

THE AFFECT OF DRUG TRAFFICKING IN WEST AFRICA ON THE NATIONAL
SECURITY INTERESTS OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

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Strategic Studies

by

WILLIAM R. WALLACE, MAJOR, USMC
B.A., History, Eastern Kentucky University, Richmond, Kentucky, 2001

Fort Leavenworth, Kansas
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Name of Candidate: Major William R. Wallace

Thesis Title: The Affect of Drug Trafficking in West Africa on the National Security
Interests of the United States of America

Approved by:

_____, Thesis Committee Chair
Stephen E. Brown, M.S.

_____, Member
Timothy R. Hentschel, Ph.D.

_____, Member
Wilburn E. Meador, Jr, M.A.

Accepted this 12th day of June 2015 by:

_____, Director, Graduate Degree Programs
Robert F. Baumann, Ph.D.

The opinions and conclusions expressed herein are those of the student author and do not necessarily represent the views of the U.S. Army Command and General Staff College or any other governmental agency. (References to this study should include the foregoing statement.)

ABSTRACT

THE AFFECT OF DRUG TRAFFICKING IN WEST AFRICA ON THE NATIONAL SECURITY INTERESTS OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA, by William R. Wallace, 84 pages.

West Africa has become a global hub for illegal drugs transiting from both Latin America and Asia to end users in North America, Europe, the Middle East, and Asia. The type of illegal substances has expanded from cocaine and heroin to amphetamine-type stimulants. West Africa is particularly susceptible to influence by transnational criminal organizations (TCOs) due to endemic corruption, minimal border security, regional geographic location, and poor resource management.

This thesis determines the impact of drug trafficking in West Africa on the national security interests of the United States. The U.S. strategy derived from the *National Security Strategy*, as well as the *National Strategy to Combat Transnational Organized Crime*. This study reports the conditions that exist and are exploited by TCOs in an effort to conduct illegal activities and undermine the security of West African countries and the national security interests of the United States. The significance of this study is that it provides further guidance and research opportunities for scholars and government officials to continue to analyze how the United States addresses the potential of a destabilized West Africa from affecting the national security interests of the United States of America.

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ACRONYMS

AFRICOM	United States Africa Command
AQIM	Al Qaida in the Islamic Maghreb
ATS	Amphetamine-type Stimulants
AU	African Union
DTO	Drug Trafficking Organization
ECOWAS	Economic Community of West African States
EU	European Union
FARC	<i>Fuerzas Armada Revolucionarias de Colombia</i> [Revolutionary Armed Forces of Columbia]
TCO	Transnational Criminal Organization
TOC	Transnational Organized Crime
UN	United Nations
UNODC	United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime
U.S.	United States
WACSI	West Africa Cooperative Security Initiative

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Background

Transnational organized crime, including drug trafficking, affects peace, security, and stability wherever it occurs. It undermines the authority and effectiveness of State institutions, erodes the rule of law, and weakens law enforcement structures.

—Ban Ki-Moon, UN Secretary General,
“Remarks to Security Council Meeting”

Drug smuggling through West Africa is not a new revelation in world affairs. The region has centuries of history being involved in the sale and distribution of illegal substances. However, within the past decade an increase in cocaine and heroin smuggling bound for European markets has significantly increased in both volume and in the means with which the drugs enter the market. In recent history, West Africa has become a global hub for illegal drugs transiting from both Latin America and Asia to end users in North America, Europe, the Middle East, and Asia.¹ The type of illegal substances has grown from cocaine and heroin to the locally manufactured amphetamine-type stimulants (ATS).² The West African region is particularly susceptible to influence by transnational criminal organizations (TCOs) for a myriad of reasons. Among those, are the corruption

¹ Africa Economic Development Institute, “West Africa and Drug Trafficking,” accessed April 11, 2015, www.africaecon.org/index.php/africa_business_reports/read/70.

² West Africa Commission on Drugs, “Not Just in Transit, Drugs the State and Society in West Africa” (West Africa Commission on Drugs, Geneva, Africa, 2014), 12.

of government officials, porous borders, and West Africa's geographic location between the South American and European continents.³

Guinea-Bissau is often referred to as Africa's first narco-state.⁴ The rampant corruption within the country permits TCOs and Drug Trafficking Organizations (DTOs) the latitude to operate unhindered without fear of reprisal from the local government or in many instances with the complicit involvement of local government officials. In the case of Guinea-Bissau, the corruption stems from a confrontational power struggle between the president, the parliament, and the military. The president often over rules parliament but does not fully control the nation's military apparatus. The militaries within West Africa will often depose the president when the military elite feel the presidency has gained too much power or no longer operates within their interests. There are no viable checks and balances in Guinea-Bissau, which has led to rampant corruption.⁵

Poverty is the key enabler to this rampant corruption. Two-thirds of the population in Guinea-Bissau lives below the U.S. poverty level. It lacks any real industrial base and the only agricultural crop of significance is that of cashews. Due to the absence of a diverse economy, the government and society have grown to rely on a

³ U.S. Congress, Senate, *Confronting Drug Trafficking in West Africa: Hearing before the Subcommittee on African Affairs of the Committee on Foreign Relations*, 111th Cong., 1st sess., June 23, 2009, 6.

⁴ Alexander Smoltczyk, "Africa's Cocaine Hub: Guinea Bissau a 'Drug Trafficker's Dream'," Spiegel Online International, accessed April 11, 2015, <http://www.spiegel.de/international/world/violence-plagues-african-hub-of-cocaine-trafficking-a-887306.html>.

⁵ Colonel Stephen Van Riper, "Tackling Africa's First Narco-State: Guinea-Bissau in West Africa" (Monograph, U.S. Army War College, Carlisle Barracks, PA, 2014), 20.

robust underground economy. The United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) estimates the total value to drugs passing through Guinea-Bissau is approximately two billion dollars. This staggering figure represents an amount four times Guinea-Bissau's Gross Domestic Product.⁶ The poverty that results from an economy based largely on the underground market guarantees an environment that is attractive to DTOs. Regarding the Latin American DTOs taking advantage of the economic climate in Guinea-Bissau, in March 2014 the Department of State noted, "The complicity of government officials at all levels in this criminal activity inhibits a complete assessment and resolution of the problem. Guinea-Bissau's political systems remain susceptible to and under the influence of narcotics traffickers."⁷

The Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) formalizes the association between countries of West Africa. ECOWAS has significant trouble monitoring and policing the porous borders between the fifteen member states of the community. ECOWAS is attempting to control and dissuade drug trafficking among its member states. It has established a Drug Control unit in the region, which provides technical support and expertise to member states seeking to combat the drug trade in their countries.⁸ Further, as the UNODC's most important counterpart in the region, ECOWAS developed a Regional Action Plan and corresponding Operational Plan that aimed to

⁶ Van Riper, 12.

⁷ U.S. Department of State Bureau for International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs, *International Narcotics Control Reports—Volume I (Drug and Chemical Control)* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 2014), 183.

⁸ Prosper Addo, Paper no. 12, "Cross-Border Criminal Activities in West Africa: Options for Effective Responses" (Kofi Annan International Peace Keeping Training Centre, Accra, Ghana, May 2006), 13.

build the region's capacity at both the regional and national levels to counter the influence of TCOs in a comprehensive manner.⁹

The geographic location of West Africa also makes the region susceptible to outside interference from both TCOs as well as DTOs. Dakar, Senegal is 700 miles closer to Recife, Brazil than it is to Paris, France.¹⁰ Importantly, the drug trade routes often link former colonial powers where familiar customs, language, and business relationships exist. The former Portuguese colonies of Brazil, Guinea-Bissau, and Cape Verde are an example of attractive locations for TCOs to facilitate the transit of narcotics due to the standing language and cultural ties.¹¹

The focus of this research paper will be on three illegal substances that are trafficked through West Africa. The trafficking of cocaine, heroin, and ATS all either transit through the region or are locally manufactured, in the case of ATS. Cocaine trafficking connects West African criminal elements to TCOs from South America and Europe. Heroin trafficking connects West Africa to the Middle East, Europe, and North America. Lastly, ATS production links West Africa with Asia, Europe, and the Middle East.

West African countries' economies suffer from the impact of cocaine trafficking because it often dwarfs the states legitimate sources of revenue. During an incident in

⁹ United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, "The Problem of Drug and Organized Crime in West and Central Africa," United Nations, accessed April 11, 2015, www.unodc.org/wesandcentralafrica/en/regional-programme.

¹⁰ U.S. Congress, Senate, *Confronting Drug Trafficking in West Africa*, 6.

¹¹ United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, *The Transatlantic Cocaine Market* (New York: United Nations, 2011), 28.

January 2008, Malian security officials seized 750 kilograms of cocaine. This one shipment of cocaine transiting through Mali represented more than a third of Mali's defense expenditures the year prior. Similarly, government officials in Benin seized 350 kilograms in August of 2007. This seizure represented the annual per capita income of 31,000 Beninois.¹²

Heroin trafficking has expanded into West Africa as routes through Asia and the Middle East become more restrictive. The number of seizures of heroin from Afghanistan have increased. The analysis of the networks involved indicate that West African criminal networks are transporting heroin from Pakistan into East Africa for onward shipment and distribution in European and other markets. The estimated earnings of the Afghan drug traffickers is approximately \$2.2 billion in 2009. This is in contrast to the other beneficiaries which include the Taliban, who earn \$155 million and the local farmers, who earned \$440 million from the sale and distribution of opium.¹³

ATS illegally trafficked through West Africa are often unnoticed due the much larger impact that cocaine and heroin have on the region. However, since 2008 criminal elements within West Africa have produced more ATS and distributed them from West Africa to consumers around the globe. The primary consumers of this facet of the illegal

¹² David O'Regan, Africa Security Brief, no. 5, "Cocaine and Instability in Africa: Lessons from Latin America and the Caribbean" (Africa Center for Strategic Studies, Washington, DC, July 2010), 2.

¹³ Sylvia Westall, "Africa Reemerging as Heroin Trafficking Hub: U.N.," *Reuters*, July 30, 2011, accessed April 15, 2015, <http://www.reuters.com/article/2011/07/30/us-un-drugs-idUSTRE76T0PH20110730>.

drug trade reside in Japan, the Republic of Korea, Malaysia, and Thailand.¹⁴ Although indications exist that the production and distribution of ATS has grown in West Africa, Nigeria was the first country to report illicit methamphetamine manufacture. Nigerian government officials seized a methamphetamine laboratory with a manufacturing capacity between 25 to 50 kilograms per cycle near Nigeria's largest city of Lagos.¹⁵ There is evidence that Mexican drug cartels are attempting to gain influence in West Africa to exploit the growing ATS trade and its twenty-one million consumers in East and South East Asia. According to the U.S. Drug Enforcement Agency, Mexican drug traffickers are used as experts in drug trafficking and as chemists in the manufacture of methamphetamines.¹⁶

This paper will analyze the link between drug trafficking in West Africa and its impact on the national security interests of the United States. The U.S. national security interests are derived from the U.S. *National Security Strategy*, the U.S. national *Strategy to Combat Transnational Crime: Addressing Converging Threats to National Security* as well as Congressional hearings and research.

Primary Research Question

How does transnational drug trafficking in West Africa impact the national security interests of the United States?

¹⁴ United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, *West Africa 2012 ATS Situation Report* (New York: United Nations, 2012), 8.

¹⁵ Ibid., 11.

¹⁶ Ibid., 12.

Secondary Research Questions

1. What is the impact of South American drug trafficking in West Africa?
2. What other drugs and narcotics are funneled through West Africa in order to penetrate Western European and other drug markets?
3. How does the United States protect its national interests in the region against the destabilizing effects of drug trafficking?

Assumptions

The relevancy of this thesis is based on several assumptions. First, West Africa is defined as the member states of the ECOWAS. Second, the demand for illegal drugs in Europe, the Middle East, Asia, and North America will continue for the foreseeable future. Additionally, West African countries will continue to have weak governmental structures, limited resources, and an inability to monitor or enforce the borders within its members states. Lastly, the facts and sources used in this thesis will remain valid and accurate for the foreseeable future.

Definitions of Key Terms

Amphetamine-type Stimulants: ATS are a group of substances comprised of synthetic stimulants including amphetamine, methamphetamine, methcathinone, and ecstasy-group substances (for example, methylene-dioxy-meth-amphetamine and its analogues).¹⁷

¹⁷ United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, *West Africa 2012 ATS Situation Report*, 6.

Drug Cartels: Drug cartels are large, highly sophisticated organizations composed of multiple DTOs and cells with specific assignments such as drug transportation, security/enforcement, or money laundering. Drug cartel command and control structures are based outside the United States; however, they produce, transport, and distribute illicit drugs domestically with the assistance of DTOs that are either a part of or in alliance with the cartel.¹⁸

Drug Trafficking Organization: DTOs are complex organizations with highly defined command and control structures that produce, transport, and/or distribute large quantities of one or more illicit drugs.¹⁹

Economic Community of West African States: The ECOWAS was founded in May 1975 in Lagos, Nigeria. The member countries include Benin, Burkina Faso, Ivory Coast, Gambia, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Liberia, Mali, Nigeria, Senegal, Sierra Leone, Togo, and Cape Verde. In 2000, Mauritania withdrew its membership. The goal of ECOWAS is to promote economic integration and cooperation in West Africa with the aim of raising the living standard of the people, increase economic stability, strengthen relations between the member states, and contribute to the advancement of the African continent.²⁰

¹⁸ National Drug Intelligence Center, “National Drug Threat Assessment 2010,” U.S. Department of Justice, accessed April 11, 2015, www.justice.gov/archive/ndic/pubs38/38661/dtos.htm.

