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AFRICA NEXT HOTBED OF TERRORISM

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AFRICA THE NEXT HOTBED OF TERRORISM

(10:45 a.m.)

MR. ALLEN: My name is Charlie Allen. I'm a Principal at the Chertoff Group and a member of the Aspen Institute Homeland Security Working Group. I spent 47 years at the Central Intelligence Agency, some of those years on Africa and I'm delighted to introduce the next session, which is Africa -- which has a question mark, "The Next Hotbed of Terrorism?" I'm not sure you need the question mark because it's from ISIS and Al-Qaeda and Libya and Mali, Boko Haram and Nigeria and Cameroon and surrounding areas, Al Shabaab in Somalia which remains active not only in Somalia, but in Kenya.

This is a long suffering continent and there is an increasing and expanding terrorist presence. We've had acts in Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso, its capital as well as in places like Cote d'Ivoire. And we've had a State Department advisory put out on Senegal above all places, which I enjoy very much.

Moderating today's session is Eric Schmitt, an old friend. He's a Senior Correspondent for the *New York Times*, covers terrorism and national security issues. He's co-author of the -- of *Counterstrike: The Untold Story of America's Secret Campaign Against Al-Qaeda*, know a little about that. For more than two decades, he's covered the military and national security affairs for *The Times* and he has made two dozen reporting trips to Iraq, Africa, Pakistan and West Africa, which I enjoyed.

He has a bachelor's degree from William's College and earned a Knight Journalism Fellowship at Stanford. Mr. Schmitt has shared two Pulitzer Prizes, he was reared in the San Francisco Bay area and is a member of the Council on Foreign Relations. Over to you, Eric to introduce your distinguished panel.

MR. SCHMITT: Great.

(Applause)

MR. SCHMITT: Thank you very much Charlie and thanks to Walter and Clark again, for hosting a wonderful session here that's already underway. And as Charlie said, we're pivoting from what may be the new version of the Cold War to hotspots on another continent, the continent of Africa, of course, where the threats are as disparate as Boko Haram in Nigeria to the Islamic State's affiliates in Libya to Shabaab and what's happening in Somalia and countries in between.

And we have a great panel today to talk about this. Their bios are in your packet, the full description, but just a quick rundown here. From my right, Cyril Sartor is the Deputy Assistant Director for Africa for the Central Intelligence Agency. Jennifer Cooke is the Director of the Africa Program for the Center for Strategic and International Studies in Washington; and General Carter Ham, retired four-star Army General, former Commander of the Africa Command, is now the President of the Association of the U.S. Army.

And I want to start with Cyril. It's unusual to have a senior CIA analyst here, and I thought given the turmoil that we are seeing in Africa, IHS Jane's just came out with a recent report talking about the number of terrorist attacks in the continent are up five-fold in the last six years or so.

But I think as we look, and we've heard even from some of the speakers today including General Votel, the presence of ISIS, presence of terrorist organizations, these kind of attacks is often symptomatic of larger problems, underlying problems. So Cyril, tell -- what's your assessment of what's going on in Africa today?

MR. SARTOR: Thank you, Eric. But first let me say, it's an honor to share this platform with these distinguished panelists and Eric and it feels a little weird as well for a CIA officer to be live streaming on YouTube.

(Laughter)

MR. SARTOR: I asked my -- I got nervous and I

asked my officers to vet my remarks before I came here and they read through them and they said, "Well, Chief, it's no TED Talk."

(Laughter)

MR. SARTOR: But that said, yes, terrorist-backed insurgencies are a growing concern for Sub-Saharan Africa. However, violent Islamic ideology is a foreign import in Sub-Saharan Africa. And as such, it only thrives where it can co-op local grievances such as the frustration of Mali's Tuareg rebels with Bamako or Somali clan frustrations with the authority of Mogadishu.

So that suggests we can blunt the spread of radical Islam in this region at least by redressing socio-economic causes of these grievances. And I sincerely believe that the international community can defeat terrorism in Sub-Saharan Africa with a robust mix of long-term development and security assistance.

Now it will take a long time because historically the average insurgency lasts more than a dozen years. It will take a long time because the region is in the grip of demographic forces that are unfolding slowly, if inexorably, and these forces are driving both opportunity and risk. Africa has the fastest growing population of any other region. The school-age population will grow 50% over the next two decades to half a billion young people. Ours will rise only 7%, Europe's will actually shrink.

