

THE BROOKINGS INSTITUTION

FALK AUDITORIUM

JIHADISM IN AFRICA

Washington, D.C.

Tuesday, November 5, 2019

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P R O C E E D I N G S

MR. O'HANLON: Good morning, everyone, and welcome to Brookings. I'm Mike O'Hanlon with the Africa Security Initiative at the Foreign Policy program, and I'm delighted today to welcome Stig Jarle Hansen from the Norwegian Life Sciences University, one of the most intrepid and dedicated Africa field researchers that I know, and also a remarkable author who has written a new book, "Horn, Sahel, and Rift: Fault-lines of the African Jihad," which covers really the whole continent. And the question of Islamist extremism throughout much of Africa ranging from the Horn to the western side, throughout the Sahel, and then down even into Mozambique. And so we're here to talk about all that today with you.

I'd like to welcome Stig. And he's visiting the United States. And as I say, based in Norway. And a good friend of Vanda Felbab-Brown, who is my co-conspirator on the Africa Security Initiative. And I'd like to thank those of you who came today and who have been part of our events in the past as well.

So what we really want to do today is just launch in with an overview of the state of so-called jihadism in Africa and then start to bear down a little bit on country by country dynamics or region by region dynamics. And also talk about which policies are working, which western or indigenous policies are working to try to diffuse the kinds of pressures and ideologies that can give rise to violent jihadism and which policies aren't working or are under resourced or what have you.

So that's the basic gist. But Stig, let me first just welcome you to Brookings, and I'll ask if you'd like to offer just any broad framing thoughts on how should we think of the state of jihadism in Africa today?

MR. HANSEN: Yeah, I think there are several fool traps when you come to start analyzing these jihadi organizations. Amongst the researchers there has been some tension between researchers that focus on the local metrics and local factors creating these groups and some researchers focusing on the international networks. And it's easy to (inaudible) too much. The local are very important, and more important perhaps than the global networks but the global networks are there and that's something that we should keep in mind when we discuss these organizations.

So there are connections between some of these groups. And ladies and gentlemen, I'm

afraid that I have to say that they are not really on the defensive, although they seem so when you read some of the reports coming from some of the regional organizations, the local actors, and some of the international organizations involved in the area as well.

If you go to the rest, we have several army offensives in Nigeria against the Islamic State of Western Africa. The problem with Nigeria is that some of the Nigerian services tend to overestimate their own success. I had a meeting with several Nigerian generals I think one and a half months ago. They would say that the Islamic State in Western Africa didn't hold any cities. I have friends close to those cities. I called them and they confirmed that they were holding those cities.

We see offenses against the former organizations of Boko Haram but we also see that they are resilient. They are withstanding and they have been again, over the last year, able to hold all tribe territories in the Bornu province of Nigeria. They are also making (inaudible) into Cameroon, very often based on somewhat ethnic ties. It's not that there is one ethnicity in Bornu supporting Boko Haram. It's rather that they use these connections to promote some of their operations and get some kind of local support rather than altrite (phonetic) ideological support. So rather contacts that are not necessarily convinced about the ideology of the Islamic State in West Africa, the former Boko Haram.

We can also see that the group that broke away from Boko Haram, the old Shekau group still exists and it's still going relatively strong and it's still in control of some of its former areas. And it's still a valid organization to count with. And this is even after now two or three months of offensives against it. So basically, the two organizations that have emerged from Boko Haram are still fit for fight and they are doing relatively well. And actually, extremely well if you compare it to the pressure that is put on them.

If you go further north you will talk about the Jabhat Nusra in Mali. In one senses the focus in Mali has changed a little bit from the northern part of Mali which still have (inaudible) idealist activities. So (inaudible) you can go five or six kilometers outside of Timbuktu and you can run into checkpoints from some of these organizations from Jabhat, but what we see now is a kind of tense situation in the middle part of Mali, the Mokhtar region, and we've seen that over the last year. The question is what really happens there. It's hard to say because it's obviously a conflict between nomads and the sedentary population but the question is if the jihadists can tap into that conflict and expand in the

area. And there are some signs that they might do that but the situation is not entirely clear.

We also see some of these groups expanding into Burkina Faso. And before we started this talk I was asked about the potential of hot spots to watch in the future and I think Burkina Faso is one of these hot spots.

Again, they are drawing on specific local conflicts, sometimes between the local population in Burkina Faso in the center of the country so it's a kind of central periphery conflict but there are a potential there for some kind of expansion.

I do think these local factors that interfere in the process, I do think that they hamper fast expansions further south. So we still have some time before we see a step further (inaudible) from these groups. But for Burkina Faso it's actually important to try to deal with the new security programs.

And Niger is another hot spot where you see some signs that it might get worse in the future. And that's actually where you have this Islamic State in the greater Sahara. A very pragmatic Islamic State province. Relatively weak but also with the potential for some activities within Niger.

If you step to Congo, the situation in Congo is also very interesting where you see since 2017 that some of the groups may be previously a part of the Allied Democratic Forces which is basically a very weird organization that I think also you encounter at times at previous stages that started out as a union between basically what was really an Islamist organization and (inaudible) Islam is a local resistant organization in the '90s. But that has been predicted to die off for more than 25 years but still are around. What we have seen for the three last years is videos surfacing from Congo taking responsibilities for attacks in the name of the Islamic State. We've seen a Kenyan court case involving persons linked both to the Islamic State and part of the ADF. We have also seen a lot of experts that say that the ADF is seriously weak and it's highlighted that some of the attacks that the ADF might have implemented in Congo might have been implemented by other actors.

So information about the ADF and the potential transition from (inaudible) into the Islamic State, it's hard to combine. But there has been something going on, that's quite sure, because you can see it in (inaudible) activity and you can see it also in the court cases that are going on in Kenya. So this is also in fact a place to watch but as a kind of joker. It can switch both ways.