¹⁹ Ibid.

²⁰ United Nations Economic Commission for Africa, “ECOWAS-ECOWAS,” United Nations, accessed April 11, 2015, www.uneca.org/oria/pages/ecowas-economic-community-west-african-states-0.

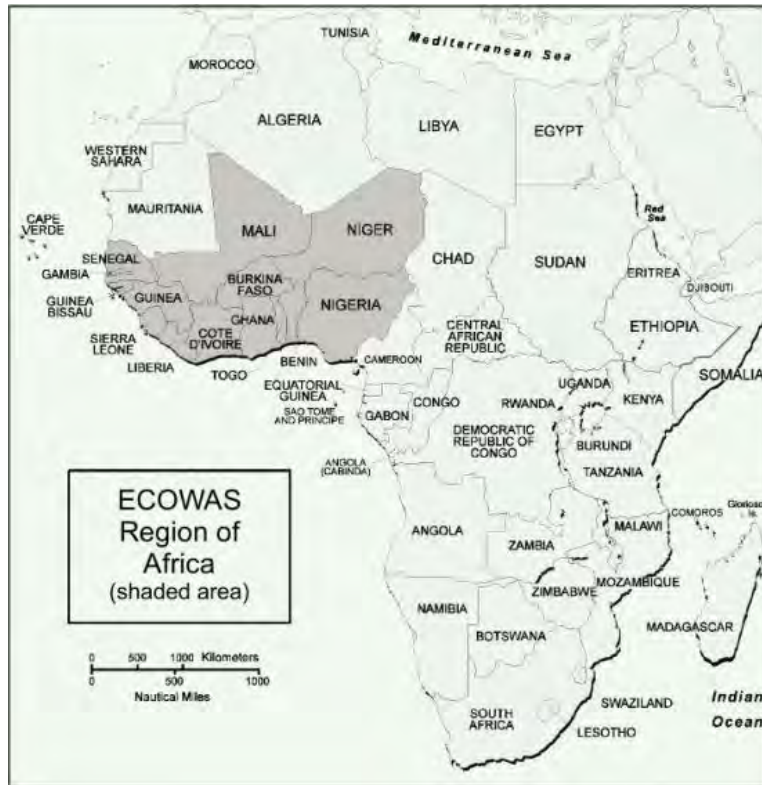


Figure 1. The ECOWAS Region of Africa

Source: Francis Crupi, "Why the United States Should Support Pan-African Organizations," *Parameters* 35, no. 4 (Winter 2005): 108.

Transnational Organized Crime: TOC refers to those self-perpetuating associations of individuals who operate transnationally for the purpose of obtaining power, influence, monetary, and/or commercial gains, wholly or in part by illegal means, while protecting their activities through a pattern of corruption and/or violence, or while protecting their illegal activities through a transnational organizational structure and the exploitation of transnational commerce or communication mechanisms.²¹

²¹ U.S. President, *Strategy to Combat Transnational Organized Crime: Addressing Converging Threats to National Security* (Washington, DC: The White House, 2011), 2.

Scope and Limitations

This paper must be complete by May 2015. As such, time is the limiting factor for research, writing, and editing.

Delimitations

This paper focus on those countries within the ECOWAS. The similar and often interlocking drug trafficking trends that exist in East Africa or South Africa will not be addressed within the scope of this research paper, unless they are tangentially mentioned to demonstrate the overall drug trafficking network that exists within West Africa. Additionally, this paper will be derived from unclassified material less than ten years old. Upon publication it will remain an unclassified document. The author will relegate the research of the drugs being trafficked to cocaine, heroin, and ATS. Lastly, the impact on the U.S. national strategy will be determined by focusing on published national strategies for the Barack Obama Administration.

Significance of the Study

By researching the destabilizing effect the drug trade has on the region of West Africa, this study will report the conditions that exist and are exploited by TCOs in an effort to conduct illegal activities and undermine the security of not only West African countries by also the national security interests of the United States of America. This significance of this study is that it will provide further guidance and research opportunities for scholars and government officials to continue to analyze how the United States continues to address the potential of a destabilized West Africa from impacting the national security interests of the United States of America.

Organization of the Study

Chapter 1 is an overview of the area of research. It also includes the primary and secondary research questions, key definitions and terms, assumptions, limitations and delimitations, and the significance of the study. Chapter 2 reviews the literature used as references for this research paper. Chapter 3 is a detailed analysis of the methodology used in order to research, write, and edit this paper. Chapter 4 will present the research conducted that analysis the type of drug trafficking that exists in West Africa and its impacts on the national security interests of the United States of America. Chapter 5 presents a summary of the findings and conclusions to the primary and secondary research questions. Lastly, it will provide recommended topics for follow on research.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

Introduction

This study gathers the relevant data that describes the characteristics unique to the cocaine, heroin, and ATS trafficking phenomenon that exists within West Africa.

Additionally, the study analyzes the U.S. strategies relating to national security, and countering TCOs. Finally, this study reviews congressional hearings and research that detail the impact of West African drug trafficking on the policies of the United States of America.

The primary research question is: How does transnational drug trafficking in West Africa affect the national security interests of the United States?

The Secondary Research Questions are:

1. What is the impact of South American drug trafficking in West Africa?
2. What other drugs and narcotics are funneled through West Africa in order to penetrate Western European and other drug markets?
3. How does the United States protect its national interests in the region against the destabilizing effects of drug trafficking?

This chapter reviews the general themes and key points of current literature related to the trafficking of cocaine, heroin, and ATS within the ECOWAS region of West Africa. This chapter also reviews the National Security Strategies that are associated with the U.S. national interests in the West African region as well as congressional testimonies and congressional research related to drug trafficking within the region. The literature review is organized in four sections. The first section reviews

the literature that describes the drug trafficking trends that exist within West Africa. Specifically, it focuses on cocaine, heroin, and ATS drug trafficking. The second section reviews the current U.S. *National Security Strategy* as well as the U.S. *Strategy to Combat Transnational Criminal Organizations*. The third section reviews congressional testimonies and congressional research that describes the impact of drug trafficking in West Africa on the policies of the United States of America. The final section presents a summary of findings from the preceding three sections and provides the foundation of research design presented in chapter 3.

Section 1: Current Drug Trafficking Trends in West Africa

The UNODC has documented the trafficking of narcotics through West Africa. The UNODC annually produces the *World Drug Report*. The edition used for this thesis is the *World Drug Report 2014*. This report specifically shows the decline of the average heroin production in Afghanistan as well as a corresponding rise in heroin seizures in Pakistan. This is relevant to this study because the report annotates that West Africa, among other countries, is tied to heroin transiting through West Africa for local markets as well as markets in Europe.²² The *World Drug Report 2014* also describes that although the amount of cocaine seizures in West Africa are currently less than the peak levels several years ago, it is assessed that the cocaine trafficking between South America and Europe via West Africa is still occurring.²³ Finally, the *World Drug Report 2014* details the growing markets for ATS. The report notes that it is difficult to quantify the global

²² United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, *World Drug Report 2014* (New York: United Nations, 2014), 25.

²³ Ibid., 38.

production of ATS. However, globally the number of ATS laboratories that were discovered and rendered inoperable increased from 12,571 in 2011 to 14,322 in 2012. Worldwide seizures of ATS reached an all-time high of 144 tons, which is a 15 percent increase from 2011.²⁴

The UNODC's *World Drug Report* gives the reader a broad overview of worldwide trends in drug manufacturing, trafficking, and use. However, it lacks the specific detail required to address the specific issues within the scope of this study. The UNODC also produces studies that are much narrower in scope but does not produce them annually. An example is the UNODC's 2007 *Cocaine Trafficking in Western Africa Situation Report*. This study is a good primer on the rapid increase of cocaine trafficking through West Africa from 1998 to 2007. It concludes that in 2007 West Africa was emerging as an important transshipment point for South American cocaine that was en route to Europe.²⁵

The UNODC produced another study titled, *Drug Trafficking as a Security Threat in West Africa*. This study not only addresses cocaine trafficking, but also heroin trafficking. The period studied under this document indicates a continuing rise of cocaine seizures within West Africa that shows that in 2008, cocaine trafficking in West Africa was still on the rise. In particular, it notes that Nigeria, Senegal, Mali, and Guinea are the most prolific in terms of drug seizures. Accordingly, Nigerians citizens were the most

²⁴ United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, *World Drug Report 2014*, 46.

²⁵ United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, *Cocaine Trafficking in Western Africa Situation Report* (New York: United Nations, 2007), 14.

detected nationality among arrestees and nearly half of the cocaine detected on commercial flights was destined for Spanish and British cocaine markets.²⁶

This report also details the emergence of heroin trafficking through West Africa. Although West Africa does not have the geographic advantages presented in the cocaine market, the heroin market is nevertheless present in the region. The report indicates that West African criminal networks and their associated heroin carriers are operating in Pakistan, Thailand, Europe, and the United States. Like cocaine, those arrested are most often Nigerian.²⁷

The aforementioned reports detailed the historic rise of cocaine and heroin trafficking in West Africa. The UNODC's *West Africa 2012 ATS Situation Report* indicates the burgeoning ATS market within West Africa. The report suggests a dramatic rise in ATS production throughout the entire region by West African criminal organizations.²⁸ More recently, UNODC produced the 2014 *Global Synthetic Drugs Assessment* that indicates that the South Africa is still the largest producer of ATS on the continent; however, ATS production in Nigeria and other West African countries has proved to be an increasing phenomenon for both local consumption and export to Southeast Asian markets.²⁹

²⁶ United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, *Drug Trafficking as a Security Threat in West Africa* (New York: United Nations, 2008), 3.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, 29.

²⁸ United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, *West Africa 2012 ATS Situation Report*, 11.

²⁹ United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, *Global Synthetic Drugs Assessment* (New York: United Nations, 2014), 13.

The UNODC publications used for this study proved invaluable to not only gain a broad perspective of narcotic trafficking trends worldwide, but also specific look at drug trafficking in West Africa. The UNODC website also contains countless articles and bulletins regarding transnational crime and drug trafficking in the ECOWAS region.

Section 2: Current National Security Strategy Relating to Drug Trafficking and Transnational Crime

The Obama Administration published the *National Security Strategy 2015* during the conduct of this study. These documents address the broad themes of combating transnational crime and developing African prosperity. The *National Security Strategy 2010* details that the United States must lead in facilitating an international order that facilitates the collective action to confront common challenges. The *Strategy* argues that without this international order, transnational crime will continue to persist.³⁰ The 2010 *Strategy* notes the concern of the “crime-terror” nexus that terrorist organizations and criminal organizations may utilize logistical and funding operations to continue their ventures.³¹ The former *National Security Strategy* focused on the development of the continent of Africa and facilitating the economic capacity and integration of the countries therein while at the same time reinforcing democratic institutions.³²

The February 2015 *National Security Strategy* is much more direct in addressing the threats of TOC. The *Strategy* discusses the significant security consequences

³⁰ U.S. President, *National Security Strategy 2010* (Washington, DC: The White House, May 2010), 40.

³¹ *Ibid.*, 49.

³² *Ibid.*, 45.

associated with weak or failing states that are enabled by TCOs.³³ Additionally, the *Strategy* notes the rapid pace of technological development facilitates the networking of multiple groups that are threats to the national security of the United States.³⁴ The president makes an argument that in order to collaborate with fragile states with a commitment to forming a legitimate government, the United States will aid in building partner capacity, to include fighting TOC.³⁵ The *National Security Strategy 2015*, like the *National Security Strategy 2010* is consistent in building partner capacity with countries on the African continent by reducing insecurity, famine, and disease. The means with which the 2015 *Strategy* employ is based much more on economic development as well as future African leader development.³⁶

Both documents referenced during this study broadly reflect the national security interests of the United States as well as the national policies oriented toward Africa and against TCOs. The notable difference as it relates to this study between the two documents in the increased focus on combating TOC across the globe.

In 2011, the Barack Obama Administration released the *Strategy to Combat Transnational Organized Crime*. This document distills the *National Security Strategy* into a focused strategy against a “significant and growing threat to national and

³³ U.S. President, *National Security Strategy 2015* (Washington, DC: The White House, February 2015), 2.

³⁴ *Ibid.*, 4.

³⁵ *Ibid.*, 10.

³⁶ *Ibid.*, 27.

international security.”³⁷ This strategy document discusses in further detail the crime-terror-insurgency nexus as well as the expansion of drug trafficking.³⁸ While this study’s focus is on West Africa, it touches on many criminal networks that become intermingled in the region to include DTOs from Southwest Asia, Latin America, Europe, and the United States. This *Strategy* also sets out the five policy objectives contained within the vision and priorities of the *National Security Strategy*.³⁹

The *Strategy to Combat Transnational Organized Crime* was a useful document in determining U.S. policies and interests in West Africa as it relates to drug trafficking. Although this strategy is nested with the National Security Strategy 2010, the ideas and policies are consistent with the National Security Strategy 2015 and as such will be relied upon in throughout the study in determining the impact of drug trafficking in West Africa on U.S. national security interests.

Section 3: Congressional Testimonies and Research Relating to West African Drug Trafficking

Congress has had numerous hearings and research papers that address the linkage between terrorist organizations and West African criminal networks. Specifically, the linkage between Hezbollah, South American drug kingpins, and West African syndicates is annotated in detail.⁴⁰ This paper also describes the lack of linkage between Al Qaeda

³⁷ U.S. President, *Strategy to Combat Transnational Organized Crime*, 5.