An educated workforce can be a great gift. Secondary school enrolment in Sub-Saharan Africa grew by nearly 50% in the first decade of this century and 60% of young adults, 20 to 24, will complete secondary education by 2030. Now, for this cohort to be productive, someone must invest in infrastructure and in training beyond secondary school and in healthcare.

The good news is much of Africa is poised to seize this opportunity. The last decade reflected Africa's strongest economic performance since the 1960s with a long stretch of GDP growth rates above the global

average. But the Sahel, Northern Nigeria and parts of East Africa have not harnessed this human potential. The Sahel in particular is the poorest region in Africa with the highest fertility rates in the world.

These countries are already facing persistent political instability and they share a legacy of coups or state failure, which can have an outcome even more destructive than terrorism. So I understand why terrorism is the topic of the day and we have cause to be gravely concerned about the rise of spectacular attacks.

However, I am more frightened by the enduring challenges Africa faces. Backsliding from economic reform and democratic progress, the risk of ethno-religious conflicts such as in Central Africa Republic or South Sudan or Burundi. The dependency on autocratic leaders to maintain stability, which in effect makes them single points of failure.

AQIM, Ansaru, Boko Haram, endure less because of their strength and appeal -- at least in Sub-Saharan Africa -- and more because of the inherent weakness of the institutions of the governments they challenge. These groups are not 10-feet tall. Their ideology is not catching fire. Their numbers are small and belie their reach. When they try to hold territory and are firmly pressed, they retreat. A sustained effort to strengthen capacity of our African partners to fight terrorism within a rule of law framework while also promoting economic development and better governments can succeed.

MR. SCHMITT: So we've got this situation now where you have these threats, and Cyril you've teed it up well I think. But you've talked about the weakness of governments and how that can lead to the kind of problems that demand military solutions, at least to restore the security, and I'll let you go back to that.

Carter, you've commanded forces in Africa, you've been through this field, where -- how do you assess what's going on now in these many different places and to what extent are these various battlegrounds connected, either through ISIS, Al-Qaeda or some combination thereof?

MR. HAM: Yeah, thanks Eric. First of all, if you remember that old Sesame Street piece, "Which of these things is not like the other?" I'd say, you have two seasoned African experts who have spent the entirety of their professional career focusing on the African continent, weren't me.

If I tried -- I remember the day when then Secretary Gates told me, he said, "Hey, I'm going to recommend to the president that he nominates you to be the next Commander of Africa Command." And I remember the simultaneous feelings of exhilaration, you're going to be a combatant Commander, that's pretty big stuff to the uniformed military and then it was like, "Oh shit, you don't know anything about Africa." That's right.

(Laughter)

MR. HAM: So that was a pretty steep learning curve and it was people like this that helped a lot. I think Cyril has laid out a lot of the reasons why the U.S. should care, which I think is the foundational question. "Why does the U.S. care what's going on in Africa, the demographics?" To me, the key demographic is by 2050, you know, global population of about 10 billion, a quarter of that, a quarter of that, will be in Africa. That's a lot.

And if the underlying issues that Cyril addressed are inadequately addressed, those things that make Africa a fertile ground for Islamic extremists and others to recruit and prosper, if those factors are inadequately addressed, we will be facing a much larger problem in Africa than we face today.

So today there are, obviously, a number of various groups operating, turn to focus on Al Shabaab in Somalia, Boko Haram in Nigeria and now ISIL gaining ground and holding ground to a degree in Libya and other places in North Africa. I think it is worrisome that increasingly there are indicators that there is collaboration, there certainly is a degree of shared ideology, not completely, but certainly collaboration amongst the groups, some collaboration and financing,

training operating along the same networks.

That brings to bear I think -- brings to the point, what's the U.S. military role? There is clearly an important U.S. military role in Africa in countering terrorism. Some of that is very limited, but very specific, direct action whether that's targeting or capture operations, those are pretty limited. But every now and then there are some people in Africa who need to meet their maker sooner than they're currently planning and if we can help them do that, that's not a bad thing.

But most of the U.S. military's effort is in what we call building partner capacity. Contributing to the stability, the strength of the institutions that Cyril mentioned because it is better for us when Africans are responsible for their own security, and where we can help advance that there's a clear role, I think, for the U.S. military.