It's very interesting for me that if you go to the recent activities in northern Mozambique, it

seems rather to gravitate towards Congo rather than to gravitate towards the north of the coast where you have some clear connections with individuals operating in Congo. There are some connections in Mozambique for the north into Somalia also as well but that's another hot spot that we should watch. It's Mozambique, northern Mozambique.

If you go up the coast, the news becomes a little bit better because despite the Dusit attack in Kenya, if you look into the details of the Dusit attack by the Shabaab in Kenya, you can see that the security services are handling the situation better. And Tanzania has faced some really nasty predictions in the past, but the patterns of Tanzania, they have jihadist activities. They had Shabaab activities inside the country. But it seems to go in waves. So there's networks created that commit violence, and then the Tanzanian security services are good at striking down an opponent. They will disappear. And for now, it seems like these networks are very weakened. But they have resurfaced in the past. So it's a kind of ongoing process where you have to watch how Tanzania performs.

It's interesting for me that if you look at the Tanzanian pattern so far, a lot of the experts were highlighting this on (inaudible) situation and basically (inaudible) resistance towards some of the mainland political movements as a very important trigger. But ladies and gentlemen, more so the activities that you can see from Tanzania in the past have been ongoing in the mainland. So that's also a surprise for several experts I think.

There are a lot of things to be said about the Kenya way to handle its (inaudible) but for now it seems like the Kenyans are kind of better situated than in the past. The intelligence services are operating better. They learn to deal with the Somalia community in a different way than they did seven years ago. But it's still also an ongoing battle for the Kenyans, and the Dusit attack shows that the Shabaab will be able to at least penetrate sometimes the security inside Kenya. But it seems that the Kenyans are more on top of things than they were before. It seems like they have managed to take and deal with a lot of returning foreign fighters from Somalia, and it seems like they also have been dealing with recruitment.

When I do field research in Kenya, I can see that there is still a recruitment potential. There are still cells that have very extreme opinions, but it's harder for them to connect, for example, to the Shabaab and connect with outsider. So still Kenya should be watched.

If we then go to Ethiopia, Ethiopia is an interesting country to watch. It's also something that should be on our watch list because Ethiopians' intelligence and Ethiopian security services have in the past actually been very good. But what we see now is a period of transition. And I wonder if this period of transition will hurt Ethiopian capacities, their capacities to actually stop Shabaab infiltrating the country and stopping Shabaab attempting to stage attacks in that country. Because the Shabaab have tried that many times in the past. So many that I will say that there's a renewed interest in Ethiopia from the Shabaab side. I would say that this is not a renewed interest because it's been there since 2007. I have seen several plots in the past. But Ethiopia is a bit in a weekend state today and that makes me want to watch that.

The last organization is, of course, the Shabaab in Somalia. And there's a lot of strange things coming out from Somalia as well when it comes to news, to positive news from the government. I would say Shabaab is today, ladies and gentlemen, an astonishing rich organization. They're highly successful in taxing internally. The drone strikes from the United States have taken their toll. It's hurt several in many strange ways. One of the ways that it hurt Shabaab is that the Shabaab Sharia culture outside of Mogadishu, they were actually quite popular inside Mogadishu but now it's seen as more dangerous to try to draw upon their services because the Sharia culture of the Shabaab were much more efficient in handling property conflicts.

So the Shabaab are facing battlefield challenges. They have nervous leaders that are facing all the time the tracks from being killed by the drone strikes by the United States, but they also have access to waste amounts of money because they are able to tax regardless of what the government says, the Somali governments tell us, they are able to tax the whole of Mogadishu and are quite good at doing this in the countryside as well. In fact, I would say after my field research in Somalia, I would say that they are better to tax Mogadishu than the government.

So it's a rich organization (inaudible) strengths but not in fact losing a lot of territories anymore. So I would say it's a rich and stable organization.

MR. O'HANLON: Fantastic overview. I think you mentioned about a dozen countries, mostly in West Africa, coming around the bend with Nigeria, Cameroon, dipping into Congo, and then coming up the east coast. And I think you covered probably slightly more than half of sub-Saharan

Africa's population because you mentioned Ethiopia and Nigeria, Kenya, Tanzania, I think four of the five largest in population, or four of the six largest. So we've got a lot to talk about.

Before we start to bear down on a few specifics, let me ask one more big picture question just to sort of aggregate a lot of the information you just put on the table.

When I think in historical terms of trends with jihadism in Africa, I think of big problems in Algeria 20 years ago. I think of Boko Haram, of course, with its takeover of areas in Nigeria half a decade ago or so, a little more. I think of the big problem in Mali that the French intervened around 2013 to deal with which has reemerged as you described. I think, of course, of al-Shabaab in Somalia and everything from Black Hawk Down to the 25 years since. But most of these big news flashes are at least somewhat distant in the past now. And what you're doing is reminding us not to let down our guard. But is it wrong to conclude that as much as jihadism is still a problem in many places, that at least there's sort of a cap on the general pervasiveness and severity of the problem across the continent? It's not getting a whole lot worse writ large. It may be getting worse here or there but it may be getting a little bit less severe in other places. And on balance, it's more or less at a plateau. Is that a fair conclusion or not?

MR. HANSEN: I think it's a rather fair conclusion. It's stable but it's potentially also problematic for us although it's stable. First and foremost, several of these actors, I'm not saying that it's going to be likely that we see a Boko Haram or (inaudible) or Shabaab attacks in the west is actually highly unlikely. But what we see is that they do target the west in their propaganda, and what we see is that they have an eagerness to target western targets on the ground in Africa and the west after all has a lot of investment in some of these countries. And the (inaudible) attack really shows how vulnerable we can be on the ground for such attacks.

And the last factor here is some kind of mutations that we should be aware and follow these organizations because it might be that there are some changes that lead them to focus more internationally. So they should be watched in relation to the Shabaab, for example. There are some positive traits. And all the Afghanistan veterans that were a part of that organization at the start, they have actually died out. They are either captured or killed by the United States or in some cases even killed by local clans. So there's a new leadership, but on the other side, you know, it seems like the Islamic State had until the recent killing of Baghdadi, a much stronger influence on the remains of Boko

Haram than a lot of people expected, you know, to the extent that they could standardize propaganda and to the extent that one of these fractions actually seemed genuinely loyal to the central organization of the Islamic State. So there is some kind of increasing international links.