³⁸ *Ibid.*, 6.

³⁹ *Ibid.*, 13.

⁴⁰ John Rollins and Liana Sun Wyler, Congressional Research Service Report for Congress R41004, *Terrorism and Transnational Crime: Foreign Policy Issues for Congress* (Washington, DC: Library of Congress, June 11, 2013), 14.

and organized crime.⁴¹ This study was useful in determining the network analysis of different criminal organizations with known terrorist organizations.

The U.S. Senate and House of Representatives have conducted multiple hearings regarding both TCOs as well as combating the West African drug trade. Particularly in May 2012, the Senate's Drug Caucus, co-chaired by Senators Diane Feinstein and Charles Grassley held a hearing, on West African Drug Trafficking Threats. This hearing informed the report, *Eight Steps to Counter the Drug Trade in West Africa* as well as passing of the Transnational Drug Trafficking Act of 2013.⁴² The congressional reports and hearings used during the research of this study were valuable resources in determining the legislature's development of policy regarding the perceived threat of drug trafficking within West Africa.

Section 4: Summary of Findings

In addition to the UNODC documents, executive strategies, and congressional hearings, the author used multiple research papers produced by the U.S. Army War College in framing the research and writing of this study. The aforementioned areas of research permitted the author to determine not only the threat level of drug trafficking in West Africa, but also the national response to the threat. Finally, the research literature used for this study further detailed the criminal-terrorist link that occurs in the region of West Africa in the conduct of drug trafficking operations.

⁴¹ Rollins and Wyler, 17.

⁴² Diane Feinstein, "Feinstein, Grassley Outline Steps to Combat West African Drug Trade," December 2013, accessed April 12, 2015, www.feinstein.senate.gov/public/index.cfm/2013/12/feinstein-grassley-outline-steps-to-combat-west-african-drug-trade.

CHAPTER 3

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Introduction

Drug trafficking trends within West Africa present a threat to the national security interests of the United States of America. The primary and secondary research questions are explored by using qualitative research methodology. This methodology allows the understanding of the drug trafficking trends that exist in West Africa, and to the socio-economic conditions that exist in the region that attract TCOs and DTOs to the area. This paper did not attempt to quantify the rates, volumes, etc. of the drug trade. It means to qualify the overarching drug trafficking trends that exist and compare that to the published national strategies from the Barack Obama Administration. We will then determine if the drug trade in West Africa presents a threat to American national security interests.

The purpose of this chapter is to identify the methodology used in order to derive the conclusions presented in chapter 5. The chapter is divided into four sections. Section 1 of this chapter presents how the researcher completed the data collection required to answer the primary and secondary research questions. Section 2 identifies the credibility of the sources used for the generation of this thesis. Section 3 regards the analysis used to interpret the data derived from the sources used in the conduct of this research paper. Section 4 provides a summary of the methodology used in order to complete the research within the scope of this thesis.

Section 1: Data Collection

Due to the nature of research required for this topic, the author relied on secondary sources as the means to answer the research questions. The author relied on the references available through the Combined Arms Research Library at Fort Leavenworth Kansas. Through the Combined Arms Research Library, the author was able to access, review, and analyze books, research papers, reports, and policies pertaining to the topic of this research paper.

There were sufficient amounts of data regarding the background of West Africa available as well as access to documents directly relating to the topics presented. Sources included the United Nations (UN), academic papers from authors with a military background, U.S. Congressional hearings, reports commissioned by the U.S. Department of State as well and presidential policy documents.

Section 2: Credibility of Sources

The sources utilized provided breadth, depth, and a broad perspective of the thesis topic from an American policy point of view. A shortfall of the documents used as the backbone of the analysis of the primary and secondary research questions was that topics written from a West African perspective were difficult to find. In order to provide greater perspective, the author relied on UN documents from non-American writers. These documents provide the study a broader multinational perspective on the effects of drug trafficking on West African states.

Section 3: Data Analysis

Throughout the research process, the author was able to critically analyze the information presented and derive answers to the primary and secondary research questions by using content analysis of qualitative data. By using a content analysis approach, the researcher was able to focus the secondary reference sources used in the study to develop the coherent and focused answers to the questions posed in this study.

Determining the current trends in drug trafficking in West Africa and the forecast trends in the future was the first area analyzed for this study. By referencing multiple sources from the U.S. government, the UN and third party scholars, the author used this first topic as a means to build a thorough context for the follow on research topics. Without knowing the current and forecast trends in drug trafficking within West Africa, the author would not be able, to convey to the reader the salient points derived in the areas of study that followed. This section also provides the data required to analyze and formulate an answer to the first and third secondary questions.

Following the context provided in the first section, the author analyzed the TCOs and DTOs that are involved in the shipment of drugs through West Africa to their final destinations in North America, Europe, the Middle East, and Asia. With the content analyzed in this section, the author was able to derive the answers to the second secondary research question.

The next section of the study will analyze the different strategies published by the U.S. government relating to drug trafficking and combating TCOs and DTOs. By thoroughly reviewing the data within this section, the author was able to formulate

answers to the fourth secondary research question as well as provide the last bit of required background to answer the primary research question.

The researcher utilized the content analysis methodology due to the nature of the primary and secondary research questions. Rather than using a comparative study of West Africa with another region around the globe, the author elected to focus only on West Africa and the drug trafficking therein. Content analysis is focused, simple, and does not require outside assistance in data management for comparative analysis. However, the weakness of the content analysis is that it is only as accurate as the content analyzed. If the author neglected a piece of research that was directly related to the topic of this thesis, then the quality of the content in chapter 5 will have been degraded.

Section 4: Summary and Conclusions

The aim of chapter 3 of this thesis was to describe the methodology used to gain the insight required to answer the topic's primary and secondary research questions. To develop the data presented into a coherent, thorough, and viable analysis, the author used content analysis. By scrutinizing the secondary sources used in this study, and acknowledging the lack of West Africa sources available, the author will be able to provide a comprehensive study of the effects of drug trafficking in West Africa on the national security interests of the United States of America.

CHAPTER 4

ANALYSIS

Introduction

Identifying drug trafficking trends within West Africa and determining the impact of West African drug trafficking on the national security of the United States of America is key to answering the primary and secondary research questions. The primary question is: How does transnational drug trafficking in West Africa impact the national security interests of the United States? The secondary questions include:

1. What is the impact of South American drug trafficking in West Africa?
2. What other drugs and narcotics are funneled through West Africa in order to penetrate Western European and other drug markets?
3. How does the United States protect its national interests in the region against the destabilizing effects of drug trafficking?

The purpose of chapter 4 is to provide the analysis to answer the above primary and secondary questions as well as provide recommendations to the reader on how the United States can orient its current policies and positions towards countries within the West African region. Chapter 4 is divided into five sections. The first section provides the reader with an overview of the generic drug trafficking trends that currently exist within West Africa and relevant historical context. Section 2 describes three specific drug trends, focused on cocaine, heroin, and amphetamine type substances. The author describes the organizations responsible for trafficking drugs as well as how the criminal organization provides command and control over the drug trafficking operation. The author details the current drug trafficking routes as well as the socio-economic

implications on countries impacted by the passage of illegal drugs. Lastly, the study identifies links between the drug trade and terrorist organizations. Section 3 provides a detailed analysis of U.S. national security strategy as it relates to the war on drugs and combating TCOs. Section 4 details the U.S. national interest regarding drug trafficking in West Africa. Section 5 provides the reader with a summary of analysis found within chapter 4.

Section 1: Overview of Transnational Crime and Drug Trafficking Trends

West African countries are susceptible to influence by TCOs and DTOs for a variety of reasons. Among those reasons are its geographic location between South America and Europe. Additional reasons are weak law enforcement and judicial systems, rampant poverty, and porous borders within the region.⁴³

The location of West Africa is a contributing factor in why the region is susceptible to exploitation by TCOs and DTOs. West Africa boasts a coastline that is longer than either one of the U.S. continental coasts. This vast coastline and its associated archipelagos are largely unmonitored by the West African law enforcement agencies. The geographic advantages combined with little law enforcement capacity permits Latin American drug cartels to ship narcotics via containerized shipping to a midway point between Latin American and emerging European markets. For example, Dakar, Senegal

⁴³ U.S. Senate Caucus on International Narcotics Control, *Eight Steps to Counter the Drug Trade in West Africa* (Washington, DC: U.S. Congress, 2013), 15.

is actually 700 miles closer to Recife, Brazil than it is to Paris, France.⁴⁴ This places Senegal, as well as other West African countries, in a location that is relatively easy to smuggle drug shipments for intermediate staging prior to shipment to its final destination. From locations within West Africa, large containerized drug shipments originating from countries like Columbia, Peru, and the Plurinational State of Bolivia can be broken into smaller shipments and be shipped via commercial air transport or ground based transport through the Sahel region of Africa to consumer markets in Europe.⁴⁵ Although the geographic location of West Africa is alluring for TCOs, it is largely the fact that the West African countries are teetering on collapse that the cartels find appealing. West African governments have a long history of widespread corruption. Endemic corruption contributes to poor state stability as governmental procedures are disregarded, resources are misallocated, and public officers are bought and sold.⁴⁶

Governmental corruption and the infiltration of governmental institutions by criminal networks pose one of the greatest threats to West African stability and enable exploitation by TCOs.⁴⁷ Corruption in West African has been referred to as endemic and

⁴⁴ David Brown, The Letort Papers, “The Challenge of Drug Trafficking to Democratic Governance and Human Security in West Africa” (U.S. Army War College, Carlisle, PA, May 2013), 21.

⁴⁵ United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, *Transnational Organized Crime in West Africa: A Threat Assessment* (New York: United Nations, 2013), 12.

⁴⁶ Samuel Mondays, “Corruption and State Instability in West Africa: An Examination of Policy Options” (Kofi Annan International Peace Keeping Training Centre, Accra, Ghana, December 2007), 2.

⁴⁷ U.S. Agency for International Development, *The Development Response to Drug Trafficking in Africa: A Programming Guide* (Washington, DC: Agency for International Development, April 2013), 11.

noted as an attractive vulnerability of the region to South American drug cartels.⁴⁸ The corruption present in the region has permitted the Columbian drug cartels to gain influence, as well as criminal groups from Italy, Mexico, Morocco, Spain, Venezuela, and perhaps even Lebanon. Criminal organizations use West Africa as a “strategic warehouse” as well as an area that provides relative safety for the formation of criminal relationships.⁴⁹

West African countries have a long history of corruption based in both the colonial legacy of the region as well as the predatory and partisan nature of the state governments.⁵⁰ Culturally, the region’s leadership often does not place the interests of the citizenry above their personal, familial, or tribal interests. Accordingly, West African governments often resemble criminal organizations themselves in that they subordinate the social welfare needs of the people to individual and sectorial interests.⁵¹

West Africa’s historical tendency to place the ruling elite’s interests above the interest of the citizenry makes them often times complicit partners in the drug trafficking trade. In some instances, where the government is repressive and predatory, political leaders welcome criminal activity as it provides another source of income. Political elites

⁴⁸ Yury Fedotov, “Impact of Transnational Organized Crime on Peace, Security and Stability in West Africa and the Sahel Region” (Remarks at the Security Council Briefing, New York, NY, February 2012).

⁴⁹ James Cockayne and Phil Williams, *The Invisible Tide: Towards an International Strategy to Deal with Drug Trafficking Through West Africa* (New York, NY: International Peace Institute, October 2009), 4.

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, 10.

⁵¹ William Reno, “Understanding Criminality in West African Conflicts,” *International Peacekeeping* 16, no. 1 (February 2009): 53.

find this enticing if targeted international sanctions deny them other income opportunities.⁵²

Corruption in West African governments is not isolated to the political elites. TCOs and DTOs target the military, police, members of the judiciary, key ministers, and other governmental officials as well as members of parliament for exploitation due to the corruption that exists at the highest echelons of power.⁵³ Because the already corrupt government does not have the resources or incentive to conduct the oversight required to contain rampant corruption, TCOs simply buy many officials into cooperation.⁵⁴ Civil servants that go unpaid will often use their office to engage in rent seeking in order to supplement their salaries.⁵⁵ Therefore, corruption exists at nearly every level of state governance. An example of such culturally ingrained corruption is Guinea after the military coup in 2009. Once Captain Moussa Dadis Camara seized power of the Guinea government, he quickly began arresting officials in the former regime. A result of the arrests and interrogations, which included the former president's son and brother-in-law, highlighted the pervasive corruption and complicity of the drug trade. One junior police officer that confessed to stealing a packet of cocaine and reselling it for \$15,000 stated,

⁵² Cockayne and Williams, 10.

⁵³ Ibid., 11.

⁵⁴ Ibid.

⁵⁵ Peter McGuire, The Pardee Papers no. 9, "Narcotics Trafficking in West Africa: A Governance Challenge" (Boston, MA, March 2010), 9.

“Eighty percent of the men in uniform lived off of this – it wasn’t just me. It was everyone.”⁵⁶

The corruption that exists within West African countries prevents adequate direction of scarce national resources. Rather than the income from natural resources used as a way to increase the basic infrastructure of society by focusing on security, healthcare, agriculture, and education, the funds have often been used to fuel conflict and corruption in the region.⁵⁷ In West Africa alone, thirty-five highly porous international boundaries make them vulnerable to the trafficking of drugs as well as other contraband.⁵⁸ The porous borders, combined with weak institutions and corruption, permit traffickers the opportunity to connect with local leaders and set up their drug trafficking network that either avoids detection by the formal security apparatus or gains the complicity of the formal security apparatus.⁵⁹ A staggering example of the limited resourcing exists in Guinea-Bissau where the judicial police in charge of drug control

⁵⁶ Cockayne and Williams, 11.

