



Illegal Drug Trade in Africa: Trends and U.S. Policy

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Summary

Africa has historically held a peripheral role in the transnational illicit drug trade, but in recent years has increasingly become a locus for drug trafficking, particularly of cocaine. Recent estimates suggest that in recent years, apart from late 2008 and 2009, between 46 and 300 metric tons of South American cocaine may have transited West Africa en route to Europe. Recent cocaine seizure levels are sharply higher than those in the late 1990s and early 2000s, which in all of Africa rarely exceeded 1 metric ton a year. Africa's emergence as a trafficking nexus appears to have resulted from structural shifts in international drug trafficking patterns, including heightened European demand for cocaine, international counternarcotics pressure driving drug traffickers away from traditional trafficking routes, and the operational allure for traffickers of low levels of law enforcement capacity and high rates of corruption in many African countries.

The growth of drug trafficking through Africa poses new challenges to international counternarcotics efforts, as well as a variety of emergent threats to the United States. Novel strategies and adaptations of existing efforts may be required to track emergent drug flow patterns, dismantle major criminal syndicates involved in such trafficking, and prevent future hotspots from emerging. While most of the cocaine transiting Africa is destined for Europe, and little of it enters the United States, other illicit substances trafficked through the region, notably heroin and illegally traded chemical precursors used to produce illicit drugs, do enter the United States. The growing drug trade in Africa also poses other threats to U.S. interests. These include the reported involvement of Latin American criminal groups, including elements of at least one U.S.-designated terrorist organization, which are targets of U.S. counternarcotics or military operations. Other challenges include threats to U.S. policy interests and assistance programs in Africa, such as efforts to advance good governance, political stability, rule of law, and human rights, and programs to build African law enforcement and counternarcotics capacities.

U.S. counternarcotics policy responses to the rise in trans-Africa drug trafficking are in the formative stages. Several U.S. agencies are evaluating the scope of the problem and identifying short-term remedies, such as efforts to expand drug monitoring and interdiction in Africa, and long-term efforts designed to strengthen local capacity to combat drugs in the region. In recent years, U.S. agencies have begun to devote greater resources to combating the drug trade in Africa. The State Department requested \$7.5 million for counternarcotics assistance in Africa in FY2010, up from about \$0.5 million in FY2006, while the Department of Defense (DOD) plans to allocate \$19.3 million in FY2009 and \$28 million in FY2010 to counternarcotics programs in Africa.

The threat of drug trafficking in Africa has drawn attention in recent Congresses. P.L. 110-417, for instance, required that DOD submit a report to Congress laying out a counternarcotics strategy for the region. On June 23, 2009, the Senate Foreign Relations Committee held a hearing entitled *Confronting Drug Trafficking in West Africa*. In responding to recent and ongoing executive branch efforts to devote increased resources and attention to this problem, Congress may choose to review existing authorities and funding levels for counternarcotics programs in Africa. Key policy questions that may arise in this respect include how best to reduce gaps in intelligence and data collection relating to the drug trade in Africa, how to balance short-term and long-term counternarcotics goals and strategies, how various U.S. civilian and military and international agency counternarcotics roles and responsibilities in Africa should be defined, and what types and levels of resources these efforts may require.

Contents

Introduction: The Rising Drug Trafficking Threat.....	1
Recent Developments.....	2
Implications for U.S. Interests	3
Confluence of Transnational Drug Syndicates and Other Security Threats	4
Potential Links Between Drug Trafficking and Terrorist Groups	4
Potential for Narco-Violence?	7
A New Drug Production Zone?	8
Other Threats to U.S. Foreign Policy Goals	8
Corruption and Other Funding-Based Threats to Law Enforcement	8
Possible Economic Effects	9
Possible Governance Impacts	10
Drug Trafficking Trends in Africa	10
Trafficking: Overview	10
Cocaine.....	12
Sources and Destinations.....	12
Volume	13
Geography of Trafficking.....	14
Trafficking Patterns and Actors	17
Heroin.....	19
Cannabis and Cannabis Resin.....	21
Synthetic Drugs and Precursor Chemicals	25
Illicit Drug Use Trends in Africa	27
Focus on West Africa: Explaining the Emergence of the Sub-region as a Global Cocaine	
Transit Hub.....	28
Driving Factors	28
Push Factors	28
Pull Factors.....	29
Driving Factors: Two Applied Examples	30
Role of West African Criminal Syndicates	31
U.S. Policy.....	33
Interagency Approach?.....	34
Implementation.....	35
Counternarcotics Foreign Assistance	36
State Department.....	36
DOD/AFRICOM	37
Maritime and Airport Security Assistance.....	40
Detection, Monitoring, and Interdiction Operations	40
Drug Enforcement Administration Role.....	41
Drug-Related Anti-money Laundering Efforts	42
Multilateral and Regional Efforts to Combat Drug Trafficking in Africa	42
Congressional Role and Possible Oversight Issues.....	46
Data Reliability: Implications for Analysis and Policymaking.....	47
Short-Term, Targeted Counternarcotics Assistance Versus Long-Term Law	
Enforcement Capacity Building.....	48

Resource Level and Allocation Considerations 48
Defining Agency Roles and Responsibilities 49

Figures

Figure A-1. Map of Africa 56

Tables

Table 1. 2006 Drug Seizures in Africa 11
Table 2. Cocaine Seizures in Africa, 2000-2006..... 14
Table 3. Heroin and Morphine Seizures in Africa, 2000-2006 21
Table 4. Cannabis Herb Seizures in Africa, 2000-2006 22
Table 5. Cannabis Plant Seizures in Africa, 2000-2006 22
Table 6. Cannabis Resin Seizures in Africa, 2000-2006 24
Table 7. Amphetamine-Type Drug Seizures in Africa, 2000-2006 25
Table 8. Ecstasy Seizures in Africa, 2000-2006 26
Table 9. Number of Drug Users in Africa, 2005-2006..... 28
Table 10. Status of Interagency Country Assessments 35
Table 11. State Department Counternarcotics Assistance to Africa, FY2006 Actual-
FY2010 Request 37
Table 12. DOD/AFRICOM Counternarcotics Assistance to Africa, FY2009-FY2010..... 38
Table 13. DOD Counternarcotics Strategy for Africa 39
Table A-1. Reported Cocaine Seizures of 10 Kilos or More in West Africa Since 2000 51
Table A-2. Status of Sub-Saharan and North African Countries’ Membership in
Multilateral Anti-Crime Agreements or Bodies 53

Appendixes

Appendix. Cocaine Seizures and African Membership in Illicit Drug Conventions 51

Contacts

Author Contact Information 56

Introduction: The Rising Drug Trafficking Threat

A rise in illicit drug trafficking in Africa in recent years has drawn the attention of U.S. policy makers. The 110th Congress, for instance, passed P.L. 110-417, requiring the Department of Defense (DOD) to author a report to Congress laying out a counternarcotics strategy for the region, among other related goals. The issue has also arisen in the 111th Congress. On June 23, 2009, the Senate Foreign Relations Committee (SFRC) held a hearing entitled *Confronting Drug Trafficking in West Africa*, and other recent hearings, such as a late 2009 SFRC hearing on U.S. counterterrorism activities in Africa's Sahel region, have also referenced this issue. President Barack Obama has also highlighted the challenge posed by drug trafficking in Africa, which he has stated "threatens stability" throughout West Africa.¹

Africans have been involved in the global illicit drug trade for several decades, both in Africa and elsewhere, but as a region, sub-Saharan Africa played a generally peripheral role in large-scale global drug trafficking prior to the mid-2000s. This was due, in part, to its geographic distance from traditional key centers of non-cannabis illicit drug production and consumption and from primary transit routes between them. While commercially significant amounts of some drugs, particularly heroin, reportedly transited the region in the 1980s and 1990s, the amounts trafficked were generally much smaller than those in most other global regions. With the exception of cannabis, local drug demand and supply incentives also remained low by global standards for several reasons. These included a relative lack of purchasing power as a result of low average household incomes across much of sub-Saharan Africa ("Africa" hereafter, except where otherwise noted), along with widespread cultural unfamiliarity with and exposure to the main non-cannabis, illicit narcotics common in other parts of the world.

Africa's historically relative peripheral status vis-à-vis the global trade in non-cannabis illicit narcotic drugs appears, however, to be ending. Hotspots of illegal drug activity have emerged in West Africa and East Africa, as well as in Southern Africa. Diverse signs of drug trafficking activity in West Africa during the past five years indicate that this sub-region is emerging as a key warehousing and transshipment hub for large-scale consignments of South American cocaine being smuggled en route to Europe.² In recent years—albeit not in late 2008 or 2009, an anomaly discussed below—the region has witnessed a sharp rise in record-sized multi-ton cocaine seizures and a rise in reported cocaine criminal cases involving diverse foreign and African individuals, including African state officials and Latin American drug syndicate members.

According to analyses by government and multilateral agencies, Kenya and Ethiopia are notable transshipment hubs for heroin from Afghanistan and Pakistan. East Africa is the primary smuggling conduit for moving heroin from Southwest Asia to Africa for further transshipment around the globe, according to the International Narcotics Control Board (INCB).³ South Africa

¹ The DOD report was submitted in September 2009. On President Obama's statements, see White House, *Remarks by the President to the Ghanaian Parliament*, (Accra, Ghana), July 11, 2009; and White House, *Readout of the President's Call with President Mills of Ghana*, Office of the Press Secretary, April 10, 2009.

² See, for example, United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), *Drug Trafficking as a Security Threat in West Africa*, November 2008; UNODC, *Cocaine Trafficking in West Africa: The Threat to Stability and Development (with Special Reference to Guinea-Bissau)*, December 2007; UNODC, *Crime and Development in Africa*, June 2005; and UNODC, *Transnational Organized Crime in the West African Region*, 2005, as well as numerous press reports. UNODC, which monitors drug trafficking trends globally and assists countries to design and carry out counternarcotics efforts, is a key source of data on illicit drug trafficking and other criminal trends in Africa.

³ International Narcotics Control Board (INCB), *Report of the International Narcotics Control Board for 2008*, (continued...)

has become a source and transshipment point for synthetic drugs, like methamphetamine and other amphetamine-type drugs, for both domestic consumption and foreign destinations in Europe and South Asia. There are also reports that multiple countries in Africa are being used as hubs for the illicit diversion of chemical precursors used to manufacture illegal drugs. According to the INCB, Africa “has emerged as a major area” for the diversion to the Americas and elsewhere of the key methamphetamine precursor chemicals ephedrine and pseudoephedrine.⁴

Local drug consumption trends are generally not well documented because of a paucity of data on illicit drug usage rates.⁵ Cannabis use rates in Africa, however, are reportedly among the highest worldwide, while available data indicate that use of other drugs, including cocaine, heroin, and amphetamines, is generally below the use rates of other world regions but is growing in some African countries.⁶

Recent Developments

On December 18, 2009, the U.S. Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA) announced the extradition from Ghana and arrest of three West Africans on narco-terrorism charges. The indictees allegedly agreed to transport cocaine for the Colombian drug trafficking and terrorist organization, the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC), from West Africa to Europe with the assistance and protection of regional affiliates of the Al Qaeda terrorist group. These arrests and other reports and congressional testimony suggest that there may be collaboration between drug traffickers and terrorist organizations in the region, as well as linkages between drug smuggling and other types of illicit trafficking and criminal activities. (See “Potential Links Between Drug Trafficking and Terrorist Groups,” below.)

On December 8, 2009, the U.N. Security Council held a special session on drug trafficking as a threat to international peace and security with a focus on Africa. The meeting focused on the “numerous security risks caused by drug trafficking ... in Africa,” among other world regions, including “serious threats posed” by linkages between transnational organized crime and the “increasing link, in some cases, between drug trafficking and the financing of terrorism.”⁷ (See “Multilateral and Regional Efforts to Combat Drug Trafficking in Africa,” below.)

(...continued)

E/INCB/2008/1, February 2009.

⁴ See INCB (2009). See also INCB, *Precursors and Chemicals Frequently Used in the Illicit Manufacture of Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances*, March 2008.

⁵ Such a lack of data is in part due to a lack of treatment facilities, which often help collect such information. UNODC, *2009 World Drug Report*, June 2009.

⁶ Illicit drug markets sometimes arise as an indirect effect of trafficking in countries that lie along trafficking routes but are not primary target market destinations for drug shipments. The availability of local supplies that generate drug use and demand may be created when, for instance, in-kind drug payments are made by large-scale smugglers to local accomplices; when drugs are found on beaches or elsewhere after being lost by smugglers due to shipwrecks or jettisoning to escape law enforcement; or when corrupt police officials sell seized drug stocks. In the context of cocaine trafficking West Africa en route to Europe, this appears to have occurred most prominently in Guinea-Bissau, although there fears—despite a dearth of hard data—that cocaine use may be growing across West Africa. See Kevin Sullivan, “Route of Evil,” *Washington Post*, May 25, 2008; U.N. Integrated Regional Information Networks (IRIN hereafter) “Guinea-Bissau: Cocaine to Europe Produces Addicts Locally,” March 3, 2008; and David Lewis, “W. African Cocaine Use Rises Along Smuggling Routes,” Reuters, February 15, 2010.

⁷ Security Council, “Statement by the President of the Security Council,” S/PV.6233, December 8, 2009.

In 2009, U.S. government agencies continued to formulate and refine Africa-specific counternarcotics programs and assistance plans. Notable in this regard was the completion of several interagency country assessments, which are used to evaluate needs and program counternarcotics assistance for countries and regions in Africa. In addition, in September 2009, the Department of Defense produced a congressionally mandated counternarcotics strategy for the region. Notwithstanding such efforts, P.L. 111-117 (Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2010) did not explicitly allocate funds for Africa-specific counternarcotics efforts, as it did for some other countries and regions, although the bill does fund a variety of global programs that are likely to support such ends in Africa. (See “U.S. Policy,” below.)

There was a decline in reported cocaine seizures in West Africa in the latter half of 2008 and in 2009, following a rapid rise in such seizures in recent prior years. The decline in such reports has spurred analysts to debate whether there has been a corresponding actual decline in volumes of trafficked through the region, and if so what its duration may be—or whether there was no such decline and whether other factors, such as changes in trafficking patterns or a lack of law enforcement intelligence or capacities, may explain the dearth of reported seizures. The discovery in Mali in November 2009 of a wrecked Boeing 727 believed to have been used to transport cocaine, along with other reports indicating the increased use of air-based methods to traffic cocaine in the region, suggests that smuggling methods may have changed, but that volumes at issue may not be declining. (See coverage of cocaine in “Drug Trafficking Trends in Africa” section, below.)

Some reports in 2009 suggested that traffickers may be seeking to transform Africa into a drug-processing and production hub where unrefined illegal base drugs may be converted into finished products, although there is reason to believe that such efforts are embryonic. (See “Implications for U.S. Interests”, below, and coverage of heroin and synthetic drugs and precursor chemicals in “Drug Trafficking Trends in Africa,” below.)

Implications for U.S. Interests

Historically, U.S. and international policy makers directed relatively little attention to counternarcotics issues in Africa, largely because the potential consequences for the United States and other non-African countries arising from drug trafficking in the region were typically viewed as limited. The perception that such activity may indeed threaten U.S. and other international interests has grown, however, as Africa’s role in global trafficking has expanded. Some U.S. observers now argue that the rise in drug trafficking in Africa has been so rapid and large—an indication that international drug trafficking patterns are in flux—that it must now be given heightened consideration within the context of global U.S. counternarcotics goals and strategies.⁸ The extent of this rise also suggests that such activities have the potential to threaten diverse U.S. security, foreign policy, and economic interests within Africa.

⁸ For such a discussion, see hearing before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, Subcommittee on African Affairs: *Confronting Drug Trafficking in West Africa*, June 23, 2009.

Confluence of Transnational Drug Syndicates and Other Security Threats

The growth of drug trafficking through Africa poses new challenges to international counternarcotics efforts, as well as a variety of emergent threats to the United States. These trends suggest that novel strategies or adaptations of existing ones may be required to track emergent drug flow patterns, dismantle major criminal syndicates involved in such trafficking, and prevent future hotspots from emerging. Many observers have raised concerns about potentially growing operational linkages between Latin American, West African, and Southwest Asian drug syndicates and European criminal elements.⁹ The increased trade suggests that such organizations are growing in capacity, strength, and global reach.¹⁰ There are signs that Latin American trafficking syndicates have expanded into the region. Several Latin American individuals from countries such as Colombia, Venezuela, Ecuador, and Mexico, some with known or suspected ties to cocaine syndicates, have been arrested in cocaine cases in West Africa in recent years. DEA also reports that since 2007, “DEA has identified at least nine top-tier South American and Mexican DTOs [drug trafficking organizations] that have established operations in Africa.”¹¹ Numerous Latin American persons, some suspected of having drug links, have reportedly established residences and businesses in Africa, particularly in West Africa.¹²

Many of the same transnational Latin American drug trafficking organizations that supply U.S. drug markets and engage in other, often violent, crimes targeting U.S. citizens, interests, or jurisdictions are believed to be playing a key role in the rapid growth of drug trafficking in Africa.¹³ In this respect, the threat to U.S. interests posed by this trend is direct, because these actors’ expansion into Africa increases their global reach and provides them additional profits and organizational linkages, making them more financially and operationally diversified, robust, and versatile—and thus more difficult to track and halt. For West African criminal groups, growing involvement with Latin American cocaine traffickers signifies their expansion beyond heroin trafficking, their traditional niche in the drug trade.

Potential Links Between Drug Trafficking and Terrorist Groups

Drug trafficking in Africa may also facilitate collaboration or other synergies between drug trafficking organizations and the activities or interests of other entities that are adversarial to U.S.

⁹ Several organized crime groups from Europe, including the Calabrian N’drangheta, as well as others from Italy and Spain, are reported among those that have recently developed a presence in West Africa. See for example, Cockayne and Williams (October 2009).

¹⁰ See, for example, Amado Philip de Andrés, “West Africa Under Attack: Drugs, Organized Crime and Terrorism as the New Threats to Global Security,” *UNISCI Discussion Papers*, January 2008; Antonio L. Mazzitelli, “Transnational Organized Crime in West Africa: The Additional Challenge,” *International Affairs*, 83:6, 2007; UNODC, *Organized Crime and Irregular Migration from Africa to Europe*, July 2006; and UNODC, *Transnational Organized Crime in the West African Region*, 2005.

¹¹ Testimony of Thomas Harrigan, Senate Foreign Relations Committee, Subcommittee on African Affairs: *Confronting Drug Trafficking in West Africa*, June 23, 2009.

¹² For examples, see Appendix A, Table A 1, *Reported Cocaine Seizures of 10 Kilos or More in West Africa Since 2000*.

¹³ See testimony of Michael Braun, Managing Partner of the Spectre Group International, before the House Foreign Affairs Committee, Subcommittee on the Western Hemisphere: *Merida Initiative*, March 18, 2009.

interests.¹⁴ These may include non-drug-related transnational organized crime networks and, potentially, U.S.-designated foreign terrorist organizations, including the leftist rebel group from Colombia, the FARC, and Hezbollah. Both of these groups are reportedly involved in drug trafficking and money laundering in regions other than Africa, and Hezbollah supporters are reportedly common among West Africa's Lebanese commercial diaspora. These or similar entities, potentially including Al Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM), could earn money directly from participation in the African drug trade.¹⁵ Such entities could also derive indirect benefits from the African drug trade (e.g., sources of financing for non-drug operations, increased international ties with other illicit actors, or access to barter deals involving drugs and other illicit goods, such as black market arms).¹⁶

The strongest known link between drug trafficking and international terrorist groups in West Africa involves the FARC, which has been linked to cocaine trafficking into Venezuela, from where much of the cocaine now transiting West Africa is believed to be exported.¹⁷ Hezbollah, which reportedly has financial and business ties and a network of supporters in West Africa and in Europe, among other world regions, has been linked to cocaine traffic originating in or transiting Venezuela, as well as in other countries, including the United States. Although there are no substantiated public reports of Hezbollah involvement in trans-African cocaine traffic originating in Venezuela, given the group's reported involvement in cocaine trafficking in other countries and its links in Africa, some analysts believe that Hezbollah may be involved in Africa-related trafficking trade, particularly with regard to the laundering of trafficking earnings between Europe and Africa.¹⁸ Some analysts believe that a portion of earnings from the trade are laundered

¹⁴ For further discussion of links between criminal and terrorist groups generally, see CRS Report R41004, *International Terrorism and Transnational Crime: Security Threats, U.S. Policy, and Considerations for Congress*, by John Rollins and Liana Sun Wyler.

¹⁵ AQIM is a regional affiliate of the international Al Qaeda terrorist group that operates in multiple countries within the Sahara and is believed to be involved in contraband trade along traditional trans-Saharan smuggling routes. Daniel Williams, "Al-Qaeda Sahara Network Spurs U.S. to Train Chad, Mali Forces," *Bloomberg News*, April 23, 2008; and Nicholas Schmidle, "The Saharan Conundrum," *New York Times Magazine*, February 15, 2009.