And I see, you know, you could also see ways that these organizations can influence the international jihadi again, the international discussions. And for me, specializing on Africa, it was interesting to see Boko Haram and Shabaab's role in the rivalry between al-Qaida and the Islamic State. And they had the global role because they were used for propaganda purposes. So the Islamic State tried to switch Shabaab away from al-Qaida, and in that process they were using Boko Haram propaganda. So Boko Haram would make propaganda videos saying that Shabaab should change their affiliations, and of course, Shabaab was very important propaganda-wise for al-Qaida because it was the second numerically strongest organization that stayed with them. And they held territories. And they do still hold territories, in fact. So there are ways that they play into the international jihadist (inaudible). There are threats against us but the threats don't manifest themselves in Shabaab planning and attack against the West or in the Islamic State in West Africa planning an attack in the West.

MR. O'HANLON: So let me ask, I want to come back to where you have your greatest worries and greatest concerns, but I also want to put on the table any kind of good news you might have for us. I mean, one bit of good news might be that at least the threat is not getting dramatically worse continent-wide as we just discussed, but I wonder if there were any success stories. You mentioned Kenya's police doing a better job, for example. I wonder if there are any case studies that you would point to either in terms of how African countries can learn from each other or how we could potentially support the right kinds of policies as western partners, donors, trainers, what have you. So any particular pilot projects or case studies or success stories that you would want to emphasize?

MR. HANSEN: No, I want to highlight -- but there are prices to be paid for that. You know, the largest success story so far is actually Tanzania. You know, they do get the waves but they do manage to strike down on that. And Kenya as you said also has actually been improving. The thing is that in Kenya there's a soft side to the countermeasures and there's a hard side. So the intelligence capacities of Kenya, the security capacities of Kenya have been improving. On the soft side, on drawing people to become more loyal towards the state, I don't think the improvement has been that drastic. So

you still have some kind of recruitment potential but we can look to Tanzania. And there's all the good news but it's good news that is rather because of us misunderstanding some of these organizations. We often think about these organizations as a kind of balloon that they lose in the battlefield and you push them into other places. And you can see that in the past when people were saying that Shabaab was going to evacuate to the north in Somalia, you can see today, ladies and gentlemen, when they say that the Burkina Faso activities means that you will see a (inaudible) push towards the coast.

The thing, ladies and gentlemen, that are good news to us is that the local dynamics are so strong in some of these organizations and the way that they tap into local grievances. So it's not easy for them to move from location to location. They move but then they move rather slowly with local partners so it takes time for them to expand and move their area of attention. That's rather good news but it's not because of us; it's rather because of some of the interaction between these organizations and local ethnic groups and local grievances, basically.

MR. O'HANLON: By the way, before I forget to ask, you mentioned that some of these groups target western interests. We know some of the hotel attacks in West Africa, some other tragedies. Have they been attacking Chinese interests? There's a lot of talk about China's greater role in Africa, greater investments. I wonder if they've managed to avoid being seen as an important target or if that's beginning.

MR. HANSEN: So far China is doing relatively well. I do think that China has a threat against them. You can see, for example, that they do a lot of support for some of the oil industry in Eastern Ethiopia, and that means that they are attempting attacks for the Shabaab because they want to hurt the Ethiopian economy. So there's not a manifestation of direct threat, yes, but there is a potential there for the Chinese. And I know that they care about this. They have been thinking about this. In fact, they were very eager in translating my latest book, so yeah.

MR. O'HANLON: Interesting. That tells you a lot right there.

Let me ask about -- I'm just going to ask one more broad question and then we'll look forward to your thoughts and questions as well for the time we've got until about 11:30.

I wanted to ask if there's any place -- you already surveyed the continent very nicely and you already began to hint at the answer perhaps to my question. But any place you would really call our

attention to where a threat is developing, becoming more severe? Or the way it intermixes with local politics, other grievances, certain kinds of internal tensions could really be explosive even if the jihadism element itself is perhaps only a piece of that country's problems. For example, you already alluded to how Ethiopia, which is one of Africa's great success stories these days, at least we hope and we've seen progress in recent years, but of course, it's a fragile progress and there are a lot of internal tensions. You mentioned the way in which jihadism could intersect with, overlap with, contribute to a combustible mix. Is there any other place or maybe you want to talk more about Ethiopia, but any place where you really want to call our attention and say this is not getting enough focused concern and perhaps resources or new policy initiatives?

MR. HANSEN: The thing is, if there is a nucleus of some kind of jihadist networks in the country and you have a state breakdown or have a civil war, that can lead to some kind of jihadist expansion. And it has done in the past. That's one of the reasons that they were so successful in Somalia. And of course, 2013 was a big success also, at least at the start, at the end of 2012 and 2013, it was a big success for the jihadists in Mali as well, partly because of this. So we need to watch war zones and we actually need to think about stability. As you said, Ethiopia is important to watch.

There is also another type of threat that we need to watch and that's where it's actually spreading. We don't know exactly the nature of those organizations yet, but Mozambique should be a place where the United States should watch very closely. And Burkina Faso should be a place where the United States should watch very closely. And it's also rather important to think about handling the conflicts of central Mali, basically, the Mopti region. And that's mundane things. It's basically trying to handle the conflicts between the pastoral population and the farmers because you might see (inaudible) entrepreneurs trying to take over that conflict and I was wrong when I said you've seen already such entrepreneurs working. So that's places to watch.

MR. O'HANLON: One last question. I don't think you've touched on Sudan, or at least not much, and I wonder why not? Because 10 and 15 years ago we saw the Janjaweed, and I thought there were sort of ethnic and also religious elements in some of the internal and terrible strife that we saw in Sudan, especially 10 to 20 years ago. But you haven't emphasized that today. Is that just a different type of problem you don't capture under the term "jihadism" or is it just calmer and better with the split of

the two Sudans? How do you see that situation?

