



Security assistance, corruption and fragile environments

Exploring the case of Mali 2001-2012

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SECURITY ASSISTANCE, CORRUPTION AND FRAGILE ENVIRONMENTS

EXPLORING THE CASE OF MALI 2001-2012

“The weakness of the Malian army...came as little surprise to anyone who had been watching the steady erosion of state institutions, largely as a result of widespread corruption.”

Andrew Lebovich
Foreign Policy, March 2013

Briefing for policymakers and implementers

Security assistance, if done well, can benefit both recipient and donor states. It can help recipient security forces improve not only the levels of their tactical and operational training but also, through tailored training, their links with the civilian population they are protecting. For donors, whose defence and security policy is increasingly shaped by war-weariness, limited resources and competing priorities, security assistance and allied capacity building are likely to grow in importance as means of achieving strategic priorities, maintaining relationships and addressing common threats with allies.

Training and equipping forces in environments that are unstable and prone to conflict means that defence planners and implementers are very likely to come across corruption and its frequent companion, organised crime.

The international community has learnt – painfully – not only that corruption can have a direct impact on the strength and capability of state institutions, but also that it can lead to assistance programmes being subverted and investments squandered. The impact of corruption on the Afghan security forces became evident as the International Security Assistance Force mission went on; it also contributed to the failure of Iraqi security forces in 2014.

It is vital that those providing security assistance do so in ways that ensure not just that the assistance is provided without waste and in a cost-effective manner, but that it has the intended outcome and is not misused.

In this study Transparency International's London-based Defence and Security Programme explores in some detail how security assistance programmes fared in an environment affected by corrupt practices and the nexus of corruption and criminality. The case study here is security assistance provided to the Malian Army by the U.S. and France in 2001-2012, i.e. prior to the coup in which units of the Malian Army deposed a sitting president. Our goal is to unpack the impact corrupt practices can have on the success of specific security assistance programmes and to start a conversation on how these risks can be addressed.

Summary of the analysis

Our goal in this analysis is to explore how security assistance programmes—comprising military training and equipment transfers—fare in environments where corruption, in combination with factional divisions, resource shortages, and inadequate management systems, weakens or subverts state institutions. To that end, we interviewed 54 stakeholders with experience or knowledge of security assistance in Mali—predominantly Malian, U.S. and French—and asked them questions about the significance of corruption for the condition of the Malian Army, the security assistance providers' approach to corruption issues, and the impact of corrupt practices on the effectiveness of assistance programmes.

Based on this analysis and additional in-house research, we identified **three main pathways through which corrupt practices can affect the workings of security assistance programmes and four main reasons why assistance programmes did not address corruption in a comprehensive way.**

Corruption and security assistance: the three pathways

The goal of training programmes such as International Military Education and Training (IMET) and Reinforcing Africa's Capacity to Maintain Peace initiative (RECAMP) is usually twofold. One, these programmes aim to develop the skills and expertise of those who are seen as capable of shaping their organisations through reaching high-level posts. Two, they aim to build up the overall capacity of the forces being trained, including the ability to counter threats to the state. Training programmes are frequently accompanied by equipment transfers.

Nepotism and bribery

The effectiveness of training programmes can be curtailed by nepotism in recruitment and promotion systems. Due to hiring and advancement being distorted, those with the greatest potential are not necessarily those selected to participate in training. Bribery, in particular the use of bribes to secure preferred postings or avoid those seen as undesirable, also undermines *esprit de corps* and diminishes readiness.

Institutional weakness

Corruption frequently exacerbates institutional weaknesses and reduces recipient institutions' absorptive capacity. Weak, hollowed-out institutions are unlikely to be able to provide further training which would entrench and make use of the skills trainees gained through security assistance programmes. In fragile environments, the skills are either likely to atrophy or build only individual capacity without translating into institutional strength.

Security assistance programmes are not well equipped to mitigate these risks. A serious flaw rests in the way they are monitored and evaluated, which places great emphasis on individual achievement of trainees and does not pay sufficient attention to institutional capacity.

Factional divisions

Factional (including sectarian) divisions can manifest themselves in particular units being favoured and receiving priority treatment in equipment transfers and training places. This often results in a lack of force cohesion, stokes resentment, and can impede the achievement of goals agreed by the donor and the recipient. Inadequate monitoring procedures contribute to equipment being diverted along factional lines.

Why was corruption not addressed?

We identified four reasons why corruption was not addressed by donors:

- Perception of corruption as insignificant and technical, and not as a political, power-distribution issue
- Primacy of tactical military considerations
- Lack of a 'toolbox' enabling concrete action
- Prevalence of short-term, unsustainable programmes

We concluded that the design of security assistance programmes, in particular the monitoring of military training and equipment transfer, is not robust enough to withstand the challenges of corrupt practices, weak institutions and inadequate resources. Weaknesses in the implementation of monitoring programmes open doors to misdirection and waste. Unit training evaluation is focused on increasing tactical effectiveness, with little consideration of the long-term effects of training or the end goal of institutional improvement.

Recommendations

This report and the subsequent recommendations are based on the analysis of U.S. and French security assistance programmes. However, the recommendations we offer are applicable to most security assistance donors in fragile environments, including states and international organisations such as the EU and the UN. Here, we use the U.S. and French institutions involved in security assistance programmes to illustrate the ways in which the recommendations can be implemented.

Recommendation 1: Policy presumptions and directives

Corruption risks need to be explicitly, systematically and uniformly recognised in the design and delivery of all security assistance programmes, regardless of which agency is the 'lead' on a particular programme. This consideration needs to be both in respect of fraud and mismanagement of the units and forces receiving the assistance, and possible diversion or subversion of the assistance for political or criminal reasons.

- A complex and fragmented security assistance system such as the one functioning in the U.S. will require inter-agency coordination, in particular between the **State Department** and the **Department of Defense**. Given its role as the primary link between the two agencies, the **Bureau of Political-Military Affairs** at the State Department should play a leading role in harmonising approaches to corruption across all security assistance programmes.
- Within the French security assistance system, the **Security and Defence Cooperation Directorate (DCSD)** within the Ministry of Foreign Affairs should take the lead on conceptualising the approach to tackling corruption in security assistance. However, given its leading role in delivering operational assistance, the **Ministry of Defence** should be an active participant in designing guidelines and training aimed at tackling corruption

during military operations; Transparency International's Defence & Security Programme's publications offer guidance to that effect.¹

Recommendation 2: Implementation

In the guidelines and instructions issued by the **State Department, the Department of Defense, the Security and Defence Cooperation Directorate** and other equivalent government and international institution departments, explicit consideration should be required of the following:

- Analysis of corruption risks in the political context of the recipient country, including the transparency, accountability and public trust in security institutions;
- Incorporation of anti-corruption analysis into intelligence agency tasking;
- Analysis of specific corruption risks and the way they are likely to affect specific programmes. The major risk categories to include are: procurement, personnel, equipment, financial, and operations;²
- Corruption risk management tools such as modalities in the design and delivery or assistance.

Recommendation 3: Transparency

In order to increase the availability of information which could be used to monitor assistance, counteract potential diversion and build recipient capacity, donors need to publish comprehensive, detailed, comparable and timely data on security assistance flows. These datasets should be published as open data on the website of **donor state embassies**. Similar transparency requirements should apply to recipient countries.

- Responsible entities—such as the **State Department's Bureau of Political and Military Affairs**, the **Defense Department's Office of Security Cooperation** and **Section 1206 officials**, and France's **Directorate of Security and Defence Cooperation (DCDS)** and **Ministry of Defence**—should release timely, comprehensive, and comparable data on security assistance programmes. While in some cases legitimate national security concerns may restrict availability of information, all exceptions need to be substantiated in line with the standards set by Global Principles on National Security and the Right to Information (the Tshwane Principles).³

Recommendation 4: Training security assistance implementers

Pre-deployment or regular training given to personnel providing security assistance (including **Security Cooperation Officers and Defence Attachés**) should include training on corruption risks and specific training on how to introduce the subject of corruption. Training should account for

¹ See Transparency International Defence & Security Programme, *Corruption Threats and International Missions; practical guidance for leaders*, London 2014, <https://www.dropbox.com/s/l3ivd017884i4mp/140930%20Corruption%20Threats%20%26%20International%20Missions.pdf>, accessed 25 March 2015.

² See for example Transparency International Defence & Security Programme, *Government Defence Anti-Corruption Index 2013*, London 2013, <http://government.defenceindex.org/report>, accessed 25 March 2015.

³ Global Principles on National Security and the Right to Information (the Tshwane Principles), 12 June 2013, <http://www.opensocietyfoundations.org/sites/default/files/global-principles-national-security-10232013.pdf>, accessed 20 March 2015.

both technical and political aspect of corruption, could take the form of scenarios, and could be implemented by the regional combatant commands as part of their activities.

- Responsible agencies (the [Departments of State and Defence](#), the [DCSD](#) and the French [Mministry of Defence](#)) should develop Transparency, Accountability and Counter-Corruption (TACC) ‘toolboxes’ which incorporate technical and political aspects of corruption, thus providing guidance to implementers.

Recommendation 5: Monitoring of assistance

Oversight of security assistance programmes should be shared between donor and recipient states. Crucially, recipient country institutions—including parliamentary defence committees, Office of the Auditor General (in Mali’s case, Bureau de Vérificateur Général, or BVG), and civil society—need to be empowered to conduct meaningful oversight of defence institutions’ funding and activities, including international aid.

- Donors should consider widening the competencies and resources of [Security Cooperation Officers / Defence Attachés](#) to include facilitation of monitoring of security assistance through recipient civil society organisations and parliaments.
- Monitoring agencies, including the DOD’s [Golden Sentry](#) programme, the [Defence Security Cooperation Agency \(DSCA\)](#) and regional military commands (e.g. AFRICOM) should coordinate with recipient nation stakeholders in order to monitor the delivery and use of assistance.

Recommendation 6: Military training

Responsible entities—such as the [U.S. State Department](#), [Department of Defense](#) and [Defense Institute for International Legal Studies](#); France’s [Directorate of Security and Defence Cooperation](#); and [regional military commands](#)—should review officer and unit training programmes and analyse the impact that structural weaknesses, including corruption and weak defence management systems, can have on the effectiveness of programmes. Training programme design should also consider how individual recipients can utilise the training in fragile or corrupt environments. Finally, training programmes for recipient state armed forces should include a counter-corruption component.

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1. Introduction

Following the Al Qaeda attacks of 9/11, the U.S. and its allies attempted to limit the spread of terrorist activities by strengthening the armed forces of friendly countries around the world in the hope that they would be able to deny groups such as Al Qaeda space for operations and training. After a 2003 kidnapping of European tourists by a group that eventually became affiliated with Al Qaeda, the Sahara Desert came to be seen as one of the weakly governed spaces offering opportunities to criminal and terrorist groups.

Between 2002 and the military coup of 2012, Mali received international assistance from multiple donors and through multiple funding streams, with the most significant packages coming from the U.S. and France. In order to counter the rise of terrorist networks in Sub-Saharan Africa, the U.S. set out to build up the capacity of Sahel countries (including Mali) through programmes such as the Pan-Sahel Initiative (PSI) and the Trans-Sahara Counterterrorism Partnership (TSCTP), culminating with the creation of the regional military Africa Command (AFRICOM) in 2008.⁴ France, the former colonial power in the region, was also involved in capacity building in the Sahel, primarily through regional peacekeeping training centres.⁵ But in 2012, the Malian Army—a recipient of U.S. and French military assistance programmes—failed to stop the advent of Saharan Tuareg rebels, strengthened by the influx of fighters from post-Qaddafi Libya and initially supported by elements of Al Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM). Subsequently, certain Army units staged a coup that overthrew Mali's elected government. The state institutions' lack of capacity and resilience, exacerbated by corruption and combined with external factors and internal challenges, made it impossible for the Malian government to address the challenges facing the country.

A number of observers have argued that the events in Mali should not have been surprising, given the slow, steady deterioration of state institutions riddled with corruption and weak management systems.⁶ Others have noted that Captain Amadou Sanogo, leader of the coup, was a graduate of U.S. training programmes. Mali was not the only case in which U.S.-trained officers, faced with corrupt governments, staged a coup: in Gambia, for example, Lieutenant Colonel Lamin Sanneh, who had undergone officer training at Sandhurst in the UK and at the National Defence University in Washington, was identified as one of the leaders of an

⁴ Stephen Harmon, 'From GSPC to AQIM: The evolution of an Algerian Islamist terrorist group into an Al'Qaida affiliate and its implications for the Sahara-Sahel Region', *Concerned Africa Scholars Bulletin* No. 85, Spring 2010, 12.

⁵ Paul Melly and Vincent Darracq, 'A New Way to Engage? French Policy in Africa from Sarkozy to Hollande', Chatham House, May 2013, http://www.chathamhouse.org/sites/files/chathamhouse/public/Research/Africa/0513pp_franceafrica.pdf, accessed 1 February 2013.

⁶ Andrew Lebovich, 'Mali's Bad Trip. Field notes from the West African Drug Trade', *Foreign Policy*, 15 March 2013, <http://foreignpolicy.com/2013/03/15/malis-bad-trip/>, accessed 15 January 2015.

unsuccessful coup attempt.⁷ These events have prompted renewed interest in the design, efficacy and possible unintended consequences of military training in fragile environments.⁸

Security assistance is certainly no panacea but, if done well, it could help recipient countries to build effective security forces that are not only tactically well trained and operationally effective, but representative of and connected to their societies. From the perspective of recipient states such as Mali, it is important that the security assistance is designed and implemented in a way that does not exacerbate existing problems and, ideally, helps address them. This in turn would help build security forces that are better capable of protecting the population and addressing threats.

For donors operating in an environment shaped by war-weariness, limited resources and competing defence priorities, allied capacity building is likely to gain importance. In the U.S., the 2011 National Military Strategy, the 2011 National Strategy for Counterterrorism, and the 2010 Quadrennial Defence Review all pointed to building up partner capacity and delivering security assistance programmes as crucial elements of national security policy.⁹ In the French approach, defence and security assistance are seen as integral components of crisis prevention and important elements of providing stability and facilitating development.¹⁰ Finally, NATO's Defence and Related Security Capacity Building Initiative, launched at the Wales Summit in 2014, aims to build stability through developing partner capacity.¹¹ It is thus all the more important to explore the implications of weak governance structures for security assistance programmes and to avoid past mistakes.