¹⁶ See David Lewis, "Qaeda Fuels Security, Criminal Woes in Sahara States," Reuters, February 12, 2010; Williams (2008); Schmidle (2009); David M. Luna/State Department, "Narco-Trafficking: What Is the Nexus With the War on Terror?" panel presentation, Armed Forces Communications and Electronics Association/Southern Command Conference *SOUTH2008: Drugs and the Americas: What Are the Challenges and the Global Impact?*, October 8, 2008; Alain Rodier, "L'Infiltration d'Al-Qaeda en Afrique?" [Al-Qaeda's Infiltration of Africa], Centre Français de Recherche sur le Renseignement (CF2R), *Note d'Actualité*, No. 2, 2004; and J. Peter Pham, "Islamist Extremism's Rising Challenge to Morocco," *World Defense Review*, August 7, 2008.

¹⁷ See CRS Report RL32488, *Venezuela: Political Conditions and U.S. Policy*, by (name redacted); UNODC, *The Threat of Narco-Trafficking in the Americas* (October 2008); International Crisis Group [ICG], *Drugs I: Losing the Fight and Latin American Drugs II: Improving Policy and Reducing Harm*, both dated March 14, 2008; Andy Webb-Vidal, "Cocaine Coasts: Venezuela's and West Africa's Drug Axis," *Jane's Intelligence Review*, February 2009; Angel Rabasa and Peter Chalk, *Colombian Labyrinth: The Synergy of Drugs and Insurgency and Its Implications for Regional Stability*, RAND Corporation, 2001; Samuel Logan, "FARC Moves to Consolidate Trafficking Network," [commentary], *Security Watch*, International Relations and Security Network, July 18, 2006; and Juliette Kerr Luis Carlos Niño, "Brazil to Strengthen Ties with Colombia and Bolivia," *Global Insight Daily Analysis*, July 18, 2008.

¹⁸ On Hezbollah, see U.S. Department of the Treasury, "Treasury Targets Hizballah Network in Africa," press release TG-149, May 27, 2009; Chris Kraul and Sebastian Rotella, "Drug Probe finds Hezbollah Link," *Los Angeles Times*, October 22, 2008; Sara A. Carter, "Hezbollah Uses Mexican Drug Routes into U.S.," *Washington Times*, March 27, 2009; Prepared Statement of James Phillips, for the House Foreign Affairs Committee, Subcommittee on Europe: *Adding Hezbollah to the EU Terrorist List*, June 20, 2007; Douglas Farah, *Hezbollah's External Support Network in West Africa and Latin America*, International Assessment and Strategy Center, August 4, 2006; Michael P. Arena, "Hizballah's Global Criminal Operations," *Global Crime*, August 1, 2006; Luna/State Department (2008); and Senate Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs Committee hearing, *Counterfeit Goods: Easy Cash for Criminals and Terrorists*, May 25, 2005.

through a process in which cash earnings are illicitly exported to African countries, where the funds are then legally wired to banks in the Middle East in which Hezbollah may play a role. Little known evidence, however, indicates that either Hezbollah or AQIM are playing a significant role in drug flows through the region—with the possible exception of hashish in the case of AQIM.¹⁹

In late December 2009, the DEA announced the extradition from Ghana and arrest of three West African individuals on narco-terrorism charges. The indictees, reportedly self-described associates of Al Qaeda, allegedly agreed to transport cocaine for purported representatives of the Colombian drug trafficking and terrorist organization, the FARC, from Mali through North Africa into Spain with the assistance and protection of Al Qaeda. A key charge in the indictment is the allegation that the indictees' actions would have provided pecuniary benefits to Al Qaeda and AQIM, which, like the FARC, are designated as foreign terrorist organizations (FTOs) by the State Department.²⁰ The indictment is believed to be the first publicly known use of 21 U.S.C. 960a to prosecute crimes related to drug trafficking in support of terrorism alleged to have been committed in sub-Saharan Africa.²¹ It also marks the first prosecution of associates of Al Qaeda for narco-terrorism offenses.²²

These arrests reinforce claims that drug traffickers and terrorist organizations in the region may collaborate.²³ In the absence of verifiable proof, some have suggested that a burnt Boeing 727 discovered in Mali (see below) may have had links to Islamic militants or Tuareg rebels known to have operated in the region of Mali where the airplane was found.²⁴ Firm evidence documenting a verifiable drug-terrorism linkage in West Africa has not been documented in detail in publicly available sources. However, UNODC's Costa stated in February 2010 that "there is more than just spotty evidence" of drug trafficker-terrorist links, and multiple media articles have outlined the possible dynamics of and rationales for the existence of such relationships.²⁵ Costa also stated that there is "plenty of evidence" to suggest that cocaine is being exchanged for arms in the region. Similar assertions have been made in other forums; according to UNODC and other

¹⁹ Testimony of William Wechsler, Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense, Office of Counternarcotics and Global Threats, U.S. Department of Defense (DOD), before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, Subcommittee on African Affairs: *Confronting Drug Trafficking in West Africa*, June 23, 2009.

²⁰ The defendants' case will be tried in the Southern District of New York. The indictment implies that the defendants claimed to have linkages with Al Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM), a regional affiliate of Al Qaeda, a term usually used to refer to an organization believed to be controlled by international terrorist Osama Bin Laden and his top associates that is based in the Afghanistan-Pakistan border areas, rather than West Africa. In describing the indictees' alleged linkages to these groups, however, the indictment employs the term "Al Qaeda," along with references to other unspecified "groups in North Africa with affiliations to Al Qaeda." See U.S. Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA), "Three Al Qaeda Associated Arrested on Drug and Terrorism Charges," Press Release, December 18, 2009 and United States of America Vs. Oumar Issa, Harouna Toure, and Idriss Abelrahman, Defendants, indictment laid in the Southern District of New York. On Al Qaeda and its regional affiliates, see CRS Report R41070, *Al Qaeda and Affiliates: Historical Perspective, Global Presence, and Implications for U.S. Policy*, coordinated by John Rollins.

²¹ 21 U.S.C. 960a, authorized under the USA PATRIOT Improvement and Reauthorization Act of 2005 (Public Law No: 109-177, enacted in 2006), outlaws "narco-terrorism," or drug trafficking in support of terrorism, including in jurisdictions outside the United States.

²² Drug Enforcement Administration, U.S. Department of Justice, *FY 2011 Performance Budget*, Congressional Budget Submission.

²³ Scott Baldauf, "Air Al Qaeda: Are Latin American's Drug Cartels Giving Al Qaeda a Lift?" *The Christian Science Monitor*, January 15, 2010.

²⁴ Serge Daniel, "Burnout Boeing, A Clue in African Drugs Trade," *Agence France Presse*, December 11, 2010.

²⁵ Rukmini Callimachi, "UN: Cocaine Being Traded for Arms in West Africa," *Associated Press*, February 15, 2010.

analyses, the drug-for-arms trade may be just one of several secondary or derivative illicit economies growing in the region, including trafficking in persons.²⁶ In at least one case that may illustrate such linkages, a local Malian ethnic Arab leader who has allegedly played a role in negotiations for hostages held by AQIM in late 2009 and 2010 is reportedly linked to the alleged air-based delivery of a large shipment of cocaine in central Mali in 2010.²⁷

Potential for Narco-Violence?

Some analysts warn that the rise in drug trafficking in Africa could prompt a rise in criminal violence in the region. African authorities have seized small arms from Latin American cocaine trafficking suspects in several West African cocaine cases, and several drug trade-related shoot-outs and murders in the region are known to have occurred in recent years. With a few notable exceptions, however, to date there has been no marked or widespread rise in drug-linked criminal violence in Africa.²⁸ While analysts may debate whether there is a potential for the growth of drug-related violence in Africa, other countries' experiences, most notably Mexico today, highlight the potential danger of drug-related violence.

One of the most recent violent, possibly drug-related incidents involved the assassination of Guinea-Bissau's armed forces chief, Batista Tagme Na Wai, on March 1, 2009, which was followed within hours by a reportedly retaliatory murder of the country's president, Joao Bernardo "Nino" Vieira. No publicly available evidence suggests that drug trafficking organizations were behind the assassinations, and there are strong indications that political factors may have played a role in the deaths. Both men were party to Guinea-Bissau's 1998 civil war, and the two men were reportedly bitter political rivals. Some reports suggest, however, that the remote-controlled bomb that was used to assassinate Na Wai could imply a drug link in his death. Such devices are reportedly rarely used in the region but are frequently used by Mexican and Colombian drug trafficking organizations. Both men had taken public stances against drug trafficking, but both were also reportedly believed by diplomatic sources, international organization representatives, and some analysts to have had links to the drug trade.²⁹

²⁶ See UNODC, *Transnational Trafficking and the Rule of Law in West Africa: A Threat Assessment*, July 2009; and James Cockayne and Phil Williams, "The Invisible Tide: Towards an International Strategy to Deal with Drug Trafficking Through West Africa," *International Peace Institute*, October 2009, among others.

²⁷ Mounir Boudjema, "The Sahel has become a time bomb. Al- Qa'idah Maghreb between hostages and cocaine", [excerpt of report by Liberté (Algerian) news website] via BBC Monitoring Middle East, February 7, 2010.

²⁸ Isolated reported incidents include cocaine-related kidnappings and clashes between Tuareg and Arab trafficking elements in northern Mali in late 2009 related to an alleged 10 tonne drug consignment; a shootout between smugglers and security forces prior to the seizure of 750 kilograms of cocaine in Mali near Algeria; the death of two suspected Ghanaian smugglers in Benin prior to an August 2007 seizure of 350 kilograms of cocaine.

²⁹ See Brent Latham, "Bissau Assassinations Highlight Obstacles to Drug Trafficking Fight," *VOA News*, March 3, 2009; Todd Pitman, "Guinea-Bissau Collapse Deepens after Leader Killed," *Associated Press*, March 5, 2009; Assimo Balde and Rukmini Callimachi, "Twin Assassinations Leave Guinea-Bissau in Turmoil," *Associated Press*, March 2, 2009; Tristan McConnell, "President Joao Bernardo Vieira of Guinea-Bissau Assassinated by Army," *The Times*, March 3, 2009; *Agence France Presse*, "Murdered GBissau General Found 200 kilos of Cocaine: Officer," March 5, 2009.

A New Drug Production Zone?

A possible nascent shift in drug trafficking tactics in the region involves reported efforts to transform West Africa into a drug processing and production hub where unrefined illegal base drugs may be converted into finished products. For some years, synthetic drugs have been produced for local and regional consumption in South Africa, as well as other countries in Southern and East Africa.³⁰ South African authorities report to the United Nations that they dismantle approximately 30 synthetic drug labs annually. In July 2009, Guinean officials discovered in at least two locations large quantities of precursor chemicals and solvents known to be used in the processing of cocaine, heroin, and ecstasy, along with specialized equipment used in the manufacture of these drugs, suggesting the presence of clandestine drug processing laboratories on West African soil.³¹ These discoveries—and in particular the implication that ecstasy is being manufactured in West Africa, which would constitute a novel development—possibly suggest that the drug trade is being further entrenched in the region.³² The international community views the July 2009 discovery as a cause for concern, with the International Narcotics Control Board (INCB) in February 2010 calling for greater awareness of the risk that African countries may be used for illegal drug production.³³ However, there have been few similar reports, suggesting that such developments are embryonic at most.

Other Threats to U.S. Foreign Policy Goals

Growing transnational drug trafficking in Africa may directly jeopardize other U.S. foreign and economic policy goals in Africa, such as the promotion of legitimate economic growth, state institution-building, and diverse other foreign aid program goals.³⁴ It could also put at risk large amounts of peacekeeping and post-conflict reconstruction assistance that the United States and other donors have invested in the region, notably in West Africa, in recent decades.

Corruption and Other Funding-Based Threats to Law Enforcement

An increase in drug trafficking could have a negative impact on levels of corruption among law enforcement, judicial, and military officials. Drug corruption poses a particular danger to African states since, due to their institutional and economic weaknesses, relatively small financial resources may be required to elicit high levels of corrupt behavior by officials and to vastly expand the challenges faced by already-challenged criminal justice systems (see text box below on “Regional Vulnerabilities.”)³⁵ Moreover, the high volumes and value of the drugs being moved

³⁰ *INCB 2009 Report*.

³¹ See section on “Drug Trafficking and Use Trends in Africa,” below; “UN Denounces Guinea ‘Drug Labs,’” BBC News, August 6, 2009; and UNODC, “Evidence of Clandestine Laboratory Activity in West Africa,” Press Release, July 31, 2009.

³² UNODC’s Executive Director, Antonio Maria Costa, has stated that some traffickers in the region have experimented with growing opium poppy crops - although, to date, without success. Rukmini Callimachi, “UN: Cocaine Being Traded for Arms in West Africa,” Associated Press, February 15, 2010

³³ *INCB 2009 Report*.

³⁴ See, for example, the U.S. *Foreign Assistance Framework*, which outlines the U.S. government’s primary foreign aid goals, including, good governance, rule of law and human rights, transnational crime, and counternarcotics. State Department, *Supplemental Reference: Foreign Assistance Standardized Program Structure and Definitions*, December 12, 2008.

³⁵ Such corruption has been reported in the region in several countries, most notably Guinea-Bissau, Guinea, and (continued...)

through the region mean that large-scale traffickers have at their disposal financial resources that are significant in relation to low average incomes common in the region. There are indications that this threat is being realized—particularly at regional air and sea ports of entry, where high levels of corruption and low official pay facilitate the trafficking of illegal drugs.³⁶ State officials have been implicated in a number of drug-related cases in multiple African countries. Similarly, the organizational and logistical assets that Latin American drug syndicates can potentially bring to bear in operations in Africa are extensive and sophisticated in comparison to those available to many law enforcement agencies in the region. Should trafficking through the region grow substantially, these assets could pose a substantial added challenge to governments' capacities to combat such activities.

Possible Economic Effects

There are some indications that the scale of the illicit narcotics trade may be growing so large as to rival the volume of legal trade in some sectors. UNODC has reported that the wholesale value of the cocaine transiting West Africa, for example, may be starting to rival that of a number of primary legal export commodities produced in the region. UNODC findings have also highlighted several economic trends that may be indicative of drug-related effects on economies in the region, including the unexplained doubling or tripling in annual remittances from Europe to several West African countries, and relatively sudden, substantial increases in foreign direct investments in several others.³⁷

If drug-related criminality in the region were to increase markedly, some analysts fear that legal foreign investment in the region—which is already low in many countries, due to a variety of factors—could be further deterred, potentially negatively affecting U.S. interests in the region.³⁸

(...continued)

Ghana, among others. In Guinea-Bissau and Ghana, there have been several cases in which suspected large-scale cocaine shipments that were seized or targeted in drug operations disappeared prior to or after being confiscated, in most cases with alleged with official connivance. The National Council for Democracy and Development (CNDD) junta that took power in Guinea in after the death of long-time president Lansana Conte in December 2008, however, has pledged to end cocaine trafficking, even though there are reports that some of its membership has been tied to cocaine trafficking. See UNODC (December 2007); Léonard Vincent, *Guinea-Bissau: Cocaine and Coups Haunt Gagged Nation*, Reporters Without Borders, November 2007; Alistair Thomson, "Drugs Trade Threatens to Corrode Ghana's Image," *Reuters*, December 23, 2008; Africa Confidential, "Ghana: Snow White," July 21, 2006, and "Ghana: Show Time for the Spooks," January 16, 2008; Bismark Bebli, "The Drug Menace, Country Sits on Time Bomb," *Ghanaian Chronicle*, May 7, 2008; Dan McDougall, "Ghana to UK: The New Trail of Misery," *The Observer* (UK), November 11, 2007; BBC News, "Guinea Drug Agents are 'Corrupt,'" October 22, 2008; BBC News, "Guinea Drugs Bust Nets Officials," September 5, 2008; Pascal Fletcher, "Bauxite-Exporter Guinea Faces Drugs Trade Threat-UN," July 12, 2008; Integrated Regional Information Networks News (IRIN)/U.N. Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, "Guinea: Drug Trade 'Potentially More Dangerous Than Guinea-Bissau,'" October 10, 2008; Saliou Samb, "Guinea Holds Conte Son in Drugs Probe - Police," *Reuters*, February 24, 2009; and Agence France Presse, "Guinea: Son of Late President Conte Confesses to Drugs Trafficking," February 26, 2009.

³⁶ Stephanie Hanson, "In West Africa, Threat of Narco-States," Council on Foreign Relations—Daily Analysis, July 10, 2007.

³⁷ See for example UNODC (November 2008) and UNODC (December 2007).

³⁸ Such factors include investor concerns over high business risk, perceived high levels of corruption, lack of infrastructure and diversified supply chains, and the relative difficulty of doing business in the region, among others. Several studies and annual indices show that, whether merited or not, such factors are widely viewed by many investors as major impediments to investment in Africa. See, for instance, World Bank *Ease of Doing Business*, 2009; and Africa Business Initiative, U.S. Chamber of Commerce, *Inside the Boardroom: How Corporate America Really Views Africa*, May 2009; and Transparency International, *Corruption Perceptions Index*, 2008.

For example, State Department analysts suggest that such inhibitions on investment could potentially negatively affect U.S. energy security interests in the region by affecting U.S. oil sector investments.³⁹ On the other hand, it remains unclear how much of a marginal increase drug-related inhibitions on investment, including investment in the energy sector, might add to a substantial existing level of foreign business reticence to invest in Africa. Large energy firms have long routinely operated in very challenging business climates, remote and harsh environmental contexts, and in countries that are affected by high levels of corruption or political instability.

Possible Governance Impacts

Corruption and the economic value of inflows of drug-related hard currency funds into Africa's relatively small economies hold the potential to undermine the political will to strongly back substantive and effective counter-narcotics efforts, and could pose a range of broader governance threats. These include the potential undermining of civil and constitutional liberties, notably freedom of the press, and limitations on citizens' franchise powers to suit the interests of corrupt officials. In the extreme, in cases in which the operational influence of drug trafficking networks significantly penetrates key institutions, such as the military, the sovereignty or viability of states as independent rule of law-based entities may be jeopardized. Such concerns have been repeatedly raised by many analysts with regard to Guinea-Bissau, as well as Guinea, albeit to a lesser extent, during the final years in power of the late President Conte.

Drug Trafficking Trends in Africa

Trafficking: Overview

Although long considered a relatively minor global source, destination, and transit point for illegal drugs, Africa's role in global illicit drug trade has grown in recent years (see **Table 1** for drug seizure levels in 2006, the most recent year for which Africa-wide data were available). Most prominent among recent drug trafficking trends in Africa is the record number of multi-ton seizures of cocaine in West Africa. Between 2005 and 2008, West African, European, and U.S. officials have seized at least 46 metric tons of cocaine bound for Europe via West Africa. This represents a significant rise over impoundment levels in the late 1990s and early 2000s, when total drug seizures rarely exceeded more than 1 metric ton per year for the entire continent. Although the region has long been a transit point for small consignments of cocaine destined for Europe, the volume and frequency of cocaine seizures in recent years appears to indicate emerging changes in methods used for trafficking of cocaine, the mix of criminal actors involved, and in patterns of global cocaine movement and consumption. How durable such changes may prove, however, is unclear.

³⁹ State Department response to CRS inquiry, June 2, 2009.

Table 1.2006 Drug Seizures in Africa
(simplified drug breakdown, in kilogram equivalents)

	Heroin and Morphine	Cocaine	Cannabis Herb	Cannabis Plant	Cannabis Resin	Amphetamines	Ecstasy
East Africa	137.9	17.0	225,340.6	32,236.1	2.3	N/A	0.0
North Africa	78.6	91.2	146,490.5	427.7	118,523.6	2.1	1.0
Southern Africa	29.7	363.4	637,227.9	145,751.6	54.8	315.4	22.9
West and Central Africa	107.6	14,578.9	207,820.0	928.4	10,426.0	517.7	3.5
<i>Africa Total</i>	<i>353.8</i>	<i>15,050.6</i>	<i>1,216,879.1</i>	<i>179,343.7</i>	<i>129,006.8</i>	<i>835.1</i>	<i>27.5</i>
<i>World Total</i>	<i>103,991.6</i>	<i>705,789.4</i>	<i>5,239,695.3</i>	<i>1,340,507.5</i>	<i>1,024,828.6</i>	<i>43,171.5</i>	<i>4,510.7</i>
<i>African Share of Global Total (%)</i>	<i>0.3%</i>	<i>2.1%</i>	<i>23.2%</i>	<i>13.4%</i>	<i>12.5%</i>	<i>1.9%</i>	<i>0.6%</i>

Source: UNODC, *Interactive Seizures Tables and Graphs*. Data current as of September 30, 2008.

Notes: Data may not total due to rounding. According to the UNODC, a possible seizure estimate error related to a cocaine case in Nigeria in 2006 may exaggerate total cocaine seizures for the region by as much as 11 tons for that year. In addition, a lack of data for some countries may result in under-reporting for all years. No other source for comparable data is available as of June 10, 2009.

While a wide variety of factors may explain the relatively sudden rise of cocaine trafficking through West Africa, a number of structural and institutional characteristics common to many African countries may make the region as a whole susceptible to trafficking of various illicit substances. These are discussed in the following text box.

