

## LETTER FROM THE EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

My Dear Friends and Colleagues:

It is a great deal of pleasure to bring you this Spring B issue of the JSDA. Many African nations are making significant strides in building the necessary infrastructures to support many development efforts. Many of the governments have also been receiving foreign assistance in the development efforts. The European Union has provided significant resources all across the continent in the construction of roads so as to distribute agricultural products to markets across the continent. Technical and educational resources have also been provided by countries of the North (such as the USA, Canada, the United Kingdom, Norway, and other Scandinavian countries). Economic development is burgeoning but poverty still remains a nagging problem on the continent. The standard of living in African countries ranks among the lowest in the world.

Investment usually follows security. Many African countries are experiencing problems of insecurity caused by Islamist terrorism. The spread of terrorism in West African countries like Mali, Nigeria, and the Cameroon when foreign nationals are kidnapped for ransom and in many cases killed poses a grave danger. Al-Qaida's presence in Nigeria is a discouragement for investment. Boko Haram insurgents have created havoc in northern Nigeria and their bombings of government buildings and kidnappings are now getting to the southern states of Nigeria. The problem of terrorism and piracy which could interfere with development in African countries are driven home by the following two quotes:

- I. There has been growing coordination between Nigeria-based Boko Haram and al-Qaida in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM), which was linked to the attack on the U.S. diplomatic mission in Benghazi, Libya, last September that killed four Americans, including the ambassador. Military leaders say AQIM has become the wealthiest al-Qaida offshoot and an increasing terrorist threat to the region.

It has long been difficult to track whether there are terrorist ties to piracy in the waters off Africa. But officials are worried that even if Boko Haram insurgents aren't directly involved in the attacks off Nigeria and Cameroon, they may be reaping some of the profits and using the money for ongoing terrorist training or weapons.



No final decisions have been made on how counter-piracy operations could be increased in that region, and budget restrictions could hamper that effort, said the officials, who spoke on condition of anonymity because they were not authorized to talk about emerging discussions between senior U.S. military commanders and other international leaders.

But officials say the solution could include continued work and counter-piracy training with African nations. The U.S. participated last month in a maritime exercise with European and African partners in the Gulf of Guinea.

"Maritime partnerships and maritime security and safety are increasingly important in the Gulf of Guinea region to combat a variety of challenges including maritime crime, illicit trafficking and piracy," said Gen. Carter Ham, head of U.S. Africa Command. (<http://news.yahoo.com/us-eyes-anti-piracy-effort-170118123.html>)

II. In the African nation of Mali today, where al-Qaida and allies have seized the northern half of the country, Azawad, as large as Texas, we are witnessing blowback for President Obama's intervention in Libya.

How so? Due almost entirely to U.S.-backed NATO bombing, which prevented Moammar Gadhafi from crushing the uprising of 2011, the colonel was overthrown and murdered by rebels.

Tauregs from Mali, whom Gadhafi had brought into his army, fled or were expelled from Libya. Taking their heavy weapons, they returned to a country where their people had been mistreated and seized its northern half, to secede and create their own nation.

But the jihadists who fought alongside them to capture the north turned on them and drove them from power. Ansar Dine and al-Qaida in the Islamic Maghreb — like the Taliban in Afghanistan who blew up the ancient Bamiyan Buddhas — then blew up all non-Islamic shrines and imposed a brutal form of Sharia law. Adulterers are subject to stonings. Thieves have their hands amputated. (<http://news.yahoo.com/al-qaida-heart-africa-080000269.html>)

The articles in this issue address both economic development matters and matters concerning security in African countries. We hope that they will shed light on the questions of development and security.

We thank you for your continued support.

Sincerely,

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