

The Al-Qaeda War Against France

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Introduction

The enemies of France, for example Iran, Turkey, Sudan, the Hezbollah of Lebanon, can support terrorist attacks against France. In the previous decades Qaddafi's Libya was another potential sponsor of terrorism against France, but after 2000 the relations between France and Libya were normalized.

Obviously there are many African countries that can support terrorist attacks against France too, but I am talking about countries that are significant military powers, so that they can provide advanced weapons and intelligence support, which are necessary for spectacular attacks against France.

In 2015 there was the agreement for the nuclear program of Iran. France opposed the Iran deal in order to protect her Arab allies, but also because Iran challenges France in North Africa, where France gets a large part of her uranium imports. France needs the uranium because for her production of nuclear energy. France covers most of her energy needs from the production of nuclear energy. See "Nuclear Power in France", November 2015.

The agreement for the Iranian nuclear program opened the road for the economic cooperation between France and Iran. Moreover, Sudan, a strong Iranian ally during the previous decades, and a strong supporter of international terrorism, changed sides and aligned itself with Saudi Arabia, and Saudi Arabia is a French ally.

These developments changed the ability of Al-Qaeda to attack France, because Iran and Sudan were strong supporters of Al-Qaeda. That does not mean that Iran or Sudan own the terrorist groups of Africa, but these groups must receive support from the enemies of France in order to attack France, and the stronger the enemies of France the greater and more sophisticated the support they can receive.

Turkey, another great military power, is an enemy of France too. However it is difficult for Turkey to support Al-Qaeda related groups, because Turkey might be an enemy of France but she is an ally of the United States. Jihadist groups are communicating vessels, and support to one group that attacks France might end up to another group that attacks the United States.

However I have to say that Al-Qaeda of North Africa (Al-Qaeda of Islamic Maghreb) is a different organization from Al-Qaeda of Asia. In Asia Al-Qaeda is fighting the Americans who are trying to bring the oil and natural gas of Kazakhstan and Turkmenistan to India i.e. TAPI Pipeline, while in Africa Al-Qaeda is fighting the French who support the construction of the Trans-Saharan Pipeline, which will send the natural gas of Nigeria to Algeria and Europe. See “A Summary of the Wars of the 21st Century”.

For the difference between Al-Qaeda Africa and Al-Qaeda Asia see Rand Corporation “North Africa’s Menace : AQIM's Evolution and the U.S. Policy Response”.

Therefore before the agreement for Iran’s nuclear program and before the repositioning of Sudan’s foreign policy, Iran, Sudan and Hezbollah were the

most powerful supporters of Jihadist groups who were fighting France in Africa. Now of course there is also the Islamic State, which was supported by Turkey and the Arabs, but I will come back to ISIS later on. But note that France is bombing ISIS in Syria, and therefore ISIS can support attacks against France too. ISIS consists of the ex-people of Saddam Hussein who were overturned by the Americans with the Iraq War of 2003. Saddam Hussein was a soviet ally and these people were trained by the Soviets and the KGB. See “Towards an Alliance Between Russia and ISIS”?

Note that Saudi Arabia, another country which supports Jihadist organizations has a limited ability to support Al-Qaeda, because Saudi Arabia is an ally of the United States and France, and Al-Qaeda fights both of them. Saudi Arabia buys her weapons from the United States and France, while Iran, Hezbollah and Sudan are buying their weapons from Russia and China. Therefore Iran, Hezbollah and Sudan had a lot more freedom to support Al-Qaeda against their enemies i.e. the United States and France, while the Saudis would lose the American and French support if they were to support Al-Qaeda against the United States and France.

Moreover Saudi Arabia is not interested in the exports of natural gas. It is Iran, Qatar and Russia that really care about natural gas exports, because they are the ones who are very rich in natural gas. Saudi Arabia consumes domestically her gas production. The Saudis fight for their oil exports, because Saudi Arabia is the second richest country in oil reserves, second only to Venezuela.

Image Richest in Natural Gas

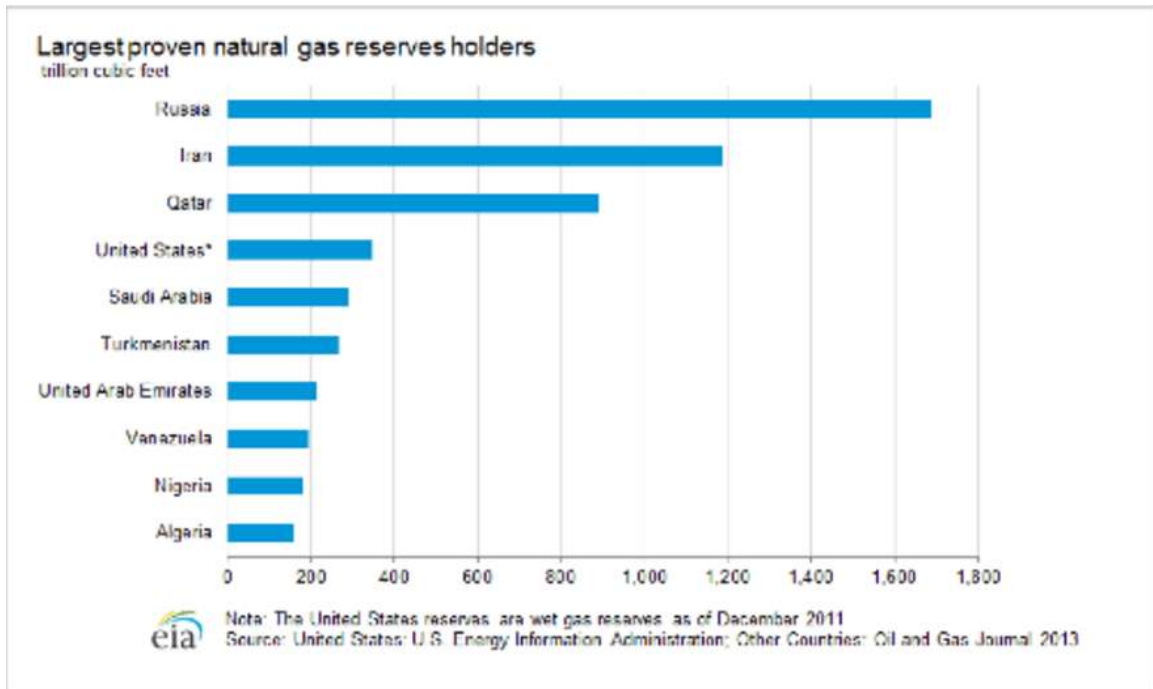
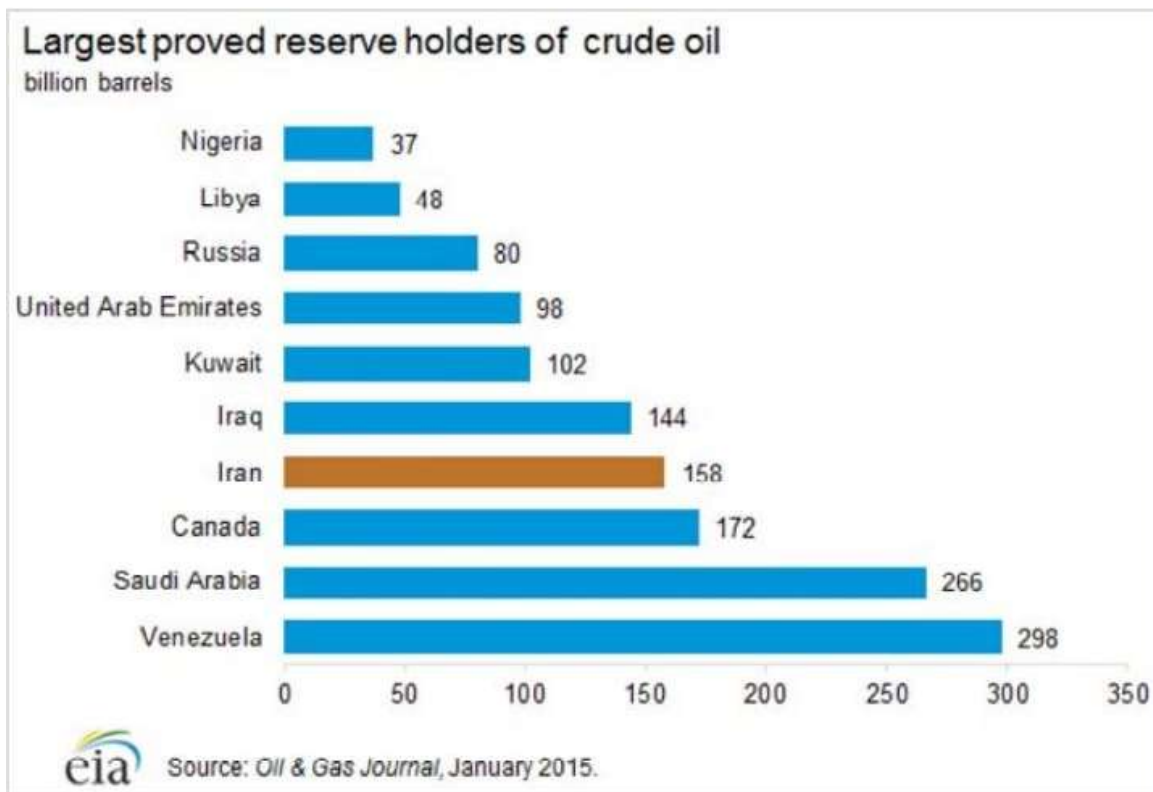


Image Richest in Oil



Therefore the Saudis do not really have to stop the TAPI Pipeline (Turkmenistan-Afghanistan-Pakistan-India), or the Trans-Saharan Pipeline (Nigeria-Niger-Algeria). It is the Iranians, the Qataris and the Iranians and the Russians that have to worry about them. The Turks must also stop the Tran-Saharan Pipeline because the Turks' main ambition is to send the natural gas of the Middle East and Central Asia to Europe, and provide an alternative to the Russian gas.

Map TAPI Pipeline



https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Turkmenistan%E2%80%93Afghanistan%E2%80%93Pakistan%E2%80%93India_Pipeline#/media/File:TAPI-EIA.png

Map Trans-Saharan Pipeline



[https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/thumb/7/7e/Gas_pipelines across Meditteranee and Sahara map-en.svg/2000px-Gas pipelines across Meditteranee and Sahara map-en.svg.png](https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/thumb/7/7e/Gas_pipelines_across_Mediterranee_and_Sahara_map-en.svg/2000px-Gas_pipelines_across_Mediterranee_and_Sahara_map-en.svg.png)

Therefore, when I say that it was mainly Iran, Sudan and Hezbollah who were supporting Al-Qaeda against France in Africa, I am not saying that Saudi Arabia is a better country than Iran. I am just saying that the alliance

of Saudi Arabia with France and the United States, and also Saudi Arabia's lack of interest in natural gas pipelines, did not make Saudi Arabia the ideal backer of Al-Qaeda against France.

Sudan and Iran

At the following map you can see how important Sudan was for Iran during the previous decades. Iran and Hezbollah used Sudan as an entrance for West Africa in order to attack Niger, Nigeria, Algeria and Cameroon. Through Eritrea and Somalia they were attacking Kenya and Ethiopia.

Map Sudan's Usefulness for Iran



From the mid-seventies Egypt left the Soviets and became an ally of the United States and Saudi Arabia, and has also signed a peace treaty with Israel (1979). Only for one year Egypt became an enemy of Saudi Arabia, when the Muslim Brotherhood rose to power with the support of Turkey, Qatar and Iran (2012-2013).

When the Muslim Brother Mohamed Morsi became president of Egypt in 2012 he received Erdogan in Egypt as a real Sultan, and he invited the

Iranian President. It was the first visit of an Iranian President to Egypt since the Islamic Revolution of 1979. But other than this brief period of the Muslim Brotherhood governance Egypt has been an enemy of Iran and a Saudi ally.

Moreover Qaddafi had formed an alliance with Chad, and together they supported separatist rebel groups in South Sudan, which is where the Sudanese oil is located. See Gatestone Institute “Chad: Gaddafi's Best Ally”, July 2011.

See also “Libya, Chad and Sudan – An Ambiguous Triangle?”.

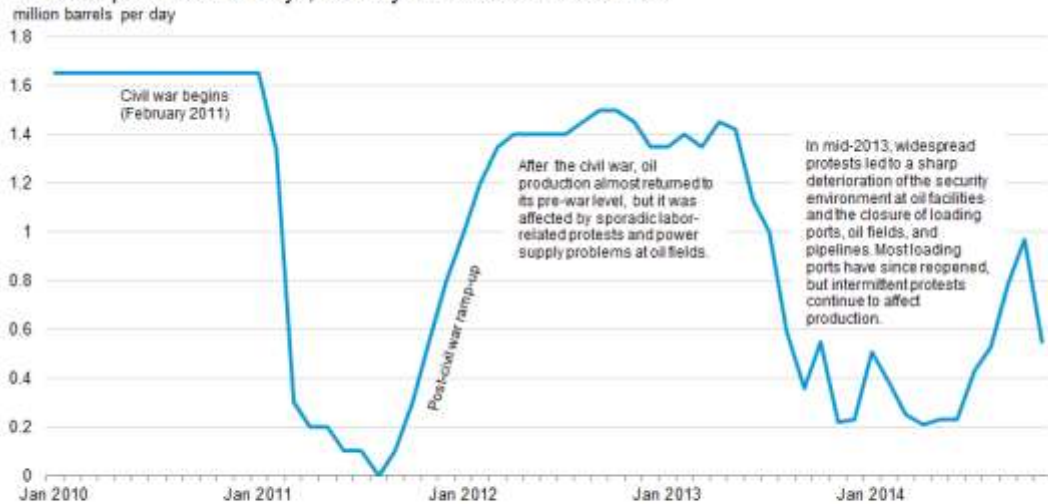
It is no coincidence that it was in 2011 that the special forces of Hezbollah and Sudan, with the blessings of Iran, and the special forces of Qatar, with the blessings of Turkey, entered Libya, and it was in 2011 that South Sudan gained its independence. It was the same war.

Qaddafi's Libya was producing 1.5 million barrels of oil per day before the Arab Spring, Sudan was producing 400 thousand barrels per day, while Chad was producing 100 thousand barrels, with the prospect to increase its production to 250.000 barrels.

After the Arab Spring and the independence of South Sudan both the Libyan and Sudanese oil productions collapsed.

Image Libyan Oil Production

Crude oil production in Libya, January 2010 to November 2014

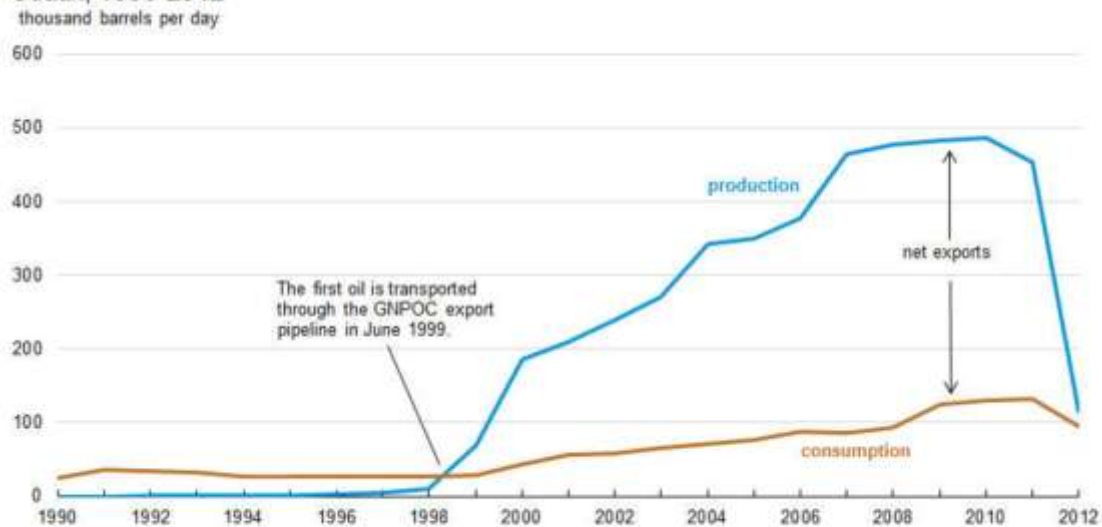


Source: U.S. Energy Information Administration, Short-Term Energy Outlook, November 2014

http://energy-cg.com/SmallPicsLinks_ECG/crude_oil_production.png

Image Sudanese Oil Production

Crude oil production, including lease condensate, and consumption in Sudan and South Sudan, 1990-2012



Source: U.S. Energy Information Administration

<http://www.globalsecurity.org/military/world/war/images/sudan-oil-production2012.jpg>

At the following map you can see with blue the Sudanese oil fields and with red the oil pipeline that was exporting the Sudanese oil to the Red Sea through the Arab part of Sudan, very close to the Saudi oil pipeline.

Map Oil Fields and Pipeline of Sudan



Oil conflict between Sudan and South Sudan (© AFP)

<http://www.energy-pedia.com/news/sudan/new-149899>

Map Pipelines of the Red Sea



From the following map you can see that Sudan was for Iran and Hezbollah an entrance to West Africa, which allowed them to bypass South Sudan, Ethiopia and Chad.

Map Sudan as a Corridor to West Africa
















In West Africa Iran targets the oil of Nigeria, the Trans-Saharan gas pipeline (Nigeria-Niger-Algeria), and the rich uranium fields of Niger which supply the French production of nuclear energy.

Niger and Namibia are among the top 5 producers of uranium in the world.

Uranium Production by Country

This is a list of countries by uranium production in 2014.

Rank ⇄	Country/Region ⇄	Uranium production (2014) (tonnes U) ^[1] ⇄	Uranium Production (2011) (thousands pounds U ₃ O ₈) ^[2] ⇄	Percentage of World Production ⇄ (2014)
	World	56,217	139,513	
1	 Kazakhstan	23,127	46,284	41.1
2	 Canada	9,134	25,434	16.2
3	 Australia	5,001	15,339	8.9
4	 Niger	4,057	10,914	7.2
5	 Namibia	3,255	11,689	5.8
6	 Russia	2,990	1,516	5.3
7	 Uzbekistan	2,400	6,239	4.3
8	 United States	1,919	4,316	3.4
9	 China	1,500	2,150	2.7
10	 Ukraine	926	2,210	1.6
11	 South Africa	573	2,210	1.0
12	 India	385	1,040	0.7
13	 Malawi	369	1,742	0.7

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_countries_by_uranium_production

Iran had also very strong connections to the terrorist organization Al-Shabaab in Somalia, but also in Eritrea. Eritrea is a very corrupt country which is for hire, but recently Eritrea said it is aligned with Saudi Arabia. See “Is the Reconciliation Between Turkey and Israel Viable”?

<https://iakal.wordpress.com/2016/07/02/is-the-reconciliation-between-turkey-and-israel-viable/>

Kenya, a country south of Sudan, is another country with problematic relations with Iran, because the Chinese want to use Kenya as an export hub, in order to export the resources of Africa to the Indian Ocean. China also wants to export the oil of South Sudan from Kenya now that there is the

Sudan-South Sudan war, and that brings Iran and Sudan together against Kenya.

Map



I must also say that Sudan is useful for Iran for one more reason. Sudan and Iran have a common politico-economic system. Both countries are Islamic societies and they have socialist economic models. However Sudan is a Sunni Islamic “Democracy” while Iran is a Shia Islamic “Democracy”.

Therefore Iran could use Sudan to set foot in Sunni terrorist organization of Africa and Asia, because 80-85% of the Muslim population adheres to Sunni Islam. The Sudanese propaganda sounds more familiar to the population of the Sunni countries. Moreover Iran and Sudan used to jointly attack the Saudi King, and Sudan was presenting itself as the model of an Islamic socialist country. Normally we do not use the words Islamists and socialists

together, but I use the word “socialist” to make clear what the economic model of Sudan and Iran is.

In recent years Turkey became also a predator hunting the Saudi King, because the Turkish President wanted to unite Saudi Arabia, Qatar and Iran, under the Muslim Brotherhood, in order to send the natural gas of Iran and Qatar to Turkey. See “Assessing the Sultan”.

<https://iakal.wordpress.com/2016/07/06/assessing-the-sultan/>

I want to mention some relevant articles before moving further.

At the following article of the Africa Journalism, you can read that Sudan supports terrorism organizations all over Africa, and soon Iran’s weapons could even reach Boko Haram in Nigeria. Note that Boko Haram was supported by Al-Qaeda, but after the Sunni-Shia war in Syria Boko Haram aligned itself with ISIS. See “The Sudanese link: from Seleka in Central Africa Republic to Boko Haram in Nigeria”, May 2014.

At the following Reuters article you can read that the Organization of Islamic Council, which is a council of all the Muslim countries, officially accused Iran of meddling in the internal affairs of other Muslim countries and for consistently supporting terrorism. See “Muslim nations accuse Iran of supporting terrorism: summit communiqué”, April 2016.

At the following BBC article you can read that Iran smuggles gun in Nigeria in order to arm terrorist groups, and Nigeria threatened to report Iran at the

United States. See “Nigeria to question Iranian over arms seized in Lagos”, November 2010.

At the following Reuters article you can read that the United Nations accuse Iran for supplying arms to Al-Shabaab in Somalia. See “Iran denies shipping arms to Islamist militants in Somalia”, February 2013.

After the wild Sunni-Shia war in Syria, Al-Qaeda and ISIS started competing for influence over Al-Shabaab. See the Telegraph “How al-Qaeda and Islamic State are competing for al-Shabaab in Somalia”, January 2016.

At the following BBC article you can read that Gambia severed diplomatic relations with Iran because Iran was smuggling weapons in Gambia. See BBC “Gambia cuts ties with Iran and orders diplomats to go”, November 2010.

At the following Al-Jazeera article you can read that Senegal severed diplomatic ties with Iran because Iran was smuggling weapons in Senegal. See “Senegal severs ties with Iran”, February 2011.

At the following CNN article you can read that Kenya many times in the past has accused Iran for supporting terrorists that have been arrested in Kenya. See “Kenyan government links 2 terrorism suspects to Iran”, November 2015.

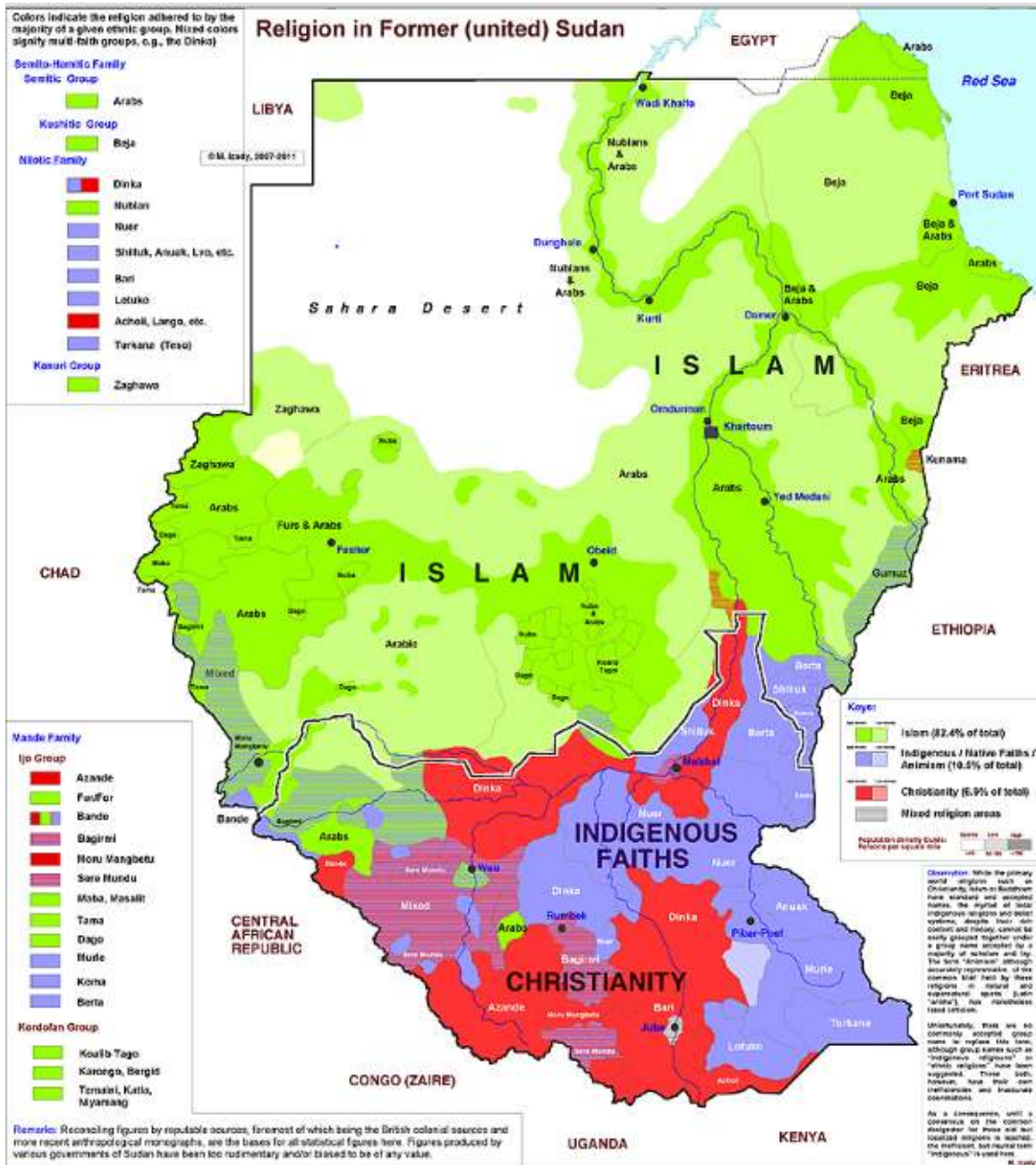
At the following Guardian article you can read that the public prosecutor of Argentina was ready to present to the Argentinean Congress evidence that

the Argentinean President Cristina Kirchner was involved in hiding evidence of Iranian involvement in Argentinean terrorism, but a few hours before going to the Congress the Public Prosecutor committed “suicide”. See “Alberto Nisman: Argentina prosecutor's death closer to being solved”, February 2016.