⁵⁷ Liesl Louw-Vaudran, “Clamping Down on Corruption in Africa’s Extractive Industries,” Institute for Security Studies, May 14, 2013, accessed April 14, 2015, www.issafrica.org/iss-today/clamping-down-on-corruption-in-africas-extractive-industries.

⁵⁸ Afua Lampitey, Policy Brief 12/2013. “Rethinking Border Management Strategies in West Africa: Experiences from the Sahel” (Kofi Annan International Peace Keeping Training Center, Accra, Ghana, December 2013), 2.

⁵⁹ Kwesi Aning and John Pokoo, West African Commission on Drugs Background Paper. no. 1, “Drug Trafficking and Threats to National and Regional Security in West Africa” (Kofi Annan International Peace Keeping Training Centre, Accra, Ghana, January 2013), 5.

have only sixty agents, a single vehicle, and often no fuel to use it.⁶⁰ Further, West African countries lack the basic infrastructure required to incarcerate those charged with breaking the law. Excluding Guinea-Bissau, which has an abysmal six persons incarcerated per 100,000 citizens, the rest of West African countries have a rate of thirty-eight persons per 100,000 citizens.⁶¹ Yuri Fedotov, the executive director of the UNODC has noted that South American drug cartels are exploiting regional vulnerabilities in West Africa: poverty, unemployment, lack of border control, weakness of law enforcement structures, and endemic corruption. He describes that for the drug traffickers, West Africa represented not only the shortest, but also the most cost effective, channel for trafficking illegal drugs to Europe.⁶²

Section 2: Drugs Being Trafficked through West Africa

The trafficking or local production of cocaine, heroin, and ATX affects West African security by leading to greater drug dependence by the local population, increasing and aggravating health risks like Human Immunodeficiency Virus and hepatitis C, and further fueling the corruption that exists in the structures of

⁶⁰ United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, *Cocaine Trafficking in West Africa: The Threat to Stability and Development (with special reference to Guinea-Bissau)* (New York: United Nations, 2015), 15.

⁶¹ United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, *Cocaine Trafficking in West Africa*, 16.

⁶² United Nations, “Security Council Presidential Statement Calls for System-wide UN Action to Combat Transnational Crime—Drug Trafficking, Piracy, Terrorism—in West Africa, Sahel” (6716th Security Council Meeting, February 2012), accessed April 15, 2015, www.un.org/press/en/2012/sc10546.doc.htm.

government.⁶³ Cocaine has increasingly been trafficked through the harbors and the seashores of West Africa en route to emerging markets in Europe, South Africa, the Middle East, and Eastern Europe.⁶⁴ West African drug trafficking networks are smuggling more heroin through West Africa as the region continues to suffer from corruption, widespread poverty, and limited law-enforcement capacity.⁶⁵ Heroin from Afghanistan, the world's largest heroin producer, is trafficked into West Africa from the Middle East via East Africa for both local consumption as well as global distribution.⁶⁶ ATS trafficking highlights a trend of African cartels of locally conducting large-scale methamphetamine production aimed at global distribution.⁶⁷

West Africa is one of the poorest, least developed, and unstable regions on the continent of Africa with significant security, governance, humanitarian, and environmental challenges.⁶⁸ The region has experienced at least fifty-eight coups and

⁶³ West Africa Commission on Drugs, "Not Just in Transit, Drugs the State and Society in West Africa," 12.

⁶⁴ Amado Philip de Andres, Discussion Papers no. 16, "West Africa Under Attack: Drugs, Organized Crime, and Terrorism as the New Threats to Global Security" (Unit on International Security and Cooperation, Madrid, Spain, January 2008), 211.

⁶⁵ Westall.

⁶⁶ Drew Hinshaw, "West Africa Rising: Heroin, Cocaine Traffickers Find More Buyers at Home," *The Christian Science Monitor*, June 21 2011, accessed April 15, 2015, www.csmonitor.com/World/Africa/Africa-Monitor/2011/0621/West-Africa-Rising-Heroin-cocaine-traffickers-find-more-buyers-at-home.

⁶⁷ Robert Beckhusen, "Out: Latin American Drug Cartels. In: African Drug Cartels," *Wired*, February 27, 2013, accessed April 15, 2015, www.wired.com/2013/02/africa-cartels.

⁶⁸ Clare Castillejo, Policy Brief no. 176, "West Africa: Continental Engine or Brake?" (Foundation for International Relations and Foreign Dialogue, Madrid, Spain, February 2014), 1.

attempted coups and many local, destabilizing criminal organizations are active.⁶⁹

Foreign DTOs exploit West Africa because cartels from Latin America can enter a relationship with existing TCOs that are already exploiting the region and facilitate the trafficking of drugs through the region.⁷⁰

Latin American cartels facilitate the trafficking of cocaine through West Africa. Seizures of cocaine shipments in Europe and follow on forensic testing demonstrate that between 2008 and 2010, 25 percent of the cocaine seized in Europe could be traced back to Columbia, 6 percent traceable back to Peru, and 2 percent back to the Plurinational State of Bolivia.⁷¹ By combining Bolivian Republic of Venezuela, Ecuador, and Panama together with Colombian cocaine, the amount of “Columbian-linked” cocaine would be 69. percent of the total seizures from 2008 to 2010.⁷² The amount of Columbian cocaine destined for the United States, by contrast, stands at 95.5 percent of 3,000 samples taken with only 2 percent deriving from Peru.⁷³

Latin American cartels and DTOs facilitate the trafficking of their products through West Africa by sending trusted lieutenants to the region in order to establish

⁶⁹ United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, *The Transatlantic Cocaine Market*, 54.

⁷⁰ Arthur Brice, “Latin American Drug Cartels Find Home in West Africa,” CNN, September 21, 2009, accessed April 15, 2015, www.cnn.com/2009/WORLD/africa/09/21/africa.drug.cartels.

⁷¹ United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, *The Transatlantic Cocaine Market*, 8.

⁷² Ibid.

⁷³ Ibid.

legitimate businesses.⁷⁴ In doing so, they obtain legal residency and begin to network with indigenous criminal organizations, particularly the Nigerians.⁷⁵ After establishing the business relationship between the Latin American cartels and local criminal organizations, the cartels are able to leverage local knowledge of smuggling routes and techniques, safe houses, storage venues, banking practices and other services essential to moving large shipments of cocaine from Latin America to European markets.⁷⁶

Cocaine consumption in the United States has drastically reduced since 2006 for a variety of reasons. Increased law enforcement efforts through the transitory state of Mexico, decreased production rates of cocaine in Columbia, cartel violence, and capitalization on emerging markets all contribute to the reduced amount of cocaine available in North American markets.⁷⁷ Due to the reduced amount of cocaine available in North American markets, the price of purity-adjusted cocaine rose 80 percent between 2006 and 2009.⁷⁸ The sky rocketing costs of cocaine in the North American markets corresponds with a sharp decline in North American consumption rates as seen in figure 2. The graph clearly shows a 68 percent decline in cocaine use determined by a urine test

⁷⁴ Christophe Champin, "Alexandre Schmidt: The Operational Capacity of Narco-Traffickers Exceeds that of West African Nations," *Afrique Drouge*, June 29, 2011, accessed April 25, 2014, <http://afriquedrouge.blogs.rfi.fr/article/2011/06/29/alexandre-schmidt-la-capacite-operationnelle-des-narcotrafiquants>.

⁷⁵ Brown, 8.

⁷⁶ Stephen Ellis, "West Africa's International Drug Trade," *African Affairs* 108, no. 431 (April 2009): 173.

⁷⁷ United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, *The Transatlantic Cocaine Market*, 9.

⁷⁸ Ibid.

that indicates cocaine use within the past few days between 2006 and the beginning of 2010.⁷⁹

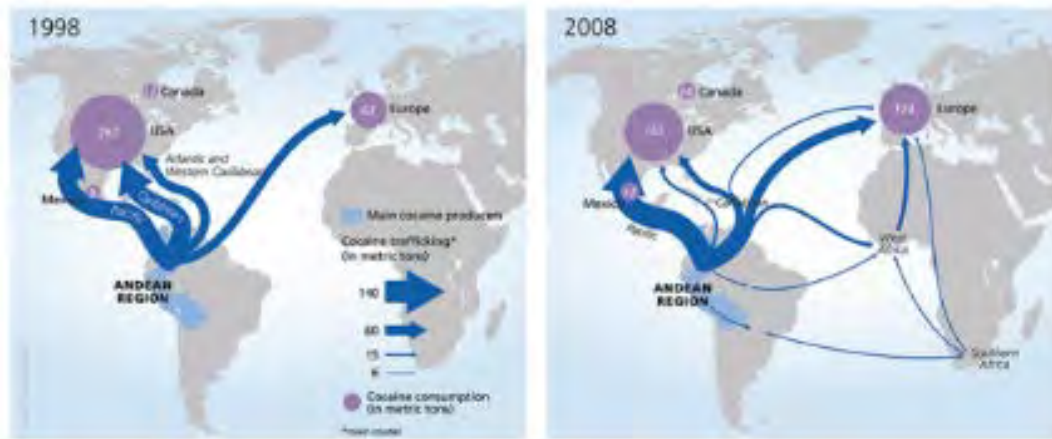


Figure 2. Cocaine Consumption Estimates

Source: United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, *The Transatlantic Cocaine Market* (New York: United Nations, 2011), 12.

A reduction of cocaine consumption in North America directly corresponds with an increase in consumption of cocaine by European consumers, although the United States remains the largest market for South American cocaine.⁸⁰ Where the quantity of cocaine available in the United States drastically reduced during the previous fifteen years, the European market doubled, with the exception of 2006 to 2009 where

⁷⁹ Ibid.

⁸⁰ United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, *World Drug Report: Drug Markets Stable but Consumption of Synthetic and Prescription Drug Rises* (New York: United Nations, 2011), 1.

consumption stabilized.⁸¹ The amount of cocaine that was smuggled to Europe through West Africa was an estimated twenty-one tons in 2009, down from a high two years before of forty-seven tons.⁸² In 2011, the estimated value of the cocaine market in Europe (\$36 billion) was approaching the market in the United States (\$37 billion.)⁸³

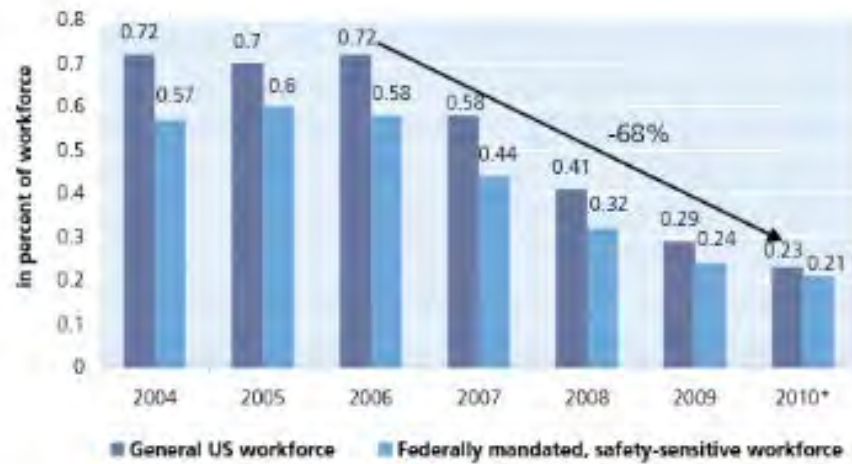


Figure 3. Positive Urine Tests for Cocaine among the U.S. Workforce, 2004-2010

Source: United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, *The Transatlantic Cocaine Market* (New York: United Nations, 2011), 10.

⁸¹ United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, *The Transatlantic Cocaine Market*, 10.

⁸² United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, *World Drug Report*, 2.

⁸³ Ibid.

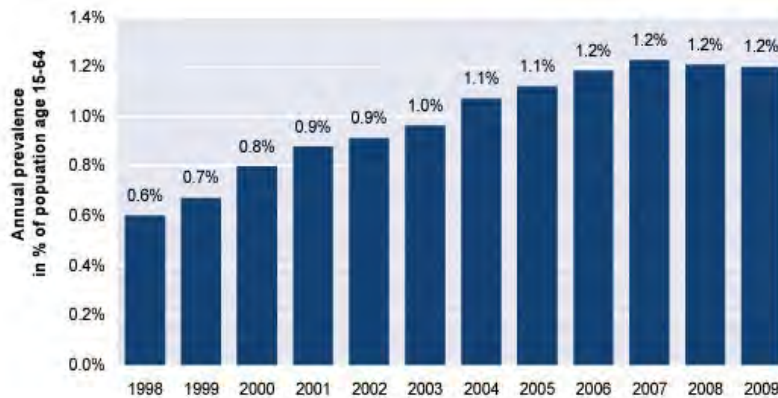


Figure 4. Annual Prevalence of Cocaine Use among European Union and European Free Trade Association Countries

Source: United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, *The Transatlantic Cocaine Market* (New York: United Nations, 2011), 10.

Cocaine traditionally arrives in Europe through one of three main drug trafficking routes. The first is the northern route. This route begins in the Caribbean to the Azores and finally arrives in Portugal or Spain. The central route takes cocaine from South America to Cape Verde or Madeira and the Canary Islands to Europe. The last route cocaine smugglers utilize is the African route from South America to West Africa and from there to Spain and Portugal.⁸⁴ The West African countries affected by the trafficking through the southern route are Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Gambia, Senegal, Ghana, Togo Benin, and Nigeria.⁸⁵

⁸⁴ United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, *The Transatlantic Cocaine Market*, 27.

