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CTAP Interview - globalECCO

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CTAP INTERVIEW - globalECCO

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This interview is taken from the collection of the Combating Terrorism Archive Project (CTAP).¹ Dr. Letitia Lawson teaches courses on security, government and politics, history, and cultures in Africa. She frequently travels to the African continent as a faculty member for the Center for Civil-Military Relations (CCMR). Colonel Michael Mensch, former Africa program manager for CCMR, is currently a consultant on African affairs. On 8 December 2015, Nick Tomb talked with Dr. Lawson and COL Mensch about security and counterterrorism across the African continent.²

NICHOLAS TOMB: To begin with, what's your big-picture analysis of how the continent is doing today and its prospects for security and development in the future?

DR. LETITIA LAWSON: Africa is an extremely big continent, and it's going in many different directions at the same time. In some obvious places, like the Central African Republic [CAR], things are not getting better. In other places, like Ethiopia and Rwanda, the economies are growing quickly. Some countries are in fact doing extremely well economically, and I think that the success of those is likely to affect the rest of the continent, although a lot of the economic growth in the region is still driven by commodity prices. Africa was largely unaffected by the 2008 financial crisis because it is disconnected from that part of the global economy, but its economic progress as a region is very much driven by, or related to, trade with China. As China's economic growth has now slowed, exports to China have slowed, and as a result, growth projections have declined for the continent as a whole. The main thing going forward, in terms of both the economies and the security of Africa's countries, is to appreciate their diversity.

On the security front, I am quite optimistic about the medium to long term. What has struck me most in the last 10 years is the extent to which the more capable African countries are beginning to behave like everybody else in the international system. Governments are using their security forces to pursue state interests as they see them. In some cases this can be destabilizing. For example, in 1996 and 1998, Rwanda and Uganda used their security forces to invade the DRC [Democratic Republic of Congo] to address what they saw as their security interests. Similarly, Ethiopia and Kenya have assumed responsibility for AMISOM [the African Union Mission to Somalia] largely as a means of securing their own borders.

There have been relatively few international security threats in Africa in the last 50 years—or in the last 100 years, really, since the colonial occupation. But now, the African countries are becoming more vulnerable to external threats of various kinds, and I think that is leading the stronger countries to think more seriously about their own security and the security of their regions. This is going to change the dynamic on the continent as a whole in a good way, over the medium to long term. In the short term, these developments are not going to affect the challenges facing CAR, DRC, and other troubled countries, but I think that, in the longer term, the region will finally move out of the post-colonial period and become self-sustaining, in terms of economic growth and development and security. The region is coming into its own.

COL MICHAEL MENSCH: We are talking about 54 different nation-states in Africa, so we are bound to generalize, but even where you see significant macro growth in the big picture, not every citizen is benefiting from that growth. Not to say there has not been some improvement, but still, the individual African's security is a human security challenge. I think there is still a long way to go toward ensuring that the gains at the national level reach the citizenry. The security versus development question is the classic chicken-and-egg question—I think you need both. To draw another comparison between state security and human security, individual security begins with the state.

ON THE
SECURITY
FRONT, I AM
QUITE
OPTIMISTIC
ABOUT THE
MEDIUM TO
LONG TERM.

Even the wealthiest of the states run out of resources before they can ensure security at the human level. I think that if governments begin with individual security rather than with state or regime security, their people overall would be better off. But this would require that resources—both national resources and foreign aid—get utilized in the way in which they were intended to be utilized, and for the benefit of the people rather than being absorbed by various bureaucracies.

LAWSON: In terms of utilizing resources as intended, it is worth noting that Nigeria, for instance, is full of reformers, people who want to do the right thing, but it takes a whole bunch of people like that working together to address structural, organizational, and interest-based obstacles to better resource utilization. Nigeria has some way to go, but it also now has a president [Muhammadu Buhari] whom people are very excited about. Buhari has long been committed to fighting corruption as well as defeating Boko Haram. Those are the first steps towards development as far as many Nigerians are concerned, and I think they are right about that. Again, I am cautiously optimistic.



MENSCH: I think you have to look at the nature of the government. In Rwanda, for instance, the government has had a key role in ensuring the country's tidiness, orderliness, economic development, and the well-being of the people. If these things are better in Rwanda, however, they have come at a price. That price is that you're basically dealing with a police state: your life is going to be good as long as you don't make waves. If you make waves and resist the government, your life can be affected whenever and however the government wants. So there can be a trade-off for all of this good order and development that some people may not be interested in making.

