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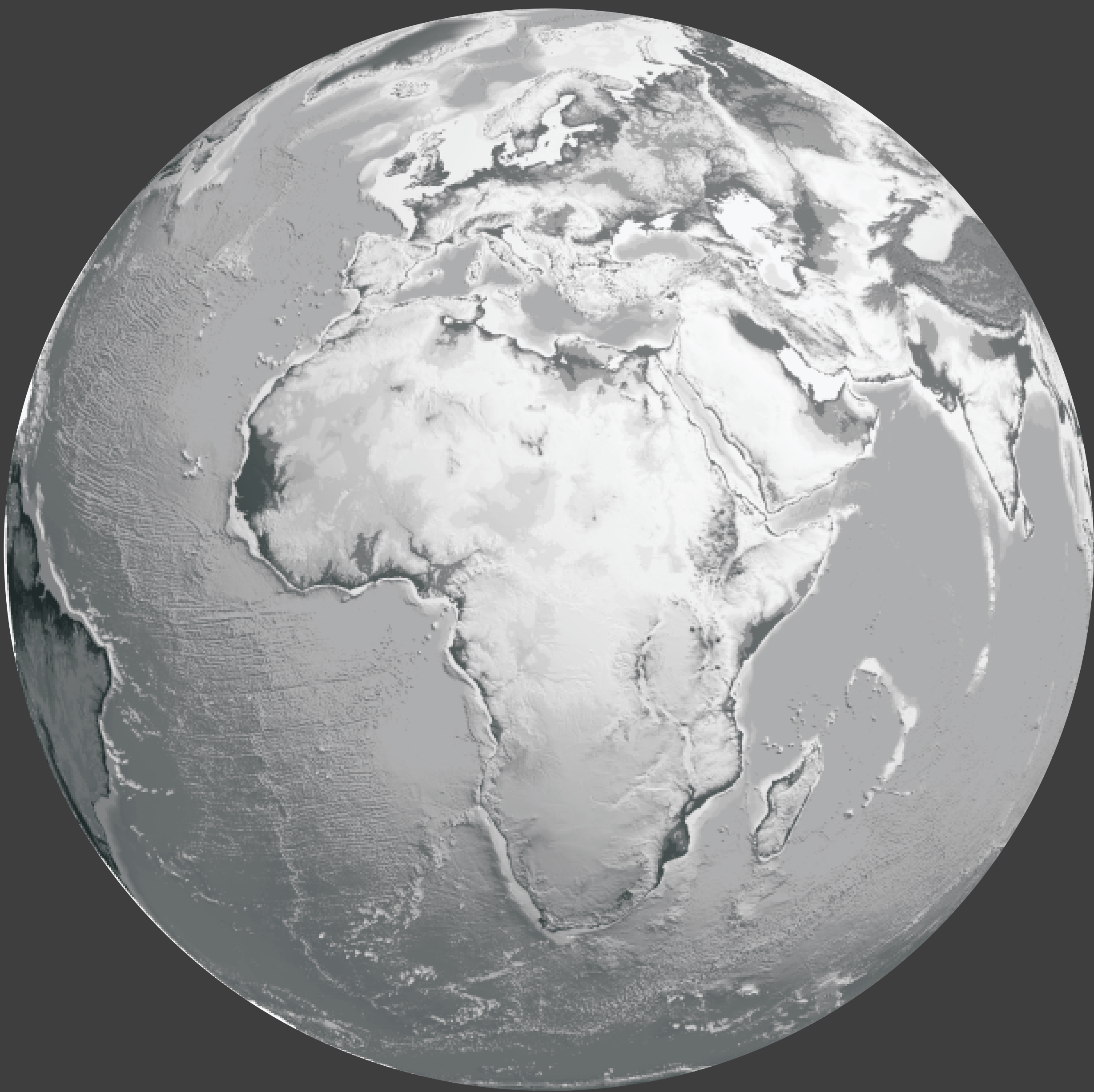

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Editor's Note

While the African continent is facing significant challenges in the domain of terrorism and security, it is also rife with opportunities on the technology and economy front. This issue of Africa Trends deals with these diverse topics.

In the cover story, Dr. Jean Langlois-Berthelot and Mr. Benedikt Barthelmess provide an insight into the technological solutions for reducing money laundering and terrorist financing in Africa and their applications. In the first commentary, Mr. Yashasvi Chandra examines the Islamic State's growth in the Sahel region, its changing dynamics with the Al-Qaeda and the impact on regional security. In the second commentary, Mr. Prabhat Jawla explores Egypt's significant bolstering of its defence capabilities and assesses its causes and consequences. In the viewpoint, Dr. Chidiebube Jasper Uche looks at the possibility of exploring blue economy as a means to bridge the funding gap in Nigeria. Ms. Pooja Priya reviews Purnima Mehta Bhatt's "The African Diaspora in India: Assimilation, Change and Cultural Survivals" which sheds light on the Sidi community from Africa who are now settled in the Indian states of Gujarat, Maharashtra, Andhra Pradesh, and Goa. Ms. Sindhu Dinesh reviews Philani Mthembu's "China and India's Development Cooperation in Africa: The Rise of Southern Powers" which examines the determinants that push China and India to pursue development cooperation activities in Africa.

We welcome your feedback!

Cover Story

HOW INFORMATION TECHNOLOGIES ARE CHANGING FORENSIC FINANCE IN AFRICA

Money Laundering and Terrorist Financing remain a serious challenge for governments on the African continent. Rapid technological change has in some instances accentuated the threats emanating from these categories of financial crime and financial authorities, just like elsewhere in the world, will have to invest considerable resources in Anti-Money Laundering and Counter Terrorist Finance measures. Besides technologies that may find direct applications in financial sector, financial institutions and their regulators could also benefit from broader governance innovation.

Jean Langlois-Berthelot and Benedikt Barthelmess*

"Spotting bad behaviour is not easy, particularly when it lurks within an ocean of legitimate activity" - Megan Butler, FCA[1]

1 The Role of Technologies in Reducing Money Laundering (ML) and Terrorist Financing (TF) in Africa

...new technologies have also been an enabler of financial crime...

In the lesser developed parts of the African continent, contemporary consumers have greatly benefitted from technological progress in finance, notably in the payments sphere. Arguably the greatest achievement of new payments solution has been the sharp increase in people's access to basic financial services. However, new technologies have also been an enabler of financial crime, the anonymity granted by virtual currencies and the widespread use of prepaid cards being just two examples.

While tighter regulation and supervision has been the way forward to tackling financial crime, technology equally has to play a role if we are "to detect and disrupt financial crime, and ultimately the criminals who seek to exploit the system", as Megan Butler, Executive

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Director of Supervision at the British banking supervisor Financial Conduct Authority (FCA), noted in a speech on the 23 October 2019.[2]

While Butler was mainly referring to the British financial sector, one could argue that this is even more so the case in Africa's less developed countries where banks and non-banking institutions find it much harder to bear to the costs that have come along with a mix of machine and manual processes employed to comply with new Anti-Money Laundering and Counter Terrorist Finance (AML/CTF) measures. Greater vigilance within the industry has moreover translated into larger numbers of reports filed with national banking supervisory authorities (e.g. Suspicious Activity Reports, "SARs"[3]). As a consequence, authorities have been struggling to cope with the increased burden of carrying out investigations, which, again, require significant resources. A recent report[4] by the AML Working Group of the RegTech for Regulators Initiative provides a particularly alarming assessment of authorities' readiness for recent technological change:

> In general, the information technology (IT) systems currently employed by financial authorities to capture, store, and render data from financial service provides (FSPs) and other sources were not designed for the latest generation of digital products, platforms, and provides that rely on Big Data. As these continue to proliferate across and within financial sectors, the capacity of existing data architectures to fully absorb and digest the data that digital financial services (DFS) generate is steadily diminishing.

Cheaper, technology-based solutions are thus an important way forward in African countries – most notably solutions that tap into Artificial Intelligence (AI), robotics, natural language processing and machine learning.

This article offers an outline of different technological solutions and seeks to explore the extent to which these technologies have already found applications in this part of the world. The remainder of this article is structured as follows: Section 2 focuses on technologies used by financial institutions. This is then followed by an exploration of technologies from the regulatory perspective in Section 3. Section 4 offers some concluding remarks.

2 Financial Institutions' Use of Technological Solutions

2.1 Profiling Technologies

Financial institutions tend to rely heavily on profiling technologies that attempt to model and simulate ML behaviour in order to capture suspicious transactions. Automated profiling solutions have been in use for many years now; however, these commonplace automated AML systems rely heavily on structured databases that lack the ability to effectively and efficiently identify hidden and complex ML activities, as Han et al.[5] note. They further note that this holds particularly true for ML activities with dynamic and time-varying features,

Financial institutions tend to rely heavily on profiling technologies...

i.e., activities that do not follow any straightforward, linear pattern. As a result, systems tend to produce a high percentage of false positives, which then need to be investigated by humans in what are often lengthy and human resource-intensive processes.