MR. HANSEN: Historically, Sudan has been amazingly important for African jihadists. And it was like the core of the networks that were created in the '90s that were very important. Also for Shabaab, in fact. For Shabaab, for the Kenya jihadist networks, maybe for the ADF. You know, the primary sources are pointing in different directions (inaudible) Islamic jihad. And of course, it hosted Osama Bin Laden. It doesn't seem to have the importance to that extent today but it's also a place to watch for the future.

I think Sudan gives a very important reminder to us, and it's very important because if you look into al-Qaida's history in Sudan, it's easy for us to think about September 11, to think about al-Qaida is an independent actor for Sudan. But the thing, if you study al-Qaida's actions inside Sudan, they were more or less operating as one out of many foreign policy tools of Sudan. Where the Sudanese fought worse, al-Qaida very often went. So Sudan's allies in Eritrea, Eritrean Islamic jihad, we have testimonies from the 9/11 court cases that they were there. They were supporting them. And of course, Shabaab, the predecessor of Shabaab, al-Ittihad al-Islami, that's also, we have very clear testimonies that they were there.

And my main point, ladies and gentlemen, is that some of these organizations we talk about here have used by local leaders for governance purposes and for foreign policy tools and have been accepted -- they have an accepted presence.

We talk about Boko Haram now as being illegal. You know what, from 2003 until 2009 they were legal. They had their conflicts with the state but they were legal. They were a legal organization. If you walk about al-Saleem (phonetic) and even to a certain extent Akim (phonetic), basically some of the member organizations (inaudible) in the past, you can see that they have been used in the poorer place between Mali and Algeria. And for now this is a little bit out of the question that this might happen because the United States, you showed your muscles. You don't accept that type of behavior, nor do the European Union, and I don't think they even try. They're not too happy about that behavior. But we can reach a stage in the future where you actually lose the attention to those phenomena, where the United States' attention is more strongly focused on China. And maybe China's attention is focused on the United States. And maybe the EU's attention is focused on themselves. And

then you might see such a scenario again where you had idealists gaining legitimacy by being used by local polar fractions. And that's also something to watch. This is a little bit further into the future but it's something that we should keep in mind because historically, it was a phenomena. It's not a strong phenomenon today but it was a phenomena, and it might re-emerge in the future.

MR. O'HANLON: Great. So let's go to your questions. And again, I'm going to do the second of my free advertisements for the book.

As you can tell, we're talking about all of Africa, "Horn, Sahel, and Rift." Horn of Africa, this broader Sahel region, the Rift Valley, and even East Africa down further towards Mozambique. So the whole continent is Stig's oyster and we look forward to questions starting in the very back. My friend?

MR. MORGAN: Good morning. My name is Scott Morgan. I'm a freelance security analyst covering the African issues. I have a quick four-part question.

First, country that would be considered a success story. How about Chad?

Second part, I haven't heard anything regarding the Central African Republic.

Third part is specifically for Michael about the reemergence of the ADF over the last few months with their brazen attacks around Benin (phonetic).

And the last part is regarding Mozambique, we're starting to see a tax on Russian interests in Mozambique as well. I was wondering if you could comment on all of those. Thank you.

MR. O'HANLON: Over to you, my friend. I'd be tempted to add somebody else but I think with a four-parter we'll go straight to the answer.

MR. HANSEN: Very good questions.

If Chad is a success story, it remains yet to be seen because what we see is that we saw Chad saving, I would say more or less saving the situation in Bornu. But, you know, I followed Boko Haram over time and I saw the predictions of their downfall in 2009 after they were banned. I saw their predictions of the downfall in 2013 after the Nigerians created a new division to handle them. I saw the predictions of their downfall after the offensives in 2016. And you know what it seems now? It seems like Boko Haram, or rather the Islamic State of West Africa, they have methods to deal with them. You know, the Shabaabians are not making that much difference. But the Shabaabians are good allies of the United States and they do have some battle worth that the other parties don't have. But I do see that the Islamic

State in West Africa have managed to deal with them. Yeah?

And the Central African Republic so far, you know, it's also a very interesting question because you've seen both the Islamic State in Western Africa and Shabaab propaganda about the Central African Republic. You've seen there has been interest. There have also been rumors about some kind of connections but you don't see the large scale manifestations yet. But maybe this is also a place to watch. And you know,

I am very interested in discussing ADF as well but maybe you can start with discussing the Russian interests in Mozambique. Russia is reemerging as an African actor, and it's reemerging partly, ladies and gentlemen, because if you get Russian support, you know that they will be there for you and that's another issue with both China and the United States these days. You don't know to the extent that the United States' full commitment is a full commitment, and China is very often an economic commitment. They do have military advisors, I admit that, but not of the size that makes it strategical.

I would like to comment on the ADF as well, but maybe you should start.

MR. O'HANLON: You start and then I'll add a word. Go ahead.

MR. HANSEN: I think ADF has been underestimated again. I do think that we are not rid of ADF. There's a lot of conspiracies locally and I don't believe any of those conspiracies. But I think they have been continuously underestimated, and I don't think we've seen the last of the ADF. They are situated there and they also seemingly have networks inside Uganda that maybe are deeper than we think they are.

MR. O'HANLON: So the only point I would add, and I'm sure, Scott, you know this at least as well as I do, but of course, it's hard to think of the Congolese population providing a particularly fertile recruiting base for a jihadist organization given ethnic and religious history. On the other hand, the state is so weak, the security forces are so weak, and there is enough spillover from Central and East Africa with some of the group connections that then I think one could imagine localized problems. And anything that's localized in Congo risks spreading because the state doesn't have the capacity to really contain it.