⁸⁵ Europol, *EU Drug Markets Report: A Strategic Analysis* (Lisbon: European Monitoring Centre for Drugs and Drug Addiction, 2013), 45.

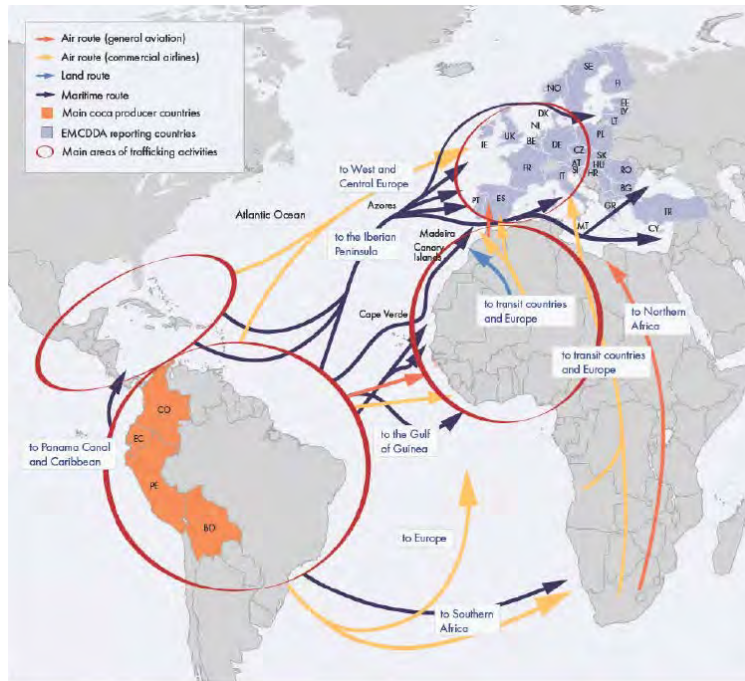


Figure 5. Main Trafficking Flows of Cocaine to Europe

Source: EUROPOL, *EU Drug Markets Report: A Strategic Analysis* (Lisbon: European Monitoring Centre for Drugs and Drug Addiction, 2013), 44.

Sea commerce is the biggest enabler of drug trafficking worldwide because the containers on these massive vessels travel all over the world in such staggering volumes that it is impossible for law enforcement authorities to search all of them.⁸⁶ The most prominent use of maritime cocaine trafficking through the African route occurred between 2004 and 2007.⁸⁷ Since 2007, maritime cocaine trafficking has been reduced for several reasons. First, international awareness of the exploitation of West Africa as drug

⁸⁶ Charles Parkinson, "Report Shows Growing Importance of European Cocaine Market," In Sight Crime, October 1, 2013, accessed April 15, 2015, www.insightcrime.org/news-briefs/report-explores-changing-face-of-drug-trade.

⁸⁷ United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, *The Transatlantic Cocaine Market*, 26.

trafficking region resulted in increased international pressure to increase law enforcement activities in that area. Secondly, political, military, and societal changes in those two West African countries also aided the reduction of cocaine smuggling.⁸⁸ However, cocaine trafficking continues in the region along the latitude of 10° North, what law enforcement agencies refer to as Highway 10, between South and West Africa. However, as Guinea-Bissau recovers from being the regions first narco-state, countries such as Nigeria and Ghana have become points where the drug trafficking has potentially shifted.⁸⁹

South American gangs are also using cargo aircraft to transport cocaine from South America to West Africa.⁹⁰ However, law enforcement agencies are more able to detect air routes that link South America and West Africa and the aircraft are limited on payload.⁹¹

⁸⁸ United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, *The Transatlantic Cocaine Market*, 9.

⁸⁹ Liana Wyler and Nicolas Cook, Congressional Research Service Report for Congress R40838, *Illegal Drug Trade in Africa: Trends and U.S. Policy* (Washington, DC: Library of Congress, September 30, 2009), 12.

⁹⁰ Chris Hawley, "South American Gangs Flying Vast Quantities of Cocaine to Europe," *The Guardian*, November 15, 2010, accessed April 15, 2015, <http://www.theguardian.com/world/2010/nov/15/south-american-gangs-flying-cocaine-to-europe>.

⁹¹ United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, *The Transatlantic Cocaine Market*, 30.



Figure 6. Boeing 727 Suspected of Carrying Cocaine after Crash in Malian Desert

Source: Afua Hirsch, “Cocaine Flows Through Sahaara as Al Qaidea Cashes in on Lawlessness,” *The Guardian*, May 2, 2013, accessed April 25, 2015, <http://www.theguardian.com/world/2013/may/02/cocaine-flows-through-sahara-al-qaida>. This shows a destroyed Boeing 727, which was believed to have been carrying up to ten tons of cocaine when it crashed in the Malian desert.

Once the cocaine is in West Africa, drug couriers are one of the primary methods used to smuggle drugs into Europe.⁹² The detection of air couriers declined nearly the same time as maritime shipments declined, which was around 2008. However, Nigerians have made up the preponderance of cocaine couriers for the narcotics that have passed through West Africa. In 2010, Nigerians made up 84 percent of the couriers coming from West Africa. Although Nigerians comprise the bulk of the drug couriers, the country of departure varies greatly. Nigerian couriers have used Cameroon as the major transit point for drugs bound for Europe as of 2010.⁹³

⁹² United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, *Transnational Organized Crime in West Africa*, 17.

⁹³ United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, *The Transatlantic Cocaine Market*, 36.

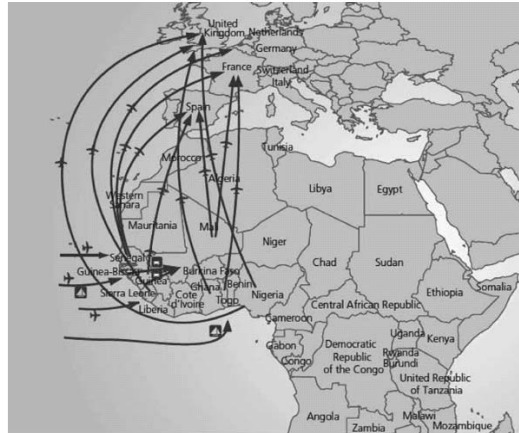


Figure 7. Cocaine Trafficking Routes from West Africa to Europe

Source: United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, *Transnational Trafficking and Rule of Law in West Africa: A Threat Assessment* (Vienna: United Nations, 2009), 13.

DTOs have increasingly used land routes to smuggle cocaine from West Africa to Europe. There are some reports that weekly vehicle convoys traffic nearly forty-eight tons of cocaine, \$1.8 billion dollars' worth, a year to Europe.⁹⁴ An anthropologist that spent months in the vicinity of the Mali-Algeria border reported on one particular route that included Colombian cocaine entering the region from Mauritania. Drivers from Western Sahara refugee camps picked up the cocaine and transported it to traders connected to In Kahlil, which is a smuggling hub in northern Mali. From there they are trafficked through Niger and into Chad when they are passed off to new couriers that funnel the cocaine to Sudan, Egypt, Israel, and Eastern Europe.⁹⁵ The region is also home

⁹⁴ Alex Perry, "Blood Lines: How Europe's Cocaine Habit Funds Beheadings," *Newsweek*, November 20, 2014, accessed April 16, 2015, www.newsweek.com/2014/11/28/blood-lines-how-cocaine-nights-fund-beheadings-285545.html.

⁹⁵ United Kingdom, *Traffickers and Terrorists: Drugs and Violent Jihad in Mali and the Wider Sahel* (London: Foreign and Commonwealth Office, 2013), 3.

to terrorist organizations, like Al Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM) that operates in Mali. AQIM has a prominent role in the West Africa cocaine trade by levying taxes and protection charges on drugs trafficked from West Africa to Europe.⁹⁶ Supporting the cocaine trafficking route is a financial windfall for AQIM. According to Algerian intelligence, AQIM has reaped more than \$100 million from 2003 to 2010.⁹⁷ Narcotics trafficking through West Africa and into Europe may also be financing the terrorist organization Boko Haram, which abducted more than 200 Nigerian schoolgirls in 2014.⁹⁸

Links to terrorism from the illegal trafficking from cocaine are not limited to the potential of Islamic terrorist organizations taxing the trafficking South American cocaine to Europe.⁹⁹ Douglas Farah, a senior fellow at the International Assessment and Strategy Center testified before Congress in June of 2009 that it is inevitable that criminal and terrorist groups that operate in the same permissive environment in West Africa work together because each have items the other group needs.¹⁰⁰ An example is Hezbollah,

⁹⁶ Max Hoffman and Conor Lane, “Guinea-Bissau and the South Atlantic Cocaine Trade,” Center for American Progress, August 22, 2013, accessed April 16, 2015, www.americanprogress.org/issues/security/report/2013/08/22/72557/guinea-bissau-and-the-south-atlantic-cocaine-trade/.

⁹⁷ Ibid.

⁹⁸ Aaron Akinyemi, “UK and US Target al-Qaida ‘Narco-Terrorism’ Drug Routes in West Africa,” *International Business Times*, July 6, 2014, accessed April 16, 2015, www.ibtimes.co.uk/uk-us-target-al-qaida-narco-terrorism-drug-routes-west-africa-1455514.

⁹⁹ Anthony Placido, “Convergence of Crime and Terrorism?” (Panel Discussion in Arlington, VA, 2013, Potomac Institute for Policy Studies, Washington, DC), accessed May 5, 2015, www.potomac institute.org/events/past-events/330-the-convergence-of-crime-and-terrorism?jusl=, 20.

¹⁰⁰ U.S. Congress, Senate, *Confronting Drug Trafficking in West Africa*.

which has been active in West Africa for decades, is increasing its involvement in narcotics trafficking due to a lack of funds.¹⁰¹ This shortfall is due to the operational funds provided by the government of Iran being slashed by over 40 percent in 2010.¹⁰² For this reason, Hezbollah is using its vast, already existing network in West Africa, to traffic cocaine for the *Fuerzas Armada Revolucionarias de Colombia* (Revolutionary Armed Forces of Columbia or FARC) from Venezuela, through West Africa, to European markets.¹⁰³ Mr. Farah argues that given Iran's ties to Hezbollah in Venezuela, Venezuela's ties to Iran in the FARC, and the FARC's history of building alliances with other armed groups in the presence of Hezbollah and other armed Islamic groups on the ground, both in Latin America and West Africa; it is likely a collusion of effort exists.¹⁰⁴

The U.S. Drug Enforcement Agency has identified that heroin is entering the global market through West Africa to reach consumers in United States and Europe.¹⁰⁵ The primary means of trafficking heroin from large production states, such as Afghanistan, to the European market is via a northern route through the Balkans, called

¹⁰¹ Russell Howard and Colleen Traughber, Report, no. 13-6, "The Nexus of Extremism and Trafficking: Scourge of the World or So Much Hype?" Joint Special Operations University, MacDill Air Force Base, FL, October 2013, 23.

¹⁰² Intelligence Quarterly, "Iran Heavily Cuts Funding to Hezbollah, Report Says," December 16, 2010, accessed April 16, 2015, www.intelligencequarterly.com/2010/12/iran-heavily-cuts-funding-to-hezbollah-report-says/.

¹⁰³ Howard and Traughber, 23.

¹⁰⁴ U.S. Congress, Senate, *Confronting Drug Trafficking in West Africa*.

¹⁰⁵ Ibid.

the “Balkan Route.”¹⁰⁶ Europeans in Western and Central Europe historically have been supplied Afghan heroin almost exclusively by the Balkan route. However, strengthening of borders along the northern route has encouraged traffickers to seek alternate routes, including shipping heroin from Pakistan through Africa to its final destination in European markets.¹⁰⁷

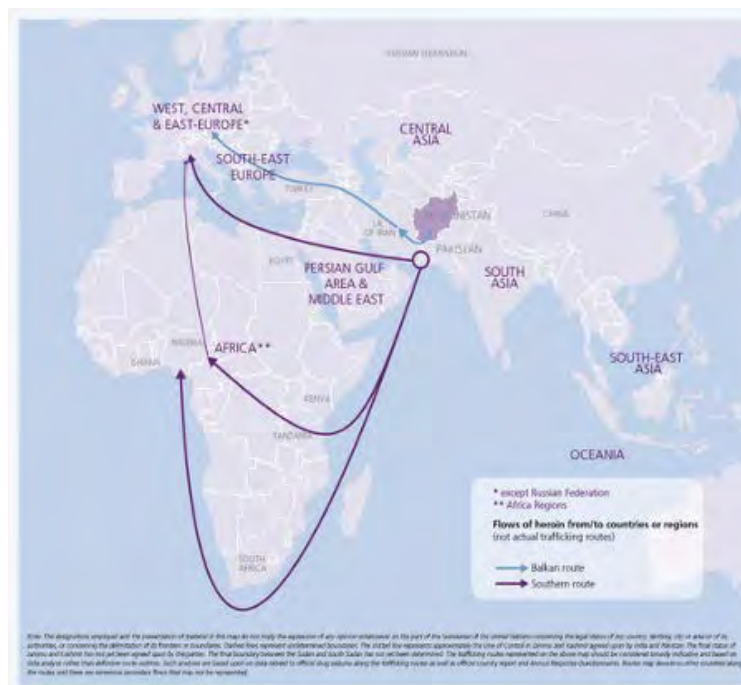


Figure 8. Trafficking Routes for Afghan Heroin to Western and Central Europe

Source: United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, *The Illicit Drug Trade Through South Eastern Europe* (New York: United Nations, 2014), 14.