Regional Vulnerabilities

Africa—in particular West Africa with respect to cocaine trafficking—is viewed as attractive to traffickers because they are likely to face relatively lower risks of monitoring and apprehension by law enforcement there than in many other world regions. While the capabilities of African governments vary, sometimes substantially, many countries on the sub-continent share a number of socioeconomic and state characteristics that appear to make the region a favorable operating environment for traffickers. These include the following:

- Poor internal transport and communications systems, which impede tracking and monitoring of drug trafficking.
- Large, sparsely populated, remote zones; porous land borders, frequent, often long-established patterns of unrecorded or illicit cross-border trade.
- Lack of maritime, air, and land surveillance and interdiction technical capacities, and often limited seaport, airport, and border post security and goods shipment controls, and lack of operational and logistical resources for these purposes.
- Institutionally weak law enforcement and judicial systems that, in some cases, are subject to corruption or political influence.
- Limited state regulatory controls and administrative capacities, and a frequent general lack of public fiscal resources, resulting in low levels of public sector compensation and/or salary arrears and often widespread public sector corruption.
- High rates of poverty and unemployment, and a sizable differential between average income levels in the region and the amount of operational capital and profits available to large-scale trafficking organizations.

The latter three factors may give rise to financial incentives that may prompt significant numbers of African citizens or public officials to accept payment in exchange for facilitating or participating in trafficking. Several countries also share other unique features seen as making them particularly susceptible to trafficking. Gambia, Benin, and Togo, for instance, host busy ports that function as large-scale import and re-export hubs for regional trade in licit, gray, and black market goods. This loosely regulated, high-volume trade may offer a useful conduit for concealing illicit drugs. Similarly, several countries, notably Senegal, Nigeria, Kenya, Ethiopia, and Ghana, host regional commercial air traffic hubs that connect the region to Europe and are used by drug mules. Lastly, several countries, notably including Guinea-Bissau, Sierra Leone, and Liberia, are seen as especially vulnerable to trafficking activities because they have emerged from civil wars within the last decade. Their institutional and governance capacities, notably in the area of law enforcement, remain weak and rudimentary, even in regional comparison. They also have lengthy histories of public sector corruption. Sizable cocaine seizures have taken place in each of them, indicating that trafficking can be empirically documented as affecting them.

Cocaine

Sources and Destinations

As with practically all illegal cocaine, that which transits West Africa originates in South America, where it is processed in Colombia and Peru using coca leaves grown in the same countries.⁴⁰ In 2007, Colombian authorities estimated that approximately 35% of cocaine produced and shipped from the coasts of Colombia, Venezuela, the Guyanas, and Brazil is trafficked via West Africa to Europe.⁴¹ During the same time period, U.S. and international

⁴⁰ Bolivia is also a major global source of coca leaf cultivation and cocaine production. However, U.N. reports indicate that Bolivian cocaine is not transiting West Africa. See *INCB 2009 Report*. In this report, unless otherwise noted, all references to cocaine are to illicit cocaine, and not to cocaine that may be legally produced and consumed for medical purposes.

⁴¹ See UNODC, *2008 World Drug Report*; Webb-Vidal (2009); Joanna Wright, "Cocaine Traffickers Develop New Routes From Brazil," *Jane's Intelligence Review*, January 1, 2006; José De Cordoba and David Luhnnow, "U.S. Accuses Venezuelan Officials in Drug Case," *Wall Street Journal*, September 13, 2008; and José De Cordoba, "Chávez Lets Colombia Rebels Wield Power Inside Venezuela," *Wall Street Journal*, November 25, 2008.

authorities estimated that approximately 80% of cocaine traveling from Latin America to Africa moved by sea and the remaining 20% by air. In recent years, the proportion of Latin American cocaine moving through West Africa en route to Europe has increased.

UNODC reports that seizures in Africa increased from under 1 metric ton per year in the 1998-2002 period to 15 metric tons in 2006, and that during the three years from 2005 through 2007, officials seized at least 33 metric tons of cocaine bound for Europe via West Africa.⁴² There has been a corresponding increase in other drug trafficking indicators: in 2006, 34% and 30% of cocaine seized at European airports came from the Caribbean and Latin America, respectively, and 24% came from Africa. In 2007, European cocaine seizures that transited through Africa had jumped to 46% of the total, while those trafficked directly from Latin America provenance increased only slightly, to 33%, and those from the Caribbean dropped to 12%.⁴³ In global terms, African cocaine seizures increased from 0.1% of total global seizures in 2000 to 0.3% in 2005 to 2.1% in 2006 **Table 2**.⁴⁴ While this rise may suggest that cocaine trafficking through Africa remains peripheral in global terms, the proportional rate of growth of this increase has been abrupt, as has its potential impact on European and African drug supply and use trends.

Volume

The actual amount of cocaine transiting Africa en route to Europe is not known; estimates of both the total amount of annual European cocaine consumption and the amount being trafficked through Africa vary significantly. Based on reported drug usage levels in Europe and extrapolations based on drug seizure data, various U.S., European, and international agency estimates suggest that between 46 tons and as much as 300 metric tons of cocaine consumed in Europe may transit West Africa annually.⁴⁵ Estimates of the value of this trade, and the possible amount of profit that it may generate for traffickers, also vary widely. One UNODC study estimated that in 2006, about 40 tons of cocaine worth \$1.8 billion—just over 27% of total European cocaine consumption of 146 tons in that year—passed through Africa. Wholesale profits on this 40 ton amount are estimated at \$450 million, or 25% of the value; these profits may have been significantly higher if some of this amount was retailed.⁴⁶ Potential earnings may

⁴² UNODC (December 2007); Simon Baynham, “Drugs Set to Become Africa’s New Invaders,” *Jane’s Intelligence Review*, September 1996; and Stephen Ellis, “West Africa’s International Drug Trade,” *African Affairs*, 108:431, April 2009.

⁴³ UNODC (December 2007).

⁴⁴ UNODC, *2008 World Drug Report*.

⁴⁵ INTERPOL estimates that as much as 300 metric tons transit through Africa en route to Europe. The U.S. *Interagency Assessment of Cocaine Movement* estimates that approximately 70% of European demand of about 350 metric tons per year, or 245 metric tons, was being trafficked through Africa or African waters. EUROPOL, the European Union Police Office, has estimated that recent annual supply levels of 250 tons, while the INCB reports that approximately 200 to 300 metric tons are smuggled into Europe each year. According to the UNODC, data on seizures of cocaine in Europe for which a place of provenance had been established indicated that 22% of seized cocaine in Europe in 2007 passed through Africa, up from 5% in 2004. This increase was steady; European cocaine seizures with an African provenance stood at 9% in 2005 and 12% in 2006, although there are questions about the methodology used to measure a large seizure in Nigeria in 2006, which contributed to this dramatic rise. See UNODC (November 2008); UNODC, *2008 World Drug Report*; EUROPOL, “Project COLA: European Union Cocaine Situation Report 2007,” September 5, 2007; and *2007 INCB Report*.

⁴⁶ UNODC (December 2007).

also be far higher given that some estimates of the total amount of cocaine entering Europe are significantly higher than the 146 tons used by UNODC to compile this estimate.⁴⁷

In contrast to reported sharp rises in the volume of cocaine trafficked through West Africa during much of the past decade, in the latter half of 2008 and in 2009, there were few reports of major cocaine seizures in West Africa. Seizures at European airports on flights originating in West Africa also reportedly declined markedly.

Table 2. Cocaine Seizures in Africa, 2000-2006
(simplified drug breakdown, in kilogram equivalents)

	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006
East Africa	8.0	7.5	25.0	5.7	1,178.4	12.2	17.0
North Africa	35.8	6.4	21.6	17.2	9.2	843.4	91.2
Southern Africa	272.6	180.7	455.1	818.7	611.0	343.9	363.4
West & Central Africa	137.1	273.0	98.3	269.3	1,797.9	1,365.0	14,578.9
AFRICA TOTAL	453.5	467.7	599.9	1,110.9	3,596.6	2,564.4	15,050.6
Change from Prior Year (%)	2.6%	3.1%	28.3%	85.2%	223.8%	-28.7%	486.9%
Number of Reported Drug Seizures	1,750	539	148	69	2,533	3,681	4,081
Number of African Countries Reporting Seizures	23	21	21	24	25	30	27
GLOBAL TOTAL	344,454.1	365,922.2	372,418.2	499,025.2	579,526.7	749,895.7	705,789.4
AFRICA'S SHARE OF GLOBAL TOTAL (%)	0.1%	0.1%	0.2%	0.2%	0.6%	0.3%	2.1%

Source: UNODC, Interactive Seizures Tables and Graphs, data current as of September 30, 2008.

Notes: Data may not total due to rounding. According to the UNODC, an error in data for West Africa in 2006 may likely exaggerate total cocaine seizures for the region by as much as 11 tons. No other source for comparable data is available as of June 10, 2009.

Geography of Trafficking

Traditionally, cocaine destined for Europe followed a northerly route from South America, through the eastern Caribbean and the Azores, to landing points on the Iberian peninsula and the Netherlands. Interdiction pressures and other factors appear to have prompted a southward shift in routing, generating the rise in cocaine trafficking to Europe through West Africa. Large consignments of cocaine are now transported from Colombia and onward to Brazil, Venezuela, and some smaller destinations, from where they are dispatched to Africa, primarily West Africa.

For much of the past decade, the largest known loads of cocaine en route to Europe via West Africa are believed to have been transported by boat (including fishing boats, sailing yachts, and

⁴⁷ EUROPOL (2007); and 2007 INCB Report.

speedboats) and on container ships and other so-called mother ships that hand off shipments to smaller, faster boats outside territorial waters.⁴⁸ Small private airplanes have also commonly been used. The bulk of cocaine shipments were believed to arrive in Cape Verde and in countries along the West African coast, ranging from Mauritania southward along the West African Atlantic coast as far west as Nigeria. Key regional entry points have included Senegal, Guinea-Bissau, Sierra Leone, Liberia, and Ghana, among others. Some shipments are also offloaded in Southern Africa, primarily South Africa, which is a destination for small quantities of cocaine as well as a transit point.⁴⁹ Major European entry points for cocaine transiting through West Africa include Spain, Portugal, the Netherlands, France, and Italy.

While more circuitous than direct routes between South America and Europe, the southern trans-Atlantic oceanic distance between South America and Africa is geographically shorter and thus more secure for trafficking purposes than that between South America and Europe. These southern routes are also located south of the Atlantic zone where U.S. and European maritime shipping monitoring and drug interdiction efforts have historically been most intense. In recent years, the southern routes through Africa have been reportedly characterized by denser traffic and larger average cocaine cargo sizes than the northern ones, as indicated by a growing number of large seizures, including a number of multi-ton consignments.⁵⁰ During the past decade, smuggling roughly along Latitude 10° North between northern South America and the West African coast (specifically between Venezuela and Guinea and adjacent Guinea-Bissau), became so common that law enforcement agencies dubbed it “Highway 10.” Another major southern route appeared to link northern Latin American source countries with Gulf of Guinea countries from Ghana to Nigeria. There was also an increase in smuggling through some landlocked Sahelian countries that lie along routes connecting coastal West Africa to northern Africa via the Sahel, such as Mali.⁵¹

Analysts are debating whether the decline in reported seizures noted above indicates an absolute decline in trafficking through the region and, if so, whether such a decline is a short-term or long-term phenomenon, or whether the absence of such reports can be explained by other factors. One set of conjectures centers around the possibility that the decline in reported seizures is the result of an actual decline in volumes trafficked through the region, potentially due to increasing counterdrug efforts in the region or other factors. An alternative explanation is that the decline may be attributable to a lack of data, law enforcement intelligence, or interdiction successes, possibly underpinned by drug traffickers’ successful use of tactical trafficking innovations to evade detection.⁵² There is some information to suggest that the latter may be true, given an apparent emergent shift of smuggling operations toward the Sahel and in light of assertions by many analysts that many prior large seizures in the region were a result of serendipity or foreign

⁴⁸ Wright (2007).

⁴⁹ Lynnette Johns, “SA agent ‘dumped’ in Senegalese drug bust,” *Weekend Argus* (South Africa), January 23, 2010 ; Bill Corcoran, “Wife of SA Minister Arrested on Drugs Charges,” *Irish Times*, January 30, 2010; Werner Menges, “Record Coke Trafficking Trial in Starting Blocks,” *The Namibian*, February 4, 2010; BBC, “Drug Searches for SA Flight Crews,” February 23, 2009; BBC, “Plane Crew Bailed Over Drugs Haul,” February 17, 2009; and BBC, “Air Crew Bailed Over Drugs Find,” January 21, 2009, among others.

⁵⁰ For examples of large seizures, see the **Appendix** and Wright (2007).

⁵¹ Gemma Ware and Marshall Van Vale, “Drugs: Powder Trails,” *The Africa Report*, June-July 2008; and UNODC (October 2007).

⁵² UNODC, “Transnational Trafficking and the Rule of Law in West Africa: A Threat Assessment,” 2009; UNODC, *World Drug Report 2009*; and Oxford Analytica, “West Africa: Reports Underestimate Trafficking Impact,” August 10, 2009.

law enforcement assistance, rather than systemic, endogenously run police operations in the region.

There is no firm evidence to suggest that the coastal West African country routes that have been prominent over the past decade have been abandoned. There are, however, some signs that the Sahel may be emerging as an increasingly important locus of trafficking, due to a potentially developing trend in which transnational traffickers active in West Africa may be increasing their use of air transport, possibly by employing much larger, longer-range aircraft than those used in prior years. According to news articles and the United Nations (U.N.) Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), traffickers transporting cocaine across the Atlantic Ocean from South America to West Africa are increasingly employing irregular private flights to do so, using aircraft ranging in size from twin engine turboprops to executive jets to Boeing 727s.⁵³ At least 10 such aircraft have been linked to such smuggling through the region since 2006.⁵⁴ Similar types of aircraft, including Boeing 727s, have been used by Latin American drug traffickers to transport narcotics shipments from South America through the Caribbean-Central American transit zone en route to the United States since at least the early 1990s.⁵⁵

A further indication of such a trend was the discovery, in November 2009, of an abandoned, burnt-out wreckage of a Boeing 727 in northeastern Mali, which the UNODC reports was used to carry cocaine.⁵⁶ In a similar, but little reported case, a Panamanian-flagged aircraft crewed by “South American” nationals that carried “250 large drums of cocaine” reportedly landed in central Mali in January 2010.⁵⁷

The considerable size and range of the wrecked 727 and the location of its discovery in the Sahel, if indicative of a new trend, may help explain the decrease in reported West African cocaine seizures in 2008 and 2009 (see “Volume,” above). Use of a 727 aircraft, reportedly one of several being used, according to the UNODC, would allow much larger air-based drug shipments to be transported much longer distances than in the past, enabling traffickers to drop payloads at delivery sites in the remote, sparsely populated, often unpatrolled Sahel belt.⁵⁸ Such a strategy

⁵³ Mounir Boudjema, “The Sahel has become a time bomb. Al- Qa’idah Maghreb between hostages and cocaine,” [excerpt of report by Liberté (Algerian) news website] via BBC Monitoring Middle East, February 7, 2010.

⁵⁴ News reports in early 2010 referenced a 2008 U.S. Department of Homeland Security (DHS) report that asserted that these aircraft constitute a “rogue aviation network,” which may be growing. Tim Gaynor and Tiemoko Diallo, “Al Qaeda Linked to Rogue Aviation Network,” *Reuters*, January 13, 2010.

⁵⁵ See for example, U.S. Government Accountability Office (GAO), “Drug Control: Observations on Counternarcotics Activities in Mexico,” GAO/T-NSIAD-96-239, September 12, 1996.

⁵⁶ Trace residue of cocaine was found at the scene of the 727 crash, as were articles from Venezuela, where most large cocaine shipments to West Africa are believed to originate. How much cocaine was being transported, however, is open to question. As much as 10 tonnes, or roughly a fifth of the total estimated annual amount of cocaine trafficked through West Africa in some recent years, could reportedly theoretically have been transported onboard the aircraft. Press accounts, however, have reported widely varying potential tonnage payloads for the wrecked 727, and have not described the model of aircraft used or the method by which their potential payloads estimates were calculated. Such calculations would have had to take into account such variables as fuel use rates, air speed, and possible modifications to the aircraft, among others. See Veronika Oleksyn, “UN Official: Traffickers May Increasingly Be Using Cargo Planes for Smuggling to WAfrica,” *Associated Press*, December 3, 2009; Serge Daniel, “Burnout Boeing, a Clue in African Drugs Trade,” *Agence France Presse*, December 11, 2009; and MENAS, “Venezuelan Cocaine in Mali, *Sahara Focus*, (5:4), 2009, among others.

⁵⁷ Mounir Boudjema, “The Sahel has become a time bomb. Al- Qa’idah Maghreb between hostages and cocaine,” [excerpt of report by Liberté (Algerian) news website] via BBC Monitoring Middle East, February 7, 2010.

⁵⁸ Gaynor and Diallo, “Al Qaeda Linked to Rogue Aviation Network.”

would obviate the need to land in or further transport the drugs through the more densely populated and relatively more policed West African coastal countries, and would place drug shipments in a location geographically nearer to end-destinations in Europe. As a result, it would reduce the number of onward transport contingencies faced by traffickers and lower the associated risk of surveillance and interdiction per unit of cocaine smuggled. Concomitantly, it would likely reduce the number of drug seizure reports in the region, since the locus of smuggling would shift to fewer countries and more remote, unsurveilled zones.

Trafficking Patterns and Actors

Limited data on cocaine trafficking into and within Africa are available, but many indications suggest that the bulk of cocaine is trafficked into West Africa, as opposed to other sub-regions on the continent. This pattern may be explained by geographic factors and changes in trafficking patterns spurred by developments outside of Africa, but it may also be rooted in the preexisting role of West Africans in the international narcotics trade. As early as the 1970s, reports indicate West Africans of multiple nationalities were significantly involved in international heroin and cocaine trafficking.⁵⁹ In 2000, the U.S. government *International Crime Threat Assessment* report stated that Nigerian criminal syndicates dominated “transatlantic cocaine shipments between Brazil and Africa” and were “increasingly trafficking South American cocaine to various regions in Africa and throughout Europe.”⁶⁰ The report stated that Nigerian traffickers primarily transshipped cocaine using drug couriers traveling via commercial air flights.

As the size of the cocaine shipments has grown in recent years, the actors involved in its trans-Atlantic transport appear to have changed. Much of the recent large-scale trafficking from South America to West Africa appears to have been dominated by Latin Americans, in particular Colombians, and some Europeans.⁶¹ The rise in cocaine trafficking through West Africa in recent years had led some analysts to conclude that the increase might indicate a long-term shift in strategies by Latin American cocaine traffickers. However, the sharp drop in cocaine seizures in early 2009 suggests to others that such a conclusion might be premature or inaccurate. Despite such uncertainties, there are some indications that suspected Latin American traffickers have been establishing a long-term permanent presence in West Africa in recent years. A relatively recent small flow of apparently wealthy Latin Americans into West Africa has drawn attention in a number of countries in the sub-region. A number of these persons, who often claim to be investors in the local economy, have purchased or constructed elaborate villas and compounds, and often drive expensive vehicles.⁶² Another possible indicator that traffickers may be moving portions of the wholesale cocaine supply chain across the Atlantic is the discovery of cocaine processing labs that convert cocaine base into a finished product, cocaine hydrochloride (HCl). Several such labs have been recently found in Spain and Portugal.⁶³

⁵⁹ See Ellis (2009), p. 181.

⁶⁰ Departments of Justice, State, and Treasury, “Chapter 3: Worldwide Areas of International Criminal Activity,” in *International Crime Threat Assessment*, [report by U.S. Government interagency working group in support the President’s International Crime Control Strategy], December 2000.

⁶¹ United Kingdom (UK) Serious Organized Crime Agency (SOCA), *2008/9 UK Threat Assessment of Serious Organised Crime*, 2008; and UNODC (November 2008).

⁶² UNODC (December 2007); and multiple press accounts.

⁶³ UNODC (November 2008), p. 12.

Latin American traffickers are believed both to directly organize cocaine transport onward from West Africa to Europe and to collaborate with West African traffickers in other cocaine redistribution and export activities. According to UNODC, “[t]here appear to be two parallel flows. One, mainly involving large maritime and private air shipments, is owned and managed by South Americans,” while West African crime groups, either in collaboration with nationals from other world regions or individually, “also traffic these drugs to Europe, usually via commercial air flights.”⁶⁴ West African traffickers are reportedly paid in kind with cocaine for their logistics services and buy wholesale consignments of cocaine from their South American counterparts. Some of these actors may, in turn, sell or consign cocaine to low-level, freelancing traffickers who are also involved in moving cocaine from West Africa to Europe.⁶⁵ West Africans have also been associated with relatively smaller amounts of cocaine smuggled from South America to Africa.