At the following article from the Nigerian Naij, one of the largest newspapers of Nigeria, you can read that the secret services of Nigeria blamed Iran for training terrorists in Nigeria. See “Iran-Linked Terror Suspect’s Family Faults SSS”.

I would also like to provide a map with the ethnic groups of Sudan. You can see the Arab part of the country on the north, and the Christian and other non-Arab part at the south of the country. The southern part of the country, the non-Arab part, is the rich in oil part of the country.

Map Sudan – Ethnic Groups



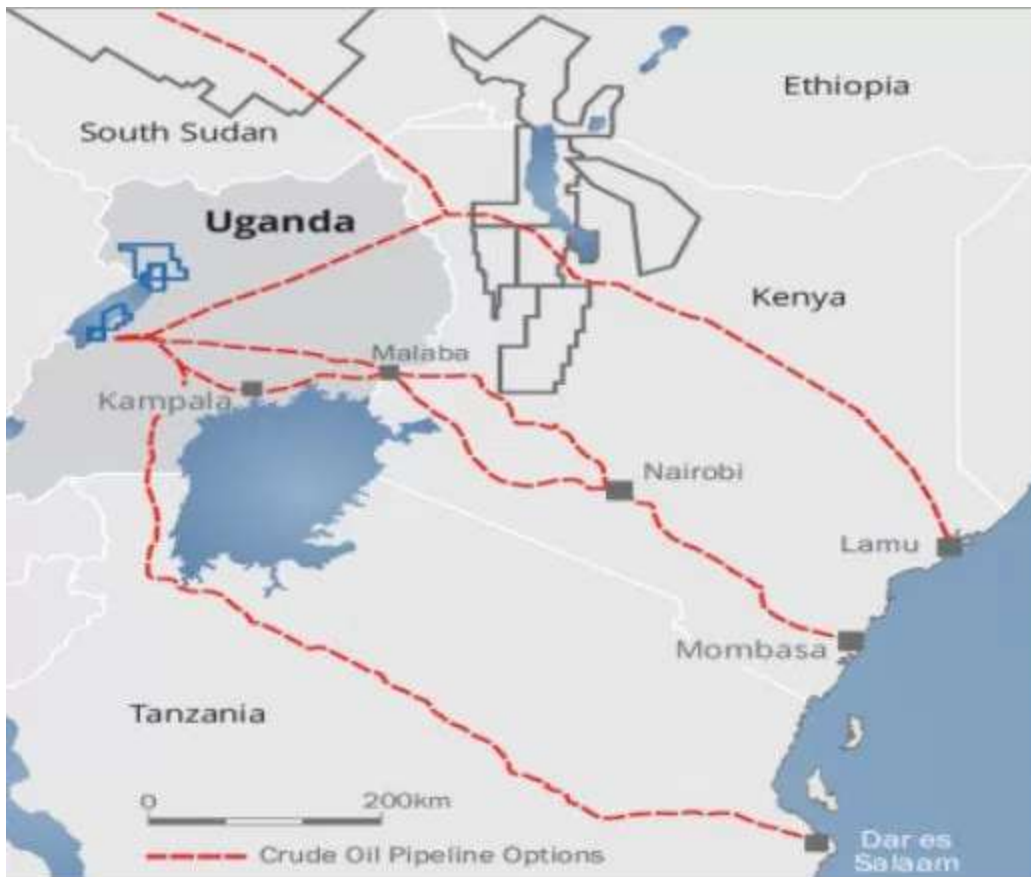
http://gulf2000.columbia.edu/images/maps/Sudan_Religion_sm.jpg

That's a very basic description of the divisions of the Sudanese population. There are hundreds of tribes in the country. Most African people did not have nations until the Westerners went there. African people were very

primitive. They would hunt and eat each other, or sell the captured tribes as slaves.

I must also mention the issue of the South Sudan-Kenya oil pipeline promoted by China, which hurts the Arabs of Sudan who want the oil of South Sudan to be exported by the Arab northern part of the country. There was also the prospect of connecting Uganda's oil on the South Sudan-Kenya pipeline. See Quartz "Kenya and Uganda are building the world's longest heated oil pipeline", August 2015.

Map South Sudan-Uganda-Kenya Pipelines



<https://qzprod.files.wordpress.com/2015/08/kenya-uganda-oil-pipeline-route-options.jpg?quality=80&strip=all&w=519>

Therefore Kenya was a common enemy for Iran and Sudan, because she would export the resources of Africa to the Indian Ocean (Iran) and she would export the oil of Sudan and Uganda, which could be exported by Sudan instead. Tanzania could also be used for this purpose and that's why Al-Shabaab attacks Tanzania too.

The following map is the map of Al-Qaeda, and it includes Kenya and Tanzania, Sudan and Uganda, the oil and natural gas of Algeria, Libya and Nigeria, the Trans-Saharan Pipeline, and the uranium of Niger.

Map of Al-Qaeda



<http://www.globalsecurity.org/military/world/para/al-qaida.htm>

The Franco-Iranian War in CAR

At the following map you can see how important the Central African Republic is for Iran and Sudan, in order for them to enter West Africa.

Map Central African Republic CAR



The Central African Republic was among other things a battle ground between France on one hand, and Iran and Sudan on the other. The Central African Republic is 85% Christian and 15% Muslim, and that is an advantage for France. But Sudan, Iran and Hezbollah had a great geographical advantage due to Sudan's proximity to CAR.

Iran and Sudan supported Michel Djotodia, a Muslim political leader of CAR. With a coup Djotodia managed to become the leader of CAR in 2013. Djotodia had studied in the Soviet Union, he is married in Russia, he is fluent in Russian, and he obviously had the blessings of Moscow too. The

Muslim population of CAR leaves at the northern part of the country, at the borders with Chad and Sudan. Russia had excellent relations with both Iran and Sudan. See Oilprice “Sudan's President Omer al Bashir’s New Best Friend - Russia?”, February 2012.

Djotodia managed to rise to power with the help of mercenaries from Sudan and Chad. For the life of Djotodia and how he rose to power see New York Times “Mystery Shrouds Rise and Aims of Rebel at Helm of Central African Republic”, April 2013.

For Djotodia also see BBC “Profile: Central African Republic's Michel Djotodia”.

Note that the government of Chad was an ally of Qaddafi, but Sudan supported many rebel groups in Chad, in the same way that Qaddafi and Chad supported rebel groups in South Sudan.

There was also the issue of the Chad-Cameroon oil pipeline, which would export Chad’s oil to Cameroon and the Atlantic Ocean, and why not the oil of South Sudan too? In the same way the Chinese could export the oil of South Sudan to the Indian Ocean through Kenya, the French and the Americans could export the oil of South Sudan to the Atlantic Ocean through Cameroon, in order for South Sudan not to be dependent on Sudan for its exports.

Obviously the Arabs of Sudan would prefer to see the oil of South Sudan, Chad and Uganda exiting Africa through the Arab part of Sudan and Port

Sudan instead through Cameroon and Kenya. And obviously for the Libyan dictator Muammar Qaddafi it would be much better for the oil of Sudan, Chad and Ugand to exit Africa from Kenya and the India Ocean, because Libya is mainly exporting to Europe.

Map Chad-Cameroon Oil Pipeline



http://www-tc.pbs.org/frontlineworld/stories/bribe/images/pipeline_map.jpg

And as I said together with Sudan there was Iran, which wanted to attack the Trans-Saharan natural gas pipeline (Nigeria-Niger-Algeria) which was very bad for Iran, but also for Qatar and Russia. It was very bad for Turkey too, because Turkey wanted to send the natural gas of the Middle East and the

Caspian Sea to Europe. That's why you see these strange, or "unholy", alliances in Africa, and the war in the Central African Republic was a byproduct of these power games.

However when Djotodia took the Central African Republic, with the blessings of Sudan, Iran and Russia, the French were not quick to respond, contrary to what they did to Mali, where they send the French army to hunt Al-Qaeda, when the rebellion broke out in 2012. See the Guardian "France: Why intervene in Mali and not Central African Republic?", February 2013.

I guess that Mali, due to its proximity to the uranium fields of Niger was a lot more important than CAR for France.

I must also say that diamonds are the most important export good of the Central African Republic, and diamonds are one of the favorite methods of payment for terrorists. If you buy diamonds from the wholesale market you leave traces, and the secret services will become aware of the transaction. But if you get diamonds from the Central African Republic, or other African countries, that is diamonds that have never been recorded, you can make payments without leaving any traces. And maybe Djotodia was giving plenty of "black" diamonds to Sudan and Iran in order to pay the terrorist groups they supported in Africa.

Osama bin Laden was buying lots of diamonds. See the Guardian "Bin Laden's \$20m African 'blood diamond' deals", October 2002.

If you read the articles I mentioned about Djotodia you will see that Djotodia had professional experience in the diamond industry.

The Franco-Iranian War in Mali

I have already described the Arab Spring of Libya. For a full description see “Iran’s Role in the Arab Spring of Libya”.

<https://iakal.wordpress.com/2016/06/20/irans-role-in-the-arab-spring-of-libya/>

But I would like to write a quick summary. Muammar Qaddafi, the Libyan socialist dictator, had made an agreement with the French President Nicholas Sarkozy, according to which France would construct a nuclear production plant in Libya, and I guess in return Qaddafi would stop supporting the Tuaregs or other insurgents of West Africa against France.

Moreover Qaddafi was an enemy of Sudan and Hezbollah, two very strong Iranian allies, and he was also an enemy of Qatar, a strong Turkish ally. Qaddafi, together with Chad, were supporting rebel groups in South Sudan, and with its alliance with Chad, Qaddafi was a constraint for Iran’s ambition in West Africa.

Moreover in 2003 Qaddafi betrayed the Pakistanis, who were selling to Iran and Libya nuclear technology in the black market, when Qaddafi surrendered his nuclear equipment to the Americans. Since 2002 Qaddafi was cooperating with the Americans, the English and the French against Al-Qaeda. See “The Cooperation Between George Bush and the Libyan Dictator Against Al-Qaeda”.

<https://iakal.wordpress.com/2016/02/12/the-cooperation-between-george-bush-and-the-libyan-dictator-against-al-qaeda/>

Sudan was supporting the Islamists of Cyreneica i.e. the eastern part of Libya, who did not like Qaddafi. Qaddafi was from Tripolitania.

Map Ethnic Groups of Libya



https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/thumb/0/05/Map_of_traditional_provinces_of_Libye-en.svg/2000px-Map_of_traditional_provinces_of_Libye-en.svg.png

All the above problems in the Libyan-Iranian relations weighted more than the traditional alliance between Libya and Iran against the Saudi King, since their traditional alliance against the United States were already broken. That's why Iran was very happy when the special forces of Sudan, Hezbollah and Qatar entered Libya, and that's why the Saudi King, who deeply hated Qaddafi was not happy. The Saudi King knew that in Libya he could not match Iran, Turkey, Sudan, Hezbollah and Qatar.

And that's why Algeria, another country with problems with Islamist rebels started sending mercenaries to Qaddafi in order to keep him in power. Many countries were sending troops to Qaddafi, either because they were his allies, or because they were afraid of the rise of Islamists in the post-Qaddafi Libya. Algeria, Chad, Mali, Niger, Kenya, were among the countries who sent mercenaries to Qaddafi. See the International Business Times "Zimbabwe and Algeria sending troops to support Gaddafi in Libya war?", June 2011.

Algeria and Libya had Al-Qaeda as a common enemy, and the Algerians knew that if the Islamists who were supported by Iran, Turkey, Sudan, Qatar and Hezbollah gained control of Libya and the armaments of Qaddafi, they would sooner or later create problems in Algeria. For Algeria's effort to save Qaddafi see the Huffington Post "The Algerian Connection", September 2011.

After all Algeria was the country that agreed to the Nigeria-Niger-Algeria natural gas pipeline in 2009. As you can read at the following Wall Street Journal article the French Total and the Italian ENI express an interest in the pipeline. See “African Nations Sign Deal for Trans-Saharan Gas Pipeline”, July 2009.

Germany also did not want to see the Islamists taking Algeria too, and the Germans approved a 10 billion dollar sale of weapons to Algeria in 2011. See “Germany okays 10 bln euro defence deal with Algeria”, July 2011.

When the special forces of Sudan and Hezbollah entered Libya there was a race between the French and the Islamists for Libya. There was “a struggle for Libya”. Remember that the French were exposed when they supported their allies, and socialist dictators, of Tunisia and Egypt, who were eventually overturned by the Muslim Brotherhood in 2011.

While there was this race for Libya between the French and the Islamists, the Iranians were shouting that NATO should stay out of Libya, while the Turks were demanding that France surrendered her leadership over the NATO operations. See Financial Times “Turkey attacks France on Libya ‘crusade’, March 2011.

Obviously if the French were leading the operations against Qaddafi they could exchange air coverage for support on the ground from the rebels. Italy did not want to attack Qaddafi, but when Qaddafi said that he would give the

contracts of ENI to Russia and China if they saved him Italy attacked him too.

When Qaddafi fall, Iran, Turkey, Sudan and Qatar got hold of whole storehouses of his weapons, and started passing them to the rebel groups of Africa they supported, or transferring them to Sudan. For a great article see World Tribune “Post-Gadhafi Libya now a jihadist springboard backed by Iran, Qatar, Sudan and Turkey”, March 2015.

Map Libya



You can see on the map that after Qaddafi fall Iran, Sudan, Qatar and Turkey could use Libya and the armaments of Qaddafi that they had managed to get hold of, in order to support rebel groups in West Africa.

The national socialist French politician Marin Le Pen accused Qatar, which is actually a French ally, but which is threatened by the Trans-Saharan

Pipeline, for supporting rebel groups against France. Marin Le Pen also said that Qatar did not want France to intervene in Mali, because Qatar's radical friends in Mali would be in danger. See France24 "Is Qatar fuelling the crisis in north Mali?", January 2013.

I have mentioned in the past the rebellion of the Tuareg warriors in Mali. See "The Rebellion of the Tuareg Warriors in 2012".

<https://iakal.wordpress.com/2016/01/27/the-rebellion-of-the-tuareg-desert-warrior-in-2012/>

Qaddafi traditionally used the Tuaregs as mercenaries against his enemies.

Map Tuareg Regions

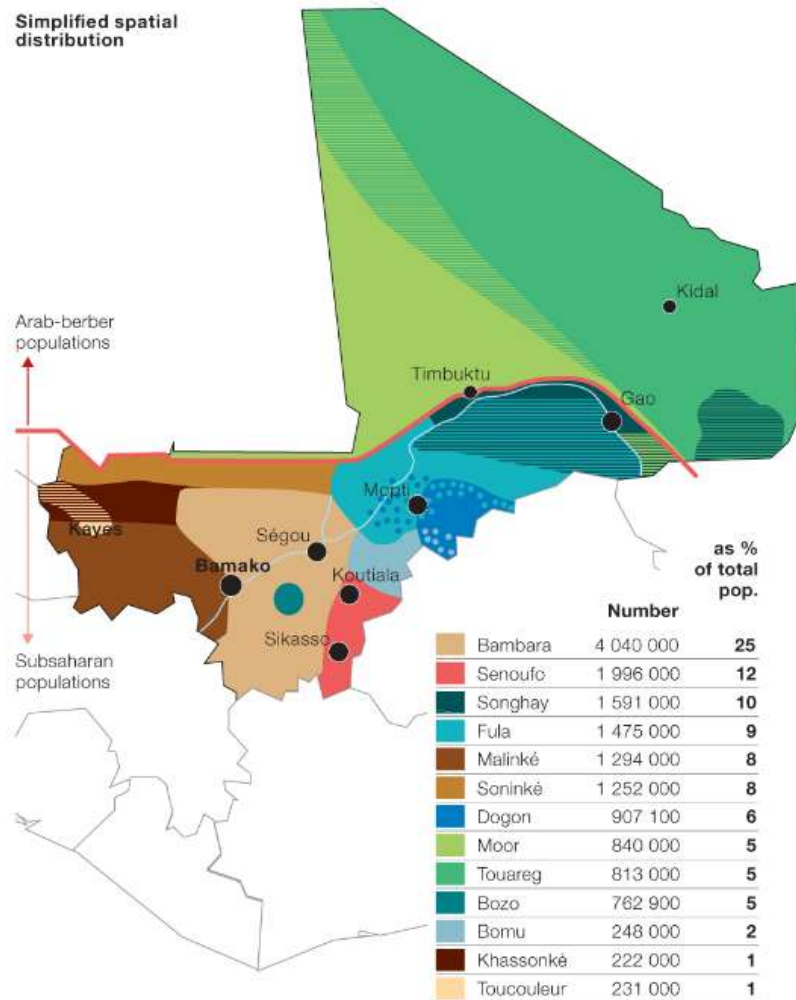


http://i.dailymail.co.uk/i/pix/2015/06/24/08/29E2A55200000578-3131511-Boundaries_The_Tuareg_travel_across_countries_but_it_has_become_a-7_1435129465760.jpg

When Qaddafi fell the Tuaregs he were paying to fight on his side were left with his advanced weaponry, and they aligned with their ex-enemy Al-Qaeda, in order to create an Islamic state in Mali. For the unholy alliance between Al-Qaeda, which was supported by Iran and Sudan, and the Tuaregs, who were supported by Qaddafi in the past, in order to fight the Malian government, who was supported by France, you can read the Economist “An unholy alliance”, June 2012..

At the following map you can see the ethnic groups of Mali. The Tuaregs, who are not the largest ethnic group, live at the northern part of the country i.e. parts of the deserts of Sahara. The largest ethnic groups are the French allies.

Map Ethnic Groups of Mali



[https://www.clingendael.nl/pub/2015/the roots of malis conflict/2 rebellion and fragmentation in northern mali/images/map 4 ethnic groups mali.png](https://www.clingendael.nl/pub/2015/the_roots_of_malis_conflict/2_rebellion_and_fragmentation_in_northern_mali/images/map_4_ethnic_groups_mali.png)

At the following map you can see with pink the areas that were controlled by the Tuaregs and Al-Qaeda after the 2012 rebellion that followed the fall of Qaddafi.

Map The War in Mali



[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Northern_Mali_conflict#/media/File:Northern Mali conflict.svg](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Northern_Mali_conflict#/media/File:Northern_Mali_conflict.svg)

The French army intervened in Mali, and started hunting Al-Qaeda fighters. Among others the French killed in Mali the leader of the Sudanese Al-Qaeda, who went to Mali to fight the French. See the Sudan Tribune “Leader of Al-Qaeda in Sudan killed in Mali”, February 2013.

The French saw in a completely different way the Tuaregs, who were an ex-Qaddafi ally, and Al-Qaeda, who was supported by Iran and Sudan. That’s why the French Foreign Minister said that France could negotiate with the Tuaregs but not with Al-Qaeda. See Reuters “France urges talks with Mali rebels, unity against al Qaeda”, April 2012.

Finally the Tuaregs changed sides, and they started fighting Al-Qaeda. See Wikipedia “Northern Mali conflict: MNLA realigns with the Malian Government”.

The Turkish President Tayip Erdogan said that the French intervention in Mali was a crusade, and a few days ago, during a speech in Niger, he said that the French are colonialists, and Turkey would never act like France. See the American state-owned Voice of America “Turkey Reinforces 'Hands Off' Policy on Mali”, January 2013.

Chad sent troops to fight Al-Qaeda next to the French. See the Christian Science Monitor “In Mali fight, Chad proves a powerful partner for France”, March 2013.

The Franoc-Iranian Rapprochement

After the agreement for Iran's nuclear program the Iranians and the French closed multi-billion dollar deals. The French Total agreed to buy Iranian oil and the Iranians agreed to buy many French Airbuses. Moreover the French state-owned railway company, together with the Italian one, will renovate the Iranian railways. The French state-owned Peugeot will also open a factory in Iran to sell cars to the Iranian people. See Euronews "France and Iran Agree 15 Billion Euros worth of Business Deals", January 2016.

Moreover Iran is seeking 60 billion dollars from the French Total and the Japanese Mitsui, in order to double its petrochemical production i.e. plastic production and other derivatives of oil.

Similar agreements were made between Iran and Italy. See Italy24 "Italian companies sign deals worth €16-17 billion with Iran", January 2016.

As a result the first visit of an Iranian President to France was a reality, and the two countries agreed to jointly fight terrorism. I guess that means Iran will not support rebel groups against France in West Africa. See "Iran and France agree to cooperate to fight terrorism and resolve world crises", January 2016.

But Iran said that to cooperate with France on terrorism France must realize that fighting terrorism is equally important in Syria, and the question is not who the president of Syria will be. Remember that France is an Arab ally

and France wanted a NATO operation to overthrow the Syrian dictator Bashar al Assad who is a very strong Iranian ally. Also remember that France has a military base in the United Arab Emirates, and France sells to the Arabs weapons worth billions of dollars.

We have to wait and see whether France and Iran can cooperate in Syria and West Africa, and how this is going to affect the alliance between France and the Arabs.

France and the Islamic State

Having said so much about the war between France on one hand, and various terrorist groups of Africa on the other, groups that were supported among others by Iran, Sudan and Hezbollah, I have to say that the terrorist attacks in France had nothing to do with Iran and Hezbollah.

These attacks were orchestrated by the Islamic State. The Islamic State are the ex-people of Saddam Hussein in Iraq, who were overturned by the Americans in 2003, in order for the Americans to bring to power the Shia Arab majority and the Kurds of Iraq.

The oil and natural gas of Iraq is located in the Shia and Kurdish parts of the country, and the Sunnis are fighting the Shia and the Kurds, and France is very active in the oil fields and gas fields of Iraq, and France is fighting ISIS.

France was very active in Iraq even at the time of Saddam Hussein. Saddam Hussein was paying bribes to the French politicians in order to stop the Americans and remove the sanctions against Iraq. See the Guardian “France's Saddam deals revealed”, October 2004.

Therefore France is bombing ISIS, and ISIS supports terrorist attacks in France. See for example the Mirror “Paris terror attacks: ISIS bombed by France in new revenge airstrikes after president declares 'we are at war'”, November 2015.

Also see Reuters “France to send heavy weapons to Iraq – Hollande”, July 2016, and CNN “French jets bomb ISIS stronghold of Raqqa, Syria; few may have been killed”, November 2015.

And when I say that Iran or Sudan were supporting terrorist groups against France in Africa it does not mean that they own these groups. The people of these groups are criminals who can be hired by someone else. Now that Iran has improved its relations with France somebody else might support these criminals.

As far as Iran and France are concerned, it remains to be seen how they will manage to sort out their differences in Syria, and whether the French will support the Trans-Saharan pipeline, which is good for France but very bad for Iran, Qatar, Russia and Turkey.

Map Possible Pipelines to Europe



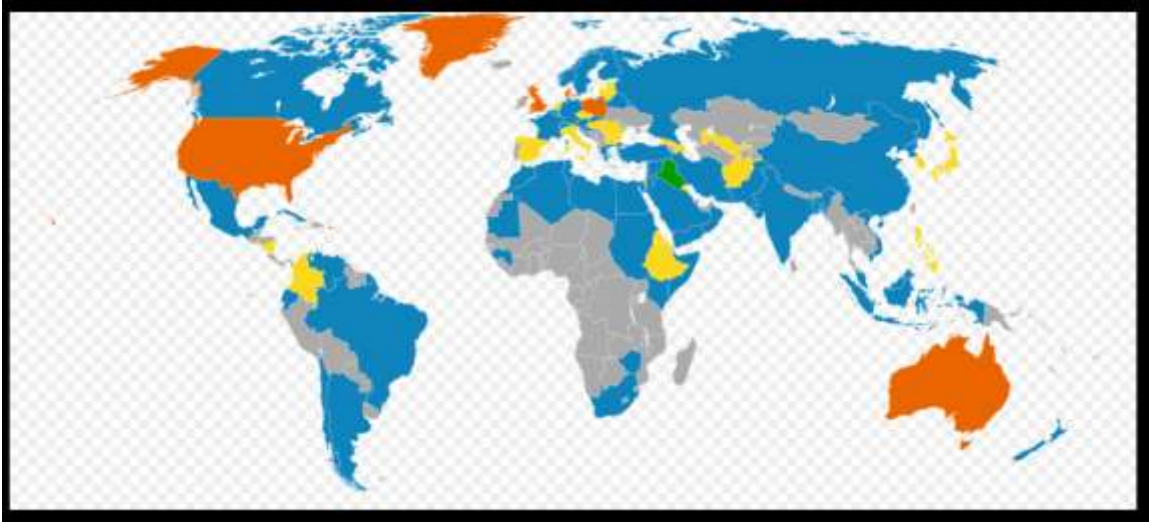
Moreover we must keep in mind that the relations between France and Iran are better, but Turkey is still an enemy of France, and Turkey was the country that was buying the oil of ISIS and was providing ISIS with intelligence.

