

MOROCCO'S STRATEGY IN DEALING WITH SAHEL THREATS

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by

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ABSTRACT

MOROCCO'S STRATEGY IN DEALING WITH SAHEL THREATS, by Major Al-Amrani Abdelaziz, 59 pages.

The security challenges in Morocco revolve around several threats that have specific characteristics stemming from Morocco's geopolitical situation. Faced with these multifaceted threats, Morocco must be aware of the sources and levels of transnational organized crime affecting its territory to be able to prevent its growth, hence the need for an effective security strategy.

The emergence of terrorist armed groups, massive migratory flows, and the increased illegal activities are the main threats in the Sahel that can affect the security in North Africa. Today's challenges require North African countries to adopt a comprehensive approach that reconciles development and security capacity building in the Sahel.

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ACRONYMS

ACSRT	African Centre for Studies and Research on Terrorism
AMU	Arab Maghreb Union
AQIM	Al Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb
AU	African Union
DIME	Diplomacy, Information, Military, Economics
GSPC	Group for Preaching and Combat
IS	Islamic State
JOSCO	Joint Operational Staff Committee
MUJAO	Movement for Unity and Jihad in West Africa
NA	North African
NetPeace	Network of Journalists for Peace and Security in Africa
OCP	Office Cherifien des Phosphates
SSB	Sahel-Saharan Band
UFL	Unit of the Fusion and Liaison
UMA	Union Maghreb Arab

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Background

A natural border between the northern part of the Maghreb and sub-Saharan Africa, the region composed of the Sahel and the Sahara, has been known in recent years as the Sahel-Saharan Band (SSB). The Sahel is a transition area between the Saharan desert in the north and the Sudan zone in the south. It is a strip about 5,500 kilometers long and roughly four hundred kilometers wide. In this semi-desert space, the dry season is particularly marked and lasts about six months. However, the Sahel is not empty; people, vegetation, and animals occupy this challenging environment, which is particularly subject to climatic hazards. For several decades, this region has been experiencing ethnic, security, and economic crises, which have slowed down its emergence on the regional and international scene (Keenan 2007).

It has always been a harsh and sophisticated space, made up of several ethnic groups living in a forced coexistence dictated by national borders imposed in the colonial era, and this space struggles to assimilate this geopolitical re-composition. Thus, at the beginning of the twentieth century, most of Africa's borders were established, heralding the configuration of nation-states in gestation. These frontiers, drawn up according to agreements between colonial powers, ignored the ethnic, linguistic, and religious realities of Africans. Ignorance of these realities has led to conflicts that have often resulted in open conflicts. The Arabs, Tuaregs, and black Africans were all grouped in a strip of French and British territory that crossed the vast expanse south of the Sahara to become the present-day states of Mauritania, Mali, Niger, Chad, and Sudan. During the last

decade, four of these countries (Chad, Mali, Niger, and Sudan) have been in the grip of rebellions or civil wars due mainly to ethnic or racial divisions. Also, these conflicts have occurred for multiple reasons: political, economic, religious, etc.

The Sahelian space, has become a real crisis polygon, marked by fault lines inscribed in time and history, and which continues to produce their effects by more new elements that have been added to and aggravate the vulnerabilities of this Sahelian region. Moreover, one of the significant factors of insecurity in the SSB lies in the effects of the Algerian civil war, which, despite the signing of the amnesty in 2005, dissidents founded the Salafist Group for Preaching and Combat (GSPC). They found refuge in the vastness of the desert, sailing from southern Algeria to Mauritania and northern Mali (Keenan 2007).

Politically, there is a community of the Sahel-Saharan States, an organization that includes about thirty different countries, covering from Morocco to Kenya (Security Council Report 2019). It can also consider that the SSB refers to the group of states formed by the superposition of the Sahel and Sahara countries. There are, therefore, significant divergences in the delimitation of the area, and this situation makes regional cooperation difficult. In beyond these geographical considerations, the region characterizes by its multiplicity, whether religious, cultural, economic, or political. Diversity is proving to be an asset for this region as far as it gives it, through its population and territories, a significant wealth. However, since the early 2000s, this Sahel-Saharan area, which includes both North African and Sahelian countries, has increasingly been considered a sensitive and at-risk region by the international community. As a result, it is now on the radar screen of the company because of several

risks that could have systemic consequences. Thus, the security situation in Mali is the sum of the crises in the Sahel. This assertion is both the observation and the result of the multidimensional crisis that Mali has been going through since the beginning of 2012 following the outbreak of the fourth Tuareg rebellion combined with the military coup d'état that took place on the night of 21 to 22 March 2012 (Security Council Report 2019). Based on this alarming situation, North Africa countries directly in contact with the Sahel and the gateway to the Mediterranean side, especially Morocco, remain the most concerned by this insecurity.

Security Threats from the Sahel

The Sahel, a strip south of the Sahara from Mauritania to central Sudan, is preyed upon by various terrorist armed groups (Security Council Report 2019). Among these armed groups that have attracted the most media attention are Islamist groups, which have proliferated in the region since the early 2000s (Kfir 2018). These are divided into two with groups aligned to Daech on the one hand and those who have sworn allegiance to Al Qaeda on the other. In the first part, Daech is represented in the region by the organization, the Islamic State in the Greater Sahara, which operates in Niger, Mali, and Burkina Faso (European Council on Foreign Relations 2019). The movement has the support of Boko Haram, an organization from Nigeria but also active in south-eastern Niger, Cameroon, and the Lake Chad region. Boko Haram has, moreover, changed its name to formalize this alliance, now presenting itself as Daech in West Africa (Felter 2018). On the second part, Al Qaeda is present in the region through its local branch Al Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM). In March 2017, one of its subsidiaries, the

Emirate of the Sahara allied with two other local jihadist groups: the Malian Ansar-Dine and the Algerian Al-Mourabitoune (Abu al-Ma'ali 2012).

Sahel countries are experiencing several political and cultural conflicts. One of the main conflicts is between the Peule and Tuareg communities in a cross-border area north of Niamey, the Nigerian capital, and south of Gao, Mali's city. In 2011, the formation of the Azawad Liberation Movement composed of Tuaregs, and its rebellion in 2012 rekindled tensions between the two communities (Early Warning Project 2018). In particular, the MLNA demanded the autonomy of northern Mali (Le Monde 2013). Several initiatives of the international community launched an attempt to stabilize the region. The Sahel hosts two missions—the UN mission, UNMISMA, and the European mission to train the Malian army—as well as the French Operation Barkhane with four thousand troops. A regional initiative has also been implemented through the G5 Sahel group, involving Mauritania, Chad, Mali, Niger, and Burkina Faso.

Finally, terrorist groups have changed their operating practices, changing them as they mutated. Al Qaeda has become a kind of multinational crime organization with subsidiaries in all continents, ready to act according to their programs. Thus, they are no longer an army carrying out terrorist attacks or group attacks, although a few elements often perpetrate acts with a definite media impact, making it a challenge to track them down.

The same logic of autonomy also applies to action and motives. In this new perspective, small groups of terrorist's acts without a mission order with an attitude that is close to the execution of Mafia contracts. Working ideologically on obedience, these groups are activated according to a schedule established by a moral authority that they

recognize by choosing a target in the agenda without any direct order. AQIM and Ançar Eddine promised to carry out attacks outside the Sahel after Operation Serval.

The Sahel countries are undergoing significant migratory flows due to demographic explosions, climate change, and especially the lack of efficient responses to secure this region (United Nations Population Fund 2020). Sahelian countries are experiencing rapid demographic dynamics due to high fertility while mortality is falling rapidly, and undergoing a natural increase much higher than net migration.

Environmental constraints are severe because the ground is unfertile and the climate is arid or semi-arid, and agriculture is dependent on a capricious rainfall regime. Also, incomes are low, urbanization is in its beginning stages, industrialization is in its infancy, and the level of education is particularly low. Population projections for 2100 predict colossal population growth, which seems incompatible with environmental constraints. The level of economic growth will produce more significant flows of migrants in the coming decades, especially as the region is politically and socially unstable.