2.2 Deep Learning Technologies

The shortcomings of such conventional profiling technologies underline the potential benefits of more advanced technologies, even though they have to date only found very limited applications in the AML/CTF context. Han et al.[6] introduce, for instance, a framework that employs deep learning-driven natural language processing (NLP) technologies—a subset of machine learning—to augment AML monitoring and investigation. What is in its essence a distributed framework, uses NLP technology to analyse news and tweet sentiments, entity recognition, relation extraction, entity linking and link analysis on data sources.

3 Reg- and Suptech: Regulators and Supervisors' Engagement with Technologies

...there has also been a growing focus on creating special regulatory environments...

Financial regulators and supervisors have now for some time been looking into advanced data collection and analytics tools that are collectively referred to as "regtech" and "suptech". While there have been considerable advancements in such tools, there has also been a growing focus on creating special regulatory environments—often referred to as regulatory sandboxes—allowing for the testing of new technologies and regulatory measures.

3.1 Regulatory Sandboxes

Regulatory sandboxes are a ringfenced innovation environment promoted by several regulators to allow the FinTech industry to test their innovation and understand the impact of regulatory measures. The first such sandbox was launched by the British FCA in 2015,[7] but the idea quickly gained traction and now more than 50 authorities worldwide are toying with such sandboxes. A report by the United Nations Secretary-General's Special Advocate for Inclusive Finance for Development (UNSGSA) FinTech Working Group[8] distinguishes between product testing sandboxes and policy making sandboxes, although the lines between the two types are fluid. Product testing sandboxes allow firms to assess consumer uptake and commercial viability. Meanwhile policy testing sandboxes are more focused on evaluating regulations or policies in view of their potential impact on new technologies and business models. Notable advantages include the reduction of uncertainty and hence the cost of innovation for FinTech developers, while the authorities find themselves in a better position to engage in evidence-based policy making. The FinTech Working Group report also emphasises regulatory sandboxes' potential to advance financial inclusion.[9]

There has, moreover, been some experimentation with multi-jurisdictional sandboxes. Such sandboxes seem particularly promising when it comes to ML/TF prevention, given the international dimension of ML and TF. An added benefit is that it potentially allows for economies of scale, bringing down individual African regulators' cost. Yet the FinTech

Working Group report also cautions that the initial cost of setting up such a sandbox may be high in light of the challenges the development of a sandbox framework across multiple jurisdictions may pose.

Regulators in African countries have only limited experience with regulatory sandboxes to date. South Africa's South African Reserve Bank and the Financial Services Conduct Authority have reportedly announced the creation of an innovation hub along with a regulatory sandbox.[10] Other African countries that have been experimenting with regulatory sandboxes are Mauritius, Sierra Leone and Mozambique.[11]

3.2 Data Analytics Tools

A large range of data analytics tools with applications in financial sector regulation have emerged in recent years and include machine learning, cloud computing, natural language processing, text mining, application programming interfaces (APIs), artificial intelligence and machine reading. As Coelho, De Simoni and Prenio[12] in a Bank for International Settlement paper note, such technologies can be used for the detection of networks of related transactions, identification of unusual behaviours and, more generally, the transformation of large amounts of structured and unstructured data for analytical purposes. Examples of more specific applications of such technologies with respect to AML/CTF supervision are explored in the following paragraphs.

A large range of data analytics tools with applications in financial sector regulation have emerged...

Supervisory authorities' mandate to supervise and monitor financial institution entails assessments of governance, risk management, internal controls and processes and systems to prevent financial crime. Coelho, De Simoni and Prenio[13] find that analytical tools have been developed to enhance the offsite assessment of the individual institutions' risk profiles. Such offsite assessment tools can be complemented by tools to assess the overall risk of supervised entities. Such analytics tools typically assign a rating to each supervised institution as of their likelihood of non-compliance with AML/CFT requirements.[14]

When it comes to the evaluation of data submitted to regulators and the identification of patterns and trends, data analytics platforms using data science, machine learning and artificial intelligence have significant potential in helping regulators to cope with growing numbers of structured and unstructured data points.

...data analytics platforms...have significant potential in helping regulators to cope with growing numbers...

African countries to date have made limited headway in this area; however, the example of Nigeria's "Data Stack" data warehouse demonstrates some of the possibilities. As outlined by a R2A whitepaper[15], the Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN), alongside the Nigeria Inter-Bank Settlement System Plc and BFA consulting firm, has been working on the redesign of its data infrastructure. The "Data Stack" consists of a transactional data warehouse and dashboards that the CBN and other stakeholders can access to analyse payments data. It is populated via Application Programming Interfaces (APIs) with real-time transactional data from the inter-bank settlements system and CBN compliance data which can be tailored to the analytic requirements of different stakeholders.

4 Conclusion

ML and TF remain a serious challenge for governments on the African continent. Rapid technological change has in some instances accentuated the threats emanating from these categories of financial crime and financial authorities, just like elsewhere in the world, will have to invest considerable resources in AML/CTF measures. None of this has gone unnoticed in African countries and, to some extent, action has already been taken. However, measures remain incomplete and incoherent, especially when it comes to the use of advanced technologies: there is a difference in employing new tool and turning it into an effective AML/CTF weapon. Among the most promising initiatives are probably, Nigeria's Data Stack, which has created tremendous opportunities for a much more integrated, data-driven approach to fighting financial crime.

Besides technologies that may find direct applications in financial sector, financial institutions and their regulators could also benefit from broader governance innovation. Huw van Steenis, Chair of Sustainable Finance at UBS, for instance, argued[16] that governments should champion digital forms of identification, following the example of India's Aadhaar programme, which simplifies the process through which networks can know their customers. The FCA's sandbox's fifth cohort included several companies that looked at decentralised and federalised digital identity platforms machine learning identity verification.[17] Such new identification mechanisms reduce the need for manual ID checks and help organisations avoid having to do duplicate checks.

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1 M. Butler, "Turning Technology Against Financial Crime", speech delivered at the Royal Services Institute, London, UK, 2019.

2 Ibid.

3 See for example the guidance provided by the South African Financial Intelligence Centre: Financial Intelligence Centre, Financial Intelligence Centre Guidance Note 4 on Suspicious Transaction Reporting, undated.

4 R2A and BFA Global Reports, *Financial Authorities in the Era of Data Abundance: RegTech for Regulators and SupTech Solutions*, 2018, p. 3

5 J. Han et al., "NextGen AML: Distributed Deep Learning based Language Technologies to Augment Anti Money Laundering Investigation", Proceedings of the 56th Annual Meeting of the Association for Computational Linguistics-System Demonstrations, Melbourne, Australia, Association for Computational Linguistics, 15-20 July 2018, pp. 37–42.

[6] Ibid.

[7] FCA (2015). "Regulatory Sandbox", May 11, 2015, at https://www.fca.org.uk/firms/regulatory-sandbox, (accessed on 1 December 2019)

[8] UNSGSA FinTech Working Group and CCAF, "Early Lessons on Regulatory Innovations to Enable Inclusive FinTech: Innovation Offices, Regulatory Sandboxes, and RegTech", Office of the UNSGSA and CCAF: New York, NY and Cambridge, UK, 2019, p. 28

[9] Ibid. p. 28.

[10] Gwen Ngwenya, "SA shouldn't miss opportunity to move the sandbox beyond fintech", June 21, 2019, *Tech Central* at https://techcentral.co.za/sa-shouldnt-miss-opportunity-to-move-the-sandbox-beyond-fintech/90450/, (accessed on 21 November 2019)

[11] M., L. Wechsler L. Perlman and N. Gurung, "The State of Regulatory Sandboxes in Developing Countries", SSRN, 2018.

[12] R. Coelho, M. De Simoni and J. Prenio, "Suptech Applications for Anti-Money Laundering", FSI Insights on Policy Implementation, no 18, Bank for International Settlements, August 2019, p. 7.

[13] Ibid. p. 7.

[14] Ibid. p. 8.

[15] R2A and FDA, no. 5., 2018, pp. 36-37.

[16] H. van Steenis, "The Digital Money Revolution", Project Syndicate, November 13, 2019, at https://www.project-syndicate.org/commentary/digital-money-payments-revolution-by-huw-van-steenis-2019-11, (accessed on 1 December 2019)

[17] FCA, "Regulatory Sandbox - Cohort 5", April 29, 2019, at https://www.fca.org.uk/firms/regulatory-sandbox/cohort-5, (accessed on 1 December 2019)

Commentary

THE RESURGENCE OF THE ISLAMIC STATE IN THE SAHEL AND ITS STRATEGIC IMPACT ON REGIONAL SECURITY

While the Islamic State has been officially eliminated in Iraq and Syria, it is rapidly strengthening its bases in the territories outside Iraq and the Levant like the Sahel and West Africa through its local affiliates. It is also mending terms with the Al-Qaeda in Islamic Maghreb (AQIM) - now operating in the Sahel under the umbrella of the Group in Support of Islam and Muslims (GSIM). Its growing affinity with Al-Qaeda could strengthen and multiply its workforce and provide access to Al-Qaeda's existing resources.

