African Regional Intelligence Cooperation: Problems and Prospects

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Considerable attention has been paid in recent years to improved intelligence sharing among Western countries in an effort to face common threats.[1] Most studies have focused on efforts by the United States with other states or among such coalitions as the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) or International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) in Afghanistan. Considerably less attention has been devoted to intelligence sharing efforts in other parts of the world. Africa in particular represents a good area for examining regional approaches to intelligence sharing.

The need for sharply improved intelligence cooperation both within Africa and by African countries with larger intelligence-sharing systems has become increasingly noted by many key figures from the region. For example, following the mass abductions by Boko Haram in Nigeria, Erastus Mwencha, deputy chairman of the African Union, stated that "there is need for a stronger collaboration in intelligence gathering and sharing to help stem the tide of growing terrorist activities."[2] Likewise, Francisco

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Madeira, the head of the African Centre for the Study and Research on Terrorism (ACSRT), which operates under the African Union, argued that ''Our counter-terrorism efforts require better planning and wider co-ordination by agencies across the continent, and this requires trust and confidence. The only way to build trust is for the intelligence agencies to meet and build personal rapport.''[3]

In examining African intelligence sharing systems, a useful template is to begin with cross-continental efforts and then to examine sub-regional efforts. In fact, some of the most significant structures thus far have been at the sub-regional level. African cooperation with external forces should be viewed in terms of sharing and the roles that external support—or in some cases, lack thereof—have played in improving cross-national cooperation.

PAN-AFRICAN INTELLIGENCE COOPERATION

In many ways, African efforts to improve regional intelligence cooperation predated those of a broader range. Reportedly, formal talks among national intelligence services began as early as 1992, ''when African leaders meeting in Dakar, Senegal, first raised concern about growing radicalisation and extremism on the continent.''[4] In part, such interest was an offshoot of a long-existing concept of pan-Africanism. Although pan-Africanism has been more of an aspiration than a reality—with any number of stresses between African countries—it seems to have had at least some practical impact on a number of regional security cooperative bodies.

Some institutions in Africa have been relatively long-lived. Some rather generic agreements for cooperation dated to as early as 1992 under the auspices of the then Organization for African Unity.[5] The ACSRT was established through the Plan of Action of the African Union High-Level Inter-Governmental Meeting on the Prevention and Combating of Terrorism on 11–14 September 2002 in Algiers, Algeria. The ACSRT is intended to coordinate with 53 National Focal Points (Member States) and the Regional Economic Communities (RECs).

The ACSRT has a very broad mandate, which includes training local counterterrorism forces and coordinating policy across national governments. Some of its functions are more closely related to intelligence purposes. These include:

- Establish operating procedures for information gathering, processing, and dissemination;
- Develop and maintain a database on a range of issues relating to the prevention and combating of terrorism, particularly on terrorist groups and their activities in

Africa, as well as on experts and technical assistance available. This database, that will include analyses, will be accessible to all Member States;

- Initiate and disseminate research studies and policy analyses periodically to sensitize Member States, based on the current trends, and/or on the demand of Member State(s). The Centre shall periodically publish its research and analyses in an "African Journal for the Prevention and Combating of Terrorism";

- Develop cooperation and assistance programmes with similar and/or interested institutions at national, regional, continental, and international levels, in the areas of research, information gathering, and analyses on issues relating to the prevention and combating of terrorism;

- Undertake research and converging studies on other global security problems with links to terrorism, which pose a threat to peace and security in Africa;

- Develop capacity for early warning to encourage early response, integrating the concept of Preventive Management of Crisis;

- Undertake studies and make recommendations on the strengthening and standardization of legal norms and cooperation in matters of information-sharing among Member States, mutual assistance, extradition, police and border control (including land, maritime and air) in Africa.[6]

One potentially very useful function for the center is its system for coordinating with national focal points. At least in theory, each country in the AU has identified a specific point of contact with which it can exchange information. According to one report: "Forty-four of 53 AU member states have appointed ACSRT focal points. Seven of eight regional focal points have been appointed. Those focal points communicate through a secure information system with Algiers on the state of the threat, national responses, and capacity needs."[7] In ideal circumstances, this can make the ACSRT an "honest broker" in coordinating counterterrorism intelligence and information sharing.