Training and equipping forces in environments that are unstable and/or prone to conflict means that defence planners and implementers are very likely to come across the issue of corruption and related issues such as organised crime.¹² Corruption and conflict are closely correlated, as is corruption and state failure: 12 out of 15 of the lowest ranked countries in the Transparency International's 2013 Corruption Perception Index are home to insurgencies or terrorist groups.¹³ Systemic, embedded corruption often exacerbates other risks—such as factional divisions, unequitable resource distribution, and other governance shortcomings—and contributes to

⁷ Colin Freeman, 'Sandhurst-trained officer "led Gambian coup"', *The Telegraph*, 2 January 2015, <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/africaandindianocean/gambia/11322107/Sandhurst-trained-officer-led-Gambian-coup.html>, accessed 20 January 2015.

⁸ Jeffrey Meiser, 'Dilemma of an African Soldier', *War on the Rocks*, 26 January 2015, <http://warontherocks.com/2015/01/the-dilemma-of-an-african-soldier/?singlepage=1>, accessed 30 January 2015.

⁹ United States Government Accountability Office (GAO), *Building Partner Capacity. Key Practices to Effectively Manage Department of Defense Efforts to Promote Security Assistance*, GAO-13-335-T, Washington D.C., 14 February 2013, <http://www.gao.gov/assets/660/652159.pdf>, accessed 15 January 2015, 1.

¹⁰ Government of France, *White Paper: Defence and National Security 2013*, http://www.livreblancdefenseetsecurite.gouv.fr/pdf/the_white_paper_defence_2013.pdf, accessed 9 February 2015, 93-94; France Diplomatie, 'La Direction de la coopération de la sécurité et la défense', <http://www.diplomatie.gouv.fr/fr/politique-etrangere-de-la-france/defense-et-securite/cooperation-de-securite-et-de-la-direction-de-la-cooperation-de/>, accessed 5 February 2015.

¹¹ NATO, *Wales Summit Declaration*, 5 September 2014, http://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/official_texts_112964.htm, accessed 22 January 2015, para 89.

¹² For an exploration of the corruption-organised crime nexus, see Louise I. Shelley, *Dirty Entanglements. Corruption, Crime and Terrorism*, Cambridge University Press 2014.

¹³ Sarah Chayes and the Working Group on International Security, 'Corruption: The Unrecognized Threat to International Security', Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, Washington D.C., June 2014, http://carnegieendowment.org/files/corruption_and_security.pdf, accessed 20 January 2015, 4.

instability and conflict, as it did in such seemingly disparate events as the ‘Arab Spring’, the conflict in Ukraine, and the failure of the Iraqi security forces in the face of ISIS in 2014.¹⁴ Conflict in turn can entrench corrupt practices due to the breakdown in state institutions that it frequently brings in its wake.

However, corruption is not only a source of unrest, instability and insecurity: It can also reduce the effectiveness of measures aimed at restoring peace and security, including security and defence assistance. A RAND study has found that good governance—which includes the ability to fight corruption—is strongly correlated with higher effectiveness of assistance programmes.¹⁵ Institutional weakness, corruption, factional fault lines and a lack of established management procedures among the recipient armed forces pose serious risks to security assistance programmes. In the worst cases, they can entirely subvert the assistance. Donated equipment can be stolen or diverted to specific political factions or even insurgents; training programmes can founder when salaries and supplies are diverted along the salary chain. Yet, despite the potential for detrimental impact on security assistance programmes, corrupt practices and ways of counteracting them rarely receive sufficient attention at the right levels when it comes to designing and implementing security assistance.¹⁶ This study intends to address the nexus between corruption and security assistance, offer preliminary conclusions and start a conversation on how to best manage corruption risks in security assistance programmes.

¹⁴ Viola Gienger, ‘Corruption: Sleeper Threat to International Security’, United States Institute of Peace 3 July 2014, <http://www.usip.org/publications/corruption-sleeper-threat-international-security>, accessed 6 January 2015.

¹⁵ Christopher Paul et al, *What Works Best in Building Partner Capacity and Under What Circumstances?*, RAND Corporation, Santa Monica 2013, xvii, 19.

¹⁶ Interviews 48-50 (sources familiar with U.S. security assistance training). One exception is the security sector reform approach, which tends to include wider institution-building concerns. This, however, does not always include military-to-military assistance programmes. See for example ‘Security Sector Reform’, United Nations Peacekeeping, <http://www.un.org/en/peacekeeping/issues/security.shtml>, accessed 24 April 2015.

2. The study: Scope, methodology and interviewees

This report focuses on security assistance to Mali between 2001 and 2012, with the events of 9/11 in the U.S. and the Malian coup in 2012 bracketing the analysis. We decided to look at the aftermath of 9/11 as the heightened attention paid to counter-terrorism brought about a change in priorities and engagement. The year 2012 was adopted as the cut-off date due to the qualitative change in the Malian situation brought about by the conflict in the country's northern regions and the military coup. Looking at security assistance prior to 2012 allowed us to focus on programmes delivered in an environment which was fragile, but short of open, large-scale conflict. The post-2012 engagement in Mali is of a different calibre, encompassing a sizable military intervention set in a state whose institutions were not capable of functioning effectively. Thus, while we have commented on the approach espoused by the post-2012 EU Training Mission in Mali (Section 9), it has not been the primary focus of the research.

We have focused on two security assistance donors: the U.S. and France. Both countries have a long history of providing assistance to allied nations' armed forces; both have significant resources and wide-ranging programmes they can put to use in security assistance initiatives. The global reach of the U.S. security assistance architecture makes an analysis of its potential shortcomings particularly germane, while France's extensive involvement on the African continent makes it an important regional contributor to capacity building. In this report, we focus on the U.S. security assistance system in greater detail.

For clarity and consistency, this report uses the term 'security assistance' as an umbrella term to describe what is variously referred to as security assistance, defence capacity building, or security sector reform. While what counts as security assistance varies widely, the definition used by the U.S. Department of Defense encapsulates the intent of the various programmes: security assistance programmes aim to 'organize, train, equip, rebuild/build and advise foreign security forces and their supporting institutions from the tactical to ministerial levels.'¹⁷ This is a wide definition and can encompass activities ranging from relatively straightforward train-and-equip programmes to multi-faceted security sector reform programmes aimed at multiple institutions. The 2013 French White Paper on Defence and National Security reflects similar breadth: security assistance programmes are divided into those with a primarily operational/equipment focus and those requiring a concerted effort at security sector reform.¹⁸ Both can be and frequently are implemented in unstable and conflict environments in order to strengthen state capacity to tackle threats.

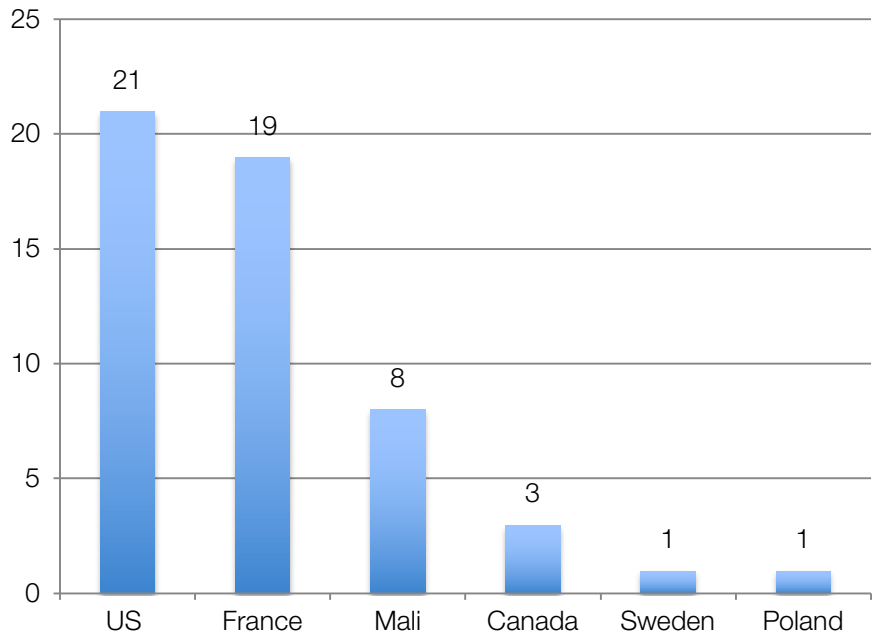
This analysis is largely based on 53 semi-structured interviews with stakeholders with significant knowledge and experience of Mali and international assistance to Malian institutions. 8 interviewees were Malian and 45 were members of the international community; among the latter, 21 were U.S. and 19 French.

¹⁷ GAO, *Building Partner Capacity*, 8.

¹⁸ Government of France, *White Paper: Defence and National Security 2013*, 78.

The choice of interviewees was shaped by a number of factors. First, as the the focus of this report was on establishing how security assistance programmes work and how they fare in fragile environments, we focused on interviewees who could speak to the ways in which programmes were designed and implemented. Second, with limited time available for interviews and fieldwork, we had to accept that ease of contact and logistical arrangements for interviews would be a factor in selecting with whom we spoke.

Table 1: Interviewees by nationality



38 interviewees were civilians and 16 were military officers. By profession, alongside the 16 military officers, Transparency International Defence & Security Programme interviewed 12 national officials, 14 researchers based in think tanks or academic institutions and 4 international institution officials.

Table 2: Civilian/military interviewees

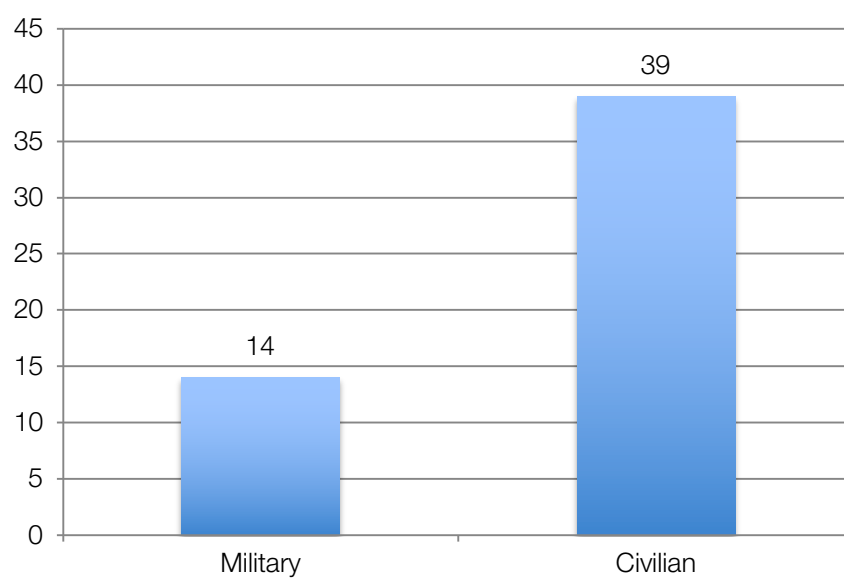
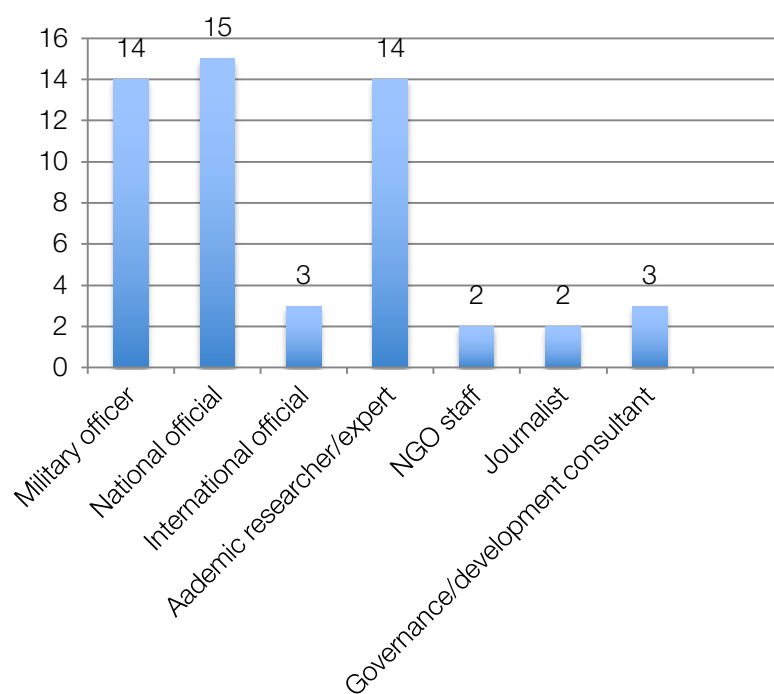


Table 3: Interviewees by profession



Most interviews were carried out in the summer of 2014, with a limited number of follow-up interviews conducted between December 2014 and February 2015. The questions were posed either in person or, in two cases, through an e-mailed questionnaire.

20 interviews were conducted in English and 35 in French.

The interviews (excepting the two that were conducted through questionnaires) were semi-structured, allowing for the specific areas of stakeholders' expertise and interest to be addressed. However, each interview was based around a set of themes outlined below.

Table 4: Interview guidelines

<p>1. How significant was corruption in the Malian Army?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. What was the nature of corruption affecting the Malian Army? b. What specific manifestations of corruption were the most important? c. To what extent can corruption be seen as an important factor in leading to the 2012 military coup?
<p>2. Did corruption affect the effectiveness of security assistance programmes?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Could you provide examples of impact that corrupt practices had on security assistance programmes?
<p>3. Were corruption risks considered in the planning of security assistance programmes?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Was corruption seen as an issue to be tackled as part of the security assistance programmes? b. Was a corruption risk assessment ever carried out? c. Was the delivery of security assistance programmes affected by anticipated corruption risks?
<p>4. Have equipment and money transfers to the Malian military been tracked?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Was it possible to ascertain whether equipment was diverted?
<p>5. Was any anti-corruption training offered to the Malian forces?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Would a greater focus on integrity in the training have made a difference? b. What would be the best way to deliver anti-corruption training to the recipient forces?

The interview material was analysed by three researchers in order to identify main themes and recurrent issues raised by interviewees. The involvement of multiple researchers allowed for a more comprehensive and objective analysis of the source material.

The gathering of primary material was supported by in-house research utilising English- and French-language sources, including government documents, audit and review reports by accountability bodies and parliaments, and expert studies of the security assistance programmes and the Malian political and social context. This material was used to contextualise

information gained through interview, analyse the structure of U.S. and French security assistance programmes, and gain additional information, particularly on the issues of military training and monitoring of assistance flows.

