at 190,000¹⁵⁴ and a witness, Virginia Comolli, putting it at around half a million. (It may be that the discrepancy is partly explained by the latter figure including British-born UK citizens of Nigerian extraction.) Ms Comolli informed us that the vast majority of British Nigerians were southern Christians, disproportionately from middle class backgrounds, and were relatively well integrated.¹⁵⁵ The shocking murder which occurred at Woolwich in May 2013, whilst we were gathering evidence for this inquiry, and which involved two individuals seeming to come from the background Ms Comolli describes, does underline the importance of the UK's intelligence services remaining discreetly vigilant in relation to radicalisation within West African diaspora communities.

148 Q 129 and 136 (Virginia Comolli); Ev 67-69 (Raffaello Pantucci and Luke Gribben)

149 Q 212

150 Ev w20 (Professor Alice Hills)

151 The Prevent strategy is the UK's current counter-radicalisation strategy. The Home Office is the lead government department https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/97976/prevent-strategy-review.pdf

152 Ev 69 (Raffaello Pantucci and Luke Gribben)

153 Ev 80

154 Ev 80

155 Q 130 and Q 133

80. UK interests in parts of North and West Africa are vulnerable to terrorism and will continue to be for the foreseeable future, whatever the level of UK engagement in counter-terrorism. It is possible that greater engagement might lead to increased targeting of UK interests, and citizens. However, we agree with the Prime Minister that UK and Western disengagement from the region, and failure to seek to address terrorism and its causes, would in the longer term carry greater risks for the UK.

81. We urge the UK Government to remain vigilant on the issue of possible radicalisation within North and West African diaspora communities, bearing in mind that dialogue and positive engagement with these communities could also contribute to an effective counter-terrorism strategy.

82. The UK's policies on non-payment of ransom money to terrorists may have helped protect vulnerable UK citizens abroad. We acknowledge the Prime Minister's global leadership in seeking to eradicate ransom payments. Countries that continue to flout the ban on payments are guilty of strengthening the terrorists' hand. The UK should continue to discreetly but firmly press its allies to end this practice.

4 Addressing future challenges

83. New and predominantly joint or multilateral approaches are needed to tackle the drivers of extremism and instability in the Western Sahel-Sahara region set out in chapter 2. In its discussion of future policies, the FCO's written submission to this inquiry tended towards the aspirational rather than the specific, and stated that the UK Government was still in the process of formulating its strategy for North and West Africa.¹⁵⁶ Many of the responses we received in oral evidence from the FCO indicate that this process is still ongoing.¹⁵⁷ It is right that the Government should take time to formulate its policies carefully, although this has meant that at the conclusion of the inquiry, we have been left with no clear sense of how the UK Government proposes to prioritise and organise its future work in relation to vulnerable countries in North and West Africa, nor whom its main partners are likely to be. This chapter sets out some proposals of our own. The starting point is to consider what resources the UK can currently call on in the region.

The UK's diplomatic resources: rhetoric versus reality

84. The Prime Minister appears to have committed the UK to a more ambitious programme of bilateral engagement in North and West Africa, in addition to increased partnership working. In his January 2013 statement to the House,¹⁵⁸ he committed the UK to “work right across the region” to help address “weak political institutions, political instability and a failure to address long-standing political grievances” and pledged that the UK would help put in place “the building blocks of democracy—the rule of law and the independence of the judiciary, the rights of minorities, free media and association, and a proper place in society for the army.” In its submission to this inquiry, the FCO set out a similar vision, referring to a new approach to North and West Africa, based around three pillars of security, development and politics.¹⁵⁹

The UK's current diplomatic footprint

85. These ambitions should be set against the UK's diplomatic footprint in the Western Sahel, which is very light. The Africa Minister, Mr Simmonds, told us that the UK has some 1000 staff based in the region relevant to this report.¹⁶⁰ We suggest that this statistic gives a somewhat misleading impression of the depth of the UK's current engagement: in the first place because it includes staff of all UK government departments and agencies and secondly because we understand the reference to include *all* the countries in West and North Africa, including countries such as Egypt and Ghana, where the UK has relatively large embassies. In relation to the countries of the Western Sahel, we consider it important to spell out just how low our current diplomatic representation is: the UK has one small embassy in Bamako, Mali, employing fewer than five UK-based staff, and no embassies in

156 Ev 74 and 76-77

157 Q 204-206 (Rt Hon Hugh Robertson MP); Q 217 (Tim Morris and Rt Hon Hugh Robertson MP); Q 216 (Simon Shercliff); Q 243 (Mark Simmonds MP)

158 HC Deb, 21 January 2013, cols 25-27

159 Ev 76

160 Q 244

Chad, Niger, Burkina Faso or Mauritania. As we understand it, the total number of UK-based staff (of any department) currently working in all of these countries is well under ten.¹⁶¹ We should add that when we visited Bamako in June 2013, we noted that embassy staff were very restricted, for security reasons, in the journeys they could take around the country, and we presume that similar considerations would apply if staff were to seek to travel around other Western Sahel countries.

86. The situation in Nigeria is distinguishable, as is only to be expected of a Commonwealth member state with the world's seventh-largest population. As of 2013, the FCO had 32 UK-based staff in the country, alongside staff of other UK departments.¹⁶² However, set against Nigeria's many social, governance and security problems, and its strong links to the UK (which, we were informed, bring challenges as well as opportunities), this hardly amounts to a massive figure. We were left with the strong impression from our visit that Nigeria is a resource-hungry country for FCO staff, and that working there is sufficiently challenging to leave little additional time for scanning the regional horizon.

87. In the Maghrebi states of Morocco, Algeria and Libya, the UK's diplomatic profile is a little higher than in West Africa, although none of the three embassies is large and all three, we understand, are dwarfed by those of France and the US.¹⁶³

88. There are no Arabic speaker slots¹⁶⁴ for FCO officials for the countries covered by this report, other than in Libya, where there are two. The total number of French speaker slots is in the low teens, almost all of them in Morocco and Algeria. There are no speaker slots for any of the indigenous languages of West Africa, some of which, such as Hausa, are spoken by millions of people across a number of countries.¹⁶⁵

89. Finally, the UK has no permanent military presence in the region covered by this report, whilst Nigeria is now the only country in the region with which the UK has a bilateral aid relationship.¹⁶⁶

The FCO's analysis of recent events

90. The Prime Minister's comments should also be considered in the light of FCO responses to recent events. In its National Security Strategy, published in October 2010, the Government made no express mention of the Sahel as an area of concern. A little more

161 This is based on figures in the FCO Annual Reports and Accounts 2012-13, Annex A, and information supplied over the course of this inquiry. For security reasons, the FCO does not disclose the precise number of UK-based staff in an embassy where they number five or fewer. The FCO told us in its written evidence that, alongside staff of the Mali embassy, there is a UK-based Political Officer in Nouakchott, Mauritania, and a locally-engaged member of staff in Niamey, Niger (Ev 74)

162 FCO Annual Reports and Accounts 2012-13, Annex A
https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/210136/HC_32_v0_2.pdf

163 The FCO's most recent annual report (*ibid*) shows that there are 11 UK-based staff in Algiers, 11 in Rabat, and 15 in Tripoli. Supplementary evidence from Mark Simmonds MP (Ev 85-86) provided in December 2013 puts the numbers at, respectively, 9, 9 and 14

164 A speaker slot is any diplomatic post in relation to which the ability to communicate effectively in the local language is considered essential.

165 Ev 85-66

166 DFID does maintain a bilateral aid relationship with five other countries in the wider vicinity; Ghana, Liberia and Sierra Leone in West Africa, and Sudan and South Sudan to the east.

than 18 months later, the Malian government had collapsed and Al Qaeda-aligned terrorists were ruling over an area the size of France. Under the heading “Lessons learned and risks”, the FCO’s written submission stated that:

the international community misjudged the nature of the Government of Amadou Toumani Touré in Mali which until early 2012 was held up as an example of stability. That Government had in fact been permitting the establishment of terrorists and had wasted aid money.¹⁶⁷

91. We asked the FCO what had gone wrong. The Minister of State, Hugh Robertson MP, remarked on the problem of “trying to get real oversight of exactly what is happening” with what he referred to as “the new breed of terrorism”. He also said that it was a difficult challenge to know at which point a known terrorist challenge is about to “become critical”.¹⁶⁸ Tim Morris, Head of the Sahel Taskforce, told us that:

In the months leading up to the military action in January [2013], which came from the terrorist uprising, there had been a prediction that something was going quite badly wrong, including in the Government. That was the reason for the appointment by the Prime Minister of his special representative¹⁶⁹ ... The actual uprising was in January 2013. It was a surprise, because there wasn’t the expectation that the terrorists would show themselves in the way that they did.¹⁷⁰

92. We take these comments as an indication that, before January 2013, the events in Mali had been of primarily local rather than international significance. If so, we are surprised by these comments. The installation of a jihadist rump state in around June 2012 was a grave matter, as is reflected in the UN Security Council discussions and votes on the matter later in the year, whilst questions about the deteriorating security and humanitarian situation in Mali were being asked in the House within a few weeks of the 2012 coup, and continued through the year.¹⁷¹

93. Mr Morris also remarked that it was widely known before the coup that terrorists were implanted in Mali, but that:

The speed of the Government’s decay—the international community believed the Government had a strong hold on power—was a surprise. The process was monitored very closely by large embassies of partner countries that, in a sense, did not spot it. That was not us, because we were not there at the time, but it is a very interesting and special case.¹⁷²

167 Ev 77

168 Q196-197

169 This is a reference to the Rt Hon Stephen O’Brien MP, the UK Special Envoy to the Sahel

170 Q 196

171 The first Parliamentary question on the humanitarian and security situation in Mali following the coup appears to have been answered on 23 May 2012 (PQ 11071). A number of written and oral questions on Mali followed throughout the year and, by at least early September, when the House had just returned from the summer recess, questions were being asked about the threat from AQIM and other terrorist groups in the north of the country (HC Deb, 4 September 2012, col 141)

172 Q 200

94. It is unarguable that countries far better placed than the UK to read the situation in Mali failed to anticipate Mali's collapse into crisis, although we are perplexed by the statement that the UK was not "there" at the time: the Bamako embassy, which had been closed in 2003, was re-opened in 2010, sometime before the coup occurred.