The other major factor that will undoubtedly contribute to the conflicts in the Sahel and the resulting migration is climate change. As highlighted in a recent study, the region “is one of the hot spots of climate change (Climate Centre 2018).” The existing population, which depends mostly on agriculture, is threatened by ever more unpredictable weather patterns, more frequent droughts and floods, and land degradation. Environmental shocks, insecurity, chronic famine, and malnutrition are also dangerously symbiotic interdependencies in the Sahel. Climate change in the Sahel is a trigger for internal or cross-border migration leading to instability in the region.

The emigration in the Maghreb became a massive and essential phenomenon in the early 1990s, reaching its peak in the 2000s. The size of the numbers set in motion and their durability are indicative of the importance of the phenomenon. Its impact as a factor of socio-spatial transformation that strongly affects the region. A hundred thousand people pass through the Maghreb each year, whereas, in the latter, they are about one and a half million in Libya, 300,000 in Mauritania, almost as many in Algeria, and tens of thousands in Tunisia and Morocco (International Organization for Migration 2018).

The Sahel also has many facets and is displayed in different ways in a region that has become a real Eldorado for the emergence of illegal trafficking (United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime 2011). Indeed, the flows of organized crime have found their place in it, ranging from the trafficking of illegal migrants, estimated at between 65,000 and 120,000 per year, to the smuggling of small arms and light weapons, with about eight million pieces circulating in West Africa, including more than 100,000 Kalashnikovs in the Sahel, to the trafficking of drugs. Also, organized crime, including trans-Saharan terrorism, has been established as a promising niche market through a growing capitalist dynamic in an environment of extreme poverty. Secondly, there are mainly two prohibited drug trafficking corridors in Africa, namely heroin in the East and cocaine in the West. The evolution of illicit trafficking flows, which are particularly profitable in terms of turnover, is all the more important as it remains closely linked to the phenomenon of the proliferation of large-scale corruption in the various countries of the region (NATO Strategic Direction–South. 2018). A symptom of political and economic dysfunction in the Sahelian States, this common and widespread practice undermines the proper functioning of all the institutions of the Sahelian States. The complicity between

social and family networks and State border control officials, in particular police, customs, gendarmes, coastguards, and the military, is often the cornerstone that perpetuates these practices and allows the flow of organized crime in all its forms. Finally, the Sahel has been an area of heavy traffic for a long time, nearly 30 percent of Sahelians are chronically food insecure, and 50 percent of them live on less than a dollar a day. The strongest of the battalion of these desert mercenaries are recruited from among the young, in despair and idleness, especially since the strengthening of the borders of transit countries. Young agile, energetic, and knowledgeable on the ground at their fingertips, qualities sought by arms traffickers, who use them as right-hand man, bodyguards, guides, transporters, or dealers. Also, the complicit silence of some tribes and their movement, which further complicates the task of arms dealer hunters. To date, it is difficult to accurately define the countries and supply locations of arms traffickers operating in the Sahel, but some analysts refer to reservoirs as armed groups in the region.

Purpose of the Study

The study's objective is to draw up a set of solutions enabling the Kingdom of Morocco to face the various threats coming from the Sahel.

Problem Statement

The emergence of armed groups, massive migratory flows, and increased illegal activities are the main threats in the Sahel that can affect the security in North Africa.

Research Questions

1. What should Morocco's strategy be to deal with the various threats coming from the Sahel, and how must it work with partner Nations to achieve it?
2. What are the political, socio-economic, and security commitments of North African countries to address these challenges?
3. What are the fundamentals of collective security?

Assumption

Given that the majority of North African countries do not enjoy political stability, collective security in North Africa (Union Maghreb Arab: UMA) will be difficult to achieve. No member country of North Africa can react alone to the threats of the Sahel.

Limitations

Collective security is a broad and complicated concept. However, this analysis will focus on threats or conflicts specific to the Sahel region. The inability to interview North African countries' staff is a restriction to this research. With the critical situation in Libya, and the current protests in Algeria, what would be Morocco's policy and strategy to deal with these various threats?

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

While the Sahel crisis could have been a unifying factor for the Maghreb states or at least a common external constraint is justifying more significant consultation between them. It has, on the contrary, stirred up Maghreb rivalries and further delayed the relaunch of the regional integration dynamic blocked since 1994. It is in scattered ranks that the Maghreb states developed their national security policies towards the Sahel despite some timid attempts to establish a common and integrated strategy.

Algeria

Algeria has always sought to exert considerable influence in the Sahel region. Since the outbreak of the Tuareg rebellion in 1990, it has been at the forefront of the creation of cooperation mechanisms in the Sahel. Setting in motion her diplomatic machine, she was the architect of peace agreements between the rebels of Niger, Mali, and the respective governments (1995 and 2005). In the same way, it was at the origin of the establishment in 2010 of the so-called “field” countries group (Algeria, Mauritania, Mali, and Niger). The main actors concerned by the situation in the Sahel, which took initiatives such as the creation of the Joint Operational Staff Committee in Tamanrasset in 2010 as well as the Merger and Liaison Unit (UFL), an intelligence-gathering unit based in Algiers. Since 2004, Algeria has also hosted the African Centre for Studies and Research on Terrorism (ACSRT), created at its initiative within the framework of the African Union. And to avoid unnecessary and counterproductive duplication with these

cooperation mechanisms, Algeria hoped that all actions towards the Sahel should complement and not replace this regional approach (Baghzouz 2014, 197).

Tunisia and Libya

Tunisia and Libya face upheavals in their internal orders as a result of popular revolutions that have affected them since the end of 2010. Post-revolutionary Tunisia struggles to have an African policy. Although it has no borders with the sub-Saharan region, it is no less affected by the upheavals coming from the Sahel region. The democratic progress in this country should pave the way for a stronger commitment to regional issues in the Maghreb and Africa. But for the time being, it is less the Maghreb or Sahel-Saharan order that worries the new Tunisian authorities than the request of the Tunisian house. This order concerns, first and foremost, the country's security and stability. Confiscated by the Salafists, the Jasmine Revolution has not yet led to a stable, peaceful order in Tunisia. The risk of political and social instability accompanying the rise of the Salafists is real in the general context of the Arab revolutions, which have not yet benefited the real actors of democratic change.

Libya is in a similar position to Tunisia with the fundamental difference that the overthrow of the Gaddafi regime achieved through Franco-British intervention. As a result, the new Libya will always feel indebted to the Western coalition as it did through its support for French intervention in Mali, even though it seems concerned about the consequences of this war if it were to continue. But Libya is not without blame in the face of this crisis. The war arsenal used by Jihadists in the Sahel comes at least partially from the spread of weapons during the Libyan conflict. Arms trafficking reported continuing today in a country controlled by local militias and plagued by internal fighting between

the various factions. It is, therefore, no secret that the Libyan crisis has increased insecurity in the Sahel, as confirmed by a report published on 26 January 2012 by the UN Security Council (Baghzouz 2014, 197).

Mauritania

In recent years, Mauritania has established itself as one of the most committed States in the fight against terrorism in the Sahel, even intervening on several occasions on Malian territory. As a pivotal country between the Maghreb and Black Africa south of the Sahara, it has a vital role to play in the formulation and implementation of any security and development policy affecting the entire region. But Mauritania's engagement in this vast no-man's-land is extremely difficult due to a series of factors inherent in the weakness of its army, internal pressures, and insufficient regional cooperation (Alcaro and Pirozzi 2014).