That does not mean that Turkey supported the ISIS attacks in France. But when you support a terrorist group you cannot completely control how this group is going to use its newly acquired expertise. And remember that the Turks are accusing the Europeans and the Americans for supporting the Syrian Kurds, and sometimes this support ends up in terrorist attacks against Turkey through the PKK. See “Erdogan and ISIS”.

<https://iakal.wordpress.com/2016/03/28/erdogan-and-isis/>

Articles

“Governmental positions on the Iraq War prior to the 2003 invasion of Iraq”



https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Governmental_positions_on_the_Iraq_War_prior_to_the_2003_invasion_of_Iraq

“France and Iran Agree 15 Billion Euros worth of Business Deals”, January 2016

1st, 2nd, 3rd, 4th Paragraphs

France and Iran have signed 15 billion euros worth of business deals as President Rouhani continues his European post-sanctions shopping trip.

The agreements cover aviation, carmaking, energy, shipping, infrastructure, railways, health and agriculture though most have not yet been finalised and French banks remain wary of doing business with Iran. There is also an agreement between French export-credit group Coface and the Iranian central bank.

Speaking at a business forum hosted by France’s main industry body Medef, Carlos Tavares, the chief executive of PSA Peugeot Citroen, detailed the planned modernisation of a Peugeot car plant in Tehran: “We are very positive and very happy to sign this

agreement. We expect that from late 2017, we will be able to introduce three brand new products with new technology, with updated technology to support our Iranian customers and we will make sure that we invest the appropriate capacity up to 200,000 cars a year in our plan with our partner Iran Khodro.”

Iran says it wants to buy over 100 Airbus planes to update its ageing fleet, including a dozen A380 superjumbos. Exactly what stage the Airbus deal was at remained unclear on Thursday, however, amid scepticism over how far and how fast western firms can get into Iran.

6th Paragraph

Total has reportedly signed a memorandum of understanding to purchase up to 200,000 barrels of Iranian crude oil per day as the country moves to ramp up its exports to pre-sanctions levels.

8th Paragraph

French national railway operator SNCF is to provide expertise for the building of high speed rail lines and stations.

<http://www.euronews.com/2016/01/28/france-and-iran-agree-15-billion-euros-worth-of-business-deals/>

“French Intervention in Mali: Causes and Consequences”, February 2013

3rd, 4th Paragraphs

Ansar Dine, which heads these groups in negotiations, withdrew an offer it had presented in Algeria that stipulated its cessation of hostilities against Mali. It also requested the African mediator, President Blaise Compaoré of Burkina Fasso, to postpone talks that had been scheduled for 14 January to discuss the road map proposed by the National Movement for the Liberation of Azawad (MNL) based on the notion of granting autonomy to the region and allowing the application of shari’ah (Islamic law).

Ansar Dine – supported by Al Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb, Jamaat at-Tawhid wal-Jihad fi Gharb Afriqiya (The Movement for Unity and Jihad in West Africa – MOJWA), and al-Mulathamini (The Masked Ones, which split from al-Qaeda under the leadership of Mokhtar Belmokhtar) froze negotiations by sending its troops from Timbuktu towards

the centre of Mali to attack the town of Mopti in an attempt to convince the French and Malians that the Islamist militants had resolved to move towards Bamako, thus forcing the French to make a hasty decision to enter war.

<http://studies.aljazeera.net/en/positionpapers/2013/01/2013120113020737609.html>

“Iran and France agree to cooperate to fight terrorism and resolve world crises”, January 2016

3rd, 4th, 5th, 6th Paragraphs

Rouhani and his French counterpart, François Hollande, agreed to cooperate on the fight against terrorism and to work together to resolve conflicts and crises the world over.

The trip came a matter of weeks after a landmark accord was reached between Tehran and six world powers to curb Iran’s nuclear activity.

Hollande stressed the need to rigourously apply the nuclear accord. Rouhani agreed, but said all sides must meet their commitments.

Syria was among the crises discussed. Rouhani stressed that defeating terrorism is more important than who is running the country.

<http://www.euronews.com/2016/01/28/iran-and-france-agree-to-cooperate-to-fight-terrorism-and-resolve-world-crises/>

“Italian companies sign deals worth €16-17 billion with Iran”, January 2016

<http://www.italy24.ilsole24ore.com/art/markets/2016-01-25/iran-saipem-130739.php?uuid=ACNrQjGC&icmpid=boxhp>

“The Sudanese link: from Seleka in Central Africa Republic to Boko Haram in Nigeria”, May 2014

1st, 2nd, 3rd, 4th, 5th Paragraphs

What is the unseen hand behind the rise of radical Islamic movements from Northern Nigeria to the Central African Republic? It is the government of Sudan. That is the allegation of Yasir Arman, secretary general and spokesman of the Sudan People's Liberation Movement, North (SPLM North), which is fighting the Sudanese government in the Nuba Mountains and the Blue Nile.

Speaking in London, Mr Arman pointed to the African Islamic University in Khartoum as the key institution that has been training radical Islamists. "They have been radicalising people for years," said Mr Arman. The University, established in 1977, was given University status by President Omar Al-Bashir in 1992. The word "Islamic" was dropped from its title, but not from its objectives. Mr Arman says that President Al-Bashir has used the University to mobilise students from across the continent.

Mr Arman suggest that Sudan's aims are supported by a wider radical alliance, supported by Qataris, Yemenis and the Iranians. "The Egyptians, Saudis and the Emirates are very worried," he says.

This circle of Islamists – says Mr Arman – links a wide range of rebels across central and northern Africa. These include Libyan rebels now attempting to seize control of the country and movements in the Central African Republic (CAR). He point to the role of Michel Am-Nondokro Djotodia, the former Seleka rebel who seized power in the CAR. Djotodia, who was president of the CAR from 24 March 2013 – 10 January 2014, certainly has Sudanese links. He served as Consul in Nyala, in Darfur.

Boko Haram

Mr Arman says that Boko Haram is part of this circle. He points to the large number of Nigerians – most of them Fulani – who live in Sudan. "There are as many millions of Nigerians in Sudan – mostly Fulani – who came on the way to the Haj," says Mr Arman. He believes it is only a matter of time before Iranian weapons find their way into the hands of Boko Haram.

<https://africajournalismtheworld.com/tag/michel-djotodia-and-sudan/>

“Turkey Reinforces 'Hands Off' Policy on Mali”, January 2013

1st, 2nd Paragraphs

The Turkish foreign ministry has criticized the ongoing French operation in Mali. The public criticism comes as Turkey is increasingly seeing West Africa as a region of interest economically and diplomatically. Ankara has been increasingly voicing concerns regarding the intervention by French forces against an Islamic insurgency in Mali.

6th, 7th Paragraphs

The Turkish foreign ministry points out the United Nations Security Council resolution on Mali sanctioned only an African led intervention. Ankara's ambivalence over France's military intervention is part of a growing rivalry between Paris and Ankara over West Africa, according to Semih Idiz, a diplomatic columnist for the Turkish daily Taraf. "I think this reflects some of the competition between Turkey and France. Prime Minister Erdogan just a few days before the Mali story broke out was in Niger, blasting at the former colonial power and trying to say that Turkey will not be like that," said Idiz. "There is a scramble for Africa and Turkey is very much part of this. It has opened quite a large number of embassies across Africa. So its clear that Turkey does see itself as a potent power."

13th Paragraph

Analysts say Ankara's ambivalence over France's intervention is likely to raise eyebrows among its western allies, all of who are strongly supporting it. But in Turkey's pro government media the question is increasingly being posed why those allies can back an intervention in Mali against an Islamic insurgency, but fail to do so in Syria.

<http://www.voanews.com/content/turkey-reinforces-hands-off-policy-in-mali/1591055.html>

“Mali conflict: UN backs France's military intervention”, January 2013

<http://www.bbc.com/news/world-africa-21021132>

“Mali: A Diplomatic Opportunity for Israel”, February 2013

However, with the electoral victory of Islamists in Egypt and Tunisia, and with the nearly takeover of Mali by al-Qaeda, more and more African countries are becoming fearful of Iran and of its Islamist allies. Ethiopia, forced to confront Islamist militias backed by nearby rebels in Somalia, has become one of Israel's closest allies in Africa, as well as a major buyer of Israeli defense equipment. Kenya, which also faces Islamist terrorism from neighboring Somalia, is interested in strengthening its military ties with Israel. Even Nigeria reportedly spent about \$500 million on Israeli military equipment in the past few years.

3rd Page

Mali's anger at Arab countries, especially Egypt, is part of a wider African fear of Islamic influence and of Iranian meddling on the continent. Even though France's military intervention in Mali is only meant to serve French interests, it opens a window of opportunity which Israel should seize to improve its relations with Africa and with France itself. French military strikes against Mali's Islamists are in stark contrast with France's backing of the Muslim rebels in Côte d'Ivoire during that country's civil war in 2002-2011. There, President Laurent Gbagbo, a Christian, started challenging France's strong economic grip over his country. His defiant policy created a community of interests between France and Côte d'Ivoire's Muslim rebels led by Alassane Ouattara. Hence did France support the Muslim rebels from Côte d'Ivoire's northern region against Gbagbo and the Christian south. The embattled Ivorian president, a close friend of Israel, sought and obtained Israel's logistical help. France and Israel ended up confronting each other by proxy in Côte d'Ivoire. In April 2011, then-French President Nicolas Sarkozy ordered a French military commando to oust Gbagbo from his bunker, allowing Ouattara to take the presidency.

While France and Israel collided in Côte d'Ivoire, the policy of President François Hollande in Mali creates a new community of interests, since France is now fighting forces that are hostile to Israel. Thus, the Malian crisis constitutes an opportunity for Israel to improve its relations with France and with former French colonies in Africa. This opportunity should be seized by Israel's next foreign minister.

<http://navon.com/wp-content/uploads/2015/12/BESAFeb2013.pdf>

“An unholy alliance”, June 2012

2nd, 3rd, 4th, 5th, 6th, 7th Paragraphs

Machinegun bursts on May 26th sent residents scurrying for cover. But the shooting turned out to be celebratory. The National Movement for the Liberation of Azawad, a secular group known by its French initials, MNLA, had cut a deal with Islamic fundamentalists from a locally dominant lot called Ansar Eddine. The pair agreed to join forces and set up a transitional government. Peace would follow.

Yet residents still have reason to be scared. Ansar Eddine has become almost indistinguishable from al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM). This is the closest to government that al-Qaeda, under any guise, has ever come. Though the nomadic Tuareg and other ethnic groups of northern Mali number only 1.3m people, the area they now control is as big as France.

The new alliance seems to be founded on two pillars. Ansar Eddine, which had previously argued only for autonomy, has evidently dropped its objections to full independence. And the MNLA has agreed to an Islamic state. Many MNLA supporters are aghast at what they see as a betrayal of a core principle of the decades-old Tuareg rebellion: a secular state offering freedom of religion and lifestyle.

The deal may yet fall apart. Tuareg officials say they want a model “similar to Mauritania or even Egypt”, where state and religion have rarely mixed. Ansar Eddine insists on a strict interpretation of sharia law, with amputations and beheadings for serious crimes. The two sides also argue over the government's make-up. Such is the mistrust that the MNLA leaders refused to let Ansar Eddine's leader, a notoriously tricky strongman called Iyad ag Ghali, sign an earlier accord.

In the end a tribal chief close to him had to put his name to it. The MNLA chose to deal with Ansar Eddine because the fundamentalists have money and guns, whereas the MNLA can barely afford to pay salaries. Flush with cash from al-Qaeda, Mr ag Ghali has started to attract deserters from the impecunious Tuareg.

The government in Bamako, Mali's capital, is in disarray after a coup by disaffected soldiers in March and is struggling to control even the southern half of the country, having abandoned the north to the assorted rebels. Meanwhile the MNLA naively thought that, as long as it distanced itself from AQIM, the West would support it. Instead it has

been outmanoeuvred by Ansar Eddine. The West, with France to the fore, is hardly likely to tolerate the existence of an al-Qaeda-run state in a large swathe of west Africa.

<http://www.economist.com/node/21556307>

“Sudan orders Iranian diplomats to leave”, September 2014

Sudan has ordered Iran to close its cultural centres and given their managers 72 hours to leave the country, officials have said, as a diplomatic row threatens normally close relations.

"Sudanese authorities summoned the Iranian charge d'affaires in Khartoum and informed him of the decision to close the three cultural centres and to give the diplomats who ran them 72 hours to leave the country," the AFP news agency quoting an unnamed official said on Tuesday.

Sudanese media speculated that the expulsions were linked to government concerns that Iranian officials were promoting their Shia brand of Islam in the largely Sunni country, according to the Reuters news agency.

The Iranian cultural centre and its branches had exceeded their mandates and "become a threat to intellectual and social security," said a foreign ministry statement.

Regional rivalries

Khartoum has maintained generally close relations with Tehran, whose ships have made a number of port calls in Port Sudan this year.

Iran is also reportedly a significant arms supplier to Sudan and the two governments are both backers of Hamas, although Sudan has denied Israeli accusations that it has acted as a conduit for Iranian arms deliveries to the Palestinian group.

Sudan turned down an Iranian offer to set up air defences on its Red Sea coast after a 2012 air strike Khartoum blamed on Israel, fearing it would upset Tehran's regional rival, the Sunni superpower Saudi Arabia, Sudan's foreign minister said in May.

A Sudanese analyst told AFP that the move by Khartoum might be in response to pressure from Riyadh, which put enormous strain on the Sudanese economy earlier this year by denying it access to the Saudi banking system.

<http://www.aljazeera.com/news/africa/2014/09/sudan-orders-iranian-diplomats-leave-201492141938226714.html>

“Leader of Al-Qaeda in Sudan killed in Mali”, February 2013

The leader of Sudan’s Al-Qaeda in the Land of the Two Niles group, Abu Hazim, was killed in an airstrike carried out recently by French warplanes on the positions of jihadists in northern Mali.

Hazim, whose real name is Eman Mahmoud, was born in the northern Sudan town of Dongola in 1964. He was married to two women, one of whom is from India.

The SITE Intelligence Group, a website that specialises in tracking the online activity of terrorist organisations, was the first to reveal the news, saying it obtained a statement announcing his death on Al-Qaeda-linked internet forums.

The Long War Journal, another website dealing with terror groups, cited a US intelligence official saying that Hazim had moved to Mali to fight alongside Al-Qaeda jihadists at the beginning of the French-led operation launched last January to stop their advance towards the Malian capital.

The Sudanese jihadist took part in operations in the Philippines and Chechnya, as well as joining the fight against the Soviet army in Afghanistan. He also trained militants who participated in the “jihad” in Iraq and Somalia, said the statement announcing his death. Khartoum-based newspaper Al-Sahafa said it obtained confirmation of his death from “informed sources”. The daily further added that the latter denied the existence of Al-Qaeda in Sudan, saying only there are small circles of radical youth in the country.

The Sudanese source told Al-Sahafa they conducted a dialogue with these youth after their return from Somalia and most of them renounced violence and extremist ideology.

Last January, the Sudanese Al-Qaeda group announced the formation of its student wing in the University of Khartoum, in a sign of growing extremist influence in the country.

The Agence France-Presse correspondent in the Malian capital, Bamako, last October reported that Islamist militants, including Sudanese, had been pouring into northern Mali to fight alongside the Malian jihadists.

A resident from Timbuktu, which at the time had been in the hands of radical fighters, said more than 150 Sudanese had arrived in the historic region.

<http://www.sudantribune.com/spip.php?article45620>

“Northern Mali conflict”

1st, 2nd, 3rd, 4th, 5th Paragraphs

The Northern Mali Conflict, Mali Civil War, or Mali War refers to armed conflicts that started from January 2012 between the northern and southern parts of Mali in Africa. On 16 January 2012, several insurgent groups began fighting a campaign against the Malian government for independence or greater autonomy for northern Mali, an area known as Azawad. The National Movement for the Liberation of Azawad (MNLA), an organization fighting to make Azawad an independent homeland for the Tuareg people, had taken control of the region by April 2012.

On 22 March 2012, President Amadou Toumani Touré was ousted in a coup d'état over his handling of the crisis, a month before a presidential election was to have taken place.[112] Mutinous soldiers, calling themselves the National Committee for the Restoration of Democracy and State (CNRDR), took control and suspended the constitution of Mali. [113] As a consequence of the instability following the coup, Mali's three largest northern cities—Kidal, Gao and Timbuktu—were overrun by the rebels [114] on three consecutive days. [115] On 5 April 2012, after the capture of Douentza, the MNLA said that it had accomplished its goals and called off its offensive. The following day, it proclaimed Azawad's independence from Mali. [11

The MNLA were initially backed by the Islamist group Ansar Dine. After the Malian military was driven from Azawad, Ansar Dine and a number of smaller Islamist groups began imposing strict Sharia law. The MNLA and Islamists struggled to reconcile their conflicting visions for an intended new state. [117] Afterwards, the MNLA began fighting against Ansar Dine and other Islamist groups, including Movement for Oneness and Jihad in West Africa (MOJWA/MUJAO), a splinter group of Al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb. By 17 July 2012, the MNLA had lost control of most of northern Mali's cities to the Islamists. [118]

The government of Mali asked for foreign military help to re-take the north. On 11 January 2013, the French military began operations against the Islamists.[83] Forces from other African Union states were deployed shortly after. By 8 February, the Islamist-held territory had been re-taken by the Malian military, with help from the international coalition. Tuareg separatists have continued to fight the Islamists as well, although the MNLA has also been accused of carrying out attacks against the Malian military. [119] A peace deal between the government and Tuareg rebels was signed on 18 June 2013[61] but on 26 September 2013 the rebels pulled out of the peace agreement and claimed that the government had not respected its commitments to the truce.[120] Fighting is still ongoing even though French forces are scheduled for withdrawal.[121] A ceasefire agreement was signed on February 19, 2015 in Algiers, Algeria but sporadic terrorist attacks still occur.[122]

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Northern_Mali_conflict

“Northern Mali conflict: MNLA realigns with the Malian Government”

1st, 2nd Paragraphs

By December, the now displaced MNLA began peace talks with the Malian government and relinquished its previous goal of Azawadi independence in favor of a request for self-rule within Mali. After the French entry in January 2013, the MNLA spokesman in Paris, Moussa Ag Assarid (who had criticized the splinter group FPA months earlier for giving up on independence[192]) declared that the MNLA was "ready to help" their former opponents in the fight against the Islamists.[193] At this time, the MNLA controlled no big localities and was only strong in rural and desert areas near the borders with Mauritania, Algeria and Niger, having been driven off from most of its claimed territory by Islamist groups.[194]

After the declaration, the MNLA re-engaged the Islamist forces, and, with the help of one defecting Islamist faction, retook the cities of Tessalit and Kidal (the site of earlier pro-MNLA protests against the Islamists[173]) in late January.[195][196]

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Northern_Mali_conflict#MNLA_realigns_with_the_Malian_Government

“Mali crisis: Key players”, March 2013

5th Paragraph

The five main Islamists groups in Mali are Ansar Dine, Movement for Unity and Jihad in West Africa (Mujao), al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM), the Signed-in-Blood Battalion and the Islamic Movement for Azawad (IMA).

<http://www.bbc.com/news/world-africa-17582909>

“In Mali fight, Chad proves a powerful partner for France”, March 2013

1st, 2nd Paragraphs

Weeks after the French launched their military intervention in Mali, the majority of Islamist rebels who were once in control of northern Mali's major cities have retreated to hideouts near the Algerian border.

But forces from Chad have followed them, spearheading an ambitious push into northern Mali's Ifoghas mountains, a terrain often compared to Afghanistan's Tora Bora. And despite suffering dozens of casualties during weeks of heavy combat, Chadian forces have succeeded in killing and capturing more than 100 jihadist militants and uprooting a network of weapons caches, fuel depots, and food stuffs hidden among the countless caves and grottoes that dot the landscape.

7th Paragraph

The Chadians have proved to be a useful partner not only because of their decades of experience fighting in a similar climate and terrain, but because they have spent much of the past decade fighting a panoply of rebel groups in their own country, many of which preferred to operate as light and mobile units, using tactics similar to those currently employed by the jihadis in Mali.

<http://www.csmonitor.com/World/Africa/2013/0307/In-Mali-fight-Chad-proves-a-powerful-partner-for-France>

“France to end Central African Republic military mission in 2016”, March 2016

1st Paragraph

France will end its military intervention in the Central African Republic this year as it has achieved its objectives of restoring security to the country after three years of communal violence, the French defence minister said Wednesday.

3rd, 4th Paragraphs

France launched the mission in December 2013 as thousands were dying in ethnic violence between Christians and Muslims.

At the time, "the country was in the throes of civil war, torn by religious tensions, plagued by chaos, on the brink of pre-genocidal scenarios," Le Drian said. "In the space of two years, the Sangaris force restored calm and prevented the unacceptable.

6th Paragraph

The CAR plunged into chaos in March 2013 when mostly Muslim Seleka rebels ousted President Francois Bozize, a Christian, and installed their leader Michel Djotodia in power for 10 months.

<http://www.france24.com/en/20160330-france-end-military-operations-central-african-republic>

“Sudan: Leader of Al-Qaeda in Sudan Killed in Mali”, February 2013

The leader of Al-Qaeda in the Land of the Two Niles, Sudan, Abu Hazim was killed in an airstrike carried out recently by French warplanes on the positions jihadists in northern Mali.

Abu Hazim, whose real name is Eman Mahmoud, was born in the northern Sudan town of Dongola in 1964. He was married with two women one of them from India.

<http://allafrica.com/stories/201302250082.html>

“Is Qatar fuelling the crisis in north Mali?”, January 2013

1st, 2nd, 3rd, 4th, 5th Paragraph

Oil-rich gulf state Qatar has a vested interest in the outcome of the north Mali crisis, according to various reports that have been picked up by French MPs, amid suspicion that Doha may be siding with the rebels to extend its regional influence.

Since Islamist groups exploited a military coup in the Malian capital of Bamako in early 2012 to take control of the entire north of the country, accusations of Qatari involvement in a crisis that has seen France deploy troops have been growing.

Last week two French politicians explicitly accused Qatar of giving material support to separatists and Islamists in north Mali, adding fuel to speculation that the Emirate is playing a behind-the-scenes role in spreading Islamic fundamentalism in Africa.

French far-right leader Marine Le Pen and Communist Party Senator Michelle Demessine both said that that Qatar had questions to answer.

"If Qatar is objecting to France's engagement in Mali it's because intervention risks destroying Doha's most fundamentalist allies," Le Pen said in a statement on her party website, in response to a call by Qatari Prime Minister Sheikh Hamad bin Jassim al-Thani for dialogue with the Islamists.

<http://www.france24.com/en/20130121-qatar-mali-france-ansar-dine-mnla-al-qaeda-sunni-islam-doha>

"France urges talks with Mali rebels, unity against al Qaeda", April 2012

French Foreign Minister Alain Juppe said on Thursday there could only be a resolution to the Tuareg-led rebellion in the north of Mali through a political dialogue and urged regional cooperation to fight al Qaeda's expansion in the area.

For long one of the most stable democracies in West Africa, Mali has plunged into turmoil since a widely condemned coup on March 22 that emboldened Tuareg rebels to seize half the country in their quest for a northern homeland.

"There will not be a military solution with the Tuaregs. There needs to be a political solution," Juppe said, adding that countries in the region had to begin talks to accomplish this.

Mali's MNLA separatist rebels said they had ended their fight to create an "Azawad" state on the edge of the Sahara on Thursday after achieving their goal, according the group's website.

The rebels, battling alongside Islamist militants who want to impose sharia, or Islamic law, swept through northern Mali last week, pushing government forces from Kidal, Gao and Timbuktu, the three northern regions of Mali that the MNLA says will form the new state.

Juppe said Paris was in contact with the various players in Mali, including the MNLA, which he said was a credible interlocutor. He said there was clear distinction between that group which was seeking independence and the Ansar Dine Islamists, who had been "infiltrated" by al Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb.

"They have another objective which is to establish an Islamist regime in Mali and the Sahel as a whole," Juppe said. "I don't see how we could have dialogue with AQIM whose objective is to kill our citizens."

<http://www.reuters.com/article/us-france-tuareg-idUSBRE8340JT20120405>

“UAE agrees to French base by 2009”, January 2008

1st , 2nd , 3rd Paragraphs

France and the United Arab Emirates signed deals during a visit by French President Nicolas Sarkozy on Tuesday for Paris to set up a military base in the UAE and help it develop civilian nuclear energy.

A defense agreement inked during the visit to Abu Dhabi calls for 400 to 500 French army, navy and air force personnel to be stationed at the base, said vice admiral Jacques Mazars, who negotiated the deal for France.