But I think the concern is the growing connection, at least in ideology. And one last point I think that confounds U.S. efforts a little bit, it is important to remember that in the intelligence community in the State Department, North Africa and Sub-Saharan Africa are dealt with by two different entities within our government.

There's some pluses and minuses to that. But it is important that with -- and even in Africa Command doesn't deal with the entirety of the continent, with Egypt carved out, specifically to General Votel's central command.

MR. SCHMITT: Jennifer, you've spent a lot of time recently in Nigeria, you're about to head back over there again. That has commanded attention, obviously, with the new government that actually had quite a lot of hopes, raised hopes among U.S. analysts, U.S. military was cooperating much better than under General Ham's, some of the obstacles you ran into. What are you looking at as you go -- as you prepare for this next trip to Nigeria and then looking -- how does that kind of look out over the broader region, some of the issues you've taken on?

MS. COOKE: Yeah, I actually think there's been some significant advances against Boko Haram and it began really in the last six months of the previous regime. But it is getting squeezed, it is definitely weakened. There are a lot of people taken out, equipment, solar panels, lot of their logistics, their people are driving mopeds not Volkswagen Golf's. They're riding horses even or bicycles. But it has reverted to this kind of asymmetrical attacks on really the softest of targets using, often very young girls as young as 13 to go into mosques, to go into marketplaces, to go into IDP camps. So they are down, but definitely not out.

I think looking forward, what I think is of concern are three things. One is new alliances, another is new rivalries, and then the third is the overhang of Libya on all of this. In terms of alliances, General Ham referred to the Boko Haram, Al-Qaeda, AQIM, Shabaab linkages and that's been of great concern. There hasn't been that much, I think, there has been collaboration but not in a way that has really bolstered any of their capacities in a real way.

The other one, though, is new alliances with equally aggrieved groups and here you have -- particularly for example, in Mali, Fulani groups that are traditional herders taking on the extremist mantle and linking up with Ansar Dine or linking up with AQIM.

You have a growing sense across West Africa of kind of Fulani solidarity and grievance. In Nigeria there've been a whole slew of deadly attacks by Fulani herdsmen against farming communities. That's a kind of network that it would make sense for a weakened Boko Haram or an AQIM to try to tap into and to try to make common cause with.

The third kind of alliance is alliance with the kind of the center -- Al-Qaeda central and ISIL. All three groups, Shabaab, AQIM and Boko Haram at moments when they were under pressure is when they pledged allegiance to those groups. And again, it's not been significant collaboration, there's been some technical assistance,

some perhaps training.

It's definitely boosted their brand in a way, but so far marginal. But as those groups, AQ and ISIL, come under pressure and as their regional affiliates come under pressure, the incentives to collaborate more deeply might grow. So -- and that could be difficult.

On rivalries, I think we've always thought of alliances as a big fear, I think rivalries can be equally dangerous as these multiple groups compete for profile and when armed propaganda and spectacular attacks are the kind of the currency --

MR. SCHMITT: As we saw in the hotel bombings.

MS. COOKE: Exactly, in Grand-Bassam. I mean, Al-Qaeda was very much weakened at that point, but launching an attack against Grand-Bassam in Cote d'Ivoire where it never had a presence before made it seem ubiquitous and very powerful. And that kind of rivalry whether it plays out among local affiliates or it trickles down from the Al-Qaeda ISIL competition could be quite dangerous.

And then the third thing that I was going to talk about is Libya. I'll just say very briefly, Libya and the presence of Al-Qaeda and ISIL there bring all of this very much closer to these multiple players. Right now, Libya is something of a magnet for fighters who are coming under pressure in Northern Nigeria or in Mali --

MR. SCHMITT: Or even Syria and Iraq where ISIS is saying, "Go there, you can't get here."

MS. COOKE: Exactly right, it's becoming a spillover for them.

MR. SCHMITT: Yes, yes.

MS. COOKE: But as if there is a settlement, a peaceful settlement or an intervention of some kind, it becomes event and it spews out fighters, arms, ideologies, foreign fighters out into a region that is very unprepared

to accept them. Just -- can I just --?

MR. SCHMITT: Sure.

