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IN THIS ISSUE:

BRIEFS 1

IRAQI SHI'A MILITIA ASA'IB AHL AL-HAQ EXPANDS OPERATIONS TO SYRIA
By Nicholas A. Heras.....4

PERU'S SHINING PATH IN DECLINE AS ITS MOVADEF POLITICAL ARM BROADENS APPEAL
By John C.K. Daly.....6

ALLEGED CONNECTION BETWEEN BOKO HARAM AND NIGERIA'S FULANI HERDSMEN COULD SPARK A NIGERIAN CIVIL WAR
By Andrew McGregor8



A Fulani herdsman with his cattle.

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ALGERIA FIGHTING A TWO-FRONT WAR WITH ISLAMIST MILITANTS

Andrew McGregor

The continuing break-up of al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM) into northern and southern factions under rival commanders Abd al-Malik Droukdel and Mokhtar Belmokhtar has presented Algerian authorities with the necessity of fighting a two-front war against factions interested in establishing their dominance by striking security targets within the country.

Algerian security operations along the border with the Kidal region of northern Mali led to the death of a dozen Islamist militants in the southern Tamanrasset region (Algeria's 6th military district). The May 5 military operation by the Algerian Armée nationale populaire (ANP) took place in the Taoundert Commune, some 80 kilometers west of the border town of Tin-Zaouatine, a regional smuggling center. Recently re-elected Algerian president Abd al-Aziz Bouteflika later claimed that the group of 20 to 30 militants were attempting to infiltrate Algeria and included elements from Mali, Libya and Tunisia, though its exact destination and purpose remain unknown (Reuters, May 7).

The operation provided some measure of revenge for the ANP after at least 11 Algerian soldiers were killed in an ambush carried out by AQIM on a military convoy in the mountainous Tizi Ouzou region east of Algiers (Algeria's 1st military district) on April 19 (BBC, April 20). The troops were returning to base after having secured polling stations in Tizi Ouzou for the presidential election.

According to Algerian security sources, much of the seized weaponry was traced to Libyan military stocks looted by NATO-backed Libyan rebels in 2011. Arms and other materiel recovered after the clash included Kalashnikov assault rifles, anti-tank mines,

mobile phones, three all-terrain vehicles, two motorcycles, satellite phones, GPS equipment, solar plates, grenades, a grenade launcher and a shotgun (*Echorouk* [Algiers], May 5). [1]

At roughly the same time, security forces in the Djanet district (Algeria's 4th military district) close to the border with southwestern Libya uncovered another cache of what appeared to be weapons looted from Libyan armories, including 87 Russian S-5KO rockets, a relatively inaccurate Russian-made rocket designed for use by aircraft and helicopters but re-adapted for use from a truck bed or a MANPAD system in Libya (Algeria Press Service, May 6). Found buried in the sand with the rockets was an improvised rocket launcher (*al-Watan* [Algiers], May 7). A further gun battle near Tin Zaouatine resulted in the death of two militants, bringing the death toll up to 12 (Naharnet.com, May 12).

The April 30 pledge of allegiance by Mokhtar Belmokhtar (a.k.a. Khalid Abu al-Abbas) to al-Qaeda leader Ayman al-Zawahiri (in which Belmokhtar called al-Zawahiri "our Amir") and his recognition of the legacy of Osama bin Laden and Abdullah Azzam appears to be yet another demonstration of his rejection of the leadership of AQIM leader Abd al-Malik Droukdel (AFP, May 1). At the moment, Droukdel's AQIM and Belmokhtar's Libyan-based al-Murabitun movement seem to be engaged in a bitter rivalry, though so far their contest is being carried out through attacks on Algerian targets rather than group-on-group clashes like those witnessed between the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS) and the al-Qaeda sponsored al-Nusra Front in Syria. With Droukdel's faction operating in northern Algeria and Belmokhtar's faction operating in the remote south, such inter-Islamist clashes appear unlikely in Algeria.

Though the United States has opened the possibility of supplying Algeria with surveillance drones to help monitor the vast desert wilderness of southern Algeria, it has refused to supply Algeria (or other nations, for that matter) with attack drones of the type deployed by the CIA and the U.S. Department of Defense (*al-Jazeera*, May 9). Meanwhile, Algeria has denied a U.S. proposal delivered by Secretary of State John Kerry to set up a base for drone operations in southern Algeria (*al-Jazeera*, May 11).

Note

1. Ministère de la Défense Nationale d'Algérie: "Neutralisation de terroristes à Tamanrasset / Bilan de l'opération," May 6, 2014, http://www.mdn.dz/site_principal/index.php?L=fr#terro06052014.