"The base will be permanent. It will be the first such French base in the Gulf and it will face the Strait of Hormuz," the strategic waterway through which much of the world's oil supplies pass, a French presidential source said.

<http://www.alarabiya.net/articles/2008/01/16/44277.html>

“Ankara's Failure: How Turkey Lost the Arab Spring”, January 2016

1st Paragraph

When anti-government protests spread from Tunisia to Egypt, Libya, and Syria five years ago, optimists declared that the Middle East was on the precipice of a dramatic democratic transformation. Among the most optimistic were the leaders of Turkey, who saw the upheaval as an opportunity to realize their neo-Ottoman dream of positioning Turkey, a Muslim democracy with close ties to both the West and Arab nations, as a regional leader. Five years later, Arab Spring optimism has collapsed, and with it, Turkish ambitions. Libya and Syria are caught in civil wars, Egypt grows increasingly authoritarian, and Tunisia—arguably the only success story among them—is a magnet for the Islamic State (ISIS). Turkey, meanwhile, has experienced its own rapid reversal of fortune. Rather than projecting influence, Ankara is more isolated than ever.

3rd Paragraph

The Arab Spring, as they saw it, provided a golden opportunity to realize this dream. As early as September 2011, Erdogan toured Libya and Egypt, unabashedly positioning his AKP government as the model for all of the Arab world's transitioning countries, and himself as the leader of that movement. Erdogan called for democracy and stressed the compatibility of Islam and secular governance. With optimism surging as dictator after dictator fell, Erdogan became a rockstar of sorts for those seeking a soft landing for the Arab Spring.

5th, 6th, 7th Paragraph

Erdogan's strategy was not as advertised. Far from championing pluralism and protection of civil liberties in the region, Erdogan opted to champion the chauvinistic style of political Islam primarily associated with the Muslim Brotherhood. With its own roots associated with the movement, it was a natural evolution for the AKP. Indeed, Erdogan had already built closer ties with many of the regional Muslim Brotherhood movements over the years, perhaps best exemplified by his close and personal relationship the leadership of the Palestinian terrorist group Hamas, itself a splinter of the Brotherhood. Ankara also teamed up with Qatar, a longtime sponsor of

Brotherhood movements region-wide that is viewed by many of its Gulf Arab neighbors as dangerously provocative in this regard.

The AKP's support for the Brotherhood was clear in Tunisia and Libya, but was arguably most evident in Egypt. Erdogan enjoyed widespread popularity among the Egyptian Ikwan soon after the revolution, not least for his firm support for Palestinians and his outward hostility toward Israel. With the Brotherhood set to inherit the mantle of power in Egypt, Ankara quickly committed to helping strengthen Egypt's economy through investment, aid, and trade. When the Brotherhood-affiliated Mohamed Morsi did become president, Davutoglu solidified Turkey's economic support, pledging nearly \$2 billion in aid to the new government in Cairo in September 2012. A month later, Morsi had already become an honorary guest at the AKP's annual convention in Ankara. Erdogan met Morsi several times throughout his one-year stint in office, advising the Brotherhood leader on a wide range of issues from governance and economics.

Ankara's assistance to the Muslim Brotherhood in Syria was more covert than in Egypt, but no less significant. The Baathist Syrian regime had banned the Muslim Brotherhood's activities in the 1960s and exiled the group in 1982. Even before the uprising against President Bashar al Assad erupted in 2011, the AKP pushed for a Damascus–Brotherhood reconciliation. But its real support to the organization came after the revolution began. Although the Brotherhood was largely irrelevant to the Syrian revolution in its early stages, Ankara propelled the group to the top echelons of nearly all the opposition groups that organized in Turkey, including the Free Syrian Army.

<https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/turkey/2016-01-25/ankaras-failure>

“France: Why intervene in Mali and not Central African Republic?”,
February 2013

1st, 2nd, 3rd Paragraphs

When France received requests from two of its former African colonies to intervene in their domestic conflicts these past couple of months, its replies could not have been more different.

Mali's calls were answered with a swift and affirmative response, and France found itself intervening in Africa once again, having been involved in conflicts in Libya and the Ivory Coast in 2011. France sent 2,500 troops who, together with the Malian army, have so far retaken several strategically important towns and are continuing to sweep north.

By contrast, when President François Bozizé of the Central African Republic (CAR)petitioned the country's former colonial ruler for assistance in fighting rebels, his calls were firmly rejected despite the fact the insurgency was gaining significant ground and looked like it could threaten the capital Bangui before too long. This seemed to be at odds with typical French post-colonial policy, especially given that the French have three military bases in the region.

<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2013/feb/05/france-centralafrican-republic-mali-intervention>

“Gaddafi's influence in Mali's coup”, March 2012

2nd Paragraph

The trouble began when hundreds of Malian combatants who had fought to defend the late Libyan leader, Muammar Gaddafi, fled back home with weapons at the end of last year and formed the most powerful Tuareg-led rebel group the region has known - the Azawad National Liberation Movement (MNL).

<http://www.bbc.com/news/world-africa-17481114>

“Qaddafi's Weapons, Taken by Old Allies, Reinvigorate an Insurgent Army in Mali”, February 2012

2nd, 3rd Paragraphs

Hundreds of Tuareg rebels, heavily armed courtesy of Colonel Qaddafi's extensive arsenal, have stormed towns in Mali's northern desert in recent weeks, in one of the most significant regional shock waves to emanate directly from the colonel's fall.

After fighting for Colonel Qaddafi as he struggled to stay in power, the Tuaregs helped themselves to a considerable quantity of sophisticated weaponry before returning

to Mali. When they got here, they reinvigorated a longstanding rebellion and blossomed into a major challenge for this impoverished desert nation, an important American ally against the regional Al Qaeda franchise.

19th, 20th Paragraphs

In some ways, the aggressive new Tuareg campaign represents the kind of support the rebels had long sought from Colonel Qaddafi, who for years alternately aided and betrayed the desert warriors, according to a recent study by Mr. Boilley. After the great regional droughts of the 1970s and 1980s, young Tuaregs migrated north to the colonel's military training camps, to later fight for him in places like Chad, while at the same time destabilizing the governments in Niger and Mali.

<http://www.nytimes.com/2012/02/06/world/africa/tuaregs-use-qaddafis-arms-for-rebellion-in-mali.html?>

“Nuclear Power in France”, November 2015

65th Paragraph

France uses some 12,400 tonnes of uranium oxide concentrate (10,500 tonnes of U) per year for its electricity generation. Much of this comes from Areva in Canada (4500 tU/yr) and Niger (3200 tU/yr) together with other imports, principally from Australia, Kazakhstan and Russia, mostly under long-term contracts. Areva perceives the front end of the French fuel cycle as strategic, and invests accordingly.

<http://www.world-nuclear.org/info/country-profiles/countries-a-f/france/>

“Sudan: 'Al Bashir Copying and Pasting Darfur Genocide Into Blue Nile' - Yasir Arman”, June 2016

<http://allafrica.com/stories/201606020963.html>

“Chad to double oil output by 2016, develop minerals –minister”, October 2014

1st Paragraph

** Production at 130,000 bpd by end-2014, 260,000 bpd by 2016*

** Firms assessing mineral deposits including gold, nickel*

** Economic growth between 11 pct-13 pct in 2014*

** Chad sees ongoing security costs amid regional instability*

<http://www.reuters.com/article/chad-economy-idUSL6N0S21K620141007>

“Central African Republic (CAR): Violence linked to Sudan and Iran”

<http://elizabethkendal.blogspot.gr/2013/11/central-african-republic-car-violence.html>

“Nigeria’s Khomeini, Spreading Iran’s Revolution to Africa”, December 2015

<http://www.thedailybeast.com/articles/2015/12/23/nigeria-s-khomeini-spreading-iran-s-revolution-to-africa.html>

IRANIAN SUPPORT FOR TERRORISM

<https://www.clarionproject.org/sites/default/files/Iranian-Support-For-Terrorism.pdf>

Al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM)

<http://www.counterextremism.com/threat/al-qaeda-islamic-maghreb-aqim>

“Chad’s relations with Libya, Sudan, France and the US”, April 2011

<http://www.peacebuilding.no/layout/set/print/Regions/Africa/Publications/Chad-s-relations-with-Libya-Sudan-France-and-the-US>

After the Arab Spring: Algeria's standing in a new world

http://www.thecommentator.com/article/3030/after_the_arab_spring_algeria_s_standing_in_a_new_world

“Al Qaeda in North Africa”

[http://globalsecuritystudies.com/Bresslin%20AQ%20North%20Africa%20\(a%20g%20edits\).pdf](http://globalsecuritystudies.com/Bresslin%20AQ%20North%20Africa%20(a%20g%20edits).pdf)

“Chad: Gaddafi's Best Ally”, July 2011

<http://www.gatestoneinstitute.org/2237/chad-gaddafi-ally>

“Libya, Chad and Sudan – An Ambiguous Triangle?”

http://www.zms.ruhr-uni-bochum.de/mittelmeerstudien/mam/downloads/zms_-_wps_-_5.pdf

“France Prepares for War in the Central African Republic”, October 2015

<https://www.thetrumpet.com/article/11011.19>

“Nigeria's Boko Haram pledges allegiance to Islamic State”, March 2015

5th Paragraph

In the past Boko Haram is thought to have had links with al-Qaeda.

<http://www.bbc.com/news/world-africa-31784538>

“Bin Laden's \$20m African 'blood diamond' deals”, October 2002

1st, 2nd, 3rd Paragraphs

The terrorist network led by Osama bin Laden struck deals in 'blood diamonds' worth over \$20 million in the months before the attacks of 11 September 2001.

Ahead of London's \$500-per-ticket, diamond-trade gala dinner next month, when Nelson Mandela is to congratulate the trade on its efforts to eradicate smuggling, The Observer can reveal the true size of the cash stockpile al-Qaeda has made from the stones mined illegally by Revolutionary United Front rebels in Sierra Leone.

'Given that the attacks on America cost only about \$500,000, it is terrifying that al-Qaeda managed to convert \$20m of its cash into diamonds,' said Alex Yearsley of Global Witness, which campaigns against the 'blood diamonds' trade.

'The ease with which terrorist organisations can use diamonds as a source of funding and money laundering is frightening; they can easily transport them over borders without detection and convert them back into banknotes whenever they need the money.'

<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2002/oct/20/alqaida.terrorism>

“The Long History of French Military Intervention in the Middle East and Africa”, November 2015

<https://mises.org/blog/long-history-french-military-intervention-middle-east-and-africa>

“Kenya woos S. Sudan after oil pipeline deal with Uganda collapses”, May 2016

1st, 2nd Paragraphs

Kenya is reviving its deal with South Sudan in which the latter will export oil through Lamu Port. This is aimed at increasing use of the Lokichar-Lamu crude oil pipeline.

The move comes after the collapse of the Uganda deal. However, experts warn that Kenya could find itself in a difficult situation again saying Total, which killed the Uganda deal, is the main holder of the majority of oil blocks in South Sudan.

<http://www.nation.co.ke/lifestyle/smartcompany/Kenya-woos-S-Sudan-after-oil-pipeline-deal-with-Uganda/-/1226/3186988/-/150b13z/-/index.html>

“South Sudan to split Total oil block”, September 2012

1st, 2nd, 3rd Paragraphs

South Sudan will split a massive oil block largely held by Total into three parts, giving one to the French company and the others to two firms, officials said, in the biggest shake-up of the nation's concessions since it seceded from Sudan.

One oil industry source identified the other two operators as U.S. major Exxon Mobil and Kuwait's Kufpec, but the government did not confirm the names.

Total, Exxon Mobil and Kuwait Petroleum Corp, the state-owned parent firm of Kufpec, all declined to comment on the division of the mostly unexplored block, known as Block B.

6th Paragraph

French firm Total is behind Uganda's involvement with Tanzania in the crude oil pipeline. The firm owns oil blocks in Congo, Uganda and South Sudan, and would be interested in having all its resources together transported through the Port of Tanga.

<http://www.reuters.com/article/us-southsudan-total-idUSBRE88C13V20120913>

“Chad : Ethnic Groups”

Chad has more than 200 distinct ethnic groups,[57] which create diverse social structures. The colonial administration and independent governments have attempted to impose a national society, but for most Chadians the local or regional society remains the most important influence outside the immediate family. Nevertheless, Chad's peoples may be classified according to the geographical region in which they live.[7][36]

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Chad#Ethnic_groups

“Iran and Hamas back Sudan's Bashir”, March 2009

<http://www.aljazeera.com/news/africa/2009/03/200937132946576390.html>

“Egypt's Brotherhood backs Hizbullah in spat with Cairo”, April 2009

1st Paragraph

The Muslim Brotherhood, Egypt's largest opposition group, has pledged its support for Hizbullah as a much publicized spat between the Lebanese group and the Cairo government deepened this week. In a statement released late on Wednesday, the Brotherhood said that Hizbullah's admission of using Egypt as a base to facilitate weapons shipments to Hamas in the Gaza Strip did not constitute a threat to national security.

4th Paragraph

Authorities in Cairo arrested 49 men accused of working on behalf of Hizbullah to plot attacks against Egyptian institutions and Israeli tourists in the Sinai region of Egypt.

<http://www.dailystar.com.lb/News/Lebanon-News/2009/Apr-24/52989-egypts-brotherhood-backs-hizbullah-in-spat-with-cairo.ashx>

“Iranian president does big business in Europe”, January 2016

1st , 2nd , 3rd , 4th , 5th , 6th Paragraphs

The first visit by an Iranian leader to Europe in more than a decade has begun with a flurry of business deals.

Hassan Rouhani landed in Italy on Monday and within hours was striking agreements worth billions of dollars to modernize Iran's infrastructure.

Saipem (SAPMY) was one of the first companies out of the gate, signing a Memorandum of Understanding with the Parsian Oil & Gas Development Company.

Saipem said the agreement covered "potential cooperation in revamping and upgrading the Pars Shiraz and Tabriz [oil] refineries."

Danieli (DNIYY) said it signed agreements worth 5.7 billion euros (\$6 billion) to supply heavy machinery and equipment to Iran.

These deals are among the 14 contracts, MOUs and cooperation agreements signed in Rome on Monday, according to Iran's state news agency IRNA.

Further deals worth more than \$18 billion were expected on Tuesday, IRNA reported.

13th , 14th Paragraphs

Similar deals are expected to be unveiled in Paris on Thursday when Rouhani meets with French President Francois Hollande and business leaders.

Related: Iran wants to buy 500 planes and resume flights to U.S.

A deal for Iran to buy more than 100 aircraft from Airbus (EADSF) is widely expected to be signed in Paris.

<http://money.cnn.com/2016/01/26/news/companies/iran-europe-deals-italy-france/>

“Turkey attacks France on Libya ‘crusade’, March 2011

1st, 2nd, 3rd Paragraphs

The Turkish government on Thursday lashed out at France over its approach to military intervention in Libya and its refusal to confer sole command of operations to Nato.

Ahmet Davutoglu, foreign minister, also said it would be “impossible for us to share responsibility in an operation some authorities have described as a crusade” – a reference to the gaffe made earlier this week by Claude Guéant, French interior minister.

Recep Tayyip Erdogan, prime minister, cast doubt on the motives for the French-led intervention, telling a conference: “I advise our western friends, when they look at this region, to see the hungry children, the suffering mothers, the poverty... I wish they would not only see oil, gold mines or underground wealth.”

5th, 6th, 7th Paragraphs

Turkey’s insistence that Nato should have sole control of all military operations in Libya reflects the deep distrust and antipathy felt in Ankara towards Nicolas Sarkozy, the French president.

Mr Sarkozy, who has long flaunted his opposition to Turkey’s efforts to join the EU, was openly slighted by his hosts when he visited Ankara last month and was pilloried in the press, with photographs staged to highlight his short stature.

Turkish ministers and officials were infuriated at being excluded from Saturday’s summit in Paris, a snub that hardened their doubts about the western-led operation.

<http://www.ft.com/cms/s/0/fe514f9c-5631-11e0-8de9-00144feab49a.html#axzz4E1Y2556p>

“Rebellion and fragmentation in northern Mali”

https://www.clingendael.nl/pub/2015/the_roots_of_malis_conflict/2_rebellion_and_fragmentation_in_northern_mali/

“Algeria's Hezbollah stance 'reflects view on resistance, not terrorism'”,

1st, 2nd, 3rd Paragraphs

When Arab League foreign ministers voted by a majority earlier this month to declare Hezbollah a “terrorist organisation,” Algeria stood with Lebanon, Iraq and Syria in rejecting the move.

According to an adviser to Algerian President Abdelaziz Bouteflika, the country’s refusal to side with Saudi Arabia and the Gulf monarchies against the Lebanese militia was based on a “principle of non-interference” in other countries’ affairs set out by the president himself.

13th Paragraph

Algeria had already refused to participate in international coalitions in Syria and in Yemen with Saudi Arabia and some other Arab League states because of the principle of non-interference, he said.

<http://www.middleeasteye.net/news/algeria-risks-isolation-arab-league-over-hezbollah-stance-1870366475>

“Why did Iran, Morocco resume relations?”, January 2015

<http://www.al-monitor.com/pulse/originals/2015/01/iran-morocco-diplomacy-economy-sunni-shiite-is-lam-jihadist.html>

“Sudan's President Omer al Bashir’s New Best Friend - Russia?”, February 2012

3rd, 4th, 5th, 6th, 7th, 8th Paragraphs

But now Moscow is preparing a diplomatic initiative that will put Western assumptions even more strongly to the test, by cozying up to the Sudanese regime of President Omer Hassan Ahmad al Bashir.

Al Bashir has a rather unusual international condition – he is the third sitting head of state indicted by the International Criminal Court (ICC) and the first to be charged with genocide. On 12 July 2010, after a lengthy appeal by the prosecution, the ICC determined that there was sufficient evidence for charges of genocide to be brought and issued a warrant for his arrest containing three separate counts due to his government's murderous rampages in Darfur.

But a number of countries have simply ignored the warrant, and al Bashir has made state visits to both Turkey and China.

The Russian Federation's Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs, Mikhail Bogdanov, traveled with a delegation to the Sudanese capital, Khartoum and held a series of meetings with top Sudanese officials. Minister of Foreign Affairs Salah al-Din Wansi headed the Sudanese delegation. Bogdanov said that he and his delegation came to Sudan to convene the first "Russian Sudanese Joint Working Group," formed after Sudanese Foreign Affairs minister Ali Karti's visit to Moscow in December 2010.

Following a meeting with al Bashir on 1 February, who encouraged the "Russian Sudanese Joint Working Group" meeting to put before them "the priorities and joint schemes which will help in enhancing the two countries' relations," Bogdanov returned to Moscow and told reporters that the Russian government intends to support Sudan in order to find durable solutions to all of its outstanding issues with South Sudan, saying, "President Omar al Bashir discussed very important issues and he briefed us on the outcomes of the recent African Union summit, and the differences between Sudan and South Sudan."

And oh, Bogdanov also added that his meeting with al Bashir touched on economic relations and Russian investments in the Sudan in the fields of oil, energy and railways before adding that the two countries shared "identical" views and his hopes that the ministerial meetings will produce the desired results.

<http://oilprice.com/Energy/Crude-Oil/Sudans-President-Omer-al-Bashirs-New-Best-Friend-Russia.html>

“Algerian Foreign Policy in the Context of the Arab Spring”, January 2013

5th, 6th, 7th, 8th, 9th, 10th, 11th Paragraphs

Since it gained independence in 1962, Algeria promoted an international architecture that defended the sovereignty of states and the right to decolonization.[2] It became a strong voice of African and Arab revolutionaries and a leading proponent of the rights of the developing world, rejecting the Cold War rigid bipolar structure and mobilizing support in multilateral forums for its agenda of self-determination, inviolability of borders, non-interference in domestic affairs and sovereign equality.[3] In a well-received speech before the UN General Assembly in April 1974, Algerian guerrilla-turned-statesman Houari Boumedienne called for the creation of a new world order where the rights of the underprivileged are protected. The old order, he said, consecrated the impoverishment of the Third World and perpetuated global inequalities.

Boumedienne’s ambitions to build international support for his vision of a cooperative, equitable and just world order soon hit a roadblock. The eruption of the Western Sahara conflict in late 1975 set Algeria against Morocco, dividing the global south into supporters and detractors of Algeria’s foreign policy.[4] In Africa, the conflict exposed the continent’s deep political, economic and ideological cleavages between the moderate countries aligned with Morocco and the so-called progressives backing Algeria. Morocco’s withdrawal from the Organization of African States (OAU) in 1984 in response to the OAU admission of the Sahrawi Arab Democratic Republic (SADR) in 1982 intensified this divide and dampened any hope of African unity and solidarity.[5] By making the military and diplomatic support for the Polisario rebels a central pillar of its foreign policy, Algeria’s grand strategic preferences and initiatives to promote them came to be seen through the prism of this conflict. It became “very hard to defend the idea of a new international order when you are engaged in a cold war with your neighbor,” wrote Algerian scholar Akram Belkaid.[6] The death of Boumedienne in 1978 did not end the stand-off between North Africa’s major two rivals, but it reduced Algeria’s ambitions to build a single-voiced powerful bloc capable of fighting for the creation of an international egalitarian political and economic order.

Under the presidency of Chadli Bendjedid from 1979-1992, Algeria's foreign policy continued to be based on the same ideological principles of self-determination, freedom from external control, and its own special brand of socialism, but several factors contributed to an attenuated commitment to revolutionary idealism in its international relations. The end of the colonial era in Africa, the resistance of the industrialized West to the economic reforms defended by Algeria and the inherent instability of its own economic model led to a shift in the country's foreign policy orientation.[7] The economic and political constraints that Algeria began to face in the mid-1980s accelerated the country's diminished global aspirations and refocused its diplomacy on its immediate neighborhood.[8]

The collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991 and the descent of Algeria into a bloody civil war in 1992-1999 presented a series of new challenges for Algerian foreign policy. The regime did not have the money or the time to focus on world affairs.[9] The country was faced with near financial bankruptcy in 1994 and it confronted a violent Islamist insurgency from 1992-1999.

The primary objective of Algerian foreign policy in the 1990s was to prevent the isolation of the country and any outside interference in its own internal conflict.[10] The military regime sought international acquiescence for its decision in January 1992 to abort the electoral process and rob the Islamic Salvation Front (FIS) of victory in the second round of parliamentary elections. More importantly, it fought to prevent the international community from focusing on the excesses of the struggle against armed Islamist groups. The foreign policy machinery was geared toward convincing the West and the Arab world that there was only a military solution to Algeria's civil strife.[11]

The election of the former foreign minister of Houari Boumedienne, Abdelaziz Bouteflika, to the presidency in April 1999 reinvigorated Algerian foreign policy. Bouteflika was determined to restore Algeria's battered image. The gradual return of peace to the country and an improving economic outlook facilitated his task. Bouteflika then embarked on reclaiming Algeria's leadership role on the African continent, evident by its involvement in brokering a peace deal between Ethiopia and Eritrea in 2000, the creation of a cabinet position dealing solely with Africa,[12] and the formation of the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) in 2001. The dramatic changes in

the international geopolitical landscape caused by the 9/11 attacks on the United States strengthened Algeria's geopolitical ambitions. The perception of Algeria by the international community changed dramatically. Long perceived as a major producer of violent extremism and a human rights violator, the country became a victim of Islamist terrorism and a key actor in the global fight against international terrorism. The proliferation of violent extremist groups in Algeria's southern hinterland boosted Bouteflika's push to make Algeria the linchpin in international counterterrorism efforts in the trans-Sahara region.[13]

Bouteflika brought a dose of pragmatism to Algeria's foreign policy, skillfully engineering a strategic rapprochement with the United States and expanding defense and economic trade beyond the country's old partners. Algeria's participation in NATO's Mediterranean dialogue in 2000 marked an important step in this regard. This signaled shift toward pragmatism, however, did not result in any major changes to the country's guiding ideological imperatives. For example, Algeria's perception of self-determination remains unchanged, as is demonstrated by its continuing refusal to compromise on the Western Sahara dispute. Despite the indifference of the Algerian public to this conflict,[14] the growing number of countries that have severed their relations with the Polisario,[15] and the support of most Arab states and the major world powers for a consensual political solution, Algeria hopes for a referendum that leads to the independence of the Western Sahara similar to East Timor. Algerian diplomacy is still driven by the same objectives that guided its approach to the conflict since its eruption in late 1975: using every diplomatic tool to drum up support for the Polisario as the only legitimate interlocutor of the Sahrawi tribes and delegitimize Morocco internationally by holding it solely responsible for the stalemate.[16]

<http://carnegieendowment.org/2013/01/14/algerian-foreign-policy-in-context-of-arab-spring-pub-50613>

“Qatar moving closer to Algeria?”, February 2013
3rd, 4th, 5th, 6th Paragraphs

The two 'brother' states have a long-standing yet ambivalent relationship. The Emir Hamad is known to have long admired the Algerian struggle for their liberation, as well as the country's diplomatic ambitions on the international scene in the 1960s and 1970s. Moreover, Qatar has long been considered one of Algeria's main Arab allies, and before the Arab Spring the Damascus-Doha-Algiers alliance was a powerful counterweight to the Riyadh-Cairo axis. Moreover, within the Arab League, Algeria and Qatar often found themselves similarly placed on major issues such as Palestine. Economic relations between the two countries are also good, and the emirate is home to a wide diaspora of Algerians who work in many sectors. In addition, the current head of the Algerian State, Abdelaziz Bouteflika, knows the Gulf States very well since he spent part of his exile there in the 1980s. Beyond these factors, relations between Algeria and Qatar have obviously been largely dominated by energy interests, including the security of their common interests within OPEC.