95. Events in Libya also raise questions as to the strength of the FCO's analysis. We outlined in Chapter 3 the effect that the collapse of the Gaddafi regime has had for regional insecurity. One very senior figure in the Algerian government told us that the fall of the regime had made regional security "fifty times worse" than before. He said that the Algerian government had been no friend of Gaddafi but had warned its Western allies, including the UK, about the likely consequences of his removal. Written evidence from the Alliance for Mali, a coalition of mainly charitable bodies with an interest in the country, stated that the implications of intervention in Libya were "widely known" in Mali and "should not have come as a surprise and should have been addressed by a responsible and coherent UK policy for the region".¹⁷³ However, the three main consequences that we listed in chapter 3 did not form a significant part of the public debate around the merits of intervention at the time when a NATO operation in Libya was being considered, and it would appear from evidence gathered during this inquiry that they did not form a significant part of internal governmental discussions either.¹⁷⁴

96. We acknowledge that regime change, although foreseeable, was not a formal objective of the NATO intervention, of which the UK Government was a leading proponent. The primary purpose of the operation was to protect rebels and civilians in the east of Libya. Mr Robertson told us that whilst there were lessons to be learned from the decision to intervene in Libya, the dangers of intervention had to be considered and balanced against the consequences of non-intervention, including the humanitarian consequences.¹⁷⁵

UK government administrative changes in response to recent events

97. From informal discussions with UK Government officials over the course of the inquiry, we sensed a willingness to acknowledge that events in Mali, Libya and Algeria may have exposed something of a blind spot in departmental thinking. Within the FCO there is a department for Africa (in fact sub-Saharan Africa) and another for the Near East and North Africa, including Algeria, Libya and Morocco, with a different Minister answering for each. However the common factor in relation to recent events in Mali, Libya and Algeria is that they involved the convergence of protagonists from across both North and West Africa. It appears that this may have wrong-footed the FCO. We note that the FCO's written evidence acknowledges that it is engaged in efforts to understand the Western Sahel-Sahara region better, referring amongst other things to "largely ignored or forgotten" ancient links between North and West Africa and adding that the FCO's "understanding of the regional dynamics is evolving".¹⁷⁶ We also note the Prime Minister's appointment in September 2012 of a Sahel Special Envoy, the Rt Hon Stephen O'Brien MP, whose main role is described as being to address the current situation in Mali, and the creation within

173 Ev w2-3

174 Q 30-31 (Imad Mesdoua and Professor Paul Rogers); Q 195-199 (Rt Hon Hugh Robertson MP and Tim Morris)

175 Q 199

176 Ev 73 and 78

the FCO of a “Sahel Taskforce”, headed by a former Ambassador to Morocco and Mauritania. Both are empowered to work across departmental boundaries within the FCO and within Whitehall.

Addressing long-standing political grievances

98. The preceding discussion underlines that the Prime Minister’s commitment to help address internal or regional political disputes may be particularly challenging within the FCO’s current limited resources. The premise—that long-standing grievances fuel anger and can be hijacked by extremists—is not disputed. However, our experience during this inquiry suggests that any such work is likely to be resource intensive. Three such issues that we encountered during this inquiry are the status of the Tuareg minority in northern Mali, the dispute over the Western Sahara, and the cultural and economic divide between northern and southern Nigeria. All three issues are formidably complex, and tend to be debated by reference to disputed interpretations of historic events. Local feelings run high. We would not suggest that the UK should simply avoid any such engagement, but it should only be contemplated if the FCO is satisfied that the human resources and depth of knowledge are there.

99. Recent events underline the difficulty of monitoring events in the Western Sahel-Sahara region, anticipating crises, and responding to them as they unfold, particularly when diplomatic resources are limited. They also underline that, whilst the Sahara may be a departmental barrier within the FCO, it is not one for terrorists. The UK Government should reflect on weaknesses in analysis that the events appear to have exposed, and how these might be rectified at departmental level. This applies particularly in relation to intervention in Libya in 2011: considerable resources were expended ensuring that military goals were successfully achieved (for which the Government deserves credit), but there was a failure to anticipate, and therefore mitigate, the regional fallout from the intervention, which has been enormous and, in some cases, disastrous.

100. Looking to the future, the UK’s very limited diplomatic resources in and around the Western Sahel will make it difficult for the Government to achieve its ambitions to be more intensively involved in the region and to help shape events as they unfold. The Government should consider increasing its resources in the region and its reserves of specialist knowledge. If not, it should scale back its ambitions—and its rhetoric.

The UK’s diplomatic footprint in Francophone countries

101. The current UK Government’s “network shift” in diplomatic postings has led to the opening of a small embassy in Côte D’Ivoire, following the re-opening of the Mali embassy in 2010.¹⁷⁷ In his 21 January 2013 statement, the Prime Minister said that he was not opposed to further redeployment in West Africa but that he did not want the UK and France to “double up in the same places”.¹⁷⁸ However, over the course of the inquiry, a number of our interlocutors, from parliaments or governments of the North and West African Francophonie, told us that they would welcome a far stronger bilateral relationship

177 Ev 74 (FCO)

178 HC Deb 21 January 2013, col 31

with the UK, citing factors such as the UK's Parliamentary tradition, its reputation for military discipline and training, its independent judiciary, and its history of free trade as reasons for closer ties, and stating that former colonial links were no longer a fit basis on which to arrange modern diplomatic networks.

102. Witnesses have mentioned an additional element behind this interest: that the UK is not France.¹⁷⁹ It does not carry the same colonial (and post-colonial) baggage as France and tends not to be perceived as being on one side or another in relation to some regional or internal rivalries or disputes. It has been suggested that this might make it easier for the UK to offer intelligence or security co-operation on terms which are consistent with the UK's values or to speak as a candid friend or mediator (in a formal or informal sense) on sensitive matters—perhaps including the “long-standing political grievances” mentioned by the Prime Minister.¹⁸⁰ We discuss below a possible UK role in relation to Algeria, Morocco and the Western Sahara.

103. We suggest that the UK Government contemplate an enhancement of its diplomatic profile in Francophone parts of the Western Sahel-Sahara region. This would be consistent with the Government's commitment towards greater engagement with the region. It would appear that a raised UK profile in the region would be welcomed and it seems probable that the UK may be able to offer advice and assistance in a way that some other countries could not. Far from raising the risk of the UK and France wastefully “doubling up” diplomatic resources, we suggest that it will increase opportunities for the two countries to work together fruitfully on security, development and political co-operation in the region, as they have been doing in Mali.

Key partnerships for the UK

104. The preceding discussion underlines the importance of the UK seeking to achieve change, as much as possible, through working in partnership. The FCO's written submission indicated that it recognised the need for new forms of partnership working, referring to the department pursuing “a new way of thinking about North and West Africa within the UK Government that adds to and transcends the standard bilateral approach”.¹⁸¹ We sought to ascertain what this meant in practice when we took evidence from the FCO. The FCO's Sahel Coordinator, Tim Morris, told us that it meant that “everything we will be trying to do in this region will be done with partners and it will be done through multilateral organisations.” Mr Morris went on to list as likely future partners under this approach the different countries of the region, regional economic communities such as ECOWAS and the Arab Maghreb Union, the UN, the World Bank, France, the US, Canada, and other European countries.¹⁸² We have no quarrel with either the proposal or the list of countries and bodies provided, but we are not clear whether and to what extent this amounts to a new way of working.

179 Q 15-16 (Imad Mesdoua); Q 74 (Professor Michael Clarke)

180 Ev w1 (Alliance for Mali)

181 Ev 76

182 Q 232-233

The need for better co-ordination on security and development

105. The signs are that it will be some time before African nations will be able to deal with and contain major security crises on their own, as discussed further below. This means that Western nations will probably have to remain closely engaged in the security of sub-Saharan Africa for the foreseeable future. It is clear that there is already significant activity going on, most of it, such as military training being provided by the US and UK, of a far lower profile than the interventions in Mali and the Central African Republic, and therefore less well-known. However, at the conclusion of evidence-taking, we are left concerned that activities are not yet being effectively co-ordinated.¹⁸³ This was a point made forcefully by US military and intelligence officers on our visit to the US African Military Command in Stuttgart. This concern applies not only to security co-operation, but also to joint work on development projects, as well as to achieving complementarity between development and security projects, which we consider to be of critical importance. The Africa Minister, Mark Simmonds MP, told us that he agreed that there was sometimes a need for greater co-ordination and co-operation but asked us to be mindful that international partners working in sub-Saharan Africa were working in “very complex, multifaceted environments.”¹⁸⁴ We fully accept this point and intend no criticism of governments and bodies seeking to provide assistance under difficult circumstances. Part of the problem may be that there is such a proliferation of governments, agencies and NGOs potentially involved as to have made effective co-ordination almost impossible, and to have left no clear sense of which countries or bodies have overall leadership.

