

# Mali: Next Target of The 9/11 Coalition?

by Douglas DeGroot

Oct. 6—After it took eight days for President Obama to reluctantly acknowledge that terrorists (run by his British allies) had assassinated U.S. Ambassador Christopher Stevens in Benghazi, Libya, Obama is now suddenly discovering that al-Qaeda (his ally in Libya and Syria) is operating in Mali, and is jumping at the chance of spreading permanent warfare to that country, which will ultimately spread from there throughout West Africa.

The Obama move comes at the same time that France and Britain have launched naval maneuvers in the Mediterranean, which, in turn, come on the heels of large Western maneuvers in the Persian Gulf, off the coast of Iran.

On Oct. 1, Assistant Secretary of State for African Affairs Johnnie Carson began preparing the groundwork for military intervention in Mali, by stating that the United States cannot afford to allow Mali to be fragmented, with a Caliphate established in the North by terrorists from other countries, such as al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM) and Ansar al-Dine. After a mid-March putsch in Mali, rebel jihadists, who were allied with Tuareg secessionist rebels, hijacked the Tuareg rebellion, and took over a region as big as France, in the Sahara Desert in northern Mali.

AQIM's alliance is with Ansar al-Dine, now a nominally Salafist, Touareg grouping headed by Iyad ag Ghali. He was formerly a whiskey-drinker who got involved in whatever criminal activity would earn him and his group some money. He was often the key negotiator with European nations for the release of Europeans who had been kidnapped. As a result, to get him out of the country, he was given a diplomatic post in Saudi Arabia in 2008 by the former Mali government. After a stint in Saudi Arabia, he decided that the easiest way to strike it rich was to become a Salafist, the prerequisite for Saudi funding.

Ag Ghali is now back in northern Mali/southern Algeria, has a long beard, and is calling for the imposition of Sharia law over the entire nation of Mali.

Another smaller grouping, allied with AQIM, Movement for United Jihad in West Africa (MUJAO), is said by well-informed Africa sources to be the most dangerous. It has members who are well-trained in special-forces types of tactics. It is headed by a Chadian, and is also the unit from which the Boko Haram offensive against Nigeria is being run.

Mohamed Bazoum, Republic of Niger Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of State for Foreign Affairs, Cooperation, stated May 21 in an address in Washington, that Niger had intelligence of Pakistani and other foreign operatives active in northern Mali.

Carson's Oct. 1 statement was a shift of position for him and the State Department. He had previously stated, as had Secretary of State Hillary Clinton, that the chaotic situation in Bamako would have to be settled before the U.S.A. could support a West African military intervention into Mali. This is still the position of U.S. Africa Command Commander Gen. Carter F. Ham, who stated this explicitly at a Sept. 30 press conference in Algiers. He was on a tour of West and North African nations, discussing the Mali crisis. He also repeated that there would be no American boots on the ground.

Carson and the Obama Administration changed their policy line on Mali only after the administration admitted that al-Qaeda had killed Ambassador Stevens and three other Americans.

At this point, the Mali army does not exist, and the institutions of the country are not functioning. Under pressure from the West African Economic Community of West Africa (ECOWAS) states, a weak interim government has been formed. But the original putschists who overthrew President Touré are still popular, and have popular support.

## Who Are the Jihadists?

The northern Mali area has long been the staging point for smuggling drugs flown into various areas of West Africa from South America. This was the primary source of income for criminal networks there, which was augmented by returns from kidnapping of European travelers or workers.

The tipping point in favor of the Mali jihadists however, was the unleashing of the jihadists in Libya, who were the backbone of the on-the-ground forces that overthrew Muammar Qaddafi, as auxiliaries to the U.S., British, and French coalition. As *EIR* has documented, the rebel "victory" in Libya was followed by