Yashasvi Chandra*

Introduction

In March 2019, when the Kurdish-led Syrian Democratic Force (SDF) captured Baghuz in Syria – the last stronghold of Islamic State – the geographical Caliphate of the Islamic State in Iraq and al-Sham (ISIS) or the Islamic State effectively came to an end. Later in October that year, a raid by United States Special Forces killed its leader Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi.

Despite these trends, ISIS is far from being eliminated. It has 'gather(ed) new strength, retooled its financial networks and targeted recruits' from newer territories.[1] It continues to inspire its foreign-based fighters to launch terror attacks while embarking on guerrilla warfare in Iraq and Syria. It has established sleeper cells, particularly in the areas now controlled by SDF, and operates in smaller groups, mainly in the mountains and deserts of Iraq and Syria to 'realign its forces and recruit more fighters'.[2]

...ISIS is far from being eliminated.

Outside Iraq and the Levant, the Islamic State has strongly and rapidly emerged in new territories like the Sahel and West Africa through its local affiliates. Its local affiliates

* Mr. Yashasvi Chandra works for the British Civil Service. The views and opinions expressed here are his own and do not reflect the official policy or position of the British Government. The author would like to thank Prof. Fred Lawson, Professor of Government Emeritus at Mills College, USA for reviewing this paper and providing valuable feedback.

particularly the Islamic State in the Greater Sahel (ISGS) and the Islamic State West Africa Province (ISWAP) have gained significant success in raising the profile of the Islamic State by launching several terror attacks in the region.

Remarkably, the Islamic State's new leadership has adopted a softer approach towards its traditional rival the Al-Qaeda. Al-Qaeda in Islamic Maghreb (AQIM), which now operates in the Sahel under the umbrella of the Group in Support of Islam and Muslims (GSIM), has temporarily joined hands by opening a joint front along with Ansarul Islam against the forces of Burkina Faso. The Islamic State's growing affinity with GSIM, could strengthen and multiply its workforce and provide access to Al-Qaeda's existing resources.

...Islamic State's new leadership has adopted a softer approach towards its traditional rival the Al-Qaeda.

To counter the growing terror groups, Mauritania, Mali, Burkina Faso, Chad, and Niger created a joint force, the G5 Sahel Joint Force (FC-G5S). This force is backed by France, which has its own strategic interest in the region. However, the joint force has not met with the level of success it was expecting to achieve, and terror activities in the region since its formation have increased significantly. FC-G5S faces its own challenges. Political instability in the region, stressed budget, and low military capability have continued to weaken its response to counterterrorism, to the delight of ISIS which is experiencing a greater success in the Sahel.

Newer territories: The Islamic State's growth in the Sahel

Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi's Islamic State was a highly centralised entity which sought unconditional allegiance from its local affiliates in return allowing them little autonomy. As a result, the Islamic State's presence outside its geographical territory – Iraq and al-Sham (the Levant) – was restricted to smaller groups or lone wolfs with limited operational capacity. These small organisations or local militias mostly pledged allegiance to ISIS to encash its name and broaden their outreach by attracting youths to their fold.

Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi's Islamic State was a highly centralised entity...

The Islamic State's affiliate in West Africa, Boko Haram, which renamed itself as Islamic State West Africa Province (ISWAP) in 2015 and its official affiliate in the Sahel, the Islamic State in Greater Sahara (ISGS), which was formed after splitting from the local militia Al-Mourabitoun[3] and too was largely unknown until 2017, pledged allegiance to Baghdadi to 'boost its Islamist credentials, attract new recruits, and appeal to ISIS' Levant-based leadership for patronage'.[4]

Abu-Baghdadi's strategy was sharply in contrast with the strategy of Al-Qaeda, which allowed local groups to operate independently, some of which like AQIM and Al-Qaeda in the Arabic Peninsula (AQAP) became powerful and independent in their own right.

Since the loss of physical territories in Iraq and Syria and the death of its leader, ISIS has moved away from the centralised system, as it can see the benefit of Al-Qaeda style decentralised control.[5] Operating through local affiliates and allowing them decision making power would allow its smaller offshoots to grow, providing Islamic State with the much needed financial and logistical support to launch terror attacks. This will not only keep ISIS alive while its fighters are holed in secret hideouts in Iraq and Syria, but it will also expand its operational base, boosting its profile.

For Islamic State, the Sahel region provides the right opportunity to test its decentralised system.

For Islamic State, the Sahel region provides the right opportunity to test its decentralised system. The region is highly unstable, volatile and it proving to be an incubator for militant groups. While Sahel has been unstable for more than two decades due to successive weak governments, the recent instability can be attributed to the breakdown of the Malian state in 2012. The fight between the government and Tuareg rebels from the National Movement for the Liberation of the Azawad (MNLA) and later Ansar Din Islamists (AQIM's offshoot later merged into GSIM) escalated the crisis.[6] Additionally, 'uncontrolled circulation of arms and radical Islamists from Libya' and the power struggle between Algeria and Morocco for 'greater influence in Mali further destabilised the region'.[7] Jihadist groups capitalising on local disputes in rural areas recruited new fighters and launched attacks against national and international forces.[8] Countries like Niger, Burkina Faso and Mauritania have all witnessed an increase in jihadist activities due to increased instability in Mali. Further, Chad has also faced vulnerabilities from the South of Libya. Instability in the Sahel has also spread to West Africa with countries like Benin, Ivory Coast and Ghana getting significantly affected.[9]

Besides, the Islamic State's strong presence in Libya allows them to easily oversee its local affiliates' activities in the Sahel region and provide material and operational support to its local groups. The Islamic State remains active in the south-west of Libya with its fighters repeatedly attacking the cities in the region of Fazzan, which shares a border with Niger and Chad.[10]

The Islamic State provides financial and logistical support to ISGS to launch terror attacks,...

The Sahel, therefore, offers a much easier opportunity for ISIS to increase its presence in newer territories. And, ISIS has seized this opportunity through its lesser-known affiliate, the Islamic State in Greater Sahara (ISGS). The group has gained significant support in northern Mali and has contributed to an escalating Salafi-jihadist insurgency in Burkina Faso. The ambushed attack on Nigerian and US soldiers in Tongo Tongo, Niger in October 2017 raised the profile of ISGS in the region. It has also regularly targeted forces of Operation Barkhane, including a suicide attack in 2018. The Islamic State provides financial and logistical support to ISGS to launch terror attacks, a point reaffirmed by the United Nations Security Council on 23 February 2020.[11] Reports also suggest that ISGS is cooperating with ISWAP in launching terror attacks and developing a logistics base in Sokoto, Nigeria.[12]

ISGS success in the Sahel and its collaboration with ISWAP will be vital for its global revival. But it is not dependent only on ISGS and ISWAP. Islamic State's mending ties with Al-Qaeda will also prove a defining factor for its growth in the Sahel.

Mending ties: Islamic States' changing dynamics with Al-Qaeda

In 2014, when the Islamic State defeated the US-trained Iraqi army and officially established the Caliphate, it faced a challenge from Al-Nusra. Al-Nusra was Al-Qaeda's branch predominantly created to increase Al-Qaeda's activities in Syria under disguise.[13] Islamic State, however, fought with Al-Nusra, eliminated it and openly defied Ayman al-Zawahiri, the head of Al-Qaeda. Since then, ISIS and Al-Qaeda have been in conflict.

The Islamic State's loss of territories since 2017 and the rise of instability in the Sahel region have witnessed increasing cooperation between ISIS and Al-Qaeda's Maghreb affiliate AQIM. This changing dynamic between the two could become a critical factor for the ISIS resurgence and the second wave of ISIS activities. The Islamic State and Al-Qaeda fighters appear to be coordinating attacks and carving out 'mutually agreed-upon areas of influence' in the Sahel, particularly in weaker countries like Burkina Faso. [14]

The Islamic State and Al-Qaeda fighters appear to be coordinating attacks...

Maintaining good relations with Al-Qaeda is in the long-term interest of ISIS. AQIM, known as GSIM in the Sahel, has a much stronger presence than ISIS. GSIM became by far the most powerful group in the Sahel after the four main jihadi organisations in the Sahel, AQIM, Ansar al-Din, Al-Mourabitoun and Katibat Macina – the latter three linked directly to Al-Qaeda – announced their unification and created the Jama'a Nusrat al-Islam wa al-Muslimin' (JNIM) also known as Group in Support of Islam and Muslims (GSIM) under the leadership of Iyad Ag Ghali.[15] This unification united all major jihadi groups in the Sahel, creating one of the most powerful Al-Qaeda affiliates.

Without the support of GSIM, ISIS would be unable to strengthen its base in the Sahel, as ISGS does not have sufficient jihadi workforce and logistical support to launch significant terror attacks. The Islamic State's another affiliate ISWAP's presence is restricted to northern Nigeria with limited influence over the Sahel region. GSIM leader Iyad Ag Ghali is a local leader and has cultivated strong relations with local tribal chiefs, who command greater authority in their respective regions.