So I guess that's the good news, bad news. I don't really see Congo's 80 million people as being likely to be swayed by an extremist ideology, particularly not an Islamist one, but on the other

hand, you know, the state is still so weak that it's hard for me to know what it could actually deal with and contain. This is the country after all where, as you all know, 20 some years ago a local leader managed to essentially march 1,000 miles west through jungle and rainforest and overthrow a government. And Congo is a little more stable today than it was at the end of the Mobutu reign, but still, of course, not very good. And therefore, I share the concern.

MR. HANSEN: Yeah, I would highlight that I do agree with what you were saying at the start. You know, when I say that ADF has been underestimated, I don't see ADF as the big game changer in Congo, but I do take into account the many predictions of their downfall. And I don't see that downfall coming up as of yet. And I think one important factor with the ADF that is easy to forget is that it was also a part of the government system from '96 to '98. And at that stage they were encouraged to invest into the local business sector and those investments are (inaudible). So they were rather integrated into the local community at the time and I think that helped them to survive.

And you have these rumors that we talked about. So probably both of you are aware that last summer you had killings of several sheikhs in Kampala. You had the Ugandan security services saying that this was the ADF actually operating within Kampala. It's rather hard to really say what that was. At the time, I had several conversations with the Ugandan intelligence officials and they would say that it was the ADF but they will also say explicitly that ADF was not a major threat against Uganda, which is kind of a strange balance that makes you wonder a little bit about some of these assessments. But it seems like they have some kind of networks going both south and also east at least. Yeah.

MR. O'HANLON: Thank you.

Another question? We'll move up here closer to the front. I'll start with the woman in the third row, please. And then we'll go back to the gentleman in the 10th row after that.

Please identify yourself if you could.

SPEAKER: (Inaudible) European Union delegation.

The Americans keep relations with Sudan --

MR. O'HANLON: We can't hear you.

SPEAKER: The Americans have Sudan on the (inaudible) list and in our discussions with them they're telling us that there are a lot of conditions to be fulfilled in order for the country to be

delisted despite the fact that if it gets delisted they will benefit from debt relief, for funding from the international --

MR. O'HANLON: Close to your mouth. We can't hear you.

SPEAKER: -- international financial institutions and so on. My question to you is, la frauline (phonetic), do the Americans have reasons to use the argument that Sudan is not cooperating sufficiently in the effort of counterterrorism; therefore, they should remain on the list? This is one of their conditions.

MR. HANSEN: Yeah, I think also an excellent question. And I think there's reasons for suspicions given the fact that they were so heavily integrated to the jihadist scene in Africa. But we need more research on the issue. That's my question. And it's going to be a very open question but that's also reflecting I think the state of the knowledge amongst the research community on these issues are. So it needs to have more research on it. And that's hard because Sudan is not really an easy country to do research in. Even not now it's easy.

MR. O'HANLON: Although if I could just follow up quickly. It sounds like your instinct is to say that Sudan is not particularly active these days in any kind of state sponsorship of terrorism. So if it's a question of like what have you done for me lately or what have you done against me lately, probably Sudan should be reassessed and perhaps snot be on the list in the same way that, you know, a Pakistan could arguably be put there or certainly an Iran. It doesn't sound like it's in that same category of activity. Is that fair?

MR. HANSEN: No, it's not under the same category when it comes to activity but it might be partial to states that are close to these groups still. And that might be of U.S. interest and European interest as well.

MR. O'HANLON: Okay. We'll go to the gentleman in the back, please.

SPEAKER: Good morning. My name is (inaudible). I work with The Gambian Embassy. My question is related to Boko Haram.

Could quasum (inaudible) use of force, be a good strategy in dealing with Boko Haram? If yes, what could be the strength and weakness of use of quasum in dealing with Boko Haram? Thank you.

MR. HANSEN: I should stop saying that but that's also a brilliant question. And you know what? That gives me the chance to highlight one of the big mistakes that the West and also several African countries have done in Africa, and also one of the issues going on in my book. I have a state of affairs that's called semi-territoriality where basically, these organizations are left in control of the countryside. And you can have armies like the Nigerian armies and its allies in Bornu, but also like the Somali army and African Union forces in Somalia that really have a superiority when it comes to fighting open battles, but because of strategic reasons, also because of force protection reasons, because of economic reasons, they concentrate themselves in super camps, which is kind of important for a Nigerian. And I saw this and my heart really bleeds when I hear that strategy. And what does that mean? It means that the countryside is left on a whim to the jihadists.

And ladies and gentlemen, if we don't ensure the protection for the locals in the countryside, ADF will be the future of African jihadists. What do I mean by that? None of them are going to disappear.

Ladies and gentlemen, we have been fighting this battle since 2006-2005. Not a single organization has disappeared. So there has been no strategic victories whatsoever in Africa. Some good examples but no strategic victories. And I think part of that is because you underestimate the rural dynamics. We tend to read in the papers about the big attacks sometimes in Abuja, sometimes in Mogadishu, sometimes in Nairobi. Sometimes the dynamics that are really important is to which extent these organizations manage to tax the countryside, to which extent they manage to go into a village and take a camel or a pig sometimes in West Africa. And this is often forgotten that you have this local taxing. And as long as the local population is left alone for various reasons, it's not going to change.

And do you know what's happening now in Somalia? You have an offensive in Lower Shebelle. The Somalia army are going in, capturing villages, and then they are withdrawing. What a rubbish strategy. You know, that leaves the villages on the whims of the Shabaab. It doesn't matter anything. It doesn't create any change. It just creates some kind of highlight in the international media saying that we conquered this village. For the villages, that means that they will have Shabaab back next week. And who do they have to deal with? The Shabaab, how do you deal with it? You provide them recruits, you provide them money, you provide them sometimes even wives, and then you become more

integrated into them. You have to do that because you have to face them in a day-to-day situation. I think that aspect of policy has been a disaster. It has been a disaster all across Africa and it's one of the reasons that the ADF still exists. And the ADA is kind of another example of this because it has been predicted to die so many times, you know, since 1996, everybody was talking about they're going to die, they're going to diminish, they're going to disappear. But they're still here, and maybe they're getting stronger. So that's a dire prediction. And I wonder if we are able institutionally, both the West and also several of the African countries to deal with these problems in the proper way because it doesn't give the big headlines. You know, to protect the local villages doesn't give the big headlines and it's resource consuming. So it's maybe not an attention grabber. But I do think it's very essential if you want to challenge these organizations. Furthermore, I think it might be essential also outside of the African context, so this is for me a big problem in counterterrorism strategy and counter-jihadist strategy of the West and also some of the countries around the world, including several of the African countries.