However, Algeria is wary of Gulf monarchies as it considers them too closely aligned with Morocco to be trusted, especially after the invitation made by the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) to Morocco and Jordan to join them in 2011. In addition, other factors have made political relations between the two countries difficult, such as Al-Jazeera. Indeed, the office of the news network in the Algerian capital was closed in 2004. Then, following the bombings in Algiers on 11 April 2007 and the attacks of 11 December 2007 – when Al-Jazeera released a survey on "opportunity or not" of this attacks – the relations between the two countries again became strained. Recently, Algiers found the coverage of the parliamentary election of May 2012 to also be very negative (nevertheless, Al-Jazeera is widely watched in Algeria)

The new context in place since 2011 in North Africa and the Sahel following the outbreak of the Arab Spring has created difficult situations for the Algerian regime, and Qatar's involvement in certain regional issues has complicated relations between the two states. For instance, the fact that Doha has played an important role in the overthrow of the regime of Colonel Gaddafi in Libya separated the two countries that had very different interests. Indeed, the Algerian government had initially supported the UN action to protect Libyan citizens against threats of Colonel Gaddafi. However when NATO took control of the action, Algeria was more reserved. For Algiers an

intervention because of the 'responsibility to protect' would have marked a dangerous precedent in the region. Moreover, Algiers feared that regional balances would change greatly with this intervention, which was subsequently confirmed, particularly in the Sahel. Finally, Algeria feared that the new Libyan regime sought to join the pro-Morocco axis, thus weakening its regional domination. The Qatari intervention in Libya was thus seen as undesirable by Algiers, ending up in opposed diplomatic positions being taken by the two countries. Thus in 2011, Algeria waited several months before recognizing the National Transitional Council, while Qatar was the first Arab country to do so.

In addition, the emirate also played an important role in the events in Syria, the former ally of Algeria. Again, the position of Qatar is not consistent with the interests of Algeria, a country that wants to save the regime of Bashar al-Assad. In this case, the diplomatic opposition between the two states was very clear, particularly in the committee in charge of the Syrian case in the Arab League. Finally, Algeria is wary of the regional activism of Qatar and its support for some Islamist movements in North Africa. For example, in 2011 the emirate provided financial and diplomatic support to the Ennahda party in Tunisia. To Algiers in fact, Qatari support for Islamist groups involves the kind of risk of destabilizing the country experienced in the 1990s. In this context, Algiers is concerned about the growing role of Qatar along with the fact that a part of the Algerian opposition is in exile, including networks of former ISF members, like Abassi Madani who lives in the emirate. Doha is for instance home to the television channel "Al Maghribia" created by the son of Abassi Madani and highly critical vis-à-vis the Algerian authorities. In that context, the visit by the emir of Qatar in January 2013 suggests that Algiers wants the peninsula to refocus its relationship with Algeria in terms of economic cooperation.

<https://www.opendemocracy.net/mehdi-lazar/qatar-moving-closer-to-algeria>

“Rohani hails ‘new chapter’ in Iran-France relations”, January 2016

<http://www.france24.com/en/20160128-iran-france-rohani-hollande-diplomacy-syria-terrorism-business>

“Iran and France agree to cooperate to fight terrorism and resolve world crises”, January 2016

1st Paragraph

Iranian President Hassan Rouhani has rounded off a four-day European tour in Paris – the the first visit to France by an Iranian president in 17 years.

<http://www.euronews.com/2016/01/28/iran-and-france-agree-to-cooperate-to-fight-terrorism-and-resolve-world-crises/>

“The Iranian-Saudi Proxy Wars Come to Mali”, August 2015

9th Paragraph

Iran and Mali have a warm, if limited, relationship. When Iran’s then-president, Mahmoud Ahmadinejad, visited Bamako and Timbuktu in 2010, he spoke in glowing terms about solidarity between the two countries and signed a raft of agreements on development aid and Iranian investment in agriculture and extractive industries. The Mustafa International School’s director, Mohamed Diabaté, who studied in Iran and maintains links with clerics there, makes appearances on Malian television to talk about his understanding of Islam. (He argues that the Tidjaniya school of Sufism common across West Africa has roots in Shiite, rather than Sunni, teaching.)

17th Paragraph

Mali has raw memories of religious conflict. In 2012, an alliance of Tuareg separatists and Islamists linked to al Qaeda invaded the country’s northern half and imposed sharia law before being ousted by French forces. But a low-level insurgency has been rumbling on ever since. Militants have targeted the Malian army, U.N. peacekeepers, and foreign aid workers with drive-by shootings and roadside bombs. The extremist group Ansar Dine claimed responsibility for a deadly attack on a popular restaurant in Bamako in March and the killing of three soldiers in a village near the border with Mauritania in June.

<http://foreignpolicy.com/2015/08/19/the-iran-saudi-proxy-wars-come-to-mali-shiite-sunni-islam/>

“Tehran switches gear in its relationship with Tripoli after Qaddafi’s death”,
October 2011

<http://www.alarabiya.net/articles/2011/10/22/173060.html>

“Profile: Central African Republic's Michel Djotodia”

14th, 15th, 16th Paragraphs

Mr Djotodia also worked in CAR's foreign ministry and was named consul to Nyala in neighbouring Sudan's Darfur region.

He was said to have used his time there to cultivate alliances with Sudanese militias and Chadian rebels in the area.

"It was these fighters from the Chad/Sudan/CAR borderlands who became the military backbone of the Seleka rebel coalition... The UFDR fighters I knew - tough guys, but a bit ragtag, especially compared to their counterparts in places like Chad or Sudan - could have put up a decent fight against the CAR armed forces on their own, but the 'Chadians' were what made them so unstoppable," Ms Lombard says.

<http://www.bbc.com/news/world-africa-21938297>

“Mystery Shrouds Rise and Aims of Rebel at Helm of Central African Republic”, April 2013

9th Paragraph

Mr. Djotodia hails from Vakaga Prefecture, in the forested savanna of the country's northeast, an isolated region at the borders with Chad and Sudan where the Central African Republic's Muslim minority is concentrated. If he maintains his hold on the presidency, he will be the nation's first Muslim leader and the first from the northeast.

14th Paragraph

Mr. Djotodia is said to have spent a decade studying in the Soviet Union, beginning in the 1970s; he married and had two daughters there before returning with fluent Russian, Dr. Lombard said. He also speaks French and Sango, the country's official languages, and Gula, his ethnic language.

16th Paragraph

Having cultivated a relationship with Jean-François Bozizé, whose father, François, seized power in a 2003 coup, Mr. Djotodia was appointed as the Central African consul in Nyala, the capital of South Darfur State in Sudan.

24th Paragraph

He emerged from relative silence at the end of last year, when he helped to construct the rebel coalition that drove Mr. Bozizé from power. Chadian and Sudanese mercenaries were critical to the rebels' success, and their presence can most likely be credited to Mr. Djotodia, analysts say.

<http://www.nytimes.com/2013/04/14/world/africa/michel-djotodia-leader-of-coup-in-central-african-republic-holds-on-to-power.html?login=email&r=0>

“Muslim nations accuse Iran of supporting terrorism: summit communiqué”, April 2016

Leaders from more than 50 Muslim nations accused Iran on Friday of supporting terrorism and interfering in the affairs of regional states, including Syria and Yemen, a condemnation that may widen the divide between Iran and its main rival, Saudi Arabia.

The leaders, including Iranian President Hassan Rouhani, have been attending a summit in Istanbul this week of the 57-member Organisation of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) to discuss a such issues as the humanitarian fall-out from Syria's civil war.

"The conference deplored Iran's interference in the internal affairs of the States of the region and other member states including Bahrain, Yemen, Syria, and Somalia, and its continued support for terrorism," the OIC said in its final summit communique.

<http://www.reuters.com/article/us-turkey-summit-idUSKCN0XC1LQ>

“Nigeria to question Iranian over arms seized in Lagos”, November 2010

2nd, 3rd, 4th Paragraphs

Iran was accused of being behind the arms and there were suggestions Nigeria was being used as a smuggling route.

But security sources say Iran has pledged to co-operate fully with the investigation.

Nigeria has said it will report Iran to the UN if investigations showed UN sanctions had been broken.

10th, 11th, 12th Paragraphs

Nigeria's authorities have described discovering an arsenal in Lagos two weeks ago, which included rocket launchers, grenades and mortars.

Mr Ajumogobia told reporters that investigations had shown that the weapons did indeed come from Iran

"That's been confirmed from our own shipping documents and the Iranian foreign minister," he said.

19th Paragraph

It says the shipment came from Bandar Abbas, a port in southern Iran, and were hidden in containers labelled as building materials.

<http://www.bbc.com/news/world-africa-11743454>

“Iran denies shipping arms to Islamist militants in Somalia”, February 2013

4th Paragraph

"The allegations of arm transfers from Iran to Somalia are absurd fabrications and have no basis or validity," Iran's U.N. mission wrote to the U.N. Security Council in a letter obtained by Reuters. "Thus it is categorically rejected by the Government of the Islamic Republic of Iran."

<http://www.reuters.com/article/us-iran-arms-yemen-un-idUSBRE91D0B120130214>

“Gambia cuts ties with Iran and orders diplomats to go”, November 2010

1st, 2nd, 3rd, 4th Paragraphs

The Gambia has said it is cutting all ties with Iran and ordered all Iranian government representatives to leave within 48 hours.

Officials from the small West African nation gave no reason for the move.

But last month Nigeria said it had intercepted an illegal arms shipment in Lagos from Iran, destined for The Gambia.

Senior Iranian official Alaeddin Borujerdi has said the move was taken under US pressure.

<http://www.bbc.com/news/world-africa-11819143>

“Senegal severs ties with Iran”, February 2011

1st, 2nd, 3rd Paragraphs

Senegal has cut diplomatic ties with Iran, accusing Tehran of supplying weapons to separatist rebels in its southern Casamance region, the foreign ministry said. "Senegal has decided to break off diplomatic relations with the Republic of Iran," the foreign ministry said in a statement on Wednesday. The statement linked the Iranian weapons with an attack on Sunday in Casamance, the latest in a string of such attacks by rebels engaged in one of Africa's longest-running conflicts, which resulted in the deaths of three Senegalese troops.

<http://www.aljazeera.com/news/africa/2011/02/201122392022223897.html>

“Kenyan government links 2 terrorism suspects to Iran”, November 2015

1st, 2nd, 3rd, 4th Paragraphs

Kenyan security agencies announced Saturday the arrest of two terrorism suspects with alleged links to Iran, claiming that both men admitted plotting attacks on Western targets in the African nation.

Abubakar Sadiq Louw, 69, and Yassin Sambai Juma, 25, are accused of terrorism and espionage on behalf of Iranian state intelligence. The pair "admitted to conspiring to

mount terror attacks," with the government asserting that the men's targets "included hotels in Nairobi frequently used by Western tourists, businessmen and diplomats."

Described as a senior figure in the Shiite Muslim community in the capital of Nairobi, Louw was working on behalf of the Quds Force, an elite unit of Iran's Revolutionary Guard that has carried out covert operations in other countries, the agencies said. Juma was allegedly one of the students Louw recruited.

There was no immediate comment from the Iranian government.

8th, 9th Paragraphs

In 2012, two Iranians were arrested and charged with preparation to commit a felony and possession of explosives without a license. A senior Kenyan government official familiar with the intelligence in that case said the men were in the advanced stages of planning a terrorist attack.

"We don't allow organizations or countries to commit terror in our country," the official said, adding that the suspects may have wanted to use Kenya as a transit point to strike in nearby countries.

<http://edition.cnn.com/2015/11/28/africa/kenyan-terror-arrests/>

“UN investigates Nigerian weapons shipment from Iran”, January 2011

1st, 2nd, 3rd, 4th, 5th Paragraphs

UN weapons experts are in Nigeria to inspect an Iranian arms shipment seized in the port of Lagos last October.

The weapons, including rocket launchers and grenades, were found in containers labelled as building materials.

Nigeria reported the seizure to the UN Security Council for an apparent breach of the sanctions against Iran.

Nigeria has charged an alleged member of Iran's Revolutionary Guards and three Nigerian citizens over the illegally imported weapons.

Iran is under UN sanctions because of its nuclear programme and is banned from supplying, selling or transferring arms.

8th, 9th Paragraphs

But the shipment was intercepted when an attempt was made to re-export it to The Gambia.

The Gambia's neighbour Senegal recalled its ambassador to Tehran over the incident, amid speculation the weapons may have been destined for separatist rebels in its Casamance region.

<http://www.bbc.com/news/world-africa-12216803>

“Alberto Nisman: Argentina prosecutor's death closer to being solved”,
February 2016

1st, 2nd, 3rd Paragraphs

A year after the mysterious death of star prosecutor Alberto Nisman shook Argentina to the core and made headlines around the world, the case may finally be moving closer to a solution.

A judicial attempt to rule out the suggestion that Nisman's death was suicide and the appearance in court of a former spymaster who could provide clues in the case suggests that the stalled investigation may inching towards a conclusion.

Nisman was found shot dead in his home last year just hours before he was due to appear before Congress to explain his accusations that then-president Cristina Fernández de Kirchner had conspired to cover up Iran's alleged involvement in a 1994 terrorist attack in Buenos Aires.

<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2016/feb/29/alberto-nisman-case-murder-argentina-lawyer-homicide-investigation>

“Iran-Linked Terror Suspect's Family Faults SSS”,

1st, 2nd Paragraphs

The family urged the SSS to charge Abdullahi to court or release him. Abdullahi, a leader of Shi'a Islamic sect and two other terror suspects, Sulaiman Saka and Saheed Adewunmi, were paraded by the SSS penultimate Wednesday for allegedly working for Iranian terrorists planning to attack American and Israeli interests in Nigeria. Deputy

Director, Public Relations, SSS, Marilyn Ogar, also alleged that Abdullahi confessed to interrogators that he received \$4,000 upon completion of his training in Iran; 3,500 Euro in April 2012 at a meeting in Dubai. Ogar further said that Abdullahi received \$20,000, out of which he allegedly used \$10,000 in relocating to Lagos from Ilorin, furnishing a house and renting a shop for his business.

<https://www.naij.com/26109.html>

“Iran and Sudan Begin to Execute Moves to Dominate Central & Western Africa”, July 2013

35th, 36th, 37th, 38th, 39th Paragraphs

Meanwhile, hectic preparations were, by late June 2013, taking place in Khartoum for the escalation of the surge into western Africa. Both Iran and Sudan consider the Central African Republic (CAR) a crucial venue because the CAR permits movement westward around the chaos in Darfur and the French presence in N’Djamena. Moreover, Bangui provides quick access to the Gulf of Guinea, as well as to the sub-Saharan east-west roadway which passes through the region’s main capitals — those which Khartoum has been recently courting — all the way to Dakar.

On June 17, 2013, Pres. Omar al-Bashir of Sudan and President Michel Djotodia of the Central African Republic oversaw in Khartoum a series of secret multi-national discussions which would now facilitate a dramatic break-out westward for Sudan, Iran, the CAR and their allies.

Djotodia is the first Muslim to lead the CAR, significant since only 15 percent of the population is Muslim and most of them practice tribally-influenced offshoots of Islam. Djotodia, in contrast, was a councilor in the CAR Embassy in Sudan but based in Darfur where he was converted to Islamism-jihadism by his Sudanese hosts. He is convinced in the Sudanese tenet that a strong jihadist kernel is indispensable to ensuring the loyalty and cohesion of any revolutionary movement irrespective of its openly declared ideology or policy.

Indeed, the key internal security and intelligence positions in Djotodia’s Seleka coalition are held by fellow jihadists and their own stalwart tribal-jihadist militias. Hence,

Djotodia is convinced he is beholden to Bashir's Sudan for his own ascent to power. Little wonder that the CAR's Christian majority fear that Djotodia and his Muslim allies from the north intend to impose an Islamist regime on the nation.

<http://oilprice.com/Geopolitics/Africa/Iran-and-Sudan-Begin-to-Execute-Moves-to-Dominate-Central-Western-Africa.html>

“Africa: Iran's final frontier?”, April 2013

3rd Paragraph

Iran's Africa strategy involves courting African countries voting in important international bodies, prioritizing outreach to African countries that mine uranium, and cementing partnerships that could give Iran access to strategic naval bases.

12th Paragraph

Iranian diplomats have long sought to cultivate ties with South Africa. The Islamic Republic's opposition to Apartheid set the foundation for warm ties after the restoration of diplomatic relations in 1994. Iranian supply of oil to South Africa has heightened economic relations. For Tehran, however, trade is not the only factor in Iran's desire to have good relations with South Africa. “South Africa is a key member of the Non-Aligned Movement, a bloc of developing countries that has resisted the efforts to force Tehran to halt uranium enrichment,” a commentary in the official Tehran Times explained.[7]

21st, 22nd Paragraphs

Another factor behind Iran's nuclear drive may be its developing nuclear program. The Iranian leadership has said it seeks up to 16 nuclear reactors for civilian energy purposes.[29] Should Iran build such a network, it will deplete its limited indigenous uranium supply within 10 years.[30] Regardless of Iran's nuclear motivation, two things are clear: Iran has at present no intention of abandoning its nuclear drive, and it will also never have true energy security. Its quest to find alternative sources of uranium may also bring Iran back to Africa.

A number of African states mine uranium: Namibia and Niger are major uranium exporters. Malawi and Gabon operate uranium mines. South Africa produces some uranium as a byproduct of gold mining, and prospecting continues across the continent.

Uranium deposits exist in Togo, Guinea, the Central African Republic, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Uganda, and Zimbabwe.[31] Iran seeks to cultivate ties with many of these states.

<https://www.aei.org/publication/africa-irans-final-frontier/>

“Zimbabwe and Algeria sending troops to support Gaddafi in Libya war?”

June 2011

3rd Paragraph

While in February the media focused on the rebels and allegations from Gaddafi's former Chief of Protocol Nouri Al Misrahi that the leader was using mercenaries from Kenya, Chad, Niger and Mali against his own people after losing control of the Libyan army, other reports suggested that while the mercenaries might have represented a very small part of Gaddafi's forces, the governments of Algeria, Zimbabwe and even South Africa were actively helping the leader

5th Paragraph

It would not be the first time that Mugabe sent Zimbabwean militia's without prior consultation as in 1997 the country's troops were sent to the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) to help Laurent Kabila against rebels backed by Rwanda and Uganda. Zimbabwe is also tipped as the favourite exile destination if Gaddafi ever decides to leave the country as President Robert Mugabe is the Libyan leader's closest ally in Africa. Over the years Gaddafi was said to have showered his counterpart with donations and subsidised oil shipments and in late 2010, Mugabe's party Zanu PF received hundreds of tractors and much farming equipment from Libya to use in election campaigns..

9th Paragraph

At the same time reports also surfaced about Algeria's involvement in the conflict and its support of the Gaddafi regime. While Algeria has always been very vocal about being concerned by western imperialism on the continent, the alleged alliance came as a surprise, especially as President Bouteflika's government has cooperated for years with the US and Nato on its North Africa and Sub-Saharan anti-terrorist policies.

11th Paragraph

Algeria Watch also accused the Algerian government of having provided the air transport planes that have carried sub-Saharan African mercenaries from Niger, Chad and Darfur to Libya.

<http://www.ibtimes.co.uk/zimbabwe-and-algeria-sending-troops-to-support-gaddafi-in-libya-war-159320>

“The Algerian Connection”, September 2011

2nd, 3rd, 4th Paragraphs

Algeria is the only country in North Africa that has not recognized the Libyan rebels' Transitional National Government. It also reportedly shipped arms and foodstuffs to the Gaddafi forces during the six-month conflict. Algeria was one of four countries that did not endorse the Arab League's support of Resolution 1973 of the United Nations Security Council, which opened the way for the air operation against the Gaddafi regime, starting on March 19. The others were Sudan, Syria and Yemen. (Yet, perhaps in a recognition of the nosediving fortunes of Gaddafi, an Algerian representative, along with those of many other countries, was present at the conference on aid to the new Libyan Government held on September 1 in Paris)

Algeria and the Gaddafi regime have had a common enemy: al Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM), made up largely of former members of the Algerian terrorist movement, the Islamic Armed Group (GIA). The Algerian Government suppressed this group, which rose up following the Government's cancellation in 1992 of an election that would have led to the victory of the Islamist political party, the Islamic Salvation Front (FIS). The 10-year war that followed ended in a defeat of the GIA and at an appalling cost of lives on both sides. The GIA then became the Salafist Group for Preaching and Combat and later officially joined al Qaeda. AQIM has retreated to the Sahel area south of the Saharan desert, where it is now mainly engaged in kidnapping Europeans (mostly French) and demanding ransom. However, in the most spectacular attack in years, terrorists stormed the Military Academy at Cherrhell, Algeria, on August 26 and killed 16 officers and two civilians. The AQIM communiqué claiming responsibility for the attack said it was justified by Algeria's support to the Gaddafi regime.

But at the same time, and to illustrate the ambivalence of the situation, relations between Gaddafi and the Algerian regime have been difficult ever since the Libyan colonel came to power in 1969. That this country of miniscule population, led by a quixotic and unpredictable dictator, could pose as a rival to Algeria's dominance of the Maghreb and the Sahel region, was a constant source of annoyance to the ruling group in Algiers. Gaddafi's support of the Touaregs of the Sahel, some of whom were among his mercenaries in the recent civil war; his posing as the "King of Africa," and his generosity to a number of Black African regimes; even his support of the Polisario Front against Algeria's rival, Morocco, grated on the Algerian Government because these were actions taking place in what it considered its own backyard.

6th Paragraph

In the background to this situation lies the fact that Algeria has a problem of legitimacy stemming from the fact that what began as a revolutionary movement against the French occupation — the National Liberation Front (FLN) — morphed over the years into a military dictatorship ruling over a state. The present president, Abdel Aziz Bouteflika, is the last of the original leaders of the FLN. With an ageing and ill president, it seems necessary for Algeria to create a new legitimacy for itself. But Algeria's present policy seems marked by a sort of paralysis, as various groups maneuver behind the scenes in view of the upcoming succession.

http://www.huffingtonpost.com/dr-charles-g-cogan/algeria-gaddafi_b_948026.html

“Iran's Battle for Africa”, September 2013

17th, 18th Paragraphs

What kind of power does Iran have? Europe gets a great deal of its oil and gas from the Middle East and North Africa. Much of it comes through the Straits of Hormuz, the Suez Canal and through pipelines across Iraq. But pipelines from Libya, Tunisia, Algeria and Morocco also carry natural gas into Europe. Several European companies want to support a project to build a gas pipeline from Nigeria to Algeria so Europe can get more of its natural gas from Africa.

To disrupt this trade, Iran doesn't need to take over the governments of the countries along the route. Pipelines are easy to break. Narrow straits of water can be strewn with

mines, making it too expensive to insure ships to cross them. If Iran can gain enough power in these areas—a goal it is working toward—it can hold Europe to ransom.

20th, 21st Paragraphs

When we examine southern European countries on their own, we see an even more disturbing picture. In Spain, 54 percent of crude oil and 77 percent of gas imports are vulnerable to Iranian disruption. In Italy, it's 48 percent of oil and 46 percent of gas. (A few years ago, before Libya's oil and gas output plummeted, this dependency was even greater.)

Iran is expanding the reach of its terrorist activities and creating goodwill with African nations to further spread its ability to strike at Europe. It's a murky game that's run, in part, by Iran's secret service. Not all the facts are readily available. But Iran clearly has an extensive network—including rebel groups, rogue states and Islamists—throughout Africa. They are certainly capable of pushing back against Europe's expansion in the continent and threatening the West's access to Africa's wealth of raw materials.

<https://www.thetrumpet.com/article/10873.24.157.0/middle-east/iran/irans-battle-for-africa>

“Germany okays 10 bln euro defence deal with Algeria”, July 2011

1st Paragraph

The German government's security council has given the green light for German companies to sell defence equipment worth about 10 billion euros over the next 10 years to Algeria, an industry source told Reuters on Sunday.

There are four projects worth a total of about 10 billion euros (\$14.2 billion) over 10 years, the source said.

<http://af.reuters.com/article/algeriaNews/idAFLDE76209K20110703>

“Out of Iran, Into Africa: Hezbollah's Scramble for Africa”, June 2013

3rd Paragraph

On June 20, 2012, two Iranian nationals, Ahmad Abolfathi Mohammad and Sayed Mansour Mousavi, were arrested in Nairobi, Kenya. In their possession was 15 kilos of explosives; 85 kilos more the two had shipped into Kenya have not been found.

5th, 6th Paragraphs

More recently it became clear that Nigeria, Africa's most populous nation, has become a hotbed for Iranian/Hezbollah terrorist activities. There were signs of Nigeria emerging as a potential site of interest back in 2004 when, according to Israeli sources, an Iranian diplomat was arrested on suspicion of spying on the Israeli embassy in Nigeria's capital Abuja.