Morocco

Morocco has always worked to build the Sahel-Saharan region, the preservation of friendly relations with all countries founded on cooperation, solidarity, and respect for their sovereignty and integrity. The Kingdom's commitment to south-south collaboration aims to pave the way for integration that is favorable to investment, trade, and co-development. Morocco continues to share its experience in the fight against terrorism and violent extremism with African CEN-SAD member states, based on the triptych defined by security, religion, and the fight against precariousness and poverty (Medias24 2019).

Major Security Challenges and Threats in Morocco

The security challenges in Morocco revolve around several threats that have specific characteristics stemming from Morocco's geopolitical situation. Faced with these multifaceted threats, Morocco must be aware of the sources and levels of transnational organized crime affecting its territory to be able to prevent its growth, hence the need for an effective security strategy.

The Jihadist Map in North Africa

The jihadist map is changing at a relatively rapid rate. Morocco influenced by the connections between the elements of the different jihadist groups operating in the region. Thus, one can distinguish several ramifications that can form threats to Morocco.

The active presence of Abdelmalek Droukdel, the Emir of AQIM in northeastern Algeria, remains a source of threat to the Maghreb and the Sahel. Since January 2014, Khalid Chaib (Abu Lukman), one of the most Droukdel's close collaborators in Bejaia, has been appointed the new leader of the Ansar Ach-Charia movement in Tunisia and Libya; he succeeds Abu Ayad, but lately part of Ansar Ach-Charia has said he has made allegiance to Islamic State (IS). The appearance of Jond Al Khilafa in eastern Algeria reflects the vivacity of jihadi groups in this part of North Africa.

Mokhtar Bel Mokhtar's return to Central Sahara after an agreement with Droukdel will influence the map jihadist from the Great Sahara. In 2014, Bel Mokhtar succeeded in unifying all the jihadist groups (*Moulattamoun*, the Movement for Unity and Jihad in West Africa (MUJAO) and *Al Mowwakioun Bi Dimaa*, "Signatories by blood") into one Katiba: Al Mourabitoun. But a fraction of Al Mourabitoun, led by Aboulwalid Sahraoui pledged allegiance to the IS, a race between AQIM and the IS then

broke out in the sphere of North Africa. The recent videos issued January 2016 by the IS reflect the concern about the rebirth of AQIM. The IS calls on AQIM's mujahideen to rally to the Caliphate of Abu Bakr Al Baghdadi. The return of Iyad Ag Ghali, Ansar Eddine's leader on the Malian scene, and the coordination of this group with AQIM were behind the attacks in Bamako in November 2015 and Ouagadougou in January 2016. These events are occurring at a time when some North African states faced with problems of destabilization, which is a source of concern for Morocco.

Drugs

Morocco has suffered for two decades from the dumping of psychotropic tablets on its territory. Given its location in the Sahel-Saharan space, Morocco can also be a transit country for cocaine. These are products exploited by transnational criminal networks and gangs. Faced with these challenges, Morocco maintains partnerships with the United States, European and African countries aimed at strengthening coordination and the fight against international drug trafficking groups, while at the same time creating mechanisms to better counter the transit of drugs through the country's borders. Other practical measures have been adopted to combat the transit of drugs, including cocaine, through the Moroccan territory: strengthening the operational capacity of various security services; the establishment of a border control policy; organization of ongoing training programs for law enforcement officers; the use of new detection technologies in ports and airports; and international cooperation with other countries within the framework of the International Criminal Police Organisation (INTERPOL).

The lack of cooperation among the Maghreb countries is an obstacle to a common Maghreb strategy to combat this scourge.

Arms Trafficking

Several reports and releases reveal the development of arms trafficking in Central Sahara. This situation creates a risk for the southern and south-eastern borders of Morocco. Algerian army releases concerning the manufacture of arms at the edges with Mali and Libya reflect the intensity of arms trafficking in Central Sahara. According to these reports, the weapons circulating near the Moroccan borders are Kalashnikovs and other live ammunition.

The security situation in Libya and northern Mali is said to contribute to the proliferation of arms on Morocco's southern and eastern borders. The intensity of arms trafficking in the Sahel-Saharan space depends on political stability in Libya and the role of the new government of national accord, the dynamics of the jihadist map, the strategy for resolving internal and external conflicts, and human development.

The Impact of the Moroccan Sahara Conflict on the Security Situation in the Region

The stability issues in the region and the conflict between Morocco and Algeria, are linked to the Moroccan Sahara conflict and Maghreb integration. The deterioration of relations between the two neighboring countries, sometimes at an alarming pace, can only foster a climate of destabilization in the entire region. The current regional situation is conducive to strengthening Morocco's role as a leading player in West Africa. This geopolitical change is opposed to the leadership role sought by the Algerian State, which makes it impossible to normalize relations between the two countries. Morocco is called upon to play a strategic role in the fight against international terrorism. At the same time,

Algeria, for its part, is currently directing its military and security interests towards the south, south-east (Mali and Niger), and east (Libya and Tunisia).

In 1989, the creation of the Arab Maghreb Union (AMU) aimed at building the political Maghreb and an integrated economic market. Today, these hopes have disappointed the expectations of 100 million Maghrebians due to the Algerian dispute with Morocco over the Moroccan Sahara. Morocco, for its part, is convinced that the Algerian state is exploiting the conflict of the Sahara in a Machiavellian way to weaken it. Morocco perceives the positions displayed by the Algerian state as hostility and aggressive policy that will crescendo since Morocco joined the process of settling the Sahara conflict, by proposing in 2007 a Moroccan Saharan solution of autonomy status for the latter within the framework of Morocco's sovereignty and national unity. It is an initiative that aims for Morocco to build a society based on the rule of law, individual and collective freedoms, the rule of law, and economic and social development. This would put an end to separatism while promoting reconciliation.

The Strategic Interests of Morocco in the Sahel-Saharan Space

Despite its evident poverty, the Sahel-Saharan space is now becoming an increasingly important global energy hub. It is covered by the great powers. A hinge zone between Central Africa and North Africa, this vast territory, which is difficult to control, has become a sanctuary dedicated to insecurity. An under-administered and poorly monitored Sahelo-Saharan area alone covers a quarter of the surface area of the African continent. The Sahel-Saharan area is increasingly becoming a space of geopolitical and geostrategic confrontation between the various regional and international powers for the

control of the natural wealth it contains: oil, gas, gold, phosphates, diamonds, copper, iron, coal, nickel, zinc, bauxite, uranium, plutonium, manganese, cobalt, silver, chromium, tin, mineral salts, freshwater, fish, crustaceans, biological diversity, livestock, precious woods, etc. The Sahel-Saharan area is also becoming an area of insecurity. Over the next decade, the geopolitics of the Sahel-Saharan space would be decisive for the future stability of Africa and that of its European and Asian neighbors. Lacking hope, this space, which remains at the crossroads of all dangers, will continue a sensitive and unstable area for a long time.

In this context, Morocco has become a continental player. It is the result of great work and a multidimensional strategy that reflects the new orientation of Morocco's African policy. The nature of Morocco's efforts in Africa lies in South-South cooperation based on the social economy and the necessary infrastructure. It is an approach directed at consolidating peace and stability. For Morocco, this is a crucial building mission in which African countries have a role to play. Through this South-South cooperation, Morocco places its action in a perspective of building the new Africa through participatory and shared collaboration. The new line of Morocco's African policy is also based on effectiveness, performance, and credibility. Morocco proclaims economic and social development and regional integration by targeting promising areas such as agriculture, industry, science, technology, and infrastructure development.

The Sahel-Saharan space occupies a notable place in Morocco's African policy. This strategy has two pillars: economic and religious. Morocco's strategic weight in Sahel-Saharan Africa has long been based on its historical dimension and its immaterial capital based on Sunni Malikite Islam.