Tracking the movement of cocaine from West Africa to Europe is challenging for law enforcement and intelligence agencies because of a lack of manpower, technological, and other resources. Some patterns have been identified, however. In general, drug syndicates, mainly from West Africa and, to a lesser extent, South America, move cocaine from West Africa to Europe using human couriers flying commercial air passenger routes. Parcel post, private air flights, trans-Sahel land and air routes, and boats are also employed.⁶⁶ The trafficking of cocaine via commercial airlines is, in particular, believed to be well-established among West African drug syndicates. Recent UNODC drug seizure data suggest that two sub-regional repackaging and redistribution trafficking patterns have emerged. One involves cocaine entering Guinea Bissau that is then routed to Senegal, Guinea, Gambia, and Mali for onward transport to Europe, primarily by passenger air flights, but also by land. Cocaine entering the Gulf of Guinea, by contrast, reportedly often flows through Ghana into Togo, Benin, and Nigeria, and then onward to Europe, primarily by passenger air flight.⁶⁷

Surveillance efforts in Europe targeting commercial air flights regularly interdict numerous human couriers, known as mules, who either swallow their shipments (a procedure known as “body packing”) or transport them on their persons or in their luggage. This mode of trafficking appears to use a so-called “shotgun” approach, in which numerous individual mules each carry amounts typically ranging from a few ounces to several kilograms. Jointly, they transport large quantities of cocaine, but traffickers face relatively low losses if some of the mules are apprehended.⁶⁸ According to the UNODC, between 2004 and a portion of 2008, at least 1,357

⁶⁴ See UNODC (November 2008); and press reports.

⁶⁵ Mazzitelli (2007), p. 1076; UNODC (November 2008); and Ellis (2009), p. 188.

⁶⁶ State Department, *2008 International Narcotics Control Strategy Report (INCSR)*, “Morocco,” 2008; UNODC (October 2007); and Wright (2007).

⁶⁷ UNODC (November 2008).

⁶⁸ In this strategy, the criminal groups assume that authorities will catch some of the mules, but are unlikely to catch all of them. As a result, their profit margin remains viable. In addition, those who are apprehended are often of little value to law enforcement or intelligence collection efforts because mules are typically low-level actors who lack substantial knowledge about the structure of the crime organization and higher-level actors who employ them. UNODC (November 2008); Alex Klein, “Mules or Couriers: The Role of Nigerian Drug Couriers in the International Drug Trade,” mimeo; Mazzitelli (2007), pp. 1071-1090; U.S. Government, *The Threat from International Organized Crime to U.S. National Interests*, September 2006; U.S. Department of Justice, Federal Bureau of Investigation, “Organized Crime: African Criminal Enterprises,” n.d.; UNODC (October 2007); and Wright (2007).

couriers were detected on Europe-bound flights originating in West Africa, with each courier attempting to smuggle up to 4 kilograms of cocaine.⁶⁹

Heroin

Africa is not a global production source of illegal heroin and other opioids. Some limited opium poppy cultivation takes place in Algeria and the Sinai Peninsula of Egypt, but U.N. reports indicate that production is solely for regional consumption, primarily in Egypt.⁷⁰ About 1.24 million Africans were estimated to have used heroin in 2008. This number, which accounted for about 11% of the global user population, was 54% higher than that reported in 2004. This rise, along with some other indicators, suggests that heroin use in Africa is growing steadily, notably in countries along key heroin trafficking routes (see **Table 3**).⁷¹

Heroin trafficking through Africa and by African drug networks, however, is a relatively long-standing phenomenon, with one of the first reported instances of heroin trafficking occurring in Nigeria in the early 1980s.⁷² West African crime networks, in particular, have long played a key role in international heroin trafficking, both with respect to the procurement of wholesale heroin from producer countries and with regard to the wholesale and retail sale of heroin in consumer countries, including the United States. West African crime networks have long played a substantial role in the U.S. and European heroin markets.⁷³ In 1994, Nigerian-controlled couriers accounted for 30% of all heroin seized by the U.S. Customs Service.⁷⁴ The U.S. Drug Enforcement Administration has reported that West Africans are continuing to play a primary role in transporting and distributing heroin in the United States.⁷⁵

⁶⁹ The greatest volumes of cocaine came from Senegal, Nigeria, and Guinea, but Senegalese made up only 2% of couriers by nationality. Nigerians made up the largest share of couriers (57%), and operated across the West African sub-region; they were the single most detected nationality on flights from every country in the sub-region, with some exceptions. In a few countries, the majority of couriers were from Guinea-Bissau. The greatest number of couriers flew out of Guinea and Mali. The leading two destinations by volume for cocaine trafficked from West Africa to Europe were Spain and the United Kingdom, which “host the two largest populations of cocaine users in Europe,” according to UNODC, which also reports that “Spain serves as both a prime destination and as a redistribution centre” in Europe. Other key destinations included the Netherlands, Belgium, France, and likely Italy, although seizure data regarding trafficking into Italy were reportedly incomplete. UNODC also reports that West Africans are often involved in distribution activities within Europe. UNODC (November 2008); and UK SOCA (2008).

⁷⁰ Algeria, for example, reports the eradication of approximately 80,000 opium poppy plants per year. See *INCB 2009 Report*. See also Hasna Yacoub, “New Plantations discovered in Adrar: Algeria In the Process of Becoming the New Opium ‘Kingdom,’” *La Tribune* (Algiers), March 12, 2008 via *BBC Monitoring Middle East*; and UNODC, *2009 World Drug Report*, June 2009.

⁷¹ As the smuggling of heroin from source countries by sea to Africa has increased in recent years (see below), island countries in the Indian Ocean have witnessed a growth in domestic drug abuse. Mauritius has been reported as having one of the highest levels of opiate abuse in Africa, a phenomenon considered to be a negative spillover effect of the country’s role as a growing drug transit country. UNODC, *Addiction, Crime and Insurgency: The Transnational Threat of Afghan Opium*, October 2009.

⁷² UNODC (2005); see also Ellis (2008). On recent trends in heroin seizures in Africa, see Nineteenth Meeting of Heads of National Drug Law Enforcement Agencies, Africa (HONLEA), *Report of the Secretariat on Statistics on Drug Trafficking Trends in Africa and Worldwide*, September 2009, UNODC/HONLAF/19/2.

⁷³ See, for instance, Eniwoke Ibagere, “Drugs: The Nigerian connection,” *BBC News*, June 6, 2000; and Joseph B. Treaster, “Nigerian Connection Floods U.S. Airports with Asian Heroin,” *New York Times*, February 15, 1992.

⁷⁴ Testimony by Donnie Marshall, DEA, before the House International Relations Committee: *Heroin*, June 24, 1998.

⁷⁵ Testimony by Thomas Harrigan, DEA, before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, Subcommittee on African Affairs: *Confronting Drug Trafficking in West Africa*, June 23, 2009.

Historically, West African networks have sourced heroin in Southeast Asia and trafficked it to consuming countries through networks mainly controlled from Nigeria and transnational operations based in various countries, particularly Southeast Asian ones, such as Thailand. In recent years, as Southwest Asian heroin has come to dominate the global market, West African heroin networks have become active in the trafficking of Southwest Asian heroin, particularly from Afghanistan and Pakistan. According to UNODC data, for example, at least 600 Nigerians have been arrested in Pakistan since 2000 in possession of more than 100 grams of heroin.⁷⁶ According to the State Department, Nigerian and Ghanaian trafficking organizations are involved in smuggling heroin from Afghanistan and Pakistan to several parts of the United States, including Ohio and the New York area.⁷⁷

Today, heroin is smuggled from Southwest Asia through East and West Africa into Europe and North America, usually by commercial air courier as well as sea routes.⁷⁸ According to U.N. estimates, approximately 30 to 35 tons of Afghan heroin are trafficked through Africa, with approximately 25 tons consumed within Africa and 5 to 10 tons transiting through Africa en route to other final destinations.⁷⁹ Approximately 20 tons of heroin are smuggled through today's primary route, from Afghanistan to Pakistan to Africa via both air and sea. Other major transit points for Afghan heroin en route to Africa include Iran (4 tons), India (3 tons), Persian Gulf states (5 tons), and South and Southeast Asian states (1 ton). For the 5 to 10 tons of heroin in transit through Africa, final destinations include the United States (3 tons), Europe (2 to 3 tons), and China (4 tons).

East Africa—which has long-standing trading links with South Asia, a global heroin source region, and the Middle East, a heroin transit zone that is today linked with these regions via multiple commercial airline routes and growing trade ties—is a particularly notable entry point for heroin shipments to the continent.⁸⁰ Some evidence suggests that global flows of cocaine and heroin are crisscrossing through Africa, with cocaine originating in Latin America trafficked from West Africa to East Africa, and heroin originating in Southwest Asia trafficked from East Africa to West Africa.⁸¹ Annual reported seizure volumes and incident totals in Africa, however, are generally very limited compared with those in other world regions.⁸² In 2008, African countries reported to the United Nations heroin seizures totaling 0.3 tons (1% of global seizures).⁸³

⁷⁶ UNODC (November 2008); UNODC (October 2009).

⁷⁷ In November 2004, two alleged drug traffickers from Ghana were indicted in Columbus, Ohio, for shipping heroin for distribution across central Ohio. A Ghanaian parliamentarian arrested in November 2005 revealed a similar trafficking network operating in New York. In 2006 several Ghanaians were arrested in the United States for trafficking heroin. In 2007, two Afghan nationals were arrested by Ghanaian police and extradited to the United States for conspiring to distribute heroin in the United States. See *2008 INCSR*, “Ghana” and “Nigeria.”

⁷⁸ In East Africa, heroin is smuggled mainly through Kenya and Ethiopia, but also Tanzania, Egypt, and Mozambique. In West Africa, heroin is smuggled mainly through Cote D'Ivoire and its neighbors. See *INCB 2007 Report* and UNODC (October 2009).

⁷⁹ UNODC, *Addiction, Crime and Insurgency: The Transnational Threat of Afghan Opium*, October 2009.

⁸⁰ See UNODC, *2008 World Drug Report* and previous annual editions of the report, as well as annual reports by the now defunct Observatoire Géopolitique des Drogues (OGD, or Geopolitical Drug Watch).

⁸¹ Nineteenth Meeting of Heads of National Drug Law Enforcement Agencies, Africa (HONLEA), “Report of the Secretariat on Statistics on Drug Trafficking Trends in Africa and Worldwide,” September 2009, UNODC/HONLAF/19/2.

⁸² Mazzitelli (2007), p. 1076.

⁸³ UNODC (October 2009).

Table 3. Heroin and Morphine Seizures in Africa, 2000-2006

(simplified drug breakdown, in kilogram equivalents)

	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006
East Africa	59.5	66.7	95.7	68.3	87.8	79.8	137.9
North Africa	48.6	57.3	66.0	36.0	56.7	57.0	78.6
Southern Africa	17.5	30.9	15.5	35.6	19.9	49.5	29.7
West & Central Africa	100.0	77.4	114.7	105.7	237.5	140.5	107.6
AFRICA TOTAL	225.5	232.4	291.7	245.6	401.9	326.7	353.8
Change from Prior Year (%)	-2.5%	3.0%	25.6%	-15.8%	63.7%	-18.7%	8.3%
Number of Reported Drug Seizures	785	2,594	900	1,121	1,530	2,712	4,883
Number of African Countries Reporting Seizures	22	26	26	22	26	30	23
GLOBAL TOTAL	80,924.4	65,613.4	73,447.9	97,565.7	100,089.8	90,427.6	103,991.6
AFRICA'S SHARE OF GLOBAL TOTAL (%)	0.3%	0.4%	0.4%	0.3%	0.4%	0.4%	0.3%

Source: UNODC, Interactive Seizures Tables and Graphs. Data current as of September 30, 2008.

Notes: Data may not total due to rounding.

Cannabis and Cannabis Resin

Cannabis has long been produced, trafficked, or used in practically every country in Africa—and analysts predict strong long-term increases in cannabis production in the region (see **Table 4** and **Table 5**).⁸⁴ The illegal cannabis drug market is by far the largest drug market in Africa; according to the UNODC, somewhere between 28.9 million and 56.4 million Africans used cannabis at least once in 2007.⁸⁵ Like other world regions, cannabis production in Africa supplies a largely domestic or intra-regional population of users. In addition—and unlike most other world regions—the continent is the source of a significant cross-regional cannabis export market, mainly to West and Central Europe and to a lesser extent to East Asia and North America.⁸⁶

⁸⁴ UNODC, *Cannabis in Africa: An Overview*, November 2007.

⁸⁵ UNODC, *2009 World Drug Report*.

⁸⁶ See for example *INCB 2008 Report*, and UNODC (November 2007).

Table 4. Cannabis Herb Seizures in Africa, 2000-2006

(simplified drug breakdown, in kilogram equivalents)

	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006
East Africa	36,268.1	683,111.6	175,663.7	769,986.1	983,384.4	162,876.0	225,340.6
North Africa	116,004.5	118,544.6	147,812.0	153,878.6	398,866.0	193,084.0	146,490.5
Southern Africa	1,062,221.8	161,966.0	141,894.4	151,059.0	878,503.8	347,094.4	637,227.9
West & Central Africa	284,082.7	335,268.2	526,007.0	562,363.0	697,871.2	162,919.8	207,820.0
AFRICA TOTAL	1,498,577.1	1,298,890.4	991,377.0	1,637,286.7	2,958,625.4	865,974.2	1,216,879.1
Change from Prior Year (%)	201.4%	-13.3%	-23.7%	65.2%	80.7%	-70.7%	40.5%
Number of Reported Drug Seizures	18,469	8,156	19,288	8,193	11,402	10,050	35,245
Number of African Countries Reporting Seizures	28	27	31	30	30	34	25
GLOBAL TOTAL	4,679,750.8	4,758,433.4	4,798,430.3	5,940,558.1	7,152,169.8	4,667,495.8	5,229,695.3
AFRICA'S SHARE OF GLOBAL TOTAL (%)	32.0%	27.3%	20.7%	27.6%	41.4%	18.6%	23.3%

Source: UNODC, Interactive Seizures Tables and Graphs. Data current as of September 30, 2008.

Notes: Data may not total due to rounding.

Table 5. Cannabis Plant Seizures in Africa, 2000-2006

(simplified drug breakdown, in kilogram equivalents)

	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006
East Africa	10,981.0	81,098.8	1,057,021.1	674,8621.4	15,454.2	436,113.4	32,236.1
North Africa	N/A	73,857.7	93,613.0	21,091.1	421.2	37,590.0	427.7
Southern Africa	929,438.4	660,035.7	760,604.2	98,803.4	97,414.8	3,397.4	145,751.6
West & Central Africa	50.6	273607.5	5120.5	313.9	2790.0	N/A	928.4
AFRICA TOTAL	940,470.1	1,088,599.8	1,916,358.8	6,868,829.8	116,080.2	477,100.8	179,343.7
Change from Prior Year (%)	246.1%	15.8%	76.0%	258.4%	-98.3%	311.0%	-62.4%
Number of Reported Drug Seizures	509	1606	727	1,359	1,888	529	754
Number of African Countries Reporting Seizures	9	14	14	14	11	10	13
GLOBAL TOTAL	6,120,773.1	6,098,692.7	11,351,607.3	12,253,027.8	3,597,710.2	3,790,275.2	1,340,507.5
AFRICA'S SHARE OF GLOBAL TOTAL (%)	15.4%	17.9%	16.9%	56.1%	3.2%	12.6%	13.4%

Source: UNODC, Interactive Seizures Tables and Graphs. Data current as of September 30, 2008.

Notes: Data may not total due to rounding.

According to UNODC figures, Africa contributes between an estimated 22% and 26% of global cannabis production. Major producers include Benin, Cote d'Ivoire, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Ghana, Guinea, Malawi, Nigeria, South Africa, Swaziland, Tanzania, Togo, and Zambia, along with Egypt and Morocco in North Africa.⁸⁷ Compared to other regions, Africa is one of the largest annual sources of cannabis production and ranks among the top regions with respect to the number and volume of annual local cannabis seizures. While cannabis is known to be widely produced in Africa, and some cannabis-related production, distribution, retail value, and use trends can be discerned, detailed country-level data on these phenomena are often lacking.⁸⁸

While cannabis availability is widespread across the continent, views regarding the acceptability of its use vary considerably by country and among social groups. In some African countries, cannabis has long been widely used for diverse work-related, recreational, medicinal, cultural, and other purposes. In others, acceptance of its use differs among social or economic groups; for example, in many African countries, cannabis is primarily consumed by poor populations, notably in urban areas, and shunned by elites.⁸⁹

In many African countries, law enforcement efforts to counter the cannabis trade are sporadic, in part because often under-resourced police agencies face a range of more serious, violent crimes. In addition, according to the UNODC, while the drug is considered a problem from a public health perspective, it is often seen as less of a threat to national security than other types of drugs, such as cocaine and heroin. In general, illicit profits and incidents of drug-related violence associated with African cannabis trafficking are fewer than those associated with other drugs or criminal activities.⁹⁰

Cannabis resin, which is used in the production of hashish, is the second most widely trafficked drug in Africa, but is predominantly produced in North Africa (see **Table 6**). In addition to possessing the world's largest documented cannabis cultivation area, Morocco is the world's largest producer of cannabis resin.⁹¹ Unlike cannabis herb production, cannabis resin production is reportedly set for a gradual but global decline, due in large part to declining demand in Europe and various other factors.⁹²

⁸⁷ *INCB 2008 Report*.

⁸⁸ Factors accounting for this data deficit include varying levels of counternarcotics law enforcement capacity; a frequent lack of political will among African countries to devote significant resources to combating the cannabis trade; and the often highly decentralized nature of cannabis markets in Africa. Typically, many small players cultivate and distribute the drug, making monitoring of such activities difficult. UNODC, *Drug Trafficking as a Security Threat in West Africa*, November 2008, p. 31.

⁸⁹ UNODCCP, *The Drug Nexus in Africa*, ODCCP Studies on Drugs and Crime Monographs, March 1999.

⁹⁰ UNODC (November 2008), p. 31.

⁹¹ UNODC (November 2007); *INCB 2007 Report*.

⁹² UNODC (November 2008).

Table 6. Cannabis Resin Seizures in Africa, 2000-2006

(simplified drug breakdown, in kilogram equivalents)

	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006
East Africa	6,404.1	51.5	1,885.8	898.4	0.2	12,333.7	2.3
North Africa	150,119.8	71,892.2	70,604.1	117,970.5	107,705.0	109,145.4	118,523.6
Southern Africa	27,056.6	539.5	1,744.2	219.6	0.0	95.0	54.8
West & Central Africa	350.0	13.0	2.0	13.2	975.7	1.4	10,426.0
AFRICA TOTAL	183,930.4	72,496.2	74,236.1	119,101.7	108,681.0	121,575.6	129,006.8
Change from Prior Year (%)	192.2%	-60.6%	2.4%	60.4%	-8.8%	11.9%	6.1%
Number of Reported Drug Seizures	128	28	421	567	1215	7960	7512
Number of African Countries Reporting Seizures	13	15	16	15	10	16	12
GLOBAL TOTAL	1,050,590.5	941,518.6	1,088,429.8	1,391,926.6	1,470,752.4	1,269,506.1	1,024,828.6
AFRICA'S SHARE OF GLOBAL TOTAL (%)	17.5%	7.7%	6.8%	8.6%	7.4%	9.6%	12.6%

Source: U.N. Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), Interactive Seizures Tables and Graphs. Data current as of September 30, 2008.

Notes: Data may not total due to rounding.

One well-known smuggling route for both cannabis and cannabis resin to Europe is through Morocco. From Morocco, traffickers reportedly smuggle illegal cannabis into Spain, where it can be easily transshipped to other EU countries because of limited border security within the EU.⁹³ Some of the same routes used for trafficking cannabis from Morocco to Europe are reportedly being used for transiting cocaine. EUROPOL has found that Colombian and Moroccan criminal groups are cooperating together to smuggle both cocaine and cannabis into Europe.⁹⁴ Such trends may not last, however. Some analysts hypothesize that the co-mingling of cocaine and cannabis shipments and their transport along North African routes traditionally used for cannabis smuggling may decline because of concern by smugglers that the merger of cocaine and cannabis trafficking might draw increased law enforcement attention and increase the risk of interdiction. At the same time, however, reported drug seizures by the government of Niger indicate that North African smugglers are willing to go to considerable lengths to protect their routes. In one incident, for example, the Nigerien military encountered “considerable resistance” from a “professional” hashish smuggling operation that was trafficking the drug in convoys of three to five four-wheel drive vehicles secured with military-grade weaponry and satellite phones.⁹⁵

⁹³ 2008 INCSR, “Morocco.”

⁹⁴ 2008 INCSR, “Morocco;” and Wright (2007).

⁹⁵ UNODC (November 2008).