A tripartite leadership model

106. Our proposal would be for international agreement on a common security and stability policy for the Western Sahel, as a matter of urgency. We understand that proposals are already being worked on at UN level.¹⁸⁵ Once the policy is agreed, lead responsibility for securing its implementation could rest with a tripartite leadership of France, the UK and the US. We would also envisage a strong supporting role for the European External Action Service, in recognition that demographic and social pressures in parts of North and West Africa are increasingly manifesting themselves in Europe, particularly on its southern doorstep.

France

107. It is France that has thus far taken the security lead in the region, and it is of course inconceivable that France would not continue to have a key role in Africa, but we have become aware during the inquiry of French concerns that they are becoming increasingly stretched and require more help.¹⁸⁶ For complex historical reasons that were discussed

183 Q 218-219; Q 261

184 Q 273-274

185 Q 217 (Tim Morris); Some UN news releases indicate that its integrated Sahel strategy is complete (eg “Sahel: UN Special Envoy presents integrated strategy to Security Council, UN News Centre, 26 June 2013 <https://www.un.org/wcm/content/site/undpa/main/enewsletter/pid/24728>) but, if so, it does not appear to be available

186 Centre for European Reform bulletin issue 94 (February/March 2014) *Why Europe Should Broaden its horizons in the Sahel*, http://www.cer.org.uk/sites/default/files/publications/attachments/pdf/2014/bulletin_94_rk_article3-8331.pdf

during our inquiry, there are also countries in Africa where significant French involvement or intervention might be domestically problematic, further underlining the benefits of a partnership approach.

The US

108. UK-French co-operation was the model in the NATO intervention in Libya and also in Mali, albeit with the UK playing a far more limited role. In relation to the Libyan operation, a number of other countries assisted, including the US. It was following the Libyan intervention that the phrase “leading from behind” entered into common currency in foreign policy circles as a shorthand to describe the Obama administration’s perceived approach to intervention.¹⁸⁷ The phrase is ambiguous: it could describe a foreign policy approach that is either somewhat disengaged or is engaged but discreet. The Libyan experience itself would indicate that the latter is more accurate, as the US’s eventual military contribution to the NATO operation was in fact far from negligible.

109. The Africa Minister, Mark Simmonds MP, told us that the concept of US disengagement from Africa was in fact the reverse of the truth, particularly in the Sahel region,¹⁸⁸ and we found this confirmed on our visit to the US Africa Command (AFRICOM) in Stuttgart. Our visit also confirmed that the US’s military, security and intelligence assets in Africa remain enormous and unmatched, and have, if anything, expanded, thanks to advances in remote technology: a new base for unarmed Reaper drones opened in Niger in early 2013, complementing drone bases established in recent years in Ethiopia and Djibouti. The US has also been heavily involved in promoting and co-ordinating counter-terrorism in the region.¹⁸⁹ Accordingly, it is imperative that the US play a leading role in any joint work to address security concerns in and around the Western Sahel. We are mindful of evidence from a witness that the presence and use of US military assets in parts of Africa is potentially a “gift” to al Qaeda propagandists.¹⁹⁰ If there is validity in this observation—and we accept that there may very well be—it could be mitigated through a continuation of the policy of discreet engagement that the US applied in Libya.

110. There is a need for a step-change in the co-ordination of international efforts to combat insecurity, and the drivers of insecurity, in and around the Western Sahel. We propose that the UK Government press its international partners for agreement to a common security and stability policy for the Western Sahel. Lead responsibility for securing implementation of the policy should rest with a tripartite leadership of France, the UK and the US, supported by others, including the European External Action Service.

111. We envisage each member of the tripartite group taking lead responsibility for a particular issue and co-ordinating a programme of action—political, judicial or security—in co-operation with local partners, including the relevant regional economic community,

187 The phrase appears in a May 2011 *New Yorker* article (“The Consequentialist”), attributed to an unnamed foreign policy adviser to President Obama, describing US strategy towards Libya at the time of NATO’s intervention. http://www.newyorker.com/reporting/2011/05/02/110502fa_fact_lizza?currentPage=all

188 Q 271

189 Ev w14 (Dr Claire Spencer)

190 Q 19 (Professor Paul Rogers)

relevant multilateral bodies, and any other states or bodies able to offer help. This should include China. We would urge continuing diplomatic efforts by the UK and others to persuade China that investment to help sub-Saharan Africa become more secure, more stable and more effectively governed is in its long-term economic interests. Ministers told us of encouraging signs that the Chinese Government was coming to recognise its wider responsibilities towards the region.¹⁹¹

112. The approach we propose could be taken in relation to many of the issues identified in chapter 2 of this report; issues having a regional impact and which require a cross-cutting, multilateral approach. These could include the monitoring and intercepting of attempted cocaine landings on the West African littoral (with particular attention paid to Guinea-Bissau); schemes to strengthen border controls across North and West Africa and monitor the movements of criminal or terrorist groups across borders;¹⁹² or projects to trace back to their source what one of our witnesses referred to as the “spider’s web of terrorist funding networks” emanating from “very wealthy individuals and organisations in the Gulf,”¹⁹³ in order to try to cut them off. On some issues, the UN or other bodies have already undertaken valuable analysis;¹⁹⁴ what appears to be needed is a push to implement the recommendations that were made.

The West’s early warning systems in the region

113. Earlier, we commented on some apparent shortcomings in the FCO’s analysis of recent events in North and West Africa and capacity to anticipate crises, focussing on events in Mali and Libya. It is only fair to add that other countries, including, in some cases, those who ought to have been better placed than the UK to make prescient predictions, appear also to have been caught out. Events in the Central African Republic (CAR) raise further concerns about the early warning systems not only of the UK but of most or all of its international partners in and around the Sahelian region. The violent overthrow of a government in a country such as the CAR cannot be considered a shock, but the events that then unfolded appear, as in Mali, to have taken the international community by surprise. The UK Government (which has no embassy in the CAR) is among countries which appear to have been slow to acknowledge what was already being reported in English-language media as early as August 2013:¹⁹⁵ that the post-coup violence in the CAR had a strong sectarian element, and that a large proportion of the Séléka militias targeting non-Muslims were from outside of the country.¹⁹⁶ It could be argued that

191 Q153 (Lynne Featherstone MP) Q265 (Mark Simmonds MP)

192 Q 72 (Professor Michael Clarke)

193 Q 26-27 (Imad Mesdoua); See also Q 56-57 (Professor Michael Clarke)

194 Eg UN Office for Drugs and Crime (UNODC), “The role of organized crime in the smuggling of migrants from West Africa to the European Union”, 2011 http://www.unodc.org/documents/human-trafficking/Migrant-Smuggling/Report_SOM_West_Africa_EU.pdf; UNODC, Transnational organised crime in West Africa: a threat assessment, 2013. <http://www.unodc.org/to/en/reports/TOCTAWestAfrica.html>

195 CAR Crisis Opens Rift Between Muslims, Christians, *Voice of America Online*, 11 September 2013 <http://www.voanews.com/content/car-crisis-opens-rift-between-muslims-christians/1748074.html> “Attacks on Christians in Central African Republic must stop, says priest”, *Catholic Herald*, 15 August 2013, <http://www.catholicherald.co.uk/news/2013/08/15/attacks-on-christians-in-central-african-republic-must-stop-says-priest/>; Conciliation Resources: Briefing: Crisis in the Central African Republic – August 2013 http://www.c-r.org/sites/c-r.org/files/CAR_briefing_ConciliationResources201308.pdf

196 FCO Research Analyst paper: Central African Republic: Background Brief and Analysis of the Crisis, January 2014: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/central-african-republic-background-brief-and-analysis-of-the-crisis>

had more been known earlier, and a quicker assessment made of events on the ground, action could have been taken earlier to try to prevent the crisis escalating to its present deeply worrying level, with revenge attacks now being carried out against local Muslims and UN officials warning of the crisis spiralling into outright civil war.¹⁹⁷

114. Given the complexity of the region, there is always the possibility of the unexpected taking the West by surprise, but the degree to which it has been caught out by recent events is worrying. We suggest that it should be the first priority of any common security and stability policy along the lines proposed to audit recent intelligence lapses and work to develop more effective and comprehensive early warning systems.

115. *There is an emerging pattern of evidence of the UK and its main partners being unsighted by events in and around the Sahel region. The international community's successive failure, in Mali and in the Central African Republic, to anticipate events and to respond to them speedily as they unfolded, is worrying. We accept that the UK was not the only country to be unsighted by events and acknowledge that its diplomatic resources in both countries are light. We recommend that the UK Government seek to raise at international level the need for more effective early warning systems in and around the Western Sahel region.*

Security co-operation with the African Union

116. Recent events in Mali and the Central African Republic have both exposed weaknesses in Africa's capacity to find a regional solution to security crises.¹⁹⁸ The relevant facts in relation to Mali were recited earlier. In the case of the CAR, a force already in the country at the time of the coup (composed of troops from ECCAS, the regional economic community for Central Africa) appears to have had little mitigating effect as the crisis escalated. Indeed, we note media reports that the presence of troops from Chad, whom many in the CAR do not perceive as a neutral bystander to the current crisis, has at times provoked violence rather than reducing it.¹⁹⁹ In July 2013, the AU agreed to send a force into the country, but it took almost five months to deploy, by which time UN observers were warning of genocide.²⁰⁰ Having initially stated that it would not deploy troops other than to protect French citizens and the main airport, France has now deployed 2000 troops in the country. In January, the EU Council agreed to deploy a small multinational force²⁰¹ in the CAR, and in February formally established the mission but, as we publish this report, no troops have yet been deployed.