Since 2013, and in the face of jihadist threats, the religious domain has been a specific feature of the South-South cooperation model advocated by Morocco with its African partners. Requests for assistance from several African countries, such as Mali, Guinea Conakry, Côte d'Ivoire, Niger, and Nigeria, among others, for the supervision and management of the fields. The religious traditions demonstrate Morocco's place as the basis of Islam based on the Sunni-Malekite rite and Sufi thought. In this space shaken by jihadist groups and marked by the absence of a robust religious institution, cooperation The South-South religious movement is becoming an essential and decisive card against the jihadist propaganda that is shaking up the Sahel-Saharan space.

At the economic and financial level, Morocco is called upon to participate in the development of the States of the Sahel-Saharan space. It would also be called on to participate effectively in building the capacities of these States at the level of institutional and security.

Morocco's strategic stakes in the Sahel-Saharan space are mainly founded on the following:

1. The importance of West Africa and the Sahel-Saharan area for Morocco as a growth pole economic.
2. The strategic importance of this space for security, territorial integrity, and national unity.
3. Meeting the challenges of economic development and stabilization of the region through religious, economic, and political diplomacy.

Challenges, Security Threats and Common Approaches to the Sahel-Saharan Sub-Region

The establishment of jihadism, effective preaching, and ethnic autonomist demands the temptation of separatism, insecurity, porous borders, and the de facto conversion of a large area of the country's territory. Saharan land outside the State is now an endemic problem that threatens the already fragile stability of the region. This situation has resulted in further economic degradation and weakened the social organization,

The political and cultural life of the sub-region. These threats have and will mainly have a severe impact on peace issues, safety, and stability in the area. The effect of security in the subregion is posed in terms of the demand for law and justice, support for cultural diversity, and good governance.

The military intervention launched in Mali in January 2013 exclusively changed the topography of jihadism in the Sahel-Saharan subregion, but the structures and gravity of the crisis require a political approach. The instability affects not only the Sahel-Saharan countries but also a large part of North Africa. Libya has become a breeding ground for jihadism, drug trafficking, and other groups, which threatens the political transition.

The absence of the State in Saharan space encourages illicit trafficking. Drugs, human beings, oil, cigarettes, counterfeit medicines, weapons, and toxic waste are illegally transited through the region.

The Porosity of Borders

Complex borders and the lack of regional cooperation are significant security challenges. Boundaries that extend over thousands of kilometers cannot, in the absence of regional cooperation, be anything but porous, regardless of the means used by the State to control them. The latest attacks on Boko Haram in Lake Chad show the fragility of the borders and the problems of coordination between the armies of the vulnerable countries (Chad, Niger, and Cameroon) and the Nigerian authorities. The absence of a common strategy capable of ensuring the protection of the entire sub-region threatens sub-regional integrity, which is undermined by political and other events, which can weaken the state and society's response to the dangers posed by transnational threats.

Terrorism

After allegiance to the Islamic State (IS), Boko Haram is now called the Islamic State Province of West Africa. The organization imposes its logic of destabilization on the countries bordering Lake Chad. It is waging a war of harassment, and the objective of the former Boko Haram may be N'Djamena. The acquisition of this target would make possible the emergence of a corridor to the Libyan south favoring the creation of a new Islamic State stronghold in the Sahel-Saharan space.

In recent months, the jihadist map has been illustrated in the Sahel-Saharan space by the rebirth of AQIM, with the new agreement between Droukdel and Bel Mokhtar, and on the other hand, the return of Iyad Ag Ghali to the jihadist scene. The Sahel-Saharan space will experience a race between Bel Mokhtar and Aboulwalid Saharaoui, the emir of the other fraction of Mourabitoun, who has pledged allegiance to IS. This

mechanism for the creation of new jihadi structures reflects the vivacity of jihadism along the geographical area that links the Sahel-Saharan space to North Africa.

Summary

The Sahel has become an area synonymous with instability and insecurity. The context of political uncertainty, armed conflict, and organized crime (cigarette smuggling, drug, and firearms trafficking) that prevails in the zone today is the result of the confluence of three major vectors of instability that still dominate the Sahelian landscape:

1. Transnational gangster-Islamist terrorism headed, by facility, by Al Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM) and its avatars (MUJAO, Ansar-Dine, Boko Haram)
2. The security surges of the Libyan pseudo-revolution following the collapse of the Libyan State
3. The Malian crisis caused both by the Tuareg rebellion and the coup d'état of 22 March 2012. A crisis followed by the French military intervention in the region.

These three intertwined crises, which have different causes, today mark significant fault lines that add to fragile social balances, precarious state matrices, and economic underperformance that continue for decades.

CHAPTER 3

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This research will be conducted using a qualitative methodology. It is research that produces and analyses descriptive data, such as written or spoken words and people's observatory behavior (Taylor and Bogdan 1984). It refers to a research method interested in the meaning and observation of a social phenomenon in the natural environment. It deals with data that are difficult to quantify. It does not reject numbers and statistics but does not give them the first place. This research starts with assumptions, a worldview, paradigms, and the possible use of theoretical lenses, and the study of research problems (Lewis 2015). The methodology is more suitable because it provides an in-depth understanding of the obstacles that Morocco is susceptible to face, as described in the following study.

In defining this research methodology, Denzin and Lincoln emphasize the process of the method. They declare:

Qualitative research is a situated activity that locates the observer in the world. It consists of a set of interpretative, material practices that make the world visible. These practices transform the world into a series of representations, including field notes, interviews, conversations, photographs, recordings, and memos to the self. At this level, qualitative research involves an interpretative, naturalistic approach to the world. This means that qualitative researchers study things in their natural settings, attempting to make sense of, or interpret, phenomena in terms of the meanings people bring to them (Denzin and Lincoln 2005).

The approach to qualitative interpretive research, which emphasizes the self-reflective nature of how qualitative research is conducted, read, and advanced, has emerged as a much more common approach in qualitative discourse (Lewis 2015, 3).

In this thesis, the use of a qualitative research methodology will make it possible to analyze Morocco's political and military responses within the Arab Maghreb Union to the various threats facing the Sahel region. The identification of the most common issues will make it possible to develop appropriate recommendations that its countries can use in terms of prevention. To reach practical conclusions, the different variables of national power (DIME) will be analyzed, notably those relating to political and military effectiveness. These variables can reverse the political commitment of North African countries, especially those that are members of the Arab Maghreb Union, civil society organizations, and support partners to address the various threats.

DIME

The acronym DIME (Diplomatic, Informational, Military, and Economic) has been used for several years to represent the instruments of national power. These components align with the main branches of the executive that apply power: The Departments of State, Defense, and Commerce, as well as the intelligence community (Joint Chiefs of Staff 2017).

The foundation of the diplomatic instrument, the first letter in the acronym, is engagement—how a nation interacts with state and non-state actors, usually to achieve some form of agreement that permits parties in conflict to cooperate peacefully. Two important considerations for any strategist considering economic action for strategic purposes are globalization and the nature of the economies of individual states. Globalization has made the economies of the world's states interwoven into an increasingly interdependent web. A disruption in the economy of one state can have widespread repercussions across the globe, with unintended consequences. Efforts to

influence the economy of another can end up generating unexpected and often negative results in one's national economy. States are less able to shape their commercial and financial activities towards a particular policy goal when the private sector controls a significant portion of their economic activity, and they rely on free-market forces to generate economic prosperity. The more the economy of any other State is privatized and governed by free-market forces, the less effective the commercial, financial, or aid actions will be, and the less likely they will produce a specific strategic outcome (Joint Chiefs of Staff 2017).

The informational instrument, the second letter in the DIME, consists of creating, exploiting, and disrupting knowledge. A state or non-state actor is generally at an advantage when it has an informational power over another party. The creation and exploitation of this information advantage is the key to the use of the information tool in the National strategy. The infrastructure, capacities, and processes by which a state or non-state actor collects, analyses, disseminates, and exploits information are crucial fundamental and institutional dimensions of power. The synchronization of communications and information activities are two main effects created to achieve the state's strategic information objectives. Synchronizing communication involves targeted efforts to understand and involve critical audiences to create, strengthen, or preserve favorable conditions for the promotion of national interests, policies, and objectives. It actively engages target audiences with programs, plans, themes, messages, and products that are coordinated and synchronized with the actions of all instruments of national power. Public diplomacy is an excellent example of strategic communication.