Good relations with Al-Qaeda will also bring economic gains for ISIS, which – once the world's richest organisation – has now lost a big portion of its revenues. The region hosts the ancient trans-Sahara smuggling routes used for smuggling contraband items for generations, and GSIM controls the region. With no economic opportunities for youth, GSIM has recruited unemployed youth to work as human traffickers, operate kidnapping operations, and traffic illicit drugs, particularly cocaine coming from South America through

Good relations with Al-Qaeda will also bring economic gains for ISIS,...

Guinea-Bissau.[16] Due to the patronage of local tribe leaders, GSIM operatives are guaranteed safe passage of contraband items. GSIM has also allowed local groups to operate the drug business independently, subject to the recognition of Iyad Ag Ghali as their leader. Gao which is on the main transition route for drug trafficking (and to an extent human trafficking) has become the main trading outpost for illicit trading activities. It now acts as the main transit point for the cocaine trade with Europe.[17] Al-Qaeda's involvement in drug and human trafficking have provided them with a secure line of funds, which ISIS would also like to benefit from. Central Sahel also hosts the gold mines of Mali, Burkina Faso, Mauritania and Niger and access to these mines would provide further revenue.[18]

However, one should note that the power equation between GSIM and ISIG is unequal. While GSIM is powerful and has an authoritative control over Sahel, ISIG is a relatively a minor player. And it appears that one of the reasons why GSIM is willing to collaborate with ISIG is to counter the G5 Sahel Joint counter terrorism Force (FC-G5S), which is backed by France. To fight with the French-backed army along with other multinational peace forces, GSIM needs additional resources like logistics and finance, which ISIS can supply through ISGS and ISWAP. Coordinated attacks would allow much effective use of their resources.

...the power equation between GSIM and ISIG is unequal.

Failing regional security: The G5 Sahel Joint Force and France

The G5 Sahel, a group of five countries – Mauritania, Mali, Niger, Chad and Burkina Faso – was established in December 2014 to fight the expansion of Al-Qaeda and its Islamist affiliates. Later in 2017, as jihadi groups continued to grow and destabilised the region, the G5 Sahel created a counterterrorism force – the G5 Sahel Joint Force (FC-G5S) – with a 4000-strong French force[19]. Its objective was to counter terrorism, organised cross-border crimes, and human trafficking.[20] It is spread over three regions of the Sahel – 'an eastern sector for Niger and Chad with two battalions; a central sector covering Mali, Burkina Faso and Niger with three battalions; and a western sector corresponding to Mauritania and Mali with two battalions'.[21]

While FC-G5S is backed by France, the force has not been very successful in eliminating the terror groups. In fact, terror activities have significantly increased since the formation of the joint force, uniting several big and small terror groups, including Al-Qaeda and the Islamic State.

The biggest challenge FC-G5S faces is successive weak governments and political instability in all five states. Mali, which is the epicentre of the Sahel crisis, despite several peace dialogues initiated by successive presidents with rebel groups, has failed to address the concerns of the north and central regions and reduce violence.[22] Likewise, while Chad and Mauritania continue to struggle with successive weak governments, Burkina Faso faces 'widespread (public) discontent fuelled by the country's dismal social and security conditions'.[23] Niger is facing its

The biggest challenge FC-G5S faces is successive weak governments and political instability in all five states.

own challenges with power transition.

FC-G5S is also a poorly organised armed force. The armies of Burkina Faso, Niger and Mali face organisational challenges, chronic budget deficit and poor operational capabilities. Further, while the armies of Mauritania and Chad are marginally better organised and have 'a good reputation for (its) intelligence services and rapid intervention units', they face other internal challenges. 'Mauritania has not participated in any major combat situations for the past four years' and Chad's soldiers face 'fatigue by multiple deployments and (a) financially weak (government) after the fall in oil prices.'[24]

Finally, the FC-G5S force is not only fighting with the terror groups but also countering trans-border organised crimes which include drug trafficking. Drug trafficking brings, in some way, employment opportunities for the youth in an impoverished region with no economic activities. The working population of the region is often offered employment opportunities by GSIM and other smaller terror groups to transport drugs, in lieu of small amounts. They are not on the regular payroll of these terror groups, i.e. carrying out terror attacks, but work on ad-hoc opportunities like drug trafficking and sometimes human trafficking, which makes it complex for FC-G5S to counter terrorism and eliminate terror groups in the Sahel.

...the FC-G5S force is not only fighting with the terror groups but also countering trans-border organised crimes...

These challenges have ensured that terror groups like GSIM and ISGS continue to benefit from the instability which the Sahel is suffering from, particularly for the Islamic State, which is aiming to regroup and remerge.

Conclusion

From being the world's richest organisation with a geographical territory, ISIS has now been reduced to guerrilla insurgents. However, underestimating its strength would be a strategic miscalculation. ISIS is strengthening its base in the Sahel through its affiliates – ISIG and ISWAP. Worryingly, it seems to be collaborating with Al-Qaeda, an organisation it fought in the past. Collaboration with Sahel based Al-Qaeda groups will give ISIS much needed human resources to operate in a new territory, helping them strengthen their base. Al-Qaeda also appears to mend its terms with the Islamic State as it wants to present a united front against the French and the G5 Sahel forces. On the other hand, G5 Sahel joint forces continue to struggle with inherent challenges like poorly organised forces, lack of training, stressed budget and political instability in every country of G5, much to the delight of terror groups.

ISIS is strengthening its base in the Sahel through its affiliates...

Taking advantage of these weaknesses, Islamic State hopes to break the state machinery through continued and sustained terror attacks, eventually preparing for a resurgence, while attempting to recruit new warriors from its traditional Sunni base. While ISIS may not be able to launch a second Caliphate with a geographical territory, its success in emerging territories like the Sahel would make it a lethal terror force.

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1 Eric Schmitt, Alissa J. Rubin and Thomas Gibbons-Neff, ISIS Is Regaining Strength in Iraq and Syria", *New York Times*, 19 Aug 2019, at https://www.nytimes.com/2019/08/19/us/politics/isis-iraq-syria.html, (accessed on 16 April 2020).

2 Mohammed Hassan, *How ISIS is Restructuring and Repositioning*, Chatham House, February 2020, at https://syria.chathamhouse.org/research/how-isis-is-restructuring-and-repositioning, (accessed on 13 April 2020).

3 Djallil Lounnas, *The Transmutation of Jihadi Organizations in the Sahel and the Regional Security Architecture*, Middle East and North Africa Regional Architecture, No. 10, April 2018.

4 Jennifer Ogbogu, *Analysing the Threat of Boko Haram and the ISIS Alliance in Nigeria*, Counter Terrorist Trends and Analyses, Vol. 7, No. 8, 2015, pp. 16–21. JSTOR, at www.jstor.org/stable/26351381, (accessed on 8 April 2020).

5 Al-Qaeda allowed several organisations to function independently. Some of them like AQIM and AQAP became very powerful over time. ISIS' predecessor, Al-Qaeda in Iraq was allowed to operate independently, even though bin-Laden did not agree with Zarqawi's approach to target Shi'a Muslims.

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Commentary

EGYPT'S ASSERTIVE MILITARY POSTURING: CAUSES AND CONSEQUENCES

In 2020, Cairo felt its interests directly under threat by Turkish policies, and as a result, Egypt took a more assertive military position. However, such bolstering of defence capabilities also comes with additional imperatives. Although Cairo has insisted that these defence manoeuvres are merely defensive and borne of its national security needs, but going forward, these moves may contribute to an arms race in the region.

Prabhat Jawla*

In June 2020, Egyptian President Fatah al-Sisi threatened military action in Libya unless the Turkish-backed forces halt their advances in Eastern Libya.[1] Later on, in 2020, reports suggesting crucial defence agreements and joint-military exercises continued to highlight Cairo's efforts in building a robust military force in the region. What explains this assertive military posturing by Cairo? Is it a consequence of Sisi's consolidation of power, wherein he is trying to establish himself as a leader in the region? Or are there external factors that explain such behaviour on the part of Egypt? Additionally, what could be the possible repercussions of this on Egypt and the region?

Quest for Stronger Military

Since coming to office in 2014, Egyptian President Sisi has endeavoured to strengthen the Egyptian military, as evidenced by Egypt's defence expenditure trends. From 2010 to 2019, Egyptian arms acquisitions have increased significantly compared with the previous decade (2000-10).[2] As per the SIPRI database, between 2015-19, Egypt was the second-largest importer of arms in the Middle East (accounting for 16 per cent of total imports in the region), following Saudi Arabia (35 per cent).[3] Cairo is also the fourth-largest recipient of military aid from Washington, worth US$ 1.3 billion.[4] However, last year, the intensifying of conflict in Libya and Mediterranean theatres and the

...Egyptian arms acquisitions have increased significantly compared with the previous decade...