Synthetic Drugs and Precursor Chemicals

The illegal synthetic drug market in Africa is reportedly relatively small (see **Table 7** and **Table 8**). One exception to this is South Africa, which is a destination and sometimes also a production source for methaqualone, methamphetamine, and MDMA (ecstasy); foreign production sources for these drugs include China, India, and Europe. Maxiton Forte, an amphetamine-type drug, is also reportedly produced in Egypt for domestic abuse. Despite limited data availability, reports indicate that the non-medical abuse of pharmaceutical preparations containing psychotropic substances occurs in West and Central Africa.⁹⁶ Amphetamine users in Africa are estimated at 2.3 million, or approximately 9% of the world total, and the International Narcotics Control Board (INCB) predicts that the number of users in Africa will continue to increase gradually, in large part due to increasing South African demand for methamphetamine and crystal methamphetamine.⁹⁷

Table 7. Amphetamine-Type Drug Seizures in Africa, 2000-2006

(simplified drug breakdown, in kilogram equivalents)

	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006
East Africa	6.0	N/A	N/A	0.3	N/A	N/A	N/A
North Africa	13.6	17.0	11.8	0.3	3.4	1.4	2.1
Southern Africa	0.0	1.8	1.3	0.5	N/A	1078.5	315.4
West & Central Africa	6.2	6.0	3.2	2,326.8	344.2	2,064.5	835.1
AFRICA TOTAL	25.8	24.8	16.3	2,327.9	348.2	2,064.5	835.1
Change from Prior Year (%)	-93.9%	-4.2%	-34.3%	14,211.4%	-85.0%	492.9%	-59.6%
Number of Reported Drug Seizures	59	321	17	204	N/A	4026	4881
Number of African Countries Reporting Seizures	8	7	6	8	3	6	4
GLOBAL TOTAL	43,622.2	26,343.0	22,773.0	36,840.4	30,485.3	41,302.2	43,171.5
AFRICA'S SHARE OF GLOBAL TOTAL (%)	0.1%	0.1%	0.1%	6.3%	1.1%	5.0%	1.9%

Source: UNODC, Interactive Seizures Tables and Graphs. Data current as of September 30, 2008.

Notes: Data may not total due to rounding.

⁹⁶ 2008 INCB Report.

⁹⁷ Ibid.

Table 8. Ecstasy Seizures in Africa, 2000-2006
(simplified drug breakdown, in kilogram equivalents)

	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006
East Africa	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	0.0	0.0
North Africa	0.3	0.7	0.1	0.4	0.6	1.3	1.0
Southern Africa	30.9	9.6	58.9	40.2	195.0	0.0	22.9
West & Central Africa	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	3.5
AFRICA TOTAL	31.2	10.3	58.9	40.6	195.6	1.4	27.5
Change from Prior Year (%)	933.8%	-66.9%	469.9%	-31.1%	381.9%	-99.3%	1,933.4%
Number of Reported Drug Seizures	779	327	3	5	3129	6	33
Number of African Countries Reporting Seizures	3	4	4	5	4	6	6
GLOBAL TOTAL	4,993.5	4,537.5	6,865.5	4,810.9	8,209.2	5,131.8	4,510.7
AFRICA'S SHARE OF GLOBAL TOTAL (%)	0.6%	0.2%	0.9%	0.8%	2.4%	0.0%	0.6%

Source: UNODC, Interactive Seizures Tables and Graphs. Data current as of September 30, 2008.

Notes: Data may not total due to rounding. Ecstasy data includes the psychotropic compounds MDA, MDEA, MDMA.

The INCB reports that Africa's significance as a transshipment point for the illicit diversion of precursor chemicals, particularly ephedrine and pseudoephedrine, used to manufacture illicit drugs, which had grown in the mid-2000s, may now be declining.⁹⁸ Ephedrine and pseudoephedrine are two key precursor chemicals used to manufacture methamphetamine. Reports had indicated that more than 120 metric tons precursor chemicals for methamphetamine had been diverted to or through Africa in 2006. The countries in Africa to which these shipments were destined included Botswana, Burundi, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Egypt, Ethiopia, Ghana, Kenya, Nigeria, Somalia, Sudan, Tanzania, Togo, Uganda, and Zambia.⁹⁹ If the precursor chemicals had not been seized, they could have been converted into a total of approximately 80 metric tons of methamphetamine—a total that represents approximately one-third of current global methamphetamine production estimates.¹⁰⁰ Since 2006, reported precursor seizures have been in decline; aggregate confiscations in the region totaled 75 tons in 2007 and 22 tons in 2008, and there were no reported seizures during the first nine months of 2009.¹⁰¹ The INCB reported in February 2010, however, that Africa may have emerged in 2009 as a target area for drug traffickers in search of acetic anhydride, a chemical used in the production of heroin as well as for numerous licit purposes.¹⁰²

⁹⁸ INCB, *2007 Report* and *2008 Report*.

⁹⁹ INCB, *2007-2009 Reports*.

¹⁰⁰ INCB *2008 Report*.

¹⁰¹ INCB *2009 Report*.

¹⁰² *Ibid.*

The low level of commercial and pharmacological regulation and a frequent lack of trade monitoring and weak customs capacities in much of Africa compared to those in many other world regions have made the continent attractive as a transshipment hub for precursor chemicals used in illicit drug manufacture. Once in Africa, traffickers may be able to relatively easily divert such chemicals from the legal commerce into illicit trade. As a result, new precursor routes and re-shipment operations are expected to continue to emerge in Africa, given that many governments in the region lack the enforcement and forensic infrastructure to detect such trafficking.¹⁰³

In July 2009, Guinean authorities seized large quantities of solvents used to process cocaine and heroin, precursor chemicals used in the manufacture of MDMA (ecstasy), and equipment used in such production processes. A subsequent assessment by the UNODC and INTERPOL found that the “quantities and nature” of the chemicals found were “far in excess of the legitimate demands in Guinea.” Their findings suggested that “the clandestine production of controlled drugs might be widespread in Guinea” and that the discoveries provide “the best evidence yet for clandestine [illicit drug] laboratory activity.”¹⁰⁴

Illicit Drug Use Trends in Africa

U.N. data also suggest that regional consumption of heroin, cocaine, cannabis, and amphetamine-type drugs is increasing, likely as a side effect of the continent’s growing prominence in the global drug trade (see **Table 9**). South Africa has long been the largest consumer of illegal drugs in Africa. There is a well-established trade in all major illicit drugs in South Africa, where cannabis, methaqualone (known locally as mandrax), methamphetamine (known locally as *tik*), and MDMA (ecstasy) are produced for domestic consumption and international export. East Africa is reportedly a growing transit point for heroin from Southwest Asia mainly to Europe, and heroin abuse is a relatively small but growing problem in Kenya, Mauritius, South Africa, and Zambia, as well as in Egypt, in North Africa.¹⁰⁵ As drug abuse continues to grow in Africa, the INCB has raised concerns about the absence of sufficient medical facilities available for drug treatment and rehabilitation.¹⁰⁶

¹⁰³ See *INCB 2008 Report*; and INCB, *Precursors and Chemicals Frequently Used in the Illicit Manufacture of Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances*, March 5, 2008.

¹⁰⁴ UNODC, “Evidence of Clandestine Laboratory Activity in West Africa,” Press Release, July 31, 2009. Antonio Mazzitelli, the UNODC representative for West Africa, later emphasized, however, that his agency “cannot conclude that narcotic labs are operating in Guinea” but that the findings are a firm indication “that traffickers in Guinea had developed the capacity to produce drugs like ecstasy and refine cocaine and heroin.” See IRIN, “Residents of Conakry are Worried for Their Health after the Discovery of Chemical Products Only Metres from Where They Live,” August 11, 2009.

¹⁰⁵ *INCB 2008 Report*.

¹⁰⁶ *INCB 2009 Report*.

Table 9. Number of Drug Users in Africa, 2005-2006

(number of drug users and percent share)

	Africa Use		Global Use		Africa Use as a Share of Global Use	
	2005	2006	2005	2006	2005	2006
Opiates	980,000	1,360,000	15,550,000	16,540,000	6.3%	8.2%
Cocaine	1,084,000	1,147,000	14,257,000	15,987,000	7.6%	7.2%
Cannabis	38,200,000	41,600,000	158,800,000	165,600,000	24.1%	25.1%
Amphetamines	2,100,000	2,260,000	24,890,000	24,650,000	8.4%	9.2%
Ecstasy	193,000	199,000	8,561,000	9,047,000	2.3%	2.2%

Source: UNODC, 2007 and 2008 *World Drug Reports*; World Bank *World Development Indicators*, and CRS calculations.

Notes: Estimates of domestic drug use in Africa are inherently limited by a lack of consistent or reliable data collection and reporting. Africans constituted 11.8% and 12% of the total world population in 2005 and 2006, respectively. As a result, drug use rates are proportionally lower for Africa than the global average for all drugs, except cannabis. However, estimates of drug use in Africa may vary substantially from rates estimated by the UNODC, since there is little available data on drug use trends in many African countries.

Focus on West Africa: Explaining the Emergence of the Sub-region as a Global Cocaine Transit Hub

In the 1980s and 1990s, Nigerian-dominated criminal organizations active in many countries became key players in the international smuggling of heroin, particularly into the United States, drawing the concern of U.S. policy makers. Apart from heroin, however, West Africa long remained a minor destination and transshipment point for other illegal drugs from regions outside of Africa. During the past half decade, West Africa has become a prominent locus of international drug trafficking, especially with regard to cocaine being trafficked onward to Europe, as previously discussed.

Driving Factors

West Africa’s increasing use as a trafficking nexus appears to have resulted from changes in the mix of disincentives and incentives, or “push” and “pull” factors, that have traditionally structured international drug trafficking patterns.

Push Factors

Push factors, notably with regard to cocaine, include heightened U.S. anti-drug and counter-terrorism law enforcement and border control efforts, and U.S. and European interdiction efforts targeting northern trans-Atlantic cocaine routes directly connecting South America cocaine production sources with European destination markets. Such activities have reportedly gradually forced smuggling southward toward Africa’s western coast, to the waters off Cape Verde en route to the Canary Islands and the Iberian peninsula, and further south, to destinations from Mauritania to as far south as Nigeria.

Other push factors include continued counterdrug pressure in source countries, stepped-up U.S. drug interdiction efforts in U.S. drug transit zones in the Caribbean and the Pacific, and an expansion of cocaine exports via Venezuela and Brazil from Colombia, in part due to increased involvement in the cocaine trade by the Colombian FARC rebel group, as previously discussed.¹⁰⁷ Growing Mexican government pressure on violent and politically powerful Mexican trafficking organizations, which have enjoyed a high degree of control of over traffic passing through Mexico into the United States—as well as competition between these groups—may also be driving South American criminal organizations to seek alternative non-U.S. markets and transit routes.¹⁰⁸ Other factors include the declining value of the U.S. dollar prior to August 2008, declines in U.S. seizures attributed to increased interdiction efforts, and relatively stable cocaine demand in the United States, which remains the largest single cocaine consumption market globally.¹⁰⁹

Pull Factors

Important pull factors, or incentives attracting increased cocaine transit through West Africa, include the high value of the Euro in recent years, steadily rising European cocaine use rates and strong demand, and stable or rising cocaine prices in Europe, where cocaine prices are as much as double the level of U.S. prices, according to the UNODC.¹¹⁰ West Africa is also attractive to traffickers because it is the nearest land mass located en route from South America to Europe.¹¹¹ Traffickers may have also been attracted to the lack of effective drug interdiction in countries such as Venezuela and Brazil—countries that are well-positioned as transit countries for cocaine movement across the Atlantic toward Africa and Europe.

Regional institutional and other state and economic weaknesses in the sub-region are other major pull factors. West Africa is seen as attractive to traffickers because many countries there lack law enforcement and border control capabilities and resources, and are characterized by high levels of corruption, poverty, and unemployment, as discussed below.¹¹² Traffickers operating in many West African countries are likely to face relatively lower risks of apprehension by law enforcement than in many other world regions where police and the justice system are more effective or less susceptible to corruption. Large-scale traffickers with access to large amounts of capital are also well-positioned, given high rates of poverty and unemployment in the region, to tap a diverse pool of potential African accomplices who may be willing to accept payment in exchange for facilitating or directly engaging in trafficking activities. Latin American traffickers may also be able to tap into an extensive pool of experienced West African drug traffickers to

¹⁰⁷ See UNODC (October 2008); ICG (2008); U.S. Government Accountability Office, “Drug Control: U.S. Counternarcotics Cooperation with Venezuela Has Declined,” *Report to the Ranking Member, Senate Foreign Relations Committee*, July 2009; and Webb-Vidal (2009).

¹⁰⁸ Juan Carlos Llorca and Frank Bajak, “Mexican Drug Cartels Expand Abroad,” *Associated Press*, July 21, 2009.

¹⁰⁹ UNODC (November 2008); see also Daniel Mejia and Carlos Esteban Posada, *Cocaine Production and Trafficking: What Do We Know?* World Bank Policy Research Working Paper No. 4618, May 1, 2008.

¹¹⁰ The Euro is the common currency for most countries in the EU. One indication of rising European demand is a rise in European cocaine seizures. UNODC (November 2008); Mejia and Posada (2008).

¹¹¹ For a discussion of other geographic pull factors, see discussion under the cocaine trafficking trend section of this report, above.

¹¹² See World Bank, *Worldwide Governance Indicators (WGI), 1996–2008*; Transparency International, *2008 Corruption Perceptions Index*, among other indices that suggest that many African countries face problems of corruption and poverty. Among other works that discuss weak law enforcement practices in Africa, see Jean-Francois Bayart, Stephen Ellis, and Beatrice Hibou, *The Criminalization of the State in Africa*, James Currey, Oxford, 1999.

facilitate drug transit through the region, as well as to connect with other criminals in West Africa with expertise in related illicit activities, including money laundering, human smuggling, and document fraud.

Driving Factors: Two Applied Examples

Some of the push and pull factors discussed above—as well as state characteristics discussed in the earlier “Regional Vulnerabilities” text box—are illustrated by a rise in trafficking in recent years in Guinea-Bissau, a tiny impoverished country that suffered a civil war in 1998 and has been wracked by numerous coups d’état, putsches, political assassinations, periodic civil unrest, and chronic military interference in governance. It has seen a sharp rise in trafficking, in part due to geographic factors: its territory contains a remote, lightly populated island archipelago and many colonial-era airstrips. Numerous reports also suggest that trafficking is often undertaken or facilitated by state security personnel, notably elements within the military, which is among the most influential institutions in the country.¹¹³

Such reports indicate that the country fundamentally lacks a capacity to counter trafficking. The national police system is highly underfunded and operates without some of the most basic equipment, notably including vehicles and fuel for them; the 60-person drug control agency has one vehicle and police reportedly use public taxis for official business, such as transporting arrested persons.¹¹⁴ Police also receive “low salaries that are seldom paid, lack phones, computers, and often even electricity. They have almost no ships to patrol a rugged coastline, and little fuel for their few police cars. Moreover, many police officers can neither shoot a gun nor swim; the latter, a real problem in a country with a long coastline and many islands.”¹¹⁵ The judiciary is significantly under-resourced and the country is without a prison, reportedly prompting judges to refrain from passing jail sentences on convicted offenders.¹¹⁶ Many of these problems are recognized by the government of Guinea-Bissau. The relatively new president of the country, Malam Bacai Sanha, who was elected in July 2009, has pledged to end Guinea-Bissau’s use as a hub for drug trafficking.¹¹⁷

Guinea-Bissau’s southern neighbor, Guinea, has also reportedly emerged as a key cocaine transshipment point. Investigations by the junta that took power after President Lansana Conte’s death in late 2008 indicate that Conte’s son and numerous top security sector officials were involved in cocaine trafficking and used state resources, including diplomatic pouch traffic, in their activities. Its anti-drug police unit, while slightly better equipped than that of Guinea-Bissau, is also reportedly highly under-resourced and lacks operational capabilities. According to the State Department, the police agency that was until recently in charge of counternarcotics

¹¹³ Alberto Dabo, “Guinea-Bissau Probes State Complicity in Drug Trade,” *Reuters*, June 1, 2007; *2008 INCSR*; and Vincent (November 2007).

¹¹⁴ UNODC (December 2007); and Vincent (November 2007).

¹¹⁵ Raggie Johansen, “Guinea-Bissau: A new hub for cocaine trafficking,” *Perspectives* [UNODC magazine], May 2008.

¹¹⁶ *Ibid.*

¹¹⁷ Sanha assumed office on September 8, succeeding Joao Bernardo Vieira who was assassinated following the death of army chief General Batista Tagme Na Waie, as previously discussed. BBC, “Guinea-Bissau ‘to Tackle Drugs,’” September 25, 2009; and Agence France Presse, “Guinea-Bissau Leader Vows End to Drug Transits,” September 24, 2009.

activities lacks “almost everything—training, equipment, investigating skills, and organizational motivation—to accomplish its mission.”¹¹⁸

Role of West African Criminal Syndicates

West African crime groups operate in more than 80 countries and are organized into more than 500 cells internationally.¹¹⁹ They have long been involved in heroin trafficking and marketing, but increasingly also smuggle cocaine, other drugs and types of contraband, including persons, and are involved in diverse other crime, such as financial fraud. Financial crimes, including 419 fraud schemes, reportedly cost the United States alone between \$1 billion and \$2 billion per year.¹²⁰ The transnational reach of such groups has given them a reputation as being among the most aggressively expansionist perpetrators of crime internationally. West African crime groups are primarily engaged in financial frauds and drug trafficking. The United States and the United Kingdom are reportedly key targets of West African crime groups, but these groups operate small cells in strategically useful locations worldwide (e.g., in illicit drug source and producing countries, financial centers in which crime proceeds can be laundered with relative ease, and key ports of entry and other international transportation hubs). West Africans have long been associated with trafficking of diverse drugs through south and southwest Asian countries, such as Thailand, Malaysia, China, the Philippines, and India.¹²¹

With respect to drug trafficking, West African crime groups in the 1980s were one of the primary groups to popularize the relatively low-risk but sophisticated use of low-level traffickers, called couriers or mules, to traffic drugs across international borders via commercial passenger flights.¹²² When using this method of drug smuggling, West African crime groups sometimes plant “decoy” couriers who intentionally draw the attention of law enforcement personnel and therefore increase the chances of one or more couriers on the same flight—often couriers trafficking greater amounts of the contraband substance—to avoid detection. West African crime groups also recruit “low profile” couriers, such as Caucasians, women with children, the elderly, or the disabled, who may be less likely to draw the attention of authorities.¹²³

¹¹⁸ In recent months that agency’s counternarcotics role has been supplanted by that of an ad hoc unit controlled by the junta that seized power in Guinea in late 2008. The new organization’s role is to fight drugs, corruption and organized crime. 2008 INCSR, “Guinea”; and CRS Report R40703, *Guinea’s 2008 Military Coup and Relations with the United States*, by (name redacted) and (name redacted).

¹¹⁹ This paragraph draws from U.S. Government, International Crime Threat Assessment, “Nigerian Criminal Enterprises,” December 2000.

¹²⁰ 419 schemes, a term derived from a provision in the Nigerian Criminal Code, involve advance-fee fraud. While these schemes vary, 419 swindlers typically approach individuals overseas by postal letter or by email. They promise to share with their intended targets putative “unclaimed” assets in financial or other overseas institutions in exchange for various “fees” and “administrative costs” paid upfront by the target of the scheme. In such schemes, the assets, often described by the swindler as unclaimed inheritances or funds resulting from administrative oversight, are fictitious, and any fees paid by the fraud target are taken by the swindler. U.S. Department of Justice, “Organized Crime: African Criminal Enterprises,” n.d.; see also Daniel Jordan Smith, *A Culture of Corruption: Everyday Deception and Popular Discontent in Nigeria*, Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2007.

¹²¹ Sandy Araneta, “NBI Busts West African Drug Ring,” *The Philippine Star*, February 18, 2010; Indo-Asian News Service, “Tip-offs Help Malaysia Nab Drug Traffickers From India,” February 3, 2010; and Shawn W Crispin, “Out of Africa,” *Far Eastern Economic Review*, May 24, 2001, among others

¹²² For a discussion of mules, see the cocaine trafficking trends section of this report, above.

¹²³ McDougall (2007); UK HM Revenue & Customs, “Ghana Drugs Case Shows the Misery of Narcotics Trafficking,” January 23, 2008; Damien Francis, “The Young Women Targeted as Mules by Cocaine Smugglers,” *The Guardian*, (continued...)

Few publicly available documents describe the organizational structure and composition of West African crime groups—and those that do broadly describe them as highly fluid and adaptable, loosely organized across a networked web of West African diaspora communities worldwide. Individual West African crime groups vary, but in general, they

- draw members from families or communities with which they have close national, ethnic, regional, or kinship ties;
- are composed of small, compartmentalized cells that often range in size between 2 and 10 members, and limit members' access to information or details about a criminal network to specific operations or tasks for which they are responsible;
- communicate mostly in African indigenous languages, which often insulates the crime group from outside infiltration;
- often function on a project-by-project basis, with impermanent operating structures that last only as long as a given project;
- may include members who are simultaneously active in more than one crime network;
- rarely fall under the permanent control of a static leader and loyalty to a single crime boss is not required; and
- are mainly motivated to participate in criminal activity in the pursuit of profit.¹²⁴

These characteristics contrast sharply with those of traditional organized crime, modeled on the Italian mafia and Chinese triads. While membership in both traditional, non-African organized crime and West African groups typically relies on kin-based, ethnic ties, the former groups tend to be organized hierarchically, with senior leaders making decisions and low-level actors carrying out the orders. By contrast, membership in West African crime groups tends to be task-based and revolve around distinct criminal specialties (e.g., procuring drugs, falsifying passports and travel documentation, recruiting couriers, laundering illicit proceeds, and similar activities). West African crime groups also tend to be more willing than others to cooperate with other West African crime groups, rather than to compete for turf or dominance in a given crime sector. Instead, some have been known to pool their joint resources in order to improve their mutual profit potential. Their networked organizations also make West African crime groups more immune to tactics typically used by law enforcement to dismantle traditional organized crime groups, which can involve either targeting the senior leader or pitting several groups against one another.¹²⁵

(...continued)

August 27, 2008; and UNODC (November 2008).