TOMB: Terrorism is clearly a huge challenge facing Africa, with al Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb [AQIM] attacking in the north and al Shabaab attacking in the east. Additionally, Boko Haram, which operates in northern Nigeria and the Lake Chad region, was recently named the world's deadliest terrorist group, having killed over 6,600 people in 2014, which is more than ISIS killed that year.³ How serious is the threat of terrorism in Africa, and what can African governments and the international community do about it?

LAWSON: I would start with a definition of terrorism, because terrorism is simply a tactic. So let's say terrorism is the use or threat of violence against civilians in pursuit of a political goal.

When you use violence against the government for a political goal, for example when al Shabaab uses terrorism to attack AMISOM or the Somali government, that is still an asymmetrical conflict. The goal is to defeat an enemy, not to persuade a government to change its policies. In contrast, the Shabaab attack on the Westgate mall in Nairobi in 2013 was classic terrorism: the goal was to persuade the Kenyan government to withdraw its forces from Somalia. These groups don't have the capacity to use other tactics, so they use this tactic regardless of the goal. Boko Haram is an insurgency. It has used terrorist tactics in the past and is returning to them now because it has been rolled back by government and neighboring armed forces. Early on, Boko Haram attacked police stations and robbed banks as a way of accumulating fighting resources, but it did not attack the civilian population as such. The organization evolved into a clear insurgency movement after its leader was killed in police custody—basically murdered by the Nigerian state.⁴ So it makes sense that it would become very deadly because it is now an army. The Nigerian Army is not very capable and in the past certainly did not feel the need to be prepared to take on this kind of threat. Boko Haram captured a lot of equipment from the Nigerian Army, which allowed it to become an expanding insurgency with basically the same level of capability as the army. As it has been rolled back, it has fallen back on classic terrorism, with attacks on the civilian population that are designed to delegitimize the Nigerian state.

The Army now has an insurgent force fighting them with their own weapons and with close to 10,000 fighters at one point. Boko Haram is a particular kind of insurgency, and it does kill more civilians. It is not going for a "hearts-and-minds" campaign. My general point is that Boko Haram is or wants to be associated with a transnational terrorist network, but in at least some of the periods of its development, the tactics that Boko Haram used were much more those of an insurgency than these targeted or general terrorist attacks we see now.

Onlookers flee at the sound of gunfire at Westgate Mall, 23 September 2013.



Like Boko Haram, AQIM historically has not been a significant threat to Africa or even to Mali. Over the last 10 years or so, since the group has been in Mali, AQIM's fighters have sat out there in the desert hills. They have been primarily involved in kidnaping for ransom and then using that money to buy weapons, so they were stockpiling money and weapons but otherwise are just sitting there. AQIM is not a very big organization, and it is still largely an Algerian organization. In the same way that al Shabaab associated itself with al Qaeda when Shabaab was weak and falling apart, so AQIM's predecessor, the Algerian Salafist Group for Preaching and Combat, did this as a way of trying to reinvigorate itself. [AQIM leader Mokhtar] Belmokhtar was a cigarette smuggler. Moving things across borders is what keeps economies going out there in the desert. In my viewpoint, there is nothing particularly unusual or threatening about smuggling economies that have been active for decades.

If you look at the population distribution of Mali, 90 percent of the population lives in the southern third of the country. The Mali government has never lost control over this area. The remaining 10 percent of the population lives in the other two-thirds of Mali, and some 80 to 90 percent of those people live in a few towns. So most of Mali is effectively empty. With regard to AQIM sitting out there in the desert, the Malian government had said, essentially, "Those of you who have an issue or a problem with AQIM, go ahead and try to deal with it because we have issues of our own and AQIM is not really doing anything to us." The government was right about that. Similarly, ethnic Tuareg rebellions are more or less perennial: they keep coming back about every 10 years. I think it's important to remember that before the most recent Tuareg attack in Mali [beginning in January 2012], the conventional wisdom was that Mali was dealing with them in exactly the right way. There was a tendency among observers to criticize Niger for being so beefy and militaristic, whereas Mali was praised for decentralizing and power-sharing and doing all kinds of nice stuff—promoting autonomy in the region. Suddenly, with northern Mali falling to the MNLA [National Movement for the Liberation of Azawad] and Ansare Dine [which provided the personal and organizational links between AQIM and MNLA] in 2012, this policy looks like a mistake.