The information activities involve efforts on the one party to deny the other party the opportunity to acquire and use the information and to protect and enhance its own ability to do the same. It involves protecting not only the information available to the State but also the capacity to collect, analyze and interpret information, to integrate the knowledge gained into decision-making processes and to use the information to shape and control the activities of the State. In democratic States, increasingly, this introspection also includes efforts to ensure the reliability of information available to the national public so that it can effectively exercise its democratic responsibilities (Joint Chiefs of Staff 2017).

The essence of the military instrument, the third letter in the acronym, is the use of force by one party to impose its will upon another. Such use may involve the application of power, the threat of the implementation of force, or the ability of other parties to apply force to achieve strategic objectives. Force can be applied over a broad spectrum and in many forms. It conducted in any field (land, sea, air, space) and the information environment (including cyberspace). The threat of force used to compel an adversary to change its current behavior or to define future action. It consists of deploying and developing military capabilities and issuing warnings that signify a decision to use force if conditions are not fulfilled (Joint Chiefs of Staff 2017).

The empowerment of the military involves increasing the capacity of international partners to apply force and usually in close coordination with diplomatic and economic instruments. It may include the provision of weapons and equipment, training, and education, combined joint exercises, foreign homeland defense, and advisory missions.

Security cooperation establishes conditions for preventing conflict, shaping the security environment, competing for influence below the threshold of armed conflict, and preparing forces to respond to contingencies. Security cooperation includes military engagements with foreign defense and security establishments, security assistance programs, combined exercises, international armaments cooperation, and information sharing and collaboration. Security cooperation programs and activities are typically integrated and synchronized with other instruments of national power (Joint Chiefs of Staff 2017).

The economic instrument, last letter in the acronym DIME, aims to promote or limit the prosperity of others. Economic power is often the core of national power. Whether the state has the economic power to pursue a particular strategy, or whether the effort to achieve a strategic objective will consume too much economic power of the country, is a crucial judgment of national strategy. Few, if any, strategic goals are worth jeopardizing the nation's economic power. Trade-in goods and services typically enhance the wealth and success of trading partners. Inversely, limits or restrictions on trade (including sanctions and tariffs) can affect an adversary's economy. Financing and access to capital markets are essential for modern enterprises to undertake investments aimed at raising their productive capacity, and for modern governments to provide the expected services (infrastructure, health, welfare, education) to their citizens. Restricting or impeding access to finance and banking systems can weaken the economic prosperity of other countries. Aid is money (or goods or equipment) provided by one party to another to increase the capacity and/or potential of the beneficiary. The provision of aid increases

the capability of the receiver to develop capacities, while the withdrawal or reduction of aid hinders this ability (Joint Chiefs of Staff 2017).

Summary

To draw up solutions for the different threats coming from the Sahel, developed in chapter 2, the analysis of the national power variables is of great importance. This study will undoubtedly make it possible to identify effective solutions to the problem, which mainly concerns diplomatic, information, military, and economic aspects. In this context, the definition of a global approach for all the countries of North Africa leads towards the definition of common collective security. The result of this analysis will facilitate the making of appropriate and more efficient recommendations.

CHAPTER 4

ANALYSIS

Before analyzing the approach which Morocco and the North African countries must focus on to deal with the various threats coming from the Sahel, it would be advisable to analyze first of all the evolution of security cooperation between the various actors in the region.

The Evolution of Security Cooperation and Responses to Security Threats in the Sahel

Several bilateral, multilateral, regional and continental initiatives have been undertaken to stabilize the Sahel, although the impacts of these initiatives have so far been limited.

Joint Operational Staff Committee, Unit Fusion and Liaison and CEN-SAD

The Joint Operational Staff Committee (CEMOC), was an Algerian initiative that sought to establish joint military patrolling and cross-border military operations between Malian, Nigerien, and Algerian security forces. After seven months, the CEMOC complemented by an intelligence service called the Fusion and Liaison Centre (UFL) responsible for facilitating intelligence sharing among the eight countries of the Sahel and Sahara: Mali, Niger, Mauritania, Algeria, Nigeria, Libya, Chad, and Burkina Faso. However, these two bodies did not function, mainly because of mistrust and doubts about the willingness of the former President of Mali to engage against violent extremist groups. It has reported that Mali, under President Touré, was reluctant to take severe measures against AQIM for fear of displeasing its Tuareg allies (Castelli 2014). Besides,

Mauritania suspected senior officials in Mali of complicity in intelligence leaks to AQIM after its forces suffered a series of armed attacks along the Mauritanian-Mali borders.

The Nouakchott process, led by the AU, was able to correct the shortcomings of previous initiatives by including many Sahelian states with the same security challenges.

Conceived within the framework of the operationalization of the African Peace and Security Architecture (APSA) in the Sahel-Saharan region, the process included eleven countries of West and North Africa, namely Algeria, Burkina Faso, Chad, Côte d'Ivoire, Guinea, Libya, Mali, Mauritania, Niger, Nigeria, and Senegal. In addition to these Member States, the process also included the African Centre for the Study and Research on Terrorism (ACSRT), the Community of Sahel-Saharan States (CEN-SAD), the Committee of Intelligence and Security Services of Africa (CISSA), ECOWAS, the AU Mission for Mali and the Sahel (MISAHEL), the Capacity for North Africa Region (CRAN) and the Unit for Fusion and Liaison (UFL) as well as the United Nations (UNAMID, the United Nations Office for West Africa and the Sahel - UNOWAS - and the Office of the United Nations Special Envoy for the Sahel - OSES).

The Multinational Joint Task Force (MNJTF)

The MNJTF reactivated by the member states of the Lake Chad Basin Commission (LCBC) and Benin to combat Boko Haram (and other terrorist groups) because of the regional dimension of the insurgency. The MNJTF was originally established in 1994 as an instrument for cross-border control of criminal activities in the Lake Chad Basin area (Daniel 2017). In 1998, the mandate of the MNJTF included general cross-border security issues between Nigeria, Chad, and Niger. The limited results achieved by the force on a few joint patrols, on the one hand, and the increasing

regionalization of the threat posed by Boko Haram, on the other, necessitated a renewed effort, at the regional level, to reactivate the MNJTF. As a result, the member states of the Lake Chad Basin Commission (Benin was added later) agreed to restructure the force to combat the Boko Haram insurgency and ensure peace and security in the Lake Chad Basin (Babatunde 2017). The Peace and Security Council formally authorized the Force on 29 January 2015. Although it supposed to be composed of military, police, and civilian elements, most MNJTF operations have focused on the military aspect (Brubacher, Damman, and Day 2017). Since its deployment, the Force worked to degrade Boko Haram, reclaim territory previously controlled by Boko Haram, and release civilians taken hostage. The mandate of the MNJTF includes the creation of a safe and secure environment in areas affected by Boko Haram and other terrorist groups to lay the foundation for the reduction of violence against civilians; facilitating stabilization programs in the Member States; and facilitating humanitarian operation and the provision of assistance to affected populations (Assanvo, Abatan, and Sawadogo 2016). To achieve these overall objectives, the mission may conduct military operations, conduct patrols, prevent the delivery of weapons and logistics to the group, search for and release abductees and conduct psychological operations to encourage the defection from Boko Haram (Assanvo, Abatan, and Sawadogo 2016). The Force is mandated to do this within the framework of international humanitarian and human rights law and in compliance with United Nations human rights due to diligence policy.

The MNJTF aims to achieve its mandate sequentially, with the priority being to remove Boko Haram from its strongholds. The second part of its mandate concerns the implementation of the stabilization program, which includes the restoration of national

authority and assistance to internally displaced persons and refugees to return to their home areas.