¹²⁴ See Mazzitelli (2007), pp. 1071-1090; U.S. Government, *The Threat from International Organized Crime to U.S. National Interests*, September 2006.

¹²⁵ U.S. Government, *The Threat from International Organized Crime to U.S. National Interests*, September 2006.

U.S. Policy

In general, U.S. policy responses to the rise in drug trafficking through Africa remain in the formative stages.¹²⁶ Many African countries lack effective law enforcement agencies and judicial systems, which fundamentally limit counternarcotics efforts in the region. In many cases, substantial U.S. and European operational cooperation or capacity-building assistance has accompanied African government efforts to increase drug trafficking monitoring, detection, and seizure rates. A fundamental challenge confronting policy makers is how to develop a strategy and find the resources to both stem the rising flow of drug trafficking through Africa—particularly West Africa—in the short term, through such means as effective interdiction operations, and simultaneously address the underlying, long-term law enforcement capacity weaknesses that make the region vulnerable to drug trafficking.

Several U.S. government agencies are currently developing policy strategies to achieve such ends, and the amounts of personnel, financial, and other resources being devoted to anti-drug efforts in the region are increasing. These efforts include the establishment of at least one new DEA office in Ghana, and potentially more in other countries in the region in the future, including in Nairobi, Kenya. Total Africa-related State Department counternarcotics assistance is gradually expanding; it rose from approximately \$0.5 million in FY2006 to \$1.6 million in FY2009. The Obama Administration requested \$7.5 million for such purposes in Africa in FY2010.¹²⁷ In February 2010, the White House Office on National Drug Control Policy (ONDCP) released highlights from its FY2011 budget request.¹²⁸ In it, the Administration requested \$13.2 million for West Africa counternarcotics programs conducted by the State Department to enhance law enforcement investigative skills and justice sector capabilities to prosecute and convict drug traffickers.¹²⁹

P.L. 111-117 (Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2010) did not explicitly allocate funds for Africa-specific counternarcotics efforts, as it did for some other countries and regions, although the bill does fund a variety of programs that are likely to support such ends in Africa.¹³⁰ Levels of funding for counternarcotics efforts in Africa remain small compared to some other regions, but there are indications that greater policy attention—in terms of strategy development, programming, resources, and international cooperation—is being devoted to combating the illegal drug trade in West Africa and elsewhere on the continent.

¹²⁶ For more information on U.S. foreign counternarcotics policy generally, see CRS Report RL34543, *International Drug Control Policy, International Drug Control Policy*, by Liana Wyler.

¹²⁷ State Department, *Congressional Budget Justification - Foreign Operations*, Fiscal Year 2010.

¹²⁸ Office on National Drug Control Policy, *National Drug Control Budget: FY2011 Funding Highlights*, February 2010.

¹²⁹ *Ibid.* Countries slated to receive counternarcotics assistance under the budget request include Benin, Cape Verde, Ghana, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Nigeria, Senegal, Sierra Leone, The Gambia, and Togo.

¹³⁰ The primary source of non-DOD counternarcotics foreign assistance to Africa, the International Narcotics Control and Law Enforcement (INCLE) account, allocates 97.7% of the account's funds to specific programs that do not include counternarcotics assistance to Africa. Some portion of the remaining 2.3% of unallocated funding (\$36.3 million), however, will likely be committed to combating drugs in Africa among other global priorities.

Interagency Approach?

No public interagency counternarcotics strategy focusing specifically on Africa has been formulated. However, several internal U.S. government agency strategy documents outline specific plans and missions. One such agency strategy involves the State Department's International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs Bureau (INL). As of February 2010, INL's strategy was focused specifically on providing assistance to African countries for the targeting, investigation, and prosecution of narcotics traffickers. In an effort to ensure that U.S. counternarcotics assistance is not misused and for cost reasons, assistance in the form of interdiction equipment, such as patrol boats and law enforcement communications equipment, is reportedly discouraged. In addition, INL has, since 2008, conducted several country assessments in West Africa (see **Table 10**). INL conducts these assessments jointly with other U.S. government agencies, including the Department of Defense (DOD), DEA, and the Department of the Treasury. The country assessments are intended to inform the development of multi-agency counternarcotics aid programs for the individual countries and for the region as a whole.

Another indication of a growing U.S. government focus on counternarcotics in Africa is the inclusion of seven African countries in the 2009 *International Narcotics Control Strategy Report* (INCSR), released by the State Department but consisting of interagency agreement on the years' top foreign counternarcotics priorities. The INCSR is an annual report mandated by Congress that provides a country-by-country analysis of selected drug producing or transit countries, including a description of the current drug situation and government efforts to improve conditions. The 2008 INCSR identified West Africa as an emerging "hub for cocaine trafficking from South America to Europe."¹³¹ New African country narratives for the 2009 INCSR include Cote D'Ivoire, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Kenya, Senegal, Sierra Leone, and Togo.

DOD has also developed a counternarcotics strategy for the region. The FY2009 National Defense Authorization Act, P.L. 110-417, requires that DOD, in consultation with the State Department, submit to Congress no later than June 30, 2009, "a comprehensive strategy ... with regard to counter-narcotics efforts in Africa, with an emphasis on West Africa and the Maghreb."¹³² Required components in the requested report include a description of the overall U.S. counternarcotics policy for Africa and DOD's roles and missions, including the U.S. Combatant Command for Africa, AFRICOM, in support of overall U.S. counternarcotics policy in Africa. The required report, which was cleared for release to the requisite congressional committees in September 2009, stated that it is DOD policy to "train, equip, assist, advise, and support partner nation law enforcement, paramilitary, and military units that have a counternarcotics and narco-terrorism mission."¹³³ DOD's primary stated counternarcotics missions in the region included (1) detecting and monitoring drug trafficking; (2) sharing information with relevant enforcement officials in the region; and (3) building foreign counternarcotics capacity related to drug detection and monitoring, information sharing, interdiction, enforcement, and border control.

¹³¹ INCSR, "Policy and Program Developments: Overview for 2008."

¹³² Sec. 1025(a).

¹³³ U.S. Department of Defense, *U.S. Africa Command Counternarcotics Strategy*, June 30, 2009.

Table 10. Status of Interagency Country Assessments

Country	Visit/Assessment Completion Date	U.S. Agencies Involved in the Assessment ^a	Status of Country Assessment/Strategy Completion
Ghana	September 2008	AFRICOM, DEA, DOJ, DOS	Complete
Senegal	September 2008	AFRICOM, DEA, DOJ, DOS	Complete
Guinea-Bissau	March 2009	AFRICOM, DEA, DOS, FBI, Treasury, USAID	Complete
Togo	March 2009	AFRICOM, DEA, DOS, Treasury	Complete
Benin	November/December 2009	TBD	—
Cape Verde	November/December 2009	TBD	—
Liberia	October 2009	TBD	—
Sierra Leone	September 2009	TBD	—
Gambia	September 2009	TBD	—
Burkina Faso	2010	TBD	—
Guinea	TBD, post “free and fair elections”	TBD	—

Source: State Department response to CRS inquiry, June 2, 2009.

Notes: Country assessments are not available for public distribution.

- a. AFRICOM: Africa Command; DEA: Drug Enforcement Administration; DOJ: Department of Justice; DOS: Department of State.

As of early June 2009, the State Department’s INL bureau had hosted one working-level interagency meeting on counternarcotics and related issues in Africa. It was attended by representatives from the State Department, DEA, DOD, Treasury, the Department of Homeland Security (DHS), and the National Security Council (NSC). Each agency provided an overview of its assistance in Africa. Participants also discussed next steps in developing and coordinating a comprehensive approach to the Administration’s counternarcotics assistance in Africa.¹³⁴

Implementation

The Office of National Drug Control Policy (ONDCP) is responsible for overseeing the implementation of overall U.S. drug control policy, including international counternarcotics efforts.¹³⁵ Primary agencies involved in formulating and implementing counternarcotics efforts in

¹³⁴ State Department response to CRS inquiry, June 2, 2009.

¹³⁵ Sec. 703 of P.L. 105-277 (112 Stat 2681-672; 21 USC 1702), October 21, 1998. As early as 1993, under congressional authorization that was subsequently repealed and superseded, the President designated the Office on National Drug Control Policy (ONDCP) as the lead executive branch agency with the responsibility to establish policies, priorities, and objectives for U.S. drug control policy. See President Bill Clinton, “National Drug Control Program,” *Executive Order 12880*, November 16, 1993, as originally authorized by Sec. 1005(d)(1) of P.L. 100-690 (102 Stat 4187), November 18, 1988.

Africa include the U.S. Department of State, the U.S. Department of Defense (DOD), and the DEA.

The State Department coordinates all U.S. foreign assistance to support international efforts to combat illicit narcotics production and trafficking.¹³⁶ DOD is responsible for the detection and monitoring of aerial and maritime transit of illegal drugs, and is also authorized to provide counternarcotics training and equipping assistance to foreign countries in certain circumstances.¹³⁷ DEA leads U.S. coordination of law enforcement investigations involving international production, trafficking and sale of illegal drugs and other controlled substances. The Department of Homeland Security is responsible for drug-related maritime security and border control and related policy issues, while the Treasury Department occasionally undertakes activities to combat drug-related financial crimes.

The United States has begun to increase multilateral cooperation on countering drug trafficking in Africa with European and other partners, both informally and formally. Formal coordination takes place through mechanisms such as the U.S.-European Union (EU) Drug Troika talks.¹³⁸ In addition, since 2007, the United States has shared counternarcotics intelligence and other information with the European Maritime Analysis and Operation Center–Narcotics (MAOC-N), located in Lisbon, Portugal. In the 2008 U.S.-E.U. Summit Declaration, the United States and the European Union also symbolically committed to continue their counternarcotics cooperation, particularly as it related to drug trafficking through West Africa.

Counternarcotics Foreign Assistance

State Department

The two major sources of counternarcotics foreign assistance to the region are administered by the State Department and DOD. The State Department provides counterdrug assistance to a number of countries in Africa, primarily through programs funded under its International Narcotics Control and Law Enforcement (INCLE) account. A key INCLE program funded by the State Department since 2001 is the International Law Enforcement Academy (ILEA) in Gaborone, Botswana. There, the United States trains approximately 500 African law enforcement officials each year, providing courses on drug enforcement, anti-corruption, financial crimes, border security, and other matters.¹³⁹ INL also provides bilateral anti-crime assistance, which includes efforts to bolster counternarcotics capacities, to a number of African countries. The Obama Administration's FY2010 budget request included \$7.5 million in counterdrug foreign aid to seven countries—up since the Bush Administration's FY2009 budget request, which included \$1.45 million in counterdrug foreign aid to six countries in Africa (see **Table 11**).

¹³⁶ Sec. 4601 of P.L. 100-690 (102 Stat 4286; 22 USC 2291(b)(1)), November 18, 1988.

¹³⁷ The authority to serve as the lead agency for detection and monitoring stems from Sec. 1202(a)(1) of P.L. 101-189 (103 Stat 1563; 10 USC 124), November 29, 1989.

¹³⁸ The EU Troika includes the Foreign Affairs Minister of the EU Member State holding the current Presidency of the Council of the European Union; the EU Secretary-General for common EU foreign and security policy; and the European Commissioner in charge of external relations.

¹³⁹ INCSR, "U.S. Government Assistance," 2009.

Table II. State Department Counternarcotics Assistance to Africa, FY2006 Actual-FY2010 Request

(in current \$USD millions)

Country	FY2006 Actual	FY2007 Actual	FY2008 Actual	FY2009 Estimate	FY2010 Request
Burkina Faso	—	—	—	\$0.100	\$0.100
Cape Verde	—	—	\$0.496	\$0.500	\$2.000
Ghana	—	—	\$0.246	\$0.500	\$0.500
Guinea	—	—	—	\$0.500	\$0.110
Guinea-Bissau	—	—	\$0.600	\$0.100	\$3.000
Morocco	—	—	—	—	\$0.750
Nigeria	\$0.495	\$0.200	—	\$0.360	\$1.000
Africa Total	\$0.495	\$0.200	\$1.342	\$1.610	\$7.500
GLOBAL TOTAL			\$1,133.664	\$1,322,277	\$1,538.063

Source: State Department, *Congressional Budget Justifications, FY2008-FY2010* (which include data from FY2006 actual to FY2010 request).

DOD/AFRICOM

DOD provides foreign assistance to train, equip, and improve counternarcotics capacity and capabilities in foreign countries under two authorities, commonly known as Section 1004 and Section 1033. Section 1004 of the National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA) for Fiscal Year 1991 (P.L. 101-510), authorizes DOD to provide counternarcotics-related training and transport of foreign law enforcement personnel. Under its Section 1004 authority, DOD has provided counternarcotics training assistance for several years. Section 1033 of the NDAA for FY1998 (P.L. 105-85), as amended, enables DOD to assist 22 foreign countries' counternarcotics efforts by providing non-lethal protective and utility personnel equipment, including equipment for navigation, secure and non-secure communications, and radar surveillance, as well as night vision systems, vehicles, aircraft, and boats.

In FY2009, Congress authorized DOD to provide Guinea-Bissau and Senegal with Section 1033 counternarcotics assistance; this was the first instance of a congressional grant of authority to DOD under Section 1033 to provide counternarcotics aid to African countries. In FY2009, DOD estimates that it will provide approximately \$19.3 million for counternarcotics assistance in Africa, mainly through AFRICOM (see **Table 12**).¹⁴⁰ The bulk of the assistance is committed to regional counternarcotics programming, which cannot be attributed to a single country alone. Leading individual country recipients in FY2009 include Nigeria (\$1 million), Mauritania (\$0.9 million), Liberia (\$0.8 million), Cameroon (\$0.6 million), and Ghana (\$0.6 million). DOD also provides counternarcotics-related Excess Defense Articles to some African countries.

¹⁴⁰ DOD response to CRS request, received June 16, 2009. For more information on AFRICOM, see CRS Report RL34003, *Africa Command: U.S. Strategic Interests and the Role of the U.S. Military in Africa*, by Lauren Ploch.

Table 12. DOD/AFRICOM Counternarcotics Assistance to Africa, FY2009-FY2010
(in current \$USD millions)

Country	FY2009 (estimate)	FY2010 (request)
Algeria	\$0.012	—
Benin	\$0.018	0.012
Burkina Faso	\$0.007	0.007
Cameroon	\$0.635	0.817
Cape Verde	\$0.185	0.300
Cote D'Ivoire	\$0.025	0.025
Djibouti	\$0.100	0.012
Gabon	\$0.136	—
Gambia	—	0.500
Ghana	\$0.591	3.872
Guinea	\$0.238	0.332
Guinea-Bissau	\$0.042	0.854
Kenya	\$0.422	0.055
Liberia	\$0.806	1.341
Libya	\$0.010	—
Madagascar	\$0.012	—
Mali	\$0.012	—
Mauritania	\$0.900	0.885
Mauritius	\$0.012	0.020
Morocco	\$0.012	0.350
Mozambique	\$0.101	—
Niger	\$0.006	—
Nigeria	\$1.042	2.617
Rwanda	—	0.005
Sao Tome	\$0.370	0.070
Senegal	\$0.200	0.975
Seychelles	\$0.012	0.015
Sierra Leone	\$0.368	0.795
South Africa	\$0.112	—
Tanzania	\$0.100	—
Togo	\$0.015	0.066
Tunisia	\$0.773	0.761
Zambia	\$0.012	—
Africa/Europe Regional	\$12.022	14.538
TOTAL # of COUNTRIES	31 countries	23 countries
TOTAL ASSISTANCE	\$19.308	\$27.964

Source: DOD response to CRS inquiry, June 17, 2009.

Notes: This chart includes DOD counternarcotics funding under all existing DOD counternarcotics authorities, including Sections 1004 and 1033. This data estimates of DOD counternarcotics support provided or efforts in these nations or regions. DOD does not budget counternarcotics programs by regions or countries, but by program.

DOD's 2009 counternarcotics strategy in AFRICOM's area of responsibility identifies specific priority sub-regions and countries in Africa where DOD plans on focusing counternarcotics-

related capacity building efforts first. In order of priority, the sub-regions are West Africa, North Africa, East Africa, South Africa, and Central Africa (see **Table 13**).¹⁴¹

Table 13. DOD Counternarcotics Strategy for Africa
(in order of reported priority)

Country or Countries	Sub-Region(s)	Threat	Assistance Plan
Guinea Bissau and Guinea	West Africa	“precarious political situations, weak institutions, and the presence of Latin American drug traffickers”	long-term investment in institution building, in coordination with European counterparts
Sierra Leone, Liberia, and Cote D’Ivoire	West Africa	“remain[s] vulnerable to the destabilizing effects of drug trafficking” due to “recently experienced civil strife”	capitalize on the United Nations presence in these countries and augment, build, or “fill in the gaps” organizations capable of countering drug trafficking
Ghana, Senegal, and Cape Verde	West Africa	risk of a “bubble effect” as “successes elsewhere in the region push traffickers out of their current bases of operation	reinforce existing national counterdrug programs in order to prevent drug trafficking in these countries from worsening
Togo, Benin, and Mauritania	West Africa	recent experience with the “effects of drug trafficking” but not considered “as vulnerable as other countries in the region”	implementation of select “targeted” programs to bolster their ability to oppose drug trafficking
Nigeria	West Africa	drug trafficking perceived as a threat, but other unrelated “problems” are considered more of a priority, including “an Islamic north” and “an unstable oil region in the Delta”	focus on Nigerian drug trafficking problems and Nigerian criminal diasporas separately
—	North Africa	“trafficking of cocaine from Western Africa flowing northward” along with a “reverse flow of bulk cash and arms from Europe into Africa”	counternarcotics capacity building, with an anticipated focus first on Morocco and Tunisia and later Algeria and Libya
—	East Africa	“movement of opiates and precursors entering the region” from Southwest Asia and the Middle East	support for maritime ports and maritime enforcement, airport security and infrastructure, land borders, and train-and-equip support for counternarcotics police and security forces
—	South Africa and Central Africa	“synthetic drug production and precursor chemical transshipment”	coordination with U.S. government law enforcement agencies to assist where possible

Source: U.S. Department of Defense, *U.S. Africa Command Counternarcotics Strategy*, June 30, 2009.

¹⁴¹ U.S. Department of Defense, *U.S. Africa Command Counternarcotics Strategy*, June 30, 2009.

Maritime and Airport Security Assistance

While maritime security in Africa is a general issue of interest for U.S. policy, counterdrug-related maritime security efforts in the region have focused mainly on West Africa in recent years. According to General William E. Ward, Commander of AFRICOM, the “absence of credible maritime security capacity” along the coast of West Africa has allowed drug trafficking and other criminal activity in the region to thrive.¹⁴² To address such challenges, various DOD elements, as well as the U.S. Coast Guard and several U.S. civilian agencies, have become involved in an increasing number of bilateral and multilateral maritime security cooperation activities in West African coastal countries.

One such training initiative is the Africa Partnership Station (APS), implemented by U.S. Navy Forces Africa and AFRICOM, in partnership with U.S. civilian and non-governmental agencies, to increase the capacity of West and Central African coastal states in the Gulf of Guinea to patrol and monitor their waters. APS vessels sponsor a variety of joint exercises, on-board trainings, and port visits aimed at enhancing diverse maritime security capacities.¹⁴³ In addition, since early 2008, at least one U.S. Navy surface combatant is on patrol off West Africa at any time, a threefold increase in such a patrol presence since 2002.¹⁴⁴ Other projects underway include maritime port and airport security assistance and infrastructure construction and related training. DOD is involved in constructing boat and refueling facilities for West and Central African navies and coast guards and seeks to enhance the capacity of African port and customs security agencies by providing training and equipment for law enforcement personnel, including scanners and other facility improvements.¹⁴⁵

Detection, Monitoring, and Interdiction Operations

Several other DOD elements are involved in the detection and monitoring of illicit drugs that flow through Africa. The combatant command for Africa, AFRICOM, which began initial operations in October 2007 and became fully operational in October 2008, includes counternarcotics efforts as one of its strategic areas of activity.¹⁴⁶ DOD’s Joint Interagency Task Force-South (JIATF-South), which traditionally has coordinated drug interdiction monitoring and detection operations in the transit zone between South America and the United States, also coordinates with AFRICOM and European counterpart agencies regarding similar operations relating to the trafficking of drugs from South America to Africa. JIATF-South-European cooperation has, in particular, focused on the goals and activities of the European Maritime

¹⁴² Statement by General William E. Ward, before the House Armed Services Committee: *Fiscal Year 2009 Defense Authorization*, March 13, 2008.