MS. COOKE: One last point that I think is important to make. We tend to focus on violent extremist groups as the main players in all of this, they are one among many players, whether its ethno-nationalists, whether it's secession movements, whether it's criminal networks, trafficking arms, people, drugs, wildlife and even personal rivalries.

So you have this whole infrastructure of conflict that VOE's are embedded in and state authorities are often implicated in that as well, whether at local or national level. So it's not enough just to extend the state, it has to be a fundamental change it have to happen.

MR. SCHMITT: Well, this is a point I wanted to pick up again. You said there are some optimistic signs of what the military's been able to do in Nigeria and yet the underlying corruption in Nigeria, no doubt is still there. And Cyril, I mean, do you see that hindering progress there or the slowness of political development in Mali, for instance, despite the presence of international peacekeepers and trainers there?

I mean, how do you strike this balance between keeping some military force on the ground that's going to create that security envelop, but then have the civilian institutions kind of clean up their act, what pressures on them to do that?

MR. SARTOR: Lots of things wrapped up in that question.

(Laughter)

MR. SARTOR: But to back up to Nigeria, it is very helpful that the new government under Buhari has had a profoundly different attitude towards cooperating with the U.S., towards frankly acknowledging that it really had a significant insurgency up in the north, whereas the

previous government seemed to be downplaying it at every opportunity.

In addition to acknowledging it, Nigeria and the other countries that are in the region have made a significant effort to coordinate the work that they are doing, gathering intelligence, coordinating some of their military activity, sharing that intelligence --

MR. SCHMITT: Do you think that's meaningful, has it really broken down --?

MR. SARTOR: That's critical, it's a critical first step.

MR. SCHMITT: Yeah.

MR. SARTOR: So, what it has revealed, now that we have willing partners, is they still have a profound lack of capacity. It's a vast expanse of territory to cover, so they don't have enough vehicles, they don't have the fuel. The Nigerian military, even when it's performing at its most effective, can take territory from Boko Haram, but it can't hold it. And it's not just because of the deficiencies in the military's command structure, it's because they don't have the logistic tail.

MR. SCHMITT: So Carter, does that -- is that an argument for more military intervention? I remember traveling with you in Nigeria a few years ago and you would point out to me, "Here's a desperately poor country," but its president was trying his best to be a solid partner in the fight against counterterrorism, yet he had fighters coming in from south, from the west, from the north.

What is the role of the U.S. and how is the U.S. fitting in now that you -- it seems to have, you know, parceled out some of these responsibilities to some of the former colonial powers, whether it's France in West Africa, the AU countries in the -- in Somalia and even arguably leading from behind in the Libya operation? What role is forwarded for the U.S. military?

MR. HAM: So I think the point that Cyril made is absolutely crucial. There is a -- the increasing role of regional collaboration across Africa is perhaps one of the most significant changes to have occurred in the past couple of years. And whether -- as he's laid out, encountering Boko Haram or you have obviously Nigeria, but also Cameroon, Chad, Niger --

MR. SCHMITT: Countries that didn't talk to each other very well before, right?

MR. HAM: They didn't. And then on the other side of the continent, in Somalia with the African Union Mission in Somalia, again, with a wide variety of regional countries contributing forces and collaborating.

So the U.S. role there, I think, is one of providing some technical assistance. Some of it is just mechanical, of interoperable communications systems and means of sharing intelligence. So now, so there's a mechanical, tactical piece of this.

But it is more broadly, I think, at the institutional level of recognizing an increasingly professional militaries that collaboration, cooperation against a common threat is an absolutely vital component. And so, the more that the U.S. can facilitate in that discussion, I think, we build -- we help contribute to that regional capacity.

Every now and then, there will be a requirement for the application of what we might call unique U.S. military capabilities. Long range precision strike, those kinds of things that are just beyond the capability of African militaries, but for the most part, the best role is enhancing the capabilities of African military.

MR. SCHMITT: But what about Libya? Here you have a country that just evolved into essentially civil war of various militias. You now have this new government and national accord, still very weak and the argument against putting more military force, be it European or American, is the Libyans will see that as a foreign intervention and react hostile to that.

I mean, how do you balance that, of fighting ISIS and supporting some of the militias on the ground is a very diverse group of people with the threat that if you allow ISIS to grow there, it could pose a -- you know, it could jump into Europe or even United States eventually?