But this is because AQIM is sitting there on a bunch of money and weapons, and then the Libyan state collapses. Who anticipated that? When Qaddafi fell, armed Malians who had been working in the Libyan presidential guard or were otherwise supported by Qaddafi came back to Mali with equipment and armaments that they would never, under any other circumstances, have had. The governments of both Niger and Mali were saying to NATO: "Please don't intervene in Libya, we don't need to hurry this rebellion on. Our countries are going to absorb the cost if you

do." And they did. So I don't know how much of a threat AQIM itself really is. It is there, and it was able to provide the extra funding and weaponry that facilitated Ansare Dine's success, so in that particular context, it was a significant threat. Whether it can expand and threaten other countries remains to be seen. In recent months, AQIM has begun to carry out classic terror attacks in West Africa on the heels of the more spectacular ISIS attacks in Europe, perhaps to remind us that al Qaeda still exists. In the long run, these terrorist threats might be a good thing, if the region's governments feel sufficiently threatened to begin taking security more seriously.

In most post-colonial African countries, the army has been the biggest threat to any sitting president. So if you're the president, rationality tells you that you don't want the army to be too professional, too capable. Instead, it becomes an institution for distributing patronage. So it's not surprising that the Malian army collapsed in 2012 in the face of the Tuareg separatist-Islamist insurgency, and it's not surprising that the Nigerian Army had a really hard time dealing with Boko Haram. But I think the level of threat indicates not so much the strength of those threatening organizations but rather the weakness of the state military institutions. If the governments and the leaders of those institutions respond to these threats by increasing their own capabilities, then I think it will not be that difficult for them to roll the insurgents back. In the short term, it's hard to predict, however, whether they will do so or the extent to which they will do so. I would expect that not much will be done in Mali because their problem has been solved for them. France and the UN are taking care of the insurgency, so the incentives for Mali's government and military to get serious about security may be lower than for Nigeria. In any case, they are never going to be able to defend a big piece of virtually uninhabited desert out there.

“ IF YOU'RE THE PRESIDENT, YOU DON'T WANT THE ARMY TO BE TOO CAPABLE. ”





Nigeria, in contrast, needs to, and actually can, control all of its own territory. Nigeria is not a desert; it is a country of 140 million people. The little corner of the country where Boko Haram operates is more sparsely populated, but the country as a whole is relatively densely populated. I think that with the correct sort of stimulus, the Nigerian government and armed forces should be able to make the kinds of changes they need to become more effective.

On the other side of the continent, al Shabaab is essentially contained. The international naval presence off the coast has mostly eliminated the piracy threat. Kenya and Ethiopia are now sealing off their borders with Somalia. Across the center of the country you have what the BBC calls "pro-government militias" supported by Ethiopia, which are basically a way for Ethiopia to operate through Somali proxies. Somalia's neighbors have mostly sealed in the al Shabaab threat.

Kenya is still threatened by Shabaab because Shabaab recruits quite effectively in Kenya, and it will continue to be an actual terrorist threat there. In the longer term, I think this could actually be a good thing, because it is creating a sense of cohesion in Kenya. The fight against al Shabaab can be divisive on religious grounds of course, but it's really challenging the Kenyan government and security forces to be more effective in their intelligence, especially internally.

The Kenyan media are among the best in the region. They report on what's going on, and civil society has a chance to think about this situation. Asking the question, "What is this threat to us as Kenyans?" is actually useful in creating a cohesive national identity in the long run. If you are a target, if you are in the Westgate mall shopping when Shabaab shows up, you don't care about the long run.⁵ But the government can use such threats to help build better state-society relations and stronger security institutions.

“ NIGERIA NEEDS TO, AND ACTUALLY CAN, CONTROL ALL OF ITS OWN TERRITORY. ”

MENSCH: The short-term answer to your specific question—how serious is the threat of terrorism for Africa—depends on where you are in Africa and who you are in Africa. There is no guarantee that your country is not going to be targeted, if for no other reason than because the bad guys can attack you. I would imagine that every African state is paying more attention now and considers terrorism a threat to its people, if not to

the state itself. So I think the awareness is high and terrorism is seen as a serious threat by most governments in Africa.