The conclusions we offer in this report constitute a first take on a complex subject, and should be followed up with additional analysis, particularly of the French security assistance structure, and with a greater focus on the European Union's security assistance initiatives.

4. Conflict in the Sahara and the disintegration of the Malian Army

The case of Mali is one of an apparent paradox: in 2011-2012 a country that had been perceived as an exemplary democracy and a stable regional actor faced a military coup, lost control of almost two-thirds of its territory to a separatist movement and was forced to rely on international assistance to stop the advance of Islamist groups toward its capital city.¹⁹ These events, however, did not come as a surprise to those who had noted the steady rise of a multi-faceted political and military crisis and the parallel decline in the country's institutional capacity.²⁰

One direct manifestation of Mali's institutional weakness was the disintegration of its ill-supplied, irregularly paid army in the face of twin crises in the country's northern region: an uprising of the semi-nomadic Tuareg population led by the National Movement for the Liberation of Azawad (MNLA) and the increasing influence of Islamist groups such as Ansar Dine (led by Tuareg Iyad Ag Ghali), Al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM) and the Movement for Oneness and Jihad in Western Africa (MUJAO). Initially supported by Islamist groups, the Tuareg uprising drove the Malian army out of the country's northern regions and led to the proclamation of independence for the region known as Azawad, encompassing around 60% of Malian territory.²¹ The separatists were in turn supplanted by the Islamist groups, which took control of major population centres in the north – Gao, Kidal and Timbuktu.²² Frustrated by what they saw as ineffectiveness brought on by corruption and incompetence, junior military officers led by Captain Amadou Sanogo staged a coup and in March 2012 deposed the democratically elected President Amadou Toumani Touré.²³

While they may have been the most glaring, the Malian Army's problems cannot be seen in isolation as their nature and severity were connected to the overall condition of the country and the region. Factional divisions, unequal resource distribution, the erosion of democracy and development of personal links as the basis for governance, corruption in education, nepotism and bribery in the public sector, impunity and links to organised crime all combined to create a perfect storm threatening the country's security and hollowing out the state institutions designed to protect it, including the armed forces.

¹⁹ David Lewis, 'Mali: from democratic poster child to broken state', Reuters, 12 April 2014, <http://www.reuters.com/article/2012/04/24/us-mali-idUSBRE83N09Q20120424>, accessed 16 February 2015.

²⁰ Andrew Lebovich, 'Mali's Bad Trip'.

²¹ François Heisbourg, 'A Surprising Little War: First Lessons of Mali', *Survival* 55(2), April-May 2013, 7.

²² Ian Lye and Monika Roszkowska, 'Insurgency, Instability, Intervention. A Snapshot of Mali and the Sahel Region Threat Landscape', Thomson Reuters 2012, <http://accelus.thomsonreuters.com/sites/default/files/GRC00406.pdf>, accessed 20 January 2015, 4.

²³ Human Rights Watch, *Mali: Country Summary*, January 2013, http://www.hrw.org/sites/default/files/related_material/mali.pdf, accessed 15 May 2015.

Democratic transition and its limits: 1991-2012

In 1991, a military coup led by Amadou Toumani Touré (known as ATT) ended the 26-year reign of the one-party regime of Moussa Traoré. Following the coup, ATT handed power over to the democratically elected President Alpha Oumar Konaré, before he was himself elected President in 2002. During Konaré's and Touré tenures, Mali moved toward political democratisation and economic liberalization, and attempted to implement peace agreements with the separatist movements in the country's north. However, while the building blocks of democracy were in place, the overall structure lacked strength and resilience.²⁴

What outsiders had perceived as a stable, inclusive government with healthy republican institutions was revealed, over the course of a few days in March [2012], to be resting on a rotten foundation.

Baz Lecoq et al. (2013)

Politically, Mali saw the emergence of a multi-party system and regular parliamentary and local elections. Instead of strengthening representative democracy, however, the structure and workings of the Malian parliament entrenched privileges for the few and failed to hold the executive to account. The President's ability to dissolve parliament, the unrealistic majority needed to dismiss the Cabinet, and political pressure to remain loyal and support a consensus persisted under Touré's 'national unity platform' in spite of the formal ending of one-party dominance.²⁵ Debate on the country's development and security issues was practically eliminated; the precarious situation in the country's northern region, for example, was not a subject of parliamentary discussion.²⁶ As a result, Mali's political system gradually lost its legitimacy.

Corruption and the culture of impunity: 'Yuruguyurugu'²⁷

The delegitimising effects of weak political representation and oversight were exacerbated by widespread corruption in the public sector. In the spring of 2012, reports from Bamako indicated that the military coup leaders sought to justify their actions by pointing to deep corruption in the Touré regime.²⁸ In the December 2012 Afrobarometer survey, Malians highlighted 'lack of patriotism on the parts of the leaders and weakness of the state' as the main causes of the crisis in the country. One year later, the survey quoted 'foreign terrorists and corruption are [...] the two primary causes of the Northern conflict.'²⁹

²⁴ Susanna D. Wing, 'Mali: The Politics of a Crisis', *African Affairs* 1-10 (2013), 1; Martin Van Vliet, 'Weak Legislature, Failing MPs, and the Collapse of Democracy in Mali', *African Affairs* 113/450 (2013), 45-46.

²⁵ Van Vliet, 'Weak Legislature', 45-46, 52

²⁶ Camino Kavanagh, Stephen Ellis, 'Comment: On the Global Initiative Paper "Illicit Trafficking and Instability in Mali"', The Global Initiative against Transnational Organized Crime 2014, http://cic.nyu.edu/sites/default/files/kavanagh_ellis_illicit_trafficking_april_2014.pdf, accessed 14 February 2015, 2; Van Vliet, 'Weak Legislature', 52-53, 63.

²⁷ 'Yuruguyurugu' is a term in Bambara—the language most widely spoken in Mali—used to describe corrupt practices. It encompasses illegal trafficking, suspicious deals, and a broader 'arrangement' among stakeholders. See Michel Galy, *La guerre au Mali*, La Découverte, Paris 2013, chapter 4, 4.

²⁸ Nicolas Van de Walle, 'Foreign Aid in dangerous places – the donors and Mali's democracy'. *United Nations University Working Paper* 2012/61, July 2012, 12.

²⁹ Massa Coulibaly, 'Popular causes and consequences of the conflict in Mali', *Afrobarometer Policy Paper* 10, 2014.

The coup exposed Mali's democracy as nothing more than a façade. Those who staged it initially gained public support because they had removed from power a political class that was considered to be corrupt to its very core.³⁰

High levels of corruption dated back to the regime of Moussa Traoré. According to a popular joke had it, FMI, the French acronym for the International Monetary Fund, would more accurately have been read as 'Famille Moussa et Intimes' ('Moussa's Family and Friends'), indicating the widespread perception of a high rate of diversion of international aid.³¹ Under the Traoré regime, the public sector dominated economic activity, and as a consequence, administration became an easy way to enrich oneself and divert public wealth. The structural adjustment programmes of the 1980s, with attendant cuts in public expenses and social welfare, as well as falling and irregularly paid wages, fostered corruption among officials seeking to supplement unreliable incomes.³² Corruption affected the educational system particularly severely, with widespread instances of exam answers being sold by teachers to students, easily obtained fake diplomas and tolerance toward academic dishonesty drastically lowering the educational level in the country.³³ This would lower the average competency and education level of security force recruits.

The situation did not improve during the Konaré and Touré administrations. According to the Office of the Auditor General (*Bureau du Vérificateur Général*, BVG), CFA 100 billion (\$201 million) 'disappeared' from the state budget in 2005-2006 due to mismanagement (40%) and malpractice (60%)³⁴. In 2009, the BVG estimated a similar loss of CFA 112 billion (\$226 millions).³⁵ Touré's creation of a 'national unity platform' and curtailment of political opposition facilitated state resources being handed out to political allies through a system of patronage and nepotism. Land distribution, for example, favoured investors connected to the political elite; inequalities in resource distribution meant that neither the products of economic growth nor aid funds (constituting up to 50% of the state budget) were channelled into improving living conditions for the majority of citizens.³⁶ In 2010, it was discovered that \$4 million of grants made

³⁰ Wolfram Lacher and Denis M. Tuli, 'Mali: Beyond Counterterrorism', *SWP Comments* no. 7, German Institute for International and Security Affairs (SWP), February 2013, 4.

³¹ Van de Walle, 'Foreign Aid in Dangerous Places', 12.

³² Senate of France, Session ordinaire 2012-2013, Rapport d'information N° 513, au nom de la commission des affaires étrangères, de la défense et des forces armées (1) par le groupe de travail 'Sahel', 105; Jacky Bouju, 'Clientélisme, corruption et gouvernance locale à Mopti (Mali)', *Autrepart* 14, 2000, 143-163.

³³ Georges Berghezan, 'La corruption, au cœur de l'effondrement de l'État malien,' in Bérangère Rouppert (ed.), *Sahel. Éclairer le passé pour mieux dessiner l'avenir*. Groupe de Recherche et d'Information sur la Paix et la Sécurité (GRIP), Brussels 2013, 41-60.

³⁴ United Nations Development Programme, 'Mali: Réforme de l'administration publique, accès à l'information et gouvernance électronique. Évaluation de Projet', Dakar 2010, 19.

³⁵ 'Le Vérificateur général rencontre la presse ce samedi pour son rapport bilan', *Maliweb*, 4 March 2011, <http://www.maliweb.net/politique/verificateur-general/le-verificateur-general-rencontre-la-presse-ce-samedi-pour-son-rapport-bilan-msidi-sosso-diarra-va-repondre-au-gouvernement-sur-les-de-112-milliards-f-cfa-de-manque-a-gagner-16683.html>, accessed 20 July 2014.

³⁶ Van Vliet, 'Weak Legislatures', 50; Ivan Briscoe, 'Crime after Jihad: armed groups, the state and illicit business in post-conflict Mali', Clingendael: Netherlands Institute of international Relations, Conflict Research Unit, May 2014, 37.

by the Global Fund to Fight Aids, Tuberculosis and Malaria was appropriated by officials; the aid was subsequently suspended.³⁷

Corruption, fraud and nepotism also distorted recruitment into the public sector; a post in customs, for example, could be bought at a cost of up to CFA 2 million (approximately \$3,500). According to some sources, the practice had become so widespread that it accounted for almost 80% of new recruits in the security sector during the decade preceding the coup.³⁸ The legal profession and the police were widely seen as susceptible to bribery and poorly prepared to curtail the culture of impunity among officials, with judges prepared to hand favourable verdicts to those paying for them.³⁹ The 2009 report assessment of the Africa Peer Review Mechanism (APRM) emphasised that corruption has become endemic in all spheres of public life, including public administration.⁴⁰

In short, corruption became so widespread that the World Bank described it as a ‘generalised sociological phenomenon’ and the UNDP observed that corrupt practices were tolerated as a form of ‘social solidarity.’⁴¹ Corruption also weakened the sense of citizenship: one interviewee evoked a Malian expression stating that ‘Mali belongs to no one’ (‘Mali does not belong to anyone’s father’ in the Bambara language, as fathers are the one who own properties).⁴² In other words, Malian resources have been widely seen as being up for grabs. With the additional impact of trafficking and crime, pervasive corruption has affected the Malian north particularly badly, weakening the social fabric that held societies together.⁴³

The state and the Malian North: corruption, organised crime, and a hybrid security system

Since Malian independence, separatist movements and economic, political and social marginalisation of the north have dogged relations between the central government in Bamako and the Tuareg minority dominating the Sahara desert.⁴⁴ Prior to 2012, the Tuaregs rebelled three times – in the 1960s, 1990s and 2006.⁴⁵ The 1996 peace agreement, initially held up as a model of conflict resolution, initiated the process of decentralisation in order to allow for greater self-government. While the reform did create over 700 new communes and municipalities and provided for local elections, it also decreased transparency and accountability as it introduced additional layers of administration and failed to integrate traditional governance structures

³⁷ Briscoe, ‘Crime after Jihad’, 37.

³⁸ Ibid., 35.

³⁹ Berghezan, ‘La corruption’, 41-60.

⁴⁰ Mécanisme Africain d’Évaluation par les Pairs (Africa Peer Review Mechanism), ‘Rapport d’évaluation de la République du Mali’, May 2009, <http://www1.unece.org/Portals/aprm/Documents/CountryReports/Mali.pdf>, accessed 20 July 2014, 369-371.

⁴¹ World Bank, ‘Mali - Recommandations visant a renforcer le programme anti-corruption,’ Washington, D.C. 2006, <http://documents.worldbank.org/curated/en/2006/01/7209571/mali-recommandations-visant-renforcer-le-programme-anti-corruption-recommandations-visant-renforcer-le-programme-anti-corruption>, accessed 15 July 2014, vi; UNDP, ‘Mali: Réforme de l’administration publique’, 10.

⁴² Interview 41 (senior Malian official).

⁴³ The Global Initiative against Transnational Organized Crime, ‘Illicit Trafficking and Instability in Mali: Past, Present and Future,’ January 2014, http://issuu.com/thebroker/docs/tinti_jan_2014_global_initiative_-_?e=0/10130917, accessed 8 February, 18.

⁴⁴ Lye and Roszkowska, ‘Insurgency, Instability, Intervention’, 4.