¹⁰⁶ United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, *The Global Opium Trade: A Threat Assessment* (New York: United Nations, 2009), 114.

¹⁰⁷ United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, *The Illicit Drug Trade Through South Eastern Europe* (New York: United Nations, 2014), 13.

In 2009, after border security in the Balkans was increased, Africa became a cost-effective trafficking route to Europe, North America, and Oceania. West African trafficking networks are increasingly transporting Afghan heroin from Pakistan into West Africa for onward shipment to Europe and other markets.¹⁰⁸ The same corruption, porous borders, weak institutions, widespread poverty, political patronage, and limited law enforcement capacity that facilitates the trafficking of cocaine through West Africa provides an optimal environment for the trafficking of other narcotics, including heroin.¹⁰⁹

Approximately forty-five tons of heroin from Afghanistan was trafficked into the African continent in 2009.¹¹⁰ The local drug market consumed most of the heroin supply in 2009 but seven tons of heroin was trafficked to Europe, almost one ton to China, and a small amount to Australia.¹¹¹ Increased law enforcement efforts, which recently dismantled a major heroin trafficking network that operated along the Balkan Route, are resulting in the diversification of trafficking routes.¹¹² Now Africa is emerging as an ideal trafficking hub for the onward movement of heroin to markets in Europe, China,

¹⁰⁸ United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, *The Global Afghan Opium Trade: A Threat Assessment* (New York: United Nations, 2011), 13.

¹⁰⁹ Aning and Pokoo, 7.

¹¹⁰ United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, *The Global Afghan Opium Trade*, 2011, 71.

¹¹¹ *Ibid.*, 72.

¹¹² Europol, “Major Heroin Trafficking Network Dismantled by Joint Investigation Team,” December 22, 2014, accessed April 16, 2015, www.europol.europa.eu/content/major-heroin-trafficking-network-dismantled-joint-investigation-team.

Australia, and North America. West African criminal networks are increasingly transporting heroin from Afghanistan from Pakistan into East Africa and onward to Europe and other consumer markets.¹¹³ The forty-five tons of heroin trafficked into and throughout Africa connects several nations and various criminal organizations. Twenty-five to thirty tons of the forty-five trafficked through Africa was likely trafficked via Pakistan. Five to six tons were trafficked via the Islamic Republic of Iran, five to six tons via India, and five to six tons via the United Arab Emirates. The destination within the African continent reaches two major distribution hubs. One is South Africa and the other, as it relates to this study, is in Nigeria.¹¹⁴

The individuals that smuggle heroin from Pakistan to West Africa for distribution are typically native to West Africa rather than Pakistan, as depicted in figure 9.

¹¹³ Westall.

¹¹⁴ United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, *The Global Afghan Opium Trade*, 2011, 71.

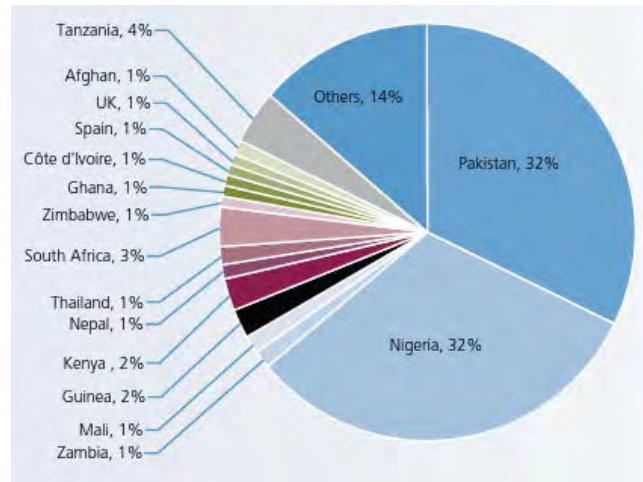


Figure 9. Distribution of Drug Trafficking Arrests in Pakistan by Country of Nationality, 2000-2008

Source: United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, *The Global Afghan Opium Trade: A Threat Assessment* (New York: United Nations, 2011), 72.

Figure 9 shows that 32 percent of the drug trafficking arrests in Pakistan from 2000 to 2008 were Pakistani. However, 37 percent of the arrests were of citizens from countries within the ECOWAS.¹¹⁵ West African networks, controlled mostly in Nigeria, have continued to utilize mature trafficking routes and practices to source Southeast Asian heroin to consuming countries.¹¹⁶ Figure 10 depicts the link between African criminal organizations and others that collude to bring heroin to the worldwide market.

¹¹⁵ United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, *The Global Afghan Opium Trade*, 2011, 72.

¹¹⁶ Wyler and Cook, 15.

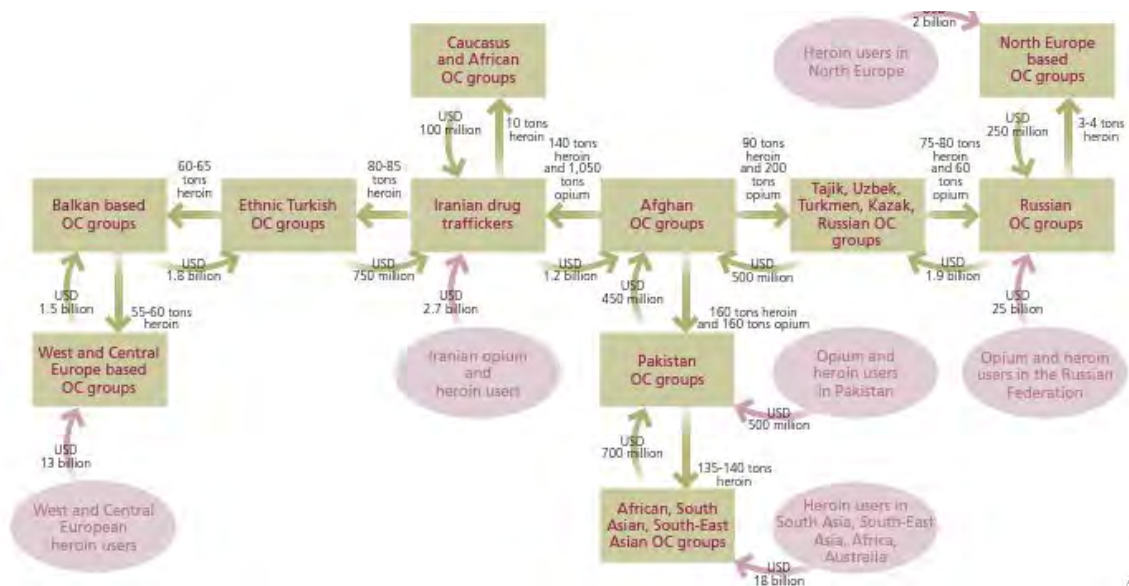


Figure 10. Organized Crime Groups Benefiting from the Afghan Opiate Trade, 2009

Source: United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, *The Global Afghan Opium Trade: A Threat Assessment* (New York: United Nations, 2011), 23.

The heroin trade in West Africa is having a compounding effect on the stability of the region. The international traffickers often pay local smugglers with product rather than cash. The drugs that stay behind drive the local consumption rate higher.¹¹⁷ The higher consumption rates in West Africa stress society in the form of health, social, employment, security, and family problems that affect the afflicted and the people around them.¹¹⁸ Heroin abuse is more dramatic in East and West Africa as the drug enters the continent through East Africa and departs the continent via West Africa. The heroin

¹¹⁷ Travis Lupick, "Drug Traffic Fuels Addiction in Sierra Leone," Al Jazeera, January 26, 2013, accessed 16 April 2015, www.aljazeera.com/indepth/features/2013/01/2013121105523716213.html.

¹¹⁸ Isidore Obot, Africa Security Brief, no. 5, "Cocaine and Instability in Africa: Lessons from Latin America and the Caribbean" (Africa Center for Strategic Studies, Washington, DC, July 2010), 3.

consumed is typically of minimal purity, often less than 10 percent, due to the poverty in the region.¹¹⁹

Compounding the impact to ECOWAS governments is the relationship between the high rate of Human Immunodeficiency Virus/Acquired Immunodeficiency Syndrome in the region and the increase use of low-grade heroin. Africa has 67 percent of the worldwide cases of Human Immunodeficiency Virus/Acquired Immunodeficiency Syndrome. Regions of Africa where the heroin trade is active, including Nigeria, have a higher rate of infection.¹²⁰

West Africa was identified in 2006 as a region where precursor chemicals for the production of ATS were being used as a transshipment point for markets to Central and North America. Since 2006, there is more evidence that West Africa is turning into a manufacturing hub for ATS.¹²¹ According to Pierre Lapaque, the head of the UNODC in West Africa, “This is the next niche for criminal groups in West Africa because you can easily cook it at home, and you can easily adjust it for supply and demand. It is slowly but surely spreading in the region.”¹²²

¹¹⁹ United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, *The Global Afghan Opium Trade*, 2011, 71.

¹²⁰ Ibid., 72.

¹²¹ United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, *West Africa: 2012 ATS Situation Report*, 8.

¹²² Monica Mark, “Homegrown Crystal Meth Industry Sparks West African Crime Wave,” *The Guardian*, March 29, 2013, accessed April 17, 2015, www.theguardian.com/world/2013/mar/29/crystal-meth-west-africa-crime.

The discovery of clandestine ATS production facilities in West Africa indicate that the region's manufacturing is expanding.¹²³ Large-scale production equipment and chemicals for the production of ecstasy in Guinea was seized in July 2009. The quantities of chemicals seized had the potential to produce over \$100 million dollars' worth of the drug.¹²⁴ In 2010, the United States disrupted attempts from members of a large-scale cocaine trafficking organization in trying to establish an illegal laboratory for the purposes of large-scale ATS production in Liberia with distribution aimed at the United States and Japan.¹²⁵ In 2011, the Nigerian government seized a manufacturing facility with a capacity to produce 25 to 50 kilograms per cycle of ATS near the country's largest city of Lagos. Nigerian authorities also seized a second production facility with an estimated throughput of 25 kilograms per cycle. The second seizure by the Nigerian government potentially links the growing ATS establishment with TCOs from Latin America. During the seizure, several Bolivian nationals were arrested which may indicate the complicit involvement of South American cartels.¹²⁶

¹²³ United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, "ATS: Second Most Commonly Abused Drug Type Worldwide," United Nations, September 13, 2011, accessed April 17, 2015, www.unodc.org/unodc/en/frontpage/2011/September/ats-second-most-used-drug-type-in-the-world.html.

¹²⁴ United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, *West Africa: 2012 ATS Situation Report*, 11.

¹²⁵ Evan Perez, "U.S. Charges Nine in Africa Drug Traffic," *Wall Street Journal*, June 2, 2010, accessed April 17, 2015, <http://www.wsj.com/articles/SB10001424052748704875604575280723641554624>.

¹²⁶ United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, *West Africa: 2012 ATS Situation Report*, 11.

Since 2009, West African criminal organizations, which matured in the cocaine market, have clearly diversified in the ATS trade.¹²⁷ The flexibility of trafficking routes and methods used in trafficking provide West African organized crime syndicates more standing with European criminal organizations.¹²⁸ Although the primarily based in Nigeria and Ghana, Nigerian and Ghanaian syndicates have coordinated with other West African criminal networks in Benin, Cameroon, Ivory Coast, Guinea, and Senegal.¹²⁹ Europol has also identified West African criminal organizations working with Outlaw Motorcycle Gangs and Russian organized criminal groups in bringing their products to the European market.¹³⁰

The world's largest market for ATS is Asia, led by a growing demand for ATS in East and Southeast Asia.¹³¹ Seizures of methamphetamines in Japan in 2009 indicated 7.4 percent of the ATS seized originated from Africa. In the first half of 2010, that

¹²⁷ United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, *West Africa; 2012 ATS Situation Report*, 19.

¹²⁸ Europol, *EU Organized Crime Threat Assessment: OCTA 2011* (The Hague: Europol, 2011), 20.

¹²⁹ U.S. National Drug Law Enforcement Agency, "West Africa's Trafficking in Methamphetamine and Amphetamine Type Stimulants" (presented at the Seventeenth Asia-Pacific Operational Drug Enforcement Conference, Tokyo, Japan, February 14-26, 2012).

¹³⁰ Europol, *EU Organized Crime Threat Assessment*, 20.

¹³¹ United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, "Asian and North America Drive Global Methamphetamine Seizures to Record Levels, UNODC Reports," United Nations, May 20, 2014, accessed April 17, 2015, www.unodc.org/southeastasiaandpacific/en/2014/05/global-synthetic-drugs-report/story.html.

percentage jumped to 36 percent, followed by 17.2 percent in 2011. Most drugs seized originated from Nigeria.¹³²



Figure 11. Reported Destinations of ATS Seized at Western European and Japanese Airports Originating from West Africa, 2009-2013

Source: United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, *Global Synthetic Drugs Assessment* (New York: United Nations, 2014), 14.

Malaysia has seen a similar rise in the arrests of West African ATS couriers.¹³³ The amount of drugs seized by the capture of couriers in 2010 was 11.3 kilograms. That number skyrocketed to 98 kilograms in 2011. ATS related arrests have also risen in Malaysia that incriminates an alarming high amount of Nigerian nationals trafficking ATS into Malaysia.¹³⁴

¹³² United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, *West Africa; 2012 ATS Situation Report*, 20.

¹³³ Ibid.

¹³⁴ Ibid.