PLAN TO SHIP ISRAELI GAS TO EGYPT RAISES POLITICAL AND SECURITY CONCERNS

Andrew McGregor

Only two years after public opposition and attacks by militants brought an end to Egyptian gas shipments to Israel, there is a new proposal to begin shipping Israeli natural gas to Egypt. Texas-based Noble Energy signed a non-binding letter of intent with Unión Fenosa Gas (UFG - a Spanish-Italian joint venture) on May 5 calling for the shipment of 2.5 trillion cubic feet of natural gas from Israel's offshore Tamar gas field over 15 years. The gas would be liquefied for export at Unión Fenosa's Damietta liquefied natural gas (LNG) plant (20 percent owned by Egypt) before shipment to foreign markets by tanker, though the Egyptian government announced two days later that it had not yet issued the necessary authorization required for any imports of gas from Israel. Egypt's Oil Ministry has said that any such deal would need to "serve the national interest of the country" (*Wall Street Journal*, May 6; *Haaretz/Reuters*, May 7).

The Tamar gas field is located 50 miles off the Israeli coast in the waters of the eastern Mediterranean and began production in March 2013. The largest partner in developing the gas field is Noble Energy, with a 36 percent share. Other partners include Israel's Isramco Negev 2, two subsidiaries of Israel's Delek Group and a subsidiary of Israel's Dor Alon Group. The Tamar partners have already signed smaller deals to supply gas to the Palestinian Authority and Jordan's Arab Potash Company and Jordan Bromine Company but have otherwise failed to find international markets for Tamar's production. Turkey remains a potential customer for Tamar gas, but any deal with Turkish energy firms would come with its own political baggage given the strained relations between Turkey and Israel.

Leviathan, a second Israeli offshore gas field, is owned by the same partners as the Tamar field. With twice as much gas reserves as Tamar, Leviathan is expected to go online in 2017 though financing has yet to be arranged due to the absence of large, long-term contracts with buyers. The Leviathan partners are expected to announce an export deal with foreign partners within three months. Tamar and Leviathan are expected to meet Israel's domestic energy needs for at least the next 25 years.

The last natural gas deal between Egypt and Israel ended badly, with both parties entering arbitration before the International Chamber of Commerce (ICC) this year to resolve outstanding financial claims. In this earlier case, natural gas exports from Egypt to Israel were repeatedly interrupted by attacks by

militants on the al-Arish to Ashkelon pipeline. The attacks began shortly after the January 2011 overthrow of President Hosni Mubarak and continued even after the Egyptian General Petroleum Corporation (EGPC) and the Egyptian Natural Gas Holding Company (EGAS) terminated their agreement with Israel's East Mediterranean Gas (EMG) over a payment dispute following an Egyptian declaration of *force majeure* they claimed would excuse them from meeting their supply obligations. [1] By this time, there was massive popular opposition to continuing a deal to supply Israel with gas at below market prices that many Egyptians viewed as a prime example of the corruption that permeated the Mubarak regime.

There has been some discussion of using the existing pipeline to carry Israeli gas to Egypt until a proposed undersea Tamar to Damietta pipeline has been completed, though it seems likely the pipeline would again be the target of Bedouin and Islamist militants operating in the Sinai (al-Jazeera, May 8). Residual anger over this earlier contract is likely to help generate opposition to any new Egyptian gas project involving Israel. However, if the deal goes through, militants will have much greater difficulty interrupting the submarine pipeline than the exposed pipeline running through the Sinai Peninsula.

Egypt is trying to deal with severe energy shortages during a politically sensitive time. Natural gas is used to generate most of the nation's electricity and blackouts have become common since the 2011 revolution. With steadily diminishing production and an inability to attract sufficient investment to develop remaining reserves, Egypt is finding it impossible to meet both heavily subsidized domestic demand and its export commitments (Reuters, May 6; al-Bawaba, May 7). Several gas-producing Gulf nations supporting Egypt's political transition have supplied Egypt with \$6 billion in free fuel to ward off potential popular unrest created by energy shortages this summer (Reuters, May 6).

With Egyptian natural gas now being diverted to the domestic market, UFG's Damietta plant has been offline since December 2012 (al-Jazeera, May 8). A second Egyptian LNG plant located at the Mediterranean port of Idko is operated by the British-owned BG Group, the losing bidder on the Tamar gas deal. Like the Damietta plant, the Idko plant is also running well below capacity due to supply shortages and was unable to export any gas during the first quarter of 2014. The Egyptian government's decision to divert natural gas supplies to the domestic market is estimated to have cost Unión Fenosa and the BG Group billions of dollars in lost revenue and has prevented both firms from meeting their commitments to customers in Europe and Asia.