MR. O'HANLON: You know, if I could add two points before we go to the next question.

Just from my experiences in Iraq and Afghanistan, which is somewhat different but somewhat analogous in certain ways, and the first point doesn't disagree with anything you just said but it is sort of -- there's some tension with it. The second point completely reaffirms what you said.

The first point is that if you look historically at our experiences in Iraq and Afghanistan, in Iraq we did try eventually with the Iraqi forces, of course, to get out into most smaller cities and towns and villages and provide protection. But in Afghanistan where there has never been the same ratio of troops and police to the population, we've actually been trying to persuade the Afghan security forces to pull back from some of the more remote locations because otherwise, they provide tempting targets for the Taliban because the number one threat in many ways to the success of the Afghan enterprise has been casualties to the security forces.

And so in light of the fact that the Taliban is strong and quite well entrenched in certain parts of the country, there really aren't enough Afghan and NATO forces to patrol everywhere. In that case, we try to encourage them to pull back into a smaller number of fortifications, but that's really a question about the specifics of Afghanistan. It has to do with the strength of the enemy, the size of the security forces. That's why I say I don't think it disagrees with anything that you just said, just sometimes

you wind up with a different conclusion based on local circumstances.

My second point where I totally agree with you is this concept that, of course, in some ways it's just good, old-fashioned counterinsurgency thinking and doctrine, but we develop new slogans and new ways of talking about it Iraq and Afghanistan, the expression "clear, hold, build, transfer." If we couldn't do all four of those things -- clear the enemy, build up local successes -- I'm sorry, clear the enemy, hold onto that territory, help the Iraqi or Afghanistan government build up capacity to govern there, and then transfer full responsibility to them, if we couldn't do all four of those things, it was better not to do any of them. It was better not to go in and do the raid and then withdraw because you were just leaving people vulnerable. You were dismantling structures that may have been partly successful that the Taliban provided, and thereby, creating more resentment against your efforts, and you certainly weren't achieving any net harm to the enemy.

So I just wanted to add those points as well.

MR. HANSEN: Yes, I would like to also -- maybe we shouldn't -- just a short comment on Afghanistan?

MR. O'HANLON: Please.

MR. HANSEN: You know, when you pull out of territories like that you basically leave it open, and that's what's happened. You know, let's face it, ladies and gentlemen, there's another winner in Afghanistan and that's not us. You know, it's basically Taliban who has been on the increase as of lately because so much territory was yielded to them. And that's also something that still can happen in Africa, you know.

MR. O'HANLON: Okay. Another question. We'll go to my friend here in the hat in the fifth row. Is that -- are you wearing a Michigan hat today? No, that's not Michigan. I can't read it from here but you know who I --

MR. HURWITZ: Thank you very much.

MR. O'HANLON: Tell us what your hat's about though. I'm curious now.

MR. HURWITZ: It's (inaudible).

MR. O'HANLON: Okay, good.

MR. HURWITZ: Thank you very much for a great presentation, Mr. Hansen.

MR. O'HANLON: Please identify yourself for everybody else's benefit.

MR. HURWITZ: I'm Elliot Hurwitz (phonetic). And I wanted to ask about the possible export of IS -- ISIS activities outside the continent.

MR. HANSEN: Outside the content of Africa?

MR. O'HANLON: From Africa to --

MR. HANSEN: To the West?

MR. HURWITZ: To the rest of the world.

MR. HANSEN: There are some interesting traits that have been ongoing for the two last years. And if you look into, for example, the recruitment, I think Shabaab had more global recruitment than, for example, the Islamic State in West Africa and also (inaudible). They did manage to recruit, although a lot of ethnic Somalis, they did manage to recruit heavily in Minnesota. They did manage to recruit heavily in Scandinavia. And the Shabaab recruitment efforts to a certain extent stopped when they were outcompeted by the Islamic State in the Levant. What we see now is that there are small signs of some of these communities recruiting to the Islamic State again in East Africa. It's a very small signs. It's still just a small, some, several court cases, less than five around the world but it's something to watch.

If you think about the Islamic State affiliates in Africa (inaudible) outside of Africa, we have to remember their size. So we have the Islamic State in Somalia. They have some activities around (inaudible) but, you know, the nature of those activities as we spoke about in the office is not very clear. Their strength is in Puttalam and the strength they have in Puttalam is because you know, the mountains there are hard to really secure.

And secondly, Shabaab, the main strength of the Shabaab is rather far away. And it's not heavy national importance potential for that group in Puttalam. It's not that strong and it's further away from targets. And if you look into another Islamic State affiliate you have the Islamic State in Greater Sahara, basically, the most pragmatic of the lot. You know, they were beaten very heavily by (inaudible) affiliates at the start and after that they started to be accommodating toward (inaudible). So they accommodated, basically, the local al-Qaida affiliates. And they are heavily integrated into the local economy to the extent of you wonder what (inaudible). So locally, around Manica, they will call them literally the "cattle rustlers" of Manica. That's a nickname that they have at the local level. And that's all

they feed themselves, basically, also. So that's also very localized and very minor.

So the big -- there's a question mark in Africa and that is what's going on in Congo. But it's decentralized. The Congo situation is so decentralized, and given the discussions about the ADF, I was talking about the ADF surviving. We don't know which part of ADF, who is tilting towards the Islamic State. It might be large parts of the organization. It just might be some parts of the organization. And we do know that ADF for now has enough problems with just surviving. So it's not a big potential there for the near future but it might have some potential to spread into other areas in Africa. And the biggest, most important al-Qaeda affiliates in Africa is actually the Islamic State in West Africa, the largest part of the former Boko Haram. And the Shekau part of the Boko Haram has still not distanced itself from the Islamic State either but they haven't been fully accepted by the Islamic State.