The G-5 Sahel and Its Joint Force

The G-5 Sahel initiated in 2015 to coordinate the security-development strategies and activities of its five Member States, namely Chad, Niger, Mali, Burkina Faso, and Mauritania. In its initial conception, the development component was to include the advancement of economic integration and the introduction of a common airline called Air Sahel, but most of the declarations and activities focused on the military-to-security component. This shows that the issue of development is only one objective. The two achievements in the area of security include the establishment of a military college in Mauritania and the formal announcement of the creation of its joint force, the G-5 Sahel Joint Force, in early 2017. The force was operational since October 2017 in the Liptako Gourma region, a region bordering Burkina Faso, Niger, and Mali. By the last quarter of 2017, all Member States, except Mauritania, had mobilized the forces to be deployed and the command and control headquarters had been renovated and equipped with the appointment of personnel by some Member States (UN Security Council 2017). However, it is too early to assess the results and prospects for the G-5 Force in stabilizing the Sahel.

The mandates of the G-5 Force include combating terrorism and transnational criminal networks, contributing to the restoration of State authority and the return of refugees and internally displaced persons, facilitating the humanitarian operation and contributing to development activities in the Sahel.

In summary, the peacekeeping experiences in Africa, and elsewhere, provide some lessons on how MNJTF and G-5 forces could fulfill their mandate and, therefore, the extent of their failures and successes. The search for solutions to violent extremism does not address the deepest reasons for insecurity across the region. Moreover, military approaches often deplete resources that should have been spent on other priorities, particularly development and humanitarian assistance need. Existing reports, including HIPPO (Habitat Loss, Invasive Species, Pollution, Human Population, and Overharvesting), stressed that peacekeeping is, first and foremost, a political process and that military action must be carried out within a political framework with an action plan and a clear strategy for sustainable peace (Independent Panel on United Nations Peace Operations). It is also added that contemporary stabilization requires a multidimensional mission that will simultaneously carry out activities in the humanitarian, political, security, and development fields.

Securing the Sahel is achieved mainly through the commitment of the North-African (NA) countries to the inclusive economic development of the region, as well as through actions aimed at advocating moderate Islam.

Diplomatic Instrument

The diplomatic effort on which Morocco, in collaboration with the States of North Africa, must continue to focus essentially on the restoration of the rule of law in the Sahel, human development, and the promotion of the culture of peace and moderate Islam.

Human Development Assistance

The NA countries must support the Sahel countries to develop human capital, especially young people and women while adapting social services to the local way of life. First, the socio-economic integration of young people and women supported by the NA guarantees sustainable security in the region. Young people and women constitute a growing majority of the populations of the Sahel. Given the development needs of the present era, and the intellectual capacities of these young people and women, they are an essential factor in the development of their respective countries. Conversely, a high rate of unemployment and socio-economic exclusion of youth and women constitutes a time bomb and a breeding ground for the recruitment of criminal groups, warlords and terrorist groups. With women representing at least 50 percent of Africa's population, excluding them from development projects would mean a machine running at less than 50 percent of its capacity. Therefore, to optimize the contribution of youth and women to development, NA countries should take significant action. By inviting 40 African exhibitors to Rabat in Morocco, including all the Sahel countries, on the occasion of the 7th Social and Solidarity Economy Fair, held from 9 to 18 November 2018 with six hundred cooperatives present, Morocco contributed to the reflection and analysis on the opportunities for effective socio-economic integration of young people and women in the Sahel countries. This initiative aims to create economic groups capable of pooling their resources and organization. It invites young people to become attached to their territory and to form cooperatives capable of creating wealth.

Secondly, the NA countries should adopt the social services they offer to the Sahelian way of life. In this respect, the central nomadic populations in the Sahel region

are Tuareg (Mali, Niger, Burkina Faso, Algeria, and Libya), Toubous (Chad, Niger, and Libya) and, increasingly, Peul. The integration of these populations in some countries of the region remains a challenge. To contribute to meeting this challenge, NA must undertake reflection on innovative projects to adapt social and public services to their lifestyles, such as the idea of mobile schools and clinics. Morocco, for example, has set up several mobile field hospitals in Mali and northern Guinea Conakry. Also, the NA countries are in a dynamic of organizing meetings to exchange experiences between the different states of the region and other countries of the continent and elsewhere that have had to manage populations with similar lifestyles. They thus encourage the promotion of the languages and identity symbols of nomadic people, within a harmonious national framework, to strengthen their integration into the national community.

Finally, the various NA countries should support the region's efforts in administrative decentralization. It is a recognized means of bringing governance and development closer to local populations, especially if it expertly translated into reality, not only in terms of devolution of authority but also in terms of providing the means to carry out concrete development projects. Decentralization, combined with the provision of technical resources (experts) to the governments of the region, is an assurance of the effectiveness of any development effort in the area.

Promotion of the Culture of Peace and Moderate Islam

The NA countries must advocate a dialogue of peace and reconciliation, and the promotion of moderate Islam. First, it is appropriate to accompany the authorities of the Sahelian countries in their processes of dialogue and national reconciliation. In this regard, the NA countries that have mobilized funds to support the field actions of the

organs in charge of the dialogue and reconciliation process in Mali should do the same for the rest of the region. Several NA media should be mobilized to promote the culture of peace by organizing, throughout the Sahel region, training workshops for media professionals, civil society, and youth organizations so that they can play a decisive role in promoting the values of dialogue and tolerance. In this regard, the Higher Institute of Information and Communication of Morocco, through its African exchange network, was able to support the Network of Journalists for Peace and Security in Africa (NetPeace) and the Communication Unit of the Fusion and Liaison Unit (UFL) and make it a tool for information, dialogue, and reconciliation in the Sahel. It also aimed to support women's organizations in the region so that they can play an essential role in dialogue and reconciliation processes.

Second, the NA countries will have to fight against radical Islam, which has spread as an alternative model to democracy, which is perceived by a growing part of the population as an ideological deception aimed at keeping kleptocrats in place. As such, religious and traditional leaders play a critical socio-political role in the region. The African Charter for Cultural Revival emphasizes that elders and traditional leaders are cultural actors in their own right. Their role and importance deserve official recognition to integrate them into new conflict resolution mechanisms and systems of intercultural dialogue. However, to create instability in the region, some individuals are trying to divert the noble messages of religions and use them for criminal and unhealthy projects. Others preach religious intolerance. To reverse this trend, the NA countries, and Morocco, in particular, have facilitated regular exchanges between and with religious and traditional leaders on the values of tolerance and strategies to better convey these

messages in the media, with young people and in places of worship. The Mohamed VI Institute for the Training of Imams is a perfect illustration of this.

Finally, the NA countries must encourage the governments of the Sahel to strengthen the position of religious and traditional leaders to enable them to better play their role as actors of peace, and as propagators of shared values and messages of tolerance and harmonious coexistence. They must support civil society and youth organizations working to promote tolerance and raise awareness among young people of the harmful effects of religious intolerance and extremism. Similarly, building on the cultural mechanisms existing in the Sahel region, the NA countries must continue to promote inter-religious dialogue to avoid stigmatization and violence. Therefore, the NA countries, by committing themselves to develop the human, cultural, and socio-economic factors of the Sahel region, participate in its security. However, purely security measures are required.

Informational Instrument

The fluid and rapid exchange of intelligence between all the countries concerned through specific arrangements would inevitably contribute to the security of the Sahel. There is a willingness among the Sahel countries to exchange intelligence. Moreover, this desire was the subject of a meeting in November 2015 between the Presidents of the G5 Sahel in N'Djamena who, on occasion, wished to set up a computerized and secure communication system to exchange intelligence on terrorists. The implementation of this mechanism is satisfactory at the bilateral level between individual States but remains below expectations at the regional level because of the slowness of the procedures recorded in certain States combined with the lack of training of the actors or the absence

of technical arrangements. Support from North African countries to fill these gaps could be a possible solution for promoting the exchange of information between Sahelian countries.