197 UN warns 'seeds of genocide' being sown in Central African Republic, *Reuters*, 16 January 2014
<http://www.reuters.com/article/2014/01/16/us-centralafrican-idUSBREA0F0PR20140116>

198 Q 36 (Jon Marks)

199 "Chad troops in CAR accused of pro-Seleka bias", *Aljazeera English*, 26 December 2013; FCO Research Analyst paper: Central African Republic: Background Brief and Analysis of the Crisis, January 2014:
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/central-african-republic-background-brief-and-analysis-of-the-crisis>

200 UN warns 'seeds of genocide' being sown in Central African Republic, *Reuters*, 16 January 2014
<http://www.reuters.com/article/2014/01/16/us-centralafrican-idUSBREA0F0PR20140116>

201 It appears that there has been not yet been formal agreement as to the size of the force. Briefings to the media from EU officials initially envisaged a force of around 500, but more recent estimates indicate it could be double that amount: "EU Sees Central African Force Reaching 800-1,000", *Wall Street Journal*, 27 February 2014
<http://www.reuters.com/article/2014/02/13/us-centralafrican-eu-idUSBREA1C15X20140213>

117. For several years, the AU has been considering proposals for a standby force for rapid deployment in the event of a crisis, without final agreement being reached. In Algeria, Prime Minister Sellal told us that there was a renewed political impetus for a standby force, with Nigeria, South Africa, Ethiopia and Algeria all behind implementation. In Nigeria, we heard from ECOWAS's military command that current proposals are to have the plan enshrined by 2015, although we are mindful that previous proposed deadlines have come and gone.²⁰² In the meantime, ECOWAS is pursuing an interim arrangement: the creation of a two standing brigades: an eastern brigade, to respond to security crises in the western part of the Community, and a western brigade, to respond to crises in the east.

118. The Minister for Africa, Mr Simmonds told us that he had discussed the proposals for a standby brigade with the AU Commissioners but that they were not yet ready to come to countries such as the UK to talk about how they might help build capacity.²⁰³

119. Renewed proposals within the African Union for a standby military force are welcome, and we would support the UK and its international partners seeking to assist in building capacity. It is reasonable to assume that it will be some time before there are wholly African solutions to African problems of equivalent scale to those in Mali and the Central African Republic. This places an onus on the UK and its international partners to ensure that contingency plans are in place to deal with future crises.

UK partnerships in West Africa

120. We discussed the importance of the bilateral relationship with Nigeria earlier, in the context of assistance to the Nigerian military. The presence of large Nigerian expatriate community in the UK, and of a number of UK passport holders in Nigeria further underlines the importance of the UK and Nigeria maintaining effective relations for counter-terrorism and monitoring purposes. The relationship with ECOWAS—West Africa's regional body for economic and security co-operation—will also continue to be important. Although ECOWAS did not deliver a military solution to the Mali crisis, it was able to negotiate the resignation of the coup leaders, and the appointment of an interim government. Most of our witnesses saw the ECOWAS Secretariat as a reasonably effective organisation struggling with enormous challenges, including the limited resources of most of its member states.²⁰⁴ ECOWAS remains the best available vehicle for delivering regional co-operation on issues such as border control and tackling organised crime.

Algeria and Morocco

121. With their stable forms of government, relative prosperity by comparison to their southern neighbours, and strong internal security and intelligence services, Algeria and Morocco were identified by our witnesses as key partners for the UK and other Western countries in addressing the security challenges of the Western Sahel.²⁰⁵ Algeria's

202 The relevant AU website (<http://www.africa-union.org/root/au/AUC/Departments/PSC/Asf/Documents.htm>) includes documents setting out policy for the establishment of a standby force dating to as far back as 2003, and setting a deadline of 2010 to achieve full operational capacity.

203 Q 270 (Mark Simmonds)

204 Q17-18 (Professor Paul Rogers and Imad Mesdoua); Q 73 (Professor Michael Clarke); Q 107 (Sir Richard Gozney)

205 Q 32 (Imad Mesdoua); Q 37-38 (Jon Marks)

geographical position gives it additional strategic importance: its vast desert hinterland stretches into the Sahel and borders seven other countries or territories.

122. In both cases, there are challenges to the development of stronger relationships. In the case of Algeria, these include the country's strong and secretive security services, seen by witnesses as operating almost as like a parallel government, and its factional and complex politics, still partly dominated by elderly veterans of the early post-independence period. Algeria's record over human rights is perceived to have improved in recent years,²⁰⁶ but serious concerns remain over the security services' adherence to international human rights standards,²⁰⁷ raising questions over the extent to which it is appropriate for the UK and Algeria to share intelligence.²⁰⁸ Algeria also maintains a policy of strict military non-intervention. Clearly this severely circumscribes its capacities as a regional peacekeeper. We also heard of concerns that, at times, Algeria's dogmatic adherence to the doctrine of non-intervention has led it to dump security problems on its doorstep rather than to try to find more comprehensive solutions in partnership with its neighbours.

123. We take it to be very significant, however, that Algeria did not oppose France's intervention in Mali, as it would almost certainly have done in the past, and we noted other signs of increased openness on our visit to Algiers. We take it as an encouraging sign, for instance, that the Algerian government has allowed the UK Government to run its Arab Partnership Programme²⁰⁹ in the country, including projects to enhance Algeria's governance and party systems. A more pluralist political culture has been emerging in recent years, along with a younger generation of political leaders²¹⁰ (although we do note that, shortly before we published this report, it was announced that the long-serving President, Abdelaziz Bouteflika, would be running for a fourth term in elections in April, despite concerns over his health). We found our government interlocutors in Algiers to be frank and straightforward in their answers to our questions, and pragmatic in their analysis.²¹¹

124. Morocco presented itself during our inquiry as a country fully aware of the extremist threats in its neighbourhood, and with realistic proposals to address them; better security co-operation, economic intervention to address the drivers of extremism, and openness to dialogue. We note that Morocco has involved itself in efforts to rebuild Mali after the crisis, and has promoted dialogue between the government and Tuareg nationalists. Although we are aware of continuing concerns in relation to human rights violations,²¹² Morocco appears to have genuinely embarked on a path towards greater democratic openness, with the agreement of a new constitution in 2011, and significant political reforms to remove some of the power of the monarchy.²¹³ Relations between the UK and Morocco are warm

206 Q 39 (Jon Marks)

207 Amnesty International 2013 Annual Report, Algeria chapter <https://www.amnesty.org/en/region/algeria/report-2013>

208 Q 38 (Jon Marks); Q 79 (Professor Michael Clarke)

209 The Arab Partnership is a joint DFID-FCO initiative to help promote political reform, stability and economic growth, in the aftermath of the "Arab Spring", currently helping fund and support projects in around ten Arab countries.

210 Q 49 (Jon Marks)

211 See also Q 75-77 (Professor Michael Clarke)

212 Amnesty International 2013 Annual Report, Morocco/Western Sahara chapter <https://www.amnesty.org/en/region/moroccowestern-sahara/report-2013>

213 Q 33-34 (Professor Paul Rogers)

and mutually respectful. The issue of the Western Sahara has, however, complicated Morocco's relationship with its neighbours and led to its withdrawal from the African Union. Relations between Algeria and Morocco are particularly poor, and this in turn has meant that the Arab Maghreb Union, the body for regional economic and—potentially—security co-operation in north-west Africa, has never functioned effectively.²¹⁴ Morocco has sought an alternative outlet for regional co-operation through CEN-SAD,²¹⁵ a bloc of nations straddling the Saharan divide, but its effectiveness is, in turn, undermined by Algeria's non-membership of that body.

125. The issue of the Western Sahara itself was seen by some of our witnesses, and some of the people we met on our visits, as increasingly worrying from a security perspective.²¹⁶ Concerns were expressed that the vast and bleak security camps where tens of thousands of Saharawi refugees have now been living for decades were at risk of becoming centres of radicalisation, as youths lost hope in the Polisario Front, the official, and non-Islamist, resistance movement. We note that the UN Secretary General gave voice to similar concerns last year.²¹⁷

126. Algeria and Morocco are both key to delivering increased stability in the Western Sahel-Sahara region, and effective bilateral relations with both countries are essential. Partnership with Algeria does present some challenges, particularly in relation to Algeria's security and intelligence services, but we believe that a constructive and effective relationship can be maintained if the UK is realistic in its aims and maintains its red lines on issues of particular importance such as respect for human rights. We note encouraging signs that Algeria is willing to engage with the UK on a more open basis than it perhaps did in the past.

127. Conflict over the Western Sahara issue has had a toxic effect on regional co-operation in North-West Africa, including on security issues. The intensification of the terrorist threat in the region, combined with the gradual generational shift in political leadership, may present an opening for new approaches to resolving the conflict to be tested. We would encourage the UK Government to explore options for helping to bring the different sides together.