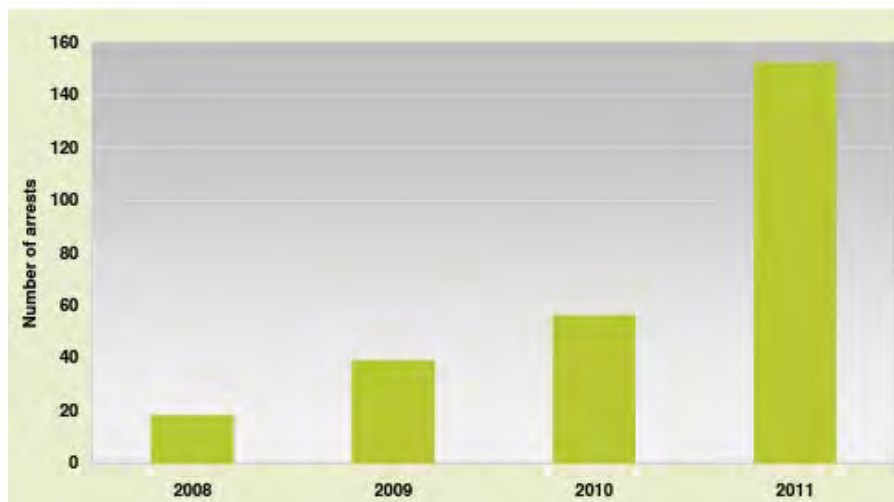


Figure 12. Malaysia: Nigerian Couriers Arrested for Methamphetamine Trafficking, 2008-2011

Source: United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, *West Africa 2012 ATS Situation Report* (New York: United Nations, 2012), 21.

In addition to Japan and Malaysia, African methamphetamine trafficking has been reported by Cambodia, China, Indonesia, Philippines, the Republic of Korea, Thailand, and Vietnam. The West African countries of Benin, Cameroon, Ivory Coast, Ghana, Guinea, Mali, Senegal, and Nigeria have all been identified as being either the origin or on the shipment route for the methamphetamines seized in Southeast Asian countries.¹³⁵

ATS trafficking in West Africa has continued to diversify by using couriers from outside the region. They have also diversified their routes, which due to the intended location is typically via air.¹³⁶ To reach the Southeast Asian markets, ATS are limited to air and maritime routes, as depicted in figures 13, 14, and 15.

¹³⁵ United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, *West Africa; 2012 ATS Situation Report*, 21.

¹³⁶ Brown, 10.

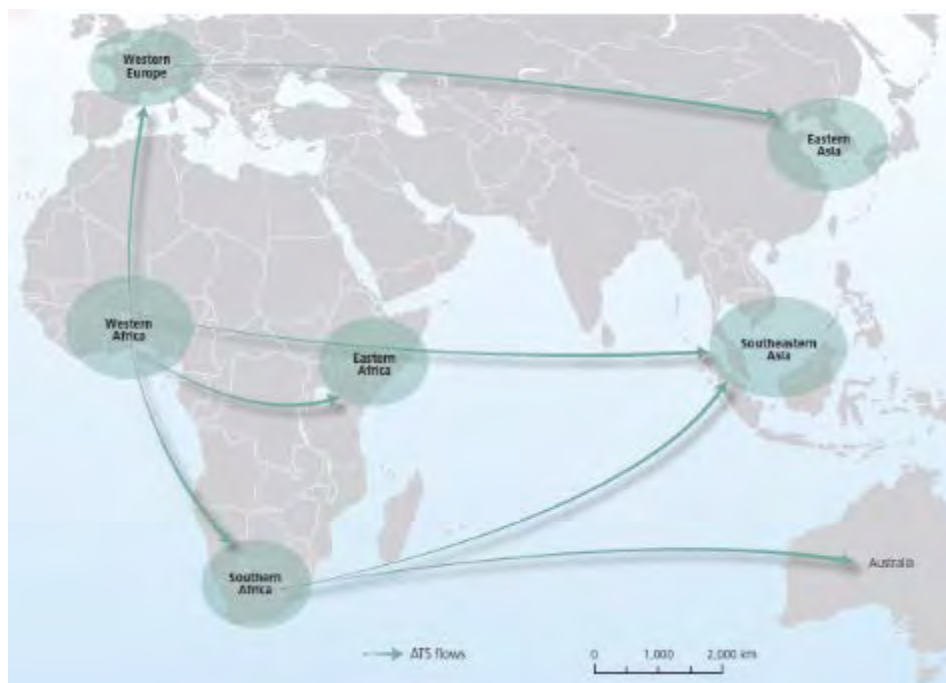


Figure 13. ATS Flows in and from Africa as Perceived by Recipient Countries, 2008-2012

Source: United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, *Global Synthetic Drugs Assessment* (New York: United Nations, 2014), 15.

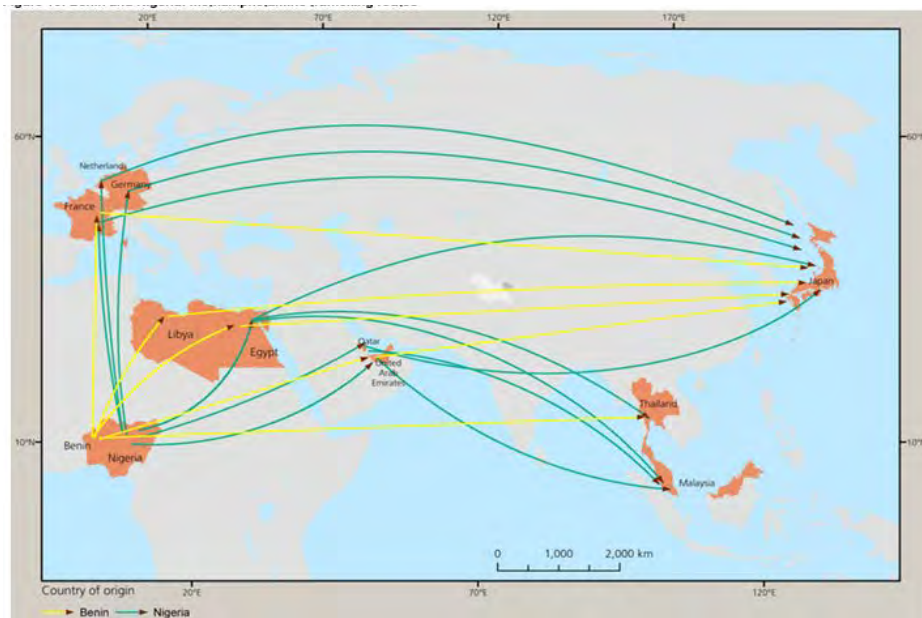


Figure 14. Benin and Nigeria Methamphetamine Trafficking Routes

Source: United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, *West Africa 2012 ATS Situation Report* (New York: United Nations, 2012), 23.

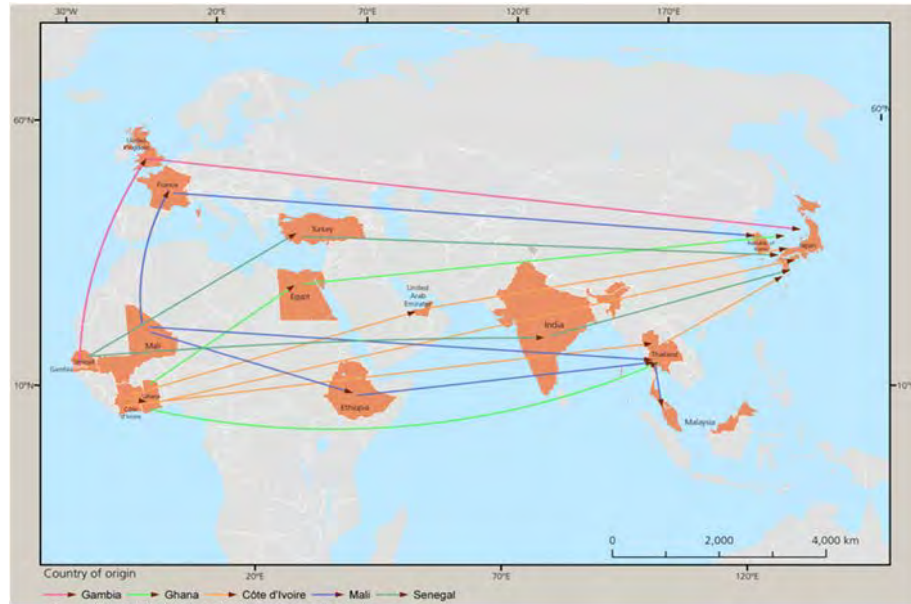


Figure 15. Other West African Countries: Methamphetamine Trafficking Routes

Source: United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, *West Africa 2012 ATS Situation Report* (New York: United Nations, 2012), 23.

ATS use within West Africa is also having an impact on the socio-economic conditions within West Africa. The production and distribution of ATS in West Africa has fueled the emergence of local ATS consumption.¹³⁷ Nigeria is the only country where the United Nations Office of Drugs and Crime has established an annual prevalence rate. In Nigeria the ATS prevalence rate indicates 1.4 percent of the Nigerian population have used amphetamines. A prevalence rate places the usage of amphetamines in West Africa higher than anywhere else in the continent does, as well as higher than most countries in Europe. The rate is comparable to prevalence rates in Asia where the presence and use of

¹³⁷ West Africa Commission on Drugs, “Not Just in Transit, Drugs the State and Society in West Africa,” 12.

the drug has a much longer history.¹³⁸ Along with cocaine and heroin, the availability of ATS in the region has resulted in a greater dependence among the West African population. Because West African societies do not have effective prevention or reduction programs, the health care and security programs that the increase consumption creates further strains effective governance in the region.¹³⁹

Section 3: The U.S. National Interest Regarding TOC

In order to determine how the drug trafficking that occurs in West Africa impacts the national security of the United States, a definition of exactly what national security interests are and how they differ from national interests is appropriate. For the purposes of this study, the definition of both national interests and national security interests refer to the definition dictated by Dr. Norman Bailey. Dr. Bailey is a professor at The Institute of World Politics and has previous experience serving on the White House National Security Council from 1981 to 1983.¹⁴⁰ According to Dr. Bailey, national interests are determined by looking through the broad lens of diplomatic, political, economic, social, and cultural interests of the nation. National interests are addressed through both positive and negative influence by diplomatic means, propaganda, cultural programs, and

¹³⁸ United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, *West Africa 2012 ATS Situation Report* (New York: United Nations, 2012), 5.

¹³⁹ West Africa Commission on Drugs, “Not Just in Transit, Drugs the State and Society in West Africa,” 13.

¹⁴⁰ Institute of World Politics, “Norman A. Bailey,” accessed April 17, 2015, www.iwp.edu/faculty/detail/norman-bailey-2.

economic measures.¹⁴¹ Dr. Bailey describes national security interests as subordinate to national interests:

National security is a subset of national interest, and comes into play when the vital interests of the country are at stake, up to and including its survival. Only in such cases is the use of subversion, sabotage, military display, and war justified. Deploying measures in the pursuit of national interests of a less serious nature, the result is a greater or lesser degree of (often-literal) overkill, with concurrent waste of resources of all kinds: human, financial, economic, and diplomatic.¹⁴²

In the *National Security Strategy 2015*, the Barack Obama Administration identified that TOC challenges the national interests of the United States by increasing the security consequences of weak and failing states.¹⁴³ This position has remained constant under his administration. In 2011, President Obama wrote in *Strategy to Combat Transnational Organized Crime*, “[Transnational criminal organizations] threaten U.S. interests by foregoing alliances with corrupt elements of national governments and using the power and influence of those elements to further their criminal activities. In some cases, national governments exploit these relationships to further their interests to the detriment of the United States.”¹⁴⁴ Within the *Strategy to Combat Transnational Organized Crime*, the U.S. Government detailed ten key areas where TOC is a growing threat to U.S. national interests. As it relates to drug trafficking through West Africa, at least four of these key areas are directly related. The four areas identified that directly

¹⁴¹ Norman Bailey, “National Interest versus National Security? The Case of Iraq,” Institute for Global Economic Growth, accessed April 18, 2015, www.igeg.org/BaileyNationalInterestSecur.html.

¹⁴² Ibid.

¹⁴³ U.S. President, *National Security Strategy 2015*, 2.

¹⁴⁴ U.S. President, *Strategy to Combat Transnational Organized Crime*, 2.

impact U.S. national interests are the penetration of state institutions by TOCs, corruption and threats to governance, TOCs posing a threatening the U.S. economy, U.S. competitiveness, and strategic markets, the expansion of drug trafficking, and the critical role of facilitators. The strategy argues that semi-legitimate actors such as accountants, attorneys, notaries, bankers, and real estate brokers are the lynchpin that connects the illicit and licit worlds.¹⁴⁵

Threats that this strategy discuss are indirectly related to drug trafficking in West Africa include human smuggling, trafficking in persons, weapons trafficking, intellectual property theft, and cybercrime. Although each of these elements is interrelated to the study of drug trafficking in West Africa and its impact on the national security interests of the United States, it is outside of the scope of this research paper.¹⁴⁶

The policy objectives set out by the United States that address combating TCOs includes first protecting American citizens and our partners from harm, violence, and exploitation of transnational criminal networks. Second, help partner countries strengthen governance and transparency, break the corruptive power of transnational criminal networks, and sever state-crime alliances. Third, break the economic power of transnational criminal networks and protect strategic markets and the U.S. financial system from TOC penetration and abuse. Fourth, defeat transnational criminal networks that pose the greatest threat to national security, by targeting their infrastructures, depriving them of their enabling means, and preventing the criminal facilitation of

¹⁴⁵ U.S. President, *Strategy to Combat Transnational Organized Crime*, 2.