⁴⁵ Van Vliet, ‘Weak legislature’, 48.

alongside new ones. Moreover, it did not bring development to the north, whether due to failed policies or misappropriation of funds.⁴⁶ The Bamako government did not manage to extend state governance into the north and instead relied on individualised ties with selected local leaders and their militia to try to manage separatist movements.⁴⁷ As these leaders became more and more involved with organised crime networks, governance structures and criminal organisations became intertwined. During the first decade of the 21st century, organised crime became not only the way in which business was done but also ‘a channel through which the central state in Bamako managed its relations with the north’.⁴⁸

The criminal networks were laid over the social dynamics of the Sahel region, preceded and enabled by the complex web of socio-ethnic links which made it possible to move contraband around. The catastrophic droughts on 1972-74 and 1982-85, coupled with ineffective responses from the state, rendered an already poor region desperate and facilitated the establishment of smuggling networks initially geared toward foodstuffs and later adapted to smuggle tobacco and subsidised fuel. Post-2001, the networks expanded to include cocaine smuggling as the Latin American cartels looked for new routes into Europe. While Mali’s role in the smuggling networks was initially to facilitate the transition from ports in Western Africa across the Sahara desert and into Europe, by 2008-9 drugs were being flown directly into the country.⁴⁹

The activity of Islamist groups added yet another challenge to state institutions in northern Mali. Criminal links—primarily the drug trade but also the ransom payments for kidnapped tourists and diplomats—created and cemented tactical alliances between ethnic leaders, some state officials and extremist groups, including AQIM, Tuareg-led Ansar Dine and the Movement for Monotheism and Jihad in Northern Africa (MUJAO).⁵⁰ Trafficking (drugs and tobacco) and kidnappings are the major sources of revenue for the Islamic militant groups: AQIM would usually be paid 10% of the cargo value in return for safe passage across the insurgent-controlled territory.⁵¹ The Malian government’s reliance on selected networks to maintain its control, combined with failure to curb organised crime networks and activity of Islamist groups meant that the Malian state became just one of many actors juggling for influence and attempting to protect their own interests in the north of the country.⁵²

⁴⁶ Wing, ‘Mali: The Politics of a Crisis’; Interview 51 (U.S. military officer).

⁴⁷ Morten Bøås and Liv Elin Torheim, ‘The trouble in Mali – corruption, collusion, resistance’, *Third World Quarterly* 34:7 (2013), 1283-1284.

⁴⁸ Briscoe, ‘Crime after Jihad’, 15.

⁴⁹ Ibid., 15-16.

⁵⁰ Lacher and Tuli, ‘Mali: Beyond Counterterrorism’, 1-7.

⁵¹ Lye and Roszkowska, ‘Insurgency, Instability, Intervention’, 6.

⁵² Briscoe, ‘Crime after Jihad’, 24.

The corruption – organised crime nexus: the ‘Air Cocaine scandal’

The aptly dubbed ‘Air Cocaine’ scandal exemplified both the reach of the illicit networks and the extent to which they penetrated government structures. In November 2009, a Boeing 727 coming from South America landed in the northern desert of Mali and, bogged down in the sand, could not take off again. Subsequent investigations concluded that large amounts of cocaine were likely carried on board. It was also reported that the General Directorate for External Security (DGSE) attempted to obstruct the investigations, preventing the National Civil Aviation Authority (ANAC) – the body mandated to investigate air accidents – from accessing the crime scene and allegedly enabling the removal of the plane’s cargo. There is also ample evidence that local leaders and even mayors were present during the unloading of illicit goods from the plane, testifying to the reach of corruption and illicit networks in the country’s northern regions.

Based on Abderrahmane Abdelkader (2012)

The Malian Army

The Malian Army struggled with the same problems that affected the Malian state and society in general: factional divisions; links to organised crime; insufficient capacity levels, including weak defence management systems; lack of robust oversight; and widespread corruption, particularly nepotism. But the case of the Army is also an illustration of the political and power-related aspects of corruption: corrupt practices have been widely seen as a way for the Army—which enjoyed significant political influence and received training and material support from the USSR during the Traoré regime—to preserve its influence and share of resources after the transition of the 1990s.⁵³

Following the coup and election of 1991-1992, army officers received key positions in Mali’s civilian institutions. Each government department accommodated a military officer known as the ‘army correspondent attached to the Ministry.’⁵⁴ Under the Touré regime, a similar structure was maintained and further politicised. Touré surrounded himself with a vast patronage network, included senior military officers in his party and continued to place them in various ministries as senior civil servants. 104 officers were promoted to the rank of general (which effectively doubled the number of generals) in return for loyalty to the regime: at the same time, lower officer ranks—from where the 2012 coup leaders hailed—were overlooked.⁵⁵ Recruitment for official posts was

⁵³ Interview 42 (Malian governance researcher); ‘Russie-Mali: Une coopération toujours dynamique’, *Maliweb*, 17 June 2014. <http://www.maliweb.net/economie/cooperation/russie-mali-cooperation-toujours-dynamique-370942.html>, accessed 15 June 2015.

⁵⁴ Interview 41 (senior Malian official).

⁵⁵ Solomon Hussein, ‘Mali: West Africa’s Afghanistan’, *The RUSI Journal* 158 1, March 2013, 12-19; Juan Carlos Castilla Barea, ‘The Malian Armed Forces reform and the future of the EUTM’, Barcelona: Spanish Institute for Strategic Studies, 7th October 2013, http://www.ieee.es/en/Galerias/fichero/docs_opinion/2013/DIEEO93-2013_EUTM_Mali_CastillaBarea_ENGLISH.pdf, accessed 20 February 2015, 6-7.

mostly based on patronage rather than merit and distorted by a lack of transparency.⁵⁶ As a result, over the years, senior military officers became embedded in political patronage networks and enjoyed impunity from laws and their consequences.⁵⁷

‘The problem is not the money; it is the injustice. The hierarchy does not correspond to military competencies. Nine out of ten officers are sons of officers’.⁵⁸

Patronage and a lack of connection between different ranks hollowed out *esprit de corps*, weakening cohesion and operational readiness. Recruitment through patronage rather than a merit-based system also undermined competence levels within the armed forces, which in turn contributed to weaknesses such as patchy or non-existent management systems, frequent lack of basic provisions and delays in the payment of salaries.⁵⁹ These issues, sources familiar with U.S. training and security assistance programmes in West Africa have noted, may contribute to petty corruption among soldiers;⁶⁰ in the Malian case, it is likely that they reinforced deeper fault lines within the army.

The Malian armed forces also evaded scrutiny by civil society and parliamentary bodies. The military budget was an opaque one, enabling little parliamentary control or opportunity to question senior officers about the army’s condition. The procurement process also usually fell outside civilian verification channels.⁶¹ Weak oversight also enabled corruption in recruitment: some Malian officers were reportedly able to inflate troop numbers under their control and divert equipment and pay for ghost soldiers.⁶²

Mali’s regional politics presented a further challenge to the armed forces. Despite multiple attempts, the Malian leadership failed to address regional fissures and tensions arose around the role played by Tuareg recruits in the existing state and security apparatus. Tuareg soldiers were integrated into the army essentially in two ways: either individually or, following peace agreements, collectively. However, during the 1990s large recruitment drive (10 000 recruits), which incorporated many former rebels into the army, new recruits did not undergo basic training, which was simultaneously reduced from 9 to 3 months.⁶³ Non-Tuareg members of the army denounced a positive discrimination policy in favour of the Tuaregs who ‘were integrated into the army at high ranks, based on previous military experience which could not be proven, while others with similar military experience were not promoted.’⁶⁴ Tuareg soldiers in turn expressed discontent at the internal politics of the Army (particularly mistrust among factions) as

⁵⁶ Interview 23 (French official); Interview 35 (Belgian expert); Interview 43 (senior Malian official); Interview 45 (member of the Malian civil society); Dorothée Thiénot, ‘Le blues de l’armée malienne’, *Le Monde diplomatique*, May 2013. <http://www.monde-diplomatique.fr/2013/05/THIENOT/49061>, accessed 21 February 2015.

⁵⁷ Céline Thiriot, ‘La place des militaires dans les régimes post-transition d’Afrique subsaharienne: la difficile resectorisation’, *Revue Internationale de politique comparée* 15(1), 2008, 15-34.

⁵⁸ Thiénot, ‘Le blues de l’armée malienne’; in-house translation.

⁵⁹ Briscoe, ‘Crime after Jihad’, 36-37; Interview 26 (French expert); Interview 28 (French official).

⁶⁰ Thiénot, ‘Le blues de l’armée malienne’, Interviews 48-50 (sources familiar with U.S. security assistance training).

⁶¹ Interview 47 (member of Malian civil society).

⁶² Emile Ouédraogo, ‘Advancing military Professionalism in Africa’, *Research Paper 6*, Africa Center for Strategic Studies, July 2014, <http://africacenter.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/07/ARP-6-EN.pdf>, accessed 20 March 2015, 30.

⁶³ Thiénot, ‘Le blues de l’armée malienne’.

⁶⁴ Galy, *La guerre au Mali*, chapter 5, 6. In-house translation.

well as national politics, particularly limits to the implementation of the decentralisation process. Amadou Toumani Touré's failure to address these issues led some to desert the Army (a regular phenomenon since the 1990s) and join northern militia groups, while southern soldiers deployed to the north would receive a bonus in addition to basic pay, to compensate for what was regarded as a punishment.⁶⁵ These moves reinforced regional and factional divisions, further eroding cohesiveness between different parts of the country and between the recruits and officers that made up Mali's army.

Following the 2006 Algiers Accord, the Malian state gradually disengaged from the north and increasingly exerted control through links with local strongmen and criminal networks. The Accord mandated the restriction of the Malian Army's presence to urban centres in the North and its replacement with local forces, known as the Sahara Security Units (SSUs), outside of cities. The SSUs were to function as mixed units, incorporating southern and northern soldiers; this, however, was never implemented.⁶⁶ The Army's absence from the north also led to neighbouring states—Mauritania, Niger and Algeria—being allowed to pursue militant networks within Mali's territory by the Malian government.⁶⁷

At the same time, Army officers reportedly developed links with the Islamist groups in the north. In September 2010, Mauritanian troops lost eight soldiers in a fight with AQIM on Malian territory; the suspicion was that a Malian officer compromised operational security by leaking information to contacts in AQIM.⁶⁸ The army was also involved in gas trafficking at the border with Algeria and cigarette smuggling. These activities not only required the complicity of state officials but also from the Malian Army and its security personnel, who offered protection to traffickers and armed groups in exchange for financial rewards.⁶⁹

Eventually, a hybrid security system in which defectors and double agents occupied a significant role emerged in northern Mali. Because the Army relied on local militia to secure the area, northern leaders had footholds both in the army and in their local militia groups. For instance, Lamana Ould Bou, a colonel in the Malian army, acted as an intermediary between the DGSE and the smugglers in the north.⁷⁰ Tuareg Imghad leader Ag Gamou benefitted from the financial and military support of the Malian Army, became the highest-ranking Tuareg officer in the Army and was promoted to number two of the general staff; however, he eventually joined the MNLA.⁷¹ This system considerably destabilised and weakened the Malian army, highlighting the failures and contradictions of military strategies.

⁶⁵ Galy, *La guerre au Mali*, chapter 5, 6.

⁶⁶ Briscoe, 'Crime after Jihad', 32; Global Initiative, 'Illicit Trafficking and Instability', 11-13.

⁶⁷ Ibid., 24.

⁶⁸ Ibid., 24.

⁶⁹ Galy, *La Guerre au Mali*, chapter 1, 4 & 12.

⁷⁰ Ibid., chapter 1, 15.

⁷¹ Ibid., chapter 1, 17. However, a source familiar with the situation has suggested that it is possible that Gamou's desertion owed much to the pressure his unit found itself under during the rebellion.

The perfect storm of factional and regional divisions, weak management practices, and government and military corruption can be held at least partly responsible for the ease of the rebel victory in the north in 2012, as well as Captain Amadou Sanogo's effortless coup in Bamako. Captain Sanogo's takeover clearly illustrated the deep problems within the military that no Malian government has been able to address.

Recollections of Army Commandant Doucouré illustrate divided loyalties within the Malian Army. One Ousmane Haidara, a former Tuareg rebel, joined the army as a captain, trained with Doucouré in Koulikoro and became responsible for the Diabali military zone. *'A few days before a Tuareg rebel attack in 2008, Haidara disappears, only to reappear a bit later. The inhabitants of Diabali strongly condemn his attitude and his loyalty, but in vain. He is reappointed to his post and promoted as commandant, then colonel, even though we are from the same intake and I am still a commandant. Moreover, it is the same Colonel Ousmane who led Ansar Dine troops and attacked Diabali in January 2013.'*

Based on Marc-André Boisvert (2013)

6. U.S. assistance to Mali and the impact of corruption

The case of U.S. defence assistance to Mali suggests that focusing solely on providing equipment and operational training, without planning for and addressing corruption risks, is not sufficient in fragile environments. Interview material and in-house research also indicate that the type of engagement the U.S. pursued—described by one interviewee as insubstantial and episodic—was not conducive to tackling overarching, systemic issues or to increasing the overall effectiveness of units and individual soldiers.⁷²

Between 2001-2012, the Malian military was a recipient of U.S. State Department- and Defense Department-funded initiatives including the Pan Sahel Initiative (PSI), African Crisis Response Initiative (ACRI), African Contingency Operations and Training Assistance (ACOTA), International Military Education and Training (IMET), the Counterterrorism Fellowship Program (CTFP), the Aviation Leadership Programme, Section 1206 'Global Train and Equip' Programmes,⁷³ regional programmes run by the [Asia-Pacific Center for Security Studies \(APCSS\)](#) and the [George C. Marshall European Center for Security Studies](#), and the regional Flintlock exercise.⁷⁴ However, overall U.S. security and defence assistance to Mali has been low, whether compared to the State or Defense Department budgets or to funding for civilian initiatives. For example, the USAID budget for Mali in FY2011 totalled \$138 million and in FY2012 totalled \$92 million across four program areas: health (\$62 million), economic growth (\$46 million), education (\$20 million),

Corruption and Malian Army: pathways of impact

- Selection of participants for international training and education courses
- Contracting
- Recruitment distorted by nepotism
- Promotion system
- Equipment diversion
- Bribes to avoid combat posting

governance and communications (\$10.5 million), compared to less than \$3 million spent on defence and security.⁷⁵ This was despite the intensification of assistance following the 2009 kidnapping of two Canadian diplomats and six European tourists by AQIM. Through 2009, President Touré repeatedly requested U.S. assistance in tackling AQIM, stating that with U.S. help and equipment, Malian forces stood ready to counter the extremists operating in the northern part of the country.⁷⁶

⁷² Interview 15 (Senior U.S. military officer, ret'd); Simon J. Powelson, 'Enduring engagement yes, episodic engagement no: lessons for SOF from Mali', Master's Thesis. Institutional Archive of the Naval Postgraduate School, Monterey, California. December 2013. <http://hdl.handle.net/10945/38996>, accessed 15 January 2015, 64.

⁷³ Referred to as 'Section 1206 programmes' as they are authorised by Section 1206 of the annual National Defence Authorization Act adopted by Congress.

⁷⁴ Department of Defense and Department of State, Foreign military Training. Fiscal Years 2013 and 2014. Joint report to Congress, Washington D.C. 2014, <http://www.state.gov/documents/organization/230192.pdf>, accessed 20 March 2015.