Moreover, the collection and sharing of intelligence require sophisticated means such as drones, cameras, and satellites, as well as the human factor through infiltration into terrorist groups. If properly conducted, these different methods can be used to dismantle networks, thwart planned attacks and, at best, neutralize terrorists before they act. Because of their lead over the Sahel countries, the North African countries could provide support in the search for and transmission of intelligence via the sophisticated means at their disposal.

Finally, in the area of intelligence sharing, the principle of give and take or reciprocity is used to achieve greater efficiency. Promoting the setting up of permanent structures for the exchange of information between the services in charge of terrorism could be a solution in this respect. The idea was subject of the ninth point of Nouakchott Declaration first summit, which states:

We stress, in the light of the preceding, that the regular meetings of the heads of intelligence and security services of the countries of the region constitute an irreplaceable tool for the exchange of information and intelligence in the context of the fight against terrorism and transnational organized crime, as well as for the promotion of trust and good neighborliness.

In short, the emergence of armed groups, massive migratory flows, and the increase in illicit activities are the main obstacles to securing the Sahel, which require adequate commitments from the countries of North Africa to ensure the socio-economic development of this region. The promise of North African countries to securing the Sahel should focus primarily on assistance for the economic development of the area,

improving the quality of social services for the benefit of the population and the promotion of a culture of peace, in which importance should be attached to the religious sphere to annihilate the radicalism rampant in the region. The securing of the Sahel region also requires permanent military cooperation with the G5 Sahel Joint Force, combined with the securing of borders within the framework of promoting the exchange of intelligence between the countries of the Sahel and those of North Africa.

Military Instruments

Military cooperation with the G5 Sahel Joint Force, combined with border security, between the countries of the Sahel and those of North Africa can ensure the security of the Sahelian space.

Military Cooperation with the G5 Sahel Joint Force

The G5 Sahel Joint Force provides a favorable framework for North African countries to engage in multidimensional military cooperation to secure the countries of the Sahel. Indeed, cooperation between the countries of North Africa and the G5 Sahel countries could materialize from the structural point of view of the training of the security actors of the said countries. It will involve working alongside the G5 Sahel countries in the preparation of their staff officers and, further afield, in the training of troops. In this respect, the G5 Sahel Defense College could be an excellent framework for cooperation for the countries of North Africa. This form of collaboration will have the advantage of standardizing methods of fighting terrorism, cross-border crime, and trafficking of all kinds in the Sahelian strip.

Furthermore, operational cooperation is understood to mean the formation of a coalition or unilateral forces of the North African countries on their southern border with the G5 Sahel countries. This approach could be incorporated into the strategies of the frameworks for consultation between the North African and Sahelian countries in the area of security cooperation, namely the Joint Operational Staff Committee (JOSCO) set up in August 2009 and the Nouakchott Process launched on 13 March 2013. Although they do not bring together all the countries of North Africa, they nevertheless have the advantage of existing. It would, therefore, be judicious to revitalize them as recommended by the 5th Ministerial Meeting to relaunch the Nouakchott Process held in Ouagadougou on 27 November 2018. These examples of South-South cooperation are unquestionably beneficial to all, especially since the countries of North Africa and the Sahel share the same cultures.

Finally, the area that seems to pose the most challenges to the operationalization of the G5 Sahel, and more particularly to its Joint Force, is indeed that of the mobilization of financial resources. It must be noted that the amounts are colossal, donors are few, and disbursement procedures remain slow. Funding ranges from €250 million for the initial phase to €400-450 million for the full year. As a reminder, at the Bamako Summit in July 2017, the first funding was provided by France and the G5 Sahel countries. However, this funding is slow to arrive, which is slowing down the implementation of the project. This is why a second financial support meeting was held in Brussels on 23 February 2018. The outcome of this meeting in Brussels was a promise of funding of 414 million euros, more than half of which will come from European Union countries. These elements highlight the financial difficulties that the organization is facing in financing its Joint Force.

Border Security

The borders between the countries of North Africa and the Sahel are porous and require the establishment of enhanced surveillance and early warning system to enable them to deal with the multifaceted security problems.

First, the Sahel region is one of the most unpredictable and volatile areas in Africa today. The porous and largely unregulated borders of countries in the region are a major contributing factor to insecurity in West Africa and the Maghreb. Weak border controls have allowed transnational criminal and terrorist groups (such as AQIM, Mujao, Al-Charia, Boko Haram, Al-Mulathameen brigades) to expand their activities throughout the region with relative ease, causing much damage to local populations. There does not seem to be a miracle solution to the problems currently facing African countries.

Therefore, strengthening borders could be a solution to combat any form of cross-border security threat. We know that today the various groups mentioned above enjoy almost total freedom of movement because States are unable to provide any border protection. The US or French troops hold the only border strips guarded in the region. Thus, increased border surveillance could affect the mobility of armed groups and make drug trafficking more complicated. The idea follows the same logic as the project (unfortunately not realized) to create a regional center in Rabat for the training and education of officers in charge of border security in the Sahel, adopted in November 2013 at the second conference on border security in the Sahel-Saharan zone.

Finally, border security is a dynamic and continuously evolving exercise. Bearing in mind that the illegal movement of people across borders not only undermines security but also the political, economic and social interests of States, the Governments of North

African countries must now focus their efforts on common security strategies, since unilateral measures no longer bear fruit. Early warning systems are, therefore, essential elements of proper border management. They strengthen the collective capacity of States to detect, prevent, and combat terrorism by facilitating inter-agency cooperation and the rapid exchange of reliable information, enabling them to take critical decisions responsibly.

Economic Development of the Sahel Countries

The commitment of the NA countries must focus on developing the agricultural sector, launching structuring projects, and supporting national strategies and efforts. First, the NA countries are counting on the development of the agricultural sector in the Sahel, a guarantee of human and social stability. As such, they have adopted and implemented programs and projects likely to accelerate economic growth through the development of the agricultural sector to eliminate or at least to reduce hunger and poverty and to improve food security and nutrition in the Sahel region. In this regard, they have contributed to the effective implementation of the African Union-SAFGRAD Strategic Plan1 (2014-2017) for the strengthening of rural livelihoods in the semi-arid zones of Africa. This strategy included the strengthening of policies, institutions, and procedures that promote the resilience of rural livelihoods and the development of Africa's capacities in research, technology dissemination, and knowledge management for the strengthening of the resilience of rural livelihoods in the Sahel region. The NA countries have also concretized the Great Green Wall for the Sahara and the Sahel initiative, adopted by the African Union (AU) summit in January 2007. This initiative aims at combating the social, economic, and environmental impacts of desertification; Morocco, in particular,

has carried out practical actions to support the promotion and modernization of livestock breeding and to combat livestock theft. The two Moroccan satellites Mohamed VI-A and B recently put into orbit will be used to that support.

Besides, the NA countries are called upon to support projects aimed at promoting the socio-economic development of the Sahel. More specifically, the implementation of structuring flagship products should be accelerated. For example, the Tangier-Lagos Trans-African Highway, or the construction of the Nigeria-Morocco gas pipeline. The opportunities involved in this type of project are numerous and beneficial both for the Sahel and for NA. The economic benefits that these structuring projects will generate once completed are multiple. In the same vein, major structuring projects launched in Nigeria on the official visit of HM King Mohammed VI to the country in 2016. His Majesty, the King, and the Nigerian President chaired the signing of an agreement between the Office Cherifien des Phosphates (OCP) and Dangote Group for the construction of an integrated fertilizer production plant in Nigeria. It is also the signing of a cooperation agreement for the strengthening of local blending capacities and the agricultural ecosystem.