But the thing is also when it comes to the modus operandi of the Boko Haram in the past, it has been very localized in its focus. So I don't see the large threats outside of Africa from any of these organizations. I do think that we will see the Islamic State in West Africa participating in the global propaganda war of the Islamic State definitively. I do think that we will see the Puttalamers (phonetic) inside the Islamic State in Somalia interacting with Yemen to a large extent. But the Islamic State in Yemen also has its problems. So it's like too weak guys trying to help each other, which is not really that efficient all the time. So I don't see this big potential for expansions outside of the content of these organizations.

MR. O'HANLON: Just one footnote as I go to the next question. The book is "Horn, Sahel, and Rift." And we're talking primarily about sub-Saharan Africa, but it's worth noting, Elliot, that, of course, if we look at Libya, Algeria, Tunisia, you've had some of the most fertile recruiting pools for ISIS in the Levant and for al-Qaeda in Mesopotamia in earlier days. So that interaction has been well established even though we're talking today primarily about sub-Saharan Africa.

MR. HURWITZ: Very important clarification.

MR. O'HANLON: So let's go to the gentleman in the far back and then we'll come back to the front.

SPEAKER: Thank you. (Inaudible) World Politics.

Well, thanks for clarifying that it's not the entire continent of Africa. I started feeling like

the main speaker is using the word "Africa" a lot and I think it's important that he clarified that it's a specific country, because Africa is over one billion people.

Anyway, my question is, with this bleak jihadism and stories, any opportunities for mutual development trades or any foreign policy that is more geared toward development and the opportunities, is Russia and Chinese also taking advantage of that? Thank you.

MR. HANSEN: Any poses geared toward -- you mean in relation to counterterrorism or counter-jihadists? Can you elaborate a little bit?

SPEAKER: No, no, no. Just development by way of uprooting these activities. If you think that jihadism in any of this part of the continent, if the reason is poverty or any lack of development, what do you propose? Thank you.

MR. HANSEN: I think definitively that low-income contributes to recruitment in most of these cases. I do think that if you want to do development, firstly, it's a harder business than you might expect because you have been attempting to do this quite a long time. You know, since you had the famous speech in 1948, it has been, again, so this is a long-term strategy. That's very important. So you need to hedge against something else in the short term.

I also do think that even though you have some development, you will have these four structures, organizations that use coercion to survive. So they might have a potential even though you do have some kind of development. But development is needed to curtail some of the recruitment potential, but we shouldn't remember that you have an agency there. You have actually an agency by these organizations that are trying to recruit locally and will force people to obey them. They will have resources to force people to obey them. Also, people with middle income in an African context. So you have that on top, but development is important but it's a long-term solution.

MR. O'HANLON: So to the woman here in the white scarf in the fifth row, please, on the aisle.

SPEAKER: My name is (inaudible) and I'm at Georgetown University. And my question is to know your -- yeah, again, to know your assessment about the possibilities for the spread of jihadism in Western Sahara given the refusal, the American refusal to negotiate the termination with the Polisario Front?

MR. O'HANLON: Morocco, Polisario.

MR. HANSEN: Yeah. I used to say Polisario. I think also I should stop saying that but that's a very good question.

And you know what, the interesting thing? If you go and look back to the regions of the Islamic State in Western Sahara, they can be traced back to individuals living in Sahara with refugee camps. So you have actually a straight line going back to Western Sahara. But it seems like they have been jumping off from the Western Sahara focus and rather moved their focus southward. But they are a product, including their current leader, al-Sharabi, (inaudible) al-Sharabi. He is a product of the Western Saharan conflict and that's also very important in order to understand that organization. The start of that organization, ethnically, it changed a little bit now but it's very important.

So it's an important thing to watch and it has already had effects on parts of the jihadists in the sub-Saharan Africa.

MR. O'HANLON: The gentleman here in the third row, please, the yellow shirt.

MR. BOYER: Thank you. Neil Boyer (inaudible).

You had mentioned, you know, the localized dynamics, and I want to look at the issue of Mali and Burkina. Particularly in terms of the ethnic dynamics between pastoralists and sedentarists (phonetic) in the context of climate change focusing on the dynamic between the Fulani and Burkina. And then so much as you have a large ethnic dynamic, climate change dynamic also in Mali, what are the implications for countries with large Fulani populations such as Guinea, to a certain degree Gambia, et cetera, in terms of spreading eastward?

MR. HANSEN: Yeah. The thing is that we talk about the Fulani but their grievances vary a little bit from country to country. So if you go to the Mopti region you have, you know, problems with the Duwamish, which is something to do with a lot of different things. You know, climate change might be a factor. Another change might be the -- another change that are important might be the change of the river courses. And also, actually, the change of some crops that have been growing. There's a new type of crop coming in and that creates some extra challenges. So it's quite mundane, and that's the kind of local dynamics that is hard to transfer for other Fulani outside of there.

And the same thing goes for Burkina Faso to a certain extent where you have this center

periphery tension. And that makes it -- you cannot say that al-Fulani is a blank check for having some kind of jihadist thing going on. You have to look into the local grievances. But, you know, on top of these local grievances you need some kind of successful entrepreneurship on behalf of some of the jihadists. So you need those two combinations. And that means that you need four Fulani in other parts of West Africa. You need some kind of local grievances and local conflicts that are there. And you need some kind of network connections going back, perhaps, to 2012-2013. And the territories that were cleared by the Northern Mali jihadists. And that's what you see in Burkina Faso. That's what you see in the Mopti region. So you need those constellations to emerge. And that might take time. Maybe you need new networks, so it will maybe spread rather more slowly than people expect it to be. So I'm not a (inaudible) on this. It might spread but it will take time and we will have ample time to see the tendencies toward spreading.