Development aid, foreign policy and fragile states

128. The Coalition Government has sought to achieve greater integration between the UK's development policies and its foreign, security and defence policies. The key document is the Government's 2011 strategy, Building Stability Overseas. The paper set out a commitment to increase development spending on fragile and conflict-affected states, which would receive 30% of all UK development assistance. The paper also proposed a refocusing of aid on, amongst other things, "development work which helps to build or rebuild critical institutions, support security and justice and generate jobs and public

214 Q 87-88 (Professor Michael Clarke)

215 In English its full title is the Community of Sahel-Saharan states, founded in 1998, and now comprising 27 North, East and West African countries.

216 Q 34 (Imad Mesdoua); Q 39 (Jon Marks); Ev w14 (Dr Claire Spencer)

217 Report of the Secretary-General on the situation concerning Western Sahara, UN Security Council, 8 April 2013 http://www.securitycouncilreport.org/atf/cf/%7B65BFCF9B-6D27-4E9C-8CD3-CF6E4FF96FF9%7D/s_2013_220.pdf

confidence” and on “upstream prevention” of conflict through development work. The strategy states that “work to prevent conflict is more likely to succeed when it marshals diplomatic efforts with development programmes and defence engagement around a shared integrated strategy.”²¹⁸

129. We agree with both the aims of the UK Government’s Building Stability Overseas strategy to integrate foreign, security and development policies, and the premises that inform it. This inquiry has provided an opportunity to consider how well the approach it sets out is working from a foreign policy perspective, treating countries of the Western Sahel-Sahara region as a case study.

Development aid and good governance

130. In chapter 2, we listed some of the challenges present in the Western Sahel-Sahara region that may foster instability. In our closing evidence session, we asked the Minister for Africa, Mark Simmonds MP, which, of all the challenges facing the Western Sahel, he would wish the international community to prioritise, in order to achieve greater security and stability. Mr Simmonds referred to:

limited and weak institutional governance structures in many of these countries ... That has to be the key priority both for bilateral relationships between the UK and other countries and for regional solutions—the role played by ECOWAS and the North African institutions, as well as the multilateral organisations—so as to ensure that there is governance, and that people feel connected to government structures as a way of airing and resolving their grievances.²¹⁹

131. Our evidence-gathering has confirmed that this should be a key priority, though it will be an enormously challenging one. In Nigeria, we were struck by the frank way in which so many of our interlocutors, from all walks of life, including politics, talked about how governing elites had, over the years, failed ordinary Nigerians. They talked about how a culture of low expectations and casual corruption had become almost endemic in much of the public sector, inhibiting the development of effective public services, responsive to the needs of ordinary people, and fostering a general sense of disillusionment or cynicism.

132. We met DFID officials and some of their local partners when we visited Nigeria. DFID’s development aid budget for Nigeria is currently its fourth largest, at over £200 million in 2012-13 and is set to grow markedly in coming years,²²⁰ with over £860 million committed, as of 2012, to 27 separate projects.²²¹ It was clear from our discussions that DFID is, as much as possible, seeking to focus its investment on grassroots projects to improve governance and effectiveness in areas such as policing, legislative scrutiny, and public services.²²² We were left with a strong sense that this was not easy work, especially given Nigeria’s security challenges (by definition, many of the areas most in need of

218 See also Q 142-144 (Lynne Featherstone MP)

219 Q 242

220 The Minister, Lynne Featherstone MP, told us that it would be around £275 million for the current year: Q 147; Ev 72

221 Department for International Development, *Operational Plan 2011-2015 DFID Nigeria*, June 2012, page 6 https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/67410/nigeria-2011.pdf

222 See also Q145-146 (Lynne Featherstone MP)

assistance are not safe to work in) and the problem of public corruption. One of our witnesses confirmed that corruption was a serious problem for the development industry in Nigeria and queried, on the basis of personal experience, whether DFID's scrutiny of spending in the country once it had allocated funds for projects was sufficiently robust.²²³ We also sensed in Nigeria a realistic awareness that measurable positive results were only likely to come in the long term. DFID's own public assessment of progress in Nigeria (measured by progress towards the Millennium Development Goals) is downbeat compared to most of the UK's other bilateral partners²²⁴ and we also note written evidence arguing that UK aid provided to the Nigerian public services (specifically training for the Nigerian police) has had little long-term impact in achieving cultural change, largely because insufficient account had been taken of local realities.²²⁵

133. We invite the Government to comment on whether its bilateral aid programme for Nigeria is making satisfactory progress against goals set out in the Building Security Overseas strategy and, if so, how this progress has been measured. We also suggest that the Independent Commission for Aid Impact, in its work evaluating DFID's approach to anti-corruption, treat DFID's work in Nigeria as a case study. The role of the ICAI, set up in 2011 by the UK Government, is to provide greater independent scrutiny of UK aid spending, thereby maximising its value for money and impact. DFID's approach to anti-corruption is one of several workstreams in the ICAI's current Year 4 Workplan.²²⁶

134. We draw these remarks to the attention of the International Development Committee.

Development aid and security

135. Development assistance provided by states must meet criteria set by the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD). The central element of the definition is that state funding counts as development assistance if the promotion of the economic development and welfare of developing countries is the main objective. The OECD is currently consulting on revising the definition. We also understand that, within the EU, debate is currently ongoing at Ministerial level on the extent to which monies within the European Development Fund can be used to build security in fragile African states (for instance non-lethal equipment for use by African armies).²²⁷

136. We note that the International Development Committee has been taking evidence on the opportunity for adjustment of the OECD criteria²²⁸ and recently reported, calling for DFID to engage with the OECD to modernise and clarify the criteria, and for there to be a

223 Q 132 (Virginia Comolli)

224 DFID annual report and accounts 2012-13 Annual Report, page 65
https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/208445/annual-report-accounts2013-13.pdf

225 Ev w17-20 (Professor Alice Hills)

226 ICAI Year 4 Workplan and response to consultation, 12 February 2014 <http://icai.independent.gov.uk/wp-content/uploads/2011/11/ICAI-Year-4-work-programme-and-Consultation-Response-FINAL.pdf>

227 Ministers to discuss call for EU to equip African armies, *European Voice*, 14 November 2013
<http://www.europeanvoice.com/article/imported/ministers-to-discuss-call-for-eu-to-equip-african-armies/78745.aspx>

228 Oral evidence taken before the International Development Committee on 9 October 2013, Q 229-232

wider debate about the issue in the UK led by DFID.²²⁹ In this connection, we consider it important to note that the link between development aid and security was raised during our visits in Africa, particularly in the context of border security. Experts from CAERT²³⁰, an Algiers-based advisory body on security and counter-terrorism to the African Union and from the ECOWAS military command in Abuja both identified weak border security as one of West Africa's more potentially solvable security problems, provided some outside help was provided. The experts told us that, in countries such as Mauritania, Mali and Niger, there was a keenness to try to improve border security, but there was a lack of local expertise, and of the up-to-date digital technology that was needed to enable real-time tracking of goods and people. They proposed that the UK and other EU countries consider providing training and non-lethal equipment as part of a European aid package.

137. We put this suggestion to Government witnesses. Lynne Featherstone MP, Minister at DFID, told us that if the training were deemed to be military training this would be "difficult" as the UK is constrained by the OECD's "very rigid rules".²³¹ Evidence from the FCO indicated that there was room for manoeuvre, as "the OECD criteria are not a barrier to ODA [official development assistance] spend on border management projects."²³²

138. We note that the opportunity is currently open to debate the purpose and definition of overseas development assistance, and that the UK Government will be a contributor. We would invite the UK Government to consider whether the current definition has the effect of restricting or preventing the development of aid programmes based around delivering increased security. We also invite the Government to respond to evidence we received during the inquiry that countries of the Western Sahel would welcome non-military development assistance to help strengthen their borders against terrorism and trans-national organised crime. We draw these views to the attention of the International Development Committee.

Training up African forces

139. In an interview with the Times on 4 November 2013, the new Chief of the Defence Staff, Sir Nicholas Houghton, indicated that withdrawal from Afghanistan in 2014 may open up new opportunities for the military to train indigenous forces in vulnerable parts of Africa, following the precedent of current missions in Kenya, Somalia and Mali. Mr Robertson, Minister of State at the FCO, told us that Sir Nicholas was "not flying a kite" and that his comments reflected policy under development at the MoD.²³³

140. Although there is no suggestion of any such training being provided within a development aid package (at least according to current definitions), it is relevant to discuss the issue in this section of the report, as we perceive there to be a natural complementarity between the provision of military assistance and that of development assistance intended to

229 International Development Committee, Eighth Report of Session 2013-14, *The Future of UK Development Cooperation: Phase 1: Development Finance*, HC 334 paragraphs 14-21
<http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm201314/cmselect/cmintdev/334/334.pdf>

230 The body is also known by its English acronym ACSRT; the African Centre for the Study and Research on Terrorism

231 Q 152

232 Ev 86. See also Q 235-237 (Mark Simmonds MP)

233 Q 223-225

improve governance in other public services. It may be that the UK Government could offer military assistance on condition that it is accompanied by DFID-supported projects to improve or reform particular aspects of public sector governance.