This February, Nigeria's State Security Service (SSS) arrested, Abdullahi Mustapha Berende and two other Nigerians accusing them of being members of a terrorist cell, trained in Iran, who planned to attack U.S. and Israeli targets.

10th Paragraph

The tempo of arrests continued to accelerate. Barely weeks later, in the second half of May 2013, Nigerian authorities arrested four Lebanese men in the northern city of Kano on suspicion of being members of the Lebanese Hezbollah. Soldiers uncovered a hidden arms cache containing 11,433 rounds of 7.6 mm ammunition, 76 military grenades, one SMG rifle, nine pistols, 17 AK-47 rifles, 44 magazines, 103 packs of slap TNT, 50mm anti-tank grenades, 123mm artillery guns, four anti-tank landmines, 21 rocket-propelled grenades, an RPG, 16 RPG chargers and one RPG tube. The arms and ammunition were concealed under several layers of concrete and placed in coolers, drums and bags, neatly wrapped. The arms and ammunition were intended to target Israeli and Western facilities in Nigeria.

16th, 17th, 18th Paragraphs

Ali Ibrahim al Watfa was described as "the permanent Hezbollah liaison to Sierra Leone" and responsible for a Hezbollah cell in the Freetown area, coordinating the transfer of funds from Sierra Leone to Hezbollah in Lebanon.

Abbas Loutfe Fawaz, "Hezbollah's leader in Senegal", built his activities in Senegal since 2006 using supermarkets in Dakar that he owned and operated in Dakar, to raise funds for Hezbollah and attract supporters. He had discussed with Hezbollah officials in

Lebanon the possibility of sending Lebanese nationals from Senegal to Lebanon, possibly for training.

Ali Ahmed Chehade is the "Hezbollah Foreign Relations Department official for Cote d'Ivoire," responsible for coordinating the travel of Hezbollah members between Senegal and Cote d'Ivoire.He is tied to Specially Designated Global Terrorist Abd Al Menhem Qubaysi, a "personal representative" of Hassan Nasrallah, Hezbollah's Secretary General.

<http://www.haaretz.com/israel-news/.premium-1.530327>

“Iranian Azim Aghajani convicted over Nigeria arms”, May 2013

1st, 2nd, 3rd Paragraphs

Rockets, mortars and grenades were among the weapons seized from a ship which docked in Lagos in 2010.

Court documents said they were due for re-export to The Gambia, in defiance of a UN arms embargo on Iran.

Nigerian Usman Abbas Jega was convicted alongside Azim Aghajani, who is alleged to be a member of Iran's Revolutionary Guards and is on a UN blacklist.

<http://www.bbc.com/news/world-africa-22515062>

“Iranians rally to protest Shia killing in Nigeria”, December 2015

1st, 2nd, 3rd, 4th, 5th Paragraphs

Iranians have staged demonstrations in the capital, Tehran, and several other major cities across the country to condemn Nigerian military's bloody crackdown on the Shia Muslim community in the African country.

Tehran saw people taking to the streets in droves after the Friday Prayers to show support for the Shia Muslims in Nigeria.

The protesters chanted slogans and carried placards in condemnation of the international community's silence on the massacring of the oppressed Nigerian Muslims.

Local media said on December 12 that more than a dozen people were killed after clashes erupted between the Nigerian army and Shia Muslims in the northern city of Zaria in Kaduna State.

The clashes broke out when Nigerian soldiers opened fire on the people attending a religious ceremony at Hussainiyyah Baqeyatullah, a religious center belonging to the Islamic Movement of Nigeria (IMN). The Nigerian military accused the Shias of trying to stop the passing convoy of Nigeria's Chief of Army Staff Lieutenant General Tukur Yusuf Buratai.

9th Paragraph

Meanwhile, a senior Iranian cleric on Friday condemned the recent bloody terrorist attacks against Shia Muslims in Nigeria and said the Nigerian government is playing into the hands of the Israeli regime and Takfiri groups.

<http://www.presstv.ir/Detail/2015/12/18/442267/Iran-Nigeria-Friday-Prayers-rally-Khatami-Muslims-Zakzaky>

“The Rebellion of the Tuareg Warriors in 2012”

<https://iakal.wordpress.com/2016/01/27/the-rebellion-of-the-tuareg-desert-warrior-in-2012/>

“North Africa’s Menace : AQIM's Evolution and the U.S. Policy Response”

Page 2

In its earliest manifestation, AQIM was organized around the goal of ousting the “apostate” junta in Algeria. Only in more recent years has it officially joined Bin Laden’s global jihad and spilled outside Algeria into the Maghreb and the Sahel. While it has wrapped itself in the banner of global jihad, AQIM remains largely an Algerian organization focused on Algeria and North Africa. Understanding AQIM requires at least a brief historical excavation of its origins in the anti-colonial and anti-French context of Algerian politics of the early 1990s. It also requires understanding the connections of some AQIM leaders to the anti-Soviet jihad in Afghanistan in the 1980s. The anti-European, local, and anti-colonial dimension of AQIM’s history appears to be the

group's core driver, but the shared background of its leaders as mujahedeen in Afghanistan links it to a broader global current of Islamist militancy that also encompasses the core of Al Qaeda. These two interwoven strands of its historical origins are essential to understanding the group's current nature and future direction.

Prior to 2007, AQIM went by the name Groupe Salafiste pour la Prédication et le Combat (GSPC). In the late 1980s, the Algerian government undertook reforms ostensibly intended to open up the largely authoritarian, one-party system that had held power since Algeria won its independence from France in the 1960s. In 1991, when an Islamist political coalition was on the verge of winning control of the parliament, the Algerian military intervened, annulling the election and breaking up the Islamist parties. In reaction, some Islamists formed a terrorist group called the Groupe Islamiste Armé (GIA) and began a bloody insurgency against the government that lasted through much of the 1990s. By the mid-1990s, however, the devastation the GIA had inflicted on Algeria's largely Sunni Muslim citizenry had undermined its popular support. It was also viewed as having been thoroughly penetrated by Algerian government agents. In large part to escape from the pall that had grown over it, the GIA broke apart and the primary branch rebranded itself as the GSPC in 1998.

Page 3

Meanwhile, Bin Laden was increasingly seeking to export his brand and encourage the development of like-minded jihadi offshoots elsewhere in the world. Al Qaeda leaders in Pakistan were also seeking to exploit longstanding tensions in France over the rights of French Muslim citizens, many of whom were from Algeria, by denouncing the French government's allegedly anti-Muslim policies. Ayman al-Zawahiri, then Bin Laden's deputy, for example, declared that France's ban on headscarves in public schools and efforts to prevent families from punishing allegedly "debauched women" were insults to Islam. These proclamations appealed to the vehemently anti-French sentiments within the GSPC.⁶

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AQIM's relationship with core Al Qaeda is essentially a marriage of convenience. The two groups can share the same basic jihadist outlook and gain from cooperation without sharing exactly the same goals or adopting the same strategies to achieve them. The

groups can benefit from cooperating without any strict convergence in their intentions. They can share the same basic ideas but have very different capabilities. More fundamentally, even if Droukdal and others share a common background with Al Qaeda in Pakistan, their social and political environment differs in important ways from that of an Egyptian such as Ayman al-Zawahiri or a Saudi such as Bin Laden. From the parochial Algerian perspective of the GSPC, France rather than the United States is the “far enemy”—the primary outside nemesis in the struggle to realize the dream of an Islamist state under shari’a law. AQIM thus frequently plays on anti-colonial sentiment in its propaganda. Core Al Qaeda is a globally oriented organization with a multinational membership and a sweeping target deck, dedicated to removing regimes it considers apostate along with any semblance of Western presence in the Muslim world. For the GSPC, and now for the main body of AQIM,⁹ the dominant organizing principle has always been removing the regime in Algiers.

Of course, AQIM members detest the United States and would cheer to see Americans die. But the priorities of someone with Droukdal’s background—or that of his main recruiting base—differ from those of core Al Qaeda. Droukdal’s decision to side with Al Qaeda came at a moment when core Al Qaeda’s propaganda was attacking France—hardly a coincidence. For Al Qaeda’s core leadership in Pakistan, the chance to align with AQIM offered several advantages that had little or nothing to do with ideology. To begin with, the appearance of expansion to a new continent was good for public relations at a time when Al Qaeda faced worldwide counterterrorism operations. Expansion into Africa demonstrated growing reach, continued resilience, and the type of energy that wins recruits. AQIM, in other words, supports Al Qaeda’s global aspirations by its very existence; it need not attack the West to do so. Spawning affiliates also offered Bin Laden the hope of diverting U.S. and allied counterterrorism resources away from Pakistan. For him, as now for Zawahiri, AQIM can burden and distract the United States and its allies from Pakistan (although, of course, AQIM’s leaders may be less comfortable playing the role of decoy).

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AQIM today is thus increasingly fragmented. Similarly, the nature of its relationship with other militant and criminal groups in the region is fluid and changing with circumstance.

AQIM's cooperation with the Nigerian jihadist group Boko Haram and its offshoot Ansaru has attracted recent attention—in large part because the perpetrator of the attempted 2009 “Christmas bombing,” Omar Farouk Abdulmutallab, was a Nigerian. Abdulmutallab, however, was linked to Al Qaeda via AQAP (Al Qaida in the Arabian Peninsula) and the relevance of his Nigerian background is limited. AQIM's cooperation with Boko Haram and Ansaru also appears to have focused more on kidnappings and roadside attacks than on sophisticated terrorist techniques.

http://www.rand.org/pubs/research_reports/RR415.html

“Towards an Alliance Between Russia and ISIS”?

<https://iakal.wordpress.com/2016/05/22/towards-an-alliance-between-russia-and-isis/>

“Iran's Awkward Diplomacy in Africa”, March 2016

1st Paragraph

Iran's deputy foreign minister for Arab and African affairs, Hossein Amir Abdollahian, promised this week that Tehran would “update” its Africa strategy, pursuing a “new level” of strategic relations in the coming years. The timing is somewhat puzzling, as President Hassan Rouhani has shown little interest in Africa. Above all, he is interested in securing foreign investment and technological know-how to help jolt the ailing Iranian economy; African countries are not on the list of priorities. Meanwhile, the latest major development in Iranian-African relations saw former ally Sudan make a complete U-turn, backing Riyadh in its current standoff with Iran. The Sudanese case has left a sour taste among political elites in Tehran, who believe African states are unreliable partners and will walk out on Iran as soon as a higher bidder comes along.

<http://nationalinterest.org/feature/irans-awkward-diplomacy-africa-15571>

“Desperate For Allies and Secret Assets, Iran Penetrates Africa”, August 2013

<http://www.thetower.org/article/desperate-for-allies-and-secret-assets-iran-penetrates-africa/>

“Iran and Sudan Begin to Execute Moves to Dominate Central & Western Africa”, July 2013

The Central African Republic has become a key player, working under Sudanese and Iranian direction, in jihadist action, geared to take advantage of the West's declining influence in Western and Central Africa, even if it challenges the interests of their traditional ally, the People's Republic of China.

The governments of Iran and Sudan are preparing for a major strategic surge into western Africa, into both the Sahel and the shores of the Gulf of Guinea. The moves have already gained momentum and challenge Iran's and Sudan's major sponsor, the People's Republic of China (PRC), as well as the West.

The ultimate objective of this surge is to consolidate control and/or influence over this extensive region and its considerable oil, gas, uranium, and other minerals (rare metals and rare earth) reserves. At the same time, the surge would pre-empt and prevent both the US/West/NATO presence and the spread of anti-Shi'ite takfiri-jihadist entities.

The surge is of such importance to both Iran and Sudan that they are willing to risk a crisis with their primary great power sponsor, the People's Republic of China. If successful, this surge would transform the status of West Africa.

Iran's clerical Government has sought to become a major power in West Africa since the early 1980s, once the Khomeini Administration consolidated its domestic power base after the fall of the Shah in 1979. From the beginning, Iran worked in close cooperation with radicalized members of the Lebanese Shi'ite community along the shores of the Gulf of Guinea (and these evolved into HizbAllah networks). At the time, Iran cooperated with Qadhafi's Libya (mainly in the Sahel), including the conduct of sophisticated terrorist strikes such as the September 19, 1989, mid-air explosion which downed UTA flight 772

over Niger. Since the late 1980s, Iran's main partner in Africa has been Pres. Umar Hasan Ahmad al-Bashir's Sudanese Government.

Khartoum followed Tehran's lead and policies to such an extent that it would evolve into Tehran's proxy on many key issues.

However, greater global developments since the turn of the 21st Century affected the regional ascent of Iran and Sudan. In order to secure the rapidly expanding Chinese economic penetration into the area, Beijing demanded growing stability and warned both Tehran and Khartoum that challenges to, or disruptions of, economic development would not be tolerated. Both Tehran and Khartoum had to abide by this stricture, given the growing importance of Iranian-Chinese and Sudanese-Chinese relations. Moreover, the PRC compensated both countries with lavish military and economic aid, as well as lucrative oil contracts.

As well, Iran could not ignore the intense US-led Western anti-terrorism activities in the Sahel in the aftermath of 9/11. Therefore, both Tehran and Khartoum decided to lower the profile of their activities in order to avoid unnecessary conflict and confrontation. After all, the US-led West was attempting to locate and destroy Tehran's takfiri-jihadist nemeses in the region. Hence, Iran and its local HizbAllah allies focused on building long-term infrastructure, clandestine networks, and underground weapon caches throughout West Africa. Toward this end, Iran delivered several huge weapon consignments by ship to Gulf of Guinea ports. One of these shipments was captured by the Nigerian security forces in late October 2010.

Meanwhile, Sudan returned to focusing on its traditional zone of influence in the Horn of Africa with Iran monitoring closely from its military and intelligence facilities in Assab, south Eritrea.

Iran, however, did not disengage completely from the growing upheaval and insurrection in the Sahel. Throughout the period of relatively low profile in the first years of the 21st Century, Iran remained the primary source of munitions, explosives, and other military goods for all anti-government forces irrespective of their ideologies all over West Africa. Most insurgencies could not have been sustained logistically and militarily without the Iranian supplies. Consequently, Iranian intelligence was able to establish presence on all the continental lines of communications, as well as establish good relations and

operational cooperation with all subversive forces in this vast area irrespective of their goals and motives. Almost all of these munitions and weapons were pushed into West Africa via Sudan, where Iran established a large network of storage sites.

In Spring and Summer 2011, the huge stockpiles of weapons which Qadhafi had built for sponsoring “liberation wars” in Africa started falling into jihadist hands. Many of these jihadists were protégés of Iran’s Quds Forces, while many others received shelter and support in Bashir’s Sudan. With their help, as well as with help from HAMAS senior operatives first led by Abdul Latif al-Ashkar (who would be target-killed by Israel near Port Sudan on April 5, 2011), Iranian intelligence launched a huge effort to buy complete Libyan strategic storage sites, first in Benghazi and the rest of Cyrenaica, and then in the Libyan deep south. The Libyan jihadists sent several convoys of weapons and munitions to their brethren in the Sahel via Sabha and Chad, as well as several convoys to their brethren in the Gaza Strip and the Sinai Peninsula.

However, far greater quantities of chemical weapons, missiles, rockets, small arms, ammunition, and other military equipment went to Sudan via Kufra. These convoys were escorted by jihadists from Sudan who entered Libya during the war. In the first half of 2012, Libya-origin weapons, munitions and other military equipment began appearing on the Iran-dominated supply lines from Sudan into the entire west Africa.

The Iranian-Sudanese surge into west Africa seemed to be on track again.

Iran has been adamant about controlling the extensive uranium deposits in the Sahel for its own nuclear program, as well as about denying the oil and rare metals to the West while expediting Chinese access in return for strategic favors. The French and US military intervention against the jihadist insurrections in the Sahel in early 2013 only reinforced the Iranian and Sudanese resolve to vastly expand their own operations across the entire west Africa.

However, there was a new twist in the Iranian-Sudanese strategy.

In addition to reinforcing support for, and cooperation with, AQIM and other jihadist groups, Khartoum, fronting for an invisible Tehran, also reached out to local governments which were increasingly apprehensive of US and Western presence. Khartoum pointed out that the US-led West was provoking civil strife (in the name of democracy) and insurrection (by ethnic groups, tribes and Islamist-jihadist

communities). Khartoum promised local governments that it would capitalize on Sudan's special relations with AQIM and other ethno-centrist and jihadist groups in order to help them — the besieged governments — with national reconciliation for as long as the US, France, and the West were sidelined.

Increasingly frustrated and concerned at the heavy-handed US and Western intervention, several governments expressed strong interest in the Sudanese mediation offers.

Meanwhile, Iran continued focusing on its growing involvement in the war in Syria.

Starting in early 2013, Tehran became apprehensive about a US-led NATO military intervention in Syria. The primary grand-strategic achievement of Iran is the consolidation of a Shi'ite-dominated on-land axis from Iran via Iraq and Syria all the way to the HizbAllah bastion on the shores of the Mediterranean. The consolidation and sustenance of this axis has cost Iran and its various proxies (HizbAllah as well as Iraqi, Syrian, and Pakistani Shi'ite militias) a lot of blood and treasure. Despite its great successes to date, Tehran is cognizant that the launch of a major air campaign against Syria — ostensibly under the definition of imposing a “No Fly Zone” — would threaten the existence of this axis. Moreover, Iran's brewing rift with HAMAS in both Gaza and Syria makes the alternate on-land route via Palestinian-dominated northern Jordan impossible.

Hence, the possible strategic changes in the Middle East made it imperative for Iran to establish alternate supply routes for HizbAllah and Syria via the Mediterranean. These supply routes would be by ship, from Sudan via the Suez Canal to the Levant. Thus, Tehran decided to vastly expand the forward storage and supply base in Port Sudan in order to better and quicker sustain the war effort in Syria and Lebanon.

Initially, Iran and Sudan agreed to simply expand and upgrade the forward base for the supply of the HAMAS and other jihadist entities in the Gaza Strip and the Sinai. Stronger storage bunkers were already being built in Port Sudan in the aftermath of the Israeli bombing of the Yarmuk missile factory and missile depots near Khartoum in late October 2012. The new strategic forward basing in Port Sudan would enable Iran to quickly deliver weapons to clients and proxies all over the region. Concurrently, Tehran instructed the HizbAllah in Spring 2013 to prepare secure coastal facilities considered

crucial for sustaining Iranian military supplies key to Assad's and HizbAllah's momentum in Syria.

In May 2013, there was a sudden sense of urgency in Tehran because of developments in West Africa.

The Nigerian security forces exposed an HizbAllah network in Nigeria and unearthed the huge arms cache it had buried. More than the arrest of a few HizbAllah operatives, Tehran was alarmed by the corrosion of the weapons in the cache which made them inoperable. Iranian intelligence experts now worry that the many other caches buried and concealed by HizbAllah Lebanese operatives along the coast of the Gulf of Guinea are in similarly unusable shape. Hence, there emerged an urgent imperative to vastly expand on-land logistical axes to push large quantities weapons to both feed the jihadist up-surge throughout the region and restore the corroded caches throughout the region.

(The capture in Nigeria in late October 2010 of the Iranian weapons ship, whose key operatives were convicted and sentenced by coincidence also in May 2013, convinced Tehran that use of smuggling operations via seaports was a too risky a route even though they enable larger weapon shipments.) Iran and Sudan concluded that the military infrastructure in Sudan must be vastly expanded and reinforced in order to sustain the push into west Africa as well as withstand possible retaliatory strikes.

Thus, Iran's decision to surge westward across western Africa all the way to the coasts of the Atlantic was the dominant factor behind the strategic changes in Sudan.

The pace of construction of the Iranian military facilities throughout Sudan picked-up in Spring 2013. In May 2013, the pace and scope of the construction of the Iranian naval, military and logistical bases in Port Sudan grew markedly. IRGC engineering units in civilian clothes and a vast army of Sudanese workers build both logistical piers to rapidly download and upload vessels, and military piers to support warships and submarines. Further away from the port, the Iranians and the Sudanese are building several new clusters of fortified bunkers and other storage sites. Both the new piers and the fortified storage sites would be able to handle tanks and combat vehicles, missile systems, self-propelled artillery and other heavy weaponry.

In mid-May 2013, the IRGC units started the construction of fencing, watchtowers, and fortifications, as well as the construction of fortified air-defense positions where SAM batteries would be deployed.

By now, the extent of the Iranian-Sudanese activities is difficult to conceal.

Khartoum and Tehran increasingly worry that Israel, the US, or other Western powers, are closely monitoring progress and even might attempt to sabotage the new port facilities. Iranian security experts warned that their new facilities were virtually adjacent to Port Sudan's oil exporting installations.

In mid-May 2013, South Sudan was to start exporting its oil through the oil loading facilities in Port Sudan. Tehran worries that when oil customers of South Sudan — the staunch friend of the West and Israel — arrive with tankers they will be in excellent position to spy on, and even strike, the Iranian sprawling military facilities in Port Sudan.

Hence, on June 8, 2013, Sudan's Pres. Omar al-Bashir suddenly announced the halting of the export of South Sudanese oil via Sudan's pipeline. Bashir announced, with great populist theatrics, his decision to close the oil pipeline in a public rally in Khartoum. On stage, Bashir turned to Oil Minister Awad al-Jaz, who was standing behind him, and gave him instructions on State matters. "Tomorrow you ... will order the oil companies to close the pipeline," Bashir told al-Jaz with the microphones open and the TV cameras rolling.

Bashir then turned back to the cheering public and explained that his decision was in response to South Sudan's continued funding of rebels in the southern parts of Sudan. Bashir said that the "decision follows careful study of all its consequences and repercussions". The crowd started cheering.

"Sudan will not allow revenues from oil exports from South Sudan to be used to buy arms for rebels and mercenaries," Bashir declared. It was a public politics undertaking designed to maximize political rewards for Bashir. Despite pressure by the US, the PRC and several world powers on Khartoum to abide by the March 2013 agreement between Juba and Khartoum, Bashir remains adamant. Ultimately, however, tight implementation of Bashir's cut-off was postponed and some export of South Sudanese oil was still taking place by late June 2013. But the die is cast. On June 21 2013, Bashir reiterated that until

South Sudan implemented “all agreements by 100 percent, no barrel of oil will be piped to Port Sudan”.

Protests from Beijing, long a major patron of Sudan and a consumer of South Sudanese oil, were ignored by Khartoum.

Meanwhile, hectic preparations were, by late June 2013, taking place in Khartoum for the escalation of the surge into western Africa. Both Iran and Sudan consider the Central African Republic (CAR) a crucial venue because the CAR permits movement westward around the chaos in Darfur and the French presence in N’Djamena. Moreover, Bangui provides quick access to the Gulf of Guinea, as well as to the sub-Saharan east-west roadway which passes through the region’s main capitals — those which Khartoum has been recently courting — all the way to Dakar.

On June 17, 2013, Pres. Omar al-Bashir of Sudan and President Michel Djotodia of the Central African Republic oversaw in Khartoum a series of secret multi-national discussions which would now facilitate a dramatic break-out westward for Sudan, Iran, the CAR and their allies.

Djotodia is the first Muslim to lead the CAR, significant since only 15 percent of the population is Muslim and most of them practice tribally-influenced offshoots of Islam. Djotodia, in contrast, was a councilor in the CAR Embassy in Sudan but based in Darfur where he was converted to Islamism-jihadism by his Sudanese hosts. He is convinced in the Sudanese tenet that a strong jihadist kernel is indispensable to ensuring the loyalty and cohesion of any revolutionary movement irrespective of its openly declared ideology or policy.

Indeed, the key internal security and intelligence positions in Djotodia’s Seleka coalition are held by fellow jihadists and their own stalwart tribal-jihadist militias. Hence, Djotodia is convinced he is beholden to Bashir’s Sudan for his own ascent to power. Little wonder that the CAR’s Christian majority fear that Djotodia and his Muslim allies from the north intend to impose an Islamist regime on the nation.

Back in early 2013, Khartoum convinced Djotodia to renege on his understandings with Paris and Bangui: the January 2013 Libreville Agreement. The Seleka coalition launched a new offensive which culminated in their occupation of Bangui on March 24, 2013, and

the overthrow of then-Pres. François Bozizé. During the offensive, the Seleka forces also attacked the AU forces, killing several South African and Ugandan troops.

Djotodia did not forget Khartoum, and soon after assuming power in Bangui started sending quantities of CAR diamonds to his friends in the Khartoum-backed Janjaweed militias in Darfur to help fund their genocidal struggle.

Subsequently, Djotodia moved quickly to transform the CAR into a “grey zone” at the heart of Africa.

The CAR is being transformed from a de facto haven for various armed groups, due to lack of governance in the remote areas, into a willing and active sponsor and facilitator of revolutionary groups and criminal networks in order to further undermine regional stability. Thus, while Lord’s Resistance Army (LRA) groups of varying size were tolerated in parts of the CAR since 2008, the growing cooperation between Bashir and Djotodia changed the importance and rôle of the LRA. In late April 2013, Joseph Kony was invited to Sudan and promised supplies and shelter in return for military cooperation in both the CAR and Uganda.