¹⁴³ The first APS deployed in 2007 and was completed in spring, 2008. It involved a variety of joint exercises, on-board trainings, and port visits in West African coastal countries from Senegal to Gabon. In 2008, a follow-on APS initiative engaged 15 West and Central African countries, hosted 79 ship riders from 10 foreign countries, conducted more than 1,700 training sessions involving more than 1,500 participants. A second APS cruise occurred in spring 2009. AFRICOM, *Fact Sheet: Africa Partnership Station*, January 28, 2009.

¹⁴⁴ Richard Reeve, “Commanding Presence: AFRICOM’s Uncertain Mission Statement,” *Jane’s Intelligence Review*, January 2008.

¹⁴⁵ DOD response to CRS inquiry, June 17, 2009; Testimony of William Wechsler, Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense, Office of Counternarcotics and Global Threats, DOD, before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, Subcommittee on African Affairs: *Confronting Drug Trafficking in West Africa*, June 23, 2009.

¹⁴⁶ Statement by General William E. Ward, before the House Armed Services Committee: *Fiscal Year 2009 Defense Authorization*, March 13, 2008.

Analysis and Operations Centre—Narcotics (MAOC-N), located in Portugal. DOD is also involved in the establishment of an “Information Fusion Center” in Cape Verde, which would help to collect and share drug-related intelligence.

Drug Enforcement Administration Role

DEA, with DOD/AFRICOM funding, is seeking to establish U.S.-vetted African police units, which would help expand DEA’s counternarcotics operations cooperation with African governments. Although plans are not final, DEA hopes to establish the first of such units on the continent in Ghana, which would be the first of its kind in Africa. The pending proposal calls for Ghanaian personnel to be hand-picked by DEA to undergo extra training, as well as to undergo background checks, including polygraphs.¹⁴⁷ To date, the United States established no vetted African law enforcement units, largely because personnel and funding have not been provided for such purposes. Vetted units are designed to improve U.S. capacity to coordinate with host nations regarding counternarcotics matters and to minimize the risk of joint law enforcement operations from being compromised through official corruption.

DEA also participates in drug interdiction and other drug-related law enforcement operations in Africa. The State Department’s 2009 *International Narcotics Control Strategy Report* states that DEA, in coordination with European and African law enforcement agencies, “has developed and implemented a program to gain increased understanding of narcotics trafficking in West Africa, fill intelligence gaps, and promote intelligence sharing.”¹⁴⁸ Public details about such activities are limited, however, to avoid compromising ongoing DEA operations.

Recent DEA-related activities in Africa include the extradition of two Colombians from Sierra Leone in April 2009, the first such defendant transfer in the history of U.S.-Sierra Leone relations. A third suspect who is a material witness in the case was also transferred to U.S. custody.¹⁴⁹ The Colombians were allegedly involved in an attempt to smuggle about 600 kilograms of cocaine to Freetown, Sierra Leone, in 2008, on a small plane. Another U.S. case in 2009 involved an alleged Colombian drug cell head, who was expelled from Togo and transferred to U.S. custody to face U.S. drug charges.¹⁵⁰ In 2006 and 2007, a DEA investigation also disrupted an Afghanistan-based drug trafficking organization’s heroin smuggling route through West Africa en route to the United States; two of the targets of the investigation were expelled from Ghana and convicted of the drug trafficking charges in the United States.¹⁵¹

Key legal tools in such efforts include two provisions of U.S. law—21 U.S.C. 959 and 21 U.S.C. 960a—that provide the DEA with the “extra-territorial jurisdiction to investigate and prosecute drug offenses with a nexus to the U.S. even though the drugs in question have not actually

¹⁴⁷ See testimony by Thomas Harrigan, DEA, before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, Subcommittee on Africa Affairs: *Confronting Drug Trafficking in West Africa*, June 23, 2009.

¹⁴⁸ 2009 INCSR.

¹⁴⁹ U.S. Department of Justice, U.S. Attorney’s Office, Southern District of New York, “United States Announces Historic Transfer of Defendants from Sierra Leone to Face Cocaine Importation Charges,” April 22, 2009; “Un Colombiano Es El Primero Narco Extraditado Desde Sierra Leona a E.U.,” *El Tiempo*, April 29, 2009; and information provided to CRS by the DEA, July 21, 2009.

¹⁵⁰ Testimony of Thomas Harrigan, DEA, before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, Subcommittee on Africa Affairs: *Confronting Drug Trafficking in West Africa*, June 23, 2009.

¹⁵¹ *Ibid.*

entered the United States.” Similar authority is provided in cases in which a drug trafficking crime can be tied to terrorist activities anywhere in the world.¹⁵²

Drug-Related Anti-money Laundering Efforts

To combat money laundering originating from drug proceeds, Congress passed the Foreign Narcotics Kingpin Designation Act in 1999. It authorizes the President to target and block financial criminal proceeds of “Specially Designated Narcotics Trafficker Kingpins,” or SDNTKs.¹⁵³ The Treasury Department’s Office of Foreign Assets Control (OFAC) implements the SDNTK asset blocking program. In 2000, the first year that the Foreign Narcotics Kingpin Designation Act was implemented, the President identified 12 SDNTKs, 2 of whom were Nigerians.¹⁵⁴ The President has since named a total of 70 SDNTKs, but apart from the two Nigerians designated in 2000, a husband and wife team, no others have been nationals of an African country.

Multilateral and Regional Efforts to Combat Drug Trafficking in Africa

In addition to the United States, multiple African and donor governments and multilateral organizations are involved in combating drug trafficking in Africa. In general, while most actors involved at the multilateral and regional level agree that drug trafficking through Africa is a growing phenomenon and poses a variety of law enforcement challenges, a shared consensus on how to address these challenges has not emerged.

Limited resources and, in some cases, limited political will, often hamper the effectiveness of African and multinational efforts to combat the illegal drug trade. For these and other reasons, some African policy makers reportedly do not view drug trafficking as a priority problem.¹⁵⁵ As one report explains: “for such poor countries ... unless funded from abroad, the advantages of directing policing resources to countering narcotics trafficking are not as apparent as in the rich consumer states that they supply.”¹⁵⁶

Nevertheless, there is growing support among African governments for efforts to address the drug situation, both at the national level and in multilateral fora. Some West African countries, notably Cape Verde, Senegal, Ghana, and Sierra Leone, have recently won praise from U.S. officials for their efforts to mount effective law enforcement responses to the problem, and for their

¹⁵² Testimony of Thomas M. Harrigan, DEA, before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, Subcommittee on Africa Affairs: *Confronting Drug Trafficking in West Africa*, June 23, 2009.

¹⁵³ Title VIII, International Narcotics Trafficking, of P.L. 106-120, the Intelligence Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2000 (21 U.S.C. 1901-1908; 8 U.S.C. 1182). The law was reportedly modeled on Treasury’s sanctions program pursuant to Executive Order 12978 (October 1995) against Colombia drug cartels under authority of the International Emergency Economic Powers Act (Title II of P.L. 95-223; 50 U.S.C. 1701 et seq.) and the National Emergencies Act (P.L. 94-412; 50 U.S.C. 1601 et seq.).

¹⁵⁴ Letter to Congressional Leaders Reporting on Sanctions under the Foreign Narcotics Kingpin Designation Act, p. 1063, William J. Clinton, *Book 1 Public Papers of the Presidents of the United States 2000-2001*.

¹⁵⁵ UNODC (2005).

¹⁵⁶ Reeve (2008).

willingness to cooperate with U.S. and international counternarcotics efforts.¹⁵⁷ Forty-five of 53 African countries have signed all three international U.N. drug control conventions.¹⁵⁸

A growing focus on the issue of drug trafficking in Africa by various U.N. agencies and analogous concerns at the national level has also brought the issue to the attention of the U.N. Security Council, which held a special session on drug trafficking as a threat to peace and security in Africa on December 8, 2009. The discussion focused on the “numerous security risks caused by drug trafficking ... in Africa,” among other world regions, including “serious threats posed” by linkages between transnational organized crime and the “increasing link, in some cases, between drug trafficking and the financing of terrorism.”¹⁵⁹

Key multilateral, European, and African country groupings that are developing efforts to combat drug trafficking in Africa include the following:

- **U.N. Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC).** Established in 1997, UNODC is mandated to assist Member States in their efforts to combat illegal drugs, transnational crime, and terrorism. UNODC publishes an annual report on drug trafficking, called the World Drug Report, and collects data on drug cultivation, production, seizures, and other drug-related statistics. In Africa, UNODC maintains five field offices: one in Egypt, covering Northern Africa and the Middle East; one in Kenya, covering Eastern Africa; one in Nigeria; one in Senegal, covering West and Central Africa; and one in South Africa, covering Southern Africa. These offices report on drug trafficking and other criminal activity trends at the regional level. They also help to build anti-crime policy and institutional capacities at the regional and country level, including with respect to counternarcotics efforts, through programs that foster drug law enforcement mentoring and training, justice and penal sector reform, and drug demand reduction. UNODC also supports *Data for Africa*, a project launched in 2005 that is designed to increase the amount and reliability of data and information on African crime and drug trends.
- **U.N. Office for West Africa (UNOWA).** Established in 2001 by the U.N. Security Council, UNOWA is mandated to further the United Nations’ peace and security objectives in West Africa. UNOWA focuses on cross-border illicit activity in the sub-region, among other issues, and helps to raise West African government’s awareness of the challenges posed by drug trafficking. It also facilitates related multilateral security and political cooperation in the sub-region.¹⁶⁰

¹⁵⁷ Senate Foreign Relations Committee, Subcommittee on African Affairs: *Confronting Drug Trafficking in West Africa*, June 23, 2009.

¹⁵⁸ The three U.N. drug treaties include the 1961 Single Convention on Narcotic Drugs, as amended; the 1971 Convention on Psychotropic Substances; and the 1988 Convention Against Illicit Traffic in Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances.

¹⁵⁹ See Security Council, *Security Council Presidential Statement Calls for Stronger International Cooperation with Global, Regional Bodies against Drug Trafficking* [press release], SC/9807, December 8, 2009; and S/PV.6233 (“Statement by the President of the Security Council,”; 6233rd Meeting; and 6233rd Meeting [Resumption 1]), December 8, 2009.

¹⁶⁰ The current mandate for UNOWA lasts until December 2010. See U.N. Security Council, “Letter Dated 28 November 2007 from the Secretary-General Addressed to the President of the Security Council,” S/2007/753, December 21, 2007. The most recent mid-year report on the activities of UNOWA, covering the period from July 1, (continued...)

- **African Union (AU).** Established in 2002, the African Union is a regional multilateral grouping of all states in Sub-Saharan and North Africa except Morocco. The African Union has addressed drug trafficking through its *Revised AU Plan of Action on Drug Control and Crime Prevention (2007-2012)*. In March 2009, the A.U. Commission and the UNODC launched a joint project to support the implementation of the A.U. Plan of Action, building on earlier joint efforts focused on drug demand reduction and drug trafficking, among other crime prevention and criminal justice issues.¹⁶¹
- **Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS).** Established in 1975, ECOWAS is a 15-member multilateral grouping of West Africa states that promotes regional economic integration and security cooperation. Recently, ECOWAS has begun to play a greater role in combating drug trafficking in the region. In October 2008, an ECOWAS ministerial conference, organized in collaboration with the UNODC and UNOWA and held in Praia, Cape Verde, adopted a draft Political Declaration on Prevention of Drug Abuse, Drug Trafficking and Organized Crimes in West Africa.¹⁶² It adopted a medium-term ECOWAS regional action plan to address drug trafficking, organized crime, and drug abuse in West Africa.¹⁶³ In July 2009, United Nations agencies and INTERPOL launched the West Africa Coast Initiative, which seeks to support the implementation of the ECOWAS regional plan.¹⁶⁴ A key part of this initiative will be to establish transnational crime units (TCUs), initially in Cote d'Ivoire, Guinea Bissau, Liberia, and Sierra Leone.¹⁶⁵
- **Financial Action Task Force (FATF) and FATF-Style Regional Bodies (FSRBs) in Africa.** Established in 1989, FATF is a multilateral organization that establishes international standards for legislative and regulatory reform to combat

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2008, to December 31, 2008, discusses drug trafficking a priority cross-border subject. See U.N. Security Council, "Report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Office for West Africa," S/2009/39, January 15, 2009.

¹⁶¹ UNODC, "African Union Commission and UNODC Launch Joint Project to Combat Drugs and Crime in Africa," March 12, 2009; UNODC, "UNODC and AU Extend Cooperation," December 10, 2007; and CRS Report RS21332, *The African Union, The African Union*, by (name redacted).

¹⁶² At the conference—which was also attended by multiple U.N. agencies, EUROPOL, MAOC, INTERPOL, and multiple non-African governments, including that of the United States—the UNODC released its November 2008 report, *Drug Trafficking as a Security Threat in West Africa*. See Antonio Maria Costa, UNODC Executive Director, "West Africa Under Attack/drug Trafficking Is A Security Threat" [speech], ECOWAS High-level Conference on Drug Trafficking as a Security Threat in West Africa, October 28, 2008; *Final Report*, ECOWAS Ministerial Conference on Illicit Drug Trafficking as a Security Threat to West Africa, October 28-29, 2008; and Melissa Chea-Annan, "West Africa: ECOWAS Adopts Strategies against Illicit Drugs," *AllAfrica.com*, November 4, 2008.

¹⁶³ ECOWAS, *Regional Action Plan to Address the Growing Problem of Illicit Drug Trafficking, Organised Crimes and Drug Abuse in West Africa 2008-2011*.

¹⁶⁴ The U.N. agencies involved include the UNODC and the U.N. Office of West Africa, Department of Political Affairs, and Department of Peacekeeping Operations. United Nations Security Council, "Report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Office for West Africa," S/2009/682, December 31, 2009; U.N. Commission on Narcotic Drugs, "Strengthening International Support for States in West Africa in Their Efforts to Combat Drug Trafficking," *Report of the Executive Director*, E/CN.7/2010/10, December 30, 2009; and U.N., Press Conference to Announce Launch of West Africa Coast Initiative, July 8, 2009.

¹⁶⁵ According to a UNODC press release, the initiative will build national and regional capacities in the areas of law enforcement, forensics, intelligence, border management and money-laundering, as well as strengthen criminal justice systems. The TCUs will reportedly be based on models already used in other world regions. UNODC, "Comprehensive Regional Response Launched to Combat Trafficking in West Africa," April 23, 2009.

money laundering, including drug-related money laundering and terrorist financing. South Africa is the only African member of FATF. However, two African FSRBs—the Eastern and South African Anti-Money Laundering Group (ESAAMLG) and the Intergovernmental Action Group against Money Laundering in West Africa (GIABA, its French acronym)—support and promote the standards established by FATF.

- **International Narcotics Control Board (INCB).** The INCB is an independent and quasi-judicial control organ that monitors the implementation of U.N. drug control treaties. In 2007, the INCB conducted a program to monitor and prevent illicit trade in precursor chemicals through Africa, called Operation Crystal Flow. The findings from that operation proved that Africa is a transshipment point for international trade in illegally diverted precursor chemicals. In its recent annual reports, the INCB has urged African countries and donor nations to continue to take steps to curtail cocaine trafficking and the emergent precursor trade in Africa.
- **INTERPOL.** Established in 1923, the International Criminal Police Organization, or INTERPOL, is a 187-member state organization that facilitates international police co-operation and efforts to prevent and combat international crime. With respect to counternarcotics issues, INTERPOL assists its member states to identify new drug trafficking trends and criminal organizations, and supports law enforcement efforts to combat drug trafficking. In Africa, INTERPOL launched Project COCAF (Cocaine Trafficking from Western Africa to Europe) in 2006, which facilitates information sharing between European and African law enforcement agencies to identify and target emerging drug trafficking routes, particularly cocaine shipment on commercial air flights from West Africa.¹⁶⁶ INTERPOL has also facilitated two other related efforts, Project PROTEUS, which was designed to combat cocaine trafficking originating in South America and transiting Western Africa en route to Europe, and Project DRUM, an effort to target the diversion of precursor chemicals in Africa.¹⁶⁷ INTERPOL is also involved in policy capacity building in Africa, through a project called OASIS Africa (Providing Operational Assistance, Services, and Infrastructure Support to African Police Forces).¹⁶⁸ The organization also deploys Response Teams that provide specialized expertise and investigative aid to countries facing major or serious police issues or cases.¹⁶⁹
- **European Union (EU).** In December 2007, the EU committed to greater counternarcotics cooperation with and assistance for Africa in the Joint EU-Africa Strategy, adopted at the Lisbon Summit.¹⁷⁰ The European Commission

¹⁶⁶ INTERPOL Fact Sheet, “Drug Trafficking,” COM/FS/2008-06/DCO-01, June 2008; INTERPOL, “Guinea Bissau Requests INTERPOL Assistance Following Major Drug Seizure,” July 21, 2008; INTERPOL, “Liberia Requests INTERPOL Assistance After Major Cocaine Haul,” February 4, 2008; INTERPOL, *INTERPOL Response Teams*, n.d.

¹⁶⁷ Ronald K. Noble, INTERPOL Secretary General, Keynote speech, 9th Meeting of the West African Police Chiefs Committee (WAPCCO), 3 October 3, 2007; INCB 2006 Report; and INTERPOL, *Facilitating International Police Co-Operation For A Safer World* [presentation], n.d.

¹⁶⁸ INTERPOL website, “OASIS Africa,” last modified April 3, 2009.

¹⁶⁹ INTERPOL, *INTERPOL Response Teams*, n.d.; and; INTERPOL, “Guinea Bissau Requests INTERPOL Assistance ...,” and “Liberia requests INTERPOL assistance,” *op cit*.

¹⁷⁰ See also the “EU Drugs Action Plan for 2009-2012,” *Official Journal of the European Union*, C326/7, December (continued...)

(EC) and several European countries also provide counternarcotics assistance to some African countries at the bilateral and regional or sub-regional levels, and through international multilateral institutions, like the UNODC and the Dublin Group.¹⁷¹ Two additional initiatives that are partially funded by the EC include the Maritime Analysis and Operations Center—Narcotics (MAOC-N), located in Portugal and established in 2007, and the Mediterranean Anti-Drug Coordination Center (CeCLAD-M), located in France and established in 2008.¹⁷² These efforts support maritime surveillance and intelligence coordination pertaining to drug trafficking interdiction operations along maritime routes between Africa and Europe. ECOWAS and the EU Ministerial Troika also meet regularly to promote mutual security cooperation, including with respect to counternarcotics efforts. The EU is reportedly planning to allocate between €18 and 22 million for drug interdiction and information gathering; in addition, the EC has pledged to provide €15 million in support of institutional development issues in the law enforcement and judicial sectors under an effort dubbed the “Dakar Initiative.”¹⁷³

Congressional Role and Possible Oversight Issues

Congress is involved in many aspects of U.S. international drug control policy. Members regularly appropriate funds for counterdrug initiatives, conduct oversight activities on federal counterdrug programs, and legislate changes to agency authorities and other counterdrug policies. Recent activities, as discussed above, include the 110th Congress’s passage of P.L. 110-417, which required a DOD counternarcotics strategy for Africa and the Senate Foreign Relations Committee’s conduct of a June 23, 2009, hearing entitled *Confronting Drug Trafficking in West Africa*.¹⁷⁴ During the hearing, the Chair and Ranking Member each expressed their concern regarding the issue, and stated that further policy efforts to halt rising drug trafficking in Africa are necessary. The possible nexus of cocaine trafficking and terrorism also featured prominently

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20, 2008.

¹⁷¹ The Dublin Group is a group of donor countries that coordinates their international counternarcotics assistance; see Council of the European Union, *Regional Report on Western Africa* [report to the Dublin Group], CORDROGUE 112 16344/06, December 12, 2006.

¹⁷² MAOC-N is staffed by law enforcement and military personnel from the UK, Portugal, Spain, Ireland, France, the Netherlands, Italy, EUROPOL, as well as personnel from the U.S. Joint Interagency Task Force-South, which is the American drug interdiction corollary to MAOC-N in the Caribbean. The French have invited members of the 5+5 Interministerial Conference of the Western Mediterranean—France, Spain, Italy, Portugal, Malta, plus Algeria, Tunisia, Morocco, Libya, and Mauritania—to participate in CeCLAD-M. See European Commission, Directorate for Maritime Affairs and Fisheries, “Non-Paper on Maritime Surveillance,” November 13, 2008; Daniel Ducarme (Rapporteur), “A Common Security and Defence Strategy for Europe—Reply to the Annual Report of the Council,” 55th Session of the European Security and Defence Assembly, Assembly of Western European Union, A/2028, December 2008.

¹⁷³ David Lewis, “Poverty Muddies Response to W. African Drug Trade,” Reuters, February 16, 2010; European Commission, *The Instrument for Stability - Multi-annual Indicative Programme 2009-2011*, April 8, 2009; and U.N. Security Council, “Report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Office for West Africa,” S/2009/682, December 31, 2009.