What can African governments do about it? In principle, this is the same every where: first of all, they need to develop good sources of information, a good intelligence network. Here is where a more authoritarian government may have an advantage if it has a well-developed internal and external intelligence apparatus—especially internal. This kind of government may have better access to information about what's going on in the far-flung areas of the country as well as in the capital. But once you collect information, you have to know what you want to do with it, which brings in another whole layer of intelligence processing: translating information into intelligence that leaders can use for policy and decision-making purposes. Beyond the analysis, you then have to be able to do something about it. We—the international community—are speaking with one voice now: We want to eliminate the threat on the ground and in the air. We want to kill these people before they kill us. We want to put them out of business.

That's one side of it, but then, as if that's not difficult enough, the more problematic side is that for every one of these terrorists—or criminals, or whatever you want to call them—that we kill, we potentially create an extended family of more martyrs who are willing to take up the call, however illogical it may seem to us. Since the creation of the state of Israel, we have had an angry, even desperate population of Arabs who feel that they have been systemically disenfranchised in this process. This frustration has finally boiled over to the point that we are at today. We can argue the morality or the legality of deciding that we, the United States or the international community, can take unilateral actions anywhere in the world to fight the terrorists or to preclude a terrorist attack, but that doesn't address the bigger picture. I think that whether it's terrorism or economic development or security cooperation in general, we need to ask questions rather than provide solutions. We want to let the Africans lead the process in their country or sub-region. The initiative needs to come from our "client," the people and government we are trying to help. My feeling is that we need to be very careful about how we approach this situation with African countries. We can do certain things for them, but there are some things we can't do—such as find [Lord's Resistance Army leader] Joseph Kony—or are not willing to do—such as put US conventional forces into the fight against Boko Haram. The United States' relationship with any African country is not going to be the same as that country's relationship with a former colonial power like France, Belgium, or Great Britain. It's going to be very difficult for the United States to play more than a support role in fighting terrorism in Africa.

Finally, we all need to address the ideological, economic, and social causes of terrorism.

LAWSON: It is important to put terrorism in the context of other threats. In the United States, we have the luxury of having terrorism be perhaps our most significant security threat. African countries do not have that luxury; they have a lot of other threats that are more important. We define security broadly to include human security. In the same time period when several hundred people were killed by terrorist attacks in Mali and two-thirds of the country came under the insurgents' control, do you know how many African kids died of malaria? Hundreds of thousands.

Even in terms of violent security threats, it seems to me that the biggest threat of violence in the modal African country comes from unemployment. Unemployed people may be recruited to terrorism, but they may be recruited to other forms of violence, too, because they have nothing to do. They are frustrated, so the salary it takes to recruit them into an organization, regardless of what the organization stands for, is relatively low. The satisfaction they get from feeling as if they are a part of something is substantial, it seems to me, because they don't get that satisfaction out of anything else. So even to the extent that governments see terrorism as a serious threat, they still need to be investing primarily in health and education and economic development.

TOMB: That's a perfect segue into the next question. Observers often note a correlation between underdevelopment, civil conflict, failing states, and acts of terrorism. Do you see development as an effective and legitimate means for countering terrorism? If these young people you are talking about have a job, if they feel like they are included in their community and their society, will that prevent them from turning to terrorism?

LAWSON: In the long run, development absolutely is the answer. In the short run, there is no way to employ all of those people who need jobs. But addressing structural unemployment is not even a generational problem, it's a problem for the century. The dilemma is how to address root causes, which are clearly economic. So you have to start now, and as far as I am concerned, you have to make development your number one priority. But even if you do that, it doesn't mean that you're going to stop the threat of terrorism in your lifetime, and certainly not in the next election cycle or even in the next generation. Economic development is the long-term solution, but while you are pursuing a long-term solution, you absolutely need shorter-term strategies and tactics to manage what you can't resolve.

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MENSCH: Development and counterterrorism need to be done hand in hand. But I also think that the question of security is too often seen as involving only the state. As we have said, security now includes so many things: economic, social, and health issues as well as defense-related issues. Depending on how pressing the security issues are for a state, they can affect the government's ability to focus on development, if indeed security is not already consuming all of the state's resources. So how can we do these two things, security and development, at the same time? Obviously we cannot solve this in the short term, as Letitia said.