Following the U.S. imposition of sanctions on Russia, European countries dependent on Russian gas imports are now seeking alternative supplies, mainly from nearby Algeria. After Egyptian negotiations with Algeria's government-owned Sonatrach were halted when European markets began expressing interest in Algerian gas following the Crimea crisis, Egypt turned to Russia's Gazprom Company for supply, reaching an agreement to import Russian liquefied natural gas beginning this summer (Daily News Egypt, May 13). The favorable payment terms offered by Russia may be viewed as part of its effort to re-establish influence in Egypt and other parts of the Middle East.

It remains uncertain whether any of the Israeli gas exported to Egypt would find its way to gas-hungry Egyptian markets or what the reaction of the Egyptian public might be to such a development. In the meantime, Unión Fenosa has brought its own complaint before the ICC over the Egyptian failure to maintain contracted payments as per its agreement and it is possible the BG Group will follow suit with reference to Egypt's failure to supply its Idko LNG facility with natural gas. The BG Group has already declared *force majeure* for its Egyptian operations because of the government's gas diversions and a \$4 billion debt owed by the Egyptian government. Egypt has already faced 19 arbitration cases from international energy firms since the 2011 revolution, with most of these remaining unsettled. In the meantime, factories, businesses and retailers are all forced to reduce their hours of operation, damaging an already struggling economy. Alternatives to gas are being sought to supply Egypt's energy needs as the high consumption summer months approach, including the use of coal and low-grade polluting petroleum products (*Zawya* [Dubai], April 15).

Note

1. *Force Majeure* refers to a party to a contract being relieved of their obligation to fulfill terms of a contract due an event or circumstance beyond the control of the party concerned that has resulted in the party failing or delaying its contractual obligations in circumstances that could not be prevented or overcome by the standard of a reasonable or prudent person or party. It excludes such relief (normally intended to be only temporary) in cases of negligence or malfeasance.

Iraqi Shi'a Militia Asa'ib Ahl al-Haq Expands Operations to Syria

Nicholas A. Heras

A suicide bombing struck an election rally in Baghdad that was being held by the Iranian-backed Iraqi Shi'a militia group and political party Asa'ib Ahl al-Haq (AAH - League of the Righteous) on April 26, killing 37 people (*al-Jazeera*, April 25; for AAH, see *Terrorism Monitor*, February 12, 2010). The militant Salafist organization Dawlat al-Islamiya fi Iraq wa'l-Sham (Islamic State of Iraq and Syria - ISIS) claimed credit for the attack in retaliation for what it claimed was AAH's role in targeting, displacing and killing Sunnis in Iraq and the group's support of Bashar al-Assad's war effort in Syria (*al-Sharq al-Awsat*, April 27). AAH's military involvement in Syria and its growing role as a sectarian-driven militia operating semi-officially within Iraq's military and security forces makes the group an important participant in the Syrian civil war and the Iraqi conflict.

AAH, led by the increasingly powerful Shi'a political figure Qais Khazali, is a breakaway faction of the Shi'a Sadrist Movement and has formed its own political bloc, al-Sadiqun (The Honest Ones), which ran in alliance with Iraqi Prime Minister Nuri al-Maliki's Dawlat al-Qanoon (State of Law) coalition in the April 30 parliamentary elections. The group's militant wing is reported to be extensively trained, funded and supervised by the Iranian Republican Guard Corps (IRGC) (*Al-Monitor*, July 23, 2013; AP, January 9, 2012). Enjoying the personal patronage of IRGC commander Qassam Solaimani, AAH emerged as one of the most effective militant groups fighting against Coalition forces in Iraq and is considered one of the most important foreign Shi'a jihadist organizations fighting for the Assad government against the armed opposition in the Syrian civil war (*al-Sharq al-Awsat*, April 14; *Guardian*, March 12; *Al-Monitor*, July 23, 2013). Ten of the AAH members killed at the April 26 election rally were veterans of the group's war effort in Syria (*al-Sharq al-Awsat*, April 27). AAH officials publicly acknowledge their role in the Syrian fighting, even if only in a limited and altruistic capacity. Speaking to the Arab media in April, AAH spokesman Ahmad Kanani, asserted these points and announced:

Asa'ib Ahl al-Haq has already stated that its official position is to defend the holy sites of Islam, which is the sacred duty of every Muslim, Sunni and Shi'a. Attacks on the holy shrines could trigger sectarian strife, which would bring about reprisals, as happened in Iraq with the destruction of the Askari Mosque, which led to sectarian

strife. Therefore we are trying to spare the region this conflict by defending the [Damascus] Shrine of Sayida Zaynab and thus avoid the need for targeted reprisals (*al-Sharq al-Awsat*, April 14).