⁷⁵ U.S. Embassy Bamako, Mali, 'U.S. Foreign Assistance to Mali', 2 November 2012.

⁷⁶ WikiLeaks dispatches, quoted in Powelson, 'Enduring engagement', 11.

U.S. security assistance programmes comprised three major elements: education for individual officers, unit training by Special Forces teams (SOF),⁷⁷ and equipment transfers aiming to increase combat readiness. In 2009, for example, the U.S. transferred 37 4x4 trucks and communications equipment worth \$ 4.5 million to the Malian Army, and dispatched Special Forces units to train Malian units.⁷⁸ There are, however, indications that the assistance may not have played the role it was meant to play. Analysts suspect that portions of U.S. assistance were directed away from fighting AQIM and toward arming northern Tuareg battalions friendly to the government, while training and equipping specific units brought mixed results.⁷⁹ Systemic institutional weaknesses in the Malian Army, including inadequate defence management systems and corruption, rendered assistance ineffective. U.S. interviewees also recognised that the focus of their engagement—a ‘train-and-equip’ approach prioritising improvements in tactical effectiveness and aerial supply to remote bases—was misplaced in the Malian context.

6.1 Military education

Most security assistance programmes include an educational component. In this report, we focus on two programmes implemented with the Malian Army: the International Military Education and Training (IMET) and unit-level training provided by Special Forces. IMET—which the Defense Security Cooperation Agency (DSCA) describes as the ‘cornerstone of security assistance training’ and which educates 4,000-8,000 foreign military personnel per year—is devoted to individual training and the main teaching courses focus on human rights and civil-military relations.⁸⁰ Individuals selected for IMET training are those who are seen as likely to perform leadership roles in the future and with good chances of being assigned to posts in which they can utilise IMET-offered training. The assumption is that as IMET graduates progress through the ranks, they should be able to add to their training and strengthen the institution in the process.⁸¹

In the Malian context, however, the effectiveness of IMET was curtailed by two issues, with corruption at the source of both. First, U.S. officers as well as Malian interviewees suspected that recruitment for educational programmes was distorted by bribery.⁸² This meant that those attending courses were not necessarily best placed or capable of either absorbing the training or of passing it on to others. Second, it was dubious that recipients of training would actually be capable of passing their skills on in an environment with weak institutional structures.

‘Even if some individuals do not regard a return to the status quo as desirable, they may not have the power or resources to achieve an effective break. Some IMET-trained Malian officers clearly personify

⁷⁷ U.S. unit training programmes fall under a number of assistance streams, primarily Foreign Military Financing and Section 1206. They can be carried out by by Special Forces and regular units. In this report, we’re focussing on SOF engagement.

⁷⁸ Berghezan, ‘La corruption’, 41-60.

⁷⁹ Ibid., 41-60; Powelson, ‘Enduring engagement’, passim. However, Interviewee 2 (Senior U.S. military officer) indicated that most of the diversion occurred after the rebellion had broken out.

⁸⁰ Jesse Dixon Savage and Jonathan D. Caverley, *Foreign Military Training and Coup Propensity*, June 2014, http://www.jonathancaverley.com/uploads/2/9/7/2/29726853/caverleysavage_otago.pdf, accessed 5 February 2015, 7-8. Section 1206 programmes (which have a counter-terrorism focus) also feature modules on human rights.

⁸¹ Savage and Caverley, *Foreign Military Training*, 8-9, 19.

⁸² Interview 4 (Senior U.S. military officer); interview 47 (member of Malian civil society).

this point; while competent individually, once returned to their status quo environment, their skills either atrophy as the system around them completely fails to make use of their knowledge, or they prove unable to export their skills to their parent organization.’⁸³

The type of training received by IMET participants also does not necessarily prepare them adequately for dealing with weak institutions. For the lower ranks, IMET training, such as that received by Amadou Sanogo, can include English language training, intelligence courses, and tactical infantry training.⁸⁴ At officer level, training can incorporate advanced courses on human rights and civil-military relations as well as issues of strategy; however, there are doubts as to whether this helps officers to work within weak, badly managed and/or corrupt institutions.⁸⁵ While it might raise the soldiers’ skills and prestige among peers, it does not easily translate into institutional improvement, particularly in an Army that lacks *esprit de corps* due to factional divisions and nepotism in hiring and promotions.

Our analysis also leads us to conclude that for most of the post-9/11 decade, donor engagement prioritised development of military tactical skills. This does not mean that corruption and related human rights and governance issues (i.e. those often seen as comprising a similar package of ‘ethical training’) were entirely below the radar. U.S. interviewees pointed out that the Defence Institute for International Legal Studies (DIILS) delivered courses on human rights and ethics to the Malian military.⁸⁶ However, DIILS would usually focus on human rights and civil-military relations before all other issues, including corruption. While programming in some cases did involve anti-corruption courses, the usual focus was on human rights issues; this was the case in Mali as well.⁸⁷ More generally, IMET training incorporates human rights training but does not have an explicit focus on transparency, accountability and counter-corruption (TACC) issues.⁸⁸

Most interviewees argued that standalone counter-corruption courses in the Malian armed forces would not have worked. What was needed was an integrated approach addressing other issues, including civil-military relations and good governance, and encompassing state and social entities apart from the army.⁸⁹ The Army, one interviewee indicated, was affected in ways similar to other institutions: moreover, it managed to avoid being controlled by civilian institutions such as the Auditor General’s Office (BVG) or the Parliament. Thus tackling corruption needed to be embedded in a comprehensive reform of institutions and processes, as robust institutional systems and better civilian oversight were important mechanisms for decreasing the risk of corruption.⁹⁰

‘...we emphasize civilian control of the military. When the civilian government is corrupt, and accepts cronyism as a means to get/stay

⁸³ Powelson, ‘Enduring engagement’, 57.

⁸⁴ Savage and Caverley, *Foreign Military Training*, 13.

⁸⁵ Meiser, ‘Dilemma of an African Soldier’; Savage and Caverley, *Foreign Military Training*, 11-14.

⁸⁶ Interview 11 (U.S. official); Interview 2 (former senior U.S. military officer).

⁸⁷ Interviews 48-50 (sources familiar with U.S. security assistance training).

⁸⁸ Federation of American Scientists, ‘International Military Education and Training (IMET)’, http://fas.org/asmp/campaigns/training/IMET2.html#_ftn38, accessed 20 April 2015.

⁸⁹ Interview 16 (international expert); Interview 10 (U.S. official); Interview 7 (U.S. official).

⁹⁰ Interview 47 (member of Malian civil society).

in power, those that rise to the top of the military typically get there via less than objective ways... So, I'd offer that anti-corruption, rule of law, government reform, etc. needs to be done to all sectors of government at the same time. The effort needs to be done long term, consistently, visibly demonstrated and supported by both the civilian and military leadership..., and those that don't comply are held accountable...'⁹¹

The experience of the Development Alternatives Institute (DAI), which carried out a series of Department of Defense-sponsored governance and anti-radicalisation workshops known as the Trans-Sahara Security Symposium in 2007-2012, also indicates that addressing corruption needs to be a part of a wider approach. DAI symposia, stretched over five years, incorporating civilian and military officials, and frequently inviting attendees to return, provided a venue at which participants could freely discuss issues of corruption and start conceptualising the impact of corrupt practices on the effectiveness of state institutions. For many, a U.S. trainer observed, this was the first opportunity in their careers to explore the impact of corrupt practices on professionalism and the condition of governance institutions.⁹² This indicates that long-term, repeated engagement, combined with gradual exchange of experience and relationship-building between trainer and trainee provide a promising model for longer-term training.

6.2 Unit Training

The second stream of engagement within the U.S. defence assistance system—train-and-equip programmes led by Special Forces—did have some positive effects. A Malian interviewee indicated that it acquainted the Malian army with the current trends in warfare (including counter-insurgency) and fostered an understanding of the dangers posed by terrorist activity.⁹³ However, the American 'train and equip' approach prioritised tactical training of individuals and specific units; institution-building considerations were secondary.⁹⁴

The experience of Simon Powelson, a SOF operative engaged in training Malian units, testifies to the programme's limits. Powelson's unit was assigned to train the Echelons Tactiques Inter Armées (ETIAs), mobile units specialising in desert operations. The ETIAs, a 2009 WikiLeaks cable stated, were 'Mali's current unit of choice in the fight against Al Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM)' and as such an early focus of U.S. training.⁹⁵ But, as Powelson found, the structure of the ETIAs made it difficult to plan for sustainable progress. While the units themselves were permanent, the soldiers comprising them came from other units and rotated through particular ETIAs on a six-month basis. Any soldier

"[I]n 2008, [the U.S.] did not have a comprehensive military relationship with Mali. It was a series of relatively uncoordinated training sessions. The whole assistance mission was focused on counter-terrorism."

Interview 8 (Senior U.S. official)

⁹¹ Interview 2 (former senior U.S. military officer).

⁹² Interview 52 (U.S. trainer).

⁹³ Interview 46 (Malian military officer).

⁹⁴ Interview 15 (senior U.S. military officer, ret'd); Interview 7 (Senior U.S. official).

⁹⁵ 'Mali Using Specialized Units in Fight Against AQIM', *U.S. Embassy cables (Bamako)*, 12 August 2009, http://www.wikileaks.org/plusd/cables/09BAMAKO538_a.html, accessed 19 January 2015, 27-28.

trained and equipped as a member of an ETIA would thus take his training and his gear with him when transferring to another unit: with no Malian follow-up for U.S. SOF training, the freshly acquired skills would atrophy and the equipment would be dispersed.⁹⁶ The U.S. military, noting that constant turnover of soldiers did not render training and engagement effective, attempted to engage with the Malian MOD to find a better way to manage the ETIAs. Since these efforts were unsuccessful, the U.S. instead identified a unit that offered the perspective of long-term engagement. The choice was the 33rd Parachute Regiment, which reportedly displayed greater *esprit de corps*, property accountability, and better skills and leadership.⁹⁷ Following longer-term training, Powelson reported improved tactical capabilities.

In this case, however, effectiveness of assistance was also undermined by long-standing divisions within the Malian Army, namely those between the 33rd Parachute Regiment (the 'red berets') and the 'green berets', i.e. other units in the Army (including that of Captain Sanogo). The former acted as guard to President Touré, himself the former commander of the red beret unit, and were outside the regular military chain of command. Their role in ensuring the security of the presidential palace was unfavourably contrasted with that of the green berets, who were usually sent onto battlefields.⁹⁸ This was exacerbated by corruption: bribes would frequently help soldiers to avoid combat postings in the north, making it more likely that those without financial resources and/or backing among upper echelons of the army would be deployed to dangerous assignments.⁹⁹ In this case, U.S. assistance is likely to have played into the divisions and did not help bridge them in order to create a more cohesive military community.¹⁰⁰

This situation contributed to feelings of anger and injustice among Army personnel. Under Captain Sanogo's leadership, the green berets' protests led to President Touré being deposed. No generals or high-ranking officers participated in the coup, which was executed by the lower ranks - precisely those who had been often marginalised by the patronage network encompassing high ranks in the Army and political officials.¹⁰¹ The coup did not put an end to existing tensions within the Army but rather revealed their extent. In opposition to Sanogo's newly proclaimed leadership, the head of the red berets, Colonel Guindo, refused to pay allegiance to a lower-ranking military officer and staged a counter-coup in April 2012. Having failed, he was arrested along with 30 other members of the red berets, whose organisation was officially disbanded by the MoD.¹⁰²

⁹⁶ Powelson, 'Enduring Engagement', 30.

⁹⁷ Ibid., 31-32, 34.

⁹⁸ Interview 25 (French journalist); Castilla Barea, 'The Malian Armed Forces reform', 3, 7.

⁹⁹ Interview 31 (Malian expert); Interview 46 (Malian military officer).

¹⁰⁰ Richard Reeve and Zoe Pelter, 'From new frontier to new normal: Counter-terrorism operations in the Sahel-Sahara', Oxford Research Group, August 2014, <http://oxfordresearchgroup.org.uk/sites/default/files/From%20New%20Frontier%20to%20New%20Normal%20-%20Counter-terrorism%20operations%20in%20the%20Sahel-Sahara.pdf>, accessed 20 February 2015.

¹⁰¹ Lacher and Tuli, 'Mali: Beyond Counterterrorism', 3. This description might not apply to Captain Sanogo himself, who was repeatedly selected for participation in U.S. training programmes.

¹⁰² Ibid. In January 2013 however, the red berets were released from jail and dispersed them among various combat units on the field. About 400 red berets accepted their new postings; others, however, resisted. Tensions eventually led to more fights between the red and green berets in February 2013, killing one civilian. Galy, *La guerre au Mali*, chapter 5, 10.

‘We were so focused on the small unit tactical stuff and by the time we started to shift the focus to the institutions the coup occurred.’¹⁰³

Lack of long-term, sustained engagement decreases the effectiveness of training programmes and allows little time or space for institution-building. But sustained engagement requires both recipient and donor participation and planning. As RAND analysts have found, adequate absorptive capacity and investment of own funds on the recipient side increases the success rate of security assistance programmes, but so does better resourcing, more consistent funding and inclusion of sustainment plans in donor activity.¹⁰⁴

On the Malian side, absorptive capacity was lacking. With regard to a Mali scheme to equip and train light infantry, for example, a U.S. official stated that it was unlikely that Mali would be able to support a training programme in the long term and in the absence of U.S. funding.¹⁰⁵ However, sustaining programmes over time also presented challenges on the U.S. side as intermittent and short-term funding prevented planning over a longer horizon. This was particularly the case with Section 1206 programmes aimed at building up counter-terrorism capabilities: while they can be implemented quicker and are much better funded than other train-and-equip programmes such as Foreign Military Financing (FMF), there is very little room for follow-up in the programme design or planning. Statutory restrictions on funding programmes which would require U.S. funds for follow-on limit the available options and do not help build the capacity of partner nations required to sustain these programmes.¹⁰⁶

Lack of continuity also undermined those U.S. programmes which utilised an approach wider than train-and-equip. The inter-departmental Trans-Sahara Counter-Terrorism Partnership Programme, which encompassed anti-radicalisation initiatives such as improvement in health and education, cultural exchanges to counteract radicalisation, and military tactical training (including the regional Exercise Flintlock), was one such example. The TSCTP was hampered by inter-agency coordination and planning problems and was not guided by an overarching, inter-agency design including priorities and milestones. Rather, each agency focussed on its own slice of the programme. Funding issues also undercut the programme’s efficiency. For example, USAID received TSCTP funding in 2005 and 2007 but not in 2006, which forced it to interrupt a peace-building programme in northern Mali.¹⁰⁷ In the context of mostly train-and-equip programmes, the TSCTP was not enough and did not sufficiently address the armed forces.