MR. HAM: Well, this is -- this has been the most significant dilemma in Libya since 2011 and that is, with whom do you partner? And that's been highly problematic. There are some indications that perhaps this government that is starting to emerge might be that partner.

And certainly, the efforts that they have taken to focus on the Islamic State in and around Cert shows some promise. I think it's in the very preliminary stages as to how this emerging government will interact with other nations? We see that certainly in the aftermath of the tragic death of the two French soldiers who were involved in an operation and how that plays out domestically in Libya will I think start to give us some indications of what is the level of acceptance, what's the tolerance of the Libyan people, the Libyan government for the kind of assistance that they will need to effectively counter this threat into the future?

MR. SCHMITT: Jennifer, talk a little bit more about this idea of increasing both rivalries and growing alliances perhaps about various different groups on the ground, are they sensing and exploiting these divisions, these weaknesses in government factions and maybe not necessarily places like Libya, but elsewhere in the continent?

MS. COOKE: Yeah, well in Kenya, Shabaab has made kind of a deliberate attempt to instigate ethnic rivalries along the coast within Kenya trying, I think to -- and exploiting anti-Muslim sentiment to try to unify those groups in a way and kind of bring them on-side as the marginalized and the oppressed.

In Mali, it's complicated because a single person can belong to multiple groups; a drug trafficking

group, an armed group, a political group, I mean, members of the MUJAO, the Movement for Unity and Jihad in West Africa --

MR. SCHMITT: These are all running in parallel or are they --

MS. COOKE: Well, they joined forces with AQIM, but there a number of drug traffickers among them, many of them now morphed back to become one of the political groups that sits at the negotiation table. So, the distinctions are often hard to make, but there is kind of a one-upmanship.

Even the In Amenas gas attack -- gas facility attack by Mokhtar Belmokhtar was an attempt to kind of distinguish himself and kind of set Al-Murabitoun kind of apart from the others. So this is -- it's a constant friction of alliances and rivalries, fragmentation and rejoining that even when they're weakened, I think, makes them very easily -- easy to regenerate.

MR. SCHMITT: Well, you mentioned Kenya, and Kenya is a crucial partner in counterterrorism operations, counter drugs, all sorts of things and yet, it has elections coming up. The last time national elections were quite violent, bloody. Cyril, what is your -- looking ahead in Kenya, both as a partner and a continent of important political, economic partner and a C.T. partner, how do you see things unfolding there in the coming weeks and months?

MR. SARTOR: Kenya is a very important partner for us and I think they're in much better shape for the elections that are coming than we have seen in some of the previous elections in Kenya.

MR. SCHMITT: Why is that?

MR. SARTOR: I don't think we have the same level of ethnic tension that you saw in the previous elections. The point I would want to make about Kenya is to reinforce what Carter was saying about the importance of the Africa partners.

We've been looking at it from the perspective of terrorist groups. But from the perspective of the African nations, we really have seen them develop a greater willingness to collaborate and engage terrorists and we've seen them cooperate more effectively.

So, if you look at Al Shabaab for example, when I was following this back in 2010 and 2011, there was a point where Al-Shabaab seemed to be on the verge of overrunning Mogadishu and they were holding large swaths of territory. And to some degree in this conversation, I think Jennifer and Carter and I are using slightly different metrics on progress against terrorism because I started off by talking about terrorist insurgencies as opposed to, you know, individual terrorist attacks and I am focused on when terrorist groups are actually able to hold large swaths of territory and actually pretend to govern and collect taxes.

That's when I see them as becoming a serious -- a regime-threatening challenge in Africa. And so back to 2010 and 2011, what we saw was Amasaman stepping up its game and we saw Kenya providing security in the South. Ethiopia, Burundi, Uganda, all working together with U.S. support and we were able to put Al-Shabaab back in the box, to deny it from holding large swaths of territory, to stabilize Mogadishu.

Now, Somalia, you know, it's a very troubled country still, but when we look at where it is now and the concerns we have about it moving into its next election, it is in a profoundly different place than it was five years ago.

MR. SCHMITT: So we're obviously in a presidential season, after the election there'll be transition teams, they are already assembling now. I want to put you all on the spot. We're very quickly talking about whether it's you're preparing Africa position papers for the transition for whether it's a Trump presidency or a Clinton presidency, what are going to be your one or two top items for the incoming president's administration, whether it's continuity of effort now but maybe breaking

out, this is an opportunity to do something different. Starting with Carter, we'll just go down the line here before we go to questions.