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rekindling of conflict in the Nagorno-Karabakh region have contributed to the rise in security concerns in Cairo that have largely dictated Egypt's quest for military posturing.

On June 06, 2020, President Sisi, alongside Field Marshal Haftar (military chief) and Aguila Saleh (head of the pro-Haftar parliament) of Libya National Army Libya (LNA), issued the Cairo Declaration, a proposal aimed to provide a political solution to the conflict in Libya. Along with the UAE and Russia, Egypt has supported the LNA against the Government of National Accord (or GNA), recognised by the United Nations and backed by Turkey and Qatar. GNA rejected the Cairo Declaration, as the GNA-led forces that include nearly 2,000 fighters of Free Syrian Army (FSA)—Turkish-backed militia—which had been successfully making advances against Haftar-led forces. To this, President Sisi had issued the threat of military action while also stressing a global legitimacy for such an action. Sisi regarded the Libyan cities of Sirte and Al-Jufra as a "red line for Egyptian national security."[5] After this particular escalation, the strengthening of military capability appears to have taken a central position in Sisi's foreign policy. This is apparent in multiple ways, whether it is the frequent visits by President Sisi to military bases, which he generally uses as platforms to deliver strong-worded messages targeting Ankara, or the multitude of joint-military exercises that Egypt has been conducting. Moreover, Egypt's grandiose office complex for the Minister of Defence, which is being built on the lines of the US's *Pentagon*—dubbed as the *Octagon*—would require the corresponding defence capabilities.[6]

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In August, reports suggesting the delivery of five Su-35 fighter jets from Russia to Egypt emerged, making Egypt the second country after China to possess these highly sought-after multi-role fighter jets.[7] These fighter planes are part of the March 2019 defence deal which were to be delivered in late-2020/early-2021. Such haste, even during the pandemic, indicates Egypt's shifting priorities in bolstering its defence capabilities. The deal was also a subject of controversy, as Washington had been displeased with it, even threatening CAATSA (Countering America's Adversaries Through Sanctions Act) sanctions against Cairo.[8]

To boost its naval capabilities, Egypt has moved to secure a deal to purchase two Bergamini-class FREMM frigates and four other custom-built frigates, as reported by Italy's *La Repubblica*.[9] Furthermore, the Egyptian Navy undertook two joint-military exercises with the Spanish Navy in the Red Sea (June 2019 and February 2021),[10] and another exercise in the Mediterranean Sea,[11] which can be viewed mainly as responses to Turkish Naval exercises. Earlier, in April, Egypt had also taken delivery of a submarine from Germany (third of the four contracted in 2014).[12]

With Russia, the defence cooperation has only strengthened over the last year...

With Russia, the defence cooperation has only strengthened over the last year, which has followed the consolidation of earlier defence purchases, especially the US$ 3.5 billion landmark deal signed in 2015. Egypt has also expressed interest in purchasing the popular

...these exercises have inordinate signalling value to Turkey by reminding Ankara of its vulnerability.

Russian defence system called "Bastion," to secure its coasts and gas fields in the Mediterranean.[13] In October/November 2019, Cairo and Moscow were involved in a joint military exercise known as "Arrow of Friendship-1."[14] This had followed more comprehensive exercises in 2020. In October, the two countries conducted a joint exercise in the Mediterranean Sea,[15] followed by another exercise in the Black Sea, three months later, in January 2021.[16] Evidently, these exercises have inordinate signalling value to Turkey by reminding Ankara of its vulnerability.

Interestingly, Cairo has been deft in its selection of defence suppliers, evident in the diversification of sellers from Europe, Russia and the United States. Before its departure, Trump Administration approved a deal to supply Egypt with excess air defence units to allow sales of parts to maintain Chaparral fire units along Egypt's border.[17] In 2018, the US and Egypt had signed a US$ 1 billion agreement to obtain 10 AH-64E Apache helicopters, which followed the May 2020 approval for the sale of equipment to refurbish the existing fleet of AH-64E Apache helicopters for US$ 2.3 billion.[18] However, Washington has been hesitant in providing sophisticated weapons technology to Egypt on the grounds of its poor human rights record and annoyance from Israel. Naturally, this renders Egypt's more reliant on Moscow, but as apparent by Sisi's decision to sign agreements with Italy and Germany, Cairo prefers diversification of its defence suppliers. Undoubtedly, Cairo's increased dependence on Moscow might hurt Egyptian interests since Moscow might compromise Egyptian interests vis-à-vis Turkey's. Recently, Egypt has also expressed interest in purchasing India's *tour de force* BrahMos missiles.[19]

...Cairo's increased dependence on Moscow might hurt Egyptian interests since Moscow might compromise Egyptian interests vis-à-vis Turkey's.

Causes

Indisputably, the Turkish behaviour in the region has attracted criticism and ire of the regional countries; however, for Egypt, Turkey presents three significant challenges, all of which manifest in various permutation and combinations. One, for Egypt, the Turkish support for the Muslim Brotherhood is the biggest dealbreaker. Since Sisi has come to power in Egypt by ousting the Brotherhood's government of Mohammad Morsi, the Brotherhood has been *persona non grata* in Egypt. Many of the Brotherhood leaders that escaped Egypt have found asylum in Turkey. This apprehension of Egypt towards the Brotherhood is shared by the GCC countries, particularly the United Arab Emirates (UAE) and Saudi Arabia, which see the Brotherhood as a threat to their respective regimes. This is also reflected in their support to Egypt in Libya and the Mediterranean theatre. The material support and implicit military cooperation are also components of the same.

Secondly, the Turkish policies in the region have enabled an inherent suspicion among the regional countries, especially its neighbours, including Egypt. Such fears are exacerbated in Turkey's partnerships in the region that perchance threaten Egypt's security and monetary interests. The maritime agreement signed between Turkey and the Libyan GNA in November 2019 is a case in point.[20] The deal allows Turkey rights to natural resources in a zone that is under dispute. The Mediterranean countries, especially Cyprus and Greece, have also raised concerns about this deal after Turkey officially started drilling for gas and oil in this disputed zone.[21] These countries, along with Egypt, are worried that Turkish control will encumber their economic interests with regards to the export of oil/gas to Europe.[22] This explains Egypt's exclusion of Turkey from the East Mediterranean Gas Forum, a grouping created to bolster cooperation and coordination between natural gas producing countries.

Finally, the defence aspect of Turkish policies weighs heavily on Egyptian policies. As per the reports of *Yeni Safak*, a Turkish newspaper outlet considered close to the ruling Justice and Development Party (AKP), Turkey has agreed to construct a military base in Misrata city in Libya that will overlook the Mediterranean and would hence compromise Egypt's security in the Mediterranean.[23] Even though the Egyptian Navy is considered a strong navy in the region, the proposed port will allow Turkey a significant strategic hold over Egypt.

...the defence aspect of Turkish policies weighs heavily on Egyptian policies.

Consequences

Needless to say, Cairo's strengthening of military capabilities must have additional objectives. No matter the endgame, such a quest for developing a robust military would not necessarily be interpreted benignly by its neighbours, especially Israel and Saudi Arabia. Cairo has already denied any ulterior motives, but the phenomenon of the 'security dilemma' dictates that such build-up would fuel fear and instability. Israel has expressed its suspicion about the same.[24] Likewise, Riyadh has reasons for caution against Cairo, given incidents in the past. For example, in November 2017, Sisi had opposed any prospects of war with Iran and Hezbollah that had made Riyadh upset.[25]

No matter the endgame, such a quest for developing a robust military would not necessarily be interpreted benignly by... Israel and Saudi Arabia.

Bearing these caveats in mind, there are credible prospects for an arms race in the region. For now, Egypt and Saudi Arabia have headed in that direction. The motivations for which may now be different, but the amassing of large volumes of arms by either one of these countries can instigate an arms race in the future. The conflicts in other North African states should also be a cause of concern, where the disputes are nowhere close to an end. A case in point is the North African nation of Algeria, which has ranked sixth among the largest arms importers between 2015 and 2019.[26] Moving ahead, Algeria may take up a cue from Egypt to strengthen its military base in light of its enduring disputes against Morocco.

To conclude, as far as the external factors are concerned, Egypt's defence posturing, which is manifested in maritime cooperation and increased defence expenditure, is an outcome of Turkish policies in the region. In 2020, Cairo felt its interests directly under threat by Turkish policies, and as a result, Egypt took a more assertive military position. However, such bolstering of defence capabilities also comes with additional imperatives. As such, the implications of such build-up are bound to make its partners, such as the UAE and Saudi Arabia, nervous. Israel, too is seeing the military build-up of Egypt with suspicion. Although Cairo has insisted that these defence manoeuvres are merely defensive and borne of its national security needs,[27] but going forward, these moves may contribute to an arms race in the region.