Nuri al-Maliki's political opponents, including Muqtada al-Sadr and members of the Ayad Allawi-led al-Iraqiya coalition, assert that al-Maliki is allowing sectarian militias to infiltrate and supplant the Iraqi security services. Shi'a fighters from AAH and Jaysh al-Mukhtar are reported to have been recruited into a special paramilitary force named the "Sons of Iraq," which is nominally tasked with conducting operations against ISIS militants in and around Baghdad. This new force is composed of committed Shi'a jihadists and is believed to be directly under the command of al-Maliki himself (*Reuters*, April 27).

In May 2013, during a period of widespread protests inside Iraq against the policies of the Maliki government, al-Iraqiya released a statement accusing the Maliki government of deploying well-armed Shi'a sectarian militias, including fighters belonging to AAH and Jaysh al-Mukhtar (a.k.a. Kata'ib Hezbollah), and allowing them to fire on and kill scores of peaceful demonstrators in cities throughout Iraq (*Mada Press [Baghdad]*, May 8, 2013).

During this same period, it was also reported that paramilitary fighters belonging to AAH were operating in lieu of the Iraqi police in Anbar governorate and making arrests of al-Iraqiya aligned officials (*al-Gharbiya TV [Baghdad]*, May 8, 2013). Following the protests, AAH fighters, including some wearing official Iraqi security force uniforms, were deployed widely across Baghdad and its suburbs (*Al-Monitor*, May 29, 2013). Muqtada al-Sadr warned the Maliki government to withdraw AAH fighters from Baghdad, stating that they were "committing criminal acts" (*Mada Press [Baghdad]*, May 28).

The Iraqi security forces' use of sectarian militias such as AAH and Jaysh al-Mukhtar is believed to be particularly pronounced in and around Baghdad, including the central-eastern governorate of Diyala which borders Iran and the Baghdad governorate. Sectarian fighting in Diyala has recently been blamed on ISIS by the Maliki government, prompting the deployment of a significant Iraqi security force presence there (*Reuters*, April 27). On March 24, the mayor of Baquba, the capital of Diyala governorate, stated that forces seeking out ISIS fighters under the authority of the Ministry of the Interior, but composed of members of AAH, cordoned off the central market in the nearby town of Buhriz and killed 23 civilians (*al-Sabeel [Baghdad]*, March 25). Eyewitness accounts of the killings assert that many of the dead were summarily executed (*Reuters*, April 27).

AAH fighters operating within the Iraqi military and security forces have increased their activities since the beginning of the armed uprising against the Maliki government in Anbar governorate in late December 2013. These activities are stated to be carried out with sectarian prejudice, similar to what AAH is reported to have executed in Diyala governorate (Ahrar News Agency [Baghdad], February 12). Recently, AAH acknowledged its auxiliary role in the Anbar fighting by burying a member of its military wing who had been killed in the governorate (al-Taghier TV [Baghdad], May 10). AAH fighters that had been deployed to fight in Syria around the Sayida Zainab shrine and are currently fighting in Anbar are reported to be appearing in popular music videos being distributed by the organization (al-Gharbiya [Baghdad], May 5).

The group's fighters are also reported to be conducting purges of anti-Maliki, Sunni Arab tribesmen from areas in and around Iraq's southern coastal city of Basra in order to secure that area's Shi'a sectarian majority (*Radikal* [Istanbul], November 6, 2013).

Political opposition to the AAH, including within the Iraqi Shi'a community, has been growing. Muqtada al-Sadr, lately positioning himself as an Arab Iraqi nationalist rather than a Shi'a political figure, has been a particularly harsh critic of both AAH's military wing and its role in supporting the security forces of the Maliki government. Al-Sadr once referred to AAH members as "killers that are neither devout nor have religion" (Iraq4All News [Baghdad], December 27, 2011). Recently, al-Sadr stated that a significant number of former AAH members were returning to his political movement and referred to the remaining, pro-Maliki AAH fighters as a "sponsored militia" (*al-Sharq al-Awsat*, October 18, 2013). Armed clashes between al-Sadr's supporters in the Jaysh al-Mahdi (Mahdi Army) and AAH fighters have sporadically flared up in Shi'a-majority neighborhoods in and around Baghdad, precipitated by the ongoing political disagreements between the two movements' leaders and conflicts caused by inter-tribal animosities (Al-Monitor, August 28, 2013).

Although there is internal opposition to AAH within Iraq, the organization's ties to the IRGC and the close contact it has with the Iraqi security forces complicate efforts to reduce its influence. AAH's military role in Iraq is a destabilizing element in the ongoing conflict. The movement's role as an important auxiliary to the Syrian military in the fight to protect Damascus from the Syrian armed opposition is used as justification for ISIS attacks against the organization and its civilian supporters. Opposition to AAH is tempered, however, by the ongoing concerns within the Iraqi Shi'a

community over the suicide bombing campaign launched against Shi'a-majority areas throughout the country. AAH's military wing is perceived as a deterrent against ISIS attacks and its active role in the Anbar and Diyala sectarian conflicts will continue to be a trigger of communal conflict in Iraq.