MR. HAM: Yeah, so I said here in 2013 that any U.S. foreign policy that ignores one-seventh of the world's population is probably doomed to fail. That's even more true if you say a quarter of the globe's population. So I think keeping Africa on the agenda is an important consideration. And from a countering terrorism, countering violent extremism, to me, the keyword is partnership and enabling African capabilities through the AU and other auspices.

MR. SCHMITT: Uh-huh. Jennifer?

MR. COOKE: Yeah, I think -- look, I think we have to keep building the capacities here, but I think simply focusing our efforts on countering the violent extremist manifestation of insecurity doesn't get us very far. You have to think of the drug trafficking, you have to think of the wildlife trafficking, you have to think of all these other enabling things, and you have to push the governments involved to tackle these things as well, not reinforce their tendency to just take the assistance where they can and fight the U.S. enemy, so that's important.

I think also kind of the institutional changes in militaries, but also the ethics of the military and the cultural practice and the engaging with communities is critically important and kind of embedding a sense of counter-insurgency tactics in here.

A third thing would be much better tracking on the financial flows that keep these groups afloat. Boko Haram, I mean, they have 250 girls that, you know, any number of players would pay millions of dollars for those girls, but they have not ransomed them. What does that tell us? They probably have independent sources of financing and I think that's important to track.

MR. SCHMITT: Cyril, what's on the top of your assessment for the incoming White House team?

MR. SARTOR: So I think I tipped my hand in the beginning with some of my remarks that we need a whole of Africa approach. I don't know if the next administration will be as ease with some of the issues that have gripped this administration such as South Sudan, which has taken a significant amount of time in the White House and is a serious intelligence challenge for us.

But that may not necessarily be on the top of the agenda for the next administration. But in any case, we need to look at all of Africa and we need to focus on those countries that I didn't mention them by name, but I tried to make the point that there are a parts of Africa that are doing very well. And they need our attention as well as sort of anchor economies and anchor militaries to keep progress going in Africa to help us --

MR. SCHMITT: Such as what?

MR. SARTOR: Such as Cote d'Ivoire, Senegal for example, Ghana.

MR. SCHMITT: Uh-huh, good. Okay we'll turn to the audience now. There are, as you've seen, microphones out there and we'll start right here in the middle please. Keep your questions short so we can get as many in as we can and we'll go round the room.

MR. HAECKER: Thanks. Josh Haecker from *Predata*, I used to be an army intel officer looking at Africa. So early in the panel, you mentioned that in order to fight terrorism in Africa, the growth of terrorism, someone has to invest in structures and institutions. So, how do we, when we look at those investments, balance the need to be critical of things like human rights abuses with our pragmatic need for partners and while we struggle with that balance, what's the risk to U.S. interests that other countries like China and Russia and Iran will make those investments and get influencing partners instead of us?

MR. HAM: So I think we actually can do that pretty effectively and have done it pretty effectively in many places. As a -- in my role as a former Commander, I

would try to say, if there is a human rights concern in a particular country or in a particular country's security forces, let's try to be as specific as we can. So what element, what individuals in that security structure are the ones that we have very valid human rights concerns about so that we can isolate them, encourage the host nation to take the appropriate actions while continuing to enable our full -- the full range of engagement with others.

But it also comes back to the point that Jennifer made. I think an important ingredient of our security forces systems is not just basic rifle marksmanship. It is ethics, it is ethical leadership and ethical behavior and I think the command and across the U.S. government, I think we're getting better at that.

MR. SCHMITT: Let's take a question right over here sir.

MR. CANNON: Thank you, great presentation there. To what -- Al Cannon, Sheriff at Charleston County, South Carolina. To what extent -- the media has not said a whole lot recently about the issue of piracy -- but to what extent does that continue to be a problem? And if it is less so, what accounts for the diminished status of that?

MR. SCHMITT: Jennifer?