¹⁷⁴ P.L. 110-417, the *Duncan Hunter National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2009*; and U.S. Congress, Senate Committee on Foreign Relations, *Confronting Drug Trafficking in West Africa*, 111th Cong., 1st sess., June 23, 2009.

in a November 2009 SFRC Subcommittee on African Affairs hearing U.S. counterterrorism priorities and strategies in the Sahel Region.¹⁷⁵

Congress may also respond to increasing executive branch prioritization of counternarcotics assistance efforts in Africa, as previously discussed.¹⁷⁶ Key Africa-related counternarcotics issues that Congress may consider, among others, include the following:

Data Reliability: Implications for Analysis and Policymaking

The analysis of drug trafficking and use trends in Africa—and, in turn, the formulation of policy solutions to combat drugs in Africa—is inherently limited by the frequent lack of basic crime and law enforcement statistics, drug-related health and social indicators, and security and justice sector evaluations in Africa. Data on domestic drug use are often unavailable or cover limited time periods. Statistics on drug-related arrests, prosecutions, incarcerations, seizures, and other related trends are often unreliable or non-existent. There is also a paucity of actionable intelligence data in the region; as the UNODC has reported, many of the largest drug seizures in recent years in Africa were detected through foreign tips, as a result of non-African law enforcement actions. Similarly, several of the largest cocaine seizures undertaken by African law enforcement appear to have arisen from accidental detection and other coincidental circumstances, rather than as a result of systematic intelligence gathering or other law enforcement operations.¹⁷⁷ As a result of the lack of data on drug trafficking trends and patterns, estimates of the amount of cocaine currently transiting Africa vary widely, with estimates ranging from 40 metric tons to 300 metric tons per year, as previously discussed. In the absence of better data on seizures and traffic volumes, accurate projections of emergent and prospective trafficking-related trends and developments—which may provide the basis for allocating resources and formulating policy responses to the problem—are likely to be difficult to generate. While cocaine trafficking through Africa has risen sharply in recent years, it remains unclear whether a reported drop in seizures in 2009, for instance, is indicative of a short-term or a long-term trend.¹⁷⁸

¹⁷⁵ See U.S. Congress, Senate Committee on Foreign Relations, *Examining U.S. Counterterrorism Priorities and Strategies Across Africa's Sahel Region*, 111th Cong., 1st sess., November 17, 2009, in particular testimony of Dr. David Gutelius.

¹⁷⁶ State Department, *Congressional Budget Justification*, FY 2010; White House, *Remarks by the President to the Ghanaian Parliament*, (Accra, Ghana), July 11, 2009; White House, *Readout of the President's Call with President Mills of Ghana*, Office of the Press Secretary, April 10, 2009; and CRS Report RS22809, *Ghana: Background and U.S. Relations*, by (name redacted). Also see testimony of Dennis C. Blair, Director of National Intelligence, "Annual Threat Assessment of the Intelligence Community for the Senate Select Committee on Intelligence," Senate Select Committee on Intelligence, hearing on *Current and Projected National Security Threats to the United States*, February 12, 2009.

¹⁷⁷ For instance, in June 2007, a passerby informed Senegalese officials about an unattended boat that had washed ashore, only to find 1.2 tons of cocaine. Similarly, in May 2006, Ghanaian authorities happened upon 1.9 tons of cocaine after searching a van during a routine traffic stop. In other situations, African law enforcement reportedly could have seized more cocaine, if it had more manpower, vehicles, and gasoline to give chase. For example, in April 2007 authorities in Guinea-Bissau intercepted a consignment of 635 kg of cocaine, but traffickers were able to escape with the rest of the consignment, believed to be about 2.5 tons, because the police did not have the manpower and vehicles to give chase. UNODC (November 2008).

¹⁷⁸ According to the UNODC, seizures in West Africa peaked in 2007, with the share of seized cocaine in Europe traced to Africa dropping from 27% in 2007 to 7% in 2008.

Several observers have argued that more and better intelligence and data collection on the nature of the drug threat in Africa is needed.¹⁷⁹ This could take the form of increased human intelligence collection and the increased deployment of technology-based methods for detecting and monitoring drug flows transiting the region. Efforts to increase such Africa-related law enforcement resources, however, are nevertheless likely to be countered by contending pressures to devote greater resources to similar objectives in other parts of the world where the drug threat is viewed as being greater. In the absence of better information on the drug threat in Africa, some observers may argue that significant shifts in U.S. attention to the region may not be warranted. Others may argue that without good information on the problem, policy makers may be prone to formulate policies that ineffectively respond to current challenges, or do not address key aspects of the problem, such as the reported involvement in African drug trafficking of criminal organizations targeted by the United States in other regions.

Short-Term, Targeted Counternarcotics Assistance Versus Long-Term Law Enforcement Capacity Building

Given that many African countries lack effective law enforcement agencies and judicial systems and resources to fund them, many observers have argued that donor countries, including the United States, should consider scaling up and expanding existing counternarcotics capacity-building assistance programs in Africa. Such recommendations raise questions over how to achieve that end. Some policy makers may contend that, given the urgency and extent of the drug trafficking threat faced by African countries, an immediate rise in U.S. and European interdiction operations, quick impact training and equipping programs, and other short-term operational activity are necessary. Others, however, may argue that in the absence of a comprehensive law enforcement and judicial system capacity-building, the results of such short-term assistance are likely to be fragmentary and ineffective in the immediate terms, and negligible with regard to long-term trends. Without a capacity to ensure fair trials; effectively prosecute potentially wealthy, high-profile defendants; properly control seized drugs for evidentiary purposes and subsequently destroy them; enforce prison sentences; or to deter police corruption, for instance, overall efforts to curtail drug trafficking may founder. Such capacity-building assistance would likely include a broad but integrated combination of law enforcement, rule of law, and government infrastructure and process training and assistance, as well as facility construction or upgrades and providing operational equipment.

Resource Level and Allocation Considerations

Ultimately, questions over the relative mix of immediate impact and long-term development that may be necessary boil down to decisions on policy prioritization and resource allocation. Some policy makers are likely to argue that both short-term interventions and long-term capacity-building efforts may be necessary. In a budgetary context in which federal fiscal resources are increasingly limited, however, decision makers will need to carefully consider what mix of resources is likely to have the greatest effects with respect to both time frames.

¹⁷⁹ See, for example, testimony of Doug Farah and Johnnie Carson, Senate Foreign Relations Committee, Subcommittee on African Affairs: *Confronting Drug Trafficking in West Africa*, June 23, 2009.

While some may be inclined to provide such aid, others may question whether a substantial level of U.S. counternarcotics assistance for Africa is warranted at all, since much of the recent growth in cocaine traffic through West Africa is believed to be destined to Europe, not the United States. As a result, some may suggest that European countries should provide the bulk of counternarcotics assistance in Africa. A related line of debate may center on whether the extent and effectiveness of current European counterdrug efforts in Africa are adequate, and whether individual European countries or the EU plan to increase their counterdrug presence in the region. Such views, however, may be countered by those who contend that drug trafficking in Africa poses a variety of direct threats to U.S. national security and foreign policy interests in Africa.

Currently, the U.S. counterdrug footprint in Africa is expanding in terms of resources and personnel. The mix of resources being devoted to such efforts reflects short term and long-term policy objectives and emphasizes the importance of cooperation with multilateral and U.N. agencies and with European governments and the EU. The State Department's FY2009 estimated level of funding for such purposes is 13 times as large as that for FY2006, and during the same period, the number of African recipient countries targeted to receive such assistance has grown from just one country (Nigeria) to six. Additional resources to combat drug trafficking through the region have also begun to flow through DOD entities and initiatives, including AFRICOM, APS, and JIATF-South. DEA is also scaling up its presence, having recently augmented its three existing regional offices by opening a new office in Accra, Ghana. DEA also has provisional plans to expand its presence in other parts of Africa farther by opening up five additional country offices and developing new law enforcement operations in five additional locations.¹⁸⁰ In addition, various other U.S. plans for other counterdrug training programs and other projects are also under development.

Despite recent and prospective increases, counternarcotics efforts in Africa remain relatively small when compared to U.S. counternarcotics programs in other parts of the world. In FY2008, for example, the State Department obligated 0.12% of its total counternarcotics aid budget to Africa, while the State Department's FY2010 request for counternarcotics assistance to Africa—which is significantly larger than that of any previous year—comprises just 0.49% of total global State Department counternarcotics assistance. Personnel resources and attention devoted to drug trafficking in Africa are also limited. The State Department has one Transnational Crime Affairs Officer stationed in the region (in Abuja, Nigeria) and has a limited diplomatic presence in some African countries affected by drug trafficking, such as Guinea-Bissau, where the State Department maintains an office staffed only with Guinea-Bissau nationals.

Defining Agency Roles and Responsibilities

U.S. government agency roles and responsibilities in combating drugs in Africa are not yet clearly defined in a public strategy document for the region. In practice, the State Department's INL Bureau has taken the lead on counterdrug matters in the region, focusing primarily on country assessments to inform future programming efforts. INL, however, is only one of several U.S. government agencies or agency units that could play a role in counterdrug efforts in Africa. As U.S. assistance for such ends grows, the 111th Congress may see a need to weigh in on what agencies play which policy implementation and coordination roles, including with respect to the

¹⁸⁰ These include Nairobi, Kenya; Rabat, Morocco; Dakar, Senegal; Cape Town, South Africa; and Conakry, Guinea. DEA response to CRS request, July 2, 2008.

relative balance of civilian and military agency participation in such efforts, as did the 110th Congress with regard to the military's role.¹⁸¹

In the absence of a clear integrated, inter-agency strategy for the region, several questions about agency participation in counterdrug efforts in Africa and interagency coordination may arise. One such question is whether an interagency coordination body should formally be established to ensure policy consistency and avoid program overlap and duplication across U.S. government agencies and offices. Presently, no such body formally exists, although informal inter-agency working group sessions have taken place on an ad hoc basis. If policy makers decide that such a coordinating body is necessary, secondary questions include which agencies should participate in the group, which agency or agencies might chair or co-chair the group, and whether the members of the group should meet at the principal, deputies, or working group levels. Similar questions regarding program coordination on the ground in countries in Africa may also arise.

A related question pertains to the emerging role of the U.S. military, particularly with respect to the role of the regional combatant command for Africa, AFRICOM—and the proportion of African counternarcotics assistance currently provided by DOD (approximately \$19.3 million in FY2009 compared to the State Department's approximately \$1.6 million in FY2009). Some observers have questioned whether DOD's growing role in counternarcotics activities and AFRICOM's prospective participation in these activities, and others that are widely seen as primarily civilian in nature, is appropriate. Proponents of an expanded DOD counternarcotics role generally argue that the U.S. military is well-equipped with the resources and monitoring and detecting skills to help foreign governments counter powerful drug trafficking organizations and that the absence of DOD's participation in counternarcotics assistance would lessen the effectiveness of U.S. programs. Some may also contend that protecting the integrity of national borders and territory from external threats, including drug trafficking, is an inherently military activity. Opponents, by contrast, may contend that counternarcotics foreign assistance is primarily a law enforcement and intelligence activity and not a core military mission. In the view of some, the training of foreign militaries and police in counternarcotics operations could result in legal dilemmas and human rights controversies arising from a merging of civilian police and military roles, potentially resulting in serious political and diplomatic repercussions for the United States abroad.

¹⁸¹ See P.L. 110-417, which requires that DOD submit a report to Congress on its counternarcotics strategy in and objectives for the region and DOD roles and missions in support of overall U.S. counter-narcotics policy for Africa, including the role of AFRICOM in such efforts.

Appendix. Cocaine Seizures and African Membership in Illicit Drug Conventions

Table A-1. Reported Cocaine Seizures of 10 Kilos or More in West Africa Since 2000

Country	Reported Amounts in Kilograms	Report Date	Summary Details
Liberia/international waters	2,400	January 2008	French navy vessel seizes drugs in international waters off Liberia. Crew of nine Ghanaians arrested and later convicted.
Togo	500	October 2008	Seizure near port of Lome; eight Colombians arrested, one of whom Togo agrees to extradite to the United States.
Sierra Leone	691	July 2008	Drugs seized from aircraft originating in Venezuela with fake Red Cross markings lands without permission at Freetown International Airport. Suspects flee. Automatic weapons linked to them are seized. One U.S. citizen, four Colombians, two Mexicans, a Venezuelan, a national of Guinea-Bissau, and several Sierra Leoneans convicted in the case in April 2009. Two suspects later extradited to United States to stand trial in a separate cocaine trafficking case.
Mauritania	53	April 2008	Persons arrested: two Mauritians and a Senegalese. Cocaine seized together with two tons of cannabis. Drugs seized at Nouadhibou.
Guinea /international waters	3,000	February 2008	French navy vessel seizes drugs in international waters off Guinea.
Mali	750	January 2008	Drugs seized near Algerian border after shootout between Malian security officials and smugglers driving Algerian-registered vehicles.
Mali	15	January 2008	French woman arrested at Bamako airport.
Mali	116	December 2007	Drugs seized at near Guinean border; two Togolese arrested.
Mali	35	November 2007	Drugs seized at near Guinean border; a Togolese and a Nigerian arrested.
Senegal/international waters	3,700	October 2007	In international waters off Senegal, Spanish police seize ship suspected of ferrying shipment from off-shore mother ship to Senegal. Persons arrested: Dutch ship officers and four Ghanaian crew members.
Mauritania	830-864	August 2007	Persons arrested: two Mauritians, two Moroccans, a Senegalese, a Spaniard, and a Mexican.
Benin	350	August 2007	Drugs confiscated from coastal village near capital, Cotonou. During a counter-narcotics operation mounted in response to a reported smuggling incident, police officers allegedly divert between 20 and 25 kilos of cocaine, in addition to that seized; two alleged traffickers are killed; and a reported Guatemalan trafficker flees, allegedly with official connivance. These incidents lead to the arrest of 14 police officers.

Country	Reported Amounts in Kilograms	Report Date	Summary Details
Senegal	1,254	July 2007	Drugs seized near Nianing at private residence close to location of 1,200 kilo seizure days earlier; links found among suspects in both cases. Two French nationals and three Senegalese, and three additional Colombians arrested at various times in connection to the 1,254 kilo case. Cash and arms also seized. Suspected trafficking pattern: Cocaine from Colombia, Venezuela and/or Ecuador transported to Aruba; shipped to West African coastal waters; and off-loaded from mother ship to sailing boats.
Senegal	1,200	June 2007	Drugs seized aboard a mechanically disabled, deserted sailing ship near the coastal resort of Nianing. Travel and financial documents suggesting links to Guinea-Bissau, Brazil, Colombia, and Portugal confiscated. A Colombian, a Venezuelan and an Ecuadoran arrested days later in connection to the seizure.
Senegal	44	June 2007	Total cocaine seized at Dakar International Airport by mid-year.
Mauritania	625	May 2007	Origin of cocaine: Venezuela. Persons arrested: one French national and 13 Mauritians, including a Mauritanian Interpol officer and a relative of former Mauritanian military junta leader Mohamed Khouna Ould Haidalla. Drugs seized from aboard a small aircraft flown from Venezuela near port of Nouadhibou, a key illegal migration debarkation point.
Guinea Bissau	635	April 2007	Drugs seized by police, who lacked the capacity to confiscate an estimated additional 2.5 tons of cocaine linked to the seized drugs. Two military officers arrested in case ordered freed by military authorities.
Burkina Faso	49	April 2007	Drugs seized near Mali border; five Nigerian females arrested.
Senegal	12	November 2006	Drugs seized over 10 days at Dakar International Airport. Persons arrested: Two Bulgarians en route from Guinea to Spain, and two Nigerians.
Guinea Bissau	674	September 2006	Drugs seized in raid on private residence by police; later seized by military officials and moved to a national treasury building; later removed by unknown parties. Two suspected Venezuelan smugglers arrested after shootout with police later released by judge.
Benin	100	July 2006	Drugs confiscated at home of former Beninois finance minister.
Nigeria	14,200	June 2006	Drugs reported packaged in 284 50 kilo bags of hidden among cement bags of similar appearance. Total seized is the subject of dispute.
Ghana	30	May 2006	Three Ghanaians and two Chinese nationals arrested; seized amount suspected of being part of a 2 metric-ton shipment, which was not recovered, sparking a later inquiry into possible official links.
Nigeria	80	March 2006	Nigerian arrested.

Country	Reported Amounts in Kilograms	Report Date	Summary Details
Ghana	588	November 2005	Two Venezuelans charged after drugs seized at their residence.
Togo/International waters	374	July 2004	Togo-registered tugboat from Venezuela to Spain interdicted by French military vessel in coordination with Togolese officials and turned over to Togolese officials. Six Venezuelans, a Ukrainian, and the Cuban ship's captain arrested.
Ghana	674	January 2004	Drugs seized at port of Tema. One U.S./U.K. dual citizen, one German, three U.K. nationals, and three Ghanaians arrested
Ghana	42	September 2003	Drugs concealed in rice sacks imported from Guyana.

Source: Compilation based on multiple press accounts from Agence France Presse, Global Insight Daily Analysis, BBC Monitoring Middle East, VOA, Reuters, *Cotonou Fraternite*, and the U.N. Integrated Regional Information Network.

Table A-2. Status of Sub-Saharan and North African Countries' Membership in Multilateral Anti-Crime Agreements or Bodies

Countries	States Party to the 1961 U.N. Single Convention on Narcotic Drugs, as amended?	States Party to the 1971 U.N. Convention on Psychotropic Substances?	States Party to the 1988 U.N. Convention against Illicit Traffic in Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances?	States Party to the 2000 U.N. Convention against Transnational Organized Crime?	States Party to the 2003 U.N. Convention against Corruption?	Member State of a Financial Action Task Force-Style Regional Body (FSRB)?
Benin	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes ^b
Burkina Faso	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes ^b
Cameroon	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No
Cape Verde	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes ^b
Cent. African Rep.	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No
Chad	No	Yes	Yes	No	No	No
Congo, Rep.	Yes	Yes	Yes	No ^a	Yes	No
Cote d'Ivoire	Yes	Yes	Yes	No ^a	No ^a	Yes ^b
Dem. Rep. of Congo	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No
Equatorial Guinea	No	No	No	Yes	No	No
Gabon	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No

Countries	States Party to the 1961 U.N. Single Convention on Narcotic Drugs, as amended?	States Party to the 1971 U.N. Convention on Psychotropic Substances?	States Party to the 1988 U.N. Convention against Illicit Traffic in Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances?	States Party to the 2000 U.N. Convention against Transnational Organized Crime?	States Party to the 2003 U.N. Convention against Corruption?	Member State of a Financial Action Task Force-Style Regional Body (FSRB)?
Gambia	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes ^b
Ghana	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes ^b
Guinea	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No ^a	Yes ^b
Guinea Bissau	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes ^b
Liberia	Yes	No ^a	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes ^b
Mali	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes ^b
Mauritania	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes ^c
Niger	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes ^b
Nigeria	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes ^b
Sao Tome and Principe	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No
Senegal	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes ^b
Sierra Leone	Yes	Yes	Yes	No ^a	Yes	Yes ^b
Togo	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes ^b
Burundi	Yes	Yes	Yes	No ^a	Yes	No
Comoros	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No ^a	No
Djibouti	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No
Eritrea	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No
Ethiopia	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No
Kenya	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes ^d
Madagascar	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No
Mauritius	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes ^d
Rwanda	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No
Seychelles	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes ^d
Somalia	Yes	Yes	No	No	No	No
Tanzania	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes ^d
Uganda	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes ^d
Algeria	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes ^c
Egypt	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes ^c
Libya	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes ^c

Countries	States Party to the 1961 U.N. Single Convention on Narcotic Drugs, as amended?	States Party to the 1971 U.N. Convention on Psychotropic Substances?	States Party to the 1988 U.N. Convention against Illicit Traffic in Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances?	States Party to the 2000 U.N. Convention against Transnational Organized Crime?	States Party to the 2003 U.N. Convention against Corruption?	Member State of a Financial Action Task Force-Style Regional Body (FSRB)?
Morocco	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes ^c
Sudan	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No ^a	Yes ^c
Tunisia	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes ^c
Angola	Yes	Yes	Yes	No ^a	Yes	No
Botswana	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes ^d
Lesotho	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes ^d
Malawi	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes ^d
Mozambique	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes ^d
Namibia	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes ^d
South Africa	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes ^d
Swaziland	Yes	Yes	Yes	No ^a	No ^a	Yes ^d
Zambia	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes ^d
Zimbabwe	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes ^d

- a. The government of this country is a signatory to the Convention, but it did not ratify, accede, or succeed to the Convention as a States Party.
- b. The government of this country is a member of the Intergovernmental Action Group against Money Laundering in West Africa (GIABA) FSRB.
- c. The government of this country is a member of the Middle East and North Africa Financial Action Task Force (MENA-FATF) FSRB.
- d. The government of this country is a member of the Eastern and South African Anti-Money Laundering Group (ESAAMLG) FSRB.

Figure A-1. Map of Africa



Source: Map Resources. Adapted by CRS.

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