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Peru's Shining Path in Decline as Its MOVEDEF Political Arm Broadens Appeal

John C.K. Daly

During Operativo Perseo 2014, a joint effort of the National Police of Peru and the Peruvian Armed Forces, 28 members of Shining Path's political wing, the Movimiento por Amnistía y Derechos Fundamentales (MOVEDEF - The Movement for Amnesty and Fundamental Rights), were arrested in Lima and Puno (a southern region bordering Bolivia) on April 10. The accused were charged with terrorism, drug trafficking and money laundering following a two-year investigation. The arrests represent an escalation of the government's actions against the political group. One of the arrested MOVEDEF leaders, Alfredo Crespo, also served as Sendero Luminoso (Shining Path) founder Abimael Guzmán's lawyer and acted as Guzmán's intermediary with Shining Path field commander Florindo Eleuterio Flores Hala (a.k.a. Camarada Artemio) from MOVEDEF's establishment in 2008 until Artemio's 2012 capture. Crespo had earlier served 12 years in prison for terrorism offenses. Peruvian authorities are concerned that even as they successfully combat Shining Path in the countryside, MOVEDEF's influence is growing, particularly on university campuses.

Guzmán, who founded Shining Path in 1970, was captured in September 1992 and convicted after a three-day trial. He is currently serving a life sentence in solitary confinement in the Callao naval base maximum security prison on the island of San Lorenzo, off the coast of Lima.

After Guzmán's arrest, Peruvian security forces halted the Shining Path's momentum and eventually succeeded in suppressing the armed insurgency. Peru's Truth and Reconciliation Commission was established in 2001 after the fall of President Alberto Fujimori to examine abuses committed during the 1980s and 1990s by both guerrilla groups and the Peruvian military. The Commission concluded that roughly 70,000 people, primarily peasants, were killed or "disappeared" between 1980-2000. Forensic teams continue to exhume mass graves in mountain villages in the Andes (*El Tiempo Latino* [Washington], August 21, 2013).

MOVEDEF was founded in 2008 with the express purpose of securing an amnesty for Guzmán and other imprisoned Shining Path leaders. At its height, the Shining Path had an estimated 7,000 militants; it is now believed to have around 300 active fighters that operate in the Huallaga Valley and

the valleys of the Apurímac, Ene and Mantaro rivers (the latter three being known collectively as the VRAEM region), which are jungle regions bordering the Amazon (*Peru this Week*, April 21).

In 2011 MOVEDEF received \$179,000 from Shining Path's Huallaga Valley cell to establish itself as a political movement by establishing 60 support committees across the country and, after organizing as a political party, obtaining registration to allow its participation in elections (*El Comercio* [Lima], April 11).

The last several years have seen Shining Path suffer setbacks on the battlefield. On February 11, 2012, Camarada Artemio was arrested by Peruvian security forces in the upper Huallaga Valley. He was the last field leader who remained loyal to Guzmán. On December 8, 2012, three months before his arrest, Camarada Artemio admitted to Lima-based journalists that Shining Path had been defeated and said that its remaining guerrillas were ready to negotiate with the government (*Diario El Mercurio* [Cajamarca], December 8, 2012). Despite Artemio's assertions, a number of guerrillas continued to fight.

On August 12, 2013, Shining Path's second-in-command and chief military commander, Alejandro Borda Casafranca (a.k.a. Camarada Alipio), died together with Marco Antonio Quispe Palomino (a.k.a. Camarada Gabriel) in a battle in Llochegua, a jungle area in the VRAEM (*La República* [Lima], August 12, 2013). Three months later, the December 9, 2013 arrest of Alexander Dimas Huaman (a.k.a. Héctor), Artemio's successor, led the head of Peru's national drug police to declare that Shining Path had disappeared from the upper Huallaga Valley and that the region had been pacified (*El Comercio* [Lima], December 9, 2013).

The arrests paralleled MOVEDEF's increased efforts to gain political legitimacy, as MOVEDEF filed papers with Peru's Jurado Nacional de Elecciones (JNE - National Jury of Elections) seeking registration as a legitimate political party and describing its ideology as "Marxism-Leninism-Gonzalo thought." The latter element refers to the personal ideology of Abimael Guzmán.

On January 20, 2012, the JNE rejected the application for a second time because it did not comply with requirements. Among the points that JNE cited for rejecting the application was MOVEDEF's lack of commitment to democracy and their failure to break with their previous subversive activities. Further proof of MOVEDEF's lack of objectivity and their ongoing commitment to Shining Path ideology was in the appeal that MOVEDEF presented to the JNE for an amnesty

for Guzmán, corrected in Guzmán's own handwriting, along with other documents captured from Shining Path members (*El Comercio* [Lima], April 27). Furthermore, the JNE concluded from the documentation that MOVAREF's actual leader was Abimael Guzmán (*El Comercio* [Lima], April 27). MOVAREF claimed to have mustered more than 350,000 signatures to support its political registration effort (*Diario La Primera* [Lima], January 23, 2012).