MS. COOKE: Sure. Off the Gulf of Aden, off of Somalia, piracy has diminished considerably and that's the result of a couple of things. One is a naval joint taskforce, a multi-national force that has been patrolling the waters. But probably the most essential thing has been just basic measures that ship owners have taken as they travel through there like, don't slow down, have someone on watch --

(Laughter)

MS. COOKE: Use a fire hose, I mean just very basic things, or go another route. What's interesting though is that piracy and robbery -- or I think it's a

slightly different term if it's anchored -- in West Africa has grown more problematic.

And there people are less after the ransom money, like the Somali pirates were, and more after the cargo and the ships. So they have much less compunction in killing people on the ships. So I think piracy has kind of gone down in our national consciousness, but I think maritime security particularly in the Gulf of Guinea still pressing importance.

MR. SCHMITT: Take one over here please.

MS. BRIGGS: Hi, Rachel Briggs from *Hostage U.S.*, we're a non-profit that supports families through hostage cases. This follows on very nicely from the last gentleman's question, I wanted to ask you about kidnapping trends in the region. Very few kidnaps make the headlines, so we have very little good public consciousness about the nature and scale of hostage taking. But if my organization's caseload is anything to go by, we're seeing two things. One is that we're seeing this region constituting I think pretty much our biggest caseload increase in the last few years, quite dramatic rises in the area.

And secondly, we're seeing, if I could describe the taxonomy of what we're seeing in terms of different types of hostage taking, the kidnap for ransom, typical both by terrorists and criminals, we're seeing the rise of short-term siege hostage crisis --

MR. SCHMITT: Can you get to the question?

MS. BRIGGS: Almost there. And we're also seeing the rise of what I would call kidnap for propaganda. So two questions, one is would you agree with the rise; and two, would you agree with the taxonomy? Thank you.

MR. SARTOR: That's propaganda.

MS. COOKE: Yeah. Well I think -- well let's see. I think it's becoming more dispersed as a tactic,

kind of the demonstrated effect of it. I don't know the trends exactly, I know in Southern Nigeria, it's become -- where it was previously confined to some of the militants in the Niger delta, kidnapping of high ranking officials, kidnapping of their relatives and so forth has become a much more widespread phenomenon, and one that is very difficult to tackle.

The high profile European -- western kidnaps get the propaganda, but there's a whole industry happening under that that doesn't get to the media. I don't think that totally answers your question, but.

MR. SCHMITT: In the back?

MR. REED: Thank you. (David Reed). I think it's fair to say that a feature shared by all the populations that are affected by these insurgencies is the increased pressure on natural resources; drought, extreme weather events, climate change that are putting very much at risk the ability of governments to deliver the services that are needed.

I'd like the panelists if you'd be so kind as to comment on the role that you think that resource scarcity and climate change will be playing in the rise of these insurgencies in the future. Thank you.

MR. SCHMITT: Cyril?

MR. SARTOR: Well, I think you're absolutely correct. We look at an area like Chad, and it is under extreme pressure as literally the shrinking of Lake Chad is compelling people to find alternative ways of making a living. It's not hard to see how you can easily fall into looking at criminal networks or working with terrorist organizations.

Again, not because the ideology is appealing to you, but it's an opportunity to make money and to feed your family. I think the analysis is absolutely correct, and it's one of the reasons we need an approach beyond security assistance to help these countries adapt to those stresses.

MR. SCHMITT: This one down here?

MR. CAMERON: (Jay Cameron), (inaudible) Internationals. My question's for Jennifer. You mentioned that the Nigerian military has been -- had some success in taking ground from Boko Haram, one of the challenges is holding that ground. Do you see a role for sustainable community development in building resiliency of these communities as a way to help hold that ground? A military plus a coordinated aid effort as well?

MS. COOKE: Well, yes. I think one of the aspects in, particularly in Northeast Nigeria was that -- is that local government is completely absent. So communities have very little kind of say and very little contact with the government, very little opportunity to kind of select their leaders and set their priorities.

And so I think, focusing on that very local, even municipal governance structure is important. Also though, in terms of engagement with the military, it's never going to be possible to patrol the entire Sahel or patrol all of Borno State. But you need much better and quicker communication and exchange of information between communities and between the military and military's ability to respond quickly in that. That requires building trust.

But then there's also kind of the livelihood aspect and the local reconciliation aspect of it as well. Many of these, in the Sahel in particular -- many of these conflicts arise out of very localized competition between communities living very close together. And so, building kind of cooperation and consensus and more social cohesion among those communities is critically important as well.