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Viewpoint

EXPLORING THE BLUE ECONOMY TO BRIDGE FUNDING GAP IN NIGERIA

Nigerian government should promote a coherent win-win cooperation across sub-regional, regional and international marine economic fields. This begins with ratification of the six instruments of International Maritime Organization by the Nigerian government. Ambitious nations are investing heavily in blue economy taking into account the projected contributions to their GDP. Nigeria cannot be an onlooker.

Chidiebube Jasper Uche*

Introduction

Nigeria is in dire straits. It is gasping for breath to cope with its fiscal challenges. The country faces budgetary anxiety as a result of slump in oil prices, which is benchmarked at US$ 60 per barrel. Thus, out of the N8.8trillion (US$ 24.291 billion) total expenditure in the 2019 budget, a humongous sum of N2.140trillion (US$ 5.887 billion) is for debt servicing, while N1.853 trillion (US$ 5.097 billion) deficit would be sourced through borrowing.[1] Though a major oil producer, yet the country's inability to prudently deploy the oil earnings, over the years, to jumpstart economic growth, is its greatest undoing. Sadly, the discovery of shale oil by the United States, a rivalling influence of Angola in oil production and emergence of other oil producing countries in Africa, as well as spirited divestments into alternative sources of energy, make the situation more precarious for Nigeria. Hence, the country is sliding into a strategic failure.[2]

However, there are brimming opportunities that the 'blue economy' offers, which Nigeria can leverage to free up resources, and address the multi-faceted developmental priorities. The concept of 'blue economy' was first used in 2010 by Gunter Pauli, and in 2012, it gained prominence in

...there are brimming opportunities that the 'blue economy' offers,...

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global political economy discourse at United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development in Rio de Janeiro (Rio + 20).

According to the European Union (2012), 'blue economy' represents "all economic activities related to the oceans, seas and coasts".[3] Otherwise known as 'marine economy' or 'ocean economy', it entails the application of innovative and sustainable approaches in development and exploitation of resources in oceans, rivers, lakes and other water bodies. Globally, the annual 'gross marine product' (GMP) measured in the form of a country's annual gross domestic product (GDP), according to World Wide Fund for Nature (2015) is put at US$ 2.5 trillion, while the cumulative 'asset' base of ocean economy is at least US$ 24 trillion.[4] Interestingly, countries with the highest sovereign wealth funds cannot match the projected revenue from blue economy, if fully harnessed.

Nigeria's Assets

Nigeria has a 853km section of Africa's 47,000 km coastline,[5] and the shared coasts with Atlantic Ocean in the Gulf of Guinea and Lake Chad in the North East are of strategic significance. There are also River Niger (the longest River in West Africa and the third longest in Africa, after Rivers Nile and Congo), River Benue and other Rivers in the nine coastal states in Nigeria. These are crisscrossed by bays, lagoons, tributaries and estuaries. Generally, the water bodies in Nigeria take about 13,000 km^2 out of the 923,768km^2 total area.[6] The oil-rich Niger Delta region harbours 80 per cent of the country's coastline.[7] Niger Delta has 3,000 rivers, with intertwining creeks, the largest wetland in the world,[8] as well as the largest mangrove habitat in Africa – and 7th among the top 20 in the world.[9]

These abundant marine resources present huge opportunities for economic diversification...

These abundant marine resources present huge opportunities for economic diversification as encapsulated in Nigerian government's Economic Recovery and Growth Plan (ERGP). A taxonomy of blue economy sectors with multivariate downstream economic activities as shown in Roy (2019) include: fishing, marine biotechnology, minerals, marine renewable energy, marine manufacturing, (shipping, port and marine logistics), marine tourism and leisure, marine construction, marine commerce, marine ICT and education/research, R&D.[10] As such, 'blue economy' can stimulate massive jobs, boost international trade, enhance food security, generate multi-billion dollar revenue for government, and ensure sustainable usage of marine resources.

Harnessing the marine biodiversity for economic growth calls for a strong political will and right policies if Nigeria is to escape another round of recession. There should be a radical departure from the prevalent free-for-all abuses of the nation's waterways exemplified in coral reef bleaching, oil spillages, unchecked mining and dredging activities, ocean warming and acidification, industrial pollution, unregulated resource exploitation and "unethical dumping of toxic and non-biodegradable by-products".[11] Management of the water bodies should therefore, be done in a sustainable manner.

Developing the Blue Economy

As a first step, government should establish a centre for blue economy research in any of the universities located in the coastal states. The institute should articulate the policy thrust, the roadmap, the areas of comparative advantage, and cost implications of short-term and long-term interventions, taking into cognizance the African Union's declaration of 2015-2025 as the Decade of Oceans and Seas. Funding for research & development (R&D) in this direction should not be politicised. Second, the Ministry of Transportation and the Nigeria Maritime Administration and Safety Agency (NIMASA) should disburse the floating Cabotage Vessel Financing Fund (CVFF) established under the Cabotage and Inland Shipping Act 2003 to qualifying local players in the shipping industry. This will help address the inability to access the finance (which was derived from two per cent of revenues of ship owners) for maintaining or purchasing new vessels since 2004, has brought about a reduction of the number of operational indigenous shipping companies by about 43 per cent.[12]

As a first step, government should establish a centre for blue economy research...

Third, adequate policies should be emplaced to protect the mangrove ecosystem stretching from the coastlines of Badagry to Calabar. There should be conscious governmental efforts to accelerate mangrove reforestation, which not only serves as breeding ground for various species of fish, but also "functions as the biggest sequester of carbon-dioxide for biodiversity survival".[13] It is instructive to note that mangroves helped the communities in the Philippines surviving the Typhoon Haiyan in 2013 and this led Philippines to invest US$ 8 million for mangrove reforestation.[14] So, Nigeria should not wait for a sweeping tragedy of climate change to do the needful. Fourth, the legal instruments to curb piracy, environmental degradation and despoliation, unregulated fishing (by local artisans and foreign vessels), and to facilitate public-private partnership investments in blue economy should be enshrined in the national laws. NIMASA's initiative of 24-hour port surveillance through inter-agency collaboration and the ongoing construction of an ambitious floating dockyard are commendable.

Conclusion

Going forward, Nigerian government should promote a coherent win-win cooperation across sub-regional, regional and international marine economic fields. This begins with ratification of the six instruments of International Maritime Organization by the Nigerian government. They include: the Hong Kong Convention for the Safe and Environmentally Sound Recycling of Ships (2009); International Convention on Standards of Training, Certification and Watch-keeping for Fishing Vessel Personnel; the Protocol Relating to Intervention on the High Seas in Cases of Oil Pollution Casualties Intervention (1973); and Protocol on Limitation of Liability for Maritime Claims (LLMC) (1996).[15]

Overdependence on oil is no longer sustainable. Ambitious nations are investing heavily in blue economy taking into account the projected contributions to their GDP. Nigeria cannot be an onlooker. The sector is a ready cash cow to leapfrog the nation from economic doldrums and imminent fiscal crisis.

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Book Review

Purnima Mehta Bhatt, *The African Diaspora in India: Assimilation, Change and Cultural Survivals*, 1st Edition, Routledge, New York, 2017.

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ISBN (eBook): 978-1-315-14838-0

Pooja Priya*

Indo-African relations in the last ten years have been considerably enhanced through the lines of credit that the former has extended to the latter in various fields such as agriculture, health, infrastructure, and others. Therefore, these have received attention in academic writings. However, the focus on the African diaspora in India has been quite limited in comparison to the African students who visit India as part of the diplomatic relations. The Sidis are among one such diaspora community in India, who have come from Africa and are now settled in the Indian states of Gujarat, Maharashtra, Andhra Pradesh, and Goa. This has been further discussed in the book "The African Diaspora in India," by Purnima M. Bhatt. This book is in fact the first of its kinds to focus on the Sidis in India and the author through a total of twelve chapters, takes the readers through a holistic read stating the history of Sidis in India to the manner in which the community has assimilated into the Indian society and lastly brings to show the social, economic and political status of the Sidis today.

Bhatt in the first chapter opens the discussion on the historical connection between the Sidis and the Indian subcontinent. She highlights the places that are inhabited by the Sidis in India, i.e. the western coast of India which comprises the state of Gujarat, Maharashtra, Goa and Andhra Pradesh. She also introduces the readers to the terminology by which this community was referred to in India, i.e. by the term Habshi or Sidis. The term Habshi is used in Arabic and Persian dictionary for those belonging to Abyssinia or Ethiopia, while Sidi comes from the word sidi and refers to the learned. The author further explores how this community entered India as slaves, mercenaries and sailors who later went ahead to attain high positions of power at Indian courts during the medieval time which helped gain high status in the Indian society. This rise in the status proves that the Sidis' positions as slaves never really limited them to attain mobility in the Indian society. This chapter has also emphasised the physical appearances of this community, i.e. their ancestry can be traced back to the African ethnic groups residing on the continent of Africa. They have dark skin ranging from black to light brown with wool-like hair, thick lips, a flattened nose and a

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heavy build. There is also an account of the languages of the community; Bhatt states the original language of the Sidis was derived from Swahili, Somali, Sudanese family languages. However, the language used by the Sidis was influenced by the region of India they settled into. For example, Sidis residing in the coastal areas of Kutch and Northern Saurashtra mostly speak Kutch languages whereas Sidis in Saurashtra speak Kathiawadi (Saurashtrian) dialects of Gujarat.