Peruvian Interior Minister Walter Albán said the Operation Perseo 2014 arrests were the result of a two-year investigation involving phone taps and undercover agents that established a link between MOVAREF and Shining Path guerrillas in the coca-producing Huallaga Valley-VRAEM region. The detainees were accused of terrorist links, financing terrorist activities with drug money and money laundering, with Albán asserting that it was evident MOVAREF "is a front" for the Shining Path (Perú21, April 11).

Also arrested was President Ollanta Humala's estranged cousin, Walter Humala, who had unsuccessfully run for the presidency of the Ayacucho region in 2010. In 2011 he also stood for one of the five Peruvian seats in the Andean Parliament, but was again unsuccessful. President Humala fought the Shining Path as an army major in the 1990s. Indicating that his cousin would get no special treatment, Humala said, "In Peru no one wears a crown" (Grupo RPP [Peru], April 9).

Peruvian authorities stated that prior to Operation Perseo 2014, they were only aware of five percent of MOVAREF's activities, but that the documents confiscated during the operation will help to figure out the rest (*El Comercio* [Lima], April 26).

General Leonardo Longa López, the new head of the VRAEM Special Command, explained the resurgence in Shining Path attacks and kidnappings after a period of inactivity, suggesting that these actions are Shining Path's last desperate reaction to military efforts to halt drug trafficking in the region: "The production supplies aren't getting through and the terrorist remnants have withdrawn... There are fewer and fewer [Shining Path members] because they're abandoning the ranks" (*El Comercio* [Lima], March 2).

While MOVAREF's effort to expand its influence is not yet massive, it has a presence in Peru similar to that of Shining Path in 1980, when that movement still attracted little attention prior to beginning military operations. The Peruvian government believes that Shining Path could be receiving around \$15 million annually from drug trafficking to purchase arms and maintain their clandestine networks.

As Peru is the world's second largest producer of coca, the problem is likely to continue.

A recent Ipsos Peru survey revealed that 22 percent of Peru's population thinks that MOVAREF is an independent movement that is not part of Shining Path, with many of these respondents living in the interior of the country (*El Comercio* [Lima], April 30).

While Lima has achieved military victories against Shining Path in the past several years, drug trafficking continues to grow. Cocaine remains the major source of income of both the narco-insurgent movement as well as several other criminal entities in the country. On the ideological front, especially among the young for whom the Shining Path armed struggle is mostly history, MOVAREF's growing presence on college campuses is rapidly becoming as big a concern as the drug trade.

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Alleged Connection between Boko Haram and Nigeria's Fulani Herdsmen Could Spark a Nigerian Civil War

Andrew McGregor

In recent weeks, Nigerian security forces have claimed that some groups of semi-nomadic Fulani herdsmen engaged in bitter and bloody conflicts with farmers in several Nigerian states are actually composed of members of Boko Haram. A statement from Nigerian Director of Defense Information Major General Chris Olukolade claimed the potentially dangerous identification came during the interrogation of Fulani herdsmen arrested after a series of killings and arson attacks in Taraba State (*Vanguard* [Lagos], April 23; *Leadership* [Abuja], April 24; *Nigerian Tribune*, April 24). Reports of Boko Haram members (who are mostly members of the Kanuri ethno-cultural group) disguising themselves as Fulani herdsmen while carrying out attacks in rural Nigeria are common. Though many of these reports may be attempts to deflect responsibility from Fulani herdsmen for attacks on sedentary farming communities throughout north and central Nigeria, even the perception that the Fulani herdsmen have joined forces with Boko Haram could propel Nigeria into a new and devastating civil war.

Conflict between Fulani Pastoralists and Nigerian Agriculturalists

With origins in the Senegambia region, the Fulani now stretch across some 20 states in West Africa and the Sahel belt, ranging from Guinea-Conakry to Sudan. Though the Fulani herdsmen once existed in a symbiotic relationship with sedentary agriculturalists in this region (involving the fertilization of fields by cattle who fed on the vegetative debris left over after crops had been taken in and the exchange of meat and milk for grain and other agricultural products), this relationship has been disturbed in recent years by environmental changes that have driven the herdsmen further south, massive growth in the size of Fulani herds, the growth of practices such as agro-pastoralism, the expansion of farmland into traditional corridors used by the herdsmen and the general collapse of customary conflict-resolution methods.