141. We understand that the UK military currently runs, or helps run, training missions with the Malian, Kenyan, Libyan and Afghan armies. Based on the precedent of Mali and Kenya, UK military training missions in Africa may not require a large army complement. The maximum number of UK soldiers in the EU training mission (EUTM) in Mali has been around 40.²³⁴ We note that there are 56 permanent staff engaged in the training mission in Kenya.²³⁵

142. The EUTM has, since March 2013, been working with the Malian army to improve its effectiveness and resilience, as well as provide a grounding in ethics and human rights. Its mandate lasts for 15 months. The plan is for the Mission to train four battalions of 700 Malian soldiers. The UK has provided the fourth-largest contingent, leading on infantry training. We spoke to trainers when we visited Bamako in June. We received a mainly positive message about the mission's work, but were told of serious doubts as to whether the length of the mandate would be long enough to effect the transformation in standards that the Malian army was considered to need.

143. The FCO told us that the subject of extending the EUTM mandate was still being discussed within Government: there was agreement with the principle that the Malian army would continue to need training after the end of the current mandate, but Ministers were insistent on the need for "an exit strategy".²³⁶ Although no formal announcement has yet been made, we understand that the Council of Ministers is close to agreeing an extension to the EUTM of up to two years.

144. Whilst the EUTM represents a new model of military training, this is not the first time that foreign soldiers have trained the Malian army: France and the US both provided training to selected officers in the years leading up to the 2012 coup. The performance of the Malian army before and during the crisis suggests that this did not have a significant positive effect.²³⁷ One person to receive such training was the junior officer who led the coup (Captain, now General, Amadou Haya Sanogo), who went on to exert a disruptive and unpredictable influence over Malian politics for much of 2012 and 2013.

145. We are supportive of signals from the UK Government that it is considering an extension of its programme of offering military training to vulnerable countries. We see this as a practical way for the UK to help bolster security and stability in fragile states. We also see it as naturally complementary to programmes to develop improved governance delivered through development aid packages. We are mindful that, in undertaking any such work, it is necessary to be realistic, as success in transmitting values and standards is

234 HL Deb, 13 February 2013, col WS 45

235 Information obtained from the British Army in Africa website <http://www.army.mod.uk/operations-deployments/22724.aspx>

236 Q 227 (Tim Morris)

237 Q 10 (Professor Paul Rogers); Ev w1 (Alliance for Mali); Ev w14 (DR Claire Spencer); Ev w21 (Guy Lankester); Ev w32 (Dr Benjamin Zala and Anna Alissa Hitzeman)

not assured. We would welcome an update on UK Government policy on the future of the EU Training Mission in Mali.

Monitoring of development aid

146. DFID witnesses assured us that the promotion of good governance was a key aim of UK development aid policy and in Nigeria we heard from DFID officials and from local project leaders about how projects are tailored to improve governance and delivery in the public sector and to improve public scrutiny.

147. In Mali, however, something appears to have gone wrong. Mali's domestic tax base is tiny and it has a small export industry.²³⁸ Accordingly, it is to a very large extent reliant on development aid to cover most of its current spending on basic public services and government salaries. When we visited Mali, we were informed that cracks in President Touré's government were already evident some time before the 2012 coup. Whilst Western countries had tended to laud Mali as a beacon of democratic values in West Africa, turnout in elections rarely exceeded 40% and had sunk to just 36% for the 2007 Presidential elections.²³⁹ We were told of an increasingly corrupt political culture in government, and of a mismatch between development income and development spending that had become increasingly overt even to ordinary Malians, particularly in the deprived north. With hindsight, it therefore appears that Mali's pre-coup reputation with foreign aid experts as a "donor darling"; a state favoured by donors in part because of its good reputation for absorbing and distributing aid money, was far from well earned, and that there had been monitoring failures.²⁴⁰

148. This troubling evidence raises concerns from the perspective of foreign, as well as development, policy, as it indicates that, instead of building resilience, transparency and efficiency in Mali's democratic institutions and public services, Western development programmes may have been inadvertently undermining the achievement of some of these goals.

149. We noted earlier the UK Government's acknowledgement that something had gone wrong in Mali and that wider lessons needed to be drawn. The FCO's submission stated that Mali had "wasted aid money"²⁴¹ whilst the Minister for Africa, Mr Simmonds conceded in oral evidence that "a huge amount of development finance has gone in [to Mali] over the last 10 or 15 years with minimal impact."²⁴²

150. Following Presidential elections in July 2013, and the opening of talks between the Government and Tuareg rebels, major donors have resumed their development aid programmes in Mali. This includes the EU, which has committed €5 billion in aid to Mali

238 According to the CIA World Factbook, in 2012 Mali ranked 128th in the world for the value of its exports <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/ml.html>

239 See also Ev w26 (International Institute for Environment and Development)

240 Ev w2 (Alliance for Mali); Ev 31-32 (Joliba Trust); Ev w34 (Dr Benjamin Zala and Anna Alissa Hitzeman)

241 Ev 77

242 Q 253; See also Q 263 (Mark Simmonds MP)

and other Western Sahel countries.²⁴³ The UK has committed £110 million over the next three years.²⁴⁴ Mali is not one of the UK's 28 bilateral aid partners. Accordingly, the UK contribution will be pooled, and DFID will have no direct oversight over its administration. We note that the International Development Committee has raised concerns about the Government's capacity to monitor multilateral organisations in countries where the Government has no bilateral aid programmes of its own.²⁴⁵ We understand that DFID currently has one member of staff working in the Francophone Sahel area, who has been seconded to the EU delegation in Mali.²⁴⁶

151. The crisis in Mali raises questions about the administration of development aid in fragile countries. There is evidence that development aid appears to have become part of the problem rather than part of the solution in Mali, inhibiting the development of responsive and responsible government and entrenching corruption in its political culture, in a manner inconsistent with the Government's Building Stability Overseas Strategy. We are also concerned to ensure that development aid programmes in Mali and elsewhere are better monitored in future. Mali remains a fragile democracy affected by internal political tensions, as well as the threat of terrorism.

152. We consider that the FCO has a role in relation to monitoring these projects alongside DFID, particularly where (as in Mali) DFID does not have a direct bilateral relationship with the country concerned. We also suggest that the Independent Commission for Aid Impact, in its work evaluating DFID's funding of multilateral aid and the scaling up of aid spending, consider treating Mali as a case study. DFID's funding of multilateral aid and the scaling up of the UK's Government's spending on official development assistance are two workstreams in the ICAI's current Year 4 Work Plan.²⁴⁷

153. We draw these comments to the attention of the International Development Committee.

Fragility, instability and demography

154. As we outlined in chapter 2, the demographic pressures in the Western Sahel are considerable. High fertility levels have a huge impact on a country's economic performance. Apart from a few oil-rich states, no country has got itself out of poverty without first stabilising its population growth.²⁴⁸ DFID has made extending the availability of family planning in the developing world one of its key policies, committing itself to a target of making contraceptive choice available to 24 million more women and girls in the

243 "EU reinforces its support for the Sahel in the years to come", European Commission News Release, 4 November 2013 http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_IP-13-1013_en.htm

244 Q 180-183 (Lynne Featherstone MP and Samantha Moorehead); Ev 72

245 International Development Committee, Fourth Report of Session 2013-14, *Multilateral aid review*, HC 349 <http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm201314/cmselect/cmintdev/349/349.pdf>

246 Q186-189. In those answers, Susanna Moorehead of DFID explained that, as of October 2013, DFID had two staff in the Western Sahel. DFID updated this information in February 2013 in an email to Foreign Affairs Committee staff.

247 ICAI Year 4 Workplan and response to consultation, 12 February 2014 <http://icai.independent.gov.uk/wp-content/uploads/2014/02/ICAI-Year-4-work-programme-and-Consultation-Response-FINAL.pdf>

248 *Return of the Population Growth Factor: its impact upon the Millennium Development Goals*, Report of Hearings by the All Party Parliamentary Group on Population, Development and Reproductive Health. January 2007. http://www.populationconnection.org/site/DocServer/Return_of_the_Population_Growth_Factor.pdf?docID=224

developing world.²⁴⁹ DFID also co-hosted the London Summit on Family Planning in 2012, which, the summit organisers claimed, would result in family planning being available to 120 million women and girls in the developing world.²⁵⁰ DFID presents its family planning policy as a straightforward matter of extending choice to women and girls in the developing world and does not expressly link it to objectives set out in the Building Stability Overseas strategy, discussed above. However, a number of commentators and experts have made an express link between extremism and instability and rapid population growth, stating there is clear evidence of a strong correlation. In 2004, the 9/11 Commission, tasked by the US Government with, amongst other things, determining the drivers behind the 9/11 attacks, commented that:

By the 1990s, high birth rates and declining rates of infant mortality had produced a common problem throughout the Muslim world: a large, steadily increasing population of young men without any reasonable expectation of suitable or steady employment—a sure prescription for social turbulence. Many of these young men, such as the enormous number trained only in religious schools, lacked the skills needed by their societies. Far more acquired valuable skills but lived in stagnant economies that could not generate satisfying jobs.²⁵¹

155. Many would argue that little has changed. One of our witnesses, Professor Paul Rogers, attributed much of the recent radicalisation in the Arab World to a “demographic bulge” of over-educated and under-employed young men.²⁵² It is concerning to note that, whilst this bulge is starting to decrease in size across North Africa, as families grow smaller, there is little sign of any deceleration in the Western Sahel.²⁵³ However, a number of interlocutors on our African visits disputed the premise that current rates of population growth give rise to any significant concerns, in any field. Other witnesses have said that such are the sensitivities around this issue that, if population growth is a problem, then it is primarily for Africans to solve it.²⁵⁴ In this connection, we note that, in some parts of the Western Sahel, perceived Western “interference” in the health of the female population has cost some people their lives at the hands of Islamist extremists.²⁵⁵