In the next chapter, the author moves on to look at the discussions on the links between India and Africa. She particularly focuses on the coastal trade between East Africa and the west coast of India, the evidence of which can be seen through the terracotta models of ships. Talking of the trade links, it was also evidenced through the archaeological findings in Egypt that boats were being used to travel since 4000-3000 BCE attesting that there was a history of trade between Egypt, India and West Asia. This evidence of the trade history can also be found in Mahabharata, Ramayana and Rig Veda. These facts further reinforce the point that Africans and West coast Indians have been historically involved in these trades.

In the following chapter, the author looks into the institution of slavery connected to the Sidis in India. India has had a history of slavery, which can be evidenced in the Rig Veda. This slavery relates back to how indigenous people of Indus Valley were defeated and enslaved by the Aryans and Europeans. However, slavery in the context of India was different from the one in the new world because the former looked at treating slaves as an extension of families, which was not the case in terms of the latter. In the third chapter, the author provides a brief on the Indian Ocean slave trade and how the practice of slavery was connected to it. This trade pre-dates the Atlantic slave trade with a time period of about 1000 years. It is also claimed by the author that this trade happened to be the first trade between the east coast of Africa and western India, but it has not received a substantial amount of attention in comparison to the Atlantic slave trade. The evidence of the Indian slave trade was seen in the official documents of the Bombay Presidency, which provided useful information on the importation of slaves into western India from countries of East Africa such as Mozambique and Zanzibar. The slaves from the East African countries were also brought to India by the Portuguese rulers, who happened to establish their colonies in Africa as well. They (slaves) were brought to the Indian States of Goa, Daman and Diu. In Daman, they were used locally and in Diu, they were often utilised as domestic labour.

In the fourth chapter, the author introduces the readers to how the East African slave trade was documented in the travel literature or accounts. It was documented in the travel accounts of N.Conti, who was a European traveller in India, that the wealth which existed within the state of Gujarat, was brought through the trade with the regions of Red Sea, Persian Gulf, the East African coast and Southeast Asia. In addition to this, there have also been official Indian records from the 13th century that state that Ethiopian soldiers like Jamal-ud-din bin Yakut lived during this period. However, while such positions were given to Africans, they were still considered to be slaves in the general context of the society.

In the fifth chapter, the author tries to take the readers into the history of Sidis in South Asia. She begins the discussion with how Gujarat became a hotspot for the Sidis due to its geographical location, which supported the trade between the Swahili coast and west coast of India. This is also the reason why the Africans got closer access to the political positions within the Nizam Shahi dynasty of Ahmadnagar in the Deccan. The author also provides evidence for the presence of the Sidi community in Oudh (present-day Lucknow). This can be seen through the existence of the African slaves as bodyguards in the Oudh royal family. According to the historian Ferishta, the African slaves were also reported to be found in the state of Bengal under the ruler Ruknuddin Barbak Shah in which the former was promoted to a high rank. Finally, other than the west coast of India, the prevalence of the Sidis was also found in Pakistan, Sri Lanka and Maldives.

In the following chapter, the author discusses the three kingdoms in India where the social mobility of the Sidis could be observed i.e. Janjira, Sachin, and Jaunpur, which survived until the middle of the 20th century. Janjira is located in the Konkan region of Maharashtra, and the role of the Sidis in the kingdom was that of soldiers and mercenaries. Janjira was closely connected to the Kingdom of Sachin. The latter was a kingdom located in the current state of Gujarat, which consisted of twenty villages and was close to the sea and controlled by the Sidis. They also dominated the royal kingdoms of North India, such as Jaunpur, which was an important provincial capital of the Tughlaq Empire. Noting how slavery impacted the Sidi community, the author also explains how slavery came to an end, with its traces continuing to be present in India.

The author also takes us through the journey of acculturation of the Sidis in India that has taken place through their involvement in the religious heritage of India among other ways. For example, their migration into Karnataka determined their religion to be Hindus, those in Portuguese regions were Christians and the majority of them were also influenced by Sufism in Gujarat. However, this Sufi practice differed from the ways it was practised in their homeland in Africa because the former comprises spirit possession, the local practices including the use of amulets, talismans and charms to ward off evil (ta'wiz). Another unique tradition of Sufism that the Sidis followed was the Dargah form of worship instead of Mosque-centred worship, due to their roots in the beliefs and practices of ancient Egyptian civilization and the worship of the departed souls. Lastly, the entity that encompasses the religious life of the Sidis is their sacred dance, the Dhamal. It includes fast movements and bodily vibrations, dramatic facial expressions accompanied by chants and songs to praise Allah and Baba Ghor. This represents the ecstatic and rhythmic dance traditions of the African continent with Sufi mystical elements.

In the eighth chapter of this book on the Sidis, Bhatt explores how this community has contributed to architecture and art in India. The author identifies the presence of Africans in 18th and 19th century Indian architecture and art. However, she also points out that identifying the Sidis in the paintings by the scholars was difficult. Nevertheless, historians have been successful in this to a great extent. To provide evidence for this, Bhatt tries to bring in the example of Sidi Saiyyed Mosque built by Shaykh Sayyid al-Habshi Sultani, a Habshi nobleman during the reign of Sultan Muzaffar III (1572–1573). He was originally a slave of Rumi Khan who later joined the service of Sultan Mahmud II (Commissariat 1938:502). Upon the death of his patron, he joined the service of Jhujhar Khan. It is believed that on his retirement he received several villages in gifts and amassed great wealth. In terms of art, there have been records since the sixteenth century and to be precise from the times of the Mughal Empire wherein descendants of Africans are portrayed quite vividly in the court of rulers such as Akbar as musicians, personal bodyguards, hukkah bearers and bearers of flywhisks.

In the following chapter, the author provides evidence of how slavery was abolished by the British in 1843 and how the African slaves were not allowed to be transported to India via the Indian Ocean. However, although there was the abolition of the slave trade, slavery still continued to exist in India among the princely states of Western India. Bhatt describes how Arab rulers in India attempted to transport the African slaves to the Persian Gulf and how the British Government emancipated the latter and sent them to Aden, Bombay and Seychelles Island. However, although they were rescued by the British Government they did not receive sufficient funds and institutions such as shelters, missions, homes and hostels.

Bhatt further introduces the status of African or Sidi women in India. She focuses on how African women were missing from the records of arts and architecture that exist today on the African men, but who played a significant role in Indian history. The initial arrival of these women in India is during the Indian Ocean slave trade as domestic workers or sex workers. The author traces areas in which Sidis women were seen to have participated more actively than their men counterparts in society, such as in religious participation, marriage customs, childbearing and practice of divorce. In terms of religious practices, women were seen to be more religiously active in comparison to their male counterparts and the former also played a leading role in the performance of dance and sacrifices towards Mai Mishra, the goddess responsible for fertility amongst the Sidis. The author further explores how the marriage practices took place for the Sidis women, i.e. the marriages were aimed to be endogamous in nature to maintain the purity of the blood and the intermarriage between Habshi and Indians only took place amongst the lower class of people.

In the second last chapter of the book, the author considers looking at the African diasporic community in Asia and India. She opens the discussion by discussing how the displacement of Africans in Asia is different from that in the New World because with the latter they did not share a common language, religion or ethnicity. The Africans who came to India, she emphasizes, were in the Persian Gulf and were then transported to India and these multiple displacements and resettlement were termed as 'circulatoriness'. The author mentions that the Sidis as a diaspora community stood out to be unique from the others in the world because they always overlooked their history of slavery and proclaimed their past in terms of how they practised intermarriages with the Indian princely families and gained positions of power. In terms of identity formation, they developed it at multiple levels in India. For example, they were the first Gujarati, Indians, Muslims and Scheduled tribes.

In the last chapter of the book, the author introduces the readers to the current status of the Sidis in India. She looks into the social problem that although they have been assimilated into the Indian landscape by the time of India's independence, they continue to face poverty, lack of education and high rates of unemployment or underemployment. The Sidis also launched a protracted campaign for their inclusion as "scheduled tribes" in 1986. The author also provides state-wise nature of work of the community, i.e. in Gujarat, they are mostly involved in unskilled or semi-skilled jobs; in Maharashtra and particularly in Mumbai, they operate African cafés and restaurants; and in Telegana state, they are massively involved in the practice of Islam and in particular, Sufism. This chapter concludes with the recommendation that education is the way to the development of this community and reduction of poverty.

To conclude, readers can say that this book written and formulated by P.M. Bhatt speaks volumes about factors that have impacted the Sidi community before their arrival in India and also looks into how their life has changed under the cultural, social and also political influences since the time of India's independence to the current day. However, in the process of formulating the book, there could have been the incorporation of how the experience of the Sidi community can be compared to the Indian diaspora in Africa, particularly in countries such as Kenya and Mauritius. All in all, this is a great book for readers interested in Indo-African diaspora communities and learning how the diplomatic relations between the two impact the lives of the diaspora communities.