MR. O'HANLON: So let's take two more questions together as our last round and then we'll have you wrap up if we could.

We'll take the question, the woman in the sort of maroon shirt in the very back and then we'll come right up here to the gentleman in the black shirt in the fourth row, please.

MS. HARRISON: Yes, good morning. Lakisha Harrison.

A very simple but loaded question, perhaps. Where does AFRICOM sit in the midst of all of this?

MR. O'HANLON: Good question.

And then, thank you, up here to the fourth row. We'll take these together if we could and then wrap up.

CHARLES: Thank you. It's to come back to the question that was earlier asked. I represent -- yeah, my name is Charles. I represent Lafayette Praetorian. We're a security and logistics group. Very well implanted in the Sahel (inaudible) Ouagadougou in the region.

What do you say to the notion that these actors are essentially socioeconomic actors more than anything else? And that ideology is not really the problem or main recruitment tool or reason to spread, but rather economic growth and opportunity, or rather lack thereof, especially when it comes to the local youth?

And the reason I ask this is because we're very close with tribal leaders in the region, in the Sahel, and we know that they allow some of their members to go and work for the West one day, work for an armed group the next day, work for the jihadists, and at the end of the day it's just a way to make a buck.

MR. HANSEN: Okay. I will start with the last question first. It's a complex and very important question.

So the first issue is reflecting on your question previously. You know, do you use economic factors, like poverty and deprivation, create these jihadist groups? What we see is that when you talk to the recruits, they will talk about economic factors definitively. And this is also dependent on what kind of situation the jihadist group is in. If they control territory, if they control what I call semi-territoriality, kind of control, kind of presence in the villages that are neglected, they will be an efficient payer of bread day to day. So there might be economic opportunities going into them.

So that's an important factor, but the thing is we have to look into the networks to explain why these organizations occur, when they occur. You know, why did these turn into jihadists rather than to Marxists? They did that in the past but they don't do it anymore. And we also need to have the jihadist networks in mind because you need entrepreneurs to take care and handle these conflicts, to take advantage of it. And at times, not often, we have seen strategic support. So we know because of the Timbuktu papers, that in a crucial period of Boko Haram's life they got help from al-Akeem. Not a lot, 100,000 Euros, I think, 100,000 or 200,000, I cannot really remember now, but at that stage, in the early Boko Haram history, it was crucial. Although small, it was crucial. So we need to have -- take these dynamics into consideration as well. So you know, it's a kind of mix. Maybe the tendencies among African studies today is to focus on these local factors. You know, talk about poverty. The local factors are very important but we need to have these networks, take these networks into consideration as well.

And in one sense I read your questions a little bit divided into two because you can talk about these economic factors, but you can also talk about social groups. And another thing that maybe we could be better at both in the European Union and in the United States is to recognize the alternative social actors, like the tribes. And I've seen so many tribes, and I think groupings with the traditional leadership trying to play both the jihadists and the government, you know, in an amazing way, and they

tried to (inaudible) to the local jihadists by supplying recruits. Take over the local chapters. But at the same time, they were sitting in the Parliament. The thinking is, do you have any traction? There's an interaction between the three sides. Sometimes there are gray zones but there are also clear (inaudible) formulations by the jihadists, relatively clear from (inaudible) on behalf of some of these tribal groupings that we are not aware of and some kind of state policy formulations as well.

So you have to be aware of those gray zones. That also means that tribal conflicts is very important for jihadist recruitment. That is one of the reasons that you cannot move them along. That's one of the reasons that the balloon hypothesis, well, if you squeeze the balloon in Africa, the balloon will move very slowly because you cannot remove yourself out of the local dynamics and flow into another area without actually preparations, without establishing the networks, et cetera, et cetera. So that's an important lesson.

Where is AFRICOM in all of this? I think you might disagree with me. I think this feeds into our Afghanistan discussions. I think AFRICOM has had their focused on kinetics. One of the reasons that they focused on kinetics is basically because development will take time. I think -- and resources, and it's outside of their mandate. I do think that they might be trapped by some of the unfortunate repercussions of both European and American military doctrine. This loss awareness that are very important so you don't have this emphasis on local governance. And what worries me a little bit with both European countries and also the United States is that you transfer this idea that you have to gather up and create basically unit security instead of engaging locally and accept more losses because maybe Europe and the United States cannot take that much losses and still maintain their presence anymore. I don't know. This is a bigger discussion that we could talk for long with. And there's a lot of people in this hall that have more competence on that than I have.

But in my dreams, if I would see an ideal AFRICOM, I would see an AFRICOM that encouraged rural village protection and understands the limitations of drone warfare and understands the limitation of actually the structures they support and the limitations of just pouring money into armies that doesn't have really that much social coercion.

By the way, I would stress that the United States and also Norway, in fact, participate in creating some of the world's worst armies in the struggle against jihadists in Africa. The Somali army who

had, I think in 2012, had reported from (inaudible) strength. It's better now but 3,000 men, and the dissertation was counted into 30,000. So you know, the dissertation, that amount of research of personnel is so much higher than the frontline strength which I think is historically quite unique.

So we have to look beyond the kinetics. We have to look beyond the money. And we have to look into local security. And it's hard because it demands resources but I think that's the step forward. Otherwise, you won't change that much. You can hedge against disasters, and that's one thing we managed to you. You know, if Shabaab takes a lot of territory, Ethiopia and Kenya will come. If you have the failure in Northern Mali, you know, basically, France will come. And when things happen in Bornu, some of them came and some others as well. So you will have foreign interventions in order to hedge off situations that grow increasingly bad but you won't really change the situation in the long term. It's like creating some kind of block toward territorialism control.

And that's interesting theoretically for me as a research. Each time you have attempts for territorial control by some of these jihadists in Africa, you will have some kind of international intervention blocking it if the local country cannot block it itself. Yeah.

MR. O'HANLON: So Stig Hansen's book is "Horn, Sahel, and Rift: Fault-lines of the African Jihad."

Please join me in thanking Stig.

(Applause)

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