In recent years, under the auspices of the Committee of Intelligence and Security Services of Africa (CISSA), officials from most of the intelligence services in Africa have met annually. At the 2014 conference, the Kenyan National Counter Terrorism Centre hosted meetings of senior intelligence officials from multiple African countries, with 40 countries represented.[8] Although this conference, along with earlier ones, could be accused of being somewhat of a "coffee klatch," it did provide channels for networking among the intelligence services.

Although not formally an intelligence structure, the AU established a Continental Early Warning System (CEWS). Its stated mission is to:

> [gather] information about potential conflicts or threats to the peace and security of Member States and provides this information to the PSC, together with recommendations on courses of action. CEWS receives reports on a daily or weekly basis from operational staff, including field missions, liaison offices and early warning officers.[9]

CEWS operates a full-time observation and monitoring system in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, together with representatives at the regional level.

A critical aspect of multinational coordination for anti-terrorism has been the emergence of the Financial Action Task Force system (FATF). Two FATF-style regional bodies have been established in Africa: the Eastern and Southern Africa Anti-Money Laundering Group (ESAAMLG) and the Intergovernmental Action Group against Money Laundering and Terrorist Financing (GIABA) in West Africa. Although providing regional information and financial intelligence sharing, these two bodies cover only a portion of the African continent: ''GIABA (15 members) and ESAAMLG (14 members) combined have a total membership of 29 African States, which leaves 24 AU member States that are not participating in any similar body.''[10]

Finally, although not yet actually implemented in practical terms, the African Conference of Directors and Inspectors General of Police issued a call in February 2014 for the establishment of a continental police cooperative mechanism under the rubric of AFRIPOL. This document, agreed to by ''Chiefs of Police'' from 40 African countries, stressed ''the need to promote African police coordination at strategic, operational, and tactical levels through the assessment of threats, analysis of criminal intelligence, planning, and implementation of actions.''[11] Initial reports suggested that it would be at least a year before AFRIPOL was actually launched. Given typical financial and bureaucratic restraints, further time lags are predictable.

SUB-REGIONAL COOPERATION

At the sub-regional level, most of the intelligence cooperation is based around pre-existing regional economic communities (RECs). These RECs include:

a. West Africa: Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS)
b. East Africa: The Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD)
c. Southern Africa: Southern Africa Development Community (SADC)
d. Central Africa: Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS)
e. East African Community (EAC)
f. East and Southern Africa: Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa (COMESA)
g. Community of Sahel-Saharan States (CEN SAD)
h. North Africa: Arab Maghreb Union (AMU)

Some of the membership in the RECs is overlapping, with several countries belonging to more than one. The various groups tend to form an overlapping

mosaic rather than "fixed borders." In some cases, multilateral cooperation has been based on "sub-sub-regional" mechanisms, due, at times, to the unwillingness or inability of the RECs to expand into security cooperation or political environments that militated against such cooperation. Certainly, the last two organizations (Community of Sahel-Saharan States and the Arab Maghreb Union) have displayed little evidence of intelligence sharing as part of their operational goals.[12] The other regions and their respective RECs will be covered in turn.

ECOWAS

The Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) consists of Benin, Burkina Faso, Cape Verde, Gambia, Ghana, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Côte d'Ivoire, Liberia, Mali, Niger, Nigeria, Senegal, Sierra Leone, and Togo. Mauritania was previously a member, but withdrew in December 2000. The community's most important information sharing mechanism, the ECOWAS Warning and Response Network (ECOWARN), is operated by the ECOWAS Observation and Monitoring Centre (OMC). ECOWARN is intended to provide a system for sharing information on potential challenges, including terrorism threats, to peace in the sub-region. Originally proposed in the 1993 ECOWAS treaty, its implementation began in 2003. ECOWARN's underlying purpose is to provide early warning of possible conflict within the region; as such, it entails both information sharing and joint training for the recognition of potential flashpoints.[13] The system relies on regional "focal points." According to ECOWAS, the ECOWARN system is to be further improved to provide "a more convivial, integrated and operational instrument to guide the zonal bureaus and focal points in their data collection and processing efforts."[14] It reportedly incorporates field agents, analysts, and volunteers for gathering information about potential security threats.[15] "Pure" intelligence cooperation has latterly become more prominent; the first meeting of the heads of the intelligence services of the states of ECOWAS was held in Accra, Ghana, on 14 May 2014.

IGAD

The Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD), consisting of Djibouti, Ethiopia, Somalia, Eritrea, Sudan, South Sudan, Kenya, and Uganda, was established to improve regional cooperation due to desertification and drought, with East Africa forming a subregion of the larger IGAD process. In 2003, as the IGAD became more focused on counterterrorism, it adopted the Draft Implementation Plan to Counter

Terrorism in the IGAD Region. The initial implementation arm for the counterterrorism effort was the IGAD Capacity Building Programme Against Terrorism (ICPAT) that engaged in a variety of capability and capacity building efforts, including the improvement of information sharing. ICPAT, launched in June 2006 in Addis Ababa as a four-year program, with significant funding by European countries, had five specific areas of focus: enhancing judicial measures; working to promote greater interagency coordination on counterterrorism within individual IGAD member states; enhancing border control; providing training, sharing information and best practices; and promoting strategic cooperation.[16] In 2011, the ICPAT was transformed into the IGAD Security Sector Program that has focused on improving formalized cooperation in regional legal systems against both terrorist groups and regional criminal organizations. These efforts have included conferences among senior security officials from all the participating countries.[17]

SADC

The Southern African Development Community (SADC) comprises Angola, Botswana, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Lesotho, Madagascar, Malawi, Mauritius, Mozambique, Namibia, Seychelles, South Africa, Swaziland, Tanzania, Zambia, and Zimbabwe. Its membership has been somewhat of a moving target, with some suspensions or withdrawals, then rejoining. The SADC established the Regional Early Warning System that integrates the various National Early Warning Centres and the Regional Early Warning Centre (REWC), initially proposed in July 2003. Activating the center, which was officially inaugurated on 12 July 2010 in Botswana, took some time. The center's missions include: "Compile strategic assessment and analysis of data collected at regional level; Share information on major issues posing threat to the security and stability of the region; and Propose ways and means for preventing, combating and managing such threats."[18] By the end of 2010, the REWC had been staffed both through secondment and direct recruitment; developed both its "concept paper" and operating manual; installed secure communications equipment; and created national focus points for coordination.[19] Within the region itself, further cooperative efforts have been implemented. For example, the Southern African Regional Police Chiefs Cooperation Organisation (SARPCCO) has been integrated into the Inter-State Defence and Security Committee (ISDSC).[20]

ECCAS

The Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS) includes Angola, Burundi, Cameroon, Central African Republic, Chad, Congo,

Democratic Republic of the Congo, Equatorial Guinea, Gabon, and Sao Tome and Principe. While its principal focus has been economic integration, it has conducted conferences and meetings regarding the exchange of information on preventing armed violence and small arms control. Overall, ECCAS seems to have lagged behind many of the other RECs in improving coordination.

EAC

The East Africa Community is comprised of Burundi, Kenya, Rwanda, Tanzania, and Uganda. Under the ''Protocol on Peace and Security'' the countries have agreed to improve coordination and cooperation, including an increased information exchange. This agreement is somewhat short on the specifics on actual intelligence sharing, but given the alliance of several EAC members surrounding the African Mission in Somalia, the practice is likely to be reasonably well-established. This protocol features several provisions for information security:

1. The Partner States undertake not to disclose any classified information, obtained under this Protocol or as a result of their participation in the Community, other than to their own officials to whom such disclosure is essential for purposes of giving effect to this Protocol or any directive taken by the Summit.
2. Partner States shall ensure that the officials referred to in this Article shall at all times maintain strict secrecy.
3. Partner States further undertake not to use any classified information obtained during any multilateral co-operation between and or among them to the detriment of any Partner State.
4. A Partner State shall remain bound by the requirement of confidentiality under this Article even after withdrawal and expulsion from the Community.[21]

Beyond this protocol, the EAC has published a regional security strategy that emphasizes the need for cooperation and improved information exchange, with a particular stress on criminal intelligence.[22] EAC intelligence officials and security leaders also have met regularly to share information.

COMESA

Although the Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa (COMESA) is predominantly an economic integration structure, it has provided systems for intelligence exchange.[23] As early as 2002, it reportedly reached an agreement with the East African Community for (unspecified) intelligence exchange.[24] In particular, it established an anti-piracy element, focusing on support for national financial intelligence structures, in particular ''the

development and/ or strengthening of common coordinated and inter-agency frameworks on anti-money laundering."[25]

Other Relationships

Beyond the RECs, several other regional sharing bodies have been created. In some cases their membership has generally followed that of the RECs, while in others their organizations have been very independent. Much of the intelligence and information-sharing structures in these organizations have involved mutual police cooperation. Most started as bilateral agreements, such as those between Côte d'Ivoire and Mali (2000), Burkina Faso and Mali (2004), Senegal and Mali (2004), Mali and Guinea (2005), and Benin and Nigeria (2005). The Benin–Nigeria agreement—the Cooperation Agreement to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons with an Emphasis on Trafficking in Women and Children—included the establishment of "a joint security surveillance team to patrol the borders of both countries."[26] Shortly thereafter, Benin, Burkina Faso, Côte d'Ivoire, Guinea, Liberia, Mali, Niger, Nigeria, and Togo entered into a broader cooperative agreement with respect to the trafficking of children. Likewise, the Economic Community of Central African States and the Economic Community of West African States agreed to a Multilateral Cooperation Agreement to Combat Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children in West and Central Africa, which also entails police information sharing.

SARPCCO

A broader structure for exchanging police information is the Southern African Regional Police Chiefs Cooperation Organization (SARPCCO), consisting of Angola, Botswana, Lesotho, Malawi, Mauritius, Mozambique, Namibia, South Africa, Swaziland, Tanzania, Zambia, and Zimbabwe. Its charter emphasizes the requirement to "prepare and disseminate relevant information on criminal activities as may be necessary" and to "ensure efficient operation and management of criminal records and efficient joint monitoring of cross-border crime."[27] Although the SARPCCO was formally incorporated into the SADC security system in 2009, "the practicalities of this shift are still being resolved within the structures."[28] SARPCCO results have reportedly been promising:

> The SARPCCO constitution and agreement have assisted in the exchange of information in order to combat criminal activities in the region, and have facilitated the planning of intelligence-driven joint operations—at the rate of two per year in the first five years. These targeted motor vehicle theft, drug cultivation and trafficking, firearms trafficking,

fugitives from justice, diamond smuggling, and illegal migration. Some of the operations involved a cluster of countries simultaneously.[29]

EAPCCO

Likewise, the Eastern Africa Police Chiefs Cooperation Organization (EAPCCO), founded in Kampala, Uganda, in February 1998, offers a venue for information and intelligence cooperation within the same region. The EAPCCO comprises the following countries: Uganda, Kenya, Tanzania, Eritrea, Somalia, Djibouti, Ethiopia, Sudan, Comoros, Seychelles, Rwanda, Burundi, and Madagascar. According to the agreement, it has the following goals:

to promote, strengthen and perpetuate co-operation and foster joint strategies for the management of all forms of cross-border and related crimes with regional implications;

to prepare and disseminate relevant information on criminal activities as may be necessary to benefit members to contain crime in the region;

to carry out regular reviews of joint crime management strategies in view of changing national and regional needs and priorities;

to ensure efficient operation and management of criminal records and efficient joint monitoring of cross-border crime taking full advantage of the relevant facilities available through Interpol;

to make relevant recommendations to governments of member countries in relation to matters affecting effective policing in the Southern African region;

to formulate systematic regional training policies and strategies taking into account the need and performance requirements of the regional police services/forces; and

to carry out any such relevant and appropriate acts and strategies for purposes of promoting regional police co-operation and collaborations as regional circumstances dictate.[30]

EAPCCO has held regular conferences and hosted numerous police forces for joint training and exercises, including its first field training exercise focused specifically on counterterrorism, held in Kampala in May 2013. During this training, the Ugandan Inspector General of Police, Lt. Gen. Kale Kayihura, emphasized that ''Terrorism has no boundaries and the groups that want to cause havoc are operating in the entire region so we need to cooperate—that is why we are carrying out joint field exercises.''[31]

More significantly, the EAPCCO has coordinated some major regional operations against criminal groups, serving as the primary coordination body with such other law enforcement cooperative bodies as INTERPOL and the Southern African Regional Police Chiefs Cooperation Organization. A major success involving all three bodies was Operation Usalama (''safety''), a regional effort carried out from 16 to 18 July 2013 that resulted in "the rescue of more than 300 victims of human trafficking

and 38 suspects arrested in Ethiopia, with a further 28 human trafficking victims rescued and 15 suspects arrested in Uganda.''[32] Police also seized a number of AK-47s in four different countries, in addition to stolen vehicles and elephant tusks. Overall, law enforcement efforts met success in at least 10 countries based on this operation, which appeared to be very much intelligence-driven. Beyond the clear cross-regional cooperation, the coordination mechanisms provided through the regional and international bodies seemed to find their way into the relevant agencies within the individual countries themselves. For example, the Inspector General of the Tanzania Police noted that ''The operation brought together law enforcement officials from customs, immigration and the Tanzania Intelligence Security Service with the police as the lead agency.''[33] Although frequently overlooked, such regional cooperation commonly has spillover effects on national interagency coordination.

WAPCCO and CAPCCO

The analogous organization for West Africa is the West African Police Chiefs Committee (WAPCCO). Virtually all its goals and objectives are identical to the other police coordinating systems, with a primary focus on child trafficking, vehicle thefts, and trafficking in small arms. A major conceptual program for WAPCCO is the West African Police Information System (WAPIS), which is intended to link all the WAPCCO countries into a single information-sharing system; improve national data bases; and provide better interconnectivity to INTERPOL.[34] Likewise, the Central African Police Chiefs Committee (CAPCCO) has pushed for better coordination and information/intelligence sharing among its members. A particularly useful initiative in recent years has been an effort to create a sharing mechanism between technical sub-committees of CAPCCO and WAPCCO (and ultimately, all the police organizations).[35] A similar focused approach to intelligence sharing, labeled FISH-i Africa, began as a pilot program among Comoros, Kenya, Mozambique, Seychelles, and Tanzania in December 2012, with Madagascar and Mauritius joining in 2013. Its purpose was to ''test if cooperation and the sharing of intelligence and information between fisheries enforcement officers, technical experts, regional organisations and other regional and global players could spur enforcement actions against illegal fishing operators....''[36] The African Union reports that the system has resulted in significantly better intelligence coordination leading to practical impacts on reducing illegal fishing.

NORTH AFRICAN SHORTCOMINGS

Notably, though, neither the Sahel nor North African RECs have proven of any particular value for security cooperation. Instead, several other *de facto*

security and intelligence exchange systems have been developed. Regular meetings of sub-regional intelligence and security services have become a feature within the region. For example, on 19 and 20 May 2014, a "Sahelo-Saharan" regional meeting, held in Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso, was reportedly the fifth such assembly, with earlier meetings in 2013–2014 in Bamako, Abidjan, N'Djamena, and Niamey. A wide variety of both national and regional bodies were represented:

> Algeria, Burkina Faso, Chad, Cote d'Ivoire, Libya, Mali, Mauritania, Niger, Nigeria, and Senegal. In addition to the Commission of the African Union (AU), the AU Mission for Mali and the Sahel (MISAHEL), the African Centre for the Study and Research on Terrorism (ACSRT), the Committee of the Intelligence and Security Services of Africa (CISSA), the Fusion and Liaison Unit (UFL), the Community of the Sahelo-Saharan States (CEN-SAD), the North African Regional Capability (NARC), as well as the United Nations Office for West Africa (UNOWA), also participated in the meeting.[37]

Some practical measures have been reported publicly. For example, in the Sahel region a planning conference proposed "the adoption of specific measures to enhance the information and intelligence, including by agreeing on the format of the presentations made at the regular meetings of the HISS and by exchanging intelligence briefs on specific events requiring urgent coordinated action. The AU Commission would transmit to the member countries of the Nouakchott Process a format for this purpose."[38] Likewise, public references have been made to the establishment of the Fusion and Liaison Unit (ULF or *unité de fusion et de liaison*) in the same region. As noted by Bérangère Rouppert, "In spite of a presentation made in Alger [location of conference] on the ULF, there are still difficulties to understand what it is: whether it is an intelligence information sharing structure or a mere communication structure."[39] In part, this public uncertainty may be the result of security restrictions, but the system itself is likely still trying to determine its missions.

Based on strong AU encouragement, the Sahel countries of Algeria, Mali, Niger, and Mauritania formed a joint military staff committee, known by its French acronym CEMOC (*comité d'état-major opérationnel conjoint*) in April 2010 to coordinate their efforts. This committee, under what was termed the "Tamanrasset Plan," was also specifically tasked with improving intelligence cooperation.[40] This activity was followed on 17 March 2013 by the Nouakchott Process, which brings together the chiefs of the regional intelligence and security services. This system includes other regional countries: Algeria, Burkina Faso, Côte d'Ivoire, Guinea, Libya, Mali, Mauritania, Niger, Nigeria, Senegal, and Chad. As of May 2014, five conferences had been held, with the objective being to "allow Heads of

intelligence and security services to exchange information on the state of security in the Sahel region and to seek common solutions to jointly address the challenges to peace and security."[41] A further stated goal of the Nouakchott Process, which suggests a rather sophisticated view of developing multi-layered interagency cooperation, is "the development and strengthening of not only single agency mechanisms, but also those applicable to inter-agency cooperation, for example between the police and intelligence services, both nationally and intra-regionally."[42]

Some other localized multilateral intelligence systems have been established or at least discussed. The Lake Chad Basin countries (Nigeria, Chad, Niger, Cameroon, and Benin) have created a Regional Intelligence Fusion Unit (RIFU), with the memorandum of understanding signed on 9 June 2014. Britain, the United States, and France have promised support for this center.[43] During a heads-of-state conference in Uganda in 2011, a proposal for a Great Lakes intelligence center was discussed.[44] Such a center was established in Goma, Democratic Republic of Congo, under the auspices of, with funding by, the International Conference on the Great Lakes Region. Eleven countries are actually participating in the center, with each providing three representatives.[45]

COOPERATION WITH EXTERNAL ELEMENTS

Although the focus is on cooperation and sharing within the region itself, coordination with external bodies is highly important in supporting and sustaining effective intelligence sharing systems. Given the varying security environments within Africa, any examination must be nuanced and subject to differences. Nevertheless, some general observations can be drawn.

The first is that the term "external groups" covers a myriad participants. In many cases, these can be individual countries training and supporting intelligence organizations from single African countries or in localized joint intelligence centers. Various international organizations such as INTERPOL and the UN conduct similar programs. In some situations, even non-governmental organizations have provided assistance. Yet, little discernable evidence indicates that these various elements have developed any particularly effective mechanisms to coordinate their assistance.[46] More typically, these efforts have been unilateral by the providers, while preaching the virtues of coordination.

The second issue is that of relative emphasis by outside forces. Although certainly understandable, and perhaps very justifiable, the priorities placed on cooperation with Africa—either continent-wide or with its sub-regions—have not necessarily been particularly high. Cooperation and sharing (together with training and assistance for regional internal sharing) has been, and will likely remain, of necessity based on the external actors'

own strategic goals. A United Nations report noted some of the issues involved with either African regional or bilateral cooperation with external organizations:

> African partners welcome security-related counter-terrorism assistance programmes, but the benefits, while important in the context of the peace and security architecture of participating States and sub-regions, as African institutions see it, fail to allay concerns that the same level of priority is absent when dealing with the conditions that are conducive to terrorism, and that "hard" counter-terrorism programmes promoted by the Security Council and pursued by some bilateral partners could have the potential for exacerbating and encouraging extremism and radicalization and help fuel rejection of state authority.[47]

Simple communication remains a factor. This has been noted at the continental level; according to one UN study, "Neither the UN system nor the AU has managed to communicate successfully the respective priorities of each to the other. Bridging this gap is a priority not only for the UN but also for the AU."[48] This observation is, of course, on large-scale diplomatic and strategic levels. In the world of intelligence exchange and support, lack of communication is most likely an even more severe problem. The increased international interest on African security issues may help in their resolution. For the U.S. in particular, the formation of Africa Command (AFRICOM) optimistically provides a strategic vision for African issues. This should also be the case for particular regional problems, such as terrorism or small arms trafficking, that are of equal interest to both parties. Nevertheless, "simple" communication of needs and goals likely will continue to be problematic.

For many years, many external organizations seemed to focus primarily on supporting individual African countries rather than more broadly on the AU or to RECs. Bilateral support from external countries versus more broadly-based support for regional initiatives reportedly remains a problem. According to a UN report,

> However, the [AU Counterterrorism] Commission's expectations were not met, as UN and other international partners, in particular bilateral donors, preferred to retain control of the assistance they were providing by working directly with AU member States. Thus the AU's reliance on technical assistance from international partners and donors, both at the AU headquarters and later at the ACSRT, to build its own counter-terrorism capacity and effectiveness has been circumscribed from the very outset by the level of available external assistance. While this dependence on external partners remains, there are efforts and some progress, especially through the ACSRT, to build AU capacity to deliver technical assistance to AU member States directly.[49]

This form of support may be changing, however. In many ways, a major driver of this change may be the increasing deployment of African multilateral peace operations on the continent. Many of these missions have received significant support from Western countries, including assistance in developing military intelligence cells, albeit at times labeled ''information cells'' due to political sensitivities. Perhaps the most significant has been the African Mission in Somalia (AMISOM), which has been somewhat surprisingly successful.[50]

Likewise, strategic counterterrorism plans have driven other efforts to provide support and cooperation regionally rather than bilaterally. Perhaps the most notable (and largest) such effort has been the Trans-Sahara Counterterrorism Partnership (TSCTP) among the U.S. and (at various times) Algeria, Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Chad, Mali, Mauritania, Morocco, Niger, Nigeria, Senegal, and Tunisia. The TSCTP under various guises and titles has focused on regional rather than national efforts.[51] Again, however, nothing indicates that the U.S. efforts under TSCTP have been particularly well coordinated with other Western countries, notably with the French operations in the region. The U.S. and France have certainly shared intelligence on the region, but the training and support of regional countries thus far appears to be uncoordinated. At a much smaller level, the U.S. deployment in support of counter-Lord's Resistance Army operations in the Horn of Africa has had a sub-regional focus, including the establishment of a joint intelligence center.[52]

FUNCTIONAL EFFECTIVENESS VERSUS STRUCTURE

The critical issue, of course, is how well the developing intelligence cooperation systems in Africa actually function. Given the normal classification level and sensitivities associated with any intelligence system, questions about such matters remain very difficult to answer. In many ways, the answers must be deduced rather than straightforward. Nevertheless, some concerns become apparent when evaluating the various sharing structures already in place or those being planned.

Larger political issues have had—and almost certainly will continue to have—an impact on basic information sharing, though much less on more formalized intelligence sharing systems. Clearly, larger political and diplomatic issues will drive intelligence cooperation (as well as larger issues). As Jonathan Fisher notes, ''[T]he personalities of leaders and their relationships with each other can impact heavily upon the shape of regional security cooperation.''[53] However well-established and elegant-appearing formal structures might be, they certainly do not always translate into effective systems.

This has definitely been the case with the African Maghreb Union, which has been essentially moribund for most of its existence. Political discord among its

members and the ongoing chaos in Libya have meant that cooperation of any sort has been minimal, if not nonexistent.[54] Likewise, the war in the Democratic Republic of Congo and the interventions by neighboring countries precluded cooperation for many years.[55] The Sahel region provides an excellent, if rather convoluted, example of how regional conflicts—some of considerable duration—can impede overall cooperation, and intelligence sharing in particular, even on common threats:

> However, the initiative [for coordination] by and large failed to translate into operational security cooperation on the ground, as representatives of its Sahelian members repeatedly pointed out. The initiative was dominated by Algeria, and included Mauritania Mali and Niger. Qadhafi's Libya reportedly refused to join, while Morocco was deliberately excluded by Algeria. Rivalries between the three North African states had long been an obstacle to regional integration... Algerian rivalry with Morocco over the deadlocked Western Sahara conflict played an equally important role; Moroccan diplomacy in Mali and Mauritania sought to prevent the emergence of an effective regional security framework from which Morocco was excluded.[56]

Similar issues have plagued the SADC:

> Discord between member states can be traced back to the formation of the organ in 1996. Differences in the interpretation of the objectives, structure and central aspects of the region's security framework led to two polarised camps, one led by Zimbabwean President Robert Mugabe and the other by South African President Nelson Mandela.[57]

Actual resourcing of the various centers may also be subject to considerable question. The UN has noted that the ACSRT "is under-resourced, in terms of financial, technical, and human resources expertise and is unable to carry out its responsibilities as effectively as its potential suggests."[58] Another examination of the ACSRT reaches similar conclusions:

> The ACSRT has augmented its activities in the past two years, partly as a result of increased donor support, but it continues to suffer from a lack of human and financial resources, which limits its ability to make practical contributions to fulfilling its wide-ranging mandate. Although it has now succeeded in organizing a number of continental and subregional training seminars, it has had difficulty working with the national and subregional focal points in a sustained manner.[59]

A similar assessment has been made of the regional centers:

> Hence the practice of framing the activities of the RECs within their respective geographic regions does not necessarily hold when discussing terrorism threats and counter-terrorism activities. As it stands, none of

the RECs are sufficiently enabled to deal with the threats and challenges posed by terrorism in their respective regions and threats which transcend geographic boundaries. They lack the overall competence required to carry out most of the work they have identified as priorities and to accomplish the tasks they have agreed to.[60]

FINANCING MECHANISMS AND POLITICAL SUPPORT

One aspect of resourcing is notable. Several centers and sharing structures have depended almost entirely on outside funding for their operations. When such funding is removed due to budgetary restraints or shifts in strategic interests, the centers can collapse rather quickly. Even relatively small-scale fusion or cooperative centers can be prone to this. In 2014, during a not-for-attribution discussion with me, a senior African intelligence officer noted that a four-country intelligence center had had some success in operations against local transnational threats. He then said that as soon as the U.S. had pulled funding from the center, it ceased operations because of either the unwillingness or inability of the host government to maintain funding.

A positive factor for the various regional cooperative structures is their ability to focus on region-specific threat environments. The converse of this, however, is that doing so can overly narrow the aperture of their vision. Similarly, the sheer number of RECs creates considerable seams in which transnational threats can operate. The AU strategy for the Sahel notes that the region "transcends almost three geographical regions of the continent and is thus situated beyond the space of any regional mechanism."[61] On a somewhat more prosaic level, the rather large number of sharing structures at the regional level further exacerbates the resourcing issue, particularly the requirements for well-trained personnel. By ECOWAS's own assessment, its coordination system has suffered from several flaws: "[T]he implementation of the preventive aspects of the Mechanism has at times, lacked a strategic approach. It has been characterized by weak internal coordination, underutilization and misdirection of existing human capacities as well as the deployment of limited instruments."[62]

One issue surrounding regional intelligence and analysis centers is how well similar centers at the national level actually support them. In many ways, the success of regional centers is predicated on how well they are "fed" by national centers. At least for the SADC, the International Crisis Group argued that

> [E]stablishment of the national centers reportedly has hindered effective implementation of the regional EWS [early warning system]. Those that have been established are merely extensions of government intelligence systems, and have not secured the collaboration of civil

society groups such as independent research institutions, think tanks, academics and NGOs.[63]

Although couched in terms of intelligence reform, Sandra Africa's conclusion further highlights the issue: "[T]he CISSA resolutions reveal a mechanism that is more concerned with the outcome of peace and security, and how cooperation can advance that goal, than with intelligence governance arrangements in individual countries."[64]

Two aspects of national intelligence organizations have a direct impact on how well regional systems can operate. The first is the availability and capabilities of the intelligence officers at the national level. Both affect the initial reporting and analysis fed into the system. African countries display the entire gamut of skills exhibited by intelligence personnel, from nonexistent or minimal to very capable. In general, some significant training gaps reportedly remain, particularly among the junior enlisted personnel.[65] The other (and broader) issue for some countries is the historical background of their intelligence services. For many African nations, their intelligence services have traditionally focused on personal regime survival; for some, this was their exclusive mission. Adapting to broader missions that necessitate much more complex analytical skillsets has been a work in progress, with varying speeds of advancement, for different countries.

Overall, Africa has experienced significant progress in developing at least the structures for improved intelligence sharing. Most countries seem to have accepted that transnational threats necessitate significantly increased cooperation. But actually converting form into function remains problematic. Historical regional differences and relatively limited resources have tended to constrain the effectiveness of adaptive efforts. Reform and development will require continued, and preferably expanded, external support. In time, with such support, and with continued efforts by the African governments themselves, African regional and sub-regional intelligence cooperation should become much more effective.

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