Book Review

Philani Mthembu, ***China and India's Development Cooperation in Africa: The Rise of Southern Powers*****, Palgrave Macmillan, 2018.**

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Sindhu Dinesh*

The 21st century has witnessed a marked shift in the trends of development cooperation. The earlier developing countries who received foreign aid from developed countries have now begun to themselves engage in extending foreign aid to fellow developing as well as underdeveloped countries. This book provides an enriching insight into these trends particularly focusing on India and China's development cooperation in Africa. Philani Mthembu examines the determinants that push China and India to pursue development cooperation activities in Africa. Furthermore, he explores why only certain countries have received more aid as compared to others.

The book consists of seven chapters that are woven together in a logical manner. In the first chapter, the author provides a context to the research and an overview of the findings. In the next, he emphasises on clarity of concepts, recognizes the discrepancies of present explanations and attempts to standardise the definitions of 'Southern Powers' and 'Development Cooperation'. The third chapter describes in the detail the various development cooperation activities pursued by India and China in the African continent. In the fourth chapter, the author explores the theoretical underpinnings of the concept of 'development cooperation' and 'foreign aid'. The fifth chapter enumerates the methodology of 'Qualitative Comparative Analysis' and provides an empirical approach to the research questions. The sixth chapter is a detailed explanation of the determinants of India and China's development cooperation in Africa while the seventh chapter concludes with the findings as well as hints at other avenues for further research.

Mthembu begins his book by observations on the changing Development Cooperation landscape in the international arena. He notes the proactive role played by the BRICS countries (Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa) in global politics. He argues against referring to them as 'emerging powers' and instead addresses these countries as the 'Southern

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Powers'. He acknowledges the willingness of BRICS countries to individually and collectively push for reform of global governing institutions; and their ability to set up institutions like NDB (New Development Bank) to fund their own development ideas. Citing the relative nature of global power, i.e., as some countries increase their influence on global politics others experience a diminished influence, he argues that the Southern powers are no longer 'emerging' as they have now formed significant poles of power in the multipolar world. The concept also hints that there are minimal values shared among these nations like abstention from interference in internal affairs of another country. With particular focus on India and China in Africa, the book empirically compares and analyzes the motives and interests of India and China's development cooperation in Africa.

The second chapter clarifies the meaning of "emerging powers" and presents rational arguments for the irrelevance of this terminology in the contemporary global political scenario. In this context, the author proposes the term 'Southern Powers' to describe the rise and re-emergence of certain non-OECD (Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development) countries as central players in global politics. He notes that the rise of countries like India, China, Brazil and other emerging economies has been alongside their impressive venture into and growth in providing development cooperation to other countries. The chapter identifies the various explanations of the term 'Development Cooperation'. The OCED standard definition of 'Official Development Assistance' is "official flows to developing countries or multilateral institutions that are disbursed for the promotion of economic development and welfare of developing countries as the main objective." The author states that this definition limits itself to only concessional loans and grants while omitting other forms of official flows; and that western aid usually come with 'political conditionalities'. In this backdrop, he proposes a definition for the purposes of this study that allows comparability and is customised to Southern powers. He defines development cooperation by Southern Powers as "official transfers of money, goods, and services to developing countries specifically for their economic development and welfare. These transfers need to come from official government ministries and be concessional in nature."

In the third chapter, at the outset, the author remarks that the contemporary relationship between India, China and their African counterparts is in fact a reflection of their ancient ties. Highlighting the contrast between Africa-Asia and Africa-Europe ties, he argues that 'history' in an important tool in the present ties shared between Africa and the two Asian nations. This chapter elaborates the various development cooperation activities by India and China in Africa and contextualises their engagement. The author refers to China's 'White Paper on Foreign Aid in 2011' and observes that contrary to conventional wisdom, China's development cooperation includes medical aid, citizen volunteers and scholarships, besides infrastructure development. On the other hand, he notes India's shift from bilateral projects to regional initiatives like the Pan-African e-Network and TEAM-9 (Technical Economic Approach for Africa Movement). He also observes that India has expanded the type of development cooperation it provides, increased the scope of countries it targets and its attempts to shift from engaging only with English-speaking countries to now engage with Francophone countries as well. The chapter provides an insight into the organisational structure of both countries in providing and financing foreign aid.

The fourth chapter enumerates the various approaches and theoretical underpinnings on the concept of foreign-aid. Stating that monocausal arguments do not explain the complexity of social phenomenon, importance is laid on examining causal conditions and variables that influence development cooperation by countries. The author explores in detail the theoretical foundations of what generates 'interest' in a nation-state to engage in development cooperation. He attempts to understand the causation of development cooperation in a combinatorial manner by including four different variables for the study. In this context, he describes the realist theory which captures the 'strategic interest variable', liberal theory which captures the 'economic interest variable', constructivist approach to include 'humanitarian ideas and norms' as the third variable and 'Diaspora' as the fourth variable situated in the tradition of realism as it hints at national interest of the donor country. Justifying the use of the four variables, the author acknowledges that for a satisfactory research into the determinants of development cooperation, both material and idealistic explanations have to be considered.

The chapter forms an interesting section of the book as the reader is introduced to exploring the concept of foreign-aid as a 'trade', as a 'bribe', etc. and juxtaposes it from the perspective of both recipient and donor countries. It is noted that although Southern Powers continue to receive aid, this reality has not prevented them from being active sources of development cooperation themselves for other developing countries. In fact, the shared similarities with impoverished countries, places the southern powers in a better position to help eradicate global poverty. The reader is made to understand that while it is possible for one of the variables to be given greater consideration to offer development cooperation, it is entirely different to argue that it is the only explanatory variable for high level of disbursement. Therefore, the author in the next chapter attempts to weigh and explore these variables in an empirical manner to reach his findings.

In the fifth chapter, the author elaborates and examines the methodology of Qualitative Comparative Analysis (QCA). He describes the application of QCA in ten steps and manually assesses the cases, their outcomes and conditions. Presenting a refreshing take on the subject, Mthembu pursues a clear methodology explaining the limitations of the study and attempts a scientific empirical approach to the research questions. He considers the development cooperation projects by India and China in Africa during the years 2000 to 2010 taken from AidData's International Aid data set. The methodology ranks the countries from highest to lowest recipients of development cooperation and operationalises the four causal variables by using Composite Index of National Capabilities (CINC) for the strategic interest variable; trade figures for the economic interest variable; Human Development Index (HDI) for the variable on humanitarian ideas and norms; and finally respective government data available on the Indian and Chinese diaspora present in the African countries.

In the author's own words, the sixth chapter provides a 'multiple and conjunctural explanation of the determinants of India and China's development cooperation in Africa'. In this chapter, each of the outcomes are assessed and the concept of Boolean algebra is applied. The author provides a detailed explanation of the methodology used and an elaborate summary of the findings. The primary finding of the book supported by empirical data is that – when extending development cooperation, while strategic importance of the recipient country was a necessary condition for China, only when it combined with humanitarian needs, did China offer its development cooperation. However, economic importance and diaspora had no role in China's consideration for development cooperation in Africa. On the other hand, India engaged in development cooperation most only with those countries that were economically important to it and simultaneously displayed high strategic importance as well as humanitarian needs. Through his research findings, the author dismisses the old lenses that 'India has always been involved most in human capacity development while China was involved mainly in infrastructure'. The author argues that the empirical results of his research support 'key principles of the narrative on South-South cooperation, namely, the combination of material benefits (win-win approach) and humanitarian interests (solidarity)'.

The seventh chapter of the book is a conclusion with a summary of the findings. The author remarks that the present narrative on development cooperation by India and China is shrouded in mystery and overrun by preconceived ideas of how Southern powers are expected to behave. In this backdrop, the author places the significance of his work to clarify and define a few concepts as well as to base his research on empirical data to add real value to the theme. The author concludes by offering avenues for further research like exploring the aspect of trilateral cooperation by Southern powers in development cooperation.

Overall, the book is an interesting read for those who follow developments in the region of Africa as it provides new insights on the theme of India and China's development cooperation in Africa. The use of empirical data and methodology, questioning of existing terminologies and introduction of new concepts is a refreshing approach to the subject.

Call for Contributions

MP-IDSA invites articles, commentaries and book reviews for publication in *Africa Trends*, a biannual magazine on Africa. Submissions can focus on security, political and economic issues relating to African countries. Articles may focus on analysing bilateral, regional and multilateral developments of strategic significance to India's engagement with African countries.

Articles could be of approximately 2000 words. Commentaries can range between 1,000-1,500 words (excluding footnotes) and book reviews between 600-1,000 words. Guidelines for contributors may be found at: http://www.idsa.in/africatrends. Submissions may be emailed to the Editor at idsa.africatrends@gmail.com.

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