The CAR is thus becoming a hub of subversion in the heart of the Africa with geopolitical ramifications extending far beyond the borders and capabilities of the CAR itself.

Thus, the June 17-18, 2013, visit to Khartoum by Djotodia and his delegation constituted a major up-grade of the CAR’s rôle in, and contribution to, the Iran-Sudan alliance. In their first private meeting, Bashir assured Djotodia of Sudan’s commitment to supporting and economically sustaining the CAR in return for the CAR’s playing a greater rôle in the continental designs of Iran and Sudan. Djotodia agreed wholeheartedly, setting the tone for the subsequent discussions between numerous senior officials.

Sudanese and Central African senior intelligence officials discussed how to better utilize the LRA in order to force the Ugandan forces out of the CAR.

Sudan’s ultimate objective is to use LRA forces based in the CAR in order to destabilize the Republic of South Sudan, and then use its territory to have LRA forces reach and destabilize Uganda. Kony has already committed to pursuing Sudan’s strategy. Sudan and the CAR agreed in Khartoum that the first step in this endeavor would be flying LRA forces currently being sheltered, trained and equipped in Sudan to Tambura (in the eastern CAR, off Tambura, South Sudan).

The Sudanese and Central African Republic senior intelligence officials also met in Khartoum with counterparts from Chad in order to upgrade and refine the tripartite security cooperation deal between their countries. Back in 2012, the three countries agreed to form a joint force in order to monitor their common borders and ostensibly “prevent rebel attacks”. As amended and refined in Khartoum, the tripartite security cooperation deal between Sudan, Chad, and the CAR now regiments and facilitates the flow of convoys with military aid and supplies westward shielded and secured from Western forces and their local allies.

Most important is the groundbreaking regional security agreement discussed and committed to on June 17, 2013, by a large group of senior officials co-chaired by Bashir and Djotodia. The Sudanese delegation was led by Defense Minister Abdelraheem Muhammad Hussein, Presidential assistant and veteran intelligence senior official Nafie Ali Nafie, and National Intelligence and Security Services chief Mohamed Atta al-Mawla Abbas. Also around the table were delegations of senior intelligence and security forces officials from the Central African Republic, Chad, Egypt, Mali, and Mauritania.

The delegations discussed and agreed on close strategic cooperation to restore Arab-Muslim preeminence to the entire region of West Africa. The representatives committed to the consolidation of mutually loyal and supportive regimes, as well as to assisting other regional countries to establish Muslim-dominated governments and to have them join their alliance. The senior officials discussed practical modalities for jointly breaking-away from stifling Western influence and demands for reforms. They agreed on cooperation in resolving security and economic crises and suppressing democratic opposition forces.

Significantly, all countries present also committed to helping Egypt and Sudan in their “sacred struggle” to sustain the Arab rights to and dominance over the Nile waters. Thus, the June 17, 2013, agreement constituted a major and strategically profound shift in the regional posture and assertiveness. If implemented, West Africa will not be the same.

Thus, as the West — led by the US and France — is contemplating the surge into the Sahel in order to contain AQIM and other jihadist and tribal insurrections, the real challenge will be the Iranian-Sudanese surge aimed to transform the entire West Africa

and deny it to the West. Al-Qaida in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM) and the other insurgencies will be but instruments of a grand strategic design and surge.

<http://oilprice.com/Geopolitics/Africa/Iran-and-Sudan-Begin-to-Execute-Moves-to-Dominate-Central-Western-Africa.html>

“Kenya and Uganda are building the world’s longest heated oil pipeline”,
August 2015

1st, 2nd, 3rd, 4th Paragraphs

Kenya and Uganda have agreed on a route for a 1,500-km (930-mile) pipeline to pump oil from Uganda to the Indian Ocean, a project that officials hope will transform East Africa into a major oil exporting region.

The path—to serve Kenya, Uganda, South Sudan, and potentially Ethiopia—has been the subject of dispute between Kenyan and Ugandan officials since last year. It will cut through northern Kenya and the Lokichar Basin from Hoima in western Uganda before reaching the port city of Lamu.

An alternative route had the pipeline snaking through Kenya’s capital of Nairobi and on to Mombasa, a plan that Ugandan officials said would be cheaper, but would have required displacing hundreds of residents.

The pipeline is part of a broader regional project, the Lamu Port Southern Sudan-Ethiopia Transport Corridor, to bring Ugandan and Kenyan oil to global markets. Uganda is home to sub-Saharan Africa’s fourth-largest supply of crude oil, with as much as 6.5 billion barrels discovered a decade ago. Kenya is home to about one billion barrels. Another proposed project would connect oil from South Sudan and Ethiopia to the pipeline.

6th Paragraph

The pipeline will likely have to travel through swamplands, national parks, and wildlife reserves, and parts of northern Kenya that are vulnerable to attacks by bandits or Islamist militants, according to consultancy BMI Research, which estimates the pipeline won’t be ready before 2020. A lack of skilled labor, poor electricity supply, and

the difficulty of importing material and machinery into landlocked Uganda are other obstacles.

<http://qz.com/478773/kenya-and-uganda-are-building-the-worlds-longest-heated-oil-pipeline/>

“Post-Gadhafi Libya now a jihadist springboard backed by Iran, Qatar, Sudan and Turkey”, March 2015

The consolidation of a self-proclaimed Caliphate in eastern Libya provides the jihadist camp with springboard into Africa and southern Europe.

That strategic thrust, supported strongly by Qatar, Sudan, Iran, and Turkey, has already begun, and highlights the transformation of the takfiri jihadist movements, the Muslim Brothers (Ikhwan), and many of the former Al Qaida movements.

Although jihadist forces occupied Tripoli in October 2011 — as a direct result of the Western military intervention which helped bring down the Moammar al-Gadhafi Administration in Libya — they failed to consolidate power and focus on all-Islamist causes. Subsequently, Libya sank into the still-escalating fratricidal fighting between a myriad of militias and localized forces.

Starting early 2014, the jihad-sponsoring states have capitalized on the building chaos in order to transform jihadist-held parts of Libya into secure springboards for the spread of takfiri jihadism into both western Africa and southern Europe.

By early 2015, Libya no longer existed as a viable state, having morphed, at least for the time being, into a web of small fiefdoms fighting each other.

Libyan jihadists affiliated with global entities, foreign jihadists, and jihad-sponsoring states played a decisive role in the victory of the Libyan uprising and the toppling of the Gadhafi Government in 2011.

While NATO airpower was instrumental in destroying Gadhafi’s military machine, the jihadist camp was decisive in seizing power on the ground to the detriment of Libya’s myriad of indigenous tribes and clans. These contradictions are at the crux of the fratricidal fighting throughout the area of what once was Libya, and adjacent regions.

As background Iran, Sudan, and their proxies — mainly the Hamas and the Hizbullah — were the first jihadist entities on the ground in eastern Libya in 2011, both helping the anti-Gadhafi upsurge and finding out how they could benefit from the prevailing chaos.

A few Iranian and Sudanese officers had already arrived in Benghazi from Sudan in the third week of February 2011, and met with Libyan senior officers who had defected to the rebels.

In March 2011, the IRGC established a high-level command center in Benghazi. IRGC Brig.-Gen. Mehdi Rabbani — a close confidant of Quds Forces commander Qassem Soleimani and the deputy commander of the IRGC Tharallah Base in Tehran — was nominated the commander of the Libyan operation. (In December 2012, Rabbani was promoted IRGC Deputy Chief of Operations and put in charge of such key issues as the defense of the Persian Gulf.)

The on-site senior Iranian operative was Ibrahim Muhammad Judaki of the Quds Forces contingent in Lebanon. His deputy was Khalil Harb, then the Special Advisor to the Hizbullah's Secretary General in charge of cooperation with and support for Palestinian, Yemeni, and other sensitive groups. Another senior member of the Iranian group was Abdul Latif al-Ashkar, one of the main logistics experts of the Hamas who was target killed by Israel near Port Sudan, Sudan, on the night of April 6/7, 2011.

The initial mission was to expedite the purchase of weapons and ammunition for all anti-Western jihadist forces. The Iranians brought with them several millions in hard currency (dollars and euros). Special attention was paid to the purchase of chemical warfare (CW) munitions for Hamas and Hizbullah.

Tehran's objective was to provide their protégés with CW capabilities from third-party sources so that Iran would not be implicated and subjected to retaliation should Hamas or Hizbullah use these weapons against Israel. In late March 2011, the first two small convoys set on their way to Sudan via Kufra. One convoy carried tactical containers and the other a few shells. This endeavor led Israel to target and kill Abdul Latif al-Ashkar as he was preparing to ship the weapons from Sudan to the Gaza Strip via the Sinai Peninsula.

The Sunni jihadists — both Libyans and foreigners — who arrived to help their LIGF (Al-Jama'a al-Islamiyyah al-Muqatilah bi-Libya: LIFG) brethren in Cyrenaica quickly

consolidate a jihadist bastion under the Emirate's banner. One of the key principles of the 2004/5 jihadist doctrine for localized jihads articulated by Ayman al-Zawahiri and the Shura Kabira is to seize foothold for jihad, and a possible base for the jihadist trend, anywhere possible and even if in cooperation or partnership with non-Islamist elements. With Cyrenaica becoming an important bastion of jihadism, as well as a gateway to Egypt, Sudan, the Sahel, and southern Europe, it was imperative to further consolidate the jihadist safe-haven the moment conducive conditions arose. The jihadists quickly ensured that no future government of Libya would be able to undermine the LIFG-dominated emirate between Darna and Baida unless they unleashed a most violent civil war.

Indeed, the jihadists immediately started to dispatch convoys of trucks full of weapons and ammunition from eastern Libya via Chad to AQIM (Al Qaida in the Islamic Maghreb) bases in the Sahel (mainly Niger and Mali).

Meanwhile, in the Autumn of 2011, the Libyan chaos served as a cover for the consolidation of numerous jihadist entities focusing on other jihadist fronts. However, it took the intervention of various jihad-sponsoring states — mainly Qatar, Turkey, and Iran — to transform the jihadist victory in Libya into an effective springboard for the export of jihadism throughout vast regions.

The number one lesson which Doha drew from the Libya crisis — Qatar's first real surge onto the big-power politics — was that money was not enough, and that there was no substitute to actual intervention on the ground in the subversive and military operations. Hence, Doha embarked on the building of a "jihadist Foreign Legion" which would provide Qatar with the ability to intervene in Sunni contingencies, starting with the then-fledgling Syrian jihad.

The then-Qatari Chief of Staff, Maj.-Gen. Hamad bin Ali al-Attiyah, personally oversaw the military aspects of the program. The Commander in Chief was the Libyan jihadist commander Abdel Hakim Belhaj. This nomination kept him away from the turmoil in Libya and the NTC's inability to install him as either Minister of Defense or Army Chief. Belhaj's deputies were Al-Mahdi Hatari (the former commander of the Tripoli Brigade) and Kikli Adem (Belhaj's loyal right-hand man from his LIFG days). The main training facilities for the Legion were in Darna, the center of the Libyan jihadist emirate.

Between early 2011 and early 2014, the Islamist jihadist world was consumed by a great theological debate about their future in view of the grassroots intifadas which shook the Middle East. Osama bin Laden's Shura Kabira never really believed in the realistic prospects of enduring jihadist states as viable sources for the spread of jihad, and rejected the concept as a viable goal after the collapse of the Taliban's Emirate in Afghanistan.

Although bin Laden led the campaign to help the intifadas, he did not believe the nascent Islamist states like then-President Mohammed Morsi's Egypt would endure against a hostile world.

In contrast, a group of neo-salafi scholars considered the intifadas as the beginning of the fateful "End-of-Time Battle" for the Middle East. According to tradition, this apocalyptic battle would be waged in ash-Sham on the plain of Dabiq. The scholars defined the theological prerequisites for expediting this battle in what they called "the Khorasan Pledge", starting with the imperative of a jihadist caliphate.

The first such Caliphate is being implemented in al-Jazira under the new "Emir of the Faithful", Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi al-Qurashi. Another key issue dividing the jihadist world was cooperation with Shi'ite Iran, which Zawahiri encouraged given the immense benefits derived by the jihadists, and Baghdadi initially forbade on account of Sunni orthodoxy but later slightly relaxed for pragmatic reasons.

This profound theological debate (within Sunni Islamism) slowed down the consolidation of the jihadist springboards in Libya and other jihad fronts all over the world.

The consolidation of a jihadist Caliphate in eastern Libya accelerated starting early 2014 because of the need to support the Egyptian Islamist jihadists against the growing power and popularity of President Abdul Fattah al-Sisi.

In March, a wide coalition of jihadists — including the Egyptian Muslim Brothers, Hamas, and Al Qaida — started building a Free Egyptian Army in eastern Libya under Qatari, Turkish, and Iranian patronage.

The "emir" of the Free Egyptian Army (FEA) is Sharif al-Radwani. The Army's liaison officer with the Qataris is Abu-Ubaida, a veteran Al Qaida commander who had worked with the Qataris in Libya, Syria, and other sensitive projects.

The initial objectives of the FEA are to target vital installations, to storm prisons to free Muslim Brothers detainees, and to make Sisi's Egypt ungovernable. The Libyan intelligence services supported these preparations. Large quantities of weapons, vehicles and other equipment were delivered to the Egyptian groups and stored in the Darna Emirate, pending dispatch into Egypt.

Meanwhile, as of Spring 2014, the theological character of the jihadist movement in Libya had been tied intimately to the transformation of the jihadist movement in the Maghreb and the Sahel. No jihadist movement could escape the brewing schism between the traditional jihadism represented by the Al Qaida supreme leadership in Afghanistan-Pakistan and the ascent of takfiri jihadism spearheaded by the Khorasan Pledge scholars and implemented by the KHI (Al-khilafa al-Islamiya or the Islamic Caliphate) in al-Jazira.

In June 2014, AQIM leaders sought to reconcile between the Al Qaida Shura Kabira and the Khorasan Pledge scholars. In a June 22, 2014, communiqué, AQIM recognized Ayman al-Zawahiri's preeminence as "our Sheikh and Emir", and urged DI'ISH to reconcile. However, when AQIM's appeals were rejected by the Al Qaida Shura Kabira, AQIM announced its support for the DI'ISH.

On July 1, 2014, Sheikh Abdullah Othman al-Assimi posted a video-message in the name of al-Qaidat Jihad in the Maghreb and Trans-Saharan Regions. Assimi, whose real name is unknown, is the organization's leader and a prominent Islamist jurist. His home base is in the mountains and forests of Boumerdes and Tizi-Ouzou in Algeria.

"My group wants to build friendly ties with DI'ISH. You are dearer to us than our tribe and family, and you will always have our support," Assimi said. "We are still waiting for Al Qaida branches across the world to reveal their stance and declare their support for [DI'ISH]." Assimi alluded to his support for the takfiri interpretations of the laws of jihad. "After the silence of the people concerned, we wanted to show our stance for the sake of justice so that the DI'ISH jihadists know that we will not fail them. We tell all Muslims that we have seen justice in the DI'ISH approach and they are among the most obedient of Allah's people and the most dedicated to the Prophet."

This was a very important endorsement of the tenets articulated in the Khorasan Pledge.

Meanwhile, a group of Libyan mujahedin, including veterans of the Syrian jihad, announced in mid-June 2014 the formation of a takfiri jihadist group in eastern Libya called the al-Battar Brigade. The Brigade was modeled after the DI'ISH and was formally affiliated with it through Libyan mujahedin in both Libya and al-Jazira. The primary objective of the Al-Battar Brigade was to establish control over the city of Darna — the heart of Libyan Islamism and jihadism — and eradicate traitors to the jihadist takfiri cause.

“We will cut off heads, slit stomachs and fill Libya with graves” in order to attain these objectives, the Al-Battar communique said. At the same time, al-Battar Brigade continued to cooperate with Al Qaida’s Ansar Al-Sharia, the jihadist primary entity expediting the movement of jihadists and weapons between the Syria-Iraq theater and local centers such as Libya.

In late-July, regional jihadist leaders met in southern Libya in order to better coordinate operations, examine the possible unification of Maghreb and Sahel groups, and agree on a common position regarding the theological dispute between Zawahiri and Baghdadi. The gathering included senior commanders from AQIM, Ansar al-Sharia (Tunisia and Libya), Ansar Bait al-Maqdis (Egypt), El Mourabitounes and Ansar al-Din (northern Mali). By mid-August 2014, the presence of takfiri jihadists affiliated with the KHI throughout the Maghreb and the Sahel was palpable. The takfiri jihadists vastly expanded recruitment of volunteers for fighting in the ranks of the KHI in Syria-Iraq. They also oversaw the conversion of existing networks and groups to takfiri jihadism.

The process has accelerated by the return of combat veteran jihadists to the Maghreb and the Sahel.

Some of these veterans assumed command of takfiri jihadist entities and raised the banner of the Caliphate. Led by Algerian commander Luqman Abu Sakhr, the Tunisia-based Uqba Ibn Nafi Brigade formally joined the KHI. The Brigade also claimed responsibility for the July 2014 killing of 15 Tunisian Army soldiers on the border with Algeria. In mid-September 2014, senior commander Khaled Abu Suleiman (real name Gouri Abdelmalek) noted that since “the Maghreb has deviated from the true path [of jihad]” he was pulling his men from affiliation with AQIM. He announced the establishment of the Caliphate Soldiers in Algeria (Jound al-Khilafa fi Ard al-Jazayer)

and swore allegiance to Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi and the Islamic Caliphate. The Caliphate Soldiers kidnapped and beheaded a French national to demonstrate their adherence to the takfiri doctrine of Baghdadi's Caliphate. Moreover, both Abu Ayaz, the leader of Ansar al-Sharia of Tunisia, and Muhammad al-Zahawi, the leader of Ansar al-Sharia of Libya, gravitated toward takfiri jihadism as a result of deep theological discussions with Luqman Abu Sakhr.

Consequently, the main regional commanders joined the preparations for the establishment of an Islamic State in the Islamic Maghreb (ISIM). Mokhtar Belmokhtar, currently the leader of the al-Murabitun in southern Libya, is the leading candidate for the post of Emir of the ISIM. In the Autumn of 2014, he oversaw the organizing of the so-called "Salvador Triangle" in the no-man's land formed by the borders of Libya, Algeria and Niger. Cadres of al-Murabitun, al-Battar and foreign expert jihadist established three secret training camps in southern Libya. These camps serve as the center of takfiri jihadism throughout the Maghreb and the Sahel, providing expert training, organizing and equipping for several hundred jihadists at any given time.

However, the most important development affecting the jihadist trend in Libya, and the entire western Africa region, was taking place in Khartoum.

Starting in late Spring 2014, Khartoum and Tehran began to restore their surge into western Africa. It was not a simple decision for Khartoum because Sudan was by then deeply involved in sponsoring and assisting a myriad of Sunni jihadist movements throughout the Middle East. Some of these groups were vehemently anti-Shi'ite and anti-Iran takfiri jihadist groups. Moreover, Sudanese intelligence was closely cooperating with Turkish intelligence and the key conservative Sunni Gulf States led by Qatar.

In Summer 2014, Sudan President Umar al-Bashir instructed the entire national security and intelligence elite of Sudan to re-examine the country's overall defense posture in view of the prevailing and emerging threats and opportunities.

On July 1, 2014, Bashir chaired a milestone meeting in Khartoum with the country's most senior military and security officials in which the overall strategic posture of Sudan was assessed.

Special attention was paid to the strategic relations with Iran and their impact on the situation vis-à-vis Libya. Gen. Siddiq Amer, the Director General of Intelligence and

Security, told Bashir that “Iran trained for us a hundred officers in advanced technological fields and areas like decoding, spying, in addition to MI [military intelligence] crafts, and supplied us with all the necessary equipment for [Sudan’s] information war.”

Gen. Yahia Muhammad Kheir, the Minister of State for Defense, summed up Iran’s contribution to Sudan’s strategic capabilities and particularly the transfer of weapon systems from Libya.

“Two-thirds of Gadhafi’s sophisticated armaments are in our hands,” Kheir stated. Gadhafi “didn’t use them because he lacked some technique [ie: technical expertise], but our experts in collaboration with the Iranian experts managed to develop some missiles [and make them operational].” Lt.-Gen. Ismail Breima Abdel-Samad, the Chief of Staff of the Air Force, added that the Iran-built Kenana Air Base south of Khartoum was the center of the strategic program.

“Kenana Air Base is place[d] underground and designed with highly advance technologies and proper security measures. This is where we store all the cargos of weapons we receive from our friends.”

Bashir summed up the discussions by asserting Sudan’s policies and future objectives. He stressed the importance of Sudan’s continued involvement in Libya in support for the jihadist forces. He noted: “We really benefit from Gadhafi’s armaments which are in our hands, we can [further] develop them. Our allies from the Islamic movements are strong. We shall contribute in training the Libyan army. I’ve advised them to ensure that all the army and security [forces] are loyal to the Islamists. You must continue the coordination with them. Then the Libyan political decision will end up in our hands and under our control in case the Islamic movements succeeded to crush Haftar. [Tell the Libyan authorities] that we would secure the oil reserves [for them]. It is clear that the Islamists will win due to the serious support from Qatar and Iran, as you know. Today, the Libyans have joint forces with us and we are supporting them with armaments and intelligence. Tchad [Chad] is a strategic ally and we have joint forces with them. Additionally, the Chadian opposition is also under our control and we can benefit from them by keeping them as a reserve force.”

In conclusion, Bashir emphasized that Sudan's international relations must always be second to "our relations with Iran, and the Muslim Brothers, and the salafi-jihadist movements that are financed by Iran and Qatar". Sudan "cannot change our relations with Iran and our brothers" on account of "useless relationships" with Arab and Western states. Bashir stressed that these assertions stem from the quintessence of the government in Khartoum. "We are Islamic resistance revolutionaries, and we refuse the domination of America in the Arab world and [the] African continent. Our religion teaches us and encourages us to fight and terrorize the enemy, plus preparing force to confront him. Our martyrs [go] to heaven and their dead [go] to hell. [There is] no way to stop the jihad," Bashir decreed.

On Aug. 31, 2014, the entire leadership met in Khartoum for a top secret strategy formulation deliberation on the basis of the July 1, 2014, meeting with Bashir. Gen. Abd al-Rahim Muhammad Hussein, the Minister of Defense, asserted that the special relations with Iran were to remain the crux of Sudan's national security:

"I shall start with our relationship with Iran and say it is a strategic and everlasting relationship. We cannot compromise or lose it. All the advancement in our military industry is from Iran. They opened the doors of their stores of weapons for us, at a time the Arabs stood against us. The Iranian support came when we were fighting a rebellion that spread in all directions including the National Democratic Alliance. The Iranians provided us with experts and they trained our MI [Military Intelligence] and security cadres. They also trained us in weapons production and transferred to us modern technology in the military production industry. There is one full battalion of the Republican Guards still with us here and other experts who are constructing interception and spying bases in order to protect us, plus an advanced Air Defense system. They built for us Kenana and Jebel Awliya Air Force bases."

Gen. Siddiq Amer, the Director-General of Intelligence and Security, concurred and stated that "Iran is our biggest ally in the region, in terms of cooperation in the areas of intelligence and military industrial production. We have relations with all the Islamic Movements World Wide and we represent a door for Iran to all these Islamic groups." Amer reinforced an earlier comment by Hussein about the extent of Sudan's reach in the jihadist circles. Hussein noted that "the ISIS and the other jihadist movements are newly

formed and can move freely outside the traditional surveillance networks. Currently, there are twenty thousand (20,000) jihadists and fifteen (15) newly formed jihadist Movements who are scattered all over, from Morocco to Egypt, Sinai, Palestine, Lebanon, Iraq, all the Gulf States, a wide presence in Africa and Europe and nobody owns a database on that as the one we have.”

Gen. Yahya Muhammad Kheir, the Minister of State for Defense, raised the possibility of cooperating with the Gulf States on issues that include Africa.

The intelligence services of several Gulf States were seeking Sudan’s help with intelligence and contacts because the Gulf States did not know anything about the Islamist groups in Libya, Somalia, Nigeria, Mali, and the North African Arab Countries. Kheir recommended that Khartoum cooperated with the Gulf States to the extent that Sudanese interests were furthered and that Sudan’s vital interests were not affected. “We will not sacrifice our relations with the Islamists and Iran for a relationship with the Saudis and the Gulf States,” Kheir stated. Amer also saw no problem balancing between the Gulf States and Iran. “We are capable of misleading the Gulf States by taking open, declared steps and procedures towards improving diplomatic relations with them,” he assured.

The meeting also delved into Sudan’s relations with the jihadist forces in Libya and their impact on Sudan’s growing cooperation with Qatar and Turkey in sponsoring jihadist forces throughout Africa. Hussein explained that practical cooperation had already begun in Libya. He illustrated Sudan’s unique role as a mediator between Iran and the Sunni powers. In late July 2014, Hussein noted, “they [the Iranians] transported to us BM [anti-aircraft] missile launchers and their rockets using civil aviation planes. We stored them in Kenana and sold part of them to Qatar to support Libya fighters after they were subjected to attacks by the Egyptian and Emirates air forces. That helped them to achieve victory.”