MR. HAM: And if I could add, just to follow-up on that. I think from a military perspective, one of the phrases we use is that the military, whether it's U.S. or African, it is an essential but non-decisive component of building security. You've got to have the military, but the military by itself can't achieve what we want to, it is that next step in development and governance that will

assure long-term gains.

MR. SCHMITT: All the way in the back.

MR. HAM: It's for you Cyril.

MR. SCHMITT: Oh-oh.

MR. HAM: This is for you Cyril.

(Laughter)

MR. McLAUGHLIN: No, for the whole panel. John McLaughlin, former Deputy Director at CIA and now at Johns Hopkins University. I wonder if the panel could reflect a moment on this. At some point, hopefully, ISIS gets driven out of its territorial strongholds in Iraq and Syria. It appears they have a plan for what to do and where to go at that point and I wonder to what extent you think Africa figures in that plan and particularly Libya, where they are under some pressure and can they be defeated in Libya where they appear to have a particularly well-developed stronghold?

MS. COOKE: We kind of agreed that all questions on Libya would go to the General.

MR. HAM: Oh thank you, yeah.

(Laughter)

MR. HAM: So I think absolutely. There are wide swaths of territory that are ungoverned or under-governed in Africa, so an ISIL or any other organization under pressure looking for a new safe haven, if you will, will look for those kinds of areas.

That's why it is all the more important for the U.S., for our allies and partners to work very diligently with the African Union, with individual African nations to help them form the kind of governance, the kind of security forces that make it increasingly difficult for ISIL or any other organization to establish a new foothold.

The presence of ISIL in Cert in Libya, I think is particularly problematic, though there are some positive indicators that the Libyans themselves are becoming increasingly intolerant of ISIL's presence. And that's what it takes. It takes people, it takes a government to say, "We won't tolerate that within our boundaries." And they may need a little help, will certainly require regional cooperation, but I think it's a very, very valid concern John to say, "Where does ISIL go next and when under pressure in Iraq and Syria?"

MS. COOKE: I also think, outside of Libya, I mean, it's not particularly attractive to set up camp, you know, north of Timbuktu. I mean, if you've ever been there, it's -- I don't think people are raging to get there or to Somalia where things are a little chaotic. But it could be a temporary haven and holding ground ultimately and I think cordoning off, helping those countries kind of insulate themselves from outflow from Libya is going to be important.

MR. SCHMITT: We have time for one --

MR. HAM: So two seconds just to follow-up on that.

MR. SCHMITT: Yeah.

MR. HAM: I think the other thing that we may be seeing is that terrorist organizations have recognized that when they operate in isolated space, they are then vulnerable to U.S. and other collection and targeting. So we may see them hide in plain view, so a place like a megacity, Lagos, a place like that may unfortunately be a new safe haven, if you will, for a terrorist organization.

MR. SCHMITT: We have time for one last short and scintillating question right down here please.

(Laughter)

MS. HACKWORTH: Thanks. Hi, (Alex Hackworth). You have all focused on building governance structures and

partner capacity. But given kind of the U.S. track record in doing that and our effectiveness and the sustainability of that, what lessons have we observed or learned over the last 10, 15 years and how can we apply those in the future given that that's kind of fundamental to what you're saying the future U.S. policy should be in Africa? Thank you.

MR. HAM: So from a military standpoint, I think that African Union Mission in Somalia is an example. Working through the African Union with U.S. and other nation's support is -- offers I think a good indicator of what might work in the future.

MS. COOKE: From the Cold War, I think we learned a lot of lessons from focusing on U.S. narrow security interests to the exclusion of issues like human rights, democracy or inclusive governance. And I think, you know, that's where even as the U.S. partners militarily with some of these countries, it has to make very clear that it also stands in solidarity with civil society groups, with communities and so forth. And I think you have to be able to speak those two messages equally credibly and we've had kind of mixed success on that I think.

MR. SARTOR: And I had wanted to reinforce the point Jennifer had just made. I think we've learned that you have to talk to more than just the government and more than just the military, and with civil society and even some of the youth groups. And I think this last administration had indeed begun an outreach like that in Africa and I hope to see the next one perhaps sustain that.

MR. SCHMITT: Well, that's our -- and we're out of time, but thank you very much for your questions and thanks for these panelists.

(Applause)

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