But we need to do something to make as many people as possible feel secure in their own homes. In my experience, Africans don't expect a lot from their governments because they haven't gotten a lot from their governments. They would be happy if they were just left alone to farm, to educate, clothe, and feed their children. They vote people into office—there is democracy. The developed countries have jammed it down everybody's throat, for good reason and with good intentions in most cases. But as someone said, you can't eat democracy. The disinterest people have in their own governments contributes to a lack of security and a lack of government accountability at all levels, and this indifference also affects the development of communities from the village level up through the state level. People are disinterested because their interest has never been appreciated, whether at the ballot box or within the governments itself. Interestingly enough, I think one of the biggest shifts in Africa in the last 20 years has been the emergence of civil society as a recognized player in the governance process—accepted and recognized, albeit with some caution—by states and the international community. Civil societies have done a reasonably credible job of linking the people at all levels to their government at all levels. This may be a bright spot, but it is still overshadowed by the unequal distribution of wealth and lack of security at all levels, including the state. If the state is feeling threatened, that's all officials are going to think about.

TOMB: In your opinion, is corruption a contributor to terrorism and insecurity, or is that taking it too far? What role does corruption play?

MENSCH: Corruption gets in the way of a lot of things, but it mainly drains resources from the state. It lowers people's expectations of what they can do for themselves and what their government will do for them. I also think that sometimes we make too much out of corruption. When I and other instructors from the Center for Civil-Military Relations have worked in Africa over the last 15 or 16 years, facilitating programs throughout the continent, we don't ever bring up the "C" word. This doesn't mean corruption doesn't get talked about, because our participants will generally bring it up, but I think corruption as we Americans understand it is one thing, while the Africans see it as another thing. It is how "Africa Works." ⁶ It's an ingrained process that has to do with the system of clientele-ism that has developed over the years. It's not as black-and-white an issue as we [non-Africans] would often like to portray it. Corruption certainly does drain resources, and it really becomes a problem when the state runs out of the resources it needs to fulfill its role as the patron and take care of its responsibilities to its clients. When those in power run out of their own money to do this, they use the state's money, and when the state runs out of money, then other issues such as political instability, public dissatisfaction, civil disobedience, and public unrest can arise and pose a threat to security. If we could create jobs for some of these folks, then economic development would be part of an answer to the problem of corruption. Executive and legislative impunity in Africa is also a factor in this discussion. It's difficult to hold people accountable.

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LAWSON: In Nigeria, as an example, it seems there is a very direct correlation between corruption and terrorism and counterterrorism. If you look at the ideology of Boko Haram, especially in its early days, one of the things that has motivated the group is the lack of justice in Nigeria. Even their name, which they didn't choose, reflects this. The community started calling them boko haram as a way of making fun of them, actually. Boko is the [Hausa] word for book, which is associated with Western education, and haram means forbidden. Leaders of Boko Haram associate Western education with access to elite positions. In their view, this leads to systemic inequality: some people become very well off through corruption, while others have nothing. So in Nigeria in particular, the inequality and injustice that flow from corruption are actually key elements of the terrorists' ideology.

But I think it's also important to recognize that corruption is not limited to the state, and within the state apparatus, it is not centralized. That means it's difficult for the state to reform itself because corruption is so pervasive. Even lower-level employees have not really bought into this effort to reform and address these issues at all levels. I think it's a really complicated issue to deal with, which is the main reason why we don't bring it up in our courses. If you poll Africans, they say corruption is their biggest problem. But when individuals are involved in reciprocal arrangements, it doesn't seem so much like corruption to them; it seems more like corruption when somebody else is involved. Again, this is driven by the fact that there are not enough resources for anything. How to you distribute scarce resources? They tend to get distributed through patronage networks, so if you are outside of the network, obviously the whole thing looks illegitimate. But what is the alternative? How else do governments hold their countries together in this context of resource scarcity and institutional weakness?

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PEOPLE DON'T TRUST
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One of the biggest obstacles for the Nigerian government and the Nigerian security forces in dealing with Boko Haram is that people don't trust the government or security forces any more than they trust Boko Haram. This is also a problem of corruption, as is the inadequacy of the security forces' equipment. The ongoing trials of high-level officials for corruption related to the theft of resources intended for the counterinsurgency campaign are evidence of this problem. I think this is another thing that can eventually bring benefit: when the threat gets high enough that people take it seriously, maybe we can start to work on resolving some of those issues. But it's a very long-term agenda, and it's very directly related to economic development. There is no country in the world that has reduced patronage significantly before developing a capitalist economy. That's just the reality, because resources are scarce

and there is no middle class. So I think you have to work on everything at the same time, to an extent sufficient to rally the population and gain their confidence. If even a little improvement in the effectiveness of counterterrorism or counterinsurgency buys you some popular support, you can build on that by encouraging people to trust more in government and to help the government. Counterterrorism is not a government activity. Everybody has to be engaged, because the security services have to be able to get intelligence from the people.