156. The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State at DFID, Lynne Featherstone, told us that she was not aware of evidence of any direct correlation between population growth and instability but commented that “I can see that if you have a lot of people with no food and no education, you are likely to get instability.”²⁵⁶ We asked the FCO whether they were prepared to be more forthright. Tim Morris of the FCO’s Sahel Task Force told us that the

249 Q173 (Susanna Moorehead)

250 “Making lifesaving contraceptives available to an additional 120 million women and girls by 2020”, DFID news release, 11 July 2012 <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/family-planning-london-summit-11-july-2012>

251 The National Commission on Terrorist Attacks against the United States, *The 9/11 Commission Report*, 2004, pages 53-54

252 Q 23-25

253 Population Reference Bureau 2013 World Population Datasheet <http://www.prb.org/Publications/Datasheets/2013/2013-world-population-data-sheet.aspx>

254 Q 98-101 (Sir Richard Gozney)

255 Nigeria polio vaccinators shot dead in Kano, *BBC News Online* 8 February 2013 <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-africa-21381773>

256 Q163-167

FCO did not have a programme for dealing with demographic change, but acknowledged that the FCO did recognise it as a concern:

What we are trying to look forward to or to analyse in the future is the scale of the potential problem and how the very fact of demographic change is going to put further pressure on migration and illegal migration – how it itself risks being a source of instability in the region. It is an immensely serious factor among a number of factors.²⁵⁷

157. We agree that population growth is likely to be a source of instability in the Western Sahel. Indeed, we would argue that that point has already been reached. As discussed earlier, evidence-gathering on this inquiry has confirmed to us environmental factors can create the conditions for instability and extremism to thrive, and for elements within societies to become radicalised. It is only common sense to suggest that very high population growth in countries already dealing with poverty, low economic activity, ethnic or religious tensions, and increased pressure on natural resources, is likely to make a bad situation worse.

158. *There is clear evidence that high population growth in the developing world is often linked to political instability and to the spread of radical or extremist views. We suggest that recent events in the Western Sahel may provide further evidence of that correlation. While we are concerned that DFID do not acknowledge this link, we commend the UK Government for prioritising increased access to family planning in the developing world and call on it to ensure that the issue remains on the international agenda.* We appreciate that future work in this area requires to be handled with sensitivity and with the full co-operation of African partners.

Migration

159. Evidence of increased migration from sub-Saharan Africa to Europe is growing²⁵⁸ and is seen as directly linked to economic inactivity and poor job prospects, as well as increased awareness of the opportunities available in the developed world.²⁵⁹ Without major economic reform, population growth, and the accompanying pressure on natural resources, is likely to be a further cause of increasing migration. Some distressing and well-publicised incidents of illegal migration occurred during the course of our inquiry, most notably the death of around 350 African migrants in a shipwreck off the Italian island of Lampedusa. Most of the deceased came from the Horn of Africa, but on our visits during this inquiry we were told of clear and growing evidence of West African illegal immigration into Europe, often at the hands of people traffickers. In October 2013, almost 100 apparently trafficked people, including women and children were found dead in the

257 Q 203

258 Frontex (European Agency for the Management of Operational Cooperation at the External Borders of the Member States of the European Union): Third Quarterly Report 2013 http://frontex.europa.eu/assets/Publications/Risk_Analysis/Fran_Q3_2013.pdf

259 UN Office on Drugs and Crime, *The role of organized crime in the smuggling of migrants from West Africa to the European Union*, 2011 http://www.unodc.org/documents/human-trafficking/Migrant-Smuggling/Report_SOM_West_Africa_EU.pdf; Institute for Public Policy Research, "The Myth of Transit: Sub-Saharan Migration in Morocco", 2013 http://www.ippr.org/images/media/files/publication/2013/07/myth-of-transit-morocco-ENG_June2013_11051.pdf

deserts of northern Niger, most having apparently come from the south of the country,²⁶⁰ whilst in February 2014, there was an escalation in the number of migrants (mainly from West Africa) seeking to break into Spain's North African enclaves of Ceuta and Melilla. Hundreds succeeded but several died in the attempt.²⁶¹

160. We asked FCO witnesses to clarify EU policy on handling migratory pressures from Africa, for instance on whether the policy was to resist migratory pressure or to try to accommodate it. Mr Robertson told us that policy was still being decided and that a summit of the EU's "Mediterranean Task Force" was to take place in December 2013.²⁶² We have since received from the FCO a communiqué produced by the Task Force following the summit, which the FCO has said it "broadly supports".²⁶³ The main focus of the document appears to be better co-ordination between governments and agencies with an interest, of which there appear to be very many. We do not sense from the document a clear vision of EU policy on handling the growing pressure of migration, other than through improved co-ordination. We understand that much of recent EU policy has focussed on seeking, as much as possible, to "contract out" the protection of its Mediterranean borders to the countries of North Africa, a policy that has become endangered by the instability that has affected that region in the aftermath of the so-called Arab Spring. We are not certain how much the document takes account of those new realities. In particular, we are uncertain how effectively the strategy would work where governments or agencies on the African side lack the capacity or resources to co-operate with their European counterparts.

161. We urge the UK to press for greater clarity from the EU on its policies for handling increased migration to Europe from Sahelian countries, and in particular on whether, when potential immigrants are located on boats in the Mediterranean, they are turned back or ushered to safety.

260 Dozens of migrants die of thirst in Niger desert, *The Daily Telegraph*, 29 October 2013
<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/africaandindianocean/niger/10410709/Dozens-of-migrants-die-of-thirst-in-Niger-desert.html>

261 African migrants storm into Spanish enclave of Melilla, *BBC News Online*, 28 February 2014
<http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-europe-26382589>

262 Q204-207

263 Ev 88

5 Conclusion

162. This report relates to a region of great human diversity inhabited by hundreds of millions of people. We have not sought to provide a comprehensive survey of security issues in the region, nor a commentary on all the evidence brought to our attention, but to set out the points of greatest urgency. We do recognise that, if UK policy is to be effective, it must be nuanced, and be tailored to specific circumstances; a major challenge in countries as formidably diverse as, for example, Nigeria or Mali. The dearth of diplomatic resources the UK generally possesses in the region does bring into question how well placed the UK is to meet that challenge. It is somewhat troubling to acknowledge, in reviewing the evidence, gathered over the course of the inquiry, that there are some significant gaps in information. This relates particularly to the terrorist groups. We still know little about the insurgency's leaders: in some cases we do not know for certain if they are living or dead. We know relatively little about how groups are organised, how strong or well-armed they are; what their income is, and who their external supporters are. We do know that they tend to thrive on the remote peripheries of the region, which makes them hard to monitor and track, and we have learned that gathering evidence about the groups by infiltrating them is very difficult. The Government has itself acknowledged that it is still learning about the region's complex dynamics and that there are gaps in its knowledge.

163. Analysis and policy-making about terrorism and insecurity in the areas covered by this report suffers from a lack of information on some key issues. We consider that increasing the gathering, and analysis, of information and intelligence on terrorism in and around the Western Sahel should be a priority for the UK Government and its international partners.

164. Islamist extremism is not a static phenomenon. This report presents a snapshot view of the nature of the terrorist threat in the Western Sahel-Sahara region in 2013-14. We cannot say with any certainty what the picture will be like in, say, ten years' time. But we are certain that unless there is concerted international action to address instability in the region, and its root causes, the problem will still be here. It may well be worse than before, and its effects may be being felt far more widely across the world.

Annexes

Annex A: Committee meetings on visits connected with the inquiry

Meetings in Algeria

Briefing by HMA Martyn Roper and officials

Meeting with Mr Boubdellah Ghlamallah, Minister of Religious Affairs and Wakf

Meeting with Mr Boulahaya, President of Foreign Affairs Commission of the Upper House of the Algerian Parliament and other Members of the Commission

Meeting and lunch with Mr Belabbès, President of the Foreign Affairs Commission of the Lower House of the Algerian Parliament, and other Members of the Commission

Meeting with Mr Abdelmalek Sellal, Prime Minister of Algeria

Meeting with Mr Mourad Medelci, Foreign Minister of Algeria

Dinner with ambassadors of the Arab Maghreb Union in Algiers (ambassadors of Libya, Mauritania, Morocco and Tunisia)

Meeting with members of CAERT/ACSRT (African Centre for Studies and Research on Terrorism)

Lunch with Algerian political scientists

Meeting with young people being supported under the UK Government's Arab Partnership programme in Algeria

Meeting with representatives of the World Food Programme, UN High Commissioner for Refugees, UN Department for Safety and Security, UN Development Programme, International Commission of the Red Cross and UN Population Fund

Meetings in Mali

Briefings from HMA Dr Philip Boyle and UK military personnel in Mali

Meeting with representative of UNOM (UN Office in Mali)

Meeting with Mr Pierre Buyoya, Head of AFISMA (African-led International Support Mission to Mali)

Meeting with General Abdulkadir Shehu and other members of AFISMA military command

Meeting with Mr Younoussi Touré, President of the National Assembly

Meeting with Mr Mohamed Salia Sokono, Chairman, Commission for Dialogue and Reconciliation, and other Commission members

Dinner with ambassadors of Canada, the EU and France, and Deputy US Ambassador

Meeting with Mr Mamadou Namory Traoré, Minister for Public Function

Meeting with Colonel Moussa Coulibaly Sinko, Minister for Territorial Administration