6.3 Coordinating, tracking and monitoring assistance

The coordination issues which affected the TSCTP were not unique. Engagement with a recipient country’s security forces usually involves more than one donor and, within donor countries themselves, multiple agencies. With different agencies come different programmes, different priorities, and different sources of funding. This created challenges of data sharing,

¹⁰³ Interview 1 (Senior U.S. military officer).

¹⁰⁴ Paul et al, *What Works Best in Building Partner Capacity*, xvi-xvii.

¹⁰⁵ United States Government Accountability Office (GAO), *DOD and State need to improve sustainment planning and monitoring and evaluation for Section 1206 and 1207 assistance programmes*, GAO-10-431, April 2010, <http://www.gao.gov/assets/310/303180.pdf>, accessed 20 January 2015, 30.

¹⁰⁶ GAO, *DOD and State need to improve sustainment planning*, 4; Interview 2 (Senior U.S. military officer).

¹⁰⁷ United States Government Accountability Office (GAO), *Combating Terrorism: Actions Needed to Enhance Implementation of Trans-Sahara Counter-Terrorism Partnership*, GAO-08-860, July 2008, <http://www.gao.gov/assets/280/279056.pdf>, accessed 20 January 2015, 3-4.

coordination, cooperation and monitoring not only among countries, but also among various agencies within the same government.

Within the U.S. programmes, overall responsibility for international assistance rests with the Department of State, which manages the significant Foreign Military Financing (FMF) and International Military Education and Training (IMET) programmes. Some components of these programmes, however, are delivered by the Department of Defense and related agencies, including the Defense and Security Cooperation Agency (DSCA), the Defense Institute of International Legal Studies (DIILS), geographic combatant commands (in this case AFRICOM), and on occasion by other entities such as the Development Alternatives Incorporated (DAI). The Department of Defense is responsible for its own security assistance programmes. These include Section 1206 programmes aimed at building the capacity of foreign military forces for counter-terrorist purposes; Section 1207, which allows DOD to transfer funds to the State Department and USAID to run non-military stabilisation programmes; and other initiatives such as the Combating Terrorism Fellowship Program and the Aviation Leadership Program.¹⁰⁸ In the recipient country, security assistance programmes are coordinated by the Security Cooperation Officer (SCO), a DOD official.

The U.S. security assistance system is thus a complicated one, with numerous agencies and streams of funding involved. Table 5 illustrates the variety of U.S. programmes with their managing government departments and their spending in Mali between 2008 and 2015. The table is meant to be illustrative rather than exhaustive and/or authoritative, as it is no easy feat to obtain and compile data on security and defence assistance expenditure. While some of the data (i.e. amounts spent in each country per year within each programme) is available, it is neither comprehensive nor easy to access or analyse. In order to gain a full picture of security and defence assistance, it is necessary to scrutinise data from the Congressional spending authorisations, documentation of annual government department spending, and reports from the Defense and Security Cooperation Agency. It is telling that only 4 out of 19 U.S. interviewees who were asked to identify the agency with overall responsibility for monitoring and tracking the spending on programmes and the effectiveness of aid could do so.

‘At one point, a U.S. security trainer on a Malian military base noticed a warehouse. When he inquired if he could look inside, the Malian military agreed. This trainer discovered a large quantity of unopened boxes with equipment the Malian military had been requesting. The Malian’s didn’t even know it was already in the country. It was never sold illicitly or stolen for personal use; they simply didn’t have a record of the equipment anywhere, so the military wasn’t aware of its availability for use....A lot of equipment went astray and it went astray because it was put someplace and people forgot about it...’

Interview 8 (Senior U.S. official)

¹⁰⁸ GAO, *DOD and State need to improve sustainment planning*, 1; DSCA, SAMM, 29; Nina M. Serafino, *Department of Defense ‘Section 1207’ Security and Stabilization Assistance: Background and Congressional Concerns*, FY 2006-2010, Congressional Research Service, Washington D.C. 2011, Summary; Defense Security Cooperation Agency, *Combating Terrorism Fellowship Program (CTFP)*, <http://www.dsca.mil/programs/combating-terrorism-fellowship-program>, accessed 7 May 2015; Security Assistance Monitor, *Aviation Leadership Program*, <http://securityassistance.org/south-asia/content/aviation-leadership-program>, accessed 7 May 2015.

When it comes to monitoring the delivery and use of equipment transferred to the recipient force, the U.S. does employ useful solutions. The Golden Sentry and Blue Lantern programmes, designed to monitor end use of donated articles by recipient forces, incorporate checks on the strength of recipients' management systems and safeguards, and incorporate on-site visits by the so-called Tiger Teams, aimed at verifying the purposes the equipment is put to.¹⁰⁹ However, a 2011 report by the Government Accountability Office has found implementation weaknesses throughout the monitoring programmes in high-priority countries. It is likely that similar weaknesses, exacerbated by funding and staff shortages as well as the shortcomings of the recipient management systems, apply to assistance to countries such as Mali.¹¹⁰ A U.S. official noted that unless the equipment in question was deemed a 'big-ticket item', monitoring would stop after the items reached Malian forces.¹¹¹

¹⁰⁹ Federation of American Scientists, *End-Use Monitoring of Defense Articles and Services. Government-to-Government Services*, Washington D.C. 2005, <http://fas.org/asmp/resources/govern/109th/EUM05.pdf>, accessed 24 April 2015.

¹¹⁰ United States Government Accountability Office (GAO), *Implementation Gaps Limit the Effectiveness of End-Use Monitoring and Human Rights Vetting for U.S. Military Equipment*, GAO-12-89, Washington D.C., November 2011, <http://www.gao.gov/assets/590/586357.html>, accessed 24 April 2015.

¹¹¹ Interview 7 (U.S. official).

Table 5: U.S. Security Assistance to Mali 2008-2012

	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012
Peacekeeping operations (\$)	243,004		127,572	307,126	81,000,000
Regional Centers for Security Studies (\$)	264,356	215,137	156,019	140,242	
Combating Terrorism Fellowship Program (\$)	428,399	474,564	441,974	643,832	266,244
Section 1206 Train and Equip Authority (\$)		601,729		1,087,000	
Section 1004 Counter-Drug Assistance (\$)		12,000			
Misc. DoS & DoD Non-Security Assistance (\$)		5,000			
Foreign Military Financing (\$)		112,000	200,000	200,000	
International Military Education and Training (IMET) (\$)	285,000	306,000	411,000	397,000	69,000
Aviation Leadership Program (\$)	37,429			23,720	33,000
Excess Defense Articles (\$)			257,012		
Non-proliferation, Anti-Terrorism, Demining and Related Programmes (\$)			1,143,000		
Non-Security Assistance – Unified Command (\$)	473,917	1,286,085	3,693,959		
Total (\$)	1,732,105	3,012,515	6,430,536	2,798,920	368,244 (81,368,244 with MINUSMA)
Total: Security Assistance Only	1,258,188	1,721,430	2,736,577	2,798,920	368,244

Source of data: Security Assistance Monitor. In-house compilation.

7. French assistance to Mali

The French model divides security assistance into two main streams: operational, aimed at assisting an allied armed force to carry out operations (frequently in hostile environments) more efficiently; and structural, encompassing mostly training in peacetime.¹¹² Structural assistance is usually carried out by the Directorate of Security and Defence Cooperation (DCSD) at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, with Ministry of Defence units—including regional commands and the general staff—responsible for designing and delivering purely technical assistance. Operational assistance falls within the scope of responsibilities of the Ministry of Defence.¹¹³ The DCSD is also in charge of the domestic safety' programme within the JUSSEC (Justice and Security in the Sahel region) project, which amounted to \$3.3 million in 2009.¹¹⁴ The legal framework for French security cooperation with other countries' armed forces is set through bilateral Agreements on Military Cooperation (AMT).¹¹⁵

French assistance to Mali tended to be slightly higher than the amounts invested by the U.S.:

Table 6: DCSD military cooperation in Mali in 2011

	Amount of Help (\$m)	Number of cooperation volunteers	Operating expenditure (\$)
Mali	4.84	14	266,000

Source: National Assembly of France, *Rapport d'information no. 4431*, 2012, 71.

French security assistance to African countries (including Mali) was housed within both bilateral and multilateral frameworks, with national assistance programmes embedded within regional strategies. The most significant French-African framework is the Reinforcing Africa's Capacity to Maintain Peace initiative (RECAMP), which also formed one of the pillars of the EU's approach to

¹¹² It is worth noting that the French security assistance model incorporates both military and police components, with DCSD also responsible for police assistance. While police-related issues are beyond the scope of this paper, it is a development worth further study. See Jennifer D.P. Moroney et al, *Lessons from U.S. Allies in Security Cooperation with Third Countries. The Cases of Australia, France and the United Kingdom*, Project Air Force, Rand Corporation, Santa Monica 2011, http://www.rand.org/content/dam/rand/pubs/technical_reports/2011/RAND_TR972.pdf, accessed 15 March 2015, 31-33.

¹¹³ Centre interarmées de concepts, de doctrines et d'expérimentations (CICDE), 'Assistance militaire opérationnelle à une force étrangère', *Doctrine Interarmées*, DIA 3.4.5.1-AMON (2011), January 2011, http://www.cicde.defense.gouv.fr/IMG/pdf/20110104_np_cicde_dia-3-4-5-1-amo.pdf, accessed 5 February 2015, 16.

¹¹⁴ Ministère des Affaires étrangères, Direction de la Coopération de sécurité and de défense, *Partenaires sécurité et défense. Revue de la coopération sécurité et défense. Paix et sécurité en Afrique*, Paris, Decembre 2013, http://www.diplomatie.gouv.fr/fr/IMG/pdf/PSD_273_cle033517.pdf, accessed 20 March 2015, 17.

¹¹⁵ Government of France, 'Décret no 90-1075 du 28 novembre 1990 portant publication de l'accord de coopération militaire technique entre le Gouvernement de la République française et le Gouvernement de la République du Mali signé à Bamako le 6 mai 1985', <http://www.legifrance.gouv.fr/affichTexte.do?cidTexte=JORFTEXT000000352292&dateTexte=&categorieLien=id>, accessed 20 February 2015.

training the continent's armed forces.¹¹⁶ The main goal of the RECAMP programme was strengthening peacekeeping capacities in a number of African institutions (primarily the African Union) and countries, including Mali. RECAMP has three main pillars: individual training; support for institutions involved in maintaining peace; and operational support for units engaged in peacekeeping operations. In its design, it brings together structural and operational cooperation, with the inter-ministerial Steering Committee and Strategic Committee (Comité de Pilotage, or COPIL, and Comité d'orientation stratégique, or COS) set up to coordinate the activities of Foreign and Defence Ministries.¹¹⁷

In Mali, RECAMP funded regional peacekeeping training the School of Peacekeeping in Bamako, a centre of excellence for ECOWAS and the African Union. It also funded the Military Staff College in Koulikoro and the Military Administration School (EMA), which trains officers with administrative and financial responsibilities.¹¹⁸

Our interviews suggest that issues affecting the effectiveness of the French training activities were similar to those which reduced the impact of U.S. programmes. Selection of candidates for training, for example, was skewed by corruption and institutional weakness: in theory, selection is to be carried out through competitive exams but interviews suggest that networks and political allegiances mattered more.¹¹⁹ However, while the problem may have been recognised, there is no indication that the issue of corruption was tackled either through programme design or training.

French training programmes did not address the deeper structural problems which most affected the effectiveness of the Malian Army. French-led education, one interviewee argued, was 'too individual'¹²⁰ and did not help build *esprit de corps* in the divided force, ultimately failing to yield long-term institutional improvement. Finally, similarly to the U.S. IMET training, French training courses did not include a component on tackling corruption. The Koulikoro School of Peacekeeping offered courses on human rights and international treaties but a specific focus on TACC issues was not in place despite the risk corruption poses to security assistance programmes.¹²¹ Currently, the Alioune Blondin Beye School of Peacekeeping in Bamako offers a

¹¹⁶ European Union, *EURO RECAMP –AMANI AFRICA (2008-2010)*, Brussels, July 2009, http://www.consilium.europa.eu/uedocs/cmsUpload/090703-Factsheet_EUORECAMP-version3_EN.pdf, accessed 22 March 2015.

¹¹⁷ Centre interarmées de concepts, de doctrines et d'expérimentations (CICDE), 'Renforcement des capacités africaines de maintien de la Paix', *Doctrine interarmées DIA-3.4.7(B)_RECAMP(2011)*, Paris, September 2011, http://www.cicde.defense.gouv.fr/IMG/pdf/20110922_np_cicde_dia-3-4-7-recamp.pdf, accessed 27 February 2015, 33.

¹¹⁸ Ministère des Affaires étrangères, *La formation militaire technique ou spécialisée*, Paris, June 2013, <http://www.diplomatie.gouv.fr/fr/politique-etrangere-de-la-france/defense-et-securite/cooperation-de-securite-et-de-les-ecoles-nationales-a-vocation/article/la-formation-militaire-technique>, accessed 24 April 2015. 'Mali: Inauguration of the Peacekeeping School at Bamako', *Reliefweb*, 26 March 2007, <http://reliefweb.int/report/mali/mali-inauguration-peacekeeping-school-bamako>, accessed 24 April 2015; Eric G. Berman and Katie E. Sams, *Peacekeeping in Africa: Capabilities and Culpabilities*, United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research, Geneva 2000, 302.

¹¹⁹ Interview 38 (Malian military officer).

¹²⁰ Interview 21 (French expert).

¹²¹ *Ibid.*; Interview 22 (French trainer); also Berman and Sams, *Peacekeeping in Africa*, 302.

peacekeeping-related curriculum including issues of human rights and on occasion a judicial-focussed component, but a specific focus on corruption is missing.¹²²

“The army may need more up-to-date training and equipment, but the structural problem is the lack of a unified national moral compass to underwrite its military operations.”¹²³

¹²² We have reviewed the online list of courses available at the Alioune Blondin Beye School of Peacekeeping in Bamako. The list (leading to more detailed course descriptions) is available at <http://www.empbamako.org/index.php/Contenu-du-site/2015-02-17-14-53-02.html> (accessed 2 May 2015).