¹⁴⁶ Ibid.

terrorist activities. Lastly, the U.S. Government aims to build international consensus, multilateral cooperation, and public-private partnerships to defeat TOC.¹⁴⁷

The U.S. Congress has also addressed the growing drug trafficking problem in West Africa. In December of 2013, the U.S. Senate Caucus on International Narcotics Control produced the *Eight Steps to Counter the Drug Trade in West Africa*. Within this document, the Caucus argues that there are four key reasons why combating the narcotics trade in West Africa is in the national security interest of the United States.¹⁴⁸ The first reason that the caucus detailed is that Latin American and Mexican drug cartels are exploiting West Africa and that “it is not in our interest to see [the FARC] enriched through illicit activities in West Africa.”¹⁴⁹ The second threat identified is the financial link between West African drug trafficking and terrorist organizations hostile to the United States. The third reason is that that methamphetamine and related precursor chemical trafficking is largely unregulated, some of these substances “may” be trafficked to the United States.¹⁵⁰ The last reason given is that West African criminal organizations are trafficking heroin, of which, “a relatively marginal, but regular source of heroin is trafficked into the United States.”¹⁵¹ In order to combat these threats to the U.S. national interest, Senators Feinstein and Grassley introduced the Transnational Drug Trafficking

¹⁴⁷ U.S. President, *Strategy to Combat Transnational Organized Crime*, 2.

¹⁴⁸ U.S. Senate Caucus on International Narcotics Control, *Eight Steps to Counter the Drug Trade in West Africa*, 11.

¹⁴⁹ Ibid.

¹⁵⁰ Ibid.

¹⁵¹ Ibid., 12.

Act of 2013 that passed the Senate during the 112th Congress. This bill permits the U.S. Drug and Law Enforcement Agency more latitude in prosecuting drug traffickers that the agency has reasonable cause to believe illegal drugs will be trafficked into the United States or within twelve miles of the coast of the United States. Although the U.S. Senate passed this bill, the U.S. House of Representatives never passed it.¹⁵²

During a 2009 Congressional hearing addressing the impact of TOC in West Africa, the Assistant Administrator and Chief of Operations of the Drug Enforcement Administration, Thomas Harrigan, spoke directly to the threat posed by the drug trafficking that occurs in West Africa. Mr. Harrigan testified, “the cocaine, heroin, methamphetamine . . . and narcoterrorism threats in Africa have an impact on the U.S., particularly since some of the DTOs that smuggle illicit drugs in the U.S. are the same as those using Africa as a base of operations for smuggling drugs into Europe and the Middle East.”¹⁵³ As a prelude to the Senate Caucus production of *Eight Steps*, Senator Feinstein gave her top three reasons that why fighting drug trafficking in West Africa was in the national security interests of the United States of America which coincide with the first three issues she identified in *Eight Steps to Counter the Drug Trade in West Africa*.¹⁵⁴

¹⁵² U.S. Congress, Senate, Transnational Drug Trafficking Act of 2013, S. Res. 706, 113th Cong., accessed April 18, 2015, www.congress.gov/bill/113th-congress/senate-bill/706.

¹⁵³ U.S. Congress, Senate, *Drug Threats in West Africa: Hearing before the Senate Caucus on International Narcotics Control*, 112 Cong., 1st sess., May 16, 2012.

¹⁵⁴ Ibid.

Section 4: Summary of Analysis

This chapter presented the analysis of why West Africa is targeted by transnational criminal and DTOs. This geographic location of West Africa, combined with the high levels of governmental corruption and poor resource management all contribute to the failed or failing state environment that both internal and external criminal organizations desire in order to operate with a level of autonomy that is required to bring narcotics to market.

Additionally, this chapter focused on the three most prominent drugs being trafficked through West Africa: cocaine, heroin, and the growing amphetamine-type stimulant market. Each of these drugs involves different and interconnected criminal elements and organizations. This chapter addressed the origins of the drugs, the routes, and methods that the drug is trafficked as well as links between criminal and terrorist organizations.

Lastly, this chapter discussed the U.S. national policies toward TOC as well as efforts of the Drug Enforcement Administration in quelling the tide of drugs being trafficked through West Africa. The findings within this chapter will be the basis for the conclusions and recommendations made in chapter 5.

CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Conclusion

The primary research question of this study was to determine how transnational drug trafficking in West Africa affects the national security interests of the United States of America. Throughout this study, the data and reports available indicate that drug trafficking in West Africa, in and of itself, is not a direct threat to the national security interests of the United States of America. However, it does infringe on several of the U.S. broadly defined national interests.

The phrase national security interest is vague and provides policy makers the latitude to structure policies that often have a limitless scope and applicability due to the undefined nature of the phrase. As stated in chapter 4, this study recognizes national security interests as those vital interests of the United States that, if left unattended, will have an immediate consequence for core national interests. Moreover, national security interests may include those national interests that, if neglected, would result in immediate massive destruction of one or more major aspects of the core national interests.¹⁵⁵ The ambiguous term national security in this study addresses both the U.S. vital and survival national interests. In both the survival and vital levels of national interests, the drug trafficking that occurs within West Africa does not present the immediate threat that would be required to be a national security threat.

¹⁵⁵ H. Richard Yarger, "The Strategic Appraisal: The Key to Effective Strategy," in *U.S. Army War College Guide to National Security Issues*, vol. 1, ed. J. Boone Bartholomees, Jr. (Carlisle Barracks, PA: U.S. Army War College Press, 2012), 58.

Drug trafficking does impact the broader categories of U.S. national interests. In President Obama's *National Security Strategy 2015*, he outlines four enduring national interests. Those include:

The security of the United States, its citizens, and U.S. allies and partners; a strong, innovative, and growing U.S. economy in an open international economic system that promotes opportunity and prosperity; respect for universal values at home and around the world; and a rules-based international order advanced by U.S. leadership that promotes peace, security, and opportunity through stronger cooperation to meet global challenges.¹⁵⁶

Within the *National Security Strategy 2015*, the president also identifies eight threats to the aforementioned U.S. national interests. Of those eight, two directly relate to the context of this study. Those two instances are “threats or attacks against U.S. citizens abroad and our allies” and more specifically, “significant security consequences associated with weak or failing states (including mass atrocities, regional spillover, and transnational organized crime.)”¹⁵⁷

As detailed in this paper, drug trafficking within West Africa affects the broader U.S. national interests by destabilizing the West African region. Corruption in West African governmental agencies permits manipulation by TCOs seeking to capitalize on the permissive environment to form a global hub to distribute narcotics across the world. Additionally, this study has linked Boko Haram, AQIM, Hezbollah, and the FARC as beneficiaries of drug trafficking within the region. All four of these organizations have ideals and motives that are counter to those of the United States. The United States should be aware that these organizations and their presence in West Africa, as well as

¹⁵⁶ U.S. President, *National Security Strategy 2015*, 2.

¹⁵⁷ Ibid.

their links with DTOs in Afghanistan, Pakistan, East Africa, Southeastern Europe, and Southeast Asia, all stand to benefit from a weakly governed West African region.

Although none of these organizations specific to West Africa pose an immediate threat to the national security interests of the United States, these organizations are likely to remain hostile and an adversarial challenge to the United States for decades to come.

Recommendations

The leadership and policy makers of the United States cannot overlook West Africa as a region that affects the national interests of the country. U.S. policy towards West Africa should focus on maintaining a physical presence in the region, enhancing the counter narcotics efforts within West African states while building partner capacity within organizations such as ECOWAS and the African Union (AU), and lastly, cooperate with European law enforcement agencies in order to target and dismantle TCOs.

The physical presence of U.S. diplomatic and law enforcement agencies, specifically the Drug and Law Enforcement Agency, will aid in the identification of TCO networks, their funding, and their linkages to the worldwide drug trade. By being active within the region, U.S. agencies can map the criminal networks that operate within the region in order to target those groups deny them the permissive environment required to operate.¹⁵⁸ Additionally, U.S. Africa Command (AFRICOM) should also remain present in the region in order to address the security challenges that exist within the region. In his statement before the House Armed Services Committee, General David Rodriguez

¹⁵⁸ U.S. Senate Caucus on International Narcotics Control, *Eight Steps to Counter the Drug Trade in West Africa*, 4.

articulated that the mission of AFRICOM is to, “with interagency and international partners, builds defense capabilities, responds to crisis, and deters and defeats transnational threats in order to advance U.S. national interests and promote regional security, stability, and prosperity.”¹⁵⁹ As directed in the mission statement, AFRICOM should remain committed to the West African region by engaging in bilateral relationships with West African defense agencies, managed by the U.S. Department of State. These engagements promote cooperation with host nation governments, as well as build the capacity of West African defense organizations to combat TCOs.¹⁶⁰ Lastly, AFRICOM, in concert with the interagency entities present in the region, should remain engaged in order to prevent terrorist organizations that operate within the region to target and harm any U.S. personnel or property.

As indicated in this study, the countries represented in West Africa have weak and failing law enforcement structures. In order to address its broad national interests, the United States should remain focused on building West African law enforcement capacity by collaborating with ECOWAS and the AU. In so doing, the United States enables West African states to target and combat transnational drug trafficking before it affects to the U.S. homeland or to our European or Asian allies.

In order to ensure that the United States remains engaged in the region with a whole of government approach, the U.S. Congress should fully fund the West Africa Cooperative Security Initiative (WACSI). Currently, the WACSI has five guiding

¹⁵⁹ U.S. Congress, House, *Statement of General David M. Rodriguez, USA, Commander United States Africa Command before the House Armed Services Committee Posture Hearing*, 113th Cong., 2nd sess., March 5, 2012.

¹⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, 7.

principles that inform how the United States works with intergovernmental organizations, such as ECOWAS and the AU, to target DTOs within West Africa.

The first objective of WACSI is to build accountable, governmental institutions that rid existing governments of the deep-seated corruption that exists. By providing technical aid, the United States can enhance the integrity controls required to build a law enforcement capacity that enables law enforcement institutions to fight crime without succumbing to crime of itself.¹⁶¹ Additionally, the United State should continue to work with local governments to build and gain the will power to prosecute corrupt officials embedded in ministerial governance.

The second objective of WACSI is to work with ECOWAS to establish common laws among member states that facilitate the prosecution of TCOs and DTOs.¹⁶² Third, the United States must collaborate with credible governments and continue to build law enforcement capacity. This is especially true in post-conflict countries like Liberia and Sierra Leone that are susceptible to corruption as governmental institutions reemerge after conflict.¹⁶³

The fourth objective of WACSI is to ensure that the justice systems within the region demonstrate they are transparent systems to the citizens that laws are enforced and prosecuted fairly. As these justice systems mature, the United States should remain

¹⁶¹ U.S. Congress, Senate, *Testimony of William R. Brownfield, Assistant Secretary, Bureau of International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs, Statement before the Senate Caucus on International Narcotics Control*, 113th Cong., 2nd sess., May 16, 2012.

¹⁶² Ibid.

¹⁶³ Ibid.

engaged to ensure the capacity exists to target not only low-end drug producers and distributors, but also to provide the means to target and prosecute TCOs and DTOs.¹⁶⁴

The last objective of WACSI is to develop the socioeconomic conditions of West African countries in order to deny TCOs and DTOs an unstable environment in which they flourish.¹⁶⁵

Through these five objectives, the United States, by means of the WACSI, collaborates with the ECOWAS and AU in a manner the builds host nation law enforcement capacity. Additionally, the United States provides the expertise required to target criminal organizations that quickly overwhelm underdeveloped law enforcement organizations. The U.S. Congress should continue to fund the WACSI in order to meet the policy goals of establishing security, good governance, and democracy.

Lastly, the United States should continue to collaborate with its European allies in order to target and dismantle TCOs and DTOs. Since 2001, the European Union (EU) has been promoting law enforcement and intelligence cooperation with the United States to counter the threat of terrorism.¹⁶⁶ The relationship built to combat terrorism can include combating other TCOs as well as DTOs. By leveraging shared intelligence as well as law enforcement assessments, training, and capacity building, the United States and EU will enable West African governments and interregional governmental agencies the network

¹⁶⁴ U.S. Congress, Senate, *Testimony of William R. Brownfield, Assistant Secretary*.

¹⁶⁵ Ibid.

¹⁶⁶ Kristen Archick, Congressional Research Service Report for Congress RS22030, *U.S.-EU Cooperation Against Terrorism* (Washington, DC: Library of Congress, December 1, 2014), 6.

analysis required as well as the law enforcement capacity required to dismantle TCOs and DTOs.

The United States has recognized that West Africa is the nexus of drug trafficking and distribution. While the crime that occurs in West Africa does not affect the national security interests of the United States, it does affect the national interests of the United States. In order to address the drug trafficking in West Africa and its corresponding impact its national interests, the U.S. Government should continue to maintain a physical presence in the region with both Department of State and Department of Defense entities. Additionally, the United States should fully fund the WACSI in order to unify the whole of government approach in building West African law enforcement capacity. Lastly, the United States should remain committed to its European allies in ensuring that intelligence sharing and law enforcement development is available to credible West African governments. By taking the aforementioned measures, the United States will enable the region of West Africa to rid itself of the harmful impact of TCOs and DTOs, all while building governmental institutions with checks against corruption and that represent and advocate for their populations. These steps address the broad national security interests of the United States by permitting West African nations the opportunity to achieve security, democracy, and good governance as well as combating TCOs.

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