Finally, the support of economic development projects by the NA countries and the increase in trade flows within the Sahel region helps to make the area more secure. From this perspective, the NA countries consider that national strategies and efforts should take precedence, while other strategies should only support them as much as possible. Indeed, no country in the region is capable, on its own, of meeting all the challenges it faces. Therefore, there is a need for these countries to harmonize their strategies and pool their efforts for greater efficiency. In this context, the contribution of

the NA is considerable. It is worth noting the development of Infrastructure and maritime and airlines, by some NA countries, such as Morocco, by favoring supranational institutions like the Moroccan Royal Air (RAM), or Moroccan Bank of Foreign Trade (BMCE), the integration process was thus indeed triggered.

CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Conclusions

The establishment of jihadism, effective preaching and recruitment, multifaceted ethnic autonomist claims, separatist temptation, insecurity, porous borders, and the de facto conversion of a sizeable Saharan domain to non-state land constitute now an endemic problem that threatens head-on the stability of the already fragile country in the Sahel zone. This situation has resulted in further economic degradation and weakened the social, political, and cultural organization of the subregion. These threats have and will mainly have a severe impact on the issues of peace, security, and stability in the zone. The question of security in the subregion is in terms of the demand for law and justice, respect for cultural diversity, and good governance. The absence of the State in the Saharan space encourages illicit trafficking. Drugs, human beings, oil, cigarettes, counterfeit medicines, weapons, and toxic waste are illegally transiting the region. The Libyan and Malian crises have exacerbated the multidimensional insecurity (personal, economic, political, social, environmental, health, etc.) of the populations living in the Sahel-Saharan space. They have highlighted not only the weakness of States but also the need for regional cooperation, particularly between the Maghreb and West Africa, to meet common challenges together.

The efforts made by the Kingdom of Morocco for the political, economic, social, and security development of the countries of the Sahel region remain essential and indispensable but require a collective and multidimensional commitment on the part of all the nations of NA countries for effective and lasting regional stability.

Recommendations

Security threats are essentially transboundary, and the responses to them cannot be confined to the boundaries of the respective territories of the States whose cooperation is then of paramount importance. Based on such an assumption, it is necessary to analyze the policies and strategies implemented by the States of the region to meet this challenge collectively. Specifically, this means evaluating experiences in this area to make an objective judgment of the effectiveness of cooperation in the light of its results and the obstacles it faces. In North Africa, unilateral security policies have shown their limits in ensuring stability in the region. Despite the announcement in 1989 of regional integration between the Maghreb countries, the North African area has remained a fragmented space, characterized by the absence or weakness of trade and cooperation between the partners. Victims of the political orientations imposed by the political elites in power in some countries, the Maghreb populations, find themselves deprived of the benefits of integration that they need for their development and security. Exposed to the multifaceted threats facing the peoples and their states, as well as the collective challenges facing them, the Maghreb countries must adopt a comprehensive policy to deal with growing problems and crises.

Maghreb Integration: A Vector for Collective Security and Lasting Stability

In a fragile zone where, multifaceted insecurity is asserting itself, the Maghreb states do not seem to be able to overcome their differences. At a time of complex interdependence and regionalization of economies and security policies, the gains from integration are more significant than ever, and the costs of its absence are apparent.

Functional integration among the Maghreb countries is the only way to ensure security and stability for a climate favorable to development. Confidence considered a promising concept of a dynamic and liberating nature.

The Development of Political Integration: A Condition
for an Adequate Security Framework

Maghreb integration is imperative to develop markets and create new opportunities for growth, job creation, and improved living conditions. Today, the Maghreb is in a phase of reconstruction at all levels. No state is capable of ensuring its development and security on its own if it does not take its neighborhood into account. The Arab Maghreb Union must be encouraged as a medium- and long-term solution for sustainable development and security. However, the implementation of this significant project requires a more pronounced willingness to cooperate on the part of the UMA member countries, but also the integration of a regional dimension into all national security policies.

However, the Maghreb countries are aware that regional integration is of great interest to North Africa. The region has significantly benefited from cooperation with Europe but has not been able to benefit from integration. The creation of a natural area of collaboration and inter-Maghreb trade would provide a strategic response to the challenges of development and stabilization of all the countries concerned, as well as to the strengthening of cooperation opportunities and consequently the development of the Sahelian neighbors. The benefits of regional integration in North Africa seem clear: increased economic activities, enhanced competitiveness, more efficient use of resources, and the impetus for growth and development that could result from increased exchanges

of ideas, services, goods, finance, and people. Regional cooperation and integration efforts can be instrumental in addressing the enormous challenges for the Maghreb and Sahel countries of youth unemployment, the adaptation of education systems to market needs, and the creation of effective social safety nets.

The Development of a Common Security Strategy

A national security strategy cannot be put in place or become effective without consolidated regional understanding and cooperation based on an explicit knowledge of the shared interests of the various neighboring countries concerned. But there will be no cooperation until the obsession with internal security replaced by genuine strategic cooperation. Thus, a political will to develop a collective response must be put in place, by all the countries of North Africa, to deal with shared threats. Cross-border crimes and transnational crime networks illustrate the need for a shared vision of security at the broader level and closer regional cooperation. Borders cannot initially be conceived as territorial delimitations, but in more strategic terms as borders marking the protection needs of specific groups. The increase in cocaine trafficking in the Sahel-Maghreb region affects the populations of all countries in the area. Given the magnitude of this threat and the excellent organization and determination of the traffickers, this reality should be recognized by States as a shared threat. Thus, this traffic needs a common approach.

Faced with the inability of the Maghreb states to coordinate their efforts, terrorists, and criminals in the Sahel zone manage to cooperate. The multiplication of terrorist and criminal acts in the region has highlighted the widening gap between criminal networks operating at the international level and security forces acting at the national level. It is time for the security response itself to become transnational, as

security is no longer a sovereign activity. Cooperation is vital as security becomes interdependent in an increasingly interconnected world.

Security challenges in one country, regardless of their criminal, environmental, economic, or demographic nature, can also pose a threat to the security of neighboring states. There is no denying that regional cooperation is beneficial. Still, for many observers, the difficulty lies in resolving the pending conflict over the Moroccan Sahara, which represents a significant obstacle to regional security cooperation.

However, the security mission in the Maghreb region cannot deliver good results without active airspace and border surveillance, which requires increased regional cooperation on financial and technical issues. It should result in joint investment in the necessary equipment and the creation of a standard information system. The security policies adopted for a long time do not meet real needs and expectations. The region, therefore, needs to develop more effective regional cooperation. The states of the area must develop together and share national security policies. They must adopt a comprehensive and participatory approach to security: a broad vision in which the objectives of peace and stability, the rule of law, democracy, and development are interdependent and mutually reinforcing.

The Creation of a Strategic Security and Support Council

Sustainable security in the Maghreb requires a global and coordinated approach with actions in the political, economic, social, and security fields, with different but complementary timeframes and which are part of an overall vision. Given the seriousness of the security situation in the region, the Maghreb countries must make this issue the

focus of their integration. The creation of a Security and Strategic Support Council could be a new beginning. Many meetings held on the security issue, and despite this awareness, no country is capable of dealing with it alone: each Maghreb country has its approach to dealing with cross-border criminal groups.

Secondly, assistance and support from actors outside the region are essential in the technical, training, and governance fields. However, their room for maneuver is limited due to the lack of effective coordination in the area. In this context, the internationalization of the security challenge in the Maghreb carries a trap that risks aggravating the problems. It is likely to strengthen extremists through the publicity they can gain from it. Therefore, foreign aid can only support the commitment and cooperation on the ground of the local actors directly concerned.

Finally, the entrenchment of terrorism in the Sahel zone makes it crucial to strengthen regional cooperation in the fight against terrorists who express unity and solidarity across borders. Coordination is the priority, but we must also bear in mind the importance of the enlargement of the countries involved, particularly in the context of intelligence sharing.

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