Gen. Imad al-Din Adawy, the Chief of Joint Operations, elaborated on the latest developments in the cooperation with and in Libya. “Our joint forces with Tchad [Chad] are in their best state. The Libyan border is totally secured, especially after the victory of our allies (the Libya Dawn Forces) in Tripoli. We managed to deliver to them the weapons and military equipment donated by Qatar and Turkey and we formed a joint

operations room with them under one of the colonels in order to coordinate and administer the military operations. Turkey and Qatar provided us with information in favor of the revolutionaries on top of the information collected by our own agents so they can control the whole country.”

Amer pointed out to the prospects for long-term relations with Libya through the professional assistance by Sudanese Intelligence. “We have intensified the work to train and graduate Libyan MI cadres. Currently, they are doing an advanced course on Internet operation, deciphering of codes, interception of telephones and wireless radios. Their leadership requested us to train and establish for them a strong MI system.” It is through the Libyan Military Intelligence that Sudan would not only dominate Islamist-jihadist Tripoli, but also open the back door for Iran.

Meanwhile, Summer 2014 saw the building of relations and cooperation between the intelligence services of Iran, Sudan, Qatar, and Turkey in Libya and the acceptance of the central and unique role of Sudan. Back in early Summer of 2014, Nouri Abusahmain — then still the Islamist president of the Libyan General National Congress (in office between June 25, 2013, and August 4, 2014) — made a secret trip to Khartoum and requested funding and arms shipments in order to sustain the hold onto power by jihadist militias affiliated with the Muslim Brothers.

The Libyans nominated Ahmad al-Zuway, an Ikhwan official with tribal links in Sudan, as the front man for the military-intelligence cooperation with Sudan. Zuway’s first task was to oversee the flow of arms and jihadists in cars and trucks from north-western Sudan to Kufra (in the southeast of Libya’s Cyrenaica region). Consequently, the Ikhwan could expand the jihadist Dawn militias with fighters, weapons and ammunition from Sudan.

During the Summer, Sudan launched supplies by air to the Tripoli-Misrata area. The coastal highway from the Benghazi-area stockpiles in the east and the Tripoli-Misrata area in the west was blocked in several sectors, so onland traffic was impossible. Consequently, Libya’s various jihadist militias became increasingly dependent on supplies flown from Sudan over the Sahara. As the jihadist forces closed on Benghazi, Sudanese transport aircraft directly supplied the forces advancing from Darna in the east

and Misrata in the west. In early September 2014, Sudan began to directly supply the jihadist Dawn militias in the Tripoli area.

Transport aircraft flew from Sudan, landed and refueled in Kufra, and continued to the Tripoli airport of Mitiga, which is controlled by the Dawn militias. These supplies enabled the Dawn militias to sustain their hold over the vital Tripoli-Misrata area, forcing the Libyan politicians opposed to the Islamists to escape to Tobruk near the Egyptian border. Meanwhile, to expedite the flow of arms and ammunition, Sudan also began to supply Kufra by air in addition to the ongoing truck convoys.

By Autumn 2014, Doha decided to institutionalize and formalize the cooperation with Khartoum in order to ensure that it was not banished from Libya and other up-and-coming jihadist fronts, mainly in Africa. During October 2014, Doha and Khartoum negotiated several secret and not-secret Sudanese-Qatari agreements. In early November 2014, Qatari Minister of Defense Hamad bin Ali al-Attiyah and the Sudanese Minister of Defense Gen. Abd al-Rahim Muhammad Hussein signed a comprehensive military cooperation agreement in Doha. The signing ceremony was attended by the Chief-of-Staff of the Qatari Armed Forces, Maj.-Gen. Ghanim bin Shaheen al-Ghanim, who handles the day-to-day implementation.

The agreement covers “training, formation, exchange of expertise, joint exercises, joint investments, exchange of visits, promotion of cooperation between the two armies, and the exchange of military studies on the level of military academic institutions”. The agreement also provided for “the exchange of expertise in logistics and industrial fields including detached service of officers and experts along with the military medical cooperation”; that is, Qatari participation in the Sudanese out of country endeavors. As part of the military cooperation agreement, Qatar committed to “supply Sudan with the natural gas”. In the secret agreement on intelligence cooperation, Qatar committed to sponsoring and funding a myriad of Sudanese (and Iranian) jihadist initiatives mostly throughout Africa.

It is understood in Doha that in the context of the new bilateral relations, Khartoum would intercede with Tehran not to undermine the al-Thani rule in Qatar and to continue to use Qatar as the lucrative main venue for illegal technology imports and sanctions-busting oil and gas exports.

In late-November 2014, Maj.-Gen. Ghanim bin Shaheen led a large delegation of military and intelligence officials on a followup visit to Khartoum. He was hosted by Sudan's Gen. Hussein. The delegations discussed the further expansion and consolidation of the special relations and cooperation between the armed forces of Qatar and Sudan. Concurrently, Sudan's Information Minister, Dr Ahmed Bilal, arrived in Doha in order to address the public political aspects of the new relations. Bilal delivered a speech praising "the relations between Qatar and Sudan" and describing them as "strong, long-standing and well-developed ties".

Bilal was effusive in his praise of official Qatar. "The people of Sudan owe a debt of gratitude to the Emir HH Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad Al Thani, the Father Emir HH Sheikh Hamad bin Khalifa Al Thani, the Government and people of Qatar for the support extended to Sudan in all conditions and in all fields."

Back in September 2014, 15 Qatar-sponsored KHI operatives led by an Egyptian and a Saudi Arabian senior commanders arrived in Darna from Syria via Turkey. The delegation included top jurist Turki al-Bin'ali and Abu Nabil al-Anbari, the former "emir" of Iraq's Anbar province. Their mission was to establish a KHI branch in Libya. By late October 2014, more than 50 Darna jihadists publicly pledged allegiance to Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi and declared their commitment to establishing a Darna Caliphate in Cyrenaica. Using the weapons and funds received from Sudan, they built an 800-strong force operating at least six camps outside Darna as well as a few large training facilities in the Green Mountains for Libyan, Egyptian and foreign jihadists. By mid-November 2014, they seized control of the entire city of Darna with the KHI's black banners flying over all government buildings.

On Dec. 12, 2014, the Mujahedin Shura Council of Cyrenaica urged all Islamist forces to join a coalition led by the Darna Caliphate, and all the Islamist militias in eastern Libya, including the Sudan-sponsored Libyan Dawn forces, recognized the new coalition.

The jihadists celebrated the announcement with a military parade in Darna led by tanks and technicals adorned with black flags. Combat proven commanders from Syria, Algeria, Tunisia and Egypt arrived in Darna from the KHI to help expand the training and force building efforts. They established three major training camps in Nawfalayah (near Sirte), Sabratha, and Darna for Libyan and African fighters. Sudanese military

technicians also arrived in Darna to build communications facilities as well as maintain the combat aircraft, tanks, artillery and rockets in the jihadists' arsenal. By month end, these Sudanese technicians were instrumental in servicing and arming the few combat aircraft seized by the Libyan Dawn, and thus enabling the Libyan pilots to bomb and set aflame several oil tanks in the Sidra port.

With the Darna Caliphate secure, Sudan and its allies — Qatar, Turkey, and, behind the scenes, Iran — could capitalize on the huge stockpiles left there by the Gadhafi Government in order to support African jihads. For example, the support for the Boko Haram was put under a single manager: a coordinator for the communications, weapons supplies and financing delivered from Libya via Sudan. Known only by nom de guerre Abu Kudes, he is an Egyptian, an Ikhwan activist and originally a “professor” from Al-Azhar University, Cairo, who was involved in earlier jihadist logistical efforts in Bosnia-Herzegovina and in Turkey-Syria.

In late 2014, Abu Kudes was coordinating the delivery of weapons from stockpiles in Cyrenaica with the assistance of logistical experts from Sudanese and Turkish intelligence. Qatari intelligence was funding all the jihadist logistical operations in Cyrenaica.

By early 2015, the uppermost leadership of the Islamic Caliphate started to openly highlight the strategic importance of Libya: that is, the Libyan Wilayat (Province) of the KHI. A clear manifestation of the trend was the publication in early January 2015 of an essay called “Libya: The Strategic Gateway for the Islamic State” in the KHI’s main electronic venue. The gist of the essay was the imperative for the KHI to expand into, and then surge from, Libya. The author identified himself as a Libyan supporter of the Caliphate.

The essay explains that “by the grace of God to Libya, God bestowed upon this country a strategic position and immense potential. These are things from which it would be possible to derive great benefits if they were efficiently exploited. Unfortunately, some supporters do not recognize the extent of the Libyan arena, the proliferation of variant weaponry within it, its geographic dimensions and its critical environs. Sufficed to say, Libya looks upon the sea, the desert, mountains, and six states: Egypt, Sudan, Chad, Niger, Algeria, and Tunisia.”

The author emphasizes the unique potential of Libya as a springboard for a jihadist invasion of southern Europe. Libya, he writes, “has a long coastline and looks upon the southern Crusader states, which can be reached with ease by even a rudimentary boat and note that the number of ‘illegal immigration’ trips from this coast is massive, estimated to be as high as 500 people a day, as a low estimate. According to many [of these immigrants], it is easily possible to pass through Maritime Security Checkpoints and arrive in cities. If this was even partially exploited and developed strategically, pandemonium could be wrought in the southern Europe. It is even possible that there could be a closure of shipping lines because of the targeting of Crusader ships and tankers.”

The essay concluded by reiterating the geostrategic importance of Libya to the expansion of the Caliphate in and beyond the Greater Middle East. “My brothers, Libya, by the permission of God, is the key to Egypt, the key to Tunisia, Sudan, Mali, Algeria, and Niger too. It is the anchor from which can be reached Africa and the Islamic Maghreb.”

The author urged the takfiri jihadist trend to expedite the liberation of Libya before the West realized the threat Libya constituted itself and before the West would attempt to intervene anew in Libya. “It is imperative that the mujahedin move to try to prevent the continuation of [the Crusader] plan and fix the differences between Libyans so that they may direct their energies towards the real enemy, the real tyrants, those who have as their masters the Crusaders. If that happens, which it will, if God permits it, then no force will stand in the way of the mujahedin.

Not only will pressure on the land of the Caliphate in ash-Sham be relieved, but the territories of the Caliphate in ash-Sham, Iraq, and Hijaz will be linked with those of their brothers in Libya and the Islamic Maghreb and the defeat of all regimes and tyrants in their way will be enabled. That is not difficult for God.”

In February 2015, the Caliphate in eastern Libya was ready to surge into the jihadist center stage.

The KHI uppermost leadership concurred and facilitated the dissemination of the Libyan Caliphate’s message in its primary venue, Al-Hayat Media. On February 15, 2015, the Libyan Caliphate posted a graphic five-minute video titled “A Message Signed With Blood To The Nation Of The Cross”. The video began with the marching and beheading

of 21 Egyptian Copts who had been recently kidnapped in Libya. Dressed in Guantanamo-like orange jump suits, the Copts were lined up along a beach and abruptly beheaded by black-dressed mujahedin. The camera then focused of the sea water red with blood.

A jihadist commander dressed in military fatigues delivered the message in American-accented English. “All praise is due to Allah the strong and mighty,” he declared at the start of the video. “And may blessings and peace be upon the ones sent by the sword as a mercy to all the worlds.” He connected the “End-of-Time Battle” in al-Jazira with the decisive surge on Christendom to be launched from Libya.

“Oh people, recently you have seen us on the hills of ash-Sham and Dabiq’s plain, chopping off the heads that have been carrying the cross for a long time, and today, we are on the south of Rome, on the land of Islam, Libya, sending another message.

“All Crusaders: safety for you will be only wishes especially if you are fighting us all together. Therefore we will fight you all together. The sea you have hidden Sheikh Osama bin Laden’s body in, we swear to Allah, we will mix it with your blood.” After the jihadist leader finished his declaration, the line of mujahedin commenced the beheading of the 21 Copts kneeling in front of them. Once the slaughter was over, the commander stepped forward for a final statement.

“And we will conquer Rome, by Allah’s permission, the promise of our Prophet, peace be upon him,” he declared.

<http://www.worldtribune.com/archives/post-gadhafi-libya-morphs-country-jihadist-springboard-backed-iran-qatar-sudan-turkey/>

“Chad–Cameroon Petroleum Development and Pipeline Project”,

1st, 2nd Paragraphs

The Chad–Cameroon Petroleum Development and Pipeline Project is a controversial project to develop the production capacity of oilfields near Doba in southern Chad, and to create a 1,070-kilometre (660 mi) pipeline to transport the oil to a floating storage and offloading vessel (FSO), anchored off the coast of Cameroon, near the city of Kribi. It is operated by ExxonMobil (40%) and also sponsored by partners forming the

consortium, Petronas (35%) and Chevron (25%). The governments of Chad and Cameroon also have a combined 3% stake in the project.[1] The project was launched on October 18, 2000, and completed in June 2003 (the official inauguration took place in October of the same year).

It was largely funded by multilateral and bilateral credit financing provided by Western governments. The International Finance Corporation, the private-sector arm of the World Bank, provided \$100 million of debt-based financing, and France's export credit agency COFACE and the U.S. Export-Import Bank each provided \$200 million; private lenders coordinated by the IFC provided an additional \$100 million.[2]

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Chad%E2%80%93Cameroon_Petroleum_Development_and_Pipeline_Project

“North Africa’s Menace : AQIM's Evolution and the U.S. Policy Response”

Page 2

In its earliest manifestation, AQIM was organized around the goal of ousting the “apostate” junta in Algeria. Only in more recent years has it officially joined Bin Laden’s global jihad and spilled outside Algeria into the Maghreb and the Sahel. While it has wrapped itself in the banner of global jihad, AQIM remains largely an Algerian organization focused on Algeria and North Africa. Understanding AQIM requires at least a brief historical excavation of its origins in the anti-colonial and anti-French context of Algerian politics of the early 1990s. It also requires understanding the connections of some AQIM leaders to the anti-Soviet jihad in Afghanistan in the 1980s. The anti-European, local, and anti-colonial dimension of AQIM’s history appears to be the group’s core driver, but the shared background of its leaders as mujahedeen in Afghanistan links it to a broader global current of Islamist militancy that also encompasses the core of Al Qaeda. These two interwoven strands of its historical origins are essential to understanding the group’s current nature and future direction.

Prior to 2007, AQIM went by the name Groupe Salafiste pour la Prédication et le Combat (GSPC). In the late 1980s, the Algerian government undertook reforms ostensibly intended to open up the largely authoritarian, one-party system that had held

power since Algeria won its independence from France in the 1960s. In 1991, when an Islamist political coalition was on the verge of winning control of the parliament, the Algerian military intervened, annulling the election and breaking up the Islamist parties. In reaction, some Islamists formed a terrorist group called the Groupe Islamiste Armé (GIA) and began a bloody insurgency against the government that lasted through much of the 1990s. By the mid-1990s, however, the devastation the GIA had inflicted on Algeria's largely Sunni Muslim citizenry had undermined its popular support. It was also viewed as having been thoroughly penetrated by Algerian government agents. In large part to escape from the pall that had grown over it, the GIA broke apart and the primary branch rebranded itself as the GSPC in 1998.

Page 3

Meanwhile, Bin Laden was increasingly seeking to export his brand and encourage the development of like-minded jihadi offshoots elsewhere in the world. Al Qaeda leaders in Pakistan were also seeking to exploit longstanding tensions in France over the rights of French Muslim citizens, many of whom were from Algeria, by denouncing the French government's allegedly anti-Muslim policies. Ayman al-Zawahiri, then Bin Laden's deputy, for example, declared that France's ban on headscarves in public schools and efforts to prevent families from punishing allegedly "debauched women" were insults to Islam. These proclamations appealed to the vehemently anti-French sentiments within the GSPC.

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AQIM's relationship with core Al Qaeda is essentially a marriage of convenience. The two groups can share the same basic jihadist outlook and gain from cooperation without sharing exactly the same goals or adopting the same strategies to achieve them. The groups can benefit from cooperating without any strict convergence in their intentions. They can share the same basic ideas but have very different capabilities

More fundamentally, even if Droukhal and others share a common background with Al Qaeda in Pakistan, their social and political environment differs in important ways from that of an Egyptian such as Ayman al-Zawahiri or a Saudi such as Bin Laden. From the parochial Algerian perspective of the GSPC, France rather than the United States is the "far enemy"—the primary outside nemesis in the struggle to realize the dream of an

Islamist state under shari'a law. AQIM thus frequently plays on anti-colonial sentiment in its propaganda. Core Al Qaeda is a globally oriented organization with a multinational membership and a sweeping target deck, dedicated to removing regimes it considers apostate along with any semblance of Western presence in the Muslim world. For the GSPC, and now for the main body of AQIM,⁹ the dominant organizing principle has always been removing the regime in Algiers.

Of course, AQIM members detest the United States and would cheer to see Americans die. But the priorities of someone with Droukdal's background—or that of his main recruiting base—differ from those of core Al Qaeda. Droukdal's decision to side with Al Qaeda came at a moment when core Al Qaeda's propaganda was attacking France—hardly a coincidence. For Al Qaeda's core leadership in Pakistan, the chance to align with AQIM offered several advantages that had little or nothing to do with ideology. To begin with, the appearance of expansion to a new continent was good for public relations at a time when Al Qaeda faced worldwide counterterrorism operations. Expansion into Africa demonstrated growing reach, continued resilience, and the type of energy that wins recruits. AQIM, in other words, supports Al Qaeda's global aspirations by its very existence; it need not attack the West to do so. Spawning affiliates also offered Bin Laden the hope of diverting U.S. and allied counterterrorism resources away from Pakistan. For him, as now for Zawahiri, AQIM can burden and distract the United States and its allies from Pakistan (although, of course, AQIM's leaders may be less comfortable playing the role of decoy).

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AQIM today is thus increasingly fragmented. Similarly, the nature of its relationship with other militant and criminal groups in the region is fluid and changing with circumstance. AQIM's cooperation with the Nigerian jihadist group Boko Haram and its offshoot Ansaru has attracted recent attention—in large part because the perpetrator of the attempted 2009 “Christmas bombing,” Omar Farouk Abdulmutallab, was a Nigerian. Abdulmutallab, however, was linked to Al Qaeda via AQAP (Al Qaida in the Arabian Peninsula) and the relevance of his Nigerian background is limited. AQIM's cooperation with Boko Haram and Ansaru also appears to have focused more on kidnappings and roadside attacks than on sophisticated terrorist techniques.

http://www.rand.org/pubs/research_reports/RR415.html

“The Iranian-Saudi Proxy Wars Come to Mali”, August 2015

<http://foreignpolicy.com/2015/08/19/the-iran-saudi-proxy-wars-come-to-mali-shiite-sunni-islam/>

“South Sudan – Oil”

<http://www.globalsecurity.org/military/world/war/south-sudan-oil.htm>

“Nigeria, Algeria agree to build Sahara gas link”, July 2009

1st , 2nd Paragraphs

Nigeria, Algeria and Niger on Friday signed an agreement to build a multi-billion dollar gas pipeline across the Sahara that could send up to 30 billion cubic metres a year of supplies to Europe.

The idea of piping gas thousands of kilometres across the Sahara was first dreamt up more than 30 years ago, but the project remained on the drawing board pending a concrete agreement between neighbouring states and a clear funding plan.

7th Paragraph

France's Total (TOTF.PA), Royal Dutch Shell (RDSa.L) and Russia's Gazprom (GAZP.MM) have all expressed interest in helping Nigeria's state-run NNPC and Algeria's counterpart Sonatrach in the project.

Gazprom and NNPC agreed to invest at least \$2.5 billion to explore and develop Africa's biggest oil and gas sector, including building the first part of the Trans-Sahara pipeline.

[ID:nLO549518]

Some analysts see Russia's keen interest in Nigeria as an attempt to maintain its grip on Europe's natural gas supplies.

<http://uk.reuters.com/article/nigeria-algeria-pipeline-idUKL345766620090703?sp=true>

“Iran hails death of long-time ally Qaddafi as ‘great victory’”, October 2011

<https://www.alarabiya.net/articles/2011/10/21/172895.html>

“Sudan and Egypt: Friends or foes?”, October 2014

1st, 2nd, 3rd, 4th Paragraphs

The budding new relationship between Sudanese and Egyptian leaders is proving to be a curious one.

Sudanese President, Omar al-Bashir and his Egyptian counterpart, Abdel Fatah al-Sisi met on Saturday in Cairo, and agreed to form a joint committee to deal with bilateral relations on the top presidential level. This followed Sisi’s first visit to Khartoum in June.

Reflective of the complexity and confusion in the wider region, where alliances are forged, broken and forged again as circumstances change, these two neighbouring countries, historically intertwined since antiquity, have been at odds after Egypt’s Mohammed Morsi was ousted. Each side has also been accused of arming and supporting rebels on either side of the Islamist/nationalist regional proxy war, particularly in Libya.

The Sudanese regime, led by an Islamist movement is accused of supporting Islamist rebels in Libya, Sinai and beyond. Sisi has continued a crackdown on the Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt since he took power.

<http://www.middleeasteye.net/columns/sudan-and-egypt-friends-or-foes-1104212263>

“How al-Qaeda and Islamic State are competing for al-Shabaab in Somalia”,
January 2016

<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/islamic-state/12015075/How-al-Qaeda-and-Islamic-State-are-fighting-for-al-Shabaab-affections-in-Somalia.html>

“Iran Seeking 60bn from Total Mitsui for Petrochemicals”, July 2016

http://www.gulfinthemedia.com/index.php?id=784670&news_type=Economy&lang=en

“France to send heavy weapons to Iraq – Hollande”, July 2016

<http://af.reuters.com/article/worldNews/idAFKCN10218A>

“French jets bomb ISIS stronghold of Raqqa, Syria; few may have been killed”, November 2015

<http://edition.cnn.com/2015/11/16/middleeast/france-raqqa-airstrikes-on-isis/>

“Paris terror attacks: ISIS bombed by France in new revenge airstrikes after president declares 'we are at war'”, November 2015

1' 2, 3, 4 Paragraphs

France has struck at the heart of Islamic State in a series of overnight bombings as the military continue to hit back following the Paris terror attacks.

The new strikes, which were carried out in the stronghold of ISIS in Raqqa, Syria, targeted a command centre and a recruitment centre for jihadists.

Carried out overnight, the strike included 10 fighter jets which were launched from the United Arab Emirates and Jordan.

It comes after French president Francois Hollande declared yesterday that France was "at war".

<http://www.mirror.co.uk/news/world-news/paris-terror-attacks-isis-bombed-6845176>

“France's Saddam deals revealed”, October 2004

1st, 2nd, 3rd, 4th, 5th, 6th Paragraphs

Dramatic new details of France's secret dealings with Saddam Hussein's regime have emerged as part of a fresh corruption investigation into alleged illicit oil deals.

Three executives of France's largest oil corporation have been charged in Paris over claims that they funnelled millions of dollars through a Swiss company in order to bribe officials to gain oil deals in Iraq and Russia.

The disclosure will embarrass President Jacques Chirac as it follows on from claims last week by the Iraq Survey Group that Saddam indirectly paid French politicians and individuals to gain support for lifting UN sanctions and influencing French policy. The ISG's claims were dismissed by Chirac as politically motivated.

In the Nineties, French oil companies Total and Elf-Aquitaine won the rights to develop the \$3.4 billion Bin Umar project and the vast Majnoon field in southern Iraq. Total, which acquired Elf, had been unable to exploit these fields while the UN trade embargo against Iraq was still in place. US hawks have accused France of opposing the Iraq war in order to protect its vast oil interests in the country. The three Total executives, arrested after raids on the firm's French headquarters on 29 September, have all been charged with complicity in the improper use of corporate funds.

French investigating magistrate Philippe Courroye, who has been probing these payments since 2002, is examining the movements of funds between a Total subsidiary in Bermuda and a Swiss company, Teliac SA. The Swiss firm is alleged to have served as an intermediary for some \$20 million in payments by the oil group into offshore accounts in the Bahamas and Cayman Islands between 1996 and 2001. Courroye has not given any details of what oil deals the alleged bribes were linked to. Total's former head of operations, Jean-Michel Tournier, is alleged to have told the French authorities the company used the Geneva-based firm to pay bribes to 'certain beneficiaries' in return for gaining access to reserves in Iraq and Russia.

Total is known to have carried out a sustained lobbying campaign with the Saddam regime with a view to putting itself in prime position to gain from any lifting of UN sanctions. Total confirmed that certain past and present employees had been questioned but said this had been part of an investigation into money laundering which was not aimed against Total itself.

<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2004/oct/10/france.iraq>

“African Nations Sign Deal for Trans-Saharan Gas Pipeline”, July 2009

1, 2, 3, 4, 5 Paragraphs

Nigeria's state oil company said Nigeria, Algeria and Niger signed an agreement to create a \$10 billion trans-Saharan gas pipeline to ship gas to Europe.

Managing director Mohammed Barkindo said Friday the project was approved by energy ministers from the three governments.

Nigeria's energy minister, Rilwanu Lukman, said the countries are now looking for partners for the project.

Europe currently depends on Russia for much of its gas and is seeking new sources and routes, and the European Union recently lent its support to the project.

Total SA and Eni SpA have expressed interest in joining the trans-Saharan pipeline project.

<http://www.wsj.com/articles/SB124663481393592621>