Lunch with representatives from UNICEF, International Monetary Fund, Oxfam and UN Population Fund

Meeting with Mr Sandy Haïdara, MP for Timbuktu and President of the Northern Malian Assembly caucus

Meeting with leadership of EU Training Mission in Mali

Meetings in Morocco

Briefing with HMA Clive Alderton and officials

Meeting with Mr Khalid Zerouali, Director for Migration and Border Control and Mr Charki Draiss, Minister-Delegate, Interior Ministry

Meeting with Mr Taieb Fassi Fihri, Advisor to the King

Meeting with Mr Youssef Amrani, Minister-Delegate for Foreign Affairs, and Mr Nasser Bourita, Secretary-General of the Ministry for Foreign Affairs and Cooperation

Meeting with Mr Karim Ghellab, Speaker of Lower House of Parliament

Meeting with Mr Habib Benyahia, Secretary-General of the Arab Maghreb Union

Meetings in Nigeria

Briefings from HM High Commissioner Andrew Pocock, Mr Christian Rogg, Acting Head of DFID in Nigeria, and UK military and security personnel

Meeting with Brigadier-General Hassan Lai and other members of ECOWAS Commission military command

Lunch with Committee on Dialogue and Peaceful Resolution of Security Challenges in the North (also known as the Amnesty Committee)

Meeting with Mr Oronto Douglas, Special Adviser to the President on Research, Documentation & Strategy

Meeting with Dr Toga Gayewea Macintosh, President of the ECOWAS Commission

Briefing from DFID project managers and local clients in Kaduna

Meeting with members of the Kaduna Peace Committee, followed by lunch with Committee members and with community and religious leaders from Kaduna state

Meeting with Mr Mukhtar Yero, State Governor of Kaduna, and state Commissioners

Meeting with Mr Nwanze Okidegbe, Chief Economic Adviser to the President, Professor Soji Adelaja, Special Adviser on Economic Intelligence and Mr Ochi Achinivu, Adviser to the President on Economic Matters

Meeting with Dr Abdulkadir Oniyangi, Acting Chairman of the Independent Nigerian Electoral Commission, and other Commissioners

Meeting with General Sarkin-Yaki Bello, Counter-terrorism Coordinator and National Security Advisor to the President

Meeting with Mr Kashim Shettima, Governor of Borno, and state Commissioners

Dinner at High Commission with members of Nigerian civic society

Meetings at the US African Command ("AFRICOM") in Stuttgart

Meeting with Lieutenant General Steven Hummer, Deputy to the Commander for Military Operations

Meeting and lunch with Ambassador Christopher Dell, Deputy to the Commander for Civil-Military Engagements and Ambassador Helen La Lime, Director for Outreach

Briefings from AFRICOM Command (chaired by Lieutenant General Steven Hummer and Major General Charles Hooper)

Roundtable discussions on development aid, counter-narcotics and piracy, counter-terrorism and special operations strategy with AFRICOM officials

Annex B: Informal meetings in the UK relevant to this inquiry

12 March 2013

Briefing from Ms Adjoa Anyimadu, Mr Paul Melly and Ms Elizabeth Donnelly, Africa Programme specialists, Chatham House

23 April 2013

Meeting with Rt Hon Stephen O'Brien MP, Prime Minister's Envoy and Special Representative for the Sahel at the Foreign & Commonwealth Office

24 April 2013

Meeting with delegation of deputies from the Parliament of Senegal

1 July 2013

Meeting with HE HH Princess Lalla Joumala Alaoui, Moroccan Ambassador

3 July 2013

Meeting with survivors of In Amenas hostage crisis and bereaved family members of victims of the crisis

10 October 2013

Meeting with the Rt Hon Baroness Amos, UN Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and Emergency Relief Coordinator

27 November 2013

Meeting with Mr Salaheddine Mezouar, Foreign Minister of Morocco and HE HH Princess Lalla Joumala Alaoui, Ambassador of Morocco to the UK

Formal Minutes

Tuesday 11 March 2014

Members present:

Sir Richard Ottaway, in the Chair

Mr John Baron
Sir Menzies Campbell
Mike Gapes
Mark Hendrick
Sandra Osborne

Andrew Rosindell
Mr Frank Roy
Sir John Stanley
Rory Stewart

Draft Report (*The UK's response to extremism and instability in North and West Africa*), proposed by the Chair, brought up and read.

Ordered, That the draft Report be read a second time, paragraph by paragraph.

Paragraphs 1 to 6 read and agreed to.

Paragraph 7 read, amended and agreed to.

Paragraph 8 read, amended and agreed to.

Paragraphs 9 to 35 read and agreed to.

Paragraph 36 read, amended and agreed to.

Paragraphs 37 to 39 read and agreed to.

Paragraph 40 read, amended and agreed to.

Paragraphs 41 to 70 read and agreed to.

Paragraph 71 read, amended and agreed to.

Paragraphs 72 to 80 read and agreed to.

Paragraph 81 read, amended and agreed to.

Paragraphs 82 to 84 read and agreed to.

Paragraph 85 read, amended and agreed to.

Paragraphs 86 to 98 read and agreed to.

Paragraph 99 read, amended and agreed to.

Paragraphs 100 and 101 read and agreed to.

Paragraph 102 read, amended and agreed to.

Paragraphs 103 to 115 read and agreed to.

Paragraph 116 read, amended and agreed to.

Paragraphs 117 to 132 read, amended and agreed to.

Paragraph 133 read.

Amendment proposed, at the end of the paragraph to add “*If no specific assurances are forthcoming within an acceptable timeframe, the Government should consider ending aid to the country.*”—(Mr John Baron)

Question proposed, That the amendment be made:—Amendment, by leave, withdrawn.

Paragraph 133 agreed to.

Paragraphs 134 and 135 read and agreed to.

Paragraph 136 read, amended and agreed to.

Paragraphs 137 to 164 read and agreed to.

Summary read and agreed to.

Annexes A and B read and agreed to.

Resolved, That the Report, as amended, be the Seventh Report of the Committee to the House.

Ordered, That the Chair make the Report to the House.

Written evidence was ordered to be reported to the House for publication on the internet.

1 Alliance for Mali

Ordered, That embargoed copies of the Report be made available, in accordance with the provisions of Standing Order No. 134.

[Adjourned till Tuesday 18 March at 2.45pm

Witnesses

Tuesday 21 May 2013

Page

Imad Mesdoua, Political Analyst, Pasco Risk Management, and **Professor Paul Rogers**, Professor of Peace Studies, Bradford University; **Jon Marks**, Associate Fellow, Middle East and North Africa Programme, Chatham House

Ev 1

Tuesday 25 June 2013

Professor Michael Clarke, Director General, Royal United Services Institute; **Sir Richard Gozney**, former UK High Commissioner to Nigeria and former UK Permanent Representative to the Economic Community of West African States; **Virginia Comolli**, Research Associate for Transnational Threats, the International Institute for Strategic Studies

Ev 15

Tuesday 8 October 2013

Lynne Featherstone, Parliamentary Under-Secretary, Department for International Development, **Susanna Moorehead**, Director, Western and Southern Africa, Department for International Development, and **Mark Bowman**, Director-General, Humanitarian, Security, Conflict and International Finance, Department for International Development

Ev 33

Tuesday 11 November 2013

Rt Hon Hugh Robertson MP, Minister of State, **Samantha Job**, Head of North Africa Department, **Tim Morris**, Head, Sahel Taskforce and Whitehall Sahel Co-ordinator, and **Simon Shercliff**, Head of Counter-Terrorism Department, Foreign and Commonwealth Office

Ev 40

Tuesday 3 December 2013

Mark Simmonds MP, Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State, **Tim Morris**, Head, Sahel Task Force and Whitehall Sahel Co-ordinator, and **Catherine Inglehearn**, Deputy Head of Africa Department, Foreign and Commonwealth Office

Ev 51

List of printed written evidence

(printed in Volume II)

1	Professor Paul Rogers, Professor of Peace Studies, Bradford University	Ev 59
2	Jon Marks, Associate Fellow, Middle East and North Africa Programme, Chatham House	Ev 62
3	Royal United Services Institute	Ev 66
4	Sir Richard Gozney, former UK High Commissioner to Nigeria and former UK Permanent Representative to the Economic Community of West African States	Ev 70
5	Department for International Development	Ev 72

6 Foreign and Commonwealth Office

Ev 73; Ev 80; Ev 82; Ev 83; Ev 88

List of additional written evidence

(published in Volume III on the Committee's website www.parliament.uk/facom)

1	Alliance for Mali	Ev w1
2	Dr Sajjan Gohel, International Security Director, Asia-Pacific Foundation	Ev w4
3	Dr Claire Spencer, Head, Middle East and North Africa Programme, Chatham House	Ev w12
4	Philip Fletcher CBE, Chair of the Church of England's Mission and Public Affairs Council	Ev w16
5	Professor Alice Hills, School of Government and International Studies, Durham University	Ev w17
6	Guy Lankester, Director, From Here 2 Timbuktu Ltd	Ev w20
7	International Institute for Environment and Development (IIED)	Ev w23
8	Joliba Trust UK	Ev w27
9	Dr Benjamin Zala and Anna Alissa Hitzemann, Oxford Research Group	Ev w31
10	Dr Oz Hassan and Dr Elizabeth Iskander Monier, Department of Politics and International Studies, University of Warwick	Ev w35