Many Fulani now tend to reach for automatic weapons to resolve disputes with agricultural communities. This has in turn led to the development of "self-defense" forces in the agricultural communities and the growth of cattle-rustling.

Vigilante groups are often more trusted than the Nigerian security forces, which are often suspected of collusion with the herdsmen and/or Boko Haram. Farmers routinely accuse the Fulani herdsmen of allowing their animals to feed on still-growing crops and contamination of community watering-places. The rape of non-Fulani women by herdsmen is also identified as a growing source of conflict and prevents women from carrying out traditional and necessary roles in gathering food and water. The herdsmen in turn accuse the farmers of denying them access to grazing areas when alternatives cannot be found.

The conflict between herdsmen and farmers is not solely a Nigerian problem, but is now common across the Sahel. The fact that the Fulani are nearly exclusively Muslim and the agricultural communities are largely Christian in Nigeria adds the disturbing possibility that this bloody conflict could shift into a sectarian conflict that could be easily exploited by Boko Haram extremists. The increasing number of recent attacks on Nigerian churches by Fulani gunmen or militants posing as such is an unwelcome trend. Pastoralist-sedentary agriculturalist violence is now common in a growing number of Nigerian states, though Benue, Taraba, Nasarawa and Plateau states remain the most affected.

The Fulani herdsmen, however, often find themselves on the receiving end of communal violence or attacks by government forces. On April 3, a uniformed group alleged to be Hausa-speaking Nigerian soldiers arrived at a Fulani settlement in Nasarawa State in armored personnel carriers (APCs) and killed over 30 Fulani, most of them elderly members of the community who were too slow to run away. The attack came only 24 hours after Fulani herdsmen had signed a peace agreement with local Tiv agriculturalists. Military authorities would only say they were "investigating" whether the attackers were actually Nigerian troops (*Premium Times* [Lagos], April 3; April 9; *Nigerian Tribune*, April 4). Within days, Fulani herdsmen were carrying out mass attacks on Tiv agricultural communities in Benue State while nearby security forces failed to respond (*Vanguard* [Lagos], April 12).

Following a massacre of 15 Fulani mourners by security forces in Nasarawa State, Nigeria's Muslim Rights Concern (MURIC) issued a statement that placed the herder vs. farmer conflict in the context of a larger and more dangerous sectarian conflict:

Cattle-grazing is not new in this country and it had been very peaceful in the past. But recently there appears to be a kind of organized resistance and stereotyping of the Fulani herdsmen. This is what we find disturbing.

Witnesses have reportedly confirmed that efforts at reconciliation between Fulani herdsmen and their neighbors have always been frustrated by external forces who perpetrate fresh killings just when peace accords have either been signed or were about to be signed... Any hostile act against the Fulani is therefore an indirect attack on Muslims. Genocide aimed at the Fulani is indubitably mass killing of Muslims. It is war against Islam (SpyGhana.com, April 22).

After enduring attacks that killed over 50 people and destroyed nine villages in southern Taraba State, the mostly Christian Jukun people's Jukun Development Association of Nigeria announced: "We earlier thought the crisis is having [the] Fulani's face, but when we saw the type of weapons the attackers possessed, we are convinced that the sudden attack on Jukunland has political undertones" (Osun Defender, April 25). Suggesting that the Jukun people may be targeted for a genocide similar to that experienced in Rwanda, Association president Benjamin Bako warned: "We want the world to know that the Jukun people, as warriors, do not shy away from fighting which is our heritage... we the people will have no other option than to resort to any means to defend ourselves" (Codewit.com, April 22; *Vanguard* [Lagos], April 25).

The conflict between herders and farmers, like the Boko Haram conflict, has already shown signs of spilling across national borders. On April 22, Fulani herdsmen fleeing clashes in Nigeria's Taraba and Benue states responded to demands from villagers in northern Cameroon to leave the area by killing at least 20 people and displacing thousands more as they torched schools, housing and crops (*Osun Defender*, April 25). The Nigerian military has denied targeting the Fulani, insisting its operations are non-partisan and non-sectarian (*The Nation* [Lagos], April 9).

A Kanuri Jihad?

Just as the early 19th century military/religious reform movement led by Uthman Dan Fodio is often called "the Fulani Jihad," the activities of Boko Haram are increasingly called a "Kanuri Jihad" against the powerful Hausa-Fulani community in north-central Nigeria. The modern Fulani (a.k.a. Peul, Fulbe) are regarded as a pastoral group separate from the Fulani who integrated with the Hausa following the Fulani conquest of north-central and north-western Nigeria.