¹²³ Bøås and Torheim, ‘The trouble in Mali’, 3.

8. Perceptions of and approach to corruption among security assistance donors: the main challenges

In the preceding sections, we outlined the ways in which manifestations of corruption affected the effectiveness of the U.S. and French security assistance programmes. We concluded that tackling corruption, whether separately or as part of a wider approach to institutional reform, was not a prominent consideration in security assistance programmes aimed at the Malian Army. In this section, we review U.S. and French perceptions of corruption in Mali. The goal is to identify reasons why corruption, despite its impact on security assistance programmes, was not high on policymakers' and implementers' lists of priorities.

The French approach to security and defence assistance did not seem to have factored in corruption. The operational assistance manual does include a reference to counter-insurgency training and to tackling organised crime. It also states that operational assistance could be folded into a larger-scale approach such as security sector reform (SSR). However, it does not directly address corruption.¹²⁴ Similarly, the 2011 RECAMP doctrine, which lays out the French approach to supporting African peacekeeping capacities, focuses on tactical and operational training for units in addition to individual training for officers.¹²⁵ RECAMP training, interviewees told us, included training on human rights, prisoner treatment and the Geneva convention, but only addressed corruption 'at the margins', if at all.¹²⁶

Students must be screened for records of human rights abuses, drug trafficking, corruption, criminal conduct, or other activities inconsistent with U.S. policy goals. If an individual's reputable character cannot be validated, the individual shall not be approved for training.

DSCA, Security Assistance Management Manual, 358

On the U.S. side, some interviewees indicated that awareness of corruption was present, particularly on the strategic level:¹²⁷ for the Department of State and USAID, corruption has been a factor in assessing aid recipients. In one instance, Mali received a \$436 million compact through the Millennium Challenge Corporation. In order to enter into the compact, the government had to **meet specific criteria, one of which was control of corruption**.¹²⁸ U.S. officials also said that some aid programmes, particularly civilian ones implemented by USAID, included due diligence on corruption

¹²⁴ CICDE, 'Assistance militaire opérationnelle à une force étrangère', 15, 19.

¹²⁵ CICDE, 'Renforcement des capacités africaines de maintien de la Paix', 23-28.

¹²⁶ Interview 21 (French academic expert).

¹²⁷ Interview 14 (U.S. expert).

¹²⁸ Interview 9 (Senior U.S. official).

issues as well as detailed follow-up of allocated spending,¹²⁹ and that transparency and accountability were discussed during bilateral meetings.¹³⁰

The issue of corruption did not go entirely unnoticed in military thinking. While human rights abuses are the only legal grounds for suspending or stopping assistance,¹³¹ guidance for planners nonetheless included corruption as a relevant planning factor. The DSCA's *Security Assistance Management Manual* (SAMM) states that recipients of IMET training need to be screened for human rights violations and involvement in corrupt practices among other issues, and instructs theatre security assistance planners to consider corruption in their analyses.¹³² The U.S. Army's security assistance manual also includes 'decreased reports of corruption' among the indicators of successful security sector reform and features anti-corruption training among the programmes needed in order for reform within the recipient armed force to be sustained.¹³³

Economic considerations for theatre planning:

- What criminal activities exploit the area of operations (such as corruption, prostitution, extortion, illegal fuel sales, or bomb making)?
- What role do FSF (Foreign Security Forces) currently have regarding corruption within the economic arena in the area of operations?
- What corruption is best left alone in the interest of mission accomplishment?

U.S. Army *Field Manual* 3-22, pp. 3-7

'At the strategic level, corruption is widely acknowledged as a challenge. But, the US programmatic design approach, authority and funding mechanisms, and implementation mechanisms neither encourage nor allow the U.S. to account for corruption in how programs are implemented.'

Interview 14 (U.S. expert)

In the Malian case, however, these guidelines do not seem to have been translated into concrete actions or guidelines. While interviewees indicated that unofficially, U.S. officials would attempt to limit contact with individuals described as 'extreme peddlers of influence',¹³⁴ we did not find evidence of a coherent counter-corruption policy, an assessment of risk corruption posed to the effectiveness of security assistance programmes, or a systematic attempt to counteract it.

The interviews we conducted indicate the lack of a comprehensive anti-corruption approach within security

¹²⁹ Interview 12 (U.S. official).

¹³⁰ Interview 11 (U.S. official).

¹³¹ The legal framework for State Department-funded security assistance programmes is set by three sources: the Foreign Assistance Act (FAA), adopted in 1961; the Arms Export Control Act (AECA) adopted in 1976; and annual appropriations acts passed by Congress and used to finance foreign operations and exports. Department of Defense-funded programmes are authorised through Title 10 U.S. Code, the annual Defense Appropriations Acts passed by Congress, and the annual National Defense Authorization Acts. The FAA and the annual defence authorisations contain provisions on discontinuing assistance in the face of gross human rights violation, first introduced by Senator Patrick Leahy in the late 1990s and known as the Leahy Amendment. See Nina M. Serafino et al, '*Leahy Law*': *Human Rights Provisions and Security Assistance: Issue Overview*, Congressional Research Service, Washington D.C., January 2014, <https://fas.org/sqp/crs/row/R43361.pdf>, accessed 20 March 2015, Summary.

¹³² Defence and Security Cooperation Agency, *Security Assistance Management Manual* (SAMM). Manual 5105.38-M, Washington D.C., October 2003, 358; Department of the Army, *Field Manual (FM) 3-22. Army Support to Security Cooperation*, Washington D.C., June 2013, 3-7.

¹³³ FM 3-22; 3-29, 4-14.

¹³⁴ Interview 11 (Senior U.S. official).

assistance programmes was a function of five factors, most of them affecting both U.S. and French programmes.

Why was corruption not addressed in security assistance?

- the perceived difficulty of conceptualising corruption and gauging its influence;
- the absence of a concrete toolkit enabling planners and implementers to tackle corruption;
- the priority ascribed to other goals—including counter-terrorism—to which corruption was seen as tangential at best;
- the importance of other institutional weaknesses;
- the lack of attention to the political aspects of corruption.

Corruption was pervasive within Malian state institutions, including the armed forces. But its very pervasiveness and intermingling with other institutional shortcomings made its influence difficult to assess and tackle. Most interviewees (particularly in the U.S.) agreed that corruption was present but noted that its nebulous, ‘middle-of-the road’¹³⁵ character was not easy to pinpoint and its impact, intermingled with the consequences of other issues, difficult to gauge.

‘[I]t was subtle. There wasn’t a direct link for example with a guy saying “if you don’t pay this guy off” or “if you don’t pad this contract you won’t be able to work”. It was more an understanding that corruption was present... to include within the military, officers would withhold pay or steer contracts to family members. Corruption was not *the* factor, but it certainly was a factor.’¹³⁶

This was exacerbated by the scope of competencies and overall focus of those delivering aid to Mali, both of which fed into programme design. In particular, an interviewee noted the absence of a concrete anti-corruption toolbox, which would have allowed implementers to address corruption when they saw it:

‘Corruption is hard to tackle because we have no tangible mechanism, outside of reporting it, to address the root causes.’¹³⁷

The issue of corruption also went relatively unnoticed because other issues were seen as higher priorities. In the case of security assistance, tackling institutional weakness (including corruption and links to organised crime) took a back seat, particularly in the north.¹³⁸

¹³⁵ Interview 4 (Senior U.S. military officer).

¹³⁶ Interview 1 (Senior U.S. military officer).

¹³⁷ Interview 3 (U.S. military officer).

¹³⁸ Interview 17 (French expert); Interview 2 (former senior U.S. military officer).

‘DoS will always acknowledge that corruption exists, but it is not high on its priority list...’

Interview 3 (U.S. military officer)

‘The big efforts in Mali were counter-terrorism focused on training and equipping programs at the tactical level and [not] anything to do with anti-corruption.’

Interview 7 (U.S. official)

‘The primary focus was dealing with issues in the North – counter-terrorism took a leading role.’

Interview 2 (former senior U.S. military officer)

Following a setback suffered by the Malian Army during a clash with AQIM fighters in 2011, AFRICOM conducted a survey of the Army’s capabilities in the north, discovering ill-equipped bases with intermittent electricity supplies and undermanned regiments.¹³⁹ Since corruption and institutional weakness frequently lead to such a state of affairs, their impact on troops’ operational readiness should have been part of the analysis.

Corruption issues were also overlooked due to a multitude of other issues encountered by donors; issues which were both entangled with and seemingly more malicious than corruption. Interviewees argued that even where corruption was noticeable, it was not the only or even the main problem. The Malian institutions suffered from lack of competence; a crippling lack of resources; weakness of institutional systems including salary payments, accounting and logistics; and, in case of the army, lack of basic training.¹⁴⁰ This was partly linked to a low level of defence expenditure and a drop from 2% to

1% of GDP between 2000 and 2012.¹⁴¹ Lack of resources and bad management, in turn, engendered ‘survivalist’ corruption: rank-and-file soldiers and officials forced toward corrupt practices by inadequate and intermittently paid salaries.¹⁴²

It is perhaps instructive that one aspect of corruption noted by interviewees in Bamako was missing from the accounts of U.S. and French interviewees: corruption and institutional weakness as a political phenomenon. Bamako-based interviewees noted that international assistance programmes were overly technical and thus not equipped to address problems of the armed forces which stemmed from political and social issues. The weakening of the Malian armed forces, interviewees noted, could be traced back to the way they were accommodated during the democratisation process. As part of this process and a component of the transformation to civilian rule, the Army was incorporated into civilian structures of power. What this created, in effect, was an opportunity for military officers to occupy important administrative posts (ambassadors, provincial governors, etc.) in government departments.¹⁴³ As a result, the army came to be seen as politicised; instead of a career path, it offered a way to access state resources. One consequence was the distortion of the recruitment system, which came to be based on patronage.¹⁴⁴ But, although patronage, nepotism and institutional weakness reduced the long-term effectiveness of training programmes, they were not systematically addressed and little effort was put into managing risks they posed.

¹³⁹ Powelson, ‘Enduring engagement’, 15-16.

¹⁴⁰ Interview 23 (French official); Interview 24 (Canadian expert); Interview 26 (French expert); Interview 27 (French official); Interview 35 (Belgian expert); Interview 8 (Senior U.S. official); Interviews 39-40 (Canadian officials).

¹⁴¹ Interview 38 (Malian military officer).

¹⁴² Interview 53 (French official); Interview 14 (U.S. officer and researcher); Interview 23 (French official).

¹⁴³ Interview 41 (senior Malian official).

¹⁴⁴ Interview 41 (senior Malian official) (39); Interview 38 (Malian military officer); Interview 42 (Malian official); Interview 46 (Malian military officer).

9. Designing corruption out of security assistance programmes: conclusions and recommendations

Conclusions

Our analysis of the U.S. and French security assistance programmes to Mali has identified four issues requiring urgent attention from policymakers and implementers: the overall priority-setting for security assistance programmes; the design of the officer and unit training programmes; the monitoring and tracking of assistance; and the availability of anti-corruption toolboxes. In this section, we reiterate the main conclusions our analysis yielded and use further Transparency International Defence and Security Programme research to offer possible solutions to the issues we identified.

Corruption and security assistance: perceptions, priorities and strategies

Our analysis leads us to conclude that for most of the post-9/11 decade, security assistance donors in Mali pursued train-and-equip approaches privileging tactical training over comprehensive institutional capacity-building and side-lining anti-corruption activities. There is, however, some evidence of evolving approaches both in the U.S. and France. French decision makers, for example, recognised the importance of transparency in security assistance. In a 2008 speech, President's Sarkozy acknowledged the opaque nature of most defence cooperation agreements, which were subsequently published: commitment to transparency as a pillar of security assistance was enshrined in the 2009-2014 Military Planning Law.¹⁴⁵ French interviewees told us that recent initiatives have incorporated greater participation of the partner country in the planning, as well as increased contractualisation, defining each partner's expectations and undertakings for security assistance programmes. The focus of assistance has also shifted from the tactical level to capacity building at the level of decision-making structures, including the Ministry of Defence.¹⁴⁶

¹⁴⁵ Jennifer D.P. Moroney et al, *Lessons from U.S. Allies in Security Cooperation with Third Countries. The Cases of Australia, France and the United Kingdom*, Project Air Force, Rand Corporation, Santa Monica 2011, http://www.rand.org/content/dam/rand/pubs/technical_reports/2011/RAND_TR972.pdf, accessed 15 March 2015, 31-32.

¹⁴⁶ Interviews 29, 53 (French officials).

A similar evolution of thinking has taken place within the U.S. approach:

'[T]he U.S. was focused on a highly technical approach to engagement, which is known as "train and equip". For example: If you are looking at an African police man, the questions asked are: 1) Is his uniform in order? 2) Does he have his sidearm? 3) When he fires his pistol does he hit the target? 4) Has he had the requisite training?). The new approach focused on SSR says: 1) Why did he draw his pistol in the first place? 2) What is his relationship with the community he is patrolling? 3) How does the community view him? From a security assistance perspective, we are moving from a focus on training of units and individuals to building institutional reform and capacity building.'

Interview 15 (Senior U.S. military officer, ret'd)

On the other hand, the transformation of approaches does not appear to have been wholesale and old patterns persist. Despite the commitment to transparency, obtaining timely, comprehensive data on French security assistance still poses a challenge.¹⁴⁷ French operations Serval and Barkhane (both post-coup interventions aimed at pushing back Islamist militants and restoring the Malian state's control over the northern part of the country), focused on counter-terrorism and have maintained tactical alliances with local Northern militia rather than Malian security forces, which is likely to be detrimental to the development of state capabilities.¹⁴⁸ Moreover, as the Global Initiative Against Organized Crime argues, the post-coup interventions still prioritised immediate, operational counter-terrorism issues to the detriment of addressing structural problems such as criminal activity:

Neither Operation Serval nor MINUSMA consider counter-trafficking a priority. "Our priority is counterterrorism. When we stop a car, we are looking for weapons and explosives. Other than that, we let them go," explained a French security source. '[It [Northern Mali] is the size of Germany, it's impossible to search everyone who is passing through. That is the reality.]'¹⁴⁹

Officer and unit training programmes

International military training is an area of practice and research that has been coming under increasing scrutiny.¹⁵⁰ We appreciate that further research is necessary and this is an issue unlikely to be resolved within one explorative study.