MENSCH: Corruption can divert funds that were intended for development to other purposes, into people's pockets or wherever. Because donors recognize that, there has been a shift from direct budgetary assistance to governments to routing funds through the NGO community and civil society organizations. That was heralded as a positive development that would enable donors to track and get better use from and accountability for the donated funds. But just as logic would tell you, we now see that some civil society organizations have become part of the

problem as well as part of the solution. Such organizations compete for resources, especially at the national or local level. The fact that each time we try to address this with development assistance the basic economic situation does not change should tell us something. Needy people will find a way to access the resources, and patronage has implications for both the people who have and the people who do not have. Clearly, corruption is going to be with us for a while. A few countries have tried to develop effective anticorruption organizations and plans. If they are really effective, they run into problems, not just with government, as Letitia said, but with other organizations, the business community, contractors, and so on. Until the basics of the economy and governance improve, I think this is just going to be a fact of life, which does not mean that we should not try to fight against the problem.

TOMB: What is the state of defense institutions in African countries? Is the US Congress right to focus on strengthening management and oversight of African armed forces, alongside more traditional train-and-equip programs?

MENSCH: Yes, I think we are right to focus on management of the force, national security planning, institutional development, defense ministry capacity, professionalism, and so on. We have also identified some weaknesses in our train-and-equip methodology in Africa in the last five or 10 years. Building the defense institution within a country is an important step, but you can't wait to train and equip the armed forces while you are building the defense institutions; you have to be able to do them both simultaneously, which is not necessarily easy. But I question the US approach. We go to the Liberian defense minister's office, for example, and tell him, "Oh, hi, we're from the United States government, and we're here to help you clean up your ministry." This is not a good approach to take with almost any of these governments. We develop these ideas about how we need to do this or that in Africa, without consulting our African partners. We don't ask, "Mr. Minister, how can we help you strengthen your efficiency, your productivity, the professionalism of your ministry? How can we help you exercise objective control over your armed forces? What are your priorities?" We don't do that. We come in with an idea and say, "Here is our idea. Do it." Then we wonder why the ministries drag their feet in implementation. They don't want to say no to a gift horse, but they clearly don't have their heart in some of these initiatives because they are not their initiatives, they are ours. I think that's an inherent problem with the approach that we take. For example, a worthwhile but ambitious effort to help the DRC prepare for local and presidential elections in 2016 was canceled by the host government when it realized that participants were raising issues that the central government did not want raised. Intelligence officials were sent to stop the seminars that were already in progress, and the US facilitators were told to leave the country. The government of the DRC had only reluctantly and vaguely approved this program—after it had already begun—under pressure from the US government. Unless the host governments want US assistance at least as much the United States wants to provide it, neither the host government's nor the US government's interests will be served.

LAWSON: We absolutely have to follow. There is no way we can lead. So if we identify a country in which the government is seriously interested in institution building, I think we can be of assistance. I would add that there actually always is civilian oversight of the military in Africa; often there is too much, not too little. The problem is that it is not formally institutionalized. These governments work through personal networks, so institutions are going to be personalized. When we show up to say, "We are here to help you build institutional capacity," it's not just that they are not paying attention. They actually don't want it, because the way they control their security forces is through personal networks.

This is an important thing to emphasize. In countries where we perceive a direct threat to our interests and need partners to address it, we don't push our agendas. Are we running out to Ethiopia, for example, to say we are there to help them build their democratic institutions? I don't think so. We let them work the way they want to because that works for us. In places like Liberia, by contrast, we show up to say, "We are here to help you build an institution!" because there aren't any real threats to US interests in Liberia. When we don't have real threats, we fall back on institution building and democratization and all of these lofty sorts of goals that we set aside when we do have real security interests. We have to think about these questions from the perspective of African governments. Controlling



the military is always serious for them. There is evidence that Nigeria is seriously interested in institutionalizing civilian control because of the recognition that the security forces need to be more effective than they are. But again, I think we can help only where a government has decided that this is a priority for them.

TOMB: Thank you both. ²