The traditional Kanuri religious leader, the Shehu (shaykh) of Borno Alhaji Kyari Garbai al-Kanemi, has rejected Boko Haram and has himself been the target of attempts on his life by the Islamist radicals. While the late Boko Haram

founder Muhammad Yusuf and current movement leader Abubakr Shekau are both Kanuris, the movement itself cannot be accurately described as a Kanuri project as many of the victims of Boko Haram operations have been Kanuri. Mohammed Wakil, a Borno politician currently serving as Nigeria's Minister of State for Power, recently noted that the Boko Haram crisis is "inflicting enormous damage on the Kanuri nation" (*Daily Post* [Lagos], April 21).

The heavy-handed response of the Nigerian Army and the large number of Kanuri civilian casualties inflicted in the military's efforts to tackle Boko Haram in the north-eastern states of Adamawa, Borno and Yobe (all currently under emergency rule) have led to calls from some members of the political elites in these states for the removal of the army. Most notable of these was a memo issued by Adamawa governor Vice-Admiral Murtala Nyako (former Nigerian Chief of Naval Staff) to his fellow northern state governors calling for the withdrawal of the Nigerian Army from these states on the grounds that the Army is carrying out a government-sponsored "genocide" in the region. Nyako also made a connection between the Boko Haram crisis and the Nigerian Civil War of 1967-70, claiming that Jonathan, "the Adolf Hitler of Nigeria," was intent on continuing a campaign by the southern Igbo to establish dominance over the Hausa-Fulani of northern Nigeria (*This Day* [Lagos], April 27; *Leadership* [Abuja], April 19; *Punch* [Lagos], April 20). Nigeria's information minister described such remarks from a former military leader as an attempt to incite the public against the national military and "the height of irresponsibility" (*Leadership* [Abuja], April 19).

The Kanuri-Fulani Rivalry in Northern Nigeria

The Kanuri people are found mainly within the borders of the old Borno Empire (1380-1893), which now spread across Borno and Yobe states in Nigeria, northern Cameroon, southwestern Chad and southeast Niger, a territory that now matches Boko Haram's operational zone. Nigerian security operations have encouraged Boko Haram to develop cross-border refuges and supply-lines that extend into neighboring Kanuri communities. Boko Haram also recruits non-Kanuris, though these recruits tend to be used for suicide operations rather than Kanuri members of the group. Numbering about five million people today, the Borno Kanuris originally came into conflict with the Fulani during the Fulani jihad of Islamic reformer Uthman Dan Fodio in the early 19th century. The Fulani jihadists eventually merged with the Hausa community of northern Nigeria to form a powerful and partly urbanized Hausa-Fulani community based on the Sokoto Caliphate, which entered into a long rivalry with the Kanuri of Borno, whose power and influence has declined

steadily.

The Fulani herders do not have an established political structure and tend to be represented by various cattle breeders associations. Alhaji Bello Abdullahi Bodejo, the leader of one of the largest of these groups, the Miyetti Allah Cattle Breeders Association, claims that most of the attacks attributed to the Fulani herdsmen are actually carried out by “terrorists” who have infiltrated the Fulani to carry out violence (*Leadership* [Abuja], April 25). The association has also explained that many of the clashes between herdsmen and farmers were caused by the encroachment of the latter on traditional cattle routes (*Daily Sun* [Lagos], April 18).

In early April, the governor of Niger State expelled recently-arrived Fulani herders on the grounds that insurgents would pose as herdsmen to carry out attacks on local residents, saying he did not believe the Fulani herders were behind the attacks on civilians in Nigeria, but added that he would “prefer to be accused of dislodging people than to be counting corpses on the roads” (*This Day* [Lagos], April 11).

The ongoing conflict between pastoralists and agriculturalists has attracted American attention, with U.S. Ambassador to Nigeria James Entwistle emphasizing the need for peace in the north-central region of Nigeria before the 2015 elections (Channels TV [Lagos], April 9).

Conclusion

While it is still difficult to determine whether Fulani gunmen are now joining forces with Boko Haram (as alleged by Nigerian security forces) or Boko Haram militants are using the pastoralist-agriculturalist conflict as a cover for their own activities, it is apparent that the two conflicts are beginning to converge, intentionally or not. The Kanuri-Fulani rivalry inhibits but does not prevent the eventual cooperation between militants from both groups, particularly as the pastoralist-agriculturalist conflict begins to take on sectarian overtones. If Boko Haram is to succeed in its goal of establishing a Salafist caliphate in northern Nigeria, it must expand its base beyond the Kanuri community. The Fulani herders are already well-armed and engaged in a bitter struggle with the Christian and non-Salafist Muslim agricultural communities of Nigeria, making expansion into the aggrieved Fulani communities an excellent place to start the necessary broadening of Boko Haram’s base. If the continuing conflict between pastoralists and agriculturalists cannot be contained and resolved in the near future, there is every possibility that Nigeria could once more descend into a nation-wide struggle for dominance that will ultimately be of little benefit to anyone other than the extremists.

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