The analysis here indicates that in environments where institutions are weak and threatened by corrupt practices, focusing on individual or small unit development is insufficient. Without

¹⁴⁷ Interview 47 (French expert).

¹⁴⁸ Reeve and Pelter, 'From new frontier to new normal', 26-27.

¹⁴⁹ Global Initiative, 'Illicit Trafficking ', 9.

¹⁵⁰ Savage and Caverley, 'Foreign Military Training and Coup Propensity'; Meisser, 'Dilemma of an African Soldier'.

The European Union Training Mission (EUTM) in Mali: have we learned?

The European Union Training Mission in Mali (EUTM) is also meant to address some of the shortcomings of the pre-existing train-and-equip focus. The EUTM forms part of an overall strategy aiming at reinforcing state capacities in the Sahel region and includes four fields of action:

- I. Economic development, good governance and internal conflict resolution;
- II. Political and diplomatic action;
- III. Security and rule of law; and
- IV. The fight against violent extremism and radicalisation.^a

As the table below shows, the budget allocated to the EUTM is substantial. Some analysts, however, have argued that the portion of spending allocated to the Malian Army is insufficient.^b Moreover, the EUTM suffers from structural and funding shortcomings. The mission comprises 550 military trainers and advisers from 24 EU member states (plus three non-member states) who are meant to train 5000 Malian soldiers over two years. The budget, however, is only partially covered through the EU, with each country paying for the personnel they allocate to the mission.^c The different sources of funding and other contributions might make oversight and coordination more difficult.^d

EU spending in the Sahel countries (€m)

	Mali	Mauritania	Niger	Regional Programme	Total
Economic development, good governance and internal conflict resolution	412	61,7	132	54,5	661
Political and diplomatic action	0,66	0	0	0	0,66
Security and rule of law	53	32,5	42,7	50,5	179
Fight against violent extremism and radicalization	8,6	8	23,3	0	40
Total	475	102	198	105	883

Source: French Ministry of Defence, cited in National Assembly of France, *Rapport d'information no. 1288*, 81

It is also unclear whether the EUTM approach on the ground is conducive to raising governance standards and building institutional capacity. The EU mission risks losing legitimacy through its association with northern Mali stakeholders suspected of serious human rights abuses.^e Transparency International's Defence & Security Programme's previous research concludes that the importance of such associations in stoking resentment and distrust among host state residents should not be underestimated.^f

^a European Union External Action Service, *Strategy for Security and Development in the Sahel*, http://eeas.europa.eu/africa/docs/sahel_strategy_en.pdf, accessed 20 February 2015, 7-8.

^b Bruno Heluin, 'Pas un euro n'a été donné pour reconstruire l'armée malienne', *Le Monde*, 22 April 2013.

^c Interview 44 (international official).

^d Lacher and Tuli, 'Mali: Beyond Counterterrorism', 7.

^e Lacher and Tuli, 'Mali: Beyond Counterterrorism', 7.

^f Transparency International UK Defence and Security Programme (TI-DSP), *Corruption. Lessons from the International Mission in Afghanistan*, London 2015, 27.

recipient nation follow-on programmes and structures to support individual and unit development, skills gained through security assistance training are likely to atrophy.

Furthermore, our interviews suggest that training programmes in Mali lacked a specific anti-corruption module and an opportunity for the recipient force to consider the effects of corruption on its strength and efficiency. Additional research by Transparency International's Defence & Security Programme indicates that training of recipient nation security forces should include an embedded anti-corruption element.¹⁵¹

Monitoring, tracking and coordinating assistance

Our analysis suggests that U.S. monitoring programmes such as Golden Sentry and Tiger Team visits go some way toward ensuring effective transfer of assistance. However, in environments affected by weak management practices and widespread corrupt practices, more robust tracking programmes are necessary to manage risks of diversion and waste. Additionally, it appears that security assistance programmes are not accessible to the recipient state's civil society organisations and parliamentary bodies charged with oversight: difficulties in gathering data and the opacity of the Malian defence sector (including budgets) have meant that Malian actors have not been able to engage in meaningful oversight. This report, as well as the work of the International Aid Transparency Initiative, suggests that the availability of useful data, which would enable meaningful oversight, is still limited.¹⁵² If the goal is to build an effective armed force that is well-connected to the society it is protecting, this is not a sustainable solution.

Finally, complex security assistance systems have not yet addressed problems of inter-departmental coordination, as different institutional priorities translate into fragmented implementation of programmes. There are, however, examples of good practice in inter-departmental coordination; this includes the French inter-ministerial Steering Committee and the Strategic Committee.

Transparency International's Defence & Security Programme's research into the conflict in Afghanistan concludes that the international community does have a number of tools and a record of good practices, which can be used to build up host state capacity. A joint oversight committee (in Afghanistan's case, the Independent Joint Anti-Corruption Monitoring and Evaluation Committee, or the MEC), bringing together national and international officials to oversee the design and implementation of anti-corruption policies, has been an effective way to build capacity and ensure host nation ownership of anti-corruption measures.¹⁵³

Anti-corruption analysis and donor training

Based on our research, we have concluded that, while there is some general recognition of the risks that corruption poses to the success of security assistance programmes, more is needed to address corruption effectively. First, the donor analysis does not fully account for the political

¹⁵¹ TI-DSP, *Corruption. Lessons from the International Mission in Afghanistan*, 46-53.

¹⁵² International Aid Transparency Initiative (IATI), *Annual Report 2013*, London 2014, <http://www.aidtransparency.net/reports/IATI-annual-report-2013.pdf>, accessed 20 December 2014. While the main focus of IATI is on Official Development Aid (ODA), it also includes information on the portion of security assistance which is counted as ODA.

¹⁵³ TI-DSP, *Corruption: Lessons from the international mission in Afghanistan*, 14.

aspects of corruption; for example, the significance of the power structures that corrupt practices support. Second, the recognition that corruption matters is not uniform across all donors and institutions engaged in security assistance. Third, the strategic-level perception of corruption has not been translated into training and specific measures available to policymakers and implementers: interviewees indicated that lack of a concrete toolbox impeded their ability to think, let alone do anything, about corruption. These shortcomings impede donors' ability to fully take corruption risks into account and start addressing them.

Recommendations

This report and the subsequent recommendations are based on the analysis of U.S. and French security assistance programmes. However, the recommendations we offer are applicable to most security assistance donors in fragile environments, including states and international organisations such as the EU and the UN. Here, we use the U.S. and French institutions involved in security assistance programmes to illustrate the ways in which the recommendations can be implemented.

Recommendation 1: Policy presumptions and directives

Corruption risks need to be explicitly, systematically and uniformly recognised in the design and delivery of all security assistance programmes, regardless of which agency is the 'lead' on a particular programme. This consideration needs to be both in respect of fraud and mismanagement of the units and forces receiving the assistance, and possible diversion or subversion of the assistance for political or criminal reasons.

- A complex and fragmented security assistance system such as the one functioning in the U.S. will require inter-agency coordination, in particular between the **State Department** and the **Department of Defense**. Given its role as the primary link between the two agencies, the **Bureau of Political-Military Affairs** at the State Department should play a leading role in harmonising approaches to corruption across all security assistance programmes.
- Within the French security assistance system, the **Security and Defence Cooperation Directorate (DCSD)** within the Ministry of Foreign Affairs should take the lead on conceptualising the approach to tackling corruption in security assistance. However, given its leading role in delivering operational assistance, the **Ministry of Defence** should be an active participant in designing guidelines and training aimed at tackling corruption during military operations; Transparency International's Defence & Security Programme's publications offer guidance to that effect.¹⁵⁴

¹⁵⁴ See Transparency International Defence & Security Programme, *Corruption Threats and International Missions; practical guidance for leaders*, London 2014, <https://www.dropbox.com/s/l3ivd017884i4mp/140930%20Corruption%20Threats%20%26%20International%20Missions.pdf>, accessed 25 March 2015.

Recommendation 2: Implementation

In the guidelines and instructions issued by the [State Department, the Department of Defence, the Security and Defence Cooperation Directorate](#) and other equivalent government and international institution departments, explicit consideration should be required of the following:

- Analysis of corruption risks in the political context of the recipient country, including the transparency, accountability and public trust in security institutions;
- Incorporation of anti-corruption analysis into intelligence agency tasking;
- Analysis of specific corruption risks and the way they are likely to affect specific programmes. The major risk categories to include are: procurement, personnel, equipment, financial, and operations;¹⁵⁵
- Corruption risk management tools such as modalities in the design and delivery or assistance.

Recommendation 3: Transparency

In order to increase the availability of information which could be used to monitor assistance, counteract potential diversion and build recipient capacity, donors need to publish comprehensive, detailed, comparable and timely data on security assistance flows. These datasets should be published as open data on the website of [donor state embassies](#). Similar transparency requirements should apply to recipient countries.

- Responsible entities—such as the [State Department's Bureau of Political Affairs](#), the [Defense Department's Office of Security Cooperation](#) and [Section 1206 officials](#), and France's [Directorate of Security and Defence Cooperation \(DCDS\)](#) and [Ministry of Defence](#)—should release timely, comprehensive, and comparable data on security assistance programmes. While in some cases legitimate national security concerns may restrict availability of information, all exceptions need to be substantiated in line with the standards set by Global Principles on National Security and the Right to Information (the Tshwane Principles).¹⁵⁶

Recommendation 4: Training security assistance implementers

Pre-deployment or regular training given to personnel providing security assistance (including [Security Cooperation Officers and Defence Attachés](#)) should include training on corruption risks and specific training on how to introduce the subject of corruption. Training should account for both technical and political aspect of corruption, could take the form of scenarios, and could be implemented by the regional combatant commands as part of their activities.

- Responsible agencies (the [Departments of State and Defence](#), the [DCSD](#) and the French [Ministry of Defence](#)) should develop Transparency, Accountability and Counter-

¹⁵⁵ See for example Transparency International Defence & Security Programme, *Government Defence Anti-Corruption Index 2013*, London 2013, <http://government.defenceindex.org/report>, accessed 25 March 2015.

¹⁵⁶ Global Principles on National Security and the Right to Information (the Tshwane Principles), 12 June 2013, <http://www.opensocietyfoundations.org/sites/default/files/global-principles-national-security-10232013.pdf>, accessed 20 March 2015.

Corruption (TACC) ‘toolboxes’ which incorporate technical and political aspects of corruption, thus providing guidance to implementers.

Recommendation 5: Monitoring of assistance

Oversight of security assistance programmes should be shared between donor and recipient states. Crucially, recipient country institutions—including parliamentary defence committees, Office of the Auditor General (in Mali’s case, Bureau de Vérificateur Général, or BVG), and civil society—need to be empowered to conduct meaningful oversight of defence institutions’ funding and activities, including international aid.

- Donors should consider widening the competencies and resources of **Security Cooperation Officers / Defence Attachés** to include facilitation of monitoring of security assistance through recipient civil society organisations and parliaments.
- Monitoring agencies, including the DOD’s **Golden Sentry** programme, the **Defence Security Cooperation Agency (DSCA)** and regional military commands (e.g. AFRICOM) should coordinate with recipient nation stakeholders in order to monitor the delivery and use of assistance.

Recommendation 6: Military training

Responsible entities—such as the **U.S. State Department, Department of Defense** and **Defense Institute for International Legal Studies**; France’s **Directorate of Security and Defence Cooperation**; and **regional military commands**—should review officer and unit training programmes and analyse the impact that structural weaknesses, including corruption and weak defence management systems, can have on the effectiveness of programmes. Training programme design should also consider how individual recipients can utilise the training in fragile or corrupt environments. Finally, training programmes for recipient state armed forces should include a counter-corruption component.

Corruption, often in conjunction with organised crime, factional divisions, and inadequate management practices, hollows out state security institutions. Weak institutions are less capable of benefitting from security assistance programmes and can endanger the well-being of populations. Through the recommendations and analysis contained in this report, Transparency International’s Defence & Security Programme hopes to contribute to the conversation on possible ways to improve security assistance and reduce its vulnerability to corruption. Further research and analysis are clearly necessary, as is engagement with both donor and recipient countries in order to design effective, mutually beneficial solutions. We stand ready to make available our experience and expertise in defence anti-corruption programmes.

Abbreviations

ACOTA	African Contingency Operations and Training Assistance
ACRI	Africa Crisis Response Initiative
AFRICOM	Africa Command
AMT	Assistance militaire technique / Technical military assistance
APCSS	Asia-Pacific Center for Security Studies
APRM	Africa Peer Review Mechanism
AQIM	Al Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb
ATT	Amadou Toumani Touré
BVG	Bureau du Vérificateur Général / Office of the Auditor General
CFA	Communauté Financière d'Afrique / Financial Community of Africa (francs)
CTFP	Counterterrorism Fellowship Programme
DAI	Development Alternatives Institute
DCSD	Directorat de la Coopération de Sécurité et de Défense / Security and Defence Cooperation Directorate
DOD	U.S. Department of Defense
DOS	U.S. Department of State
DGSE	Direction générale de la sécurité extérieure / Directorate-General for External Security
DSCA	Defense Security Cooperation Agency
DIILS	Defense Institute for International Legal Studies
ECOWAS	Economic Community of West African States
EMA	École Militaire d'Administration / Military Administration School
ETIA	Échelons Tactiques Interarmées / Joint Tactical Level units
EU	European Union
EUTM	European Union Training Mission in Mali
FMF	Foreign Military Financing
IMET	International Military Education and Training
JUSSEC	Projet Justice et Sécurité en sahélo-saharienne / Project for Justice and Security in the Sahel region
MEC	Monitoring and Evaluation Committee
MINUSMA	Mission multidimensionnelle intégrée des Nations unies pour la stabilisation du Mali / United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilisation Mission in Mali
MNLA	Mouvement nationale pour la libération de l'Azawad / National Movement for the Liberation of Azawad
MOD	Ministry of Defence
MUJAO	Mouvement pour l'unicité et le jihad en Afrique de l'Ouest / Movement for Oneness and Jihad in Western Africa
PSI	Pan-Sahel Initiative
RECAMP	Reinforcing Africa's Capacity to Maintain Peace initiative
SAMM	Security Assistance Management Manual
SOF	Special Operations Forces
SSR	Security Sector Reform
SSU	Sahara Security Unit
TACC	Transparency, Accountability and Counter-Corruption
TSCTP	Trans-Sahara Counterterrorism Partnership
UN	United Nations
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
USAID	U.